

CHAPTER 2

Harmonious World: The Conceived International Order in Framework of China's Foreign Affairs

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What will the world order be like in the 21st century? What role will China play in the process of shaping the future world order? How does China conceive the future world order? What will China do in the construction of the new world order? All these are hot issues throughout the world.¹ In the opening ceremony of the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 2007, Chinese President Hu Jintao made a working report entitled “To Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive for the Success of Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in all Respects.” At the conference of “standing at a new historical starting point,” the Chinese president put forward a proposition for building a harmonious world. How will this proposition influence the establishment and development of China's diplomacy? It could be argued that “harmonious world” is China's first conceptual illustration of a future world order, which not only embraces abundant concepts and theories, but is a concrete strategic design with maneuverability. This paper tries to expound the concept of “harmonious world” with its implication of China's diplomatic strategy and policy, and illuminate China's option of diplomatic strategies to shape the world order under the framework of “harmonious world.”

The Strategic Theory in China's Diplomacy

Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese government has put forward a series of theories and principles to guide Chinese diplomacy, most of which were aimed at handling threats and challenges of the time. Soon after the end of the Cold War, the Chinese government raised a proposition to build a just and rational international political and economic order, calling for the development of multipolarity of world structure. But until the end of the twentieth century, there had been no clear proposition to define the world order advocated by Chinese politicians

¹ G. John Ikenberry, “The Rise of China and the Future of the West: Can the Liberal System Survive?” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 1, January/February 2008.

and scholars. Since the reform and opening-up to the outside world, China has been constituting its foreign policies based on its domestic economic development and social stability. The U.S. scholars have predicted that for the next two decades, China's primary focus will remain internal, on its numerous domestic problems.² To some extent, the prediction is justified, but in the 21st century, China has gradually surpassed the internal-oriented diplomatic trend, beginning to take both domestic and foreign affairs into consideration.

During the first two decades of reform and opening-up, China had to maintain a peaceful international environment so that it could concentrate its energy on economic development. Entering into the 21st century, China realized that it has integrated very much into today's world and that its stability and development can be a positive influence on international society. On the one hand, China's development needs cooperation from other countries; on the other, the world's peaceful and prosperous processes need China's contributions. China is trying to promote a win-win structure to define its relations with other countries.³ Therefore, China has broadened its concern from domestic development to taking into account both internal and external affairs. The turning point was the Central Meeting on Foreign Affairs Work in August 2006 where President Hu Jintao stressed that China should take both domestic and international situations into consideration.⁴ He also pointed out that China must grasp the development direction from the mutual relations of international and domestic situations, make good use of development opportunities from the transformation of international and domestic conditions, create development conditions from the complementary advantages of international and domestic resources, and control the overall development situation from the combined actions of international and domestic factors.⁵ At the 17th National Congress of the CPC in October 2007, President Hu Jintao stated "China cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the world, nor can the world enjoy prosperity and stability without China," which showed that China has

² Evan S. Medeiros and M. Taylor Fravel, "China's New Diplomacy," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 6, November/December 2003.

³ Guo Jiping, "China's Peaceful Development and World's Common Prosperity," *Renmin Ribao* [*People's Daily*], March 31, 2006.

⁴ "China to Adhere to 'Mutual Benefits and Win-win' Strategy," http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2006-08/23/content_4999285.htm.

⁵ "Stick to the Path of Peaceful Development and Strive to Construct Harmonious World (Editorial)," *Renmin Ribao* [*People's Daily*], August 24, 2006.

already surpassed the stage of seeing the world from its own demands, and began to see itself from the international perspective.⁶

In the past, people questioned what kind of China could satisfy the demands of the world, but now people are thinking from the opposite angle—what kind of world does China want.⁷ Now that China is closely connected with the outside world, the Chinese leaders have to consider how China, together with other countries, can construct a just and rational world order. Therefore, the Chinese leaders started to examine Chinese diplomacy from the viewpoint of diplomatic strategy, explicitly proposed the following fundamental theories about the establishment of a world order, and put forward concrete principles to guide China's diplomatic practice.

Hu Jintao's wording report at the 17th Party Congress is an extremely rigorous document, penetratingly elaborating China's foreign policy; diplomatic principles, foreign affairs objectives and diplomatic strategy. President Hu said "the world today is undergoing tremendous changes and adjustments." And in the process, "historic changes have occurred in the relations between contemporary China and the rest of the world, resulting in ever closer interconnection between China's future and destiny and those of the world."⁸ Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi told news reporters during an interview that "President Hu's report at the 17th Party Congress operated from a strategically advantageous position, analyzed the current world situation which is transforming and adjusting, and elaborated the profound connotation of building a lasting and peaceful harmonious world of common prosperity. It is a solemn declaration of China's persistence in peaceful development, and set the direction for China's future diplomatic work."⁹ The following are the Chinese government's key theories and viewpoints on diplomacy.

After the Cold War, the Chinese government has held the view that "peace and

⁶ Hu Jintao, "Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive for New Victories in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects (Report to the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China on Oct. 15, 2007)," *Renmin Ribao [People's Daily]*, October 25, 2007.

⁷ Forum Economique Mondial 2007—What Kind of World Does China Want?" <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=7684548835999883725>.

⁸ Hu Jintao, op. cit., *Renmin Ribao [People's Daily]*, October 25, 2007.

⁹ "Yang Jiechi: Important Announcement of China's Policy for the Peaceful and Development Road," http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2007-10/15/content_6887008.htm.

development remain the main themes of the present era, and the pursuit of peace, development and cooperation has become an irresistible trend of the times.” Chinese scholars stated that the modern world has experienced several eras: the era of colonial expansion, the era of imperialism, and the era of war and revolution. Today’s “era of peace and development” is a new stage in the history of international relations. US President Bush once believed that the Iranian nuclear threat could cause the eruption of “the third world war,”¹⁰ and even the American Enterprise Institute’s scholar predicted the so-called “fourth world war” (if the Cold War can be regarded as the third world war).¹¹ Russian President Putin also suggested that Russia should carry on comprehensive military exercises to prepare for possible major war and invasion. But, the Chinese government believes that in the foreseeable future, the chances of global war breaking out are slim, especially during the worldwide financial crisis and the world economic slowdown when major nations and regions of the world are all paying great attention to enhancing comprehensive national strength. In this case, international competition is a benign contest of comprehensive national strength.

