



**HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS**  
Hugvísindasvið

# **China's foreign policy**

*Noninterference, peaceful coexistence and the  
preservation of national interests*

**Ritgerð til B.A.-prófs**

**Tobias Biedermann**

**Maí 2012**

**Háskóli Íslands**

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**Kínversk Fræði**

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## **Abstract:**

This Bachelor's thesis deals with China's foreign affairs since the end of the Second World War. Due to China's economic success and political reforms within the last 30 years, the country has become a power of global importance. China left its isolated status and now maintains diplomatic relations to almost every country in the world, which leads to the question of China's aim within the international scene and whether China's rise goes hand in hand with a peaceful diplomacy towards other nations. This thesis aims to analyze and explain the development of China's foreign policy, by means of China's role in the Security Council of the United Nations and its relationship and position towards, Japan, North Korea, the Southeast Asian Nations, Taiwan and the United States of America. The emphasis of this thesis therefore is the question whether China's foreign policy is able to balance its principles of noninterference and peaceful coexistence with its national interests.

Þessi BA ritgerð fjallar um utanríkisstefnu Kína frá lokum Seinni heimstyrjaldarinnar. Þökk sé uppgangi efnahags Kína ásamt pólitískum umbótum síðastliðin 30 ár, hefur landið orðið stórveldi í alþjóðlegum skilningi. Kína sagði skilið við einangrunarstefnu sína og viðheldur í dag virkum milliríkjasamskiptum við flest ríki í heiminum, sem vekur upp þá spurningu hver stefna Kína sé á alþjóðavísu og hvort vöxtur Kína gangi hönd í hönd við yfirlýsta friðarstefnu í alþjóðasamskiptum. Markmið þessarar BA ritgerðar er að rýna í og útskýra þróun kínveskrar utanríkisstefnu út frá setu Kína í Öryggisráði Sameinuðu Þjóðanna ásamt samskiptum og afstöðu þeirra gagnvart Japan, Norður-Kóreu, Taíwan, Suðaustur Asíuþjóðum og Bandaríkjunum. Áhersla verður því lögð á hvort utanríkisstefna Kína kemur til með að geta haldið jafnvægi út frá yfirlýstri stefnu um hlutleysi og friðsamlega sambúð við önnur ríki á mótí þjóðarhagsmunum.

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## 1. Introduction

China is seen as the next superpower, economically, politically and militarily. Approximately one fifth of the world's population is Chinese, cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou or Chongqing are some of the most populous cities in the world. Half of the world's clothing is *Made in China*. In addition to that, 40% of the world's cement, 40% of the world's coal and 30% of the world's iron steel are claimed by China. Moreover, China consumes 12% of the world's energy.<sup>1</sup> China's resource consumption appears to be insatiable. The Chinese government maintains diplomatic relationships with almost every country in the world. Confucian Institutes have been founded in various countries. China is already a member of the WTO as well as a constant member of the SCUN. Though not yet a member of the G8, its acceptance is a mere question of time. China indeed has become a global figure. In 2010, China overtook Japan and is now the second largest world economy. Due to China's rapid growth and economic success, Beijing more and more represents its national and international interests on the international scene. Hu Jintao's speech to the 17th National Congress of the CPC in 2007 reflects China's present foreign policy in terms of its own view of the CPC.

"Hu said that whatever changes take 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."<sup>2</sup>

There is no doubt that politicians and journalists of Western countries and sometimes even the citizens of those countries, do not believe in aim of the CPC. Some of them openly fear China's rise and see China as a threat to the world and to their own country. A lack of knowledge and understanding of China and its foreign policy is at the root of many accusations of this kind. But is China's foreign policy on the other hand exactly as Hu proclaims in his speech? Is the PRC able to stick to its national interests without violating its principles of noninterference and peaceful coexistence? Has China become a responsible international power of global importance? This Bachelor's Thesis sets out to examine the development of China's foreign policy in context of noninterference, peaceful coexistence and the preservation of national interests. How is the PRC able to

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<sup>1</sup> M. Leonard, *Was denkt China?*, trans. H. Dierlamm, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, Munich, 2009, p.18

<sup>2</sup> T. Feng, *'Hu Jintao calls for building harmonious world'*, Xinhua News Agency, 2007, retrieved 3 March 2012, <[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/15/content\\_6884160.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/15/content_6884160.htm)>

fulfill its principles mentioned before? In this research I have mostly relied on books which deal with Chinese foreign policy or the development of China in general. In order to discuss recent events, I used online sources, as well. The reason why I preferred books over newspapers or other sources of that kind is, that it is within my belief, that books are able to provide the necessary background information and coherences. Firstly I will deal with China's position and role in the UN as well as the SCUN. The fact that China is a member of the P-5 in the SCUN, gives China an important role in the international scene. China is not only able to express its foreign policy in the UN, but also able to decide over military interferences. Within the UN, the PRC has the possibility and chance to actively influence world politics in favor of its own national interests and principles. Secondly the thesis aims to analyze China's relations to Japan, North Korea and the Southeast Asian Nations. Japan is, next to China, the other big global player in the APA, therefore a military confrontation between these two, would mean a devastating catastrophe for the whole APA, therefore a peaceful coexistence between these two super-powers is essential for both of them. China's diplomatic relations to Japan and Japan's close alliance to the US, will be the focus in this chapter. China's close alliance to North Korea is often seen as an insult towards the international community, therefore it shall be pointed out whether there is a real alliance between North Korea and China or not. Due to the fact, that China is North Korea's only official ally, the dispute on the Korean peninsula cannot be solved peacefully without China. The Southeast Asian Nations are right in front of China's doorstep and it is within China's interest to maintain good political and economic relations. Furthermore, China is aware that the US also seeks influence in that area. Therefore China is interested in investing and helping in this area, in order to win new friends and to push back the rising American influence. The following part will examine China's position in the Taiwan issue, which seems to be non-negotiable. Beijing's position is, that Taiwan is to be seen as a part of China. Due to the fact that China sees the Taiwan issue as an inner affair, it reacts very sensitive to foreign criticism. The final part of this thesis deals with China's relationship to the US. The US is China's biggest trading partner, as well as biggest opponent. Is a war between China and the US inevitable? And why do both rely on global influence? In order to approach these complicated issues and questions, one must take a close look and see the picture from more than just one side.

## 2. China's role and position in the Security Council of the United Nations

The acceptance of the ROC as a permanent member of the SCUN in 1945 was a milestone in Chinese history. Back then China wasn't the centre of attention. The world looked at Germany and at the end of the Second World War. Due to the fact that China was weak and certainly not a power of global importance, it might seem surprising that China got the seat in the SCUN, but President Franklin Roosevelt rewarded China for its efforts against the Japanese during the Second World War. As a result of a civil war between the Nationalist *Guomindang* and the Communist Party of China, the GMD under Jiang Jieshi had to flee to the small island of Taiwan. In 1949 Mao Zedong proclaimed the foundation of the PRC while his opponent Jiang Jieshi still claimed to represent the whole of China. The political class in America was anticommunist, so the permanent seat in the SCUN remained to the GMD on Taiwan. Any demands by the CPC were declined. From now on the foreign policy of the PRC concentrated on that issue. During the war in Korea between 1950 and 1953 the UN continued to refuse the CPC and its aim. In 1950, out of a protest of refusing the PRC's aim, concerning the permanent seat in the SCUN, the former SU boycotted the UN for several months. Therefore the UN was able to interfere in Korea, since the SU wasn't able to veto that decision.<sup>3</sup> The PRC entered the war, supporting the regime in Pyongyang, when UN military forces reached the Chinese-Korean border. "The conflict catapulted the new regime of Mao Zedong from the situation of a victor in civil war to that of a contender with the United Nations for control of Korea."<sup>4</sup> The council of the UN understood this act as an interference into UN affairs, hence China's claim of representing the whole of China vanished completely. In order to modify the UN's view on the PRC, the CPC proclaimed its *5 principles of a peaceful coexisting* in 1954: "[...] gegenseitiger Respekt für die Souveränität und territoriale Integrität, gegenseitiger Nichtangriff, gegenseitige Nichteinmischung in die inneren Angelegenheiten, Gleichheit und gegenseitiger Nutzen sowie friedliche Koexistenz."<sup>5</sup>

