

■ Recognizing and Understanding China Series

# China's Wisdom

China's Diplomacy since the 18th CPC National Congress

Jin Canrong et al.

Translated by Wen Jianxin

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Chapter 1 .....

Retrospect and prospect of theoretical and practical innovations of  
China's diplomacy since the 18th CPC National Congress

# 1

Retrospect and prospect of theoretical and practical innovations of China's diplomacy since the 18th CPC National Congress

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the Central Committee of the CPC with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core has embarked on a new path featuring strengthening internal affairs governance and propelling foreign affairs. The past years witnessed China's vision and pioneering spirit. The Central Committee of the CPC has gained precise insight into complex international realities while forging ahead against all the odds. In succession, it has proposed a series of important new ideas and thoughts, developed new features and styles and identified new positions and goals. Hence, it ushers in a new era of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, in which China's diplomacy enters a brand new stage.

## 1 Current international background

The world is going through profound and complex changes. China reaches a critical moment in its pursuit of revitalizing the nation. In general, the international communities are moving in a direction favorable for China to maintain its rapid development. Although the Cold War ended, Western countries led by the United States of America have never given up their Cold War mentality. They are still seeking "hegemony" here and there. They have never ceased their efforts to contain China and Russia, two major countries in Asia and Europe respectively. NATO's Eastward Expansion in Europe epitomizes such containment strategy and the island chain strategy aimed at containing China. The United States Asia-Pacific strategy was wrecked due to the September 11 attacks (often referred to as September 11 or 9/11). As an alternative, the United States resorted to an anti-terror initiative. It waged wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, flin-

ging itself further into the turmoil in the Middle East. The United States' Subprime Crisis and Europe's Debt Crisis plaguing the West since 2008 indicate that Western countries are downhill. Western countries' intervention in the Middle East's Arab Spring (also known as the Arabic rebellions or the Arab revolutions) is stirring chaos in the Middle East and catalyzes the rise of Islamic extremist forces. Consequently, Western countries are subjected to even more challenging "IS"-based and refugee-related crises. Even worse, the European Union is facing a splitting future, followed by the British people's voting to leave it. The entire Europe is enveloped in rightward and conservative atmosphere. It is safe to conclude that the so-called advanced European and American governance modes or patterns are not immune from defects, some of which are even more serious.

All the above foretell an even more turbulent world to come. It is likely that China has to deal with an increasingly disorderly world. Such international landscape will affect China in two ways. On the one hand, as China's import and export will be severely affected by the economic standstill of Western countries, China has to reduce its dependence on foreign trade. On the other hand, to defend its national interests of "going global", China must play a more important role in the international arena.

Over nearly forty years' reform and opening-up, China's economic strength and international status have increased rapidly. In 2001, China's GDP ranked the sixth in the world. In 2010, China's GDP rocketed to World's No. 2, surpassing that of Japan and trailing behind only that of the United States of America. The period witnesses China's rising international status, which is prominently manifested by its participation and performance in major international affairs.



**European countries are tired of struggling with floods of refugees. The photo taken in September 2015 shows the wire netting mounted on Hungarian border to resist influx of refugees**

China is playing an increasingly influential role in the UN, World Bank, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and East Asia Summit. It is optimistically foreseen that China's rise will not stop but continue. In the future, China is expected to maintain its medium-to-high-speed economic growth for a long time even after its GDP exceeds that of the United States.

A review of the very beginning of reform and opening-up reveals that China was short of capital and technologies then. Even worse, there was no well-established blueprint for China to follow as to which path to take. Therefore, the achievements that China has made so far seem even more remarkable in view of a developing country. The contrast between China's rise and Western countries' decline plagued by a series of crises highlights a certain sense of road confidence. China did not collapse as expected by the theory of "China's Collapse" advocated by some Western countries. Instead,

China maintains steady growth. Undoubtedly, China's rapid rise incurs panic and skepticism from the US and other Western countries.

China-US relations have gone through the ups and downs since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. As the only super power in the world, the United States directed the China-US relations, exerting noticeable influence on the latter's diplomacy. China-US relations in this period went through three stages. The first stage fell in the 1990s, when the United States identified "imagined enemies". During this period, giving up the "quasi-allied" China-US relationship defined during the Cold War, the United States strategically targeted China as its imagined enemy. However, in fact China did not pose realistic threats to the United States, China stayed self-controlled in the Taiwan Strait crisis of 1995-1996 and the 1999's China's Embassy to the then Yugoslavia bombed. Correspondently, after a short period of mutual hostility the United States cushioned its tension with China. The second stage is the George W. Bush's administration period, in which the positioning of China as the United States "strategic competitor" was suspended by the outbreak of the September 11 attacks. After the September 11 attacks, the United States was bent on its anti-terror initiative, which to some extent called for cooperation from Russia and China. In 2005, the United States identified China as its stakeholder, through which the United States hoped to plan and control China-US relations. China used this strategic opportunity to strengthen itself. The third stage is the Barack Hussein Obama's administration, whose "Asia-Pacific Rebalancing" strategy posed manifold oppression to China. During the late stage of President Obama's administration, the United States withdrew its troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. Meanwhile, it tightened surveillance over China and frequently involved in matters concerning the relations between China and its neighbors. To enhance its

