

Thorough Grasp of Theoretical and Practical Significance of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy

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In the seven decades since its founding, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has added a glorious chapter to its development epic, and achieved the “two miracles” of rapid economic development and long-term social stability. The Chinese nation is proudly striding on the great road of “becoming strong” and embracing the brilliant prospects of rejuvenation. China has never been closer to the grand goal of national rejuvenation or more influential on the world than it is today, while the attention paid to China by the international community has never been greater.

At present, China is undergoing profound changes not seen in a century and is securing a decisive victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects. We are in a period in which the time frames of the “two centenary goals” converge. The major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics is now facing new situation, new tasks, and new requirements which call for continuous efforts and innovations in order to overcome difficulties and gain the upper hand. A new era needs new theories. At the 2018 Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs, Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy was established as the guideline, an epoch-making milestone in the development of New China's diplomatic theory. It sets the fundamental course for China's diplomatic work in the new era and points the way for navigating through the complex array of issues in today's world.¹

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¹ “Wang Yi Talks about the Achievements and Experience of New China's Diplomacy over the Past 70 Years,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, March 8, 2019, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjbjzhd/t1643858.shtml>.

As a guide to action for achieving national rejuvenation and advancing major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy comprises a complete system rich with implications. It contains the profound thinking of the shared future and coexistence between China and the world. Under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics has been highly innovative and has made great significant achievements. The international status and influence of China has risen in a remarkable way.

Epoch-Making Significance of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy

In 1949, Comrade Mao Zedong solemnly declared to the world that the PRC was founded and that the Chinese people had stood up. The great event has completely changed China's miserable fate of being poor and weak, and being bullied and humiliated in modern times. The Chinese nation has since embarked on the path of achieving national rejuvenation.² Zhou Enlai, China's first Foreign Minister, pointed out at the founding ceremony of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that "the West Empress Dowager of the Qing Dynasty, Yuan Shikai of the Northern Warlords, Chiang Kai-shek of the Kuomintang, which of them did not fracture the diplomatic dignity? China's diplomacy for a century had been one of humiliation."³ The founding of New China marks the opening of a new era in China's relations with the world. China's diplomacy has taken on a new look.

At its founding, the Communist Party of China, which led the Chinese people to establish the New China, made the realization of communism its highest ideal and its ultimate goal, and shouldered the historic mission of national rejuvenation. This original aspiration, this mission, is what

2 "Xi Jinping Delivers an Important Speech at the 70th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China," *Xinhua*, October 1, 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2019-10/01/c_1125065799.htm.

3 Zheng Ceshi, "Stories of the Founding of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs," *People*, November 6, 2009, <http://culture.people.com.cn/GB/22226/71855/77118/10328611.html>.

inspires Chinese Communists to advance, to seek happiness for all ethnic groups, and to pursue rejuvenation for the Chinese nation. It has profoundly changed the fate and future of the Chinese nation, as well as the pattern and shape of the international landscape.⁴ The theoretical framework of China's independent foreign policy has been gradually improved through continuous exploration and practice: the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, advocated in the early days of New China, has now become basic principles of international relations; ever since the reform and opening-up, China has been committed to the path of peaceful development, achieving its own economic rise while facilitating reforms in other countries and contributing to the cause of peace and development of mankind; since the 18th CPC National Congress, China has actively fostered a new type of international relations and a community with a shared future for mankind, making China the backbone of world peace and stability. To this day, China's foreign policy has established a fine tradition with distinctive features. They include: independence as a cornerstone, concern for the common good of humanity, pursuit of equity and justice, commitment to win-win outcomes, facilitating domestic development, and dedication to serving the Chinese people.⁵

Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era is Marxism in the 21st century. The CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at the core leads the whole Party and people of all ethnic groups to ensure coordinated implementation of the five-sphere integrated plan, and the four-pronged comprehensive strategy, so as to break a new ground for the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics for the new era, and provide a guarantee for the shifts and historic achievements in the cause of the Party and the country. Xi said that since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, China, under the strong leadership of the CPC

4 Yang Jiechi, "Advance the Major-Country Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics under the Guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy," *Qiushi*, No.17, 2019.

5 "Wang Yi Talks about the Achievements and Experience of New China's Diplomacy over the Past 70 Years."

Central Committee, has put forward innovations in diplomatic theory and practice, advanced its diplomatic agenda on all fronts, forged ahead with the Belt and Road construction, and participated in the reform of the global governance system. “We have firmly safeguarded China’s sovereignty, security and development interests, strengthened the centralized and unified leadership of the Party with regard to external work, and explored a new path of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, making historic achievements,” he said.⁶ It is through long-term practices that Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy has been developed and established.⁷

The Thought is the crystallization of diplomatic theory and practice over the past seven decades, an important part of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and provides the basic guidelines for China’s external work in the new era. There are mainly ten aspects: upholding the authority of the CPC Central Committee as the overarching principle and strengthening the centralized, unified leadership of the Party in external work; advancing major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics to fulfill the mission of realizing national rejuvenation; taking the preservation of world peace and the pursuit of common development in an endeavor to promote the building of a community with a shared future for humanity; enhancing strategic confidence with socialism with Chinese characteristics as the basis; forging ahead with the Belt and Road construction with the view of achieving shared growth through wide consultation and joint contribution; following the path of peaceful development based on mutual respect and win-win cooperation; developing global partnerships while advancing China’s diplomatic agenda; leading the reform of the global governance system with the concept of fairness and justice; taking national core interests as the bottom line in safeguarding China’s sovereignty, security and development interests;

6 “President Xi Jinping Chairs the First Meeting of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the CPC Central Committee,” *Xinhua*, May 15, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/2018-05/15/c_1122836914.htm.

