



The Korean Factor in China's Policy Toward East Asia and the United States

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Introduction

The Korean Peninsula is one of China's most important neighbors. From the perspective of China's history, its northern and eastern neighbors have been more important to it in the security field than its southern and western neighbors because the former are much closer to China's political and economic centers. The Korean Peninsula, on the one hand, may become a buffer zone for China's northeast land borders and a protective screen for its northeast and eastern sea borders; on the other hand, it could become a gangplank used by a third country to invade China. From the view of current geopolitics, the Korean Peninsula is located in the center of Northeast Asia, where the interests of the four major powers—namely, China, the United States, Russia, and Japan—intersect. From this view, the strategic importance of Northeast Asia to China is greater than that of South Asia or Southeast Asia.

Even in ancient history, because of Chinese culture the Chinese people strove to realize the long-term hope of maintaining a peaceful, neighborly relationship with the people of the Korean Peninsula. Chinese emperors wanted to establish a mechanism for a tributary system. Since the Ming Dynasty, China has pursued two objectives concerning its policy toward the Korean Peninsula: (a) to prevent Korea from posing a threat to China and (b) to prevent a third country from using the Korean Peninsula as a gangplank to invade China. Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC), to some extent,

China's policy toward the Korean Peninsula has adhered to the two objectives. For example, in the 1950s the focus of China's policy toward the Korean Peninsula was to prevent a third country from using the Korean Peninsula as an invasion route.

Also, since the establishment of the PRC China has abandoned both the intention behind tributary and the mechanisms used to effect it. Instead, China's foreign policy has been based on the five principles of peaceful coexistence: mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual nonaggression, mutual noninterference in another's internal affairs, equal—mutual—benefits, and peaceful coexistence. China's policy toward the Korean Peninsula has been focused on ensuring a long-term peaceful and stable security environment, which is beneficial to China's domestic economic development.

China's foreign and security policy should be subordinated to and in the service of China's national development strategy (NDS). Since the early 1980s, China has been focusing its efforts on internal economic development in order to improve the living standards and educational levels of its people—a goal that will be pursued for a long time. The long-term purpose of China's national development strategy is to ensure that China becomes a midlevel developed country, which will be strong, democratic, and civilized, by 2050.¹ To achieve that objective, China will continue to pursue its policy of reform and opening, which will be facilitated by a long-term peaceful international environment, especially stable surroundings. This means China does not want to do anything that could seriously disturb cur-

rent international economic and political mechanisms except when its critical national interests are threatened. Even if China achieves that objective according to the plan, its large population and unbalanced economic development will cause it to continue to focus its attention on internal issues. At the same time, the more prosperous China becomes, the more cooperative it will be with other countries because it will be influenced more easily by the outside world under the circumstances.

China has been pursuing its independent foreign policy of peace since the mid-1980s. The objective is to strive for a peaceful international environment, which will be beneficial to China's long-term economic and social development. In effect, there are two outstanding characteristics in China's current foreign policy: peace and independence. Peace, rather than the objective of gaining military superiority, is the objective China is seeking when it evaluates whether a particular policy will be beneficial to international and regional peace and stability. Similarly, an evaluation of independence indicates that China has formulated its foreign policy according to its national interests and the common interests of the people in all the countries of the world. To continue to develop its policy of friendly cooperation based on the five principles of peaceful coexistence with all the countries in the world, including the United States, is the primary goal of China's independent foreign policy of peace.

New Thinking in China's Foreign Policy

China's new leadership has formulated its foreign strategy and security policy for the next 20 years. There is a remarkable continuity in China's foreign strategy and security policy. However, there is also something brand new.

Current Chinese leaders have tried to advance some creative and new concepts that will become the theories that guide further economic and po-

litical reform in China and lead the country to integrate itself further into international society and play a role as a responsible power in the world, especially in the periphery of China.

Since China carried out a policy of reform and opening at the end of the 1970s, it has been making great progress in integrating itself into international economic and political mechanisms. The more closely China integrates itself into international mechanisms, the more willing it will be to play a responsible role in the international community.

During recent years the Chinese economy has been steadily developing. If China can maintain the trend evident in its economic development, by the midtwenty-first century it will be among the major powers in the world. Whether China becomes a responsible great power or not will depend on both internal and external factors. Those factors also can be divided into subjective and objective ones, among which mechanisms will play important roles. The world will benefit from the peaceful rise of China as a responsible power in the international community.

Achieving Three Major Historical Tasks in the Twenty-First Century

In the twenty-first century there are three major historical tasks China is committed to achieve: propel the drive toward modernization, achieve national reunification, and safeguard world peace as well as promote common development.²

If one compares these with the three major historical tasks China undertook in the twentieth century—objectives identified by Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s—one finds no expression such as “against hegemony.” The new formulation indicates that China is focusing on safeguarding world peace and promoting common development in its foreign and security policy. It does not mean that China will not oppose hegemony. In the future if some country pursues a hegemonic policy or action, China will oppose that policy or action. It

also indicates that in China's current dictionary, hegemony does not refer in particular to the goal of one country, such as the United States.

Furthermore, the leadership of the Communist party of China and the Chinese government has reiterated that China will never seek hegemony and will never pursue expansion. At the same time, China will clarify its objectives by formulating its conception of a fair and rational new international political and economic order. Politically, all countries should respect and consult one another and should not seek to impose their will on others; economically, they should complement one another by pursuing common development objectives and not creating a polarization based on wealth; culturally, they should learn from one another by working for common prosperity and should not shun the cultures of other nations.

