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# CHINA AND GLOBAL “SECURITY”

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## **HISTORY FROM BEGINNINGS TO 1840**

The old Chinese language did not differentiate between the concepts “world” and “China”. The Chinese referred to both with the same word “Tianxia”, “Under the sky”, because the Chinese knew only themselves as civilised people. Their perception, or rather their experience made them think that their own living space coincided with the terrain of the civilised world. This idea was further strengthened by the circumstance, that in 221 B.C., one of the seven principalities, the westernmost Qin was the first to unite the country, the Chinese inhabited, eastern half of the present day’s People’s Republic of China. The thus united state of China with its more than 2000-year old history and strong recovering capacities, even with its occasional declines and falls is a unique phenomenon in the history of the world. Especially since none of the other great empires of the ancient world exists today.

It is easy to understand, that China regarded itself the centre of the world, and this view is reflected in the modern name of the state: Zhongguo means Central Empire, Central Country. Yet certainly, China did not live in a void, not even 2000 years ago.

In the ethno-genesis of the Chinese people, the mixing of different civilizations played a significant role, thus for example the Northern millet growers’ and the Southern rice growers’ civilizations. Yet the Chinese civilization, formed of these two were exposed to farther influences; the horse-drawn military chariots came from a presumably Western influence, yet silk, first made in China, spread all over the world on the Silk Road by land and by sea. China got its foreign names from the Chinese word “si” for silk, hence the Roman name Seres, the land of the silk, which was worth the same weight of gold. Trade was done by distributors, who probably gave the name Qin as the source of their goods, not simply because of the couple of decades old Qin empire, but rather because of the thousand-year old Qin principality. This way, China became known by this name in the Western world. This is the source of the English word itself, China.

At that time, the world beyond the almost impenetrable deserts, mountains and seas did not arouse interest in either the Europeans, or the Chinese. For a long time, there were no individual journeys, no exact observations, and there were no plans on either side for territorial conquests.

For China, the only danger came from the neighbouring nomadic peoples, who sometimes partially, sometimes entirely conquered its territory. This happened in the second third of the first millennium A.D., when the greater part of the region north of the Yangtze river was conquered by non-Chinese nomadic tribes, then during the 13-14<sup>th</sup> century Mongolian rule, and for the last time, during the two and half centuries of the Manchurian dynasty. The Mongolians were eventually driven out, but the other conquerors were gradually becoming Chinese themselves, such as the Manchurians, who actually brought the Western part of the present day People's Republic of China under their own control in order to eliminate the threat from the still nomadic Mongolians.

The danger from the neighbouring nomadic tribes established a unique Chinese foreign policy practice. It made at least some knowledge necessary about the "Chinese globe", the world visible from China, since the traditional Chinese strategy was to make an alliance with the nomadic tribes living behind the aggressor's territory, thus thrusting it into a "pair of pincers". Yet, this tactic backfired many times, for instance with the Mongolians, who having driven out the nomadic tribes from Northern China did not give back the area to the Chinese, but settled there themselves, and later on conquered Southern China from there.

Mongolians made global politics ever since the time of Genghis Khan, more precisely in order to fulfil their world-conquering plans, spies and vanguards explored the opponents' actual conditions. Although Kublai Khan tried to conquer Japan from China, the Mongolians did not make China the centre of their world empire building; China did not become part of the world, and although during the so-called "Pax Mongolica" there existed a bridge between Europe and China, this period was too short for China to become truly a part of the world. Due to the difference in attitude, members of the Venetian Polo family travelled to the Far Eastern empire and Marco Polo had his memories written down. No Chinese Marco Polo was born however, who could have told stories about the Europe of the time.

The traditional Chinese state, holding itself superior (not without any foundation) did not recognise its nomadic neighbours as equals, and even if sometimes in order to buy peace it had to accept humiliating conditions, the pacts were always worded in

a way that covered up for these facts, and thus the indemnities happened to turn into generous gifts from the Chinese emperor.

The traditional Chinese state did not know equal international relationships and likewise, nor did it know the conditions of the actual world.<sup>1</sup> The basic reason for this lies in its own social structure, since its ideal type was a redistributive system based on the peasantry, who lived off the state's land and paid taxes directly to the state, through state officials. Craftsmen and merchants were at the bottom of the social ladder; this system did not favour individual initiatives and the accumulation of private means. The highest goal of all Chinese administrations was to operate this united, centralised, redistributive state. This state of affairs was regarded as order ("zhi") and its opposite as disorder, chaos ("luan").