7 Yang Jiechi, “Advance the Major-Country Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics under the Guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy.”

nurturing a distinctive style of Chinese diplomacy by combining the fine tradition of external work and the characteristics of the times. By thoroughly implementing the Thought on Diplomacy of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, China has been continuously facilitating a favorable external environment for realizing the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation and promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.⁸

China's major-country diplomacy for a new era shoulders the historic responsibility to create favorable conditions for realizing the Chinese Dream and building a community with a shared future for mankind. The centralized, unified leadership of the Party is the biggest political advantage and the fundamental political guarantee of China's diplomacy. New China's diplomacy has gone through a magnificent course, and achieved glorious achievements while attracting worldwide attention, and all this boils down to the correct leadership of the CPC. In 2019, the Decision adopted at the fourth plenary session of the 19th Central Committee of the CPC pointed out that China's state and governance system enjoys notable strengths, as reflected in the unity of independence and self-reliance and opening up to the rest of the world, and in China's active participation in global governance. It also stated that China should uphold and improve the independent foreign policy of peace and continuously work to build a community with a shared future for mankind.⁹ These important statements summarize the experience and inspiration of New China's diplomacy in the past seven decades, and provide the "top-level design" for modernizing China's system and capacity for governance in the diplomatic field, thus setting the course for the country's pursuits and firming up confidence in the major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics.

8 "Xi Jinping: Breaking New Ground for China's Major-Country Diplomacy in the New Era," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, June 23, 2018, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/zyxw/t1571169.shtml>.

9 "The CPC Central Committee's Decision on Some Major Issues Concerning How to Uphold and Improve the System of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Advance the Modernization of China's System and Capacity for Governance," Central People's Government of China, November 5, 2019, http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2019-11/05/content_5449023.htm.

Understanding the Dialectical Relationship between Profound Changes Unseen in a Century and China's Period of Strategic Opportunity

Only by seizing the commanding heights of history can we make an accurate judgment of the world situation, grasp the momentum, and take the lead. The world is undergoing profound changes unseen in a century as China reaches a decisive stage of realizing the Chinese Dream of great national renewal. At this historic juncture, Xi Jinping stressed the importance of adopting a correct approach to history, to the overall picture, and to China's role in assessing international developments. "China has now entered the best stage of development since the beginning of the modern era; and the world is experiencing changes not seen in a century. These two trends are unfolding in parallel and impacting each other. We face many favorable international conditions in conducting our external work in both the current stage and in the years to come."¹⁰ The Central Committee of the Communist Party has reviewed the situation, kept in mind both internal and international imperatives, and firmly grasped the main theme of serving national rejuvenation and promoting human progress to advance the community with a shared future for mankind. In other words, national rejuvenation and human progress advance in parallel. China and the world share win-win opportunities.

Looking at the world at large, multi-polarity, economic globalization, information society, and cultural diversity continue to develop in depth. International relations are restructured at an accelerated pace and the international order is undergoing profound changes. With alternate "black swans" and "grey rhinos," the West finds itself in a real predicament, and its willingness to lead global governance is declining. The raging protectionism, unilateralism, and bullying are eroding the international order. The US-Europe

10 "Xi Jinping: Breaking New Ground for China's Major-Country Diplomacy in the New Era."

relations are no exception, with new tensions emerging in the transatlantic alliance. French President Emmanuel Macron said no to the United States, and even declared NATO “brain-dead.” The US imposed sanctions on the Russia-led gas pipeline project Nord Stream 2, but it was boycotted by Germany. The US has also withdrawn from the Paris Agreement and the Iran nuclear deal, indicating increasing strategic differences between the US and Europe. Macron said at a 2019 meeting with French ambassadors that there is “the restructuring of the world order,” the core and result of which might be “the end of Western hegemony.” Coincidentally, the Munich Security Conference once argued in one of its annual reports entitled “Post-Truth, Post-West, Post-Order?” that the world might be entering a “post-West” age, characterized by a decline in Western-led global freedom. Its 2019 report entitled “The Great Puzzle: Who Will Pick Up the Pieces?” analyzed international politics and security in terms of the significant shocks that are reverberating, and a major reshuffling of core elements of the international order.

Since the founding of New China, at each historical juncture, the CPC Central Committee has been able to make forward-looking judgments on the international situation, timely adjust its domestic and foreign policies, and win valuable opportunities for China’s development. The CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has given great consideration to the profound changes in a century and rendered judgment on China’s period of strategic opportunity. The Party’s important estimate that “China is still in the best period of development since modern times” demonstrates its keenness and confidence in turning crises into opportunities, and points the way for us to accurately grasp the world trend and seize important strategic opportunities.

The capability of capturing, creating, and utilizing opportunities is an inherent requirement of the major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, and a highlight of Chinese diplomatic success. Internationally, the peaceful transformation of today’s world order is an important opportunity for China. Unlike previous transformations, all achieved by war, this transformation is carried out in a peaceful way. Despite remaining

contradictions and competition among major powers, maximizing benefits through war is no longer the main option for all parties. At the same time, while the evolution of the international order occurred primarily in the West during the modern period, rising developing countries have now rapidly expanded their influence and their role. They stand firmly on the principle of multilateralism and free trade while opposing hegemonism and power politics, becoming important contributors to the new international order. With the accelerated pace of globalization, countries are more interdependent and their interests are more closely intertwined, which has restricted the possibility of wars or other risky ventures by state actors. A burgeoning round of technological revolution has created unprecedented development opportunities. As the world's largest developing country, China has initiated the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, and promoted a peaceful transformation of the international order, thereby contributing more development opportunities for both China and the world.

