China’s Foreign Policy under Xi Jinping

The main external issues confronted with China

Firstly, How to deal with the logic of so-called “A strong nation is bound to seek hegemony”? Although China has reiterated to choose the path of peaceful development, the voice of “China Threat” is still being echoed by some followers. Some Western countries speculate from their rising history and draw a conclusion that China will seek hegemony after becoming powerful.

Secondly, a kind of strong influence from media and the public to disturb bilateral relation. The media’s power has been enlarged in the new media era. The media will affect the public opinion and press the government to make decisions that may be against their willingness. It results in strong responses to please the public but damaging diplomatic negotiation or no happening of any possible compromise.

Thirdly, the nationalism in Japan, Vietnam, Philippines and so forth is emerging. They made use of historical problems and territorial disputes to interfere with China and sometimes even became temporary alliance.

Fourthly, some neighboring countries have been worried about China’s rapid growth, which causes pressure on their industries and environment. They question about China’s peaceful development as well.

Fifthly, the external tension also comes from America’s return to Asia-Pacific Strategy. It encourages some Chinese neighboring countries to expand the disputes in order to pursue self-interests.

Xi Jinping’s world outlook and diplomatic thoughts

Then what are the world outlook and diplomatic thoughts of President Xi Jinping to deal with this complicated chessboard?

Firstly, President Xi Jinping embraces Deng Xiaoping’s legacy by upholding China’s unique path. Xi appreciates Mr. Deng’s pragmatic doctrine of “seek truth from facts”. Mr. Deng displayed his political courage and a sense of responsibility to test uncharted waters and break new
ground. But Xi also said, "We should always be brave enough to explore
and create. We shall proceed with reform and opening up without hesita-
tion". He carries out foreign policies with more initiative.

Secondly, President Xi Jinping created the concept of Chinese dream
and has made full use of possible chances to publicize it in the world. The
core content of Chinese dream is to build a moderately prosperous society
and realize national rejuvenation. The Chinese Dream integrates national
and personal aspirations, with the twin goals of reclaiming national pride
and achieving personal well-being. And Chinese dream will benefit greatly
the whole world and will not damage other peoples' well-being at all.

Thirdly, President Xi Jinping stresses a view of righteousness and
profit. He says that we should seek common ground and converging inter-
ests, stick to the sound value of justice and benefit, have principles to act
upon, cherish friendship and righteousness, and offer more assistance to
developing countries within our capacity. During his recent visit to Mon-
golia, he restated that in international cooperation we should pay attention
to profits, but also to the Righteousness. He says China welcome neighbor-
ing free riders to share China’s rapid growth of economy.

Fourthly, President Xi Jinping advocates to building a community of
shared destiny for mankind. In promoting inclusiveness and mutual learn-
ing, we should respect diversity of civilizations and development paths,
respect and safeguard the rights of all peoples to independently choose
their social system and development path, learn from others to make up for
our shortcomings, and advance human civilization. In promoting mutually
beneficial cooperation, we should raise awareness of sharing a community
of common destiny. A country should accommodate the legitimate con-
cerns of others when pursuing its own interests. Countries should establish
a new type of global development partnership which is more equitable and
balanced, stick together in times of difficulty, both share rights and shoul-
der obligations, and boost the common interests of mankind.

Fifthly, President Xi Jinping proposes the concept of building a new
Asia. Xi emphasized that countries should be treated equally with regard
to security and Asian problems should be solved by Asians. Xi said Asian
countries should “pro-actively” seek to build an Asian security concept
with a regional framework and we should keep up with the changing times,
and cannot allow it to happen that your body has entered the 21st century
but your mind still sticks to the old era of Cold War and zero-sum mentality.
Sixthly, President Xi Jinping vows no surrender on legitimate rights and core interests. China will remain on a path of peaceful development, yet it will “never give up” legitimate rights or sacrifice core interests. China will adhere to an “open, cooperative and win-win” development model. Xi stressed that only when all countries pursue a path of peaceful development can they jointly develop and enjoy peaceful coexistence. China should participate in international affairs in a more positive manner, jointly combat global challenges and contribute to global development.

Seventhly, President Xi Jinping emphasizes that Chinese should boost the self-confidence in our path, our theories and our institutions and especially in our culture. As he visited the headquarters of The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris in March this year, he said that In the Chinese civilization, the pursuit of culture has always a part of people’s spiritual lives and social ideals. So the realization of the Chinese dream is a process of both material and cultural development. The Chinese civilization, together with rich and colorful civilizations created by the people from other countries will provide mankind with the right cultural guidance and strong motivation. What’s more, Xi wore a modified Mao suit to a state dinner hosted by the Dutch royal family. The state-run China Daily said that Mr. Xi’s choice of a Chinese-style suit reflected “national pride and confidence in Chinese culture.