In the era of peace and development, the overall international situation is stable. The progress toward a multipolar world is irreversible, economic globalization is developing in depth, and the scientific and technological revolution is gathering momentum. Global and regional cooperation is in full swing, and countries are increasingly interdependent. The international balance of power is changing in favor of the maintenance of world peace, and the overall international situation is stable. But many problems still exist; world peace and development are still confronted with numerous difficulties and challenges. Based upon Hu Jintao’s argument, “the world remains far from tranquil. Hegemonism and power politics still exist, local conflicts and hotspot issues keep emerging, imbalances in the world economy are worsening, the North-South gap is widening, and traditional and nontraditional threats to security are intertwined.” In the contemporary international situation, historic changes have occurred in the relations between contemporary China and the rest of the world, resulting in an ever closer interconnection between China’s future and destiny and those of the world. Therefore, in diplomacy, whatever changes take

¹⁰ Bush Administration War Plans Directed against Iran,” September 16, 2007, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=6792-73k>.

¹¹ Norman Podhoretz, *World War IV: The Long Struggle Against Islamofascism* (New York: Knopf Publishing Group, 2008).

place in the international situation, the Chinese government and people will always hold high the banner of peace, development and cooperation, pursue an independent foreign policy of peace, safeguard China's interests in terms of sovereignty, security and development, and uphold its foreign policy purposes of maintaining world peace and promoting common development. "To this end, all countries should uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, observe international law and universally recognized norms of international relations, and promote democracy, harmony, collaboration and win-win solutions in international relations." China will carry on the new localization in the international community from two angles. The localization may be illustrated by two terms; "share" and "win-win." To share is "to share opportunities for development and rise to challenges together." China's stability decides regional and world stability, and China's development brings opportunity for local and world development (the new engine for world economy). Win-win means "China will unswervingly follow a win-win strategy of opening up."¹² In the report at the 17th Party Congress, the term win-win was mentioned four times. China will unswervingly follow a win-win strategy of opening up to jointly create a peaceful and stable regional environment featuring equality, mutual trust and win-win cooperation; to promote democracy, harmony, collaboration and win-win solutions in international relations; and to work together to advance economic globalization in the direction of balanced development, shared benefits and win-win progress.

After the Cold War, there was a certain period where games were played between various kinds of big powers, but now the traditional political pattern of power politics needs to be changed. How should the future international order be constructed? The Chinese government has raised its own proposition: the concept of a "Harmonious World." In 2004, the Chinese government set the concept of a harmonious society as the strategic macro-goal of the nation's development, in order to conceptualize the ideal of building a comprehensively prosperous society. This was a very important concept, and also the ideal of the Chinese people which will be realized through joint efforts within the entire nation. The strategic concept of "building up a harmonious society" was first mentioned at the fourth session of the 16th Party's Congress in September 2004. It became the core of the governing idea of China, and also the logical starting point for designing the future world order. The concept of harmonious

¹² Hu Jintao, op. cit., *Renmin Ribao* [People's Daily], October 25, 2007.

world is the extension of harmonious society in the international community.¹³ On September 15, 2005, President Hu Jintao made a speech entitled “Strive to Construct Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity” at the summit meeting of the United Nations 60th anniversary, where he officially put forward the proposition of building up a new world order.¹⁴ To be exact, the harmonious world means:

“Politically, all countries should respect each other and conduct consultations on an equal footing in a common endeavor to promote democracy in international relations. Economically, they should cooperate with each other, draw on each other’s strengths and work together to advance economic globalization in the direction of balanced development, shared benefits and win-win progress. Culturally, they should learn from each other in the spirit of seeking common ground while shelving differences, respect the diversity of the world, and make joint efforts to advance human civilization. In the area of security, they should trust each other, strengthen cooperation, settle international disputes by peaceful means rather than by war, and work together to safeguard peace and stability in the world. On environmental issues, they should assist and cooperate with each other in conservation efforts to take good care of the Earth, the only home of human beings.”

The idea of “harmonious world” has become a strategic conception of constructing a new world order through diplomatic effort.¹⁵ “Harmonious world,” being the development of an independent foreign policy of peace to a higher level, has become the major item in the three ideas of the Chinese government; peace, harmony and win-win, and it clearly declares to the outside world China’s resolution to peaceful development. It was for the world’s universal benefit that China put forward the world order concept, and China has been carrying out multi-directional work with flexibility and sophistication for the purpose of realizing this strategic concept in its diplomacy.¹⁶ Generally speaking, “harmonious world” is a conceptive indication of the diplomatic strategy theory, and the Chinese government has strived for the realization of this idea

¹³ “Central Foreign Affairs Meeting Held in Beijing, Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao Made Significant Speeches,” *Renmin Ribao* [People’s Daily], August 24, 2006.

¹⁴ “Hu Jintao’s Speech at the Summit Meeting of the United Nations 60th Anniversary,” September 16, 2005, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/zxxx/t212365.htm>.

¹⁵ Qin Yaqing, “Harmonious World: A New Concept in China’s Diplomacy,” *Lilun Cankao* [Theory Reference], No. 5, 2007, pp. 22-23.

¹⁶ Evan S. Medeiros and M. Taylor Fravel, op. cit.

in the frame of China's foreign relations from three levels, namely to establish bilateral partnership relations, to promote the integration process with regional cooperation and to build up a framework of global networks with interregional coordination. The following part will further analyze this idea from three aspects.

Partnership Diplomacy: The Building of Partnership Strategy Framework

Bilateral relations between countries are the basic content of international relations, and also the focus of China's foreign relations. Since the end of the Cold War, a prominent characteristic of Chinese diplomacy has been "non-enemy diplomacy." In today's world, there is not a single country which China sees with hostility. It is a unique period in China's diplomatic history. The Chinese government has carried out multi-directional cooperation with all kinds of countries in the world, including developed countries, developing countries and neighboring countries. All the cooperation is realized in the frame of constructing multi-level "partnership."

"Partner" means collaborator or partner in joint undertakings, who takes risks and receives benefits together. In China's traditional culture, the word "partner" originated from a kind of ancient military system, in which ten soldiers shared one oven and were called "fire partners" or people in the same military compound. Later, the word was extended to mean companion, thus forming the word "partner."¹⁷ Obviously, the meaning of "partner" is interlinked in Chinese and foreign cultures. "Partnership" then refers to interrelation between "partners." And in international relations, "partnership" refers to coordination and cooperation in relations that are established for seeking common interest between nations. Therefore, partnership countries should: (1) never treat each other with hostility, which is the premise of establishing partnership relations; (2) share common ground, which is the foundation for the existence of partnership relations; (3) have a desire for cooperation for common interests, which is the motive power of the establishment of partnership relations; and (4) adopt practical measures to develop interrelations, which is the manifestation of partnership relations. In brief, this kind of partnership requests that neither side take

¹⁷ Su Hao, "The 'Partnership' Frame in China's Foreign Affairs," *Shijie Zhishi [World Knowledge]*, Vol. 5, 2000.

the other party as the enemy, both sides treat each other with equality and respect, never interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, seek common political and economic interest, maintain and advance the development of bilateral relations, and coordinate and cooperate in international affairs.¹⁸

Whatever partnerships they might be, they all share the following essential characteristics: (1) these are new type of relations between nations, rather than military alliances; (2) the nations peacefully solve differences and conflicts existing between them through consultation and dialogue; (3) they are not allied to counter a third country; (4) they help each other to establish normal relations with a third country; and (5) they both look to the future and are oriented to the new century. It is undoubtedly a new type of relations between nations, defined with the partner relationship of neither alliance nor hostility and differentiated with the relations such as alliance, hostility or confrontation during the Cold War period and before.