The memory of a primordial community is the core of this view and practice: a time, when everybody was equal. This is reflected in the concept of "da tong" ("great unity", "great equality") in the earliest social writings. It runs through the entire Chinese social history and even appears in the great 19-20<sup>th</sup> century theoretical summary, Kang Youwei's "The Book of Great Unity", which outlines a communistic utopia in this spirit, where even state borders disappear. Kang had indeed nothing to do with Communism, he was an adherent of constitutional monarchy; it was the traditional Chinese thought itself, which led him to his utopia.

Thus, it was not only geographically, but also socially determined, that China was not able to live with the great, early 15<sup>th</sup> century opportunity. When Admiral Zheng He, with court help made seven sea expeditions between 1405 and 1433, he reached as far as the eastern coast of Africa (part of his fleet is supposed to have gone around the world). This happened decades before the era of the great geographical discoveries. The commander ship of the Chinese admiral was 147m long and 47m wide and could carry up to hundreds of people. In 1492, Columbus discovered America with his ship, the Santa Maria, which was 18m long, 12m wide and could carry only up to 40 people. Still, while Zheng's journey remained a historical curiosity, the Western geographical explorations changed the course of the world.

The Chinese explorations were stopped, because the state treasury had been drained due to the constant Mongolian attacks. In 1449, the Mongolians captured even the Chinese emperor himself. In 1436, the foreign envoys were sent back home and in

<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed description see Ildikó Ecsedi, *Nomádok és kereskedők Kína határain.* (Nomades and trademen int he border of China) Kőrösi Csoma kiskönyvtár, 16. Budapest, 1979.

1452, the Chinese fleet was commanded to retreat into the coastal ports. China turned its back on the seas the same time, when Europe was about to face them.

It is easy to understand that China did not have any background knowledge about European merchant ships that appeared from time to time at its coasts from the 16th century onwards, nor did it have any intention to establish any relationship with them.<sup>2</sup> Yet there was a rational move in everything, since the thus formed trade relations became rather one-sided: the West could not sell anything in China (save for the goods from the Southeast Asian spice islands), but for three centuries, the foreigners paid silver coins for the large amount of silk, china, tea and other products. Thereby, although China did not initiate great geographical explorations, it was not responsible for looting newly discovered regions. Besides, it still became their indirect beneficiary due to the large amount of silver pouring into the country, which also monetized its tax system.

This one-sidedness was reflected in the letter of refusal sent to the king of Britain, delivered by the British envoy Macartney, in 1793: "As your Ambassador can see for himself, we possess all things. I set no value on objects strange or ingenious, and have no use for your country's manufactures." It should not be forgotten, that it was written before the industrial revolution and the Chinese emperor was in fact writing the truth. Objects strange or ingenious meant probably rococo musical clocks brought by the foreign envoys, these still fill an entire room in the Beijing Palace Museum today.

If a balance is drawn up of this era, two parallel but opposing tendencies can be seen, that alone, one by one would not express the whole picture. The Great Wall and the sea closure are defensive strategies; one secured the country against nomadic attacks and the other against getting involved in tangled sea and overseas businesses and against raiding attacks of the Japanese pirates. These were there to defend an advanced region from attackers, who were coveting its goods. Yet China was an expansive state ever since it existed: it gradually integrated southern areas, these regions being the most suitable for Chinese grain crop cultivation. In addition, during

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<sup>2</sup> As opposed to historical predetermination, another approach is taking ground, which while not denying economical reasons for the cancellation of the enterprise, states that 600 years ago, it was simply a misjudgement that deprived the „world's most advanced country" of the possibility of taking control of the entire world, as it is clearly put in Wolfgang Hirn's book, *Herausforderung China* (S. Fischer, Frankfurt am Main, 2005). „The Chinese, who were at the top of their power at that time could have conquered the world. That is why Konrad Seitz asked the interesting, though hypothetical question: 'Why did not China do it?' The Chinese had all the conditions necessary to become a leading power of the world. They ruled the seas, they had advanced weaponry, they were many and had many clever people. If they had wanted it, world history would have taken quite a different shape. But they did not. So everything happened the other way."

the Manchurian period, it was annexing those northern and western planes, from where the mainly stockbreeder peoples were threatening the Chinese state.<sup>3</sup>

The geographical obstacles and the advance of other powers set the limits of its expansion. After they fought against each other for decades, Russia expanding towards Siberia and China under Manchurian rule signed a treaty in Nerchinsk, in 1689 that designated the river Amour as natural boundary. This was the first and for a long time the last treaty, in which China treated a foreign power as its equal.

