

Xi Jinping's Strategic Thought Guiding Chinese Diplomacy

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China's peaceful development, since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, has entered a new historical stage at a time when the pattern of international development continues to undergo complex and profound adjustments. With a broad international vision and a deep-rooted sense of national responsibility, President Xi Jinping has coordinated domestic and international situations, accurately grasped the historical position of and direction forward for China's development, and clearly stated that China should "conduct diplomacy with a salient Chinese feature."¹ Committed to implementing the diplomatic philosophy of peace, development, and win-win cooperation, major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics has gradually formed a series of strategic, forward-looking and targeted diplomatic ideas and policies, and created a new situation in which China's relations with other countries move forward in an all-round way.

Historic Responsibilities Connecting the Past and the Future

Since the founding of the People's Republic, China's diplomacy has gradually evolved from an embryonic form to maturity and sophistication. Over several historical periods of exploration and accumulated experience, transformation and innovation has been steadily realized on the basis of that heritage, forming now the major-power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics.

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1 "The Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs was Held in Beijing," November 29, 2014, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1215680.shtml.

Mao Zedong's diplomatic thought laid the foundation for the New China's diplomacy. The diplomatic work of the Communist Party of China began in the Yan'an period. After the birth of New China, in order to defend the hard-won independence and freedom of the People's Republic, Chairman Mao Zedong applied the principle of "independence and self-reliance" to foreign affairs which laid the foundation for contemporary Chinese diplomacy. Under the guidance of Mao Zedong's diplomatic thought, the New China's diplomacy moved forward with great courage amidst all changes in the international situation. The decision of "leaning toward one side" safeguarded national independence and laid the foundation for domestic construction. The "One Line" strategic adjustment later eased the grim situation that confronted national security, where China faced enemies both in front and in the rear. The "Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence" jointly proposed by Premier Zhou Enlai and representatives of developing countries has been widely endorsed and abided by in the international community and has become the basic criterion for China's foreign relations.

Deng Xiaoping's diplomatic theory laid out the blueprint for China's diplomacy since reform and opening up. In the early 1980s, the international situation and the development tasks facing China both witnessed significant changes. In particular, the focus of domestic work turned to the socialist modernization drive. In this context, Comrade Deng Xiaoping launched another major adjustment in China's diplomacy and introduced the "independent foreign policy of peace." Its purpose was to safeguard world peace, oppose hegemonism, promote common development, and create a long-lasting peaceful and stable international and regional environment for China's socialist modernization drive. Since then, under the guidance of Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thinking of the "Three Represents" and the Scientific Concept of Development, the independent foreign policy of peace, together with the diplomatic strategy of keeping a low profile while shouldering due responsibilities, has withstood the major test of the collapse of the bipolar model and the drastic changes of the international situation at the turn of the century, and has won a valuable period of strategic opportunity for



Chinese President Xi Jinping delivers a keynote speech, entitled “Enhanced Partnership for Greater Momentum of Growth,” at the 2016 APEC CEO Summit in Lima, Peru on November 19.

the peaceful development of the country.

Xi Jinping’s diplomatic strategic thought is leading the major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. In the first decade of the 21st century, the international situation continues to experience significant and profound changes. With the unabated momentum of its peaceful development and rise, China’s total economic output has jumped to the second place in the world, becoming a milestone in the history of the world. China’s “new life as an ancient country” is faced with two totally unprecedented developments: first, it is close to the center of the world stage; second, it is approaching its goal of the great national rejuvenation.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, China’s diplomacy is once again standing at a new historic starting point. Xi Jinping clearly bears in mind China’s roots and the reason why the nation started its mission, and has inherited and

developed in an innovative manner the strategic thinking of China's diplomacy since the founding of New China, particularly after the reform and opening up. Xi has pointed out that "In our long-term practice, we have proposed and insisted on the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, established and implemented the independent foreign policy of peace, solemnly promised the world that we would never seek hegemony or expansion, and stressed that China will always be a staunch force for world peace. These are the principles we must unswervingly stick to, and they can never be shaken."²

At present, China is in the transition from a regional power to a global power, during which the definition and scope of China's national interests has changed and expanded. The continued growth of its comprehensive national strength and international status has made China an important force in the evolution of the global landscape. The world is also curious about the direction of China's diplomacy. President Xi has comprehensively analyzed the trend of the times and the changes in the international and domestic situations as well as China's tasks, pointed out with great vision the historic direction of China's diplomacy, and has laid out under the new situation the guidelines, basic principles, strategic objectives and major tasks of China's foreign affairs, which is encapsulated in "holding high the banner of peace, development and win-win cooperation, pursuing China's overall domestic and international interests and its development and security priorities in a balanced way, focusing on the overriding goal of peaceful development and national renewal, upholding China's sovereignty, security and development interests, fostering a more enabling international environment for peaceful development and maintaining and sustaining the important period of strategic opportunity for China's development," so as to "ensure the realization of the 'two centenary goals' and the Chinese dream of the great renewal of the Chinese nation."³

2 "Better Coordinating Domestic and International Situations and Strengthening Foundations for Peaceful Development," *People's Daily*, January 30, 2013.

3 The "two centenary goals" are respectively doubling the 2010 GDP and per capita income of urban and rural residents and finishing the building of a society of initial prosperity in all respects when the CPC celebrates its centenary, and turning China into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious when the People's Republic of China marks its centenary. See "The Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs was Held in Beijing."