The stability of the international order requires inter-coordination and cooperation between big powers which play vital roles in international relations. The Chinese government has made a judgment about the international pattern. The tendency toward a multi-polar world is irreversible. Therefore, in the international community between those realistic and latent powers which may display "polarity" functions, a "great power concert" frame should be established, thus forming strategic stability in the global scope. To realize the strategic stability, partnership must be established between big powers. Therefore, the Chinese government is determined to continue to strengthen strategic dialogue, enhance mutual trust, deepen cooperation and properly manage differences to promote long-term, stable and sound development of bilateral relations with developed countries. The establishment of strategic partnerships between big powers requires the arrangement of certain kinds of mechanisms. First, leaders of both countries need to state clearly the establishment of the partnership, which is often realized by making a manifesto or other joint documents during exchange visits. Second, leaders of both countries make regular exchange visits. Third, both countries establish meeting mechanisms between heads of state or heads of government, like the Chinese and Russian premiers' regular meeting mechanism.

¹⁸ Su Hao, "The Partnership Relations in China's Foreign Affairs in the 1990s," *Kua Shiji de Zhongguo Waijiao* [Cross-century Chinese Diplomacy] (Beijing: World Knowledge Press, 2000), p. 78.

Fourth, both countries establish strategic dialogue mechanisms, like the Chinese and Indian strategic dialogue.¹⁹ China and America are also holding the “Sino-US Economic Dialogue” once a year, with Chinese Vice-Premier and American Secretary of the Treasury as representatives, which is called a factual “strategic dialogue” by the Chinese side. Fifth, both countries coordinate standpoint. Close strategic partners coordinate standpoints and policies concerning the international issues of mutual interest through communication and consultation. “Partnership” refers, in a normal way, to the relations established between China and other big powers, but with the passage of time, “partnership” developed and extended into normal and stable relations between China and other countries. In Chinese foreign relations, the attributes used to modify a “partnership” often decide the status and degree of development of relations between China and these countries.

Roughly, Chinese diplomatic “partnership” can be divided into four levels. The first level, “friendly cooperative relations” was the beginning of establishing normal relations with other countries in the post-Cold War period. Since the early 1990s, China has started to establish and develop normal friendships and cooperative relations with many countries. China and North Korea have been maintaining a close relationship as such for many years. To maintain stable reciprocity, China and its peripheral countries declared clearly “good-neighborly and cooperative relations” in the 1990s, which included the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Burma and Mongolia. Meanwhile, China also restored and developed normal relations with other Asian nations as well as African, European, Latin American nations on the basis of friendship and cooperation, including Australia, Turkey, Algeria, Morocco, Yugoslavia, Romania and Italy. Theoretically speaking, China never takes any country as an enemy, and may establish friendship and cooperation with all other countries on the basis of “the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.” However, to some big nations, “cooperation” means a certain type of stable relationship of mutual respect and mutual benefit. For instance, the “cooperation relations” between China and the United States since early this century, and the “strategic mutual benefit relationship” between China and Japan are both good illustrations for stable relations and space for

¹⁹ On December 21, 2007, Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi met with the visiting Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee who came to attend the third Sino-Indian Strategic Dialogue, see <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/zxxx/t392250.htm>.

further development. So it is safe to say that “friendship and cooperation relation” is a kind of normal relationship in China’s diplomacy.

As for the second level, China laid stress on promoting “friendship and cooperation” with countries of more geographical importance. When establishing and developing relations with these developing countries, China usually defined this relationship as “good neighborly partnership,” while for other developing countries, China deepened mutual relations on the basis of “friendship and cooperation.” Since the late 1990s, China has developed “good-neighborly partnerships” with Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal and some countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. This type of partnership has a geopolitical color, which emphasizes friendship and cooperation between neighborly countries to promote mutual development. China has also regarded friendship and cooperation as the basis of establishing mutual relations with many other Asian, European, African and Latin American countries. China has founded “friendly and cooperative partnerships” with Uzbekistan, Poland, Hungary, Jamaica, and Fiji. For most developing countries, China establishing “friendly and cooperative partnerships” with them symbolizes the stability of mutual relations, which is a basic kind of partnership in China’s diplomacy.

At the third level of “comprehensive partnership relations,” China has founded “comprehensive partnerships” on the basis of friendship and cooperation with countries of important status in various regions in the world. The comprehensive partnership stresses the comprehensiveness of bilateral cooperation, including multi-directional cooperation in politics, economy, trade, security, culture and other fields. On the one hand, it is because bilateral relations do not have the capability of surmounting the bilateral domain and influencing the region and even the world; on the other, it is because bilateral relations have a big influence on the region and even the world, but for certain realistic reasons, both sides restrict the relationship to the bilateral scope. Examples of the former include the relationship between China and Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Chile, and Peru, while the latter includes the relationships between China and some big nations in Western Europe before establishing a strategic partnership. By the end of 2008, nations which had established comprehensive cooperation with China include: South Korea, Romania, Croatia, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Peru, Chile, Ethiopia and others, most of which are of medium size and are quite influential in their respective regions. China has set up multi-directional and multi-

domain cooperative partnerships with those countries. “Comprehensive cooperative partnership” has the twofold meaning in the frame of China’s foreign relations: on the one hand, it is a kind of mature partnership; on the other hand, it indicates basic cooperation between big powers. Therefore, it can be said that this kind of relationship laid the foundation for further development of close bilateral relations of friendship and cooperation.