Domestically, China's opportunities benefit from its own efforts. The system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and China's governance system are able to ensure the realization of the "two centenary goals" in the process of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. China upholds socialism with Chinese characteristics, resolutely walks along the road of peaceful development, and adheres to the policy of reform and opening-up. This is a guarantee for the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and also the greatest opportunity for China. China adheres firmly to its fundamental state policy of opening-up in order to promote reform, development and innovation. It has set up six new pilot free trade zones, opened a new section of the Shanghai Pilot Free Trade Zone, and speeded up exploration of building a free trade port in Hainan province. Such major measures have been introduced one after another. The Chinese economy strives to transition from high-speed to high-quality growth, from "the world's factory" to "the world's market," and continues to unlock and create new opportunities. China has a 900-million-strong workforce, a talent pool of 170 million college graduates or people with professional skills,

a huge market in accelerated upgrading with 1.4 billion people, a well-established industrial system, and relatively full-throated infrastructure. These all contribute to China's key position in the global industrial supply chains. The Foreign Investment Law, which entered into force on January 1, 2020, has strengthened legislation on China's opening-up at higher levels. President Xi emphasized: "the Chinese economy enjoys solid overall strength and resilience, potential and flexibility, sufficient to sustain its sound development in the long term. China will uphold the new development philosophy to promote high-quality development, advance its opening-up at an even higher level, and bring more opportunities for global economic growth."¹¹ China's opportunities are also the world's opportunities.

The going gets tough as we sail toward the midstream of a river or climb halfway up a mountain. Profound changes bring high risks and great opportunities. We are undergoing major changes rarely seen in a century, and are situated at the best period for development since the beginning of the modern era. The two are not contradictory, but dialectically united. With China's increasing capability to stabilize the international environment, its ability to maintain and create great strategic opportunities will be improved at the same time. The rise of China today may well be faced with more challenges than any other major power in our external environment, and it requires a greater awareness of danger and the ability to defuse major risks. Armed with strong convictions, we must integrate China's changes into the global landscape, ride the momentum, and take the initiative. This will certainly turn risks into opportunities.

Mutual Enrichment of Realizing National Rejuvenation and Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind

President Xi said when he visited the "Road to Rejuvenation" exhibition: "Since the modern times began, achieving national rejuvenation has been

11 "President Xi Jinping Meets with Visiting IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva," *CNR News*, November 22, 2019, http://news.cnr.cn/native/gd/20191122/t20191122_524868777.shtml.

the most cherished dream of the Chinese nation.” It has always been the aspiration of many generations of Chinese, and represents the country’s overall interests, and the common expectations of all Chinese people. The 19th CPC National Congress report laid out the blueprint for the Chinese Dream, and inspired all 1.4 billion Chinese people to fight for it. Meanwhile, “China today is more than the country itself; it is very much a part of Asia and the world. In the time to come, China will embrace the world with a more open posture and contribute more dynamic civilization achievements to the world in the future.”¹² Thus, it is the Chinese Dream to realize its national rejuvenation while it is China’s World Dream to build a community with a shared future for mankind. The pursuit of the Chinese Dream will contribute to building a community with a shared future for mankind, and vice versa.

China has always held the ambitious ideal of making greater contributions to human society. The international community also expects China to shoulder more responsibilities and play a greater role. The CPC strives for both the well-being of the Chinese people and the progress of humankind. At a time when the future of the world is at stake, China has never been and will never be an onlooker. We need to put China’s proposals on the table and make our voice heard. Our aim should be to safeguard peace and development for all, and to build a community with a shared future for mankind. This is also China’s proposal for handling those previously unforeseen major changes, and building a better world. This proposal, with China’s characteristics, conforms to the trend of the times, and embodies the inclusivity and advanced nature of China’s diplomatic thought. It has been written into the White Paper of China’s National Defense in the New Era and approved by a UN resolution.

As quoted in *Tao Te Ching*, cultivated everywhere under heaven, integrity is vast. China must not only clarify what kind of country it will

12 “President Xi Jinping Attends the Opening Ceremony of the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations and Delivers a Keynote Speech,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, May 15, 2019, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/zyxw/t1663685.shtml>.

be, but what kind of world it wants. We will have a more just, inclusive, and balanced international order if we promote shared prosperity and combine China's national rejuvenation and the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. "If history is any guide, realizing the Chinese Dream will bring opportunities rather than threats, peace rather than turmoil to the world. It will help the world make progress in various aspects."¹³

With the profound interdependence between China and the world, a stable, open, and prosperous China will bring more benefits to the world. Xi said the CCP seeks happiness for the Chinese people and will also contribute to world peace and human progress. We need to keep in mind both our domestic and international imperatives, develop a global perspective and grand strategic ambitions, care about the whole world while loving the motherland, so as to shape a new kind of international relations, and build a community with a shared future for mankind.¹⁴ Running our own affairs well is in itself a contribution to the world's peaceful development. In the 1990s when the financial crisis broke out in East Asia, China did not pursue a beggar-thy-neighbor policy, but instead adopted a responsible monetary policy with no competitive devaluation, leading the East Asian nations out of danger and further advancing regional economic integration and cooperation. During the 2008 global financial crisis, China again stepped forward and played a key role in saving the world economy. China's contribution to the world's economic growth has averaged over 30 percent over the past decade, making it a veritable engine and stabilizer of the global economy.