These five principles are still valid in China's foreign policy today. Not only did those five principles fit fundamental principles of international law, but they also gave China

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<sup>3</sup> C. Schniedermann, *Der Drache auf der Weltbühne: China's UN-Politik seit der Zeitenwende 1989*, Diplomica Verlag GmbH, Hamburg, 2009, p. 38

<sup>4</sup> A.S. Whiting, *China crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War*, New York, 1960, cited in *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> C. Schniedermann, *Der Drache auf der Weltbühne: China's UN-Politik seit der Zeitenwende 1989*, Diplomica Verlag GmbH, Hamburg, 2009, p. 39



the opportunity to establish its claim for leadership aside from New York, Washington D.C. and Moscow. During the 1960s China more and more isolated itself, while members of the CPC called the UN the "political stock exchange in the name of a few big powers".<sup>6</sup>As a result of the Cultural Revolution China's foreign policy and its diplomacy took a back seat. At the end of the cultural revolution in 1969, China started to renew international relations. Henceforth the claim of being a permanent member of the P-5 in the SCUN had highest priority in China's foreign policy. Old embassies were reopened, old relations re-established and new relations were made. In 1971 the majority of the members of the UN voted for the PRC and therefore against Taiwan. For the first time in the history of the UN a permanent member of the SCUN was banned and as a result of that the PRC became a member of the P-5 in the SCUN. The effort of searching new allies is a significant reason why the PRC reached its aim. But not only the majority of the developing countries, which represent a majority in the UN, voted for the PRC, but also P-5 members such as France and Britain, as well as all the NATO-states except the USA.<sup>7</sup> From 1971 until 1989 China's role in the UN was hesitant, passive and cautious. The PRC never agreed on the UN's so called *peace-missions*, nevertheless it didn't block those missions with a veto either. After Mao Zedong's death in 1976, Deng Xiaoping concentrated his politics on economic growth. Even though Deng Xiaoping never was head of state, head of government or general secretary of the Communist Party, in 1978 the CPC made him the more or less unofficial paramount leader of the PRC. Henceforth the CPC concentrated on Deng's *four modernizations*, which meant the modernization of agriculture, industry, science and technology as well as the modernization of the army.<sup>8</sup> Deng was well aware that he needed the Western countries for his reforms in order to bring investors and modern technology into his country, thus China's diplomats at the UN saw no reason to interfere into the Western countries' business at the UN. Due to that passive position within the UN, the PRC was somewhat inconsistent with its actual foreign policy. Given that the PRC was the only member of the P-5 which was a developing country, the PRC understood itself as a representative of the developing countries, hence the PRC neither was a responsible member, nor a counterbalance to the USA, Britain, France or the SU.<sup>9</sup> 1989 marked

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<sup>6</sup> S.S. Kim, *China, the United Nations, and World Order*, Princeton, 1979, cited in *ibid.*, p. 40

<sup>7</sup> C. Schniedermann, *Der Drache auf der Weltbühne: China's UN-Politik seit der Zeitenwende 1989*, Diplomica Verlag GmbH, Hamburg, 2009, p. 42-43

<sup>8</sup> K. Seitz, *China: Eine Weltmacht kehrt zurück*, 5th edn., Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, Munich, 2006, p. 232

<sup>9</sup> C. Schniedermann, *Der Drache auf der Weltbühne: China's UN-Politik seit der Zeitenwende 1989*, Diplomica Verlag GmbH, Hamburg, 2009, p. 52-54

another short period of mistrust towards the PRC. Due to the Tiananmen-Tragedy the CPC risked their legitimacy to be a member of the P-5. The Western countries imposed a couple of sanctions on the PRC. Especially the economic sanctions threatened Deng's plan of modernization. It didn't take long for Deng Xiaoping to react:

"When I heard that seven Western countries, at their summit meeting, had decided to impose sanctions on China, my immediate association was to 1900, when the allied forces of the eight powers invaded China."<sup>10</sup>

The final collapse of the SU complicated the situation even more. "Der damalige US-Präsident George Bush rief bereits im Herbst 1990 eine *New World Order* aus, deren konkrete Gestaltung seinem Amtsnachfolger Bill Clinton oblag."<sup>11</sup> It was hard to tell whether the PRC would have played an important role in Bush's *New World Order*. The first Gulf-War in 1990 offered the PRC the chance to rehabilitate its relations to the UN. When the military forces of Iraq invaded Kuwait it was up to the PRC whether this action would be condemned or not. The PRC agreed to the *Resolution 660* which ordered Iraq' government to withdraw all military forces from Kuwait and imposed several sanctions on the country.<sup>12</sup> However the resolution didn't bring any positive results, so the UN was now talking about a military intervention, but the PRC was not willing to agree to a military intervention. But herein the PRC had the opportunity to show the UN that it could take on great responsibility, since the mistrust regarding the Tiananmen-Tragedy hadn't been forgotten yet. The PRC saw itself as a representative of the developing countries, and most of those developing countries didn't agree on the military intervention in Kuwait, so on the one hand the PRC wanted to regain trust from the Western members of the UN, which would have been possible if it had agreed to the military intervention in Kuwait, on the other hand the PRC didn't want to lose its allies among the developing countries. When it came up to the *Resolution 678*, which implied a military intervention in Kuwait, the PRC answered with an abstinence.<sup>13</sup> In that way the PRC was able to regain trust from the Western countries and the USA in particular, but also to stick to its basic principle of nonviolence and noninterference. "China abstained because the resolution could set a dangerous example of countries using the UN as a tool to interfere in regional affairs around the world or in other countries

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<sup>10</sup> X. Deng, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3: 1982-1992, Beijing, 1994, cited in *ibid.*, p. 55

<sup>11</sup> C. Schniedermann, *Der Drache auf der Weltbühne: China's UN-Politik seit der Zeitenwende 1989*, Diplomica Verlag GmbH, Hamburg, 2009, p. 56

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p. 58

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p. 60

domestic affairs by the use of force."<sup>14</sup> Concerning the intervention on the Balkan starting in 1995, the PRC once more stayed abstinent in some of the resolutions. Nevertheless, the PRC agreed to a resolution which allowed a NATO peace-keeping troop to enter Bosnia-Herzegowina, but not without leaving a remark:

"This does not mean however that China's position has undergone any change: that is, China has all along disapproved of operations authorized by the Security Council when at every turn it invokes Chapter VII of the Charter and adopts mandatory measures. We believe that the implementation force (IFOR), in carrying out its task, must maintain neutrality and impartiality and avoid wanton use of force so as to avoid damaging the image of the United Nations."<sup>15</sup>

When the situation escalated in 1999, the NATO-States decided to bombard Serbia with the result of the well-known bombardment of the Serbian capital Belgrade. This intervention was not covered by a resolution of the SCUN and still represents a violation of international law. The harsh reaction of the Chinese government wasn't really surprising:

"We oppose the use or the threat of use of force in international affairs. We oppose the power politics of the strong bullying the weak. We oppose interference in the internal affairs of other States, under whatever pretext, in whatever form. [...] the question of Kosovo, being an internal matter of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, should be resolved by the parties concerned in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia among themselves."<sup>16</sup>

The Kosovo-Conflict symbolized the two different points of view concerning that *New World Order*. Some countries represented the ones who stood for military intervention in order of peace-keeping, the others stood for the ones who didn't want to interfere into other countries' inner affairs. Beijing was worried about this new form of military intervention and started to develop a mistrust towards the institution of the UN. The Sino-US-relations had once again been weakened. This period of mistrust already changed in 2001, after the terrorist attack on the Twin-Towers in New York City. After 9/11 the PRC immediately assured the Bush-Jr.-Administration of its support in Bush's *War On Terror*. "For all the differences and mutual suspicions between China and the United States, Jiang [Jiang Zemin] realized, the US and China are in a win-win, lose-