The fourth level, “strategic partnership,” is the highest level of partnership framework constructed in China’s diplomacy. As mentioned above, relations between big powers decide the structure of international politics, so maintaining good relations between big powers helps to form a stable international strategic order. This level of partnership is of the most significance in the construction of China’s foreign relations framework in the post-Cold War era. The establishment of strategic partnerships started with the confirmation of a strategic partnership between China and Brazil during President Jiang Zemin’s visit to Brazil in November 1993. Establishing a strategic partnership between China and Brazil, both great developing nations, symbolized the maturity of bilateral relations, which is because the significance of “South-South Cooperation” between China and Brazil has far surpassed the category of bilateral relations. Several years later, China and Russia established partnership at the strategic level in 1996, and clearly defined it as “strategic coordination partnership of equality, trust and aimed at the next century.” The strategic partnership emphasized “coordination” because both China and Russia are important and influential nations, and are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. China and Russia strengthened cooperation in international and regional issues, influencing the global politics and the development of a new international pattern. Soon afterwards, China and America also founded a “constructive strategic partnership” in the late 1990s. It is clarified as “constructive” because of the development stages of Sino-US relations. Entering into the 21st century, China established strategic partnerships with more nations. The relationship between China and the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece are greatly promoted and defined as “comprehensive strategic partnerships,” among which China and Germany’s relations are determined as “strategic partnership with global responsibility,” showing that bilateral relations between and the responsibilities of the two nations are of great global significance. As of March 2008, nations (or international organizations) that had established strategic relations with China include: Russia, the European Union, France, England,

Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Indonesia, India, Kazakhstan, Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina, Mexico and others. Although the relations are named differently, they all embrace a core concept—"strategic partnership." It needs to be pointed out that the "strategic partnership" between China and Russia is inter-coordinating to a certain degree due to the fact that China and Russia have similar strategic benefits in many domains. The relations between China and the US have experienced some changes. In November 1997, both nations decided to "be committed to establishing a Sino-US constructive and strategic partnership."²⁰ Afterwards, bilateral relations were defined as "cooperation relations" after a period of twists and turns. In fact, China, from the macroscopic angle, still regards America as a partner in handling many international affairs. Therefore, China and America communicate and cooperate on many important global issues through a series of strategic dialogue platforms. China and Japan's relations also experienced fluctuation. In 1998, China and Japan made a joint declaration that both countries would establish a "friendly and cooperative partnership oriented towards peace and development." After a period of "political coldness but economic warmth," China and Japan are determined to maintain a stable "strategic relationship for mutual benefit" and maintain room for escalation of their relations in the years to come.

Partnership Framework of China's Foreign Relations



The "partnership" framework the Chinese government established in its foreign relations is not only the definition of the relationships between China and other

²⁰ "China and the US Made a Joint Communiqué," *Renmin Ribao* [People's Daily], October 31, 1997.

countries, but also China's diplomatic effort to establish a stable and coordinated international pattern.

Four Circle Diplomacy: Promoting Asia's Regional Integration

Since the turn of the century, the Chinese government has made two basic judgments on trends in the development of international relations, namely the globalization of international relations and the integration of regional cooperation. Regional integration is the foundation of globalization, while globalization is the impetus for regional integration. In line with the major tendencies of the development of international relations, the Chinese government actively participated in the development of Asia's integration, and took the process as an important option for China's diplomatic strategies. China is determined to construct a cooperative, stable and prosperous Asia through positive diplomatic efforts, and by exercising special influence with its special location in the center of Asia.

In the early 1990s, the Chinese government proposed the regional strategic conception, "keeping a foothold on the Asia-Pacific region and maintaining the stability of the surrounding area," which laid emphasis on building a good secure environment around China, thus enabling the Chinese government to concentrate on internal economic development. Since the late 1990s, the Chinese government gradually formed a strategic plan to integrate China into Asia by promoting regional cooperation. The report on the 16th National Congress of the CPC explicitly put forward China's Asian diplomatic guideline as "good-neighborly relationship and partnerships with the neighbors."²¹ This marked huge changes in China's strategic objectives. In the past, China strived to build a good surrounding environment to facilitate China's domestic economic development. Today, China emphasizes promotion of regional cooperation to realize mutual benefit and win-win relationships within the region. The goal of regional cooperation is to realize "regional integration," for which President Hu Jintao pointed out in his report on the 17th National Congress of the CPC that "China will unswervingly follow a win-win strategy of opening-up. We will continue to contribute to regional and global development through our own development, and expand the

²¹ "Build a Well-off Society in an All-Round Way and Create a New Situation in Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics—Jiang Zemin's Report at 16th Party Congress," November 8, 2002.

areas where our interests meet with those of various sides.” He also stressed that “we will continue to follow the foreign policy of friendship and partnership, strengthen good-neighborly relations and practical cooperation, and energetically engage in regional cooperation in order to jointly create a peaceful, stable regional environment featuring equality, mutual trust and win-win cooperation.”²² For this purpose, the Chinese government is positively advancing Asian regional integration from four directions, which can be called “four circles diplomacy.”

An important focus of China's Asian diplomatic strategy is on advancing East Asian integration. Since the late 1990s, the East Asian regional cooperation advanced rapidly, and China followed the principle of “opening-up, tolerating, and complementing each other's strengths” guided by the theory of “open regionalism.”²³ The regional cooperation framework “ASEAN+3” established by the East Asian nations in 1997, is the main channel of the East Asian integration process. In this framework, there are three “10+1” coordination and cooperation arrangements among China, Japan, Korea and ASEAN, the sub-regional arrangement of ASEAN's political and economic coordination, and the cooperation design among the three northeastern nations China, Japan and Korea. Moreover, the “Greater Mekong Subregional Cooperation” framework and the Pan-Tonkin Bay cooperation arrangement are also important mechanisms to deepen East Asian cooperation.²⁴ The Chinese government believes that the mechanism developments, such as “10+3” and the “10+1” cooperation between ASEAN and China-Japan-Korea trilateral cooperation respectively, are “all regional forum and cooperation mechanisms for realizing East Asia's peace, stability, development and prosperity. They all have distinctive features and unique advantages, and are also mutually interdependent and inter-complementary.”²⁵ The realization of the East Asian regional cooperation integration and the construction of the East Asian community will facilitate a stable, prosperous and harmonious East Asia, and finally lay a good foundation for establishing a stable international order in

²² Hu Jintao, op. cit., *Renmin Ribao* [People's Daily], October 25, 2007.

²³ Su Hao, “Nature of East Asian Regionalism: A Chinese Perspective,” Zhang Yun-ling, ed., *East Asian Regionalism: Trend and Response* (Beijing: World Affairs Press, 2005).

²⁴ Su Hao, “The Preliminary Construction of Regional Cooperation Mechanism in the East Asian Integration,” Zhu Liqun and Wang Fan, eds., *The East Asian Regional Cooperation and Sino-US Relationship* (Beijing: World Knowledge Press, 2006).