Unlike the rise of other major powers, China, which is building itself into a powerful modern country, always sticks to the path of peaceful development, advocates win-win cooperation instead of confrontation and

13 "President Xi Jinping Speaks at the 50th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between China and France," *China News*, March 28, 2014, <http://www.chinanews.com/gn/2014/03-28/6002841.shtml>.

14 "President Xi Jinping Delivers a Keynote Speech at the 2017 Meeting of Envoys," *Xinhua*, December 28, 2017, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2017-12/28/c_1122181743.htm.

domination, forges partnerships through “dialogue rather than confrontation and friendship rather than alliance,” actively shoulders more responsibilities, seeks more converging interests, and pursues mutual benefits and win-win results. “China has never exhausted all resources to build up military power, has never taken the initiative to wage war abroad, and has never occupied an inch of foreign territory. With regard to the disputes between China and other countries on the issues of territory, rights and interests, we have always insisted on the peaceful settlement through dialogue and negotiations, without resorting to the use or threat of force.”¹⁵ Such political declarations and practices have enhanced the sense of responsibility and the transparency of China’s foreign policy, and are conducive to increasing trust and defusing doubts. So far, China is the second largest contributor to the United Nations regular and peacekeeping budget. It is also the biggest peacekeeping force contributor among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. It joined the UN Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS) and took the lead in building a peacekeeping standby force of 8,000 troops. China’s peacekeepers have actively participated in international peacekeeping, counter-terrorism and humanitarian assistance operations. They have helped war-torn countries to rebuild their homes, and effectively safeguard regional and world peace.

China will eliminate absolute poverty as currently defined by 2020, and build a moderately prosperous society in all respects, which is a landmark accomplishment in human history. A world without poverty has been the aspiration of all peoples for thousands of years. As the world’s most populous developing country, China has lifted 800 million people out of poverty. This is a magnificent achievement for China’s poverty alleviation, and also a strong boost for the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. China’s historic elimination of absolute poverty will set an example for the international community, and bring confidence and hope to developing countries.

15 “Wang Yi: China Is Upright on the International Stage,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, October 23, 2019, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjbzhd/t1709955.shtml>.

Summit Diplomacy and Host Diplomacy

As the highest form of state-to-state interaction, summit diplomacy has a pivotal and irreplaceable strategic value.¹⁶ Thanks to its special level, popularity, strong penetration, and rapid dissemination, summit diplomacy takes the lead in high-level exchanges, plays a unique role in improving strategic communication and coordination between China and other countries, and showcases a fresh look at the major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. President Xi Jinping works as the chief architect of China's diplomacy and is involved in planning and conducting summit diplomacy. These major diplomatic events have deepened the world's understanding of China, enhanced China's profile and influence, and facilitated the solution to many global problems. Xi's leadership and charisma has earned him and China many friends coming from a variety of diverse social and cultural backgrounds.¹⁷ Since the 18th CPC National Congress, President Xi has made nearly 40 visits to 71 countries, leading China's diplomacy to carry forward its traditions, promote innovation, and advance the country's diplomatic agenda in a comprehensive, multi-level, multi-faceted way.¹⁸

Confucius said: "Good government obtains when those who are near are made happy, and those who are far off are attracted." In recent years, China has hosted major events such as the Boao Forum for Asia annual conferences, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the G20 Hangzhou summit, the BRICS Xiamen summit, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Qingdao summit, the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, the Conference on

16 "Foreign Minister Wang Yi Answers Questions from Chinese and Foreign Journalists on China's Foreign Policy and Foreign Relations," *Xinhua*, March 8, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/mrdx/2018-03/09/c_137027036.htm.

17 *Ibid.*

18 "Interview with Deputy Foreign Minister Le Yucheng," *Xinhua*, January 6, 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2020-01/06/c_1125428301.htm.

Dialogue of Asian Civilizations (CDAC), and the Shanghai International Import Expo. Diplomatic events hosted by China have become an important platform for China's diplomacy, which enable China to maintain the initiative in setting the agenda, better socializing its interests, and creating an international forum for China's proposals. The success of the series of diplomatic events at home allows the world to better understand international metropolises such as Beijing and Shanghai, and also China's other places including Boao, Hangzhou, Xiamen, Qingdao, Wuhan, and Chengdu. These high-profile events have boosted the international visibility of the host cities, and given the international community a straightforward glimpse of China's all-round development.

Whether it be relations with major powers, neighboring countries, developing countries, or multilateral events, the major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics continues to gain new ground, which is closely related to the strategic guidance and solid advancement of summit diplomacy and high-profile diplomatic events at home. President Xi once said to Chinese diplomatic envoys that "Diplomacy is for me a matter of great concern and to which I am most dedicated." In September 2018, President Xi hosted nearly 70 bilateral and multilateral events during the Beijing summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), including nearly ten multilateral meetings and eight state events. Xi also held bilateral meetings with all African leaders attending the FOCAC summit, setting a record for Chinese leaders in their meetings with foreign leaders in China. The highlights of summit diplomacy across the border and high-profile diplomatic events at home have contributed to closer relations between China and the world.