Advancing the Concept of a Period of Important Strategic Opportunities

The first two decades of the twenty-first century present a period of important strategic opportunities for China. During that period, China will focus its attention on building a well-off society in an expeditious way. The objectives of China's modernization are to quadruple the gross domestic product (GDP) of 2000 by 2020 and to become a midlevel developed country by 2050. In order to achieve those objectives, China needs long-term peace and a stable international security environment, which would be beneficial to its economic development.

Although some regional wars and armed conflicts such as the war in Iraq exist in the world, peace and development remain the main themes of the era. At the same time, trends toward the formation of a multipolar world and democracy have been playing important roles in restricting hegemony and power politics in international relations. Under the circumstances, those trends can be realized, leading to a long-term peaceful international environment.

Acting in Consonance with the Historical Tide and Safeguarding the Common Interests of Humankind

Because of economic globalization, the common interests of humankind have become evident. China is ready to work with the international community to boost a multipolar world, promote the harmonious coexistence of diverse forces, and maintain stability in the international community. China will continue to improve and develop relations with developed countries. Proceeding from the fundamental interests of all countries concerned, China will broaden the converging points of common interests and settle differences properly on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence, notwithstanding differences in social systems and ideologies. China has been cooperating with the United States and other countries in antiterrorist endeavors and in dealing with regional security problems such as the North Korean nuclear crisis.

Stressing the New Concepts of Security That Feature Mutual Trust, Mutual Benefits, Equality, and Coordination

Since the end of the cold war, China has changed its security concepts greatly to reflect the new international situation and the interests of the Chinese people as well as the interests of the people of the world in seeking peace and development. China thinks that in order to obtain lasting peace, it is imperative to abandon the cold-war mentality, cultivate a new concept of security, and seek a new way to safeguard peace. China holds that countries should trust one another, work together to maintain security, and resolve disputes through dialogue and cooperation. Moreover, they should not threaten to use force or resort to using it. It has been demonstrated that the new concepts of security are in keeping with the trend of the era and have great vitality.

China holds that the core of the new security

concepts should be mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, and coordination.³ The new security concepts also should be regarded as guidelines to resolve disputes concerning international security.⁴

The new security concepts China has adopted include

1. **The concept of “mutual security.”** During the cold war, the concept of a “zero sum game” played the most important role in international politics. In the environment that has emerged since the end of the cold war, countries should accept the concept of mutual security because of the changed situation. China would oppose any country that built its supposed security on the insecurity of others.
2. **The concept of cooperation.** All countries are facing many non-traditional security threats or transnational problems such as environmental problems, the greenhouse effect, drug trafficking, terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, SARS, HIV/AIDS, and so on. They should make common cause and cooperate with one another to deal with those challenges.
3. **The concept of comprehensive security.** Although some politicians still regard geopolitics, military security, and ideological factors as playing the most important role in international relations, since the end of the cold war the role of economic factors has become more significant. All countries, therefore, should expend great efforts to settle differences and disputes between and among nations through peaceful means.

Continuing to Cement China’s Friendly Ties with Its Neighbors and Build Good-Nighbor Relationships and Partnerships with Them

China regards this policy as one of the important parts of its great effort to seek and maintain a long-term, stable, and peaceful international security environment. China will step up regional cooperation and will raise to new heights its exchanges and cooperation with surrounding countries.

The Major Objectives of China’s Policy Toward the Korean Peninsula

Maintaining Stability and Peace on the Korean Peninsula

The future of the Korean Peninsula depends mainly on the development and direction of North Korean policy. All of the major powers—including the United States, Russia, Japan, and China—would like to see stability and peace on the Korean Peninsula. It would be impossible for South Korea to unleash an all-out war against North Korea, and so the most important variable in the Korean issue is North Korea.

Realizing a Nuclear-Weapons-Free Korean Peninsula

Since the beginning of the North Korean nuclear crisis, China has been playing a positive and active role in resolving the problem. China hosted the three-party talks and three rounds of six-party talks in Beijing. China pursued shuttle diplomacy to coordinate the activities of member nations in the six-party talks. At the same time, China has made great efforts

to try to persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons option. It will continue to contribute to the resolution of the Korean nuclear crisis.

The North Korean nuclear crisis erupted again in October 2002, when U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly visited Pyongyang and the U.S. delegation thought that North Korean First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok Chu had admitted that North Korea had a uranium-enrichment program. In order to resolve the crisis, three-party talks were held in Beijing in April 2003. In August 2003 the first round of six-party talks (among North and South Korea, China, Japan, Russia, and the United States) was held in Beijing. During the second round of six-party talks held in Beijing February 25–28, 2004, some progress was made. The most important outcome was the commitment made by all six nations to a nuclear-weapons-free Korean Peninsula.

Two meetings of the working groups were held in Beijing May 12–15 and June 21–22, 2004, to prepare for the next round of six-party talks. The third round of six-party talks was held in Beijing June 23–26, 2004. All of the parties had constructive and concrete discussions. In the chairman's statement issued at this round of talks, all of the parties reaffirmed the common objective of a nuclear-weapons-free Korean Peninsula, emphasizing that it was necessary to take measures as soon as possible in the first phase of the talks to realize this objective. They also stressed that a peaceful solution should be sought in an orderly way and step by step according to the principles of word for word and action for action. According to the chairman's statement, the fourth round of six-party talks were to be held before the end of September 2004.