Although the West made many attempts to establish a permanent agency in Beijing, the first Chinese diplomats were sent abroad only as late as 1878. Yet, in the meantime, the Chinese Emperor's court was always open for those western missionaries, who were able to adapt to Chinese ways, and especially for those, who had more knowledge on astronomy and calendar making than the Chinese themselves.

#### **THE REALISATION OF CHINA'S BACKWARD SITUATION AND SEARCHING FOR AN ALLY FOR THE CLOSING UP PROCESS (FROM 1840 TO THE BEGINNING OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY)**

The reason for the fall of the traditional China was the fact that it only exported, and since it never imported, the Eastern India Society decided to redeem opium for the silver paid to China. This action was so successful, that in four decades, the expenditure of the previously profit-making Chinese state treasury exceeded the revenues. In 1839, the Chinese government tried to prevent the economic collapse by prohibiting opium trade, but the British saw this move as a violation of free trade and retaliated with force of arms. China was defeated in the first Opium War, and in 1842, in Nanking, it was forced to sign the first, so-called one-sided treaty, which was followed by many others in the next more than half a century. (At that time started the practice, where a Chinese favour granted to one great power was at the same time due automatically to all the other ones.)

In the fact, the imperial court was only forced to deal with problem because of the government's financial difficulties. There was no consensus however, since the Manchurian rule was afraid that rousing an entire social class could result in such an increase of patriotic feelings that even their rule would be questioned. Nevertheless, the main problem was its inexperience in the power relations of the world. Lin Zexu,

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed description, see Polonyi, P. Birodalom-e Kína? (Is China an empire?) In Rózsa, N.E. ed. Nemzeti identitás és külpolitika a Közel-Keleten és Kelet Ázsiában (National identity and foreign policy in the Middle East Asia), Teleki László Foundation, Budapest, 2005.

the representative sent to negotiate this question in Guangzhou, the city designated for foreign trade, first threatened with the cancellation of all Chinese export. He only began to reflect on the actual state of affairs after seeing that the British world empire did not yield ground, even at the prospect of a likely decrease in tea and rhubarb import. It was Lin, who first commanded his subordinates to gather information about the world; this is how "The knowledge of the four continents" was written. But they could not make up for three centuries lost in a couple of months.

The most serious problem however was the fact, that not even the Nanking Treaty, which opened the ports of China, sobered the Manchurian court. It took almost no steps to defend its country from the likely attacks of the West, which was getting stronger due to the industrial revolution. After two decades, it needed an English-French strike on Beijing, the second Opium War, to be willing to open its eyes.

The one and a half century that has passed since has been the age of China's modernization. Its dilemma is still unresolved: what is to be preserved, what is to be discarded from the Chinese tradition and what is to be taken over from the West?

The foreign office was established in 1861, governed by Prince Gong, the stepbrother of the emperor. It did not only serve to cultivate diplomatic relations, but also dealt with trade in foreign weapons and machines. The then started "Self-strengthening movement" believed, it was enough to take over the technical means and manufacturing from abroad, while keeping the inner structure of the country intact. As opposed to the 1868 Japanese Meiji reform, which by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with extensive reform brought Japan to the level of the leading industrial powers of the world the movement in China ended in failure. In the 1880s, China was defeated by the French and lost its influence on the Indo-Chinese peninsula. In the 1890s, it was defeated by Japan, and thus lost its influence in Korea and some of its territory for example in Taiwan.

The defeats strengthened the Chinese reform movement; even the young Chinese emperor became one of its adherers. But led by the mother empress, the conservative powers eliminated the 1898 Hundred-Day Reform and executed the captured reformers. The emperor was basically put under house arrest for the rest of his life.

Instead of a reform ruled from above, the discontent with the actual state of the country was expressed in the anti-foreigner Boxer Rebellion at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The movement was supported half-secretly, half-openly by the court, and it resulted in the military intervention of eight powers (Germany, Japan, Italy,

Great Britain, France and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy). It is true, that the Chinese court did not give protection to the diplomatic district contrary to international practice, but Emperor Wilhelm's speech at sending off his German troops had neither too much to do with international law, when he encouraged his people with the words: "Have no mercy, take no prisoners." In 1901, the operation ended in a Chinese defeat, in the so-called "Boxer Report" and other reparations. The official press of the great powers spoke of the "Yellow Peril" and condemned the Chinese people collectively, although the Southern Chinese provinces had consciously kept out of this movement.