In 2019, President Xi made seven foreign visits to 12 countries, and attended many high-profile diplomatic events at home including the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations, the Beijing International Horticultural Exhibition, the second China International Import Expo, and the eighth China-Japan-ROK trilateral summit. Xi delivered a keynote speech at the

opening ceremony of the second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, and chaired a leaders' roundtable. Emphasizing the high-quality direction of Belt and Road cooperation, Xi launched a renewed round of joint Belt and Road construction. In the face of such rhetoric as the "clash of civilizations," CDAC, by exploring the driving force of different countries and ethnic groups toward a community with a shared future for mankind from the perspective of civilization and national spirits, has won positive responses from Asian countries that attended the event and widespread attention from the international community. Xi explained the inherent logic between civilization and development, "diversity spurs interaction among civilizations, which in turn promotes mutual learning and their further development." He believed that we need to act in the following ways: first, we need to respect each other and treat each other as equals; second, we need to uphold the beauty of each civilization and the diversity of civilizations in the world; third, we need to stay open and inclusive and draw on each other's strengths; fourth, we need to advance with the times and explore new ground in development.

The year 2019 marks the 20th anniversary of China-ROK-Japan cooperation. The trilateral summit in Chengdu has pushed forward the tripartite cooperation. In his meetings with Japanese and ROK leaders, President Xi called for broadening consensus and strengthening cooperation to achieve mutual benefits and win-win results. On China-Japan relations, President Xi said: "In order to develop China-Japan ties in the new era, the two countries should first reach a clear strategic consensus. The two sides should take the overall situation into consideration, enhance communication and coordination on the basis of sharing mutual respect and seeking common ground while shelving differences, and make efforts to secure cooperation and mutual benefits. This should become the common strategic guidance for China-Japan relations in the new era."¹⁹

China safeguards multilateralism, upholds the international order

19 "President Xi Jinping Meets with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, December 23, 2019, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/zyxw/t1727165.shtml>.

based on international law, and stands on the right side of history. We value “combining learning with practice,” conform to the trend of the times, and promote high-quality development with high-level openness. According to the 19th CPC National Congress report, a new structure of all-out opening-up is quick in the making. China will open its door only wider to the world. Be it “going global” or “welcoming in,” China’s diplomacy is attracting the world’s attention. The summit diplomacy and diplomatic events at home complement each other with a multiplier effect. In President Xi’s 2020 New Year speech, he said: “I held meetings with many heads of state and government, sharing with them China’s proposals, promoting friendship and deepening consensus. Over the past year, a few more countries established diplomatic ties with China, making the number of countries having diplomatic relations with China reach 180. We have friends in every corner of the world.”²⁰ With summit diplomacy and host diplomacy, China has established a global partnership network and made remarkable results, establishing different forms of partnerships with 112 countries and international organizations.

Improving and Deepening China’s Diplomacy on All Fronts

It is an important part of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy to pursue all-round diplomacy, fully advance China’s friendly relations with other countries, and increase its involvement in global governance. With the changing international order, China’s diplomacy needs to advance all aspects of work in all dimensions and at all levels, yet without interfering with one another. The focus is to foster a framework of major-country relations featuring overall stability and balanced development. We should give strategic support to neighboring countries, maintain the fundamental role of developing countries in China’s all-round diplomacy, proactively carry out multilateral diplomacy, and improve our ability to manage complex

20 “President Xi Jinping Delivers New Year Speech,” *People’s Daily*, January 1, 2020, p.1.

situations.

China and Russia are each other's biggest neighbors. Both sides are furthering strategic connectivity and cementing strategic relations. Under the strategic guidance of President Xi and President Vladimir Putin, the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination has made great strides, delivering fruitful outcomes at the bilateral level and also acting as a stabilizer for world peace and security. In the new era, we should deepen the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination. "No matter how the external environment changes, China-Russia relations are always placed at the center of Chinese diplomacy, and China has an unwavering determination to deepen all-round cooperation with Russia. As the world is undergoing profound changes, the future of the two countries is closely connected. We should set no limits for our relations. There's no best, only better."²¹ The eastern route of China-Russia natural gas pipelines, an energy artery across the two countries, was launched in 2019. Russia promised to provide annually for 30 years 38 billion cubic meters of gas to China. The pipeline is a landmark project of deepening the bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era. In addition, the Tongjiang-Nizhnelenskoye cross-border railway bridge and the Heihe-Blagoveshchensk cross-border highway bridge were completed, ending a historical situation in which there was no cross-border bridge connection between China and Russia. On December 19, 2019, President Putin said at a press conference that the all-round strategic coordination between China and Russia is based on rock-solid mutual trust, which speaks volumes about the high-level, long-term and stable relationship between the two sides. In 2020, China and Russia will jointly celebrate the Year of Scientific and Technological Innovation and the 75th anniversary of World War II victory and the founding of the UN. The two sides will strengthen strategic coordination, enhance the integration of interests,

21 "Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Le Yucheng: China-Russia Relations at the Center of Chinese Diplomacy," *Xinhua*, November 26, 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2019-11/26/c_1125273507.html.

deepen traditional friendship, and make greater contributions to national development and rejuvenation as well as world stability and prosperity.²²