The six-party talks have provided a suitable mechanism in the process undertaken to resolve the North Korean nuclear problem through dialogue and negotiations. Furthermore, the six-party talks may develop gradually into one of the most important mechanisms for conducting sub-

regional security dialogue and facilitating cooperation in Northeast Asia if the North Korean nuclear problem can be resolved under its framework.

North Korea announced it would not attend the fourth round of six-party talks because the Bush administration had pursued a hostile policy toward it and South Korea had conducted nuclear tests in 1982 and 2002. The United States intimated that North Korea would not improve its options by waiting to resume the six-party talks until after the November 2, 2004, election in the United States.⁵ On September 29, 2004, North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Choe Su-hon, attending the UN General Assembly, made the official announcement of North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons: "We reprocessed the 8,000 spent fuel rods, and we've already declared we weaponized them."⁶

On February 10, 2005, North Korea declared it possessed nuclear weapons. The statement underscored the fact that the North Korean nuclear issue had entered a new stage. As the reason for its actions, North Korean officials have cited comments made by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during her Senate confirmation hearings in which she described North Korea as an "outpost of tyranny."⁷ The North Korean nuclear problem remains deadlocked.

Helping North Korea to Overcome Its Economic Problems by Providing Large Amounts of Food and Fuel

From 1996 to 2000, China supplied North Korea with more than 150,000 tons of food, 1 million tons of crude oil, and 1.5 million tons of coal as humanitarian aid or on credit. As the largest source of foreign aid to North Korea, China has played a significant role in helping Pyongyang deal with its economic crisis. In fact, aid to North Korea in the last five years constituted about one-third of China's total foreign aid.⁸ China's aid to the DPRK has been conducive to the stability of the Korean Peninsula.

Encouraging Pyongyang to Pursue Some Kind of Opening and Reform Policy

China's great success in pursuing policies of reform and openness in the past 20 years has set a good example for North Korea. In May 2000 and January 2001, the chairman of the North Korean National Defense Commission, Kim Jong-il, visited Beijing and Shanghai. His visit to Shanghai and his assessment of its rapid development deeply impressed him. The example will encourage Kim Jong-il to pursue some kind of opening and reform policy. On the other hand, China would not like to pressure North Korea to do something in particular because of its principle of not interfering in other countries' internal affairs. Although Pyongyang always insists that it will adopt policies commensurate with its own situation, there are signs it is going to implement more flexible policies to reinvigorate its shattered economy. It seems that North Korean leader Kim Jong-il will pursue a policy of reform and openness to some extent. The maintenance of North Korea's internal stability, however, will still be one of his top priorities. Thus he will be quite cautious when he introduces any policy of reform or openness.

Developing Political and Economic Cooperation with South Korea, One of China's Important Neighbors

On November 12, 1998, the leaders of the two countries issued a joint statement calling for the formation of a comprehensive "cooperative partnership" looking toward the twenty-first century. If both countries can maintain such a cooperative partnership, that relationship will benefit the stability and peace of Northeast Asia. In the economic field, China–Republic of Korea (ROK) relations have grown rapidly since 1992. China is now South Korea's largest trading partner and the second largest recipient of the ROK's overseas investment. In particular, China's entry into

the World Trade Organization (WTO) has provided an additional, important opportunity for South Korean businessmen to explore China's huge market. On the other hand, China has begun to invest in South Korea. The Chinese government advocates expanding the volume of trade while seeking a rough trade balance in the context of economic development and resolving the trade deficit issue.⁹ Economic cooperation is beneficial to the development of both states.

The China-Centered International Order of the Past

In ancient times the China-centered international order involving a tributary system prevailed in East Asia because geographical barriers—mountains, deserts, and oceans—isolated East Asia from the rest of the world, including the rest of Asia, although the isolation was only relative. In those days because people lacked geographical knowledge about the whole world and had not forged close economic, cultural, and political exchanges between the East and the West, the elite of Chinese society had only the concept of the "Land under Heaven" instead of the concept of the world. Based on the former, the Chinese people regarded China as the land under heaven and regarded regions outside of China as barbarian or uncivilized places.

Geographical factors and the Confucian culture of China contributed to the inward-looking character of its civilization, as well as to its impressive continuity. In ancient times, although China often was threatened and sometimes was overrun by nomadic invaders from Central Asia, institutional breakdowns and periods of disunity were temporary. The Chinese state and society were always reconstructed under new dynastic management, even if those dynasties were of non-Han nationality.

East Asia was politically unified into a single entity only during the Mongol ascendancy of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and then

only partially. Nevertheless, important economic, political, and social interactions developed in East Asia. Those interactions centered on China, which, until the midnineteenth century, was the wealthiest, most powerful, and most culturally and technologically advanced state in the region.

In ancient times, the Chinese viewed China as the center of the world and as a superpower that enjoyed unification and its strong position in the world. From earliest times, China did not face a rival that had acquired the standard of civilization China had achieved. Rome, Byzantium, the Arab Caliphates, the Ottomans, and the Mughals were too distant to matter much to the Chinese. Reality to them was the world near China. Unlike other people, such as the Romans and European colonists, the Chinese were not attracted to military conquest or a civilizing mission. With the exception of occasional forays into Central Asia, they thought in defensive terms. It was enough to secure the borders of China—which, for much of Chinese history, coincided with the homeland of the Han and ethnic Chinese.

During the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, the China-centered international order involving the tributary system prevailed in East Asia. Some of the major characteristics of the international order are listed below.