²⁵ “The Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi's Address at the Conference among Foreign Ministers of ASEAN, China, Japan and Korea,” <http://news.cctv.com/china/20070731/117106.shtml>.

the Asia-Pacific region. In the advancement of East Asian cooperation, the Chinese government has taken a series of practical and feasible measures to enthusiastically propel the establishment of the East Asian regional cooperation mechanism. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao pointed out at the 10th “10+3 Summit Meeting” that “China remains committed to East Asian cooperation and will work with other countries to promote peace and development and build an East Asia of peace, prosperity and harmony.”²⁶ The Chinese government, abiding by the foreign policies of “building good-neighborly relationships and partnerships with our neighbors” and “establishing good-neighborly relations and helping with our neighboring countries’ prosperity and peace,” is playing a vital role in advancing East Asian regional integration through a series of multilateral cooperative arrangements for mutual benefits at various levels in East Asia.

After the end of the Cold War, it was of vital importance for security and economic development to the west of China to form a peaceful and developing environment in Central Asia. China made a rational choice on its Central Asia diplomatic strategy, which is to advance Central Asian regional cooperation through regional multilateral cooperation. It was due to China’s positive participation that a Central Asian regional cooperation framework was officially established. In 1996, China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan established a summit meeting in Shanghai to discuss and solve the enhancement of military trust and disarmament in border areas, which is called the “Shanghai Five.” Along with the establishment of mutual trust and friendship across the boundary areas, the regional cooperation of Central Asia expanded gradually from the boundary problems to politics, security, diplomacy, economy, trade and other areas. On June 15, 2001, the heads of state of the “Shanghai Five” and Uzbekistan met in Shanghai again and declared the official founding of the “Shanghai Cooperation Organization.” This organization aims to strengthen mutual trust and good-neighborly friendship between various member nations; all the member states comply with the principles of mutual respect, noninterference in each other’s internal affairs, not using or threatening to use military force, and are committed to maintain and safeguard peace, security and stability in the region.²⁷

²⁶ Wen Jiabao, “Work Together to Build an East Asia of Peace, Prosperity and Harmony,” January 14, 2007,” <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t290180.htm>.

²⁷ “Declaration of the Establishment of Shanghai Cooperation Organization,” <http://www.sectso.org/CN/show.asp?id=100>.http://english.people.com.cn/200401/01/eng20040101_131678.shtml#message.

In 2007, the member states of the organization signed the “Treaty on Long-term Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation,” and further consolidated the friendly mutual trust and cooperation between China and the Central Asian nations.²⁸ The Chinese government set the “mutual security” concept as the basic instructive idea of the Shanghai Cooperative Organization (SCO), and has established security relationships of mutual trust, stability, peace and security with the Central Asian nations. China is determined to take this as the foundation and continue to expand this relationship to economics and trade, science and technology, culture and education, energy, transportation, environmental protection and other areas. In addition, China would like to welcome some South Asian and West Asian nations as observers to be engaged in the SCO’s process to extend its influence on maintaining Asia’s peace and development.

The northwest part of China is connected with South Asia, so the peace and development of South Asia are closely linked with China’s peripheral environment. At the beginning of this century, the South Asian nations started to inject new vitality into the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) founded in 1985 and promoted regional cooperation among the South Asian nations. SAARC is made up of eight member nations: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, Bhutan and Afghanistan. Its objective is to strengthen cooperation between the South Asian nations in the areas of politics, economics and others. At the 12th summit meeting of SAARC in Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, in January, 2004, the member countries decided on the principles and areas for comprehensive regional cooperation, and set a timetable for officially establishing a South Asian free trade zone by January 1, 2014, thus marking the beginning of South Asian regional integration.²⁹ A politically stable and economically booming South Asia certainly works to China’s benefit. It is China’s important diplomatic policy to keep the traditional friendship and cooperation with South Asian nations and then participate in South Asian regional cooperation. Therefore, China is willing to enhance cooperation with the South Asian nations for mutual benefit and work toward communal development. South

²⁸ Department of Policy Planning, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People’s Republic of China, *China’s Foreign Affairs 2008* (Beijing: World Affairs Press, 2008), p. 363.

²⁹ Wang Hongwei, “The Status Quo and Prospect of South Asian Regional Cooperation,” *Dangdai Yatai [Contemporary Asia-pacific Studies]*, Vol. 2, 2004; and Yang Yonghong, “The Development and Integration Conception of South Asian Regional Cooperation,” *Guoji Shangwu [International Business]*, Vol. 6, 2004.

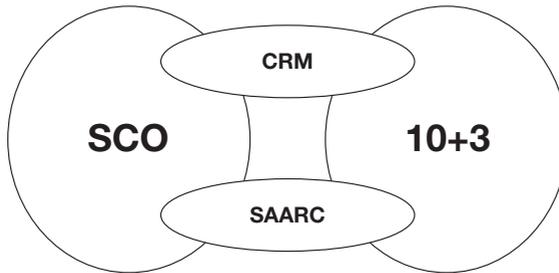
Asian regional cooperation brings a new turning point to China's development of relations with the South Asian nations. In December, 2004, the first China-South Asia Business Forum was held in Kunming, Yunnan Province of China, providing a new platform for carrying out dialogue, exchange and cooperation for the participants' mutual benefit. The "Dhaka Declaration" was signed at the 13th summit meeting of SAARC in November 2005. The declaration appointed China as an observer of the organization, which enabled China to attend the 14th summit meeting of SAARC in April 2007. Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing stated clearly at the meeting that it was an important component of the Chinese government's foreign policy to develop friendship and cooperation with SAARC and member nations of SAARC. The Chinese government is willing to continue advancing friendship and cooperation with the South Asian nations and SAARC, to actively participate in economic cooperation with the South Asian nations, and to promote the stability of political security in South Asia.³⁰ The cooperation with SAARC can not only build a favorable peripheral environment for China, but also facilitate China and the South Asian nations' joint effort to promote stability and the development of Asia.

During the Cold War period, China was menaced by direct threats for some time from the northern direction. Since the end of the Cold War, China and Russia have established a strategic partnership, which provided a peaceful environment for China's northern area, also bringing opportunities for China, Russia and Mongolia to carry out economic cooperation. Based on their strategic cooperative partnership, China and Russia worked together to promote Mongolia's economic development, thus promoting the regional development of North Asia. China has become Mongolia's biggest trade partner and investor, while Mongolia serves as a bridge and lubricant between China and Russia. China is trying to construct a cooperation framework among China, Russia and Mongolia (CRM) through diplomatic efforts at the national level and interstate exchanges between local governments. In August, 2005, the first session of "The Border Area Regional Cooperation Forum among China, Russia and Mongolia" was held in Ulaan Baatar, the capital of Mongolia. The annual forum has become an important platform for interstate regional cooperation among the three

³⁰ "Li Zhaoxing Stated That China Is Willing to Promote Cooperation with SAARC," http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2007-04/03/content_5930089.htm.

nations. And the three governments have decided to transform Inner Mongolia's Manzhouli and Hairlar from "the big channel" into "the big platform" of the trilateral regional cooperation among the three nations.³¹ China's three northeastern provinces and Inner Mongolia strengthened regional economic cooperation from geography, culture and economic cooperation, laying a good foundation for economy and trade cooperation between China and Russia, as well as China and Mongolia.³² At the provincial level, the Chinese local governments tried to cooperate with Russia and Mongolia to treat and maintain a good Northeast Asian ecosystem among the three nations.³³ Although the cooperation among China, Russia and Mongolia is regional in nature, the formation of this cooperation framework is playing an extremely vital role in building a secure and developing environment in northern China.