The China-EU relationship has remained stable. With more consensus than differences between the two sides, the China-EU cooperation for mutual benefits will continue to flourish and prosper. In a turbulent world, both China and the EU can find their common ground with regard to support for multilateralism, and opposition to unilateralism and protectionism. Despite existing differences, both sides believe that negotiation is the best policy. The EU's stable, independent, and positive China policy from the past to the future conforms to its fundamental interests. To maintain healthy and steady growth of China-EU all-round strategic partnership, strengthen communication, and deepen cooperation in various fields, the Chinese government has decided to establish a Special Representative of the Chinese Government on European Affairs, and strives to develop the China-EU partnerships for peace, growth, reform and civilization. China and Europe are partners, not rivals; and friends, not enemies. The year 2020 marks the 45th anniversary of China-EU diplomatic relations. China is prepared to strengthen high-level exchanges with Europe to jointly take the China-EU comprehensive strategic partnership to a new level. Working together, China and Europe can provide more stability to an otherwise uncertain world.²³ 2020 is a "year of Europe" for China's diplomacy. With two high-profile diplomatic events to be held, China-EU relations will reach a new height.

The building of a community with a shared future for mankind starts with the countries in the neighborhood. China will take forward relations with its neighbors in accordance with the principle of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness and the neighborhood policy of building friendship and partnership. To this end, China advocates and puts into practice the

22 "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang's Regular Press Conference on December 20, 2019," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, December 20, 2019, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/fyrbt_673021/jzhsl_673025/t1726539.shtml.

23 "Wang Yi: China and Europe Are Partners Not Rivals, Friends Not Enemies," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, December 23, 2019, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/wjbzhd/t1727159.shtml>.

building of an Asia-Pacific community with a shared future and a new vision of Asian security. China, Japan, and the ROK are important countries in East Asia, with more than US\$720 billion of trade volume among the three countries, and around US\$12 billion of mutual investment in 2018. With more than 30 million personnel exchanges in 2018, their cultural ties are getting stronger, and understanding and perception among the peoples are constantly deepened. The three countries, with a total population of 1.6 billion, account for 70 percent of the East Asian total. Their combined GDP, which stands at nearly US\$21 trillion, is nearly 90 percent of the East Asian economy.²⁴ According to the Trilateral Cooperation Vision for the Next Decade issued by the eighth trilateral summit in December 2019, China, Japan, and the ROK regard each other's development as opportunities; and they will synergize their development strategies and raise their cooperation to higher levels.²⁵ This will bring new opportunities to the negotiations on a trilateral free trade agreement. Stronger trilateral cooperation serves the common interests of the three countries and peoples and effectively drives regional integration process forward.

China also promotes solidarity and cooperation among developing countries. With President Xi's proposal to work with Africa for an even stronger China-Africa community with a shared future, the future of 1.4 billion Chinese people and more than 1.2 billion African people is closely connected. At the 2018 FOCAC Beijing summit, the two sides pool the strength of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with that of Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations to build a stronger China-Africa community with a shared future, setting a good example for building such a community for the whole mankind. China continues to enhance friendship and cooperation with Latin American and Caribbean countries, and promote a China-Latin America

24 "Chinese Premier Li Keqiang's Speech at the 8th China-Japan-ROK Meeting," *Xinhua*, December 25, 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/2019-12/25/c_1125384230.htm.

25 "Trilateral Cooperation Vision for the Next Decade (full text)," *Xinhua*, December 24, 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2019-12/24/c_1125383968.htm.

community with a shared future, which has led to encouraging results. With abundant driving force, the cooperation between China and other developing countries contributes to the world's peace and development.

China's proposal echoes globally. The Belt and Road Initiative originates with China but its opportunities belong to the world. Taking swift but steady steps, the BRI has become a new platform for international cooperation. With increasing international influence and attraction, it is the most popular public good in today's world. The first Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in 2017 upgraded the Chinese proposal to an international one. The second Belt and Road Forum focused on high-quality development, providing a transition from high-level planning to intensive and meticulous implementation. Pursuing open, green and clean cooperation, and following a high-standard, people-centered and sustainable approach, Belt and Road cooperation with partner countries is making continuous progress.

During President Xi's visit in March 2019, China and Italy signed a memorandum on Belt and Road construction. In November of the same year, China and ASEAN made a statement on the synergy of the BRI and the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025. During Xi's visit to Nepal, leaders of the two countries agreed to align the China-Nepal joint Belt and Road construction with Nepal's national development strategy of building itself into a land-linked country, and accelerate the building of the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network. By the end of October 2019, China had signed 197 documents on Belt and Road cooperation with 137 countries and 30 international organizations. Major progress has been made in building China-Laos, China-Thailand, and Hungary-Serbia Railways, and the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway, as well as port projects, including the Gwadar Port, the Hambantota Port, the Port of Piraeus, and the Khalifa Port. The China-Europe freight trains have made a total of nearly 20,000 trips.²⁶ According to a World Bank report,

26 "China-Europe Freight Trains Have Made a Total of Nearly 20, 000 Trips," *People's Daily*, November 16, 2019.

if fully implemented, the BRI can lift 32 million people from moderate poverty (living on less than US\$3.20 a day), increase trade by 6.2 percent for the world, 9.7 percent for economies along the routes, and increase global real income by 2.9 percent.²⁷ These facts are strong evidence that the BRI is a solution to the “trap of underdevelopment or no development” and the world’s unbalanced development.