China in essence found itself in a half-colonial situation, but since it was too much of a challenge for only one country to stand, different countries had their authorities on different areas in China, and the scope of action of Manchurian-Chinese diplomacy was restricted to take advantage of the conflicting interests among the great powers. The great powers were ready to co-operate with the Manchurian court, which had distanced itself from the Boxers and showed willingness for some modernisation. The days of the monarchy were numbered.

In 1911, the rebellion organised by the followers of Sun Yat-Sen overthrew the monarchy and the republic was proclaimed (the first one in Asia). The process happened by declaring independence in each province one by one. The great powers announced their intention to remain neutral in this conflict.

In fact the great powers still intended to control China and they could easily find allies in country fallen apart into different conflicting interest-groups. Sun had already looked for Western relations before the victory of his revolution, and meant to pay for foreign help with granting increased influence on China for the country concerned, as was the case with France. When, soon after his victory, he had to hand over the leading role to the conservative, but patriotic and strongly anti-Japanese General Yuan Shikai, the strong man of the former monarchy, Sun wanted to regain his power with Japanese support.<sup>4</sup>

Yet Japan, as a result of its expansionist policy was not popular among the Chinese. The Beijing government, after long hesitation joined the Allied Forces in 1917 and declared war on Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy only in order to

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<sup>4</sup> Based on the results of western research, Gyula Jordán and Barna Tálás present surprising advices from the „father of the country” on pp.68-69 of their book titled *Kína a modernizáció útján a XIX-XX. században* (China on the way to modernisation in the 19th and 20th centuries) published first in Hungarian in 2005. He offered the entire Manchuria to the Japanese in exchange for weapons. He declared at the secret agreements that "Japan... can prevent the Europeans and America from dividing the melon among themselves... Asia should be governed by the Asians".

regain those Chinese territories that had been formerly occupied by the Germans and now were in Japanese hands. (Their participation was limited to export in workforce.) There was a national uproar, when these areas were left with the Japanese at the Paris peace negotiations. The 4 May 1919 Beijing demonstration was organised to protest against this decision, and it became the overture for a patriotic, radical movement.

The US did not agree with the excessive advance of Japan either, and at the turn of 1921-22, it called for a conference of those powers, who had interest in the area, and made arrangements for giving back the former German territories to China. Since the US wanted China to pay compensations, the envoys of the latter, just like in the case of the Paris Treaty, did not sign it.

Sun Yat-Sen (who had opposed the declaration of war) disappointed by the Europeans, Americans and the Japanese, turned to Soviet-Russia for help to unite the country fallen apart in the wars of local warlords. In 1922, he offered Joffe, Lenin's envoy, the dis-annexation of Chinese Central Asia in exchange for weapons.<sup>5</sup> However, it should be noted that after the victory of the October Revolution, Russia declared that it would give up all its privileges it had gained by the former one-sided pacts. Soon it turned out, Russia did not consider the 1858 littoral boundary agreement to belong to them. After the death of Sun Yat-Sen in 1925, Chiang Kai-shek won the fight for succession in the Kuomintang party and the new leader also inherited the alliance with Russia. His army trained and supervised with the help of Russian military experts managed to unite the country in the Northern Expedition. In 1927, he broke up with the Soviet Union and the communist alliance, since it was getting more and more inconvenient for him.

And now it was the Japanese who interfered with the course of Chinese history. In 1932, they declared Manchuria an independent state and put the last Chinese emperor on the throne of the puppet state. Playing on survival, Chiang Kai-shek did not declare war on Japan and since he did not receive any effective support from the League of Nations, he reinstated diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. This did not prevent Moscow from supporting the Chinese communists, who were building red base territories, and Chang from continuing punitive campaigns against these territories.

This situation changed only in 1937, when the Japanese attacked Chinese territories south of the Great Wall. The US and Great Britain did not feel strong enough to

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<sup>5</sup> Referred to on p. 32 in the Mao biography by the author of the Wild Swans, Yung Chang and Jon Halliday: *Mao, the Unknown Story*, Jonathan Cape, London, 2005.

confront Japan, so Chiang Kai-shek could only have expected military support from Moscow. China received this help, since Stalin was worried about the so-called Anti-Comintern Pact, signed by Germany and Japan a year before, threatening with having him to fight a war on two fronts. For him, it had become essential that China engaged significant Japanese forces. To this end, he succeeded in having the Kuomintang Party and the Chinese Communist Party suspend the hostility between them.