New Characteristics of China’s foreign policy under Xi’s Administration

Under the guidance of Xi, the foreign work has been implemented in the following aspects.

At first, China calls for a “new type of major-power relationship” as a framework for future Sino-US bilateral relations. During the U. S. — China presidential summit in June 2013 at Sunnylands, California, Chinese President Xi Jinping asserted that relations between China and the United States were at “a new historical starting point” and a new type of Sino-US relation should be built up. The major principles align with the idea are mutual respect, mutual benefit and win-win to forge ahead with the lasting and healthy development of the ties. It is a well-developed, coherent outgrowth of Chinese foreign policy meant to stabilize great power relations and establish a new international order. To the contrary, the US began to flesh out its rebalancing to Asia strategy in 2012, prompting Chinese
concerns. US planed to shift its force posture from the current roughly 50–50 split between the Pacific and Atlantic to a 60–40 split in favor of the Pacific. Chinese scholar DR Jin Canrong suggests that the key element of the New Type of Great Power Relations should be avoiding military conflicts. Modification is far more needed than revolution in the current international order. And America scholar David M. Lampton puts forward the idea of Cooperative Balance in Asia. The central strategic challenge that the United States and China face is how to get along with each other so that each country can focus on rebuilding itself. Beijing’s and Washington’s commitment to those similar projects like economic mutual interest is the foundation for sound ties on which both should build, knowing that cooperation and competition will both be features of relations. Neither the United States nor China can afford to be at loggerheads if they each wish to build better homes for themselves and cooperate on pressing global issues such as climate change. From the perspective of Chinese scholars, the developing of the comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination between China and Russia has set a successful example of new type of major power relations.

Secondly, referring to the neighboring countries, China will stick on building good neighborly relationships and partnerships with neighboring countries and bringing harmony, security and prosperity to the neighbors, actively practice the new concept of “closeness, sincerity, sharing in prosperity and inclusiveness” in neighborhood diplomacy, further enhance political mutual trust with other Asian countries, expand convergence of interests, strengthen exchanges and cooperation, restrain and manage conflicts and disagreements, and jointly foster a peaceful, stable, cooperative and prosperous regional environment.

Thirdly, China not only takes the developed and neighboring countries into its diplomatic consideration, but also launches an all-dimensional diplomacy project. For the first time, China said that As a Member of the Developing World China Will Always Speak up for Developing Countries. The international balance of power is moving towards greater equilibrium. The developing countries have gained a greater say in world affairs and enjoyed greater respect. From March to June in 2013, President Xi Jinping has visited Russia, Tanzania, South Africa, Congo, Latin America and so forth.
The last but not least, China has attached importance on Public Diplomacy and cultural exchanges. Xi and his colleagues have been trying to tell story of China to the world and tell story of the world to China. Mr. Xi and his colleagues often write articles for the local newspapers and deliver open speech for local audience. Through frequent public diplomacy, Chinese new leaders have tried their best to dwell on our policies and standpoints to the international affairs. For example, Mr. Xi delivered a speech at Moscow State Institute of International Relations during his visit in your country. You only know if the shoes fit by wearing them yourself. Xi said that Efforts are needed to build China’s national image. China should be portrayed as a civilized country featuring rich history, ethnic unity and cultural diversity, and as an oriental power with good government, developed economy, cultural prosperity, national unity and beautiful mountains and rivers. China should also be marked as a responsible country that advocates peaceful and common development, safeguards international justice, and makes contributions to humanity, and as a socialist country which is open, amicable, promising and vibrant.

The possible changes will be happening to China’s international strategy

Adapting to the changing circumstances in the restructuring of international relations and for China’s own development, Xi’s government has made pioneering efforts with a series of major diplomatic initiatives for proactively advancing China’s diplomatic theories and charted a new course in practice.

First, with the role that China plays in the international stage varying from developing country, responsible great country to great power, the victim mentality of nations will change to great power mentality, especially in the context of Xi’s diplomatic features, which is confident and proactive.

Second, more flexible diplomatic methods will be applied such as Summit Diplomacy and Public Diplomacy. It replaces the traditional diplomatic preference of working without publicizing. The national image building has become a vital part dealing with foreign affairs.

Third, the country’s strategy begins to focus more on politics and culture instead of economy, military and security. China will give priority to pursuit of soft power rather than hard power gradually.