- Trade and cultural exchanges between China and its eastern neighbors, Korea and Japan, were important. However, the situation was complicated by political factors that did not operate in Southeast Asia. Throughout China's history, its northern and eastern neighbors usually have been more important to China in the security field than its southern and western neighbors because the former were much closer to the political and economic centers of China. Feudal Japan was the sole nonnomadic state on China's periphery that refused to accept tributary status and posed a

potential military threat, as was underscored by its attempts to invade China through Korea in the 1590s. The Chinese and Koreans, who viewed the Japanese *samurai* as dangerous, semicivilized barbarians, shared an interest in containing them on their offshore islands.¹⁰ China looked on Korea as a strategic buffer state. The Koreans, for their part, welcomed China's protection and were proud of being East Asia's "star pupils" of China's Confucian civilization. In 1882 and 1884, China sent its troops to Korea to protect it from invasion by Japan.

- In ancient times, on the one hand, Japanese emperors wanted to have a political position that equaled that of the Chinese emperors; on the other hand, the Japanese regarded China as a cultural model and enthusiastically imported its art, literature, and philosophy. In the absence of official tributary relations, Chinese–Japanese contacts were conducted through Korea (which permitted indirect trade with Japan) and the nominally independent but Japanese-controlled Okinawa.¹¹ Although Japan was a political outlier in the Sinic world, it was economically and culturally integrated into it.¹²
- Since ancient times, conquest and annexation have been neither practical nor desirable options for China in Southeast Asia. The Chinese saw no threat from this quarter and were disinclined to assume the burden of pacifying culturally alien and fiercely independent people.¹³ China's top priority was the secu-

rity of its southern border provinces, which required keeping the neighboring kingdoms of Burma, Siam, and Vietnam compliant. This was accomplished through the tributary system under which neighboring kings accepted the nominal suzerainty of China's emperor and undertook to respect his wishes. Tributary status involved no loss of independence for these rulers. China rarely interfered in their affairs; when it did, its attempts were repulsed by military force. Moreover, the tributary system conferred important benefits on these kingdoms, including trading privileges and the prestige of being recognized by China's "Son of Heaven."¹⁴

- From 1405 to 1433, decades before Columbus, Chinese Admiral Zheng He sailed seven times from China with 300 ships and 28,000 men. His fleet, the largest in the world during that period, reached Southeast Asia and South Asia and even ventured as far as Africa. Unlike the European colonists, Zheng He's fleet did not occupy any territories or loot any foreign treasures. One of its major tasks was to let the people of other countries know of the benevolence and high prestige of the Chinese emperor. For about 300 years thereafter, the governments of the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties of China pursued a closed-door policy.

The China-centered international order involving the tributary system in East Asia was broken by both the European colonists beginning in the sixteenth century and by the Japanese militarists beginning in the nineteenth century. European imperial expansion changed the politi-

cal map of East Asia by turning large parts of the region into European colonies and dependencies. In essence, this process began in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with the Spanish conquest of the Philippines. It experienced a resurgence in 1910, when Japan subjugated Korea.

China's Current Policy Toward East Asia

To cement its friendly ties with its neighbors is the current priority of China's foreign policy. China is doing its best to build good neighborly relationships and partnerships. China is in East Asia, which is one of the most important areas for China. In recent years China not only has been improving bilateral relations with other East Asian countries but also has been according more importance to the process of multilateralism in East Asia. The Korean Peninsula is one of the most important neighboring areas for China, which considers the Korean factor under the framework of East Asia.

Although compared with the European Union (EU), East Asia experienced the process of regional economic integration and security cooperation late in its existence, during recent years regional institutions—including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), ASEAN Plus Three (ASEAN+3: China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea), ASEAN Plus One (ASEAN+1: China), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and six-party talks on North Korean nuclear issues—have made significant progress. They have been playing more important roles in the economic and security fields of East Asia.

These institutions are of various types. The first consists of organizations such as APEC that are focused on economic issues. The second, such as ARF, is composed of associations that are focused on security issues. The third—such as ASEAN, ASEAN+3, and ASEAN+1—includes organizations that deal with both economic and security issues.

These institutions are at different levels of development and differ from one another in terms of economic cooperation, security dialogue, and cooperation. As far as economic integration is concerned, ASEAN is much more advanced than other institutions. Although less advanced than ASEAN, the six-party talks may gradually develop into one of the most important mechanisms for promoting subregional security dialogue and cooperation if the North Korean nuclear issue can be resolved under its framework.

ASEAN+3 may develop into one of the most important institutions of regional economic integration and security cooperation. The financial crisis in Asia in 1997 made ASEAN member states realize it is necessary for them to promote regional cooperation in East Asia. The reason is evident: It is difficult for ASEAN, a group of developing countries that possess small markets and insufficient capital, to overcome a crisis only by strengthening its cohesiveness. Thus far ASEAN has achieved economic development through participation in dynamic trade and investment relations in East Asia. By extension, it is essential for ASEAN to strengthen cooperation with other East Asian countries such as China, Japan, and South Korea to overcome economic difficulties and achieve long-term development. In November 1997, the first ASEAN+3 summit meeting was held. In November 1999 at the Manila meeting, the leaders of ASEAN—China, Japan, and South Korea—issued their joint statement on East Asian cooperation. They announced their agreement to strengthen cooperation in a broad range of fields, including politics, security, the economy, and culture. In particular, they emphasized cooperation on socioeconomic issues.

In line with these developments, at the first ASEAN+3 meeting of economic ministers held in Yangon, Myanmar, in May 2000, the ministers agreed to promote cooperation in nine specific fields, including expanded trade and investment; in the information technology (IT) sector; and in the development of the Mekong Basin. They expressed the shared view that the meeting could provide a valuable opportunity for further collabo-

ration, promote a cohesive response to the challenge of globalization, and lead to the recovery of the region's role as a center for world growth.