When Hitler attacked the Soviet Union in 1941, the support to China decreased, but when Japan unleashed the Pacific Ocean war against the US and Great Britain the same year, China officially declared war on Japan, which in fact had already been going on for eleven years then and also officially joined the anti-fascist coalition. After the Japanese attack, the Kuomintang party split in two, and many of its former prominent representatives took on roles in the puppet government formed on the Japanese occupied territory.

Chiang Kai-shek and his followers withdrew to Sechuan province and Mao's co-operating troops were stationing in the back of the Japanese. Although they both conserved their military power for the clash with each other after the war, they engaged significant troop contingents. As a recognition, the US and Great Britain gave up their former Chinese privileges and supported China with regular air and land supplies from India. Roosevelt, Churchill and Chiang Kai-shek agreed at the 1943 Cairo Conference that after the war, Japan would have to give up all of its post-1895 acquisitions. In 1945, China became one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. (The Charter was also signed by the representative of the Chinese Communist Party.) China, in ruins, having the grievances of a hundred years and with a World War 2 loss of at least 20 million human lives became (even if for the time being only formally) an equal member of the world, one of the five great powers.

Although both Moscow and Washington wanted to see a coalition government in China, hostility between the two great Chinese political powers soon resumed and grew into a civil war. In the end, the Chinese Republic led by the Kuomintang Party had to retreat to the island of Taiwan and in Beijing, the People's Republic of China was established. The two world powers did not directly interfere with the course of the civil war, but it was clear, that the Soviet Union supported the military forces of the Communist Party whereas the US supported the Kuomintang government. It was not just moral support, but actual consignment of arms.

Because the Japanese occupation and the civil war seriously devastated the underdeveloped economy and since the defeated Kuomintang, itself in a party-state system from 1928 took the majority of its cadres to Taiwan, the new party-state, formed in 1949 had to face a serious shortage of experts. At the beginning, it had to establish a military government in order to operate the country. China obviously needed an ally, who could help solve its problems.

From 1949 to 1982, the People's Republic of China tried to make up for its backwardness and become a world political factor with the support of three different international powers: in the first decade with the Soviet Union, in the second decade, as part of the third world and eventually, with the support of advanced Western countries. It accepted the thesis of multipolarity in 1982 and this is stated to be its goal ever since the world has become unipolar. At least, the practice of dividing the world into friends and foes stopped in their public analyses.

Opinions vary whether the Chinese government's flirt with the US in World War 2 and the Civil War was for only tactical or strategic reasons. Official Chinese statements in 1949 seemed to be suspiciously frequent, constantly demonstrating that the new power did not need to keep up any relations with the West at all. It is easier to detect an intention of trying to dissolve Moscow's suspicion, than the sincerity of these statements. Moreover, evidence shows that the Chinese society and the leadership itself were undecided, whether China should take sides in world politics at all.<sup>6</sup>

It is equally difficult to do justice in the question of who had more responsibility in the Korean War: Kim Ir Sen, Stalin or Mao Tse-Tung? One thing seems certain: Mao Tse-Tung had to adapt to Stalin's needs, just like concerning the conditions of the Soviet-Chinese friendship Pact, because he could only expect Soviet industrial development support this way. Until the explosion of war, he's responsibility is probably smaller, but the protection of the war can be imputed to his venting to gain more modern technology from the Soviet Union. But these questions can be answered only after the opening of the Chinese archives.

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<sup>6</sup> In the 30 June 1949 issue of the official paper of the party, in his article on the democratic dictatorship of the people, Mao himself wrote about how he had disputed with obviously civilian fellow passengers, who opposed Chinese politics' „learning to one side". Even if not in any other ways, it is obvious here, that there existed such views at that time. More sources testify that in the winter of 1949-50, Mao Tse-Tung's Moscow negotiations, someone from China informed Stalin on the „Soviet-friendly" and „American- friendly" wings of the Chinese party, but no other details or names are known.