To advance China’s all-round diplomatic agenda, we should take part in reforming the global governance system, and win international recognition for China’s proposal. Xi noted that China stays committed to the vision of global governance based on extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, resolutely opposes protectionism, and upholds the WTO-centered multilateral trading system. “I hope that the International Monetary Fund will continue to play an active role in the global trade agenda, maintain a fair and open global financial market and promote the development of the international order in a more just and rational direction,” Xi said.²⁸ China upholds the international system built around the United Nations, the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and widely recognized norms of international relations. It will adhere to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and encourage more countries to cooperate in combating climate change, so as to promote a fairer, more just and equitable global governance system.

China has further integrated itself into the world, because China advances within the current system. Building a community with a shared future for mankind is a proposal that fits the common value of all peoples, and represents a major innovation in cooperation mechanisms. In recent years, China has built new platforms such as the BRI and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, to help the idea of building a community with a shared future take root in practice. The beggar-thy-neighbor unilateralism and protectionism cannot stop the pace of economic

27 “World Bank Report: BRI Accelerates Poverty Reduction in Developing Countries,” *Xinhua*, June 19, 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com/2019-06/19/c_1124645501.htm.

28 “President Xi Jinping Meets with Visiting IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva.”

globalization. In the face of complicated challenges and expectations from the international community, China takes the initiative to shoulder more responsibilities and play a positive role. China has become a stabilizer in this age of turbulence.

Building the China-US Relations Featuring Win-Win Cooperation

The United States is the biggest external factor affecting China's development. Today, China-US relations have come to a crossroads again, because the relationship is often interpreted through the lens of a "Thucydides Trap." Some claim that China has ambitions to replace American global hegemony. They believe in the imminent prospect of a US-China war. But, this view seems to be too simplistic. It does not fit the facts nor the trend of the times.²⁹ As President Xi noted, the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation is by no means that of seeking hegemony. China does not intend to replace any power, rather, its aim is to regain the dignity and status it deserves.³⁰ We must not leap into a paradigm of power shift when looking at China-US relations, so that we can avoid that lingering shadow of conflict in our history, and embrace a brighter future for the bilateral relations.

According to the paradigm of power shift, the rising power is bound to challenge the existing international order and collide with the established power. But the opposite is true. Since the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008, China has impressed the world. Its contribution to the global economic growth has exceeded 30 percent over the past 10 years, demonstrating its positive role in handling crisis and stabilizing the world economy. China benefits more from maintaining the international order than challenging it; through it China can play a more positive role and receive international recognition more readily. The established power is, by

29 "Ruan Zongze: Looking beyond the Paradigm of Power Transition," *Global Times*, December 24, 2019.

30 "Xi Jinping Meets with Foreign Representatives Attending the 2019 Innovative Economic Forum," *Xinhua*, November 22, 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/2019-11/22/c_1125264342.htm.

contrast, the peace breaker. The United States' use of tariffs as a weapon and imposition of "maximum pressure" on multiple countries have made it a revisionist power.

China's rise within the current international order is sufficient to show that the relationship between China and the international order is never zero-sum or confrontational, but is mutually beneficial. So far, China has joined more than 500 international conventions, promoted joint construction of the BRI, and led the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, striving to create a new platform for the world economy. China's participation in the past and its contribution at present both indicate that China and the international community share a lot of common interests. The international order is not weakened by China, but has become more complete, authoritative, and legitimate because of China's efforts to democratize international relations, support multilateralism and free trade, and safeguard a peaceful and stable international order.

China adheres to the path of peaceful development based on mutual respect and win-win cooperation, and hopes for mutually beneficial cooperation with the world, including with the US. China and the US are becoming closer with intertwined interests in the economic globalization. China is the most peaceful major power. Since the founding of New China, it has never initiated wars or conflicts. After the end of the Cold War, it has concentrated all its efforts on development and then became the world's second largest economy. Today, China has lifted 1.4 billion people out of poverty, enjoys prosperity and progress, and has become the creator and contributor of the world's peaceful development. A stronger China must be a stronger partner in addressing global challenges. China has made achievements in dealing with challenges such as financial crises or global climate change. Actions speak louder than words.

For the enduring, steady growth of China-US relations, both sides should strengthen communication on fundamental and strategic issues. In a telephone conversation with US President Donald Trump, President Xi expressed his hope to "exchange views with the US side on fundamental issues concerning

the development of China-US relations.”³¹ The fundamental issues involve fostering mutual respect, finding common ground, managing differences, coexisting peacefully, and achieving win-win cooperation. Xi said that despite existing differences, China and the United States have highly integrated interests and extensive areas of cooperation, and they should not fall into so-called “traps” of conflict and confrontation, but should stick to mutual benefits and common development. Fundamentally, the essence of China-US economic and trade cooperation is mutual benefit and win-win results. With shared interests in many areas, China and the US should be partners. From China’s perspective, this implies that the China-US relationship must never become a zero-sum game and must offer a brighter future for both countries and the world. China does not agree with the rhetoric of “power shift” or the “Thucydides Trap.” “I harbor no hostility towards China and hope for better bilateral relations,” Trump said.³² Both sides agree to set the direction for bilateral ties in the coming period and agreed to advance a China-US relationship featuring coordination, cooperation and stability.