Cooperation generated by ASEAN+3 led to a great step forward in the financial field. In May 2000, the finance ministers of ASEAN+3 gathered in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and agreed to promote measures to strengthen financial cooperation. Subsequently such measures came to be called the Chiang Mai Initiative. Before the initiative was agreed to, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand had concluded currency swap agreements worth U.S. \$40 million to prevent the recurrence of a currency crisis. Under the Chiang Mai Initiative, those agreements were expanded to include other ASEAN states and China, Japan, and South Korea. In addition, the finance ministers agreed to build a "repo" network of securities repurchase agreements among ASEAN+3.¹⁵ The progress that has produced cooperation in the financial field among ASEAN+3 reflects the fact that during the financial crisis in Asia in 1997, East Asian countries were unable to receive meaningful assistance from the United States and the EU. East Asian countries exerted little influence on policies adopted by the international financial institutions, especially the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which operated under the strong influence of the United States and major European countries. In light of this experience, East Asian countries recognized the need to prepare their own countermeasures in case of another financial crisis.

At the fourth ASEAN+3 summit held in Singapore in November 2000, the leaders reaffirmed the importance of promoting the Chiang Mai Initiative and agreed to organize a study group with a view to creating an "East Asia Free Trade Area."¹⁶ Since then a framework of cooperation not only in finance but also in trade is developing among ASEAN+3. As the countries in East Asia demonstrate increased capacities for economic interdependence, ASEAN+3 cooperation in the economic field is expected to strengthen.

Unofficial institutions involving security dialogue (Track II) also have been developing, including the Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue (NEACD), the Council of Security Cooperation in Asia–Pacific (CSCAP), the Expanded Senior Panel of Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone in Northeast Asia (ESP-NWFZNEA), and so on. For example, NEACD provides an opportunity for a nongovernmental-level security dialogue that has been designed to contribute to the long-term stability of Northeast Asia. The forum is hosted by the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation (IGCC) at the University of California, San Diego, in collaboration with the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) in Japan. Meetings have been held with the relevant parties from five countries: the United States, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Russia. North Korea participated for the first time at the Moscow meeting in 2002.¹⁷ During the meetings, government officials (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, and others), in addition to academic experts from various countries participating in their private capacities and putting aside the official positions of their respective governments, engage in a free exchange of opinions on such topics as security policy, counterterrorism measures, the Korean Peninsula situation, and the U.S.–Japan alliance. In contrast to the cold-war period, the United States, China, Russia, and other countries are beginning to emphasize how to build mutually cooperative relationships in Northeast Asia. NEACD, through a free exchange of views and confidence-building measures, is expected to contribute to a promotion of mutual trust that will become the foundation for peace and stability in Northeast Asia.

The establishment of the new strategic stability framework among major powers will be beneficial in the long term for the peaceful and stable international security environment, which is necessary for China's economic development and national interests. It also will be conducive to the stability and security of the world, including the Asia–Pacific region, and to China's continuous role as a responsible power and so will benefit the interests of all other nations.

In order to reach the objectives of China's modernization plan to quadruple its 2000 GDP by 2020 and to become a midlevel developed country by 2050, China's new leadership will make great efforts to maintain both a peaceful and stable international environment and a peripheral environment for the long term. Consequently, China will try its best not to be involved in any major international crisis or any major war in its peripheral area. As it develops economically, China wants to make sure that its rise as a major power is peaceful so that it will be gradually accepted as such by the international community. China will try its best to avoid confrontation with the United States and other major powers. Furthermore, China wants to elicit more cooperation from the United States and other major powers to deal with traditional security threats such as nuclear proliferation on the Korean Peninsula, as well as nontraditional security threats such as terrorism.

China's East Asian policy is focused on continuing its friendly ties with its neighbors and on building good neighborly relationships and partnerships with them. China regards this policy as one of the important goals of its great efforts to seek and maintain a peaceful international security environment for the long term. China will increase regional cooperation and raise its exchanges and cooperation with surrounding countries to new heights.

China Can Cooperate with Other Countries Through Regional Institutions

The ASEAN+3 Framework Has Become the Most Important Multilateral Institution

This framework was established in response to the momentum to strengthen regional cooperation among the East Asian countries that experienced the Asian currency and financial cri-

sis. Since 1997, an ASEAN+3 summit has been held every year along with various ministerial meetings such as foreign ministers' meetings under the ASEAN+3 framework. Thus the framework is developing great scope and depth.

Furthermore, since the ASEAN+3 process was inaugurated, opinions have been expressed that the organization should handle not only the economic area but also the political and security areas, including transnational issues. At the ASEAN+3 summit held in Cambodia in November 2002, leaders expressed their intentions of prosecuting counterterrorism. At the same meeting, a clear message was issued in the chairman's press statement urging North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons development program.

China has made great efforts to strengthen economic cooperation and to maintain stability in East Asia through the mechanisms of ASEAN+3 and ASEAN+1. At the sixth ASEAN+3 summit in November 2002, China put forward a 23-point proposal to promote regional cooperation and common prosperity in East Asia. China signed or released a total of 11 important documents, including the Framework Agreement on China-ASEAN Comprehensive Economic Cooperation, which launched a process that will enable the member states to decide whether to form a free-trade area between the two sides; the National Report on China's Participation in Great Mekong River Subregional Development, which set in motion mutual cooperation between China and ASEAN in the Mekong Basin; the Joint Declaration in the Field of Nontraditional Security Issues, which broadened the scope of cooperation in that area; the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, which provided the political foundation for a stable South China Sea Area; the Memorandum of Understanding on Agricultural Cooperation (MOU), which initiated the first move of China-ASEAN bilateral cooperation in priority areas; and the Asia Debt Reduction Plan to enable Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar not to pay tariffs on most of their exports to China, thus making tangible contributions to the eradication of poverty in the region.