The goals of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics are firm and clear: first, to be responsible for national rejuvenation, and second, to contribute to human progress. The clear connection between China's own development and the common development of the world not only makes Chinese diplomacy stand in the forefront of the trend of the times, but also enables it to occupy the high ground of international morality and order.

National Dream with a Global Vision

“Feet on the soil of our motherland; our nation's hope on our shoulder.” These lyrics are quite appropriate to describe the reason for the diplomatic strategic thought of President Xi. Formed against the historical backdrop of a complicated and profound adjustment of the international situation, the major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics is deeply rooted in the vast land of China and the thousands of years of its national bond. Its historic mission is to serve the grand goal of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation in an all-round way, and contribute China's strength and wisdom to world peace and human development.

Xi Jinping has put forward and expounded upon the Chinese Dream of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, which has well summarized the historical aspirations of the country and the people for over thousands of years, while providing the spiritual driving force for national unity and progress in the new era. China has had a glorious history of an ancient civilization, and in modern times has had humiliation, followed by a journey of national revival. In 1894, Mr. Sun Yat-sen put forward the slogan of “the rejuvenation of China,” which has inspired the dedication and fighting of generations of Chinese people. Since the formation of the Communist Party of China, it has shouldered the great mission of leading the Chinese people to create a happy life and realize national rejuvenation. With profound ideas and historic responsibilities, the Chinese Dream is in line with the “Three-step” Strategy of Deng Xiaoping, which is aimed at completing the historic mission of the “two centenary goals.” To achieve this ambitious goal, the

Communist Party of China has led the whole Party and people of all ethnic groups to advance the “Four Comprehensives,” namely, to comprehensively build a moderately prosperous society, comprehensively deepen reform, comprehensively implement the rule of law, and comprehensively strengthen Party discipline.⁴

Guided by historical materialism and dialectical materialism, Xi Jinping’s diplomatic strategic thought is a natural result of a scientific, objective review of the development of world history and of China’s national conditions. “Mighty is the trend of the world; those who follow it will flourish, while those who act against it will perish.” The evolution of world history and the trend of international situation has three important implications. First, the law governing the rise and fall of great powers in world history shows that aggression and expansion by force will eventually end up in failure. The realization of the Chinese Dream cannot follow the path adopted by the Western powers characterized by overseas war and expansion. Rather, peaceful means is the only way. Second, with the background of globalization, China’s development has been inseparable from the world development, which means that the Chinese Dream cannot be realized without peaceful international environment and a stable international order. At the same time, the historic process in which China strives to realize its dream will also create more opportunities for other countries and better promote world peace and development. Therefore, while China’s development needs the world, the world’s prosperity and stability also needs China. Third, peace and development rely on and condition each other, and together they constitute an organic whole. Without peace, successful development is impossible. And there can be no durable peace without development. China must seize the valuable opportunity offered by the times and by history, manage its own affairs well, and with its growing comprehensive national strength, follow closely the path of peaceful development.

The realization of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the

4 “Advancing the ‘Four Comprehensives,’” *Qiushi*, Issue 1, 2015.

strategy of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics have inherent dialectical and unified relations. First, China and the rest of the world provide development opportunities for each other. “The world’s prosperity and stability is China’s opportunity while China’s development is an opportunity for the world.”⁵ Second, the opportunities of China and the rest of the world are intertwined. “The success of the path of peaceful development relies largely on our ability to promote the mutual cross-fertilization of China’s opportunities and those of the world, and to make progress through positive interaction and win-win cooperation between China and other countries.”⁶ Third, China should stay rooted in its own conditions while adopting a global perspective. “We should bear in mind our reality and unswervingly follow our own path. Meanwhile, a global perspective is necessary. We should combine more effectively domestic development and opening up, the development of China with that of the world, and the interests of the Chinese people with the common interests of the all mankind.”⁷ Finally, China should participate in world affairs and assume global responsibilities. “We should continue to expand mutually beneficial cooperation with other countries, participate in global affairs with a more positive attitude, work with other countries to cope with global challenges, and strive to make contributions to world development.”⁸

Diplomacy is an extension of domestic affairs. Major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics serves as a solemn declaration that China will unswervingly follow the road of peaceful development while demonstrating the positive significance of China’s development to the world. It has not only achieved a high degree of unification of China’s domestic and foreign policies under new historical conditions, but has also realized the organic integration of socialism with Chinese characteristics and peace and development, which

5 “Better Coordinating Domestic and International Situations and Strengthening Foundations for Peaceful Development.”

6 “Global Impression of President Xi Jinping’s First 100 Days,” *People’s Daily (Overseas Edition)*, February 22, 2013, p.1.

7 “Better Coordinating Domestic and International Situations and Strengthening Foundations for Peaceful Development.”

8 *Ibid.*

are the themes of our times. Under the guidance of the blueprint of the “Four Comprehensives” and the opening up strategy, major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics will take on the sacred mission of guaranteeing socialism with Chinese characteristics, peace and development.

Broad and Deep Strategic Outlook

When the baton of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics was historically passed to the new generation of central collective leadership with Comrade Xi Jinping as General Secretary, global political and economic structures were in a major period of change and adjustment. In the international environment around China, both positive and negative factors were on the rise.