Stalin's death in 1953 became a turning point for the Chinese leadership, since with Mao's international reputation, the People's Republic of China could have become the head of the Communist world movement, if China itself had become the most successful country of the building of socialism.<sup>7</sup> The Chinese side would have liked to see Moscow and Beijing "uniting their powers" and was dissatisfied with Khrushchev's policy aiming to lessen international tension. Mao and his followers consciously aggravated the situation, provoked incidents in the Taiwan Strait and on the Indian border, hoping to force the Soviet Union into closer co-operation because of increasing international tension. At the same time, by fanatising masses, China tried to achieve quick economic increase on its own with starting the "Great Leap Forward". After its failure, although a more sober domestic policy began, the debate with the Soviet Union did not subside and it even to ally led to the collapse of the former relations. In parallel, since the Soviet Union suspended the previous co-operation, Beijing continued to prepare for the production of its own atomic bomb.

The new foreign policy direction was outlined by the beginning of the 1960s: China intended to become the leading power of the third world. Naturally, this direction had its own antecedents.

During World War 2 some leaders of Asian communist parties stayed in Yan'an, the centre of the communist controlled Chinese area. After 1949, certain Asian communist parties came under Beijing's control with Moscow's consent. In 1955, China showily joined the Non-Aligned Movement.

The 1960's were a qualitatively different period, however. The concept outlined by Mao Tse-Tung was further elaborated in Lin Biao's writing titled "Long Live the Victory of People's War!" as "the whole cause of world revolution hinges on the revolutionary struggles of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples who make up the overwhelming majority of the world's population. [...] Everything is divisible. And so is this colossus of U.S. imperialism. It can be split up and defeated. The peoples of Asia, Africa, Latin America and other regions can destroy it piece by piece, some striking at its head and others at its feet. That is why the greatest fear of U.S. imperialism is that people's wars will be launched in different parts of the world, and particularly in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and why it regards people's war as a mortal danger." In other words, the "poor" countries (the "rural areas of the world") strangle the "affluent"

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<sup>7</sup> Barna Tálás (then known as Gabor Hidasi) gave this explanation for the Chinese pace increase first in his study on Chinese modernization, written in the 1970s. This explanation is elaborated in more details in his book p. 165- 167.

countries (the "cities of the world") by depriving them of their raw materials, just as the villages beat the towns in the Chinese Revolution. In other words: the conflicts worldwide should not be pacified, but extended, and the Chinese leadership obeyed. It supported with money and arms every movement against any prevailing order and thus in itself became one of the most significant destabilising factors of the world. This was the period when the colonies achieved their independence.

In 1965, China wanted to establish an anti-UN with Indonesia, which at that time, for a period disallied itself from the UN, and also encouraged the Indonesian Communist Party to overthrow that Indonesian leadership, that had achieved the independence of their country from the Dutch. Although Beijing exploded its first atomic bomb in 1964, its aggressive foreign policy did not yield in real results and the Indonesian right turn clearly showed the impracticability of this direction. With this, Chinese politics became the cause of its own crisis, embodied in the "cultural revolution" in 1966.

At the end of the 1960s, the internal situation gradually consolidated, but China did not withdraw officially the direction of opening up toward the third world, nor the steps made in the direction of Soviet-Chinese consolidation. In the meantime however, the now independent, former colonial countries would have preferred Beijing, and not Taipei as the representative of China in the UN. These factors made the US to reconsider its China policy. After cautious inquiries, in summer 1971, Henry Kissinger, then US national security advisor conducted secret negotiations with then Chinese leaders and next year, President Nixon paid an official visit to Beijing. From the American side, Kissinger clearly stated the reason for this turn: for the stability of the world, there was a need to establish an American-Soviet-Chinese triangle, in which the US could play the role of balancing power.

The situation of Beijing proved to be more delicate, since it had to supply explanation acceptable for its own people. This was the theory of the "Double Anti" China must keep the same distance from the US as from the USSR. But soon, the Soviet Union was declared to be more dangerous, against whom China could have made use of US help. In addition, the Chinese refreshed the theory of Three Worlds, in other words, the possibility of allying against superpowers with countries of the third world and other capitalist countries, except for the US. This led to some odd incidents, such as Chinese diplomacy giving the reason for establishing contact with NATO member Canada as "to isolate the UN".

The death of Mao, the beginning of the elimination of the consequences of "cultural revolution", the outlining of the policy of "reform and opening" in 1978, all made it possible to face the reality of the world and as a result, the 12<sup>th</sup> party congress in 1982 gave up describing the world situation as "great chaos" and opened the way for the perception of multipolar world. Although with the fall of socialism in Europe, the world has in fact become unipolar, multipolarity still remains the objective. Beijing, at least in its public statements, kept away from identifying itself as an antipole of the only superpower.