The Chinese leader also proposed a medium- and long-term IT cooperation program. His proposal was unanimously endorsed by ASEAN. In the fields that have been accorded priority, China-ASEAN cooperation is progressing.

Under the ASEAN+3 framework, China can cooperate with other countries on important issues such as economic cooperation and integration, antiterrorism, antipiracy, environmental protection, anti-illegal immigration, antidrug trafficking, and so on.

China-ROK-Japan Trilateral Cooperation Provides an Important Multilateral Mechanism

Spurred by the first China-ROK-Japan summit in 1999, China-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation has promoted cooperation centered on spurring economic and financial prosperity and environmental protection in the region.

At the China-ROK-Japan summit held in Cambodia in November 2002, the three countries expressed their views that based on the relationship of trust, they would further deepen "cooperation for prosperity" and promote China-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas. They also exchanged views regarding the situation on the Korean Peninsula. Furthermore, the three countries agreed they would promote China-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation in the future, assigning priorities to five areas: economics and trade, information and telecommunications, environmental protection, the development of human resources, and cultural cooperation.

During the summit meeting, some economic research institutions of the three countries submitted a Report on the Proposal of Joint Policies and proposed a feasibility study of a China-ROK-Japan free trade zone and its possible economic impact. The three leaders endorsed this report in principle and supported the proposed feasibility study.

At the China-ROK-Japan summit held in October 2003, at the initiative of Chinese Pre-

mier Wen Jiabao, the three countries issued a joint declaration on promoting trilateral cooperation, which was the first such document on trilateral cooperation issued by the leaders of the countries. The document defined the basic framework and the future direction of trilateral cooperation. In December 2003, China, Japan, and the ROK agreed to establish a trilateral committee, which would be led by the foreign ministers of the three countries, to do research, plan, and observe trilateral cooperation in different fields, as set forth in the joint declaration.

China and the ROK have made significant progress in bilateral economic cooperation. In 2002, China's trade with the ROK reached U.S. \$44.1 billion, an increase of 22.8 percent. China (along with the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) has replaced the United States as the ROK's largest export market.

The advancement of China–ROK–Japan trilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas—such as “cooperation for prosperity” and “cooperation for stability”—is the driving force promoting East Asian cooperation. It is expected that China, Japan, and the ROK will take the initiative to accelerate the advancement of specific kinds of cooperation with ASEAN countries, leading to the expansion and deepening of regional cooperation in East Asia as a whole.

Through the mechanism of China–ROK–Japan trilateral cooperation, China and South Korea can cooperate in both the economic and security fields, which can be classified in two sectors: traditional security issues and nontraditional security issues.

At present both China and South Korea face many new security challenges, which can be classified in two fields: nontraditional security challenges and traditional security challenges.

Nontraditional security challenges include terrorism, piracy, environmental pollution, international crime, illegal immigration, drug trafficking, natural disasters, AIDS/HIV, and others. In those sectors China and South Korea share many common interests and have to cooperate to deal with those challenges. Furthermore, because

those challenges are transnational or global problems, China and South Korea have to rely on multilateral institutions to cope with them.

China has become the largest trade partner of both South Korea and Japan. By 2002, China's GDP reached U.S. \$1.2 trillion, constituting 4 percent of the world's GDP. China's ability to increase its imports from the rest of Asia to a level of growth in 2002 of 25.8 percent and 34.4 percent, 25 percent, and 22 percent, for ASEAN, Japan, and the ROK, respectively, became an important stimulus to Asian economic growth. There is great potential for China, the ROK, and Japan to develop trade and economic cooperation, which would be beneficial not only for the three countries but also for the world economy. In China–ROK–Japan relations, economic exchange has always grown faster than other aspects, and it is continuing to expand and develop. In order to accelerate economic cooperation with one another, China, the ROK, and Japan will need to develop a framework for establishing a trilateral free trade area in the near future. At the same time, a continuation in the trend related to economic integration in East Asia, as well as in the rest of the world, will reinforce that need, making it necessary for China, the ROK, and Japan to establish a China–ROK–Japanese Free Trade Area by 2020 at the latest.

China would like to continue to play a positive, active, and constructive role and cooperate with other countries through multilateral institutions. China thinks its interests and objectives, as identified below, can be achieved through its membership in the multilateral institutions identified in this article.

- **Cooperation through these multilateral institutions will help China to realize its three major historical tasks in the twenty-first century.** As detailed in the Report to the 16th National Congress of the Communist party of China, in the twenty-first century there are three major historical

tasks for China to achieve: to propel the modernization drive; to achieve national reunification; and to safeguard world peace and promote common development.¹⁸ Cooperation with other countries through these multilateral institutions will enable China to fulfill these goals.