In terms of the international political and security situations, the power balance has continued to favor the East rather than the West; the trend of world multi-polarization has become even more pronounced; emerging economies have been developing continuously; and the forces maintaining peace have continued to grow in the international community. The anxiety and alertness of the existing superpower has increased, and it has strengthened its guard against emerging powers which are feared may challenge its international status. The conflict between “unipolar” and “multipolar” continues. “Soft power” and “hard power” competition has intensified. With constant ups and downs, the international political and security environment has seen the emergence of destabilizing factors. In terms of world economic trend, with the unprecedented development of global trade, international finance, transnational production and information technology, members of the “global village” have become more and more economically interdependent. The idea of such interdependence has been more widely recognized, with economies actively seeking common interests in order to promote mutually beneficial cooperation. At the same time, the “double-edged sword” effect of economic globalization is still outstanding. With the global economic landscape continuing to be fragmented, issues of economic and financial

security have become a major concern of the international community. The downward pressure on the world economy has continued and the process of recovery has been difficult and tortuous. In terms of global governance, the need for sustainable development has been widely recognized by the international community. But the task of global governance remains arduous, and arguments about rule-making and world order have become more intense. Non-traditional security issues have become more prominent. Terrorism, separatism and extremism have caused regional instability from time to time. Environmental protection, climate change, refugee crises and disease prevention, among many others, have also attracted international attention. Concerning the external environment facing China, the country's commitment to peaceful development has enlarged its influence on global and regional affairs, which has been widely followed and in which lessons have been learned by the international community. This being said, the old international political and economic order still exists, and the international community's stereotypes about China are still deeply rooted, and have been difficult to uproot. With its neighboring countries, China has always pursued a policy of good neighborliness and friendship, which has enabled a generally stable friendship with them. However, in recent years, incidents in which some countries have violated China's territorial and maritime rights and interests have frequently occurred. Forces inside and outside these regions have gradually joined hands against China, both in overt and covert ways. The outbreak of intertwined old and new security issues has been more sudden and frequent.

With the existence of various conflicts and competition in international relations, actors vie with each other, and they find themselves at times collaborators, at other times contenders. The interdependence and competition of national interests has penetrated into all fields of international relations. Old and new conflicts are intertwined and emerge one after another, which has been a phenomenon throughout the development process of international relations. Against this backdrop, China, in the development of its diplomacy, must properly handle the problem of accurately identifying, firmly safeguarding and relentlessly expanding its core interests, important

interests and general interests, and further clarify the primary conflicts, the secondary conflicts, and the primary and secondary aspects of conflicts. To ascertain and grasp the essential elements and the objective laws of changes in international relations, the world view and methodology of historical and dialectical materialism must be adopted. A general picture must be kept in mind despite all the possible obstacles. In the face of a variety of intertwined conflicts and problems, we must stick to calm observation, objective analysis, overall consideration, an approach targeting the essence of a problem, and comprehensive policy-making. For one thing, we should use dialectical materialism to penetrate the surface phenomena of various issues, gain insight into their essence and inner connections, and grasp the pulse of the development of our times. For another, we need to adopt the viewpoint of historical materialism, recognize the development of world history, and accurately grasp the long-term trend and direction of the evolution of the world landscape. This is the only way for us to ensure that our domestic and foreign policies are in keeping with the times and with the trend of the world, and can lead the development of history.

Xi Jinping's diplomatic strategic thought has combined dialectical and historical materialism, and revealed the five "must fully estimate" and the five "more important to see" in the examination of international situation. First, while we must fully estimate the complexity of the development and evolution of the global structure, it is more important to see that the trend of world multi-polarization will not change. Second, while we must fully estimate the twists and turns of world economic adjustment, it is more important to see that the process of economic globalization will not change. Third, while we must fully estimate the sharpness of international conflicts and competition, it is more important to see that peace and development as themes of our times will not change. Fourth, while we must fully estimate that the competition for world order will be long-term, it is more important to see that the direction of the reform of the international system will not change. Fifth, while we must fully estimate the uncertainties in our surrounding environment, it is more important to see that the overall prosperity and stability of the Asia-Pacific

region will not change. Adopting this method to carry out an all-dimensional review of our world, it can be found that our international environment has four major features. First, today's world is a changing world. Second, new opportunities and challenges are emerging one after another. Third, the international system and order are undergoing sustained and in-depth adjustment. Fourth, global balance of power is witnessing in-depth changes toward the direction of peace and development. In this context, Xi Jinping has made a strategic judgment that China's development is still at an important period of strategic opportunities in which a great deal can be accomplished, and that China's biggest opportunity is to make itself stronger. Meanwhile, attention should be paid to various risks and challenges, turning crises into opportunities, and dangers into security.⁹

The broad and deep insight of Xi Jinping's diplomatic strategic thought has laid a solid theoretical foundation for the all-round development of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics.

Pioneering and Innovative Ideas

Xi Jinping has mapped out major strategies and actively promoted innovation in the development of the theory and practice concerning foreign affairs, with new creative ideas put forward one after another. At the same time, Xi has guided the top-level design, policy approaches and bottom line thinking of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in a comprehensive and balanced manner.