China's Diplomacy of Four Circles



The above mentioned design for China's multilateral regional cooperation in four circles of Asia is an interconnected and interlocked organic whole. To be specific, the "10+3" framework for East Asian regional cooperation and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization of the Central Asian cooperation mechanism are the major structures towards the east and the west; the two circles of China and SAARC in the southwest and the coordination among China, Russia and Mongolia in the north are playing a supplementary role to connect the major structures of the east and the west, thus forming an organic whole of four circles to integrate China into the Asian international

³¹ "Hulunbuir: To look at the World from the 'Turning Point'," *Neimenggu Ribao [Inner Mongolia Daily]*, August 2, 2007.

³² The Foreign Affairs Committee of CPPCC National Committee, "To Promote Inner-Mongolia to Open up to the North," *Renmin Ribao [People's Daily]*, December 28, 2007.

³³ "China, Russia and Mongolia Plan to Build Ecosystem Research Network and Share Achievements," <http://club.news.sohu.com/newsmain.php?c=101&b=Russia&a=29063&l=n>.

community. From a diplomatic point of view, China is based on the cooperation mechanism of the east and the west, and supports the coordination framework of the southwest and the north. On this basis, China can create favorable conditions for eventually realizing its concept of “Harmonious East Asia” and “Harmonious Asia” by building the four-link regional cooperation circles in China’s periphery.³⁴

Multilateral Diplomacy: The Construction of a Global Trans-Regional Cooperation Network

The construction of a future international order is no longer designed with the nation-state as fundamental actors. The tendency of international political and economic globalization and regional cooperation integration will result in countries surmounting international relations, thus establishing a network pattern of international politics, economy and culture with regions as the foundation. That is, the international order will become a network structure, which will be realized through “a process of widening and deepening political, economic, and societal interactions between international regions” guided by “inter-regionalism.”³⁵ The Chinese government is trying to make diplomatic efforts to advance the formation of an international network structure on a global scale. While propelling East Asian regional integration, China is also positively promoting the East Asian cooperation mechanism and all kinds of dialogue and cooperation mechanisms of other international regional cooperation organizations in the world. China is striving to construct a global inter-regional cooperation network, taking East Asia as the foundation and Asia as the backing, and with cooperation from various countries and regions all across the world. This network includes a series of cooperation frameworks among East Asian and other Asian nations, North American nations, European nations, African nations, and Latin American nations, thus forming a new international network order covering the whole world. Consequently, China will work together with various regional cooperation organizations to weave a worldwide

³⁴ Hu Jintao, “Work Together to Build Harmonious Asia of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity—Address at the 2nd Session of Leaders of the Member Nations of Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA),” June 17, 2006, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/ziliao/wzzt/2006zt/yaxinhua/t258398.htm>; and Wen Jiabao, “Build Jointly a Peaceful, Prosperous and Harmonious East Asia—Address at the 10th Session of Conference between ASEAN and Leaders of China, Japan and Korea,” <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/zxxx/t288992.htm>.

³⁵ Heiner Hanggi, Ralf Roloff and Jurgen Ruland, eds., *Interregionalism and International Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 18.

trans-regional and inter-regional cooperation network structure.³⁶ This section will briefly analyze the construction of a multi-dimensional regional cooperation network in the Asia-Pacific area, the Eurasian continent and other regions in the world.

Asia-Pacific Trans-regional Cooperation

China needs a coordination framework among great nations to guarantee the smooth advancement of East Asian regional cooperation. This platform is the East Asian Summit, whose first session was held in December 2005 as a result of the joint efforts of all the East Asian nations. The East Asian Summit, a pan-East Asian platform to promote East Asian regional cooperation on a larger scale was established with the joint efforts of the member nations of the "10+3" East Asian cooperation framework and Australia, New Zealand and India. So far, three sessions of the East Asian Summit have been held, and at the conferences the participants positively and earnestly discussed East Asian regional cooperation, non-traditional security issues and global climate change. China is supportive of the status and function of the "East Asian Summit," and is actively participating in its development. China is also taking advantage of this platform to coordinate with great nations within and outside of the East Asian region about issues of common interest, thus making the summit an effective exterior guarantor for smooth regional cooperation in the East Asian area. As a platform among great powers to maintain and stabilize East Asian cooperation, the East Asian Summit makes it possible for nations outside of the region to share the achievements of economic development with East Asian nations. In the East Asian area, there has formed a twofold regional cooperation structure; the walnut model, with the "ASEAN+3" as the main channel of East Asian community building and the East Asian Summit as the big powers coordination framework.³⁷ Meanwhile, the "East Asian Summit" also connects the East Asian area with the South Pacific and South Asian regions, and has formed an inter-regional cooperation platform across the three regions.

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a trans-regional economic cooperation

³⁶ Liu Zongyi, "The Development of Inter-Regionalism and Its Influence on China," *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* [World Economy and Politics], Vol. 4, 2008, pp. 43-50.

³⁷ Su Hao, "The 'Walnut Model': The Structural Analysis of the Double Regional Cooperation of '10+3' and the 'East Asian Summit'," *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* [World Economy and Politics], Vol. 10, 2008.

mechanism for the whole Pacific rim. After almost twenty years' development, it has gradually evolved into one of the most important and highest level economic cooperation fora, and is playing an irreplaceable role in impelling the liberalization of regional trade and investment and strengthening economic and technological cooperation between member nations.³⁸ In November 1991, China officially joined APEC as a sovereign state, as did Chinese Taipei and Hong Kong as local economies. All the member nations of the "10+3" East Asian cooperation are members of APEC. Therefore, all the countries on both sides of the Pacific Ocean can meet together to discuss cooperation, trade, and the exchange of investment, technology and personnel around the Pacific. This helps to realize exchanges and cooperation between nations of different levels of economic development and economic systems. It also connects East Asia with some South American nations and forms a trans-regional cooperation platform covering the entire Pacific rim. The Chinese government regards APEC as the main platform for the developing countries in the East Asia to carry out economic and technical cooperation at the official level with the developed countries in the Asia-Pacific region. It is also an effective institution for China's bilateral and multilateral coordination with other nations of the Pacific rim.