- **Cooperation through these multilateral institutions will help China to enter a period that will offer important strategic opportunities.** According to the documents of the 16th National Congress of the Communist party of China, the first two decades of the twenty-first century constitute a period of important strategic opportunities for China. During the period, China will focus its attention on building a well-off society in an efficacious way. The objectives of China's modernization drive are to quadruple its GDP of 2000 by 2020 and to become a midlevel developed country by 2050. In order to achieve those objectives, China needs long-term peace and a stable international security environment, which will be beneficial to its economic development.
- **Cooperation through these multilateral institutions will help China to advance with the historical tide and safeguard the common interests of all the people of the world.** How the common interests of humankind are served by economic globalization has become evident. China is ready to work with the international community to promote many global centers of power, encourage the harmo-

nious coexistence of diverse forces, and maintain stability in the international community. China will continue to improve and develop relations with both developed and developing countries. Proceeding from its recognition of the fundamental interests of all countries concerned, China will broaden the converging points of common interests and settle differences on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence, notwithstanding differences in social systems and ideologies. China has been cooperating with the United States and other countries in dealing with antiterrorism and regional security problems such as the North Korean nuclear crisis. Furthermore, advancing economic cooperation, including the establishment of free trade areas, will benefit the people of all member states.

- **Cooperation through these multilateral institutions will help China to cement friendly ties with its neighbors and continue to build good neighborly relationships and partnerships with them.** During recent years China has attached great importance to the implementation of this policy. For example, in 2003 China's new leadership further developed this policy by advancing the new concept of good neighborliness, which has been designed to make its neighbors secure and rich. China regards this policy as one of the important parts of its great efforts to seek and maintain a long-term, stable, and peaceful international security environment. China will step up regional cooperation and raise its exchanges and level of co-

operation with surrounding countries to a new height.

- **Cooperation through these multilateral institutions will help China to implement the new concepts of security featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, and coordination.** Since the end of the cold war, China has changed its security concepts greatly according to the new international situation and the interests of the Chinese people, as well as the necessity of the people of the world to seek peace and development. China holds that to obtain lasting peace, it is imperative for all countries to abandon the cold-war mentality, cultivate a new concept of security, and seek a new way to safeguard peace. China advocates that countries should trust one another, work together to maintain security, and resolve disputes through dialogue and cooperation and not resort to the threat or the use of force. It has been proved that the new concepts of security are in keeping with the trend of the era and have great vitality.

Both China and other countries share many objectives and interests in these multilateral institutions of East Asia. Although member states may compete against one another in such institutions, the cooperation they demonstrate there will prove to be much more beneficial to them. Close cooperation between China and other countries will be one of the most important preconditions for the establishment of the East Asian Free Trade Area, which will be one of the most important parts of Asian security cooperation. U.S. participation in Asian security cooperation also is necessary and will be one of the most important aspects of its success.

The Korean Factor in China's Policy Toward the United States

On the one hand, from the perspective of geopolitics, China is still concerned that the United States may use the Korean Peninsula as a gangplank to pose a threat to China and would like to see the peninsula become a buffer zone for its land borders in the Northeast and a screen protecting its northeast and eastern sea borders; on the other hand, based on its new security concept, China would like to develop economic and security cooperation with both Koreas and the United States in order to achieve "win-win-win" situations with them. Because the Taiwan issue is the key issue that involves the national interests of China and is the most sensitive factor in China-U.S. relations, China would have to consider the Korean factor from the perspective of geopolitics if the United States strengthened its military relations with Taiwan. That would send the wrong signal to separatists on Taiwan, encouraging them to make further efforts to achieve Taiwan independence, which would be very dangerous.

Although South Korea is still a military ally of the United States, as the trend toward regional economic integration evolves in East Asia, China would like to pay more attention to developing economic cooperation and security dialogue with South Korea.

Now China and the United States are cooperating on economic and security matters, although they still have some disputes. After the George W. Bush administration took office and a collision occurred between Chinese and U.S. military airplanes on April 1, 2001, the relationship experienced many difficulties. Despite those difficulties, the two countries share many interests in the security field as well as in the economic field. The September 11, 2001, incident has expanded the basis for China-U.S. security cooperation and allowed the two countries to resume their efforts to achieve strategic cooperation. In the post-9/11 period, the China-U.S. relationship has developed

in some important ways, including security and strategic cooperation. However, negative factors still affect their relations. If both sides can ascribe more importance to cooperation and deal effectively with the negative factors in their relationship, they can continue to improve their security cooperation and military relations.

Because the United States is the only superpower in the world, the China–U.S. relationship is one of the decisive factors affecting China's foreign policy and security policy. On September 20, 2002, the Bush administration issued its first report of the National Security Strategy (NSS) of the United States—the first report on U.S. national security strategy published by the U.S. government since the attacks of September 11, 2001. In the report the administration emphasized the importance of developing agendas for cooperative action with other main centers of the world. If the United States and China can make common efforts to develop constructive and cooperative relations with each other, it would be beneficial not only for the interests of both sides but also for Asian–Pacific stability and world peace. From a long-term view, the two countries should establish a framework of strategic cooperation and stability, which will become one of the important parts of the global strategic stability framework in the twenty-first century.

With its integration in international economic and political mechanisms during the next 10 years, China will continue to play a responsible role as a major power in international affairs. After September 11, 2001, the United States connected the issue of nuclear proliferation with the issue of terrorism. Under the circumstances, the international community should cooperate to establish a new framework of strategic stability among the major powers based on nuclear arms control, nuclear nonproliferation, and strategic cooperation in countering nontraditional security threats, including terrorism. Furthermore, China and the United States should cooperate in preventing Taiwan from declaring independence because they have common interests in maintaining stability across the Taiwan Strait. If both

countries could cooperate to prevent Taiwan from declaring independence and work together to establish a new framework of strategic cooperation and stability among the major powers, China would play a more positive and active role in international affairs in the future.