Deepening the strategic thought of peaceful development. Xi Jinping has deepened and developed the strategic thought of peaceful development, and given it new content and scope. Major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics has deepened and developed the core spirit of the "Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence" and upheld sovereign equality, common security, common development, win-win cooperation, inclusiveness and

9 "The Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs was Held in Beijing."

mutual learning, and fairness and justice.¹⁰

Major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics is aimed at promoting peace and development. Xi has pointed out that “China’s pursuit of peaceful development is not an act of expediency, still less diplomatic rhetoric. Rather, it is a conclusion we have reached based on an objective assessment of China’s history, its present and future. It represents confidence in thinking and readiness to practice it.”¹¹ “China will unswervingly follow the path of peaceful development. It is hoped that all countries in the world will pursue peaceful development, that countries and civilizations will carry out exchanges on an equal footing, learn from each other and achieve common progress and that all countries can make united efforts to build a harmonious world of enduring peace and common prosperity.”¹² That is to say, it is far from enough if only one country in the world follows the path of peaceful development. Only when all countries pursue this path, meet each other halfway with positive interactions on an equal footing, can all countries live with one another in peace and broaden the path of peaceful development. While China adheres to peaceful development, it will by no means give up its legitimate rights and interests nor sacrifice its core national interests.¹³ The new heights reached by such strategic thought regarding peaceful development has deepened our understanding of the laws governing international relations, which has not only expanded space for China to pursue its path of peaceful development, but has also given rise to new contributions to the theory and practice of the world’s peaceful development as a whole.

Promoting win-win cooperation. In the theory and practice of

10 “Carry Forward the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence to Build a Better World through Win-Win Cooperation,” June 28, 2014, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1170143.shtml.

11 “Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping President of the People’s Republic of China at the Körber Foundation,” March 28, 2014, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1148640.shtml.

12 “President Xi Jinping Stresses in Joint Interview with Media from BRICS Countries: China Will Unswervingly Follow the Path of Peaceful Development and Will Unswervingly Promote World Peace and Development,” March 19, 2013, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/xjpcf1_665694/t1023555.shtml.

13 “Xi Jinping: Never Sacrificing Core National Interests,” March 12, 2014, <http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2014/0312/c70731-24607620.html>.

international relations, many have upheld the old ideas of political realism, “zero-sum game” and “winner takes all.” However, with globalization gaining momentum, the interests of various countries are intertwined and integrated. Despite all the differences in political system, historical tradition and social culture, win-win cooperation represents the optimum interest of the international community. President Xi advocates the new type of international relations with “win-win cooperation” at the core, and calls for cooperation instead of confrontation, and win-win outcomes instead of “winner takes all.” He points out that “A country which pursues its own development, security and well-being must also let other countries pursue their development, security and well-being.”¹⁴ “Win-win cooperation” is a new idea that reflects the collaboration and interdependence among countries in the era of globalization, which is fundamentally different from the old mentality in the Cold War featuring the confrontation between the two major camps. To place “win-win cooperation” at the top of the national diplomatic banner, and expand it to a wide range of areas including politics, economy, security and culture is not only a refinement and development of China’s diplomatic practice, but also a positive innovation and major breakthrough in the traditional theory of international relations. In addition, this approach also conforms to the historical trend and direction of world peace, development and progress.

To place “win-win cooperation” at the top of the national diplomatic banner is a positive innovation and major breakthrough in the traditional theory of international relations.

Building partnerships. Even after the Cold War, zero-sum thinking has not disappeared. The phenomenon that countries ally with and draw lines between each other based on level of intimacy still exists, and their alliance strategies are becoming even more widespread. It is in itself a major pressing problem in international relations as to how to establish a relationship of

14 “Work Together to Maintain World Peace and Security,” July 7, 2012, <http://wcm.fmprc.gov.cn/pub/eng/wjdt/wshd/t951973.htm>.

cooperation between countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit that conforms to peace and development, the features of our times. Major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics is based on the firm belief that friends can be made worldwide even without establishing alliances. Like-minded friends can be good partners; friends that seek common ground while reserving differences can also be great partners.¹⁵ Major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics actively advocates “establishing partnership without alliance.” China believes that countries should work together to forge a “community of shared destiny” in which countries share with each other, and build a global partnership network characterized by win-win cooperation, inclusiveness and openness. Based on equality, peace and inclusiveness, the partnerships China upholds do not put emphasis on who assumes leadership or which camp a country belongs to. There are no imaginary enemies, and no third parties are targeted. Rejecting the Cold War mentality, this way of thinking has transcended traditional international relations which were characterized by alliance or confrontation.

Upholding the value of integrating friendship and interests. It is true that the development of international relations requires the search for common interests. However, interest-seeking cannot be narrowly interpreted mercenary. In international relations, interest is not the only pursuit; in addition to interest, there is also the value of friendship and brotherhood. One important feature of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics is integrating the values of friendship and interests. Xi Jinping said that “In international cooperation, we should attach importance to interests and attach more importance to morality... In international relations, we should properly handle the relationship between interests and morality. In politics we should uphold fairness and justice and adhere to treating each other equally. In economy we should persist in mutual benefits with win-win results and

15 “President Xi Jinping Delivers Keynote Speech at Opening Ceremony of APEC CEO Summit,” November 9, 2014, http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2014-11/09/c_1113174791.htm.

common development and abandon the obsolete notion of zero-sum.”¹⁶ In an international community where interests of different parties are intertwined, the rise of China’s soft power is best demonstrated by its understanding of international relations with a greater sense of inclusiveness, and its efforts to solve issues of global governance with the concept of global collaboration. Major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics implements the right concept of morality and interests, advocates justice and fairness politically, promotes cooperation and development economically, and upholds trust, brotherhood, justice and morality in international affairs. It has not only carried forward the traditional virtues and core values of the Chinese nation, but has also exerted positive and far-reaching influence on world peace and development as well as on harmony among civilizations.