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<sup>14</sup> H. Hwei-ling, *Patterns of Behaviour in China's Foreign Policy: The Gulf Crisis and Beyond*, in: Asian Survey, Vol. 32, No. 3, 1992, cited in *ibid.*, p. 60

<sup>15</sup> U. N. Security Council Verbatim Record, S/PV. 3607, December 1995, cited in C. Schniedermann, *Der Drache auf der Weltbühne: China's UN-Politik seit der Zeitenwende 1989*, Diplomica Verlag GmbH, Hamburg, 2009, p. 64

<sup>16</sup> U. N. Security Council Verbatim Record, S/PV. 3989, March 1999, cited in C. Schniedermann, *Der Drache auf der Weltbühne: China's UN-Politik seit der Zeitenwende 1989*, Diplomica Verlag GmbH, Hamburg, 2009, p. 66

lose symbiotic economic - and strategic - relationship."<sup>17</sup> The reasons why the PRC agreed to the resolution concerning Afghanistan are many-sided: The PRC wanted to improve its relations to the US after the discrepancy in the Kosovo-Issue, the US declared Muslim separatists in the Chinese province of Xinjiang as a terrorist organization, China was able to regain global importance within the UN and the US-made *China threat theory* vanished.<sup>18</sup> China's position concerning the second Gulf-War was ambivalent. China agreed to the first resolution, which included inspections in Iraq concerning nuclear material for military use. Before the second resolution, which included a possible military intervention, China, next to Russia and France, announced that it wouldn't agree on any military intervention. Therefore the military intervention in Iraq by the US was another clear violation of international law. But compared to the intervention in Kosovo, China was this time in a more comfortable position, since other UN-members of global importance, such as France, Russia and Germany, didn't take part in the intervention, either. Nevertheless, in Chinese eyes, the intervention was and is a complicated diplomatic issue.

"Although the war on terrorism provided an opportunity for improving [...] Sino-American relations, this improvement has not significantly altered the looming tensions and mistrust between the United States and China.[...] Believing that the United States is threatened on an unprecedented scale by regimes and groups whose ideologies commit them to the destruction of American values, Washington considered it axiomatic that the emergency was too great to rely on existing multilateral mechanisms of security, especially the UN."<sup>19</sup>

Since 1989 the PRC has certainly become a responsible power within the UN, although strategic voting is still dominating China's foreign policy. Nevertheless China's foreign policy within the SCUN and the UN is inseparably connected to its *5 principles of peaceful coexisting*, so it isn't really surprising that China somehow sees itself as some kind of guardian of the *Westphalian Tradition* of the UN: "China's sense of victimhood and its wariness of the UN's expanded normative agenda has led it to reaffirm the Security Council's primacy [...] and to hold onto the Westphalian interpretation of state sovereignty and noninterference".<sup>20</sup> But as any other member of the UN, Beijing will act

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<sup>17</sup> G. Banning, *US-China Relations in the Era of Globalization and Terror: a framework for analysis*, in: *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 15, No. 48, cited in C. Schniedermann, *Der Drache auf der Weltbühne: China's UN-Politik seit der Zeitenwende 1989*, Diplomica Verlag GmbH, Hamburg, 2009, p. 68

<sup>18</sup> C. Schniedermann, *Der Drache auf der Weltbühne: China's UN-Politik seit der Zeitenwende 1989*, Diplomica Verlag GmbH, Hamburg, 2009, p. 72

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, p. 75-76

<sup>20</sup> D.M. Lampton, *The Faces of Chinese Power*, in: *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 1, 2007, cited in *ibid.*, p. 132

according to its own interests. Especially the developing countries in the UN share China's position of noninterference, not because all of them consider themselves as close allies to the PRC, but they see China as an important counterbalance to the power of the USA. According to them, "China is destined to pose a challenge to the Western-dominated international system."<sup>21</sup>

### 3. China's *zhoubian* diplomacy

China has land-based borders to 14 countries, which are Afghanistan, Bhutan, Myanmar (Burma), India, Kazakhstan, North-Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Tadjikistan and Vietnam. Even though there are no land-based borders to Japan South-Korea and the Philippines, due to territorial issues, you could still assume that China actually has 17 neighbors. If one also counts in Indonesia, Brunei and Malaysia, it would be 20 neighbors. Even though not all of China's neighbors are land-based, due to recent economic and diplomatic relations and developments, China seeks for close diplomatic relationships to these countries, as well. But nevertheless, China has more land-based neighbors than any other country in the world. This fact requires a peaceful and careful *zhoubian* diplomacy, which can be understood as a peripheral diplomacy. China's relations to its neighbors are quite different, although Beijing has always proclaimed that China does not have any expansionist interests. Since China never displayed extensive colonial interests in the past, especially in comparison to other Western countries, such as the UK, the US and the former SU, this claim seems to be justified. However, during the era of Mao Zedong, the PRC interfered in Tibet, the Korean War, the Vietnam War as well as in few other conflicts, so until 1989 there was a certain mistrust towards the PRC. Since the 1990s Beijing has sought to improve the relations to its neighbors.

"With the exception of Taiwan, which did not factor directly in China's peripheral diplomacy, the chances of a conflict between Beijing and a neighbouring political actor are much lower than in previous decades. Moreover, China's growing economic power has attracted considerable attention throughout the Pacific Rim, especially after the 1997-98 Asian Financial Crisis, which resulted in Beijing being perceived as both an island of stability and a helpful partner."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> B. Russett & J. Oneil, *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence and International Organizations*, New York, 2001, cited in C. Schniedermann, *Der Drache auf der Weltbühne: China's UN-Politik seit der Zeitenwende 1989*, Diplomica Verlag GmbH, Hamburg, 2009, p. 134

<sup>22</sup> M. Lanteigne, *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction*, Routledge, New York, 2009, p. 109

The AFC certainly was a milestone in improving China's relations to its neighbors. Former Chancellor of West-Germany, Helmut Schmidt, shares Lanteigne's point of view:

"In den neunziger Jahren haben die asiatischen Länder beobachten können, dass China keine militärischen Expansionsträume hegt, und im Verlauf der Asienkrise haben sie festgestellt, dass China in schlechten Zeiten bereit ist, für die gesamte Region gerade zu stehen. Die Chinesen haben den Yuan nicht abgewertet und ihre asiatischen Nachbarn nicht in eine noch tiefere Krise gestürzt [...]. Zudem hat die chinesische Führung dem IWF große Summen überwiesen, um die Lage zu stabilisieren. Das hat dazu beigetragen, Vertrauen aufzubauen."<sup>23</sup>

Even though the relations to China's neighbors improved, China is still confronted with certain problematic issues in the APA. Three of those are the complicated relationship to Japan, China's position towards North-Korea and the dispute about the Spratly Islands in the South Chinese Sea.