Asian Inter-regional Cooperation

The East Asian nations have established some inter-regional cooperation platforms and mechanisms with other nations and organizations in Asia, among which the Asia Cooperation Dialogue is the most important one. This concept was first put forward by then Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in 2001, and was supported by the major countries in various areas of Asia, including China. In 2002, at the first session of the foreign ministers meeting for the cooperation dialogue, the Asia Cooperation Dialogue mechanism, an official cooperation and dialogue institution oriented toward all of Asia, was officially established. The Asia Cooperation Dialogue is an informal and non-organizational forum, and is open to all Asian nations, covering East Asia, South Asia, West Asia and Central Asia. Its main purpose is to integrate the existing sub-regional cooperation in Asia, and to promote dialogue and cooperation in the Asian continent. In June 2004, at the 3rd session of the foreign ministers meeting held in Qingdao, China, the participating countries signed the "Asia Cooperation Declaration," agreeing to cooperate in economy, society, culture and other areas in

³⁸ "About APEC," http://www.apec.org/apec/about_apec.html.

hopes of building a better homeland together.³⁹ Due to the multiple characteristics of Asia, the foreign ministers conference of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue put the pan-Asian cooperation concept into practice and has made positive progress.⁴⁰

The Asia Cooperation Dialogue focuses on economic cooperation, while the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) pays great attention to enhancing trust and resolving doubts in Asia's security. The idea of establishing the multilateral forum of CICA was first raised by the Kazakhstani president Nazarbayev. Its major purpose is to build an effective and comprehensive security guarantee mechanism in the Asian Continent. The Chinese government has always advocated that this proposal should be put into practice. In September 1999, the first session of ministers of foreign affairs level conference of CICA in Almaty was the milestone in the progress of CICA. The first summit of CICA was held in Almaty in June 2002, and the second was held four years later. At the meetings, all the participating countries reached widespread consensus on promoting mutual understanding and trust among Asian nations, and maintaining peace in Asia. The Chinese leaders stressed at the meetings that to efficiently and effectively handle the issues in Asia requires cooperation among all Asian nations and peoples of every country. China will unswervingly follow the path of peaceful development, and build a harmonious Asia of lasting peace and common prosperity with all Asian nations.⁴¹

The Asia-Middle East Dialogue Conference is an inter-regional cooperation mechanism between East Asia and the Middle East. The first session of the Asia-Middle East Dialogue Conference was held in Singapore from June 21 to 22, 2005, with the purpose of enhancing dialogue and cooperation in various fields between Asia and the Middle East. China appreciates and supports the Asia-Middle East Dialogue, and is willing to make its due contribution to promoting the healthy development of the Asia-Middle East Dialogue, strengthening the cooperation between Asia and the Middle East. At the second session of the Asia-Middle East Dialogue Conference in 2008, China put forward four suggestions to strengthen cooperation between the

³⁹ "Asia Cooperation Declaration: To Work together to Build a Better Homeland," http://www.qingdaonews.com/content/2004-06/22/content_3284635.htm.

⁴⁰ "Assistant Minister Zhai Jun Goes to Kazakhstan to Attend the 7th Session of the Foreign Ministers of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue," October 16, 2008, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/zxxx/t472125.htm>.

⁴¹ "Hu Jintao's Address on the 2nd Session of the Heads of States of CICA," <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2006-06-17/17309229765s.shtml>.

two areas, namely stability, solidarity, development and cooperation.⁴² This dialogue has become an effective platform of common development to carry out dialogue between cultures and religions, and to promote understanding and acceptance between different cultures and societies.⁴³ Moreover, in January 2004, China and the Middle East nations established the “Forum on China-Arab Countries Cooperation,” and published *The Declaration of the Forum on China-Arab Countries Cooperation*. The establishment of the Forum on China-Arab Countries Cooperation helped the founding and development of the Asia-Middle East Dialogue Conference.

Asia-European Interregional Cooperation

The interregional cooperation between the East Asian nations and the European Union, based on the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM), is a typical model for cooperation between different regions in the world. In March 1996, at the Asia-Europe Summit Meeting in Bangkok, capital of Thailand, the framework of the Asia-Europe relationship was established as the highest ranking and largest intergovernmental forum. The Asia-European Meeting serves as a multi-level and multi-domain cooperation arrangement, with meetings of heads of states, and meetings of ministers of foreign affairs, economy, finance and technology once every two years. In October 2008, the 7th session of the Asia-Europe Summit Meeting was held in Beijing, and the heads of states of the two regions decided to cooperate to tackle the global economic and financial crisis, promote dialogue between civilizations, and advance sustainable development. The Chinese government has always been supporting and participating in cooperation between Asia and Europe, and it is an important constituent in the Chinese foreign policy to strengthen and develop friendship and cooperation with Asian and European countries.⁴⁴ In addition, since April 1998, China has been holding regular meetings with European leaders, setting up a regular contact mechanism between China and national leaders of regional organizations. The meetings between Chinese and European leaders promoted close cooperation in global and bilateral issues between China and the European Union nations, and also

⁴² “Vice Minister Wang Yi Attended the 2nd Session of Ministerial-level Conference of the Asia-Middle East Dialogue,” April 7, 2008, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/zxxx/t422358.htm>.

⁴³ “Report of the Chairman: The Second Ministerial Meeting of the Asia-Middle East Dialogue (AMED II)—Partnership in Action Towards a Better Future,” Sharm El Sheikh, April 5-6, 2008, <http://app.amed.sg/internet/amed/amedIIChairRpt.asp>.

⁴⁴ Hu Jintao, “Asia and Europe should Cooperate for Common Prosperity,” <http://news.qq.com/a/20081024/002493.htm>.

deepened the cooperation connotations between Asia and Europe.

Interregional Cooperation between East Asia and Other Developing Areas

As early as the 1950s, China has been positively participating and impelling friendship and cooperation between Asia and Africa, and supporting the Asian and African developing nations to rise to the international stage as an independent emerging force. Entering into the 21st century, the Asian and African countries are determined to carry out the “Bandung Spirit,” and to promote the further development of cooperation between Asia and Africa. The Asian-African Subregional Organizations Conference (AAS), initiated by Indonesia and South Africa, was held in Bandung, Indonesia in July 2003, marking the establishment of an interregional cooperation institution across Asia and Africa. Fifty years later, in 2005, country leaders of Asia and Africa met in Indonesia again, showing their determination for close coordination and cooperation between the two continents. This meeting decided to take the Asia-African Conference as the new cooperation platform for strategic partnership between Asia and Africa, and published the “Declaration on New Strategic Partnership between Asia and Africa” to promote cooperation in three domains: political union, economic cooperation, and socio-cultural relations, between the two continents.⁴⁵ Asia-Africa cooperation is a good example of close, effective and comprehensive cooperation between different developing regions, following with South-South cooperation. China has not only played a vital role in promoting the Asian and African cooperation from the beginning to the end, but also hosted the Beijing Summit of China-African Cooperation in 2006, creating the precedent of holding summit meetings between a big power and the African countries, and thus realizing comprehensive friendship and cooperation on the basis of mutual benefit and win-win relations between China and African countries.⁴⁶