### **HOW CONTINUE?**

"The main problem of China, ever since the start of its modernisation process in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century what to preserve from the Chinese past and what to take over from the West. This problem is made even more complicated, since certain elements of this past are strongly intertwined with that of socialism: certain socialist characteristics coinciding with the traditional Chinese perception helped the spread of socialism, for example the recognition of the necessity of central government and redistribution, the need for restricting big private means, the establishment of an isolated nomenclature, that does not represent local needs and the respect for hierarchy. The generally accepted, present "Chinese coloured socialism" is in fact nothing else the sum total of these features. Yet this raises a question: in the long run, how will it agree with the existence of other, more complex, more democratic countries, who acknowledge social differences? Who should assimilate the other? Or will China be able to create an in-between, a third way?

With the increase of Chinese economic power, another question attracts more attention: What is the exact meaning of the Beijing expression that we live in the age of "the rebirth of China"? Does it mean that today's China is a blossoming, robust country with developing economics? Or does it mean that having regained its former economic and military greatness, it becomes again one of, or in the long run the only leading power, which makes its own social model an example to be followed by the entire world? The theory of "Socialism with Chinese characteristics" and "rebirth of China" both draw attention to the same problem.

Today, there is no clearly expressed Chinese answer. The public ones are too general and the internal ones are not know. Foreign guesses are only guesses indeed: materials published under this title seem to be fabrications.

Thus, one has to draw future conclusions primarily based on the country's practical politics, taking into consideration two factors of uncertainty. One is that because of the confinement of Chinese political life, it is not known what inner disputes precede a certain step; a policy's support and thus its longevity cannot be estimated. For instance, it can certainly be explained with the change in the government's inner power relations, that while the country's leaders kept using the "China's Peaceful Ascendance" idiom last years it disappeared from their statements for a time, but it has recently reappeared in the statements of the first man of the country, Hu Jintao. This time, obviously it was to balance the 14 July 2005 statement of major general Zhu Chenghu threatening the US with a nuclear strike. The statement was declared "private opinion" soon after. The other factor of uncertainty is the fact that there exists virtually no slogan or policy that has been withdrawn officially, thus theoretically all these are still in force. The aforementioned statement of the dean of the University of National Defence was operating with expressions dating from Mao Tse-Tung's time, stating that China, as regard to Taiwan is ready to make "the biggest national sacrifice". In a nuclear war it is "ready to sacrifice its territories East of Xi'an". It must be noted, that these theses still not have been directly cancelled officially; the Chinese foreign minister overwrote the words of the major general by stating that his country had never drawn back the solemn declaration made at the time of the explosion of its first atomic bomb in 1964: China would never be the first to use nuclear weapon against anybody.

What does the picture of the Chinese society-economy show? Certainly it is not a stepped-up war economy continuing the former policy of extreme equalisation. One can see the gradual taking over of the model of consumer society for the last quarter of a century, with occasional recoils in the process. If the differences between various geographical regions and social layers go beyond a certain limit, that is supposed to be still tolerable, then a partial restoration process occurs. The same signs show up if life is starting to be too similar to that of the advanced societies and a feeling dawns in the leadership, that China is losing its individual, "socialist" image; the West is absorbing it into the capitalist world. These fears have been aggravated by the fall of socialism in Europe. China strives to nip every such phenomenon in the bud.

Such recoils took place in 1983, during the fight against the "mental disturbances", and at the violent suppression of the Tiananmen Square students riot in 1989. Today two years after the inception of the fourth generation of leadership, one such restoration

process can be witnessed: they are hurrying to restrain the process of spontaneous privatisation, they make great efforts to consolidate and modernise state owned industry. In a certain sense, these stops can be the preliminaries for newer advances, since it is not at all certain, that what happened here would be practical for China. Stopping certain processes may well be more advantageous for China's progress, than continuing in a direction, which may prove to be a dead-end.

These recoils have not jeopardized so far the process of foreign economic relationships leading to mutual dependence. It would be difficult to stop them now, since motorway buildings and motorisation have become the highest profit-making factors, and for this, China needs oil import. This cannot be stopped or be sidetracked at a peremptory order anymore.