### **3.1 Japan - *zhengleng jingre***

Over centuries the relations to Japan were one-sided. China saw itself as the Middle Kingdom and certainly had the hegemony in the APA, hence China had a big influence on the Japanese Culture; no matter whether it was pottery, painting, horticulture, Buddhism or the Japanese Kanji - which are Chinese Characters. Without the Chinese culture, the Japanese culture as we know it today, wouldn't exist. Due to the first Opium War in the middle of the 19th century, China's supremacy vanished and Japan became the new predominance in East Asia. In 1856, the fleet of US-Commodore Matthew C. Perry reached the bay of Tokyo, which led to the so called *Meiji-Restoration*, which in fact wasn't a restoration but the opening of the Japanese market to the world as well as the beginning Japan's of industrialization<sup>24</sup>. In terms of China it meant the continuing downfall after the loss of the War against the British Empire. At the end of the 19th century Japan was powerful enough to take over Taiwan, which remained a part of Japan until 1945. Japan annexed other parts of China as well, but the most horrific event took place in 1937, when the Imperial Japanese Army mass-murdered approximately 300,000 Chinese civilians and unarmed soldiers in Nanjing; today this war-crime is known as the *Nanjing Massacre*.<sup>25</sup> Based on the Japanese intrusion and the *Nanjing*

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<sup>23</sup> H. Schmidt & F. Sieren, *Nachbar China*, 2nd edn., Ullstein Buchverlage GmbH, Berlin, 2008, p. 169

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p. 115

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p. 148

*Massacre*, the Sino-Japanese-Relations are still relatively bad, although their economies are closely linked. One of the main reasons for that is, that the Japanese government never officially apologized to China for their war crimes. Due to the ignorance of the Japanese political class and ongoing provocations towards China, Chinese resentments towards Japan are still very present:

"First is the controversy over Japan's Yasukuni Shrine, founded in 1869, which became a magnet for local and regional criticism when in 1978 fourteen Class-A war criminals, including wartime Prime Minister Hideki Tojo, were interred there. Visits by Japanese leaders to Yasukuni to honour Japanese war dead frequently aroused protests in China and South Korea, and the subject remains politically delicate in Tokyo while often being a focus of nationalist protest in China."<sup>26</sup>

Another scandal took place in 2005, when the Japanese government allowed history books in school which trivialize the Nanjing-Massacre and other war crimes. Not only the Chinese government protested against those school books, but a huge part of the Chinese population also expressed their anger in public by boycotting Japanese products and burning Japanese flags. "These demonstrations, which caused significant damage to many Japanese businesses and consulates, were allowed to proceed for a few days by Chinese authorities before being halted."<sup>27</sup> Another factor which doesn't improve the Sino-Japanese-relations is the presence of the US military forces in Japan as well as the re-militarization of the Japanese military. In 2005 the Japanese prime minister changed article 9 of the Japanese constitution. This article was introduced in 1947 by the Americans, in order to prevent a Japanese re-militarization.<sup>28</sup> Since then Japan had only been allowed to have military troops and equipment in order to defend itself. Supported by the USA, Japan has now rearmed and upgraded its military forces in order to fight global terrorism as well as being able to defend itself if China would decide to attack Japan. Obviously Japan does not trust China and Hu Jintao's speech from 2007 at all, but the legitimacy of Japan's re-militarization is highly questionable. In the last 4000 to 5000 years China never invaded or attacked Japan, nevertheless the Japanese government fears the Chinese rise and doesn't want to become the Asian-Pacific *No.2*. But basically Japan can be seen as just the little sister of the USA in the APA. Although China's and Japan's economy are closely linked and both certainly work well together on the economic field, one fact is inevitable, that is, that China gets more important and Japan gets less important and among many other countries in the APA, such as

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<sup>26</sup> M. Lanteigne, *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction*, Routledge, New York, 2009, p. 111

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> J.F. Susbielle, *China-USA: Der programmierte Krieg*, trans. A. Hildebrand & H. Must, Ullstein Buchverlage GmbH, Berlin, 2009, p. 224

Thailand, China most likely has the better reputation. "As Chinese scholars have noted, the relationship has best been described as 'cold politics, hot economics' (zhengleng jingre)."<sup>29</sup>

### **3.2 North Korea - the valuable, misbehaving little brother**

Concerning the North-Korea issue, the Chinese position is a little bit more complicated. During the 19th century Korea was encapsulated in the same way as China was, which led to the fact that both sealed their own downfall, but while China's government stayed in office and the foreign invaders annexed only a few parts of China, all of Korea got under Japanese control. Therefore China became home to many Koreans who fled from their home country.<sup>30</sup> After the Second World War, Korea was separated by the USA and the Soviet Union into the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the North and the Republic of Korea in the South. Since then "A 4 km wide, 250 km long DMZ [demilitarised zone] has separated North from South Korea since 1953, with only 194 km separating Pyongyang from Seoul."<sup>31</sup> After the Korean War, "North Korea adopted a policy of ostensible diplomatic and economic 'self-reliance' (*juche*), and today the country remains one of the most closed in the world. [...] In reality, however, the country was heavily dependent upon Soviet and Chinese assistance [...]."<sup>32</sup> Since 1961 the alliance between the PRC and North Korea has been in existence, therefore Beijing has a bigger influence on the North Korean regime than any other nation does. Moreover China is not only North Korea's only official ally, but also its financial backer. After the North Korean flood catastrophe in 1995, Beijing immediately aided its ally and until today still maintains financial aid, since North Korea is always low on energy and food.<sup>33</sup> A breach in the relations between China and North Korea happened in 1992, when Beijing officially started diplomatic relations with South Korea. Since then China has conducted a dual recognition policy towards North and South Korea, a policy which was appreciated by South Korea, but certainly not by the North. Nevertheless, North Korea continued its relations to China, since China was and still is its only ally anyway. After the collapse of the SU, Russia became less important to

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<sup>29</sup> M. Lanteigne, *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction*, Routledge, New York, 2009, p. 113

<sup>30</sup> G. Kempf, *Chinas Außenpolitik*, R. Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, Munich, 2002, p. 88

<sup>31</sup> M. Lanteigne, *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction*, Routledge, New York, 2009, p. 115

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. 114

<sup>33</sup> G. Kempf, *Chinas Außenpolitik*, R. Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, Munich, 2002, p. 86-96



North Korea and North Korea became less important to Russia. During the period of the Cold War both China and the Soviet Union assisted North Korea in its attempt to get nuclear components, yet it still remains unclear how North Korea was able to develop its own nuclear bomb.<sup>34</sup> "In 1992, North Korea agreed to an inspection of its nuclear reactors by representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)."<sup>35</sup> Hence, the relations between the Western countries and North Korea improved, as it was seen as a success that North Korea agreed to the inspection of its nuclear reactors. However, this success didn't go on for a long time. Due to the strict regulations and rules of the IAEA, North Korea resented the inspection and after Pyongyang's plutonium enrichment program became known, several countries placed sanctions on North Korea. As a result of that, North Korea left the atomic NPT which it had signed before. After back and forth relations to the US during the Clinton-era, the relations got even worse when former US-President George W. Bush came to office and included North Korea into his *axis of evil*. In 2002, when North Korea announced its uranium-enrichment program, "[...] China was concerned that the United States might use force to deal with Pyongyang, [therefore] Beijing insisted upon a negotiated settlement which included a complete denuclearisation of the peninsula and the maintenance of regional peace and stability."<sup>36</sup> Beijing's attempts failed, since it became known that North Korea successfully tested one of its nuclear bombs in 2006:

"Finally, on 9 October 2006 North Korea detonated an approximately 1 kiloton nuclear device near the city of Gilju near the border with China, thus marking the DPRK the *de facto* ninth nuclear power, although it has not been formally recognised as such. Beijing received warning only minutes before the test via a phone call from Pyongyang, and the Chinese government launched an unusually strong public criticism of the blast, calling it 'flagrant' (*hanran*), wording normally used by Beijing when an adversary, not an ally, commits an objectionable act. Shortly afterwards, China sided with the rest of the UNSC in passing Resolution 1718, imposing economic and military sanctions on the DPRK."<sup>37</sup>

China, which is usually known for staying neutral within the UN, imposed sanctions upon its own ally. This clearly shows that the PRC does not defend North Korea by all means. Nevertheless Beijing sought to relax the tensions between North Korea and the Western countries, therefore Beijing wanted all parties to return to the so called SPT, which included North and South Korea, the US, Russia, Japan and China itself. The

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<sup>34</sup> M. Lanteigne, *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction*, Routledge, New York, 2009, p. 116