Promoting the concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. In his first overseas visit as President of China, Xi Jinping expressed his new view on international security, such as “Peace, development, and win-win cooperation have become the trend of our times,” and “To keep up with the times, we cannot have ourselves physically living in the 21st century, but with a mindset belonging to the past, stalled in the old days of colonialism, and constrained by zero-sum Cold War mentality.” President Xi pointed out that “In the face of complex security threats, no country can go it alone and it is even worse if some countries are obsessed with military options. The only right choice is to achieve collective and common security through cooperation.”¹⁷ For the international and regional security issues, he believes that it is necessary to “advocate common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security in Asia.”¹⁸ Common security means respecting and ensuring the security of each and every country. Comprehensive security means upholding security in both

16 “President Xi Jinping Delivers an Important Speech in ROK’s Seoul National University,” July 9, 2014, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/xjpzxdhgjxgsfw/t1172436.shtml.

17 “Xi Jinping Calls for the Building of New Type of International Relations with Win-Win Cooperation at the Core in a Speech at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations,” March 23, 2013, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/xjpcfl_665694/t1024781.shtml.

18 “New Asian Security Concept for New Progress in Security Cooperation,” May 21, 2014, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1159951.shtml.

traditional and non-traditional fields. Cooperative security means promoting the security of both individual countries and the region as a whole through dialogue and cooperation. Sustainable security means that we need to focus on both development and security so that security would be durable. The Asian security concept has provided a new path for China to work with other Asian countries to safeguard regional security and build a “community of common destiny.” In the area of nuclear security, China advocates the concept of four “equal emphasis,” namely placing equal emphasis on development and security, on rights and obligations, on independent and collaborative efforts, and on treating symptoms and addressing causes. This concept has demonstrated China’s sense of responsibility as a major country, and has been widely endorsed by the international community.¹⁹

Building a “community of shared future” for humankind. In the 2015 annual meeting of the Boao Forum for Asia, President Xi Jinping delivered a keynote speech entitled “Towards a Community of Common Destiny and a New Future for Asia,” which brought forth the major concept of moving toward a community of common destiny for Asia and building a community of shared future for the mankind.²⁰ “The whole world shares the same winds and rains.” In the face of drastic changes in the international arena, countries need to assess the situation and trend, keep up with the times, and jointly create a more favorable international and regional order for both Asia and the world. In September 2015, Xi Jinping attended the 70th United Nations General Assembly in New York and gave an important speech entitled “Working Together to Create a New Mutually Beneficial Partnership and Community of Shared Future for Mankind.” Xi pointed out that “The world is going through a historical process of accelerated evolution. Peace, development, equality, justice, democracy and freedom are common values of all mankind.” To achieve the goal of creating the community of shared future,

19 “Statement by H.E. Xi Jinping President of the People’s Republic of China at the Nuclear Security Summit,” March 24, 2014, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1140583.shtml.

20 “Towards a Community of Common Destiny and A New Future for Asia,” March 28, 2015, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-03/29/c_134106145.htm.

Xi clearly set forth the overall approach featuring five inseparable aspects: 1. building partnerships in which countries treat each other as equals, engage in mutual consultation and show mutual understanding; 2. creating a security environment featuring fairness, justice, joint participation and shared benefits; 3. promoting open, innovative and inclusive development that benefits all; 4. increasing inter-civilization exchanges to promote harmony, inclusiveness and respect for differences; 5. building an ecosystem that puts Mother Nature and green development first.²¹ The concept of community of shared future for the mankind has served to integrate the development of China with that of the other countries, and closely connected the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation to the common progress of human society. It has become another important banner of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics.

Comprehensive Layout Combining Specific Areas and the Bigger Picture

Under the guidelines of “major countries as the key, neighboring countries as the priority, developing countries as the basis, and multilateral diplomacy as an important arena,” major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics takes all-round and multi-level consideration to make the “grand chessboard” of diplomacy more comprehensive and balanced.

Promoting the construction of a new type of major-country relationship. The report of the 18th CPC National Congress points out that China will improve and develop relations with developed countries, and promote the establishment of a long-term, stable, and healthy new type of major-country relationship. President Xi Jinping has set forth the initiative to build a new type of major-country relationship between China and the US, focusing on the important principles of “non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual respect, and win-win cooperation.” This new approach is designed to

21 “Working Together to Create a New Mutually Beneficial Partnership and Community of Shared Future for Mankind,” September 28, 2015, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/special/2015-11/28/c_134864551.htm.

make the two countries view each other's strategic intentions in an objective and rational way, respect each other's core interests and major concerns, take into account each other's interests and promote common development, so as to avoid falling into the "Thucydides' trap" as a new power rises. The two leaders have successfully held the Annenberg Retreat summit, the Yingtai night talk and the autumn White House meeting, which have enabled the two countries to enhance mutual trust, deepen cooperation, manage differences, and promote the joint building of a China-US new type of major-country relationship. China-Russia relations have maintained high standards and played a "strategic leading" role. The two heads of state signed the China-Russia Joint Statement on Win-win Cooperation and Deepening Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Coordination, and China-Russia Joint Statement on a New Stage of Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Coordination. Breakthrough progress has been made in energy, high-speed rail, aviation and aerospace, military industry, and finance. The two countries have shown mutual respect and coordinated closely in major international and regional issues, which has further consolidated the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination. China-EU cooperation has constantly opened up new prospects. President Xi Jinping paid a historic visit to Europe. Both sides have worked together to promote the four partnerships of peace, growth, reform and civilization, and have established the China-EU investment platform, and developed the China-EU 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation. Cooperation between China and European national, sub-regional as well as EU institutions has witnessed all-round and in-depth development. Chinese and European leaders have successfully exchanged visits, constantly opened up new areas of mutually beneficial and practical cooperation, and comprehensively deepened political, economic and trade, and cultural ties, shaping the strategic situation on which both China and the EU depend and helping each other to play a more prominent role in the global arena. With the official founding of the New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA), China's cooperation with BRICS countries and other emerging markets and major developing countries has scaled new heights.