China is one of the main currency earner partners of the US and it spends most of the amount gained from the positive trade balance in the US bond market. Due to this fact, it is one of the main financiers of the American economy. At the same time, this complicated web of relations is the main guarantee for the financial stability of the world: nobody is interested in changing this situation suddenly.

These economic interpenetrations are after all factors that strengthen calculability and global security, which in turn are the bases for other effects.

After one and half decades of negotiations (and obviously internal Chinese debates), China was admitted to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), making integration for the country even easier. By 2010, China intends to establish free market relations with ASEAN, the organisation of the Southeast Asian countries. It takes part in the more open APEC, which has members from the countries of the Pacific rim. EU-China meetings have been held regularly since 1998, which show China's reevaluation of the EU. China intends to hold regular bilateral meetings with the leaders of the main EU powers, by which, even if unsaid, the country tries to balance American influence. It is not a coincidence, that in November 2005, before the meeting of APEC in South Korea and the visit of president George W. Bush to China, the first man in China, Hu Jin Tao to strengthen his own position for the negotiations, made a demonstrative round trip in London, Berlin and Madrid. The intention of the Chinese Communist Party to come closer to the European Socialist parties is again connected these processes: actually, with the mediation of the Hungarian Socialist Party, as has been reported in the press. „The Shanghai Six” organisation established on Chinese initiatives in 1996 has a definite economic, political and military nature. Its members

are those Asian countries who have interest in the Central Asian region. Discernibly, in order to balance the US, Beijing is developing its relations with Russia, which it has recently confirmed by a pact and a large-scale joint military exercise in August 2005.

Yet it is clearly visible, that Beijing would not like it, if the US put China in the vacant seat of the Soviet Union and force it into a spiral of armaments. This is why it favours the US dotting the policy of „participation” rather than the policy of „obstruction” concerning China. This and the afore mentioned economic advantages helped the relations of the two countries to go through such crisis situations, as the American bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrad in 1999, or the patrolling of US reconnaissance aircraft close to the shore of China in 2001. Although the things that happened triggered immense antipathy in the Chinese population, the leadership intended to suppress, rather than to make use of these feelings. This was clearly expressed after 9/11, when the Chinese high command immediately stood behind the Antiterrorist Front.

The tangled lines connecting China to the world can no longer be thorn with one move today. Yet it does not follow that the country will be a major stabilising factor in world politics in the long run. It will continue to be so until the end of its to-three decades long, economic- military closing-up process. Behind the Chinese leaders' peaceful political statements and moves, there can be no ulterior motives, contrary to what is demonstrated. Since an increase in economic potential automatically means increase in military potential, having greater military force may also change the tone of Chinese world political statements. This comes under the scope of futurology, though.

Yet, in three geographically close relations, Chinese foreign policy is very much connected to the present: North Korea, Japan and Taiwan.

As far as the nuclear armament of Pyongyang is concerned, Beijing seems to have given indispensable help to Washington at the hexalateral negotiations. So far, without substantial result. Chinese politics concerning Japan is quite inconsistent: it has elements that try to win Japan and elements that try threaten Japan, both for one and: to distance Japan from the US in order to decrease both US and Japanese influence in the region. The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the victory of the Antifascist Coalition in World War 2 gave the opportunity. President Koizumi's visits in the Yasukuni shrine and the wording of Japanese history books embellishing the past provided for a pretext.

Concerning Taiwan, both the peaceful arrangement and the threat of sanctioning with an armed solution are included in a low concerning the unity of the country

passed at the 2005 spring session of the Chinese legislative assembly. The Beijing visits of the leaders of the Taiwanese opposition parties the same year showed a possibility, that an election with results favourable to the People's Republic of China would increase the chances of a peaceful solution. The law itself, which does not designate the People's Republic of China as the "one China", actually leaves the way open for a confederal solution. That is, if the Chinese leadership is more interested in solving the question than living it open. Some observer state, that by leaving the Japanese and the Taiwanese questions open, the Chinese leadership has the possibility of stirring up an anti-American hysteria among the Chinese population any time, while by making a final decision, they would never be able to do so any more. Nevertheless, Beijing could be stricter with North Korea and more accommodating with Japan and Taiwan. But for the time being, it is not.

Answers for these questions and their interconnections with Chinese domestic and foreign politics will be given in the foreseeable future, since if China truly intends to lessen tension, it has to make concessions. If it does not, it will be obvious its aim is hegemony over the region, in other words: regaining its former position...