sense of presence, the United States posed its nose into the Diaoyu Islands issue, the South China Sea issue, the Korean Peninsula issue, and matters related to Myanmar, Vietnam, the Philippines, Australia, and Singapore. It even made indiscrete remarks on China's internal affairs such as issues regarding Taiwan, Hong Kong and Tibet. Consequently, uncertainty loomed in the East China Sea, the South China Sea, and the Taiwan Strait and the Korean Peninsula. Now, China-US relations face new uncertainties. In November 2016, the sharp-tongued and capricious Donald Trump was elected as the 45th president of the United States. As one of his important campaign policies, he blamed Chinese for "stealing" Americans' jobs. He made it clear that the United States should start trade wars against China. In early December that year, he even unprecedentedly held a telephone conversation with Tsai Ing-wen, leader of the Taiwan. Later he ate his words by claiming that the United States would stick to the One China policy. His capricious remarks and behaviors provoked China's bottom lines and undermined the political foundation of China-US relations. After he was officially inaugurated in January 2017, China and the United States made joint efforts to communicate with each other. As a result, Donald Trump promised that he would respect and uphold the One China policy. However, whether he will honor his commitment remains to be seen. Given the above context, frictions are inevitable in China-US relations and the two sides shall make mutual efforts to co-exist with each other.

The above analysis tells us that China's rise is accompanied by two phenomena. One is that international realities are getting increasingly complicated. The other is that "Asia-Pacific Rebalancing" strategy will be put into practice. To further improve our diplomatic environment, we shall base our diplomatic policies and theories on realities while looking far beyond the realities.



**Donald Trump injects uncertainty into China-US relations, and brings new challenges to it**

## 2 The Central Committee of the CPC's theoretical innovations on diplomacy since the 18th CPC National Congress

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, international situations have been getting more and more complicated. Meanwhile, China's rise gives birth to new challenges and demands. Under such circumstances, China is expected to precisely position its diplomacy while strengthening its relations with other countries so as to explore more room for development. Over the past four years, Chinese leaders was keeping pace with the time and breaking new ground. Gradually, a sound and holistic diplomatic blueprint has been shaped.

### 2.1 New general diplomatic goal, new national positioning

For a long time (at least since the reform and opening-up), China has positioned itself as a “developing country” and “a major coun-

try in East Asia.” Such positioning is based on China’s long-term backwardness, and China’s corresponding foreign affairs goal is set to navigate the smooth development of its domestic economy. Obviously, this is a conservative diplomatic stand. As economic and trade exchanges between China and other countries or regions frequent, China’s economy and security have “gone global”. As a result, China’s national interests are increasingly globalized. A conservative diplomatic stance, if continued, may yield disharmony between economic development and social progress. Even more, China’s justified national interests may be jeopardized. Since they took office, the enterprising and innovation-driven leaders have proposed for the first time an overall goal of China’s diplomatic work, namely, “building major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics.” Such goal clearly indicates that China positions itself as a major country in the world. Meanwhile, it points out that China’s diplomacy must serve its pursuit of the great renewal of the nation.

Both Chinese Dream and the overall goal of China’s diplomatic work reflect China’s stand that diplomacy must serve the development of the country. In November 2012, during the visit to the “Road to Revive” exhibition, Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPC, put forward the Chinese Dream aimed at the renewal of the Chinese nation. In March 2013, at the completion of a new round of leadership transition, Xi once again expounded on Chinese Dream. In essence, Chinese Dream calls on us to achieve national prosperity, national renewal and a happy life for people. At the Central Committee’s diplomacy working conference held in Beijing that lasted from November 28 to 29, 2014, Xi delivered an important speech. As the overall goal of China’s diplomatic work was put forward for the first time, It prescribes we

should champion peaceful development, cooperation and mutual benefit, plan internal and external affairs as a whole, balance development and security, make peaceful development and national renewal as our priority, safeguard national sovereignty, security and development so as to create more favorable international environment for our peaceful development, maintain and extend our strategic development opportunities, and ensure the accomplishment of the “Two Centenary Goals” and Chinese Dream of the renewal of the Chinese nation.

It's the top priority for China to accomplish the “Two Centenary Goals” and Chinese Dream now. The overall goal of China's diplomatic work sets forth what China shall champion, reiterates “plan internal and external affairs as a whole, balance development and security,” and defines specific diplomatic objective of creating more favorable environment for peaceful development and maintaining and extending China's strategic development opportunities. The new diplomatic positioning, taking all current diplomatic realities into account, will be capable of directing future work in an all-round manner.

## 2.2 China contributes to global peace by firmly proposing a new type of moral-based international relations themed on “a human community of shared destiny” and “win-win cooperation”

It was clearly stated in the report on the 18th CPC National Congress that “We should raise awareness of building a human community of shared destiny. A country should accommodate the legitimate concerns of others when pursuing its own interests, and it should promote common development of all countries when advancing its own development.” Xi Jinping maintained that not a single country