Striving to stabilize and expand amicable relations with neighboring countries. The Asia-Pacific region is the shelter and foundation for the development and prosperity of China. In the first conference on the diplomatic work on neighboring countries since the founding of New China, President Xi Jinping stressed that “the basic tenet of diplomacy with neighbors is to treat them as friends and partners.”²²

He integrated the simple truth that “a close neighbor means more than a distant relative” into the guidelines for neighborhood diplomacy, and demonstrated China’s diplomatic approach of “amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness” with neighboring countries, and its distinct attitude and position of living in harmony with all neighboring countries.²³ With an inclusive approach and broad mind to benefit all neighbors, China proposes to adopt innovative cooperation models and build the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road with neighboring countries.²⁴ The Belt and Road, built of all, by all and for all, will become a great promoter for the construction of international and regional “communities of common destiny.” China has also proposed to set up the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Silk Road Fund, promoted the connectivity of infrastructure, and built economic land corridors and maritime cooperation pivots. A China-ASEAN cooperation framework has been established and enriched. With the launch of the five-year action plan and the progress of the Lancang-Mekong sub-regional cooperation, the relations between China and ASEAN have entered a new stage of development. The China–Pakistan all-weather strategic partnership of cooperation has been further consolidated with the progress of the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor. The strategic mutual trust between China and India has improved. China’s friendly relations with Nepal are continually

22 “Xi Jinping: China to Further Friendly Relations with Neighboring Countries,” October 26, 2013, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-10/26/c_125601680.htm.

23 “President Xi Jinping Delivers Keynote Speech at Opening Ceremony of APEC CEO Summit.”

24 “President Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech and Proposes to Build a Silk Road Economic Belt with Central Asian Countries,” September 7, 2013, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/xjpfwzysiesgjtflshzzfh_665686/t1076334.shtml; “President Xi Gives Speech to Indonesia’s Parliament,” October 2, 2013, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013xiapec/2013-10/02/content_17007915.htm.

developing. Its cooperation with South Asian countries has steadily deepened. China-Mongolia relations have been upgraded to a comprehensive strategic partnership. China has established strategic partnerships with all Central Asian countries, constantly deepening the foundations for pragmatic cooperation. Xi Jinping has comprehensively elaborated the concept of “community of common destiny” in the international arena, and further clarified the direction and goals of China’s relations with neighboring countries. Meanwhile, in order to solve difficult and hotspot issues around China’s borders, China has actively worked with all relevant parties to ease tensions in the Korean Peninsula. China and Japan have reached consensus on four principles to properly handle and improve bilateral relations. In the South China Sea issue, China firmly safeguards its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, and promotes the settlement of disputes through dialogue and negotiations with the relevant countries.

Strengthening the friendly cooperation with developing countries.

China’s relations with developing countries in Asia have been deepened, and relations with African and Latin American countries have also witnessed tremendous progress. President Xi Jinping has proposed to develop relations with Africa with “sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith.” First, in treating African friends, China will remain faithful. Second, in conducting cooperation with Africa, China will value real results. Third, in strengthening friendship with Africa, China will seek to cultivate kinship-like qualities in the relationship. Fourth, in addressing problems in cooperation with Africa, China will be sincere.²⁵ In his first state visit as President of China, President Xi Jinping paid visits to three countries of Africa, and met with over ten African national leaders in various venues. China co-sponsored the Johannesburg Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation with African countries. And the announcement of the ten major China-Africa cooperation plans has brought China-Africa cooperation to a new

25 “Xi Jinping Delivers a Speech at the Julius Nyerere International Convention Center in Tanzania,” March 25, 2013, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zzjg_663340/fzs_663828/gjlb_663832/3099_664224/3101_664228/t1025803.shtml.

height. After the Ebola outbreak, China immediately lent a helping hand to stricken African countries, fulfilling its duties as a responsible major country. President Xi Jinping visited several Latin American countries, and held bilateral meetings with a number of Caribbean countries. Xi announced the establishment of a China-CELAC comprehensive cooperative partnership based on equality, mutual benefit and common development. The two sides also officially launched the China-CELAC Forum to carry forward friendship, enhance mutual trust, promote cooperation, seek common development, and forge the new “five-in-one” structure of China-CELAC relations. These developments have enhanced the overall cooperation between China and Latin American and the Caribbean countries, and have extended China’s overall cooperation mechanisms with developing countries to include every region it should. China and Arab countries are committed to building a “1+2+3” new pattern of cooperation and bringing the China-Arab strategic cooperation featuring comprehensive cooperation and common development to a higher level. In terms of Pacific island countries with diplomatic ties with China, strategic partnerships featuring mutual respect and common development have been built based on equality and mutual benefit. The preparation and construction of the AIIB, which was promoted by China, has seen the active participation of a large number of countries. The work of the New Development Bank and Contingent Reserve Arrangement is also steadily advancing. The implementation of many initiatives and ideas with Chinese characteristics has vigorously promoted the progress of South-South relations as a whole.