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p. 117

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p. 118

SPT were founded in 2003, after North Korea once again withdrawn itself from the NPT. Even though all six parties joined the SPT at the end of 2006, Beijing remained in a difficult position for a couple of reasons. Beijing wasn't sure how much influence it had on its own ally, furthermore it placed a lot of political capital on the SPT, but couldn't be sure whether the SPT would turn out as a success, since North Korea had crossed a line. In addition to that many Chinese government officials still saw North Korea as China's ally and a storm of North Korean refugees seemed to be possible as well.<sup>38</sup> Recent incidents such as the bombardment of a South Korean island by North Korean artillery at the end of 2010 as well as the attempt to launch a North Korean satellite into space in 2012 certainly have not helped China's position in the Korea-issue.<sup>39</sup><sup>40</sup> Therefore everything remains at a status quo and China seeks to conciliate both North Korea and the Western countries including Japan and South Korea. There are three main reasons why China won't let go of North Korea. First, North Korea is estimated to have a lot of mineral resources, such as coal, iron ore, magnesia and others. On that account Beijing seeks good relations towards the regime in Pyongyang in order to have access to those precious resources. Second, Beijing wants to reduce the US-influence in the Asia-Pacific area and henceforth doesn't want a Korea which is ruled only by the South - who is an ally of the United States. And third, if there was a second Korean-war, it would be likely that China, once again, would have the US military forces right in front of its own doorstep. In that way, North Korea is considered a welcome buffer zone between the Chinese-Korean border in the North and the US military forces in the South. The opinions on which solution in the Korea-issue might be the most comfortable one for Beijing, differ. The German sinologist Hans van Ess thinks that China would prefer a settlement and therefore a reunion of North and South Korea, because it would automatically end the presence of the US military forces in Korea.<sup>41</sup> The German journalist and China-Expert Frank Sieren on the other hand believes that China would not prefer any kind of reunion, because US military forces could be stationed right in front of the Chinese-Korean border.<sup>42</sup> In addition to that he assumes that even in case of a reunion, the US would find arguments for their troops to

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<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p. 118-119

<sup>39</sup> BBC News, '*North Korean artillery hits South Korean island*', BBC, 2010, retrieved 3 April 2012, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-11818005>>

<sup>40</sup> BBC News, '*North Korea rocket launch fails*', BBC, 2012, retrieved 15 April 2012, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-17698438>>

<sup>41</sup> H. van Ess, *Die 101 wichtigsten Fragen: China*, C. H. Beck oHG, Munich, 2008, p. 58

<sup>42</sup> F. Sieren, *Der China Schock: Wie Peking sich die Welt gefügig macht*, 2nd edn., Ullstein Buchverlage GmbH, Berlin, 2010, p. 88

remain in South Korea.<sup>43</sup> Given America's past foreign policy, this assumption seems logical and since US-President Barack Obama recently announced he wanted to increase US military forces in the APA in order to maintain peace and expand the US-influence in the region, it is very unlikely that the Americans would retreat from South Korea, even in case of a reunion of North and South.<sup>44</sup> Because of that one could hypothesize that the US has an interest in maintaining North Korea as it is, to legitimate their presence in South Korea. Regarding the Korea-issue, Helmut Schmidt believes that the US and Europe should not permanently interfere and that the Korea-question should only concern North and South Korea, Russia, China and Japan.<sup>45</sup> Whether North and South Korea find a solution to their conflict remains to be seen, but it does not only lie in their hands. China most likely will continue to be some kind of middleman between the North and the South and should be interested that North and South Korea continue talking.

### **3.3 Southeast Asia - essential new friendships**

Since the end of the Cold War, the relations between China and the Southeast Asian Nations have undergone a variety of changes. During the era of Mao Zedong, China supported other Communist regimes such as the former regime of Myanmar (Burma), and therefore the PRC was considered an enemy to those countries which didn't have a Communist state-ideology. In 1967, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Singapore founded the ASEAN in response to the socialist expansion in the region. Since then, Brunei, Myanmar (Burma), Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam have joined. "Despite many outstanding regional issues between China and Southeast Asia, the ASEAN region is regarded as another example of China's peripheral diplomacy producing tangible results in both the diplomatic and the economic fields."<sup>46</sup> For the past two and a half decades China has been seeking good relations to its Southeastern neighbors in order to create peace and stability in the region as well as repressing American influence. However, China's relations to the members of ASEAN are still complicated, due to territorial issues in the South Chinese Sea. Two main island groups namely Spratly (Nansha) and Paracel (Xisha) are claimed by China in full, but these

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<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, p. 98

<sup>44</sup> White House on msnbc.com, *Obama: US to boost Asia-Pacific military presence: President tells Australia parliament: 'We are here to stay'*, MSNBC, 2011, retrieved 15 April 2012, <[http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/45318987/ns/politics-white\\_house/t/obama-us-boost-asia-pacific-military-presence/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/45318987/ns/politics-white_house/t/obama-us-boost-asia-pacific-military-presence/)>

<sup>45</sup> H. Schmidt & F. Sieren, *Nachbar China*, 2nd edn., Ullstein Buchverlage GmbH, Berlin, 2008, p. 175

<sup>46</sup> M. Lanteigne, *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction*, Routledge, New York, 2009, p. 120

islands are claimed by Vietnam, Taiwan, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines in part or in full, as well. Both island groups are considered to be full of oil and gas reserves, which is the reason for ongoing disputes since the 1970s. Since then there have been arguments and even violent confrontations.<sup>47</sup> In 1995 the PLA seized one island, called the Mischief Reef (Meiji Jiao), and banished Philippine fishermen who were working there; an act which didn't lead to any serious consequences by the ASEAN members, but an act which spread more mistrust towards the PRC. The AFC in 1997 marked a turning point for better relations between China and the Southeast Asian Nations, because China was able to present itself in the best light:

First, it refused, unlike Taiwan, to devalue its own currency as a defensive measure against the rising prices of its exports in comparison with Southeast Asia. Second, Beijing arranged for emergency financial assistance to crisis-hit states, including authorising a US \$1 billion transfer to the IMF to assist the flagging Thai economy. Third, it was able to accomplish this while also protecting Hong Kong's currency, which also risked a meltdown in the wake of the former colony's stock market crash in October 1997.<sup>48</sup>

The whole AFC proved that China was willing to take serious responsibility for the whole region, in times of a crisis. China needs good relations to its Southeastern neighbors, not only to maintain a good economic cooperation, but also to insure its own interests. The Southeast Asian sea lanes are vital to China's trade with the world, therefore it seeks to secure those lanes against terrorist attacks. In 2003, the General Secretary of the Communist Party and President of the PRC, Hu Jintao, expressed his so called "Malacca Dilemma" (Maliujia kunju), which means the passage of Malacca, surrounded by Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, which is essential for China's energy imports. In case of a blockade and/or a terrorist attack, China would run short of energy, henceforth it seeks to station own military forces in that region, in order to secure a safe import of gas and oil.<sup>49</sup> Even though there is still a little mistrust towards the PRC, China was able to establish good relations to Southeast Asia, a region which is assuming a more and more important global role. China wants to establish a peaceful coexistence, it has to preserve its national interests and it wants to push back American influence in the region.<sup>50</sup> In order to maintain and reach these goals it relies on good relations to the ASEAN members, but in the end it depends on certain developments

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<sup>47</sup> W. Hirn, *Herausforderung China: Wie der chinesische Aufstieg unser Leben verändert*, S. Fischer Verlag GmbH, Frankfurt a. M., 2006, p. 209

<sup>48</sup> M. Lanteigne, *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction*, Routledge, New York, 2009, p. 120

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, p.121

<sup>50</sup> G. Kempf, *Chinas Außenpolitik*, R. Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, Munich, 2002, p. 110-118

whether China and the Southeastern nations are able to coexist peacefully. The dispute about the Spratly and Paracel island groups is still not settled, due to the economic success, the Chinese expat community in Southeast Asia is not popular among the local citizens, and the influence of the US in the region displeases Beijing but is welcome by a few other ASEAN members who think that the US can be a good balance towards the rising China. Moreover it isn't clear to ASEAN members, whether China seeks a hegemony in the Asian Pacific Area or not, so China will have to dissipate that fear in order to be seen as a partner and not as a new expansionist continental power.