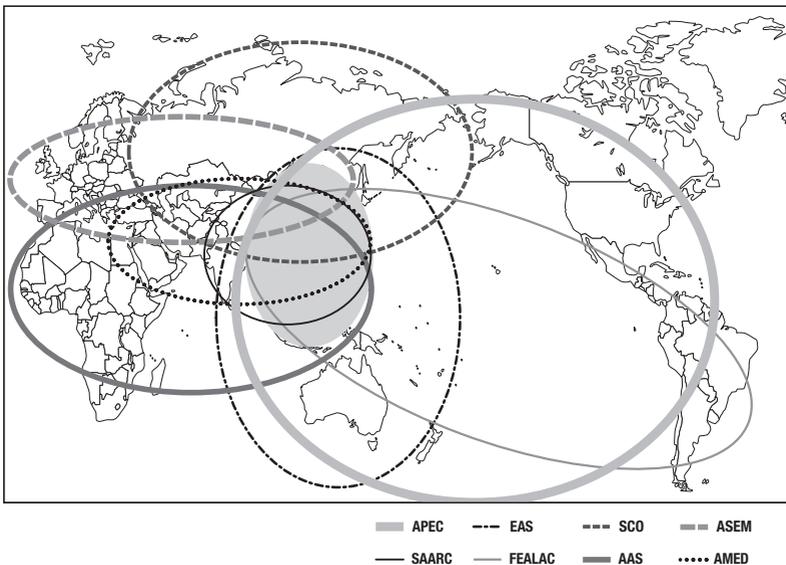
A dialogue and coordination cooperation arrangement between East Asia and Latin America has also been established: the East Asia-Latin America Forum (EALAF). The inaugural meeting of the forum was held in Singapore in September 1999, and

⁴⁵ “Declaration on the New Asian African Strategic Partnership,” http://www.naasp.gov.za/DECLARATION_ON_NAASP.pdf.

⁴⁶ Hu Jintao “Keep Pace with the Times, Inherit the Past and Usher in the Future, and Construct a New Type of Asia-African Strategic Partnership—Address at the Asia-African Summit,” Jakarta, April 22, 2005, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/gdxw/t192875.htm>.

altogether 27 countries, including 13 East Asian nations, 12 Latin American nations, Australia and New Zealand attended the meeting as initial members. The forum provides a platform of exchanging ideas for the East Asian and Latin American leaders in politics, trade, and other domains, in order to enhance understanding between the two regions and to develop cooperation in politics, economy and culture.⁴⁷ Since the establishment of the forum, China has always attended the meetings of foreign ministers of the forum once every two years and the Senior Officer Meeting once a year, regarding the forum as the major dialogue channel between the two regions and the important platform of South-South cooperation.

Networks of Multiple Cooperation Circles in China's Diplomacy



Thus, China has been endeavoring jointly with the East Asian nations to weave a network of multiple cooperation circles all around the whole world. This kind of network design, taking East Asia as the basic point and covering every region in the world, is actually not focused on East Asia. In fact, in this network structure, any region in the world can be taken as the basic point to become the center of such a network.

⁴⁷ "Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC)," http://www.mfa.gov.sg/internet/foreignpolicy/io_fealac.htm.

Therefore, this kind of network world order is an order without central authority. The order is an international order of friendly relationships, shared benefits and win-win progress between different social systems, levels economic development, and cultures. Through regular dialogue, exchange, coordination and cooperation, various regions coordinate in politics and security, complement each other in economy and trade, and exchange and integrate societies and cultures, thus eventually forming a global human community.

Conclusion

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, a series of diplomatic strategic options have been formed and used to guide China's foreign affairs practice. But most of the strategies aimed at protecting China's national security, and were strongly oriented towards its national interest. The "Three Worlds" theory is a macroscopic strategic plan, but not a conception for the international order. Therefore, for the entire 20th century, the Chinese government never made any active design for the future of global international relations, not to mention a macroscopic strategic concept to support and clarify the idea. After the Cold War, although the Chinese government advocated building a new political and economic international order of justice and rationality, and promoting multi-polar international relations, it has never developed the ideas into theories. The conception of "Harmonious World" is the first comprehensive strategic ideal the Chinese government has initiated for the future international order. It is not merely a thought or a Utopian ideal. It is logically related to the philosophy of "coordination and harmony among all nations" in Chinese traditional culture, is combined with the development trend of international relations in the light of new situation, and is also supported by concrete theories.

In the "Harmonious World" theory framework, the Chinese government established three important diplomatic strategic theoretical viewpoints. The first is non-enemy diplomacy. Relations between countries should not be resistant or hostile, so disputes existing between countries should not be solved through military force, but should be settled through consultation and cooperation on the basis of maintaining friendship, mutual respect, and mutual understanding. Therefore, it is possible to establish partnership relations between nations. The theoretical starting point of partnership relations derives from the Chinese world view of "Unity with Diversity," and its policy

foundation relies on the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.” In international politics, nations with different social systems, different civilization backgrounds, and different ideologies can coexist and progress along with their differences on a foundation of mutual respect. In view of this, the Chinese government has formed the condition of non-enemy diplomacy, enabling China to establish and maintain friendship and cooperation with the majority of countries in the world and further develop relationships into partnerships.

The second is open regionalism. Regional cooperation integration is a major trend in the development of international relations, and countries within a certain region will realize regional conformity through integration. Since relations between different countries should be of coexistence and coordination, nations in a certain region should be able to construct a stable regional cooperation framework, improve better benefit coordination between nations, and realize common development through mutually beneficial cooperation, eventually achieving peace, development and prosperity in the entire region. This kind of region is not a closed area, but open to countries and areas outside of the region.

The third is the global inter-regional cooperation network. The globalization of international relations is gradually developing together with regional cooperation integration. Various regional cooperation mechanisms have been founded in each region in the world, so in the present and the foreseeable future international community, open regionalism will help with establishing relations of connectedness and inter-coordination between regions. Global international relations will turn out to be an inter-coordinating and harmonious new international order on the basis of the network of the inter-regional cooperation. In a word, the Chinese government, based on the construction of partnership frameworks between nations, pushes forward inter-regional integration in Asia in the direction of a harmonious Asia, and also promotes inter-regional coordination and cooperation in the world as a whole, and has a sincere hope to build up peaceful development and a harmonious international order at the national, regional, and global levels.