Participating in and promoting multilateral diplomatic processes in an in-depth manner. President Xi Jinping attaches great importance to the significant role of international organizations such as the United Nations, expressed by China’s stance to continue to firmly support the work of the UN, and by the firm belief that the international community should uphold the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. China is committed to strengthening the role of the United Nations by adhering to political solutions in all conflicts, sticking to the goal of common development, and

upholding the UN to play its political and coordinating role.²⁶ China has actively participated in meetings of the UN and various other international organizations. It has not only played a unique role in guiding the direction of reforms of the international system, but also helped to increase the representation and the voice of emerging markets and developing countries in it. China has made positive contributions to a series of global issues, such as climate change and disease control. In hot issues such as Ukraine, Syria, Palestine and Israel, Afghanistan, South Sudan, and the Iranian and North Korean nuclear issues, China has upheld objective and fair positions, actively promoted ceasefire and negotiations, and played an important constructive role. President Xi Jinping has attended many times BRICS summits, and further improved the cooperation mechanism of the BRICS countries, which has served to inject a strong driving force for promoting a more just and rational international political and economic new order. As the host, China's successful arrangement of a number of multilateral diplomatic events, such as the Boao Forum for Asia, the CICA Shanghai Summit, and the APEC economic leaders' informal meeting, has left the distinctive marks of China for deepened international and regional cooperation. During the APEC meeting in Beijing, Xi called on jointly building a future-oriented Asia-Pacific partnership, and proposed to enhance comprehensive connectivity and infrastructure construction. Thus the historic process of developing an Asia-Pacific free trade area was officially launched. In 2015, the events commemorating the 70th anniversary of victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-fascist War were held in Beijing, which demonstrated China's important role in working with the international community to safeguard the post-war international order and world peace. President Xi Jinping has attended G20 summits many times, during which he called for safeguarding multilateral trading systems, and building a mutually beneficial and win-win global market. In September 2016, amidst the ups and downs of the world economy, China hosted the G20 Summit in Hangzhou.

26 "Xi: Political Solution Only Way to Address Hotspot Issues," May 19, 2014, http://www.gov.cn/english/2014-05/19/content_2682195.htm.

The Summit is the most important host-diplomacy event of the year, and also the most far-reaching in its influence among the summits held in China in recent years. President Xi, in the Summit's opening speech, stressed that the G20 must keep up with the changing times, fully honor its commitment, make joint efforts and deliver benefits to all as well as stick together as partners in meeting challenges.²⁷ Centering on the theme of "building an innovative, invigorated, interconnected and inclusive world economy," the Summit has witnessed China's special contributions in drawing up the blueprint for global economic recovery and bringing the world economy out of the doldrums.

Diplomatic Approach Integrating Hard and Soft Powers

Xi Jinping's thought on diplomatic strategies has combined internationally recognized diplomatic norms with the fine culture and tradition of China. It is both principle-based and highly flexible, and always adheres to the dialectical unity of these features, forming the style of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics that integrates hard and soft power.

Chinese style with grand vision and broad mind. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the implementation of Xi Jinping's diplomatic strategic thought has provided strong impetus for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and demonstrated distinct "Chinese characteristics" and "Chinese style."²⁸ These include: First, safeguarding peace. China will always be a builder of world peace and defender of the international order. It has not only developed itself through the existing peaceful environment, but also taken active steps and the initiative in managing and shaping an enabling environment for peaceful development. China determines its position and policy according to the right and wrong of things themselves, adheres to the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, promotes democracy in international

27 "Xi Jinping Chairs G20 Hangzhou Summit and Delivers an Opening Speech," September 4, 2016, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/XJPCXBZCESGJTLDRDSYCFHJCYGHD/t1395097.shtml.

28 "The Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs was Held in Beijing."

relations, believes that the fate of the world must be shared by the people of all countries, respects the right of people in all countries to choose their paths of development, opposes the Cold War mentality and the zero-sum game, advocates that all countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal members of the international community, and upholds fairness and

China has not only developed itself through the existing peaceful environment, but also taken active steps and the initiative in managing and shaping an enabling environment for peaceful development.

justice in international and regional affairs, speaking in particular for developing countries. Second, promoting cooperation. China has always been a contributor to global development. The development concepts of “innovation, coordination, green, openness and sharing” play a leading role in the development of the world today. China will unswervingly follow the path of peaceful development,

implement the basic policy of reform and opening up, build an open economy, enrich its common interests with other countries, expand complementary advantages and all-round cooperation, and create, with public products such as the Belt and Road Initiative, a more comprehensive, in-depth, and diverse international cooperation pattern. Third, promoting harmony. The Chinese nation always upholds the spirit of “unremitting self-improvement and social commitment” in self-cultivation and helping the world. The innovation and development of the philosophy of global governance cannot be separated from the absorption of outstanding achievements of various civilizations. Upholding the notion of harmony in diversity, the major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics is committed to respecting and protecting the diversity of civilizations and promoting communication, dialogue, inclusiveness, mutual learning, incorporation and harmonious co-existence among different civilizations in the world, so as to promote the ultimate formation of a community of common destiny for all mankind.