#### **4. Taiwan - an inner affair?**

Of all territorial problems China seems to have, Taiwan is the most delicate one, that is why it has always been China's top priority to reintegrate Taiwan into the mainland. Over 400 years ago Taiwan was an unimportant island with a small population of Malay-Polynesian. From time to time Chinese people settled on the island as well. In 1590 the Portuguese arrived. Around 43 years later the Dutch came and settled down on Taiwan with their East-India company. The actual Chinese history of Taiwan started in 1644, when the Manchurians invaded China. As a result out of that, approximately 100,000 Chinese fled to Taiwan, so it can be said, that around 1644, Taiwan started to get Chinese elements. In 1662, by order of the Ming-Emperors, General Koxinga banished the Dutch from Taiwan. 20 years later the Manchurians were able to conquer Taiwan and in 1683 Taiwan was annexed and therefore a part of the Chinese empire.<sup>51</sup> As the Mongolian invaders did before, the Manchurians also adapted to the Chinese administration and government system and assimilated into the Chinese society and culture. For Taiwan it meant a period of 200 years of peace. That changed, when China lost the first Chinese-Japanese war in 1895 and had to leave Taiwan to the Japanese.<sup>52</sup> The contract said that henceforth Taiwan would always be a part of Japan. One can see a big difference to Hong Kong here, because whereas Hong Kong was only claimed for 99 years, Taiwan was supposed to be considered a part of Japan forever. During the Japanese control over the small island, Taiwan got its modern face. The Japanese occupation lasted for 50 years, and when Japan surrendered after the Second World War, it had to return Taiwan to China. Due to the civil war, which the Nationalist GMD

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<sup>51</sup> H. Schmidt-Glintzer, *Das neue China: Von den Opiumkriegen bis heute*, 3rd edn., C. H. Beck oHG, Munich 2004, p. 109-111

<sup>52</sup> K. Seitz, *China: Eine Weltmacht kehrt zurück*, 5th edn., Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, Munich, 2006, p. 425-426

lost, Jiang Jieshi and almost two million of his supporters had to flee to Taiwan and established a government in exile.<sup>53</sup> It soon turned out that the GMD governed in a much more brutal way than the Japanese occupants had done before, therefore the GMD wasn't popular among the Taiwanese.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless the USA supported the GMD in order to weaken Mao and his Communists in Beijing. Henceforth the PRC tried to get Taiwan's seat in the UN. In 1971 the CPC succeeded in its aim and was officially the one and only representative of the whole of China. However, at that time, Taiwan maintained its claim to be the true representative of China, and on one point Taiwan and the PRC even agreed: There is only one China. After the US had established diplomatic contacts to the PRC, it passed the so called TRA which provided Taiwan with military equipment in order to defend itself. Since then the US has been a protector of Taiwan. From Beijing's point of view, the TRA is seen as an insult towards Sino-US relations. Indeed, Taiwan gave up its claim to be the only representative of China in the early 1990s, but it hasn't seen itself as a part of the PRC, either.<sup>55</sup> So until today, the Taiwan-question has remained at a status quo. Ever since the dispute between Taiwan and the PRC, Beijing has been demonstrating its military power. Almost every year it holds military exercises to prevent the Taiwanese government from declaring its independence.<sup>56</sup> When Chen Shuibian from the DDP came to office he ensured Beijing that he would not seek independence for Taiwan, as long as Beijing wouldn't threaten Taiwan by any means. When Chen came to office, it was the first time that a non-GMD ruler governed Taiwan. The reason why Chen was elected, was quite simple: His DDP has always stood for an independent Taiwan. But right after he became president of Taiwan, the CPC and the US government expressed their concerns and Chen refrained from his actual aim. Taiwan's economy already depended too much on the Chinese mainland, and the US government didn't want to have any trouble with Beijing. Due to the fact that the Chinese economy is getting stronger and stronger, other countries remain at a political distance to Taiwan, as well. Everybody wants to do business in China, therefore especially the Western countries depend on good relations to the PRC. It hence doesn't seem logical why the US still supports Taiwan. US citizens and the political class in general seem to sympathize with Taiwan, simply because Taiwan is a

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<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> H. Schmidt-Glintzer, *Das neue China: Von den Opiumkriegen bis heute*, 3rd edn., C. H. Beck oHG, Munich 2004, p. 109-111

<sup>55</sup> K. Seitz, *China: Eine Weltmacht kehrt zurück*, 5th edn., Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, Munich, 2006, p. 425-426

<sup>56</sup> H. Kissinger, *China: Zwischen Tradition und Herausforderung*, trans. H. Dierlamm, H. Ettinger, O. Grasmück, N. Juraschitz, M. Müller, C. Bertelsmann Verlag, Munich, 2011, p. 485-492

democracy and the PRC is not. However it isn't that clear whether Taiwan is a real democracy in the way of how the USA defines a democracy. Certain doubts remain:

"Die politische Klasse insgesamt [of the U.S.], die weniger erfahren und weniger gebildet ist als die Top-Bürokraten in der jeweiligen Regierung, hat sich eingebildet, Taiwan sei eine Demokratie. Eine Vorstellung, die bis vor wenigen Jahren lächerlich war; denn Taiwan unter Tschiang Kaishek und seinem Sohn war genauso eine Diktatur wie Peking. Auch heute hat die Taiwan-Demokratie mit einer westlichen Demokratie wenig zu tun. Die Taiwan-Demokratie wurde von den westlichen Medien und Politikern aufgepöppelt. Allen voran vom Abgeordnetenhaus ebenso wie vom Senat; man wollte damit den Kommunisten in Peking schaden."<sup>57</sup> (Schmidt, S. 143)

But even if Taiwan wasn't a democracy, the US would nevertheless defend Taiwan, if Beijing decided to invade Taiwan and because of the fact that the US seeks to maintain the present status quo. Taiwan gives the US the possibility to expand its influence in the APA, therefore one could assume that the only reason why the CPC wants Taiwan to be a part of the PRC is to repel the Americans out of that area. Indeed, that would be a nice side-effect for Beijing, but the Taiwan-issue is a question of national importance. China's mainland population stands behind Beijing's claim. Beijing already made certain attempts in order to convince the Taiwanese government of its belief. Concerning Taiwan, the CPC would even go further than it did in the case of Hong Kong:

"Beijing seinerseits hatte seit Beginn der 1980er-Jahre Vorschläge für eine Wiedervereinigung unterbreitet. Taiwan sollte dabei volle innere Autonomie behalten. Sofern es den Status einer >>Sonderverwaltungsregion<< der Volksrepublik akzeptiere (den gleichen Status, den Hong Kong und Macao bekommen sollten), versprach Beijing, dass es weiterhin seine eigenen politischen Institutionen und sogar seine eigenen Streitkräfte würde behalten dürfen."<sup>58</sup>

A question regarding the Taiwan-issue, which often comes up is whether a military conflict is inevitable. Even though a military conflict is possible, it is still very unlikely. The economies are closely linked, so "money and people are moving across the straits regularly and in way that benefit both countries. There are by some estimates as many as half a million citizens of the ROC who live and work in Shanghai; there are many Taiwanese businesses with offices on the Mainland."<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, the Taiwanese can see that the CPC's system of *One country, two systems* works successfully in Hong

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<sup>57</sup> H. Schmidt & F. Sieren, *Nachbar China*, 2nd edn., Ullstein Buchverlage GmbH, Berlin, 2008, p. 143

<sup>58</sup> H. Kissinger, *China: Zwischen Tradition und Herausforderung*, trans. H. Dierlamm, H. Ettinger, O. Grasmück, N. Juraschitz, M. Müller, C. Bertelsmann Verlag, Munich, 2011, p. 485

<sup>59</sup> J.N. Wasserstrom, *China in the 21st Century: What everyone needs to know*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2010, p. 119

Kong. Another interesting question is, why the Americans wouldn't let go of Taiwan. What legitimates the US-government to not let go of Taiwan concerning the possibility of positioning a possible aircraft carrier right next to Taiwan, and why does the US apparently not want Taiwan to be part of the PRC? Both former chancellor of West-Germany, Helmut Schmidt, and former German ambassador in Beijing, Konrad Seitz, believe that the time will work for the position of the PRC.<sup>60</sup> However, the Taiwan-issue is still unsolved and it remains to be seen whether the PRC succeeds in its aim. "Für Taiwan schiene es deshalb am günstigsten zu sein, bald ein Abkommen über eine Wiedervereinigung auf lange Frist mit Peking zu schließen; Jiang Zemin und sein Nachfolger wären wohl bereit, für diesen so heiß ersehnten Erfolg einen maximalen Preis zu zahlen."<sup>62</sup> In the end the question remains whether Taiwan is an inner affair, or not. Chinese politicians constantly proclaim that Taiwan is an inner affair. Indeed, it should be an inner affair, but it isn't.