Despite recent setbacks in China-US relations, China still holds firm to building a bilateral relationship featuring win-win cooperation. Xi noted at a meeting with former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger: “At present, China-US relations are at a critical juncture facing some difficulties and challenges. Chinese traditional culture values ‘harmony in diversity’ and ‘first things first.’ The two countries should enhance their communication on strategic issues, avoid misunderstandings and misjudgments, and improve their mutual understanding. We should put the fundamental interests of the two peoples first, respect each other, and promote win-win cooperation, thereby keeping the bilateral ties on the right track.”³³ In fact, the future of China-US relations cannot solely be decided by either side. Both countries need to shoulder their historical responsibilities and make decisions that

31 “President Xi Jinping Has Phone Call with US President Donald Trump,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, June 18, 2019, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/zyxw/t1673344.shtml>.

32 *Ibid.*

33 “Xi Jinping Meets with Former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger,” *Xinhua*, November 22, 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/leaders/2019-11/22/c_1125263893.htm.

stand the test of time.

If China and America disengage from each other, the world will be more turbulent, which is not in the interests of either side or the world community. Most countries adopt a balancing act between the two great powers, and they do not want to take sides. Leaders from Malaysia, Singapore and other countries all agreed that the US should face up to China's rise, and stop suppressing China or forcing other countries to make unwilling choices. In the era of globalization when the interests of different countries are intertwined, there are different groups of interests on specific issues. In fact, American allies do not follow the US blindly, because the American policy preferences sometimes do not represent their interests. There are also objective and rational voices in the United States, who believe that China's rise does not mean America's decline. "China is not the enemy of the US." America should not blame China for its own problems. Former Speaker of the US House of Representatives Newt Gingrich wrote in his new book *Trump vs. China: Facing America's Greatest Threat*, that most of America's problems are not China's fault but its own. Jeffrey Sachs, a professor at Columbia University, wrote, "China is not the source of our economic problems - corporate greed is."

With converging interests, China and the United States stand to benefit from cooperation and will lose from confrontation. There are no "free riders" nor are there losers in the bilateral relations. Both sides win. In different historical periods, China-US relations have been motivated by different forces; however, both sides can always find their shared goal of win-win cooperation. During the Cold War, China and the US became closer in opposition to a "common threat," and as a result the US received an unprecedented strategic dividend. After that, the two countries fostered good relations in pursuing "common development," and the US enjoyed a golden period of growth. In the face of the financial crisis, the two sides worked together and demonstrated the spirit of cooperation and coordination. Today, they should shoulder the "common responsibility" for the world's peaceful development and create a new chapter of history. Adhering to the

principles of coordination, cooperation and stability in bilateral ties is exactly the very public goods China and the United States can jointly provide for the world. As President Xi stressed, the economic and trade cooperation between the two countries has made significant contributions to the stability and development of China-US relations and the advancement of the world economy. As modern economy and modern technologies integrate the world as a whole, the interests of China and the United States have become more intertwined with each other, which makes some differences in cooperation inevitable. As long as both sides maintain the main trend of China-US economic and trade cooperation featuring mutual benefits and win-win outcomes, and always respect each other's national dignity, sovereignty and core interests, they will overcome difficulties on the road to progress, and push forward their economic and trade ties under new historical conditions to benefit the two countries and peoples.³⁴

As a Chinese poem goes, the mountain is more beautiful when the cloud comes, and the mountain remains picturesque when the cloud is gone. The China-US relations are one of the most important bilateral relations in the world. The two economies account for around 40 percent of the world's economy and one quarter of the world's population. This relationship therefore has decisive influence on the international order. If the US continued to regard China as a "strategic rival," this would undermine mutual trust between the two countries, lead to an economic shock to the world, and severely destabilize the international situation; and the impact would be enduring and complicated. The new changes in China-US relations are also part of the "profound changes unseen in a century." Given that the future of the bilateral relations must not be defined as "new Cold War" or even as "decoupling," China will undertake a great struggle and firmly safeguard its sovereignty, security, and development interests. On the other hand, China has proactively proposed building a new type of major-power relations with the US, defined by no conflict, no confrontation, mutual

34 "President Xi Jinping Speaks with US President Donald Trump on the Phone," *Xinhua*, December 21, 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2019-12/21/c_1125371565.htm.

respect and win-win cooperation. It aims at avoiding the paradigm of power shift, breaking the “tragedy of great power politics,” and pursuing a path of peaceful coexistence and mutual benefits for China and the US.

Conclusion

The past is not gone, yet the future is already here. Amid the drastic interaction between the international situation and China’s new era, we have witnessed profound changes in the international community and are confronted with unprecedented opportunities and challenges of realizing the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. “The risks and challenges facing us will only become greater and sometimes there will come tempestuous waves beyond our imagination. The struggles facing us are not temporary, but rather long-term. They will at least accompany us through the entire process of realizing China’s second centenary goal.”³⁵ We should be confident and well prepared for potential adversities and worst-case scenarios. Maintaining a fighting spirit and strengthening the ability to struggle is a must. We need to safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests, maintain the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, and oppose any external force interfering in our internal affairs.

China will take a path of her own and will never pursue development at the expense of others’ interests. It will not “import” a foreign model, nor “export” the Chinese model. We should develop a good grasp of the theoretical and practical significance and the essence of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, enhance the “Four Consciousnesses,” strengthen the “Four Confidences,” and ensure the “Two Upholds.” We will meet challenges head on and turn risks into opportunities, so as to open new chapters of the major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics and create a friendly environment for fulfilling the Chinese Dream. 🇨🇳

35 “President Xi Jinping Speaks at the Opening Ceremony of the Training for Young and Middle-Aged Cadres at the CPC Central Party School (National Academy of Governance),” *Xinhua*, September 3, 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com//2019-09/03/c_1124956081.htm.