Far-sighted strategies and plans amidst complicated international situations. With great courage and vigor, the major-country diplomacy with

Chinese characteristics has greatly enhanced China's international influence. Some countries have deliberately trumpeted the "China threat" rhetoric making reference to historical cases where great powers ended up dominating the world. In this regard, Xi Jinping has responded to the hostile remarks with grace and humility, "The Chinese people don't have the gene for invasion and hegemony in their blood."²⁹ In view of the fact that some foreign countries have used power politics to undermine regional stability and interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, Xi Jinping has spoken out and argued with reason that "The international community should advocate the vision of comprehensive security, common security and cooperative security so as to turn our global village into a big stage for common development, rather than an arena where gladiators fight each other. And no one should be allowed to throw a region and even the whole world into chaos for selfish gains."³⁰ Xi Jinping has properly handled the dialectical and unified relationship between following the path of peaceful development and safeguarding the core interests of the country. He has promoted friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation in a way that has put people at ease, while daring to fight against hostile forces on issues of principle. He stresses that "The Chinese people do not believe in fallacy nor are we afraid of evil forces. Chinese people do not make trouble, but we are not cowards when involved in trouble. No foreign country should presume that we will engage in trade involving our core interests or expect us to swallow the bitter fruit of damage to our sovereignty, security and development interests."³¹ With regard to major issues concerning China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, Xi has always acted in a confident manner with long-term strategy in mind, and remained calm despite the drastic external changes. While China does not covet others' interests or envy others' development, it will never give up its legitimate rights and interests. China unswervingly

29 "Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping President of the People's Republic of China at China International Friendship Conference in Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the CPAFFC," May 15, 2014, <http://en.cpaffc.org.cn/content/details25-47426.html>.

30 "Working Together toward a Better Future for Asia and the World," April 7, 2013, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/boao_665692/t1030610.shtml.

31 "Xi Jinping Delivers Speech at 95th CPC Anniversary," July 1, 2016, <http://epc.people.com.cn/n1/2016/0702/c64093-28517655.html>.

insists on its bottom line, and adheres to the unity of maintaining stability and safeguarding national interests. Meanwhile, by innovatively adopting the late-mover strategy and planning big, China has effectively safeguarded its sovereign rights and interests and maintained regional stability.

Combining hard and soft approaches while believing in the greatest benevolence. The major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics has also demonstrated flexible diplomatic art in practice. When explaining China's peaceful policy to other countries, Xi often introduces his highly profound and suitable philosophical thinking. "Peace, like air and sunshine, is hardly noticed when people are benefiting from it. But none of us can live without it."³² To illustrate the idea of win-win cooperation, he borrowed from Chinese cultural classics and quoted the saying "All living things are nourished without injuring one another; all roads run parallel without interfering with one another."³³ In order to explain the relationship between interests and morality, he quoted the saying "A relationship based on interests is temporary while a relationship based on sincerity is enduring."³⁴ President Xi is also good at expounding his profound ideas in ways that are easy to understand. For example, when talking about the development path of the country, he said that "You will never know if the shoe fits unless you try it on."³⁵ When analyzing the China-US relations, he pointed out that "The vast Pacific Ocean has enough space to accommodate the two big nations of China and the US."³⁶ To introduce the benefits the Belt and Road Initiative will bring to countries along the routes, he said that "All countries are welcomed to board the train of China's development."³⁷ President Xi also pays attention to learning from and quoting

32 "Working Together Toward a Better Future for Asia and the World."

33 "Speech by H.E. Mr. Xi Jinping President of the People's Republic of China at the Meeting Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Establishment of China-France Diplomatic Relations," March 27, 2014, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1147894.shtml.

34 "President Xi Jinping Delivers an Important Speech in ROK's Seoul National University."

35 "Xi Jinping Calls for the Building of New Type of International Relations with Win-Win Cooperation at the Core in a Speech at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations."

36 "China, US Committed to Newly-Defined Ties," June 9, 2013, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013xivisit/2013-06/09/content_16595193.htm.

37 "Xi Jinping Delivers an Important Speech at the State Great Hural of Mongolia," August 22, 2014, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1185662.shtml.

sayings from other cultures. For example, “A large ship sails far,”³⁸ “With a source, a river runs deep,”³⁹ and “One who tries to blow out other’s oil lamp will get his beard on fire.”⁴⁰ These highly vivid comparisons have brought him closer to his listeners. Open-minded, honest, humble and generous, President Xi gives people a strong sense of affinity and trust. Whether in public speeches or private conversations, whether in congratulating on his counterpart’s birthday or trying football on the pitch, his personal charisma has become a catalyst for his wide network of friends. During the speech to the Australian Federal Parliament, Xi even joked that he should receive a certificate for his travels across the country.⁴¹ Such wisdom and humor have not only promoted friendship between the host and guest, but also vividly demonstrated China’s soft power as a major country.

“I will mount a long wind some day and break the heavy waves, and set my cloudy sail straight and bridge the deep, deep sea,” a Chinese poem goes. The diplomatic strategic thought laid out by President Xi Jinping has become the practical action guide for major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in the new era. The major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics is committed to peace, development and win-win cooperation. It entails historic responsibilities which have connected the past and the future, and expresses a national dream with a global vision, a broad and deep strategic outlook, pioneering and innovative ideas, a comprehensive layout combining specific areas and the bigger picture, and a diplomatic approach which integrates hard and soft powers. Although the journey will inevitably encounter many difficulties and obstacles, the ship of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics has charted a clear course to follow. And with great confidence and determination, it will continue to break waves and navigate forward. 🚢

38 “Xi Jinping Calls for the Building of New Type of International Relations with Win-Win Cooperation at the Core in a Speech at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations.”

39 “Commentary: Applause Testifies China-Africa Friendship, Brighter Future,” March 26, 2013, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2013-03/26/c_132263550.htm.

40 “New Asian Security Concept for New Progress in Security Cooperation.”

41 “Xi Calls Forum a ‘Milestone’,” November 20, 2014, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2014xiattendg20/2014-11/20/content_18944841.htm.