## 5. China and the USA - conflict and interdependence

The first time America became important to China was during the Second World War, when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Therefore the USA appreciated the efforts of the GMD and Mao's communists in their fight against the Japanese. After the Second World War China became a member of the P-5 in the SCUN. Due to the civil war between the GMD and Mao's troops, the GMD under Jiang Jieshi was forced to flee to Taiwan. When Mao proclaimed the formation of the PRC in 1949, the world's eyes were on Germany and the beginning of the Cold War. Due to Mao's interference in the Korean War and the fact that he and his supporters were communists, the USA has supported Taiwan ever since. Later, the loss of the Vietnam War, where Mao interfered with his military troops successfully as well, confirmed American resentment towards China. But the American *grand strategy* concentrated on fighting communism in general, all of whose actions and commands America believed came directly from Moscow.<sup>63</sup> Therefore the PRC was underestimated and not really seen as an independent communist state. During the Vietnam War, America started to realize that China acted on its own, since the PLA was fighting against the Americans in South-

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<sup>60</sup> H. Schmidt & F. Sieren, *Nachbar China*, 2nd edn., Ullstein Buchverlage GmbH, Berlin, 2008, p. 144

<sup>61</sup> K. Seitz, *China: Eine Weltmacht kehrt zurück*, 5th edn., Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, Munich, 2006, p. 429

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> H. Schmidt & F. Sieren, *Nachbar China*, 2nd edn., Ullstein Buchverlage GmbH, Berlin, 2008, p. 118



Vietnam and against those who were loyal to Moscow in the North. China didn't want to have either of them right next door. In order to weaken the SU, US president Richard Nixon came to China in 1972. He wanted to covertly ally with China against the SU. Even though the US was now paying attention to China, its focus was still not about China but about the SU.<sup>64</sup> Due to anti-Chinese/communist resentments in the US Senate it wasn't until 1979 that the US started official diplomatic contacts to China. In the 1980s American companies, such as the AMC, started to invest in China, but in 1989 these new established relations changed, overnight. The American economic interest in China, however, remained:

"The Tiananmen Incident of June 1989 resulted in China once more being isolated by the United States, ending any pretence of common diplomatic ground between the two sides. However, less than a month after the Incident, despite a ban imposed by Washington on high-level US government visits to China, two top officials from the government of George H.W. Bush went to Beijing to meet with Deng Xiaoping to convince him to ease tensions within the country and expressing hopes for the continuing maintenance of cross-state ties. Economic ties between the two states were quick to recover, but a ban on weapons sales to Beijing remains in place even today."<sup>65</sup> (Lanteigne, S.96)

When president Bill Clinton came to office, he criticized Bush Senior's politics towards China. Clinton acted on the assumption that China sooner or later would have to become a democracy and improve its human rights. With his MFN-act, he tried to make Beijing's politicians open up to democratic reforms, in order to be considered as a MFN by the US, which would mean more investments and easier trade.<sup>66</sup> However, Clinton failed in this attempt, since Beijing had clarified that there is a different understanding of human rights in China. In order to demonstrate strength, Clinton's successor, George W. Bush, re-established a foreign policy of confrontation. Due to an upcoming American fear that China could become too powerful, Bush Jr. had the chance to profile himself and act as a policeman towards China. After *9/11* the situation changed once again, since China supported Bush's *War on Terror*. Over the last decades the US and Chinese economy have become closely linked together. By 2000, China's GDP already

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<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, p. 119

<sup>65</sup> M. Lanteigne, *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction*, Routledge, New York, 2009, p. 96

<sup>66</sup> H. Kissinger, *China: Zwischen Tradition und Herausforderung*, trans. H. Dierlamm, H. Ettinger, O. Grasmück, N. Juraschitz, M. Müller, C. Bertelsmann Verlag, Munich, 2011, p. 478

reached 1.099 Billion US-Dollar.<sup>67</sup> In recent times, China has become the US' biggest creditor. China holds over one trillion US-Dollar currency reserves.

"The trading relationship between the two states has developed to the point where 'symbiosis' is said to have been reached, and each of the two economies is indispensable to the other. This has created a situation of entrenched economic interdependence which makes it difficult for one side to change the trading relationship without affecting both sides. The American market has benefited from inexpensive Chinese goods, while China benefits from having a stable American market for its exports."<sup>68</sup>

However, a dispute which often comes up, is the appreciation of the Chinese currency *Renminbi*. The US accuses China of holding its currency at an artificially low exchange rate in order to get the full advantage in trading with the US. The present Prime Minister of the PRC Wen Jiabao argues as follows:

There are three points. First, China does not pursue a trade surplus. Our objective in having foreign trade is to have balanced and sustainable trade with other countries, and we want to have a basic equilibrium in our balance of payments. Second, the increase of a trade surplus of a country is not necessarily linked with the exchange policy of that country. The third point is that the trade imbalance between our two countries is mainly structural in nature. Many Chinese exports to the U.S. are no longer produced in the U.S. [e.g. textiles, toys, etc.], and I don't believe that the U.S. will restart the production of those products - products that are at the low end of the value-added chain. Even if you don't buy them from China, you still have to buy them from India, Sri Lanka or Bangladesh. And that will not help resolve the trade imbalance between our two countries."<sup>69</sup>

Another field of dispute is the fight for resources between these two states. Both China and the US almost completely rely on oil-imports. After the interference in Iraq, China now relies on allies like Iran or Sudan for its oil-imports, but Iran is an opponent of the US. China fears a war between Iran on the one side and the US and Israel on the other side. Therefore it's China's interest to avoid a possible war by all means. Nevertheless China needs to maintain a very careful foreign policy as to the US and so far China has acted very cautiously. The 1999 bombardment of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade and the collision of a Chinese aircraft with a US one at the Chinese border in 2001 showed China's restraint. China did not threaten the US government or imposed any sanctions. China is seeking alliances, either with countries that are potential markets for Chinese

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<sup>67</sup> K. Seitz, *China: Eine Weltmacht kehrt zurück*, 5th edn., Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, Munich, 2006, p. 451

<sup>68</sup> M. Lanteigne, *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction*, Routledge, New York, 2009, p. 102

<sup>69</sup> J. Wen, *The Wish and Will of the People Are Not Stoppable*, in: *Time*, Vol. 177, No. 16, October 2010, p. 29

goods, or countries that are rich in mineral resources. Due to its careful, nonaggressive foreign policy, China enjoys a much better reputation among other developing countries (e.g. African countries) than the US does.<sup>70</sup> There are many ongoing disputes between China and the US, no matter whether it is the run for mineral resources, China's rising influence in Southeast Asia, China's position towards North Korea, China's resentment towards *peace-missions*, China's rising influence within the UN, or others. Basically the list of confrontations between the US and China is endless. One fact is clear: the more powerful China gets, the more self-confidently it expresses its claims. But does that mean that as China becomes more important the US becomes less so? Not necessarily, but the US has to get used to the fact that in the future there won't be only one who is able to govern the world.

"The Jiang [Zemin] perspective on US-China relations was summed up by the newspaper with unusual clarity: 'What truly matters now for China and the US is a shared political will to anchor what is perhaps one of the world's most influential, yet volatile, state-to-state relationships.' This was an accurate description for a relationship which remained hostage to the unexpected - and not least the expected in Taiwan."<sup>71</sup>

Due to the win-win and lose-lose symbiotic relationship between China and the US, a serious military confrontation, or even war, is, though highly unlikely and it remains to be seen whether the US will willfully allow another country to be the next superpower besides itself.

## 6. Conclusion

The Chinese foreign policy has gone through various changes over the last decades. While Mao wanted to spread and support his Communist ideology in East and Southeast Asia, Hu Jintao in recent times seeks a peaceful coexistence. While the list of criticism towards China seems to be endless, those same criticism come from the very nations that most want to do business in China. Public opinion especially in Western countries about China, is more negative than positive. Negative headlines just like *Die Gelben Spione* from the German magazine *Der Spiegel* complete the picture, which the public opinion of the Western countries has about China.<sup>72</sup> Therefore speeches, just like the one Hu gave to the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2007,

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<sup>70</sup> H. Schmidt & F. Sieren, *Nachbar China*, 2nd edn., Ullstein Buchverlage GmbH, Berlin, 2008, p. 130

<sup>71</sup> J. Gittings, *The Changing Face of China: From Mao to Market*, Oxford University Press Inc., New York, 2006, p. 298

<sup>72</sup> *Der Spiegel*, *Die gelben Spione*, No. 35, SPIEGEL-Verlag Rudolf Augstein GmbH & Co. KG., August 2007, <<http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-52715099.html>>

are seen as pure Chinese propaganda. However, if one looks at the Chinese foreign policy more precisely, one will realize that China's international attempts are manifold rather than one-sided. With the success and recognition on the economic field and the international scene, comes great responsibility China has to take. To me, it seems that the political leaders in Beijing already realize that their concept of noninterference, peaceful coexistence and the preservation of national interests do not necessarily go hand in hand. If the Taiwanese government would declare its independence, Beijing would interfere with its military and therefore violate its principle of noninterference and peaceful coexistence in order to preserve the national interest, which is that Taiwan is to be seen as a part of the PRC. The dispute about the Spratly and Paracel islands is similar, since China's peaceful coexistence with its Southeastern neighbors would be threatened, if Beijing decides to claim these islands by military force. In the issue about North Korea, things are a little bit different. It is within China's national interest that the North Korean buffer zone remains, but it is also within China's interest that North and South Korea peacefully reunite, as long as the US would withdraw its military forces from that area. As long as the North Korea-issue remains on status quo, Beijing seeks for a peaceful coexistence with North Korea and won't let go of its ally in future. As long as Japan's government continues to stubbornly uphold its attitude concerning the Chinese-Japanese War, and the Japanese are constantly afraid that China could invade their territory and therefore seek close alliance with the US, the political climate remains cold and one-sided, namely *zhengleng jingre*, but nevertheless Beijing seeks for a peaceful coexistence towards Japan and certainly does not want to interfere into Japan's business unless it is China's national interest to interfere. By far the biggest challenge for China's foreign policy is the complicated relationship with the US. In all the issues mentioned above, the USA is involved. Not only does China seek to preserve its national interests, but so does the US, since both are in need for oil and other mineral resources as well as global influence. The difference between China's foreign policy and the US one is that China doesn't interfere into other states' inner affairs. Moreover China does not try to convert Islamic nations into democrats, and it certainly doesn't deliver a one-sided message of humanitarian idealism. In terms of human rights, the USA and other Western countries, such as Germany, France and Norway, always emphasize the individual rights of a person, while China puts the emphasis on the collective rights. But trying to convince other countries to adapt to the Chinese philosophy, moral, ideals, or political system would violate China's aim of noninterference. Herein China's foreign policy differs from the US' one and as a fact the Security Council of the UN gives China

a useful tool to counterbalance the US' point of view in this matter. China's role in the SCUN has been manifold. While the PRC played a hesitant and passive role the SCUN before, it now has become a self-confident and responsible member of the international community within the UN. However, China's position in the SCUN and the UN isn't easy. On the one hand China wants to uphold its ideals of peaceful coexistence and noninterference, on the other hand it seeks for good relations to the Western countries. The problem is, that some of these Western nations are willing to interfere into other countries' affairs, if necessary. A recent example for that was the resolution regarding Syria. China shared Russia's concerns regarding the resolution, which was, in Russia's eyes, too one-sided. The resolution meant only to condemn Syrian leader Assad, but not the violent demonstrators as well, therefore China agreed with the Russian point of view and vetoed the resolution.<sup>73</sup> In general, China tries to stick to its principle of noninterference and peaceful coexistence, but only if it doesn't violate China's national interests. In 2001 we could see the opposite example, when China supported Bush's *War on Terror*. Back then it was China's national interest to improve the relationship to the US, therefore China violated its own principle of noninterference. Even though, China's foreign policy in the UN is also driven by its national interests, just like many other countries, the foreign policy of the US is a lot more aggressive than China's present foreign policy. Nevertheless, China's foreign policy acts in accordance with the US' one, so the more aggressive the US acts, the more aggressive Beijing answers. Professor Henry Rosemont Jr., Professor of the Liberal Arts at St. Mary's College shares this point of view:

"A reduction of U.S. threats to the world – from nuclear weapons, regional wars such as Iraq and Afghanistan, and potential conflicts with Iran and North Korea – would decrease the likelihood of confrontation with China as well as undercut any rationale for China's own increased military spending."<sup>74</sup>

Indeed, China's foreign policy is also driven by national interests, but it seeks to be a responsible power of global importance, as well. Furthermore we should not forget, that China is still a developing country, and thus has a lot to learn. For a long time, I have questioned the legitimacy of our Western penchant to proselytize the Chinese communities into adopting Western political traditions and institutions. As the world progresses towards globalization, it is my belief that it is pertinent to bring bridges of

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<sup>73</sup> D. Tang, *Russia, China use double veto to block UNdraft on Syria*, Xinhua News Agency, 2012, retrieved 5 May 2012, <[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-02/05/c\\_122656650.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-02/05/c_122656650.htm)>

<sup>74</sup> H. Rosemont Jr., *Is China a Threat?*, ed. J. Feffer, Foreign Policy In Focus, February 2008, retrieved 5 May 2011, <[http://www.fpif.org/reports/is\\_china\\_a\\_threat](http://www.fpif.org/reports/is_china_a_threat)>

dialogue - at eye-level - between the East and West for a prosperous future. In order to maintain peaceful diplomatic relations to China, the Western countries should listen to the words of German author Max Frisch, during his visit to China in 1975: "Wir sind nicht das Wunschbild der Chinesen, unser Urteil also nicht das Maß für ihre Anstrengungen."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> M. Frisch, '*Wir sind nicht das Wunschbild der Chinesen, unser Urteil also nicht das Maß für ihre Anstrengungen*', Frank Sieren, retrieved 20 April 2012, <[http://www.sieren.net/pages/publikationen\\_buch.php?lang=DE&id=19](http://www.sieren.net/pages/publikationen_buch.php?lang=DE&id=19)>

**List of Abbreviations:**

AFC - Asian Financial Crisis

AMC - American Motor Cooperation

APA - Asian Pacific Area

ASEAN - Association of Southeast Asian Nations

CPC - Communist Party of China

DDP - Democratic Development Party China/Taiwan

G8 - The Group of Eight (France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Russia)

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

GMD - Guomindang China/Taiwan

IAEA - International Atomic Energy Agency

MFN - Most Favored Nation

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NPT - Nonproliferation Treaty

P-5 - Group of the permanent members of the Security Council of the United Nations

PLA - People's Liberation Army

PRC - People's Republic of China

ROC - Republic of China

SCUN - Security Council of the United Nations

SU - Soviet Union

SPT - Six Party Talks

TRA - Taiwan Relations Act

UK - The United Kingdom

UN - The United Nations

US - The United States

USA - The United States of America

WTO - World Trade Organization

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