Since the end of the cold war and especially since the attacks of September 11, 2001, there have been new developments in the international strategic situation: First, the challenge posed by nonstate actors to sovereign states has become one of the important factors affecting the international strategic situation. In addition, terrorism has become a significant factor in the fields of international security and politics. Second, nontraditional security problems, especially terrorism, have increasingly posed serious threats to international society. Third, asymmetric war has become one of the main forms of war. The war in Afghanistan involving coalition forces led by the United States against the Taliban and Al Qaeda is a case in point. New developments in the international strategic situation have spurred the major powers to strengthen cooperation to deal with new threats and challenges.

The new strategic cooperation and stability framework among the major powers in the twenty-first century should be established on a new theoretical foundation. The international security situation has been undergoing deep changes. The scope of security, which is not only a military issue but is also related to the fields of politics, economics, finance, science and technology, and culture, has been enlarged. The common interests of countries in the security field have greatly increased, and interdependence among countries has been strengthened. Also, the model for interactions in the security field has been changing, turning from the original zero-sum game to win–win or win–win–win games. Because military means are not sufficient for dealing with varied security challenges, it will be necessary to have new means and concepts in order to maintain stability and peace.

During recent years, as it has come to realize that the process of safeguarding security needs

new concepts, China has advocated new security concepts based on core objectives such as mutual trust, mutual benefits, equality, and coordination. The purpose of these new security concepts is to improve mutual trust through dialogue and to spur common security through cooperation.¹⁹

The new security concepts should become the theoretical foundation for establishing a framework of strategic stability in the twenty-first century.

1. **Mutual trust** means that the major powers should go beyond differences in ideology and social systems and abandon the cold-war mentality and the thinking that pervades power politics. Once it has been established, mutual trust can be increased through varied techniques such as confidence-building and security measures.
2. **Mutual benefits** mean that the major powers should move in harmony with the globalization trend to realize common security and show respect for the security interests of one another while maintaining their own national and security interests and help others to create conditions that will enable them to realize similar interests.
3. **Equality** means that countries should respect and treat one another equally. As they refrain from interfering in other countries' internal affairs, they should promote the democratization of international relations.
4. **Coordination** means that the major powers should cooperate broadly and deeply on security problems that are of mutual concern to them, resolving disputes through peaceful means and preventing conflicts and war.

Generally speaking, the theoretical foundation of the new strategic cooperation and stability framework should be cooperative security, comprehensive security, coordinated security, and common security. The new strategic stability framework should not only deal with traditional strategic security issues such as nuclear weapons and missile defense systems but also should be so persuasive that it will convince the major powers to cooperate on antiterrorism, the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional security, and transnational security issues through effective mechanisms.

Since September 11, 2001, the United States also has recognized the importance of cooperating with major powers. President Bush has said, "We have our best chance since the rise of the nation-state in the seventeenth century to build a world where the great powers compete in peace instead of prepare for war."²⁰ "It is inevitable for major powers to compete between each other, but armed conflicts between us in the world are avoidable." "[T]he biggest opportunity the United States has got is to establish [a] balance of power that favors [the] freedom of human beings."²¹ The first report of the National Security Strategy of the United States issued by the Bush administration on September 20, 2002, holds: "Today, the world's great powers find ourselves on the same side—united by common dangers of terrorist violence and chaos." "We will preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers."²² All those statements indicate that the Bush administration is willing to build a framework of cooperation among the great powers to maintain peace.

On the other hand, there are some serious internal contradictions in the Bush administration's strategic concepts and foreign policy. First, the administration has acknowledged that there are "other main centers of global power"²³ and has recognized the trend toward a multipolar world, but it still wants to maintain for the United States its "leading position in the world." Second, it has indicated that it wants to realize "peaceful cooperation among the great powers,"

but it also has used “building a balance of power that favors freedom” as one of the main theories that can be used to govern its relations with other great powers.²⁴ Third, it has emphasized “maintaining peace” but has prepared for “preemptive attacks” against enemies that threaten U.S. interests.²⁵ Fourth, it has declared that “the United States will use this moment of opportunity to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe,” but it often uses U.S. concepts to define freedom and tries to interfere in other countries’ internal affairs based on its singular definition. These tendencies if realized will impose a negative impact on the process of establishing a framework for strategic stability among the major powers.

One of the bases for establishing a China–U.S. strategic cooperation and stability framework is the continued U.S. acceptance and implementation of the one-China policy. If the two countries want to build such a framework, they should first establish a multilevel mechanism for their strategic dialogue. Because China–U.S. summit meetings between leaders have proved to be important to improving and promoting relations between the two countries, such meetings should become regular and institutionalized.

The new strategic cooperation and stability framework among the major powers, global security mechanisms such as the United Nations, and varied regional security mechanisms should complement one another and play significant roles in building a global strategic stability framework in order to facilitate the establishment of a new world political and economic order and become some of its important parts. The establishment of the new strategic stability framework among the major powers will be beneficial for the long-term peaceful and stable international security environment, which is necessary for China’s economic development and national interests. Also, it will be conducive to stability and security in the world, including the Asia–Pacific region, and to China’s continuous role as a responsible power seeking to ensure the interests of all other nations.

In order to fulfill the modernization goal of

quadrupling its 2000 GDP by 2020 and of becoming a midlevel developed country by 2050, China’s new leadership will make great efforts to maintain a long-term peaceful and stable international environment as well as the same kind of peripheral environment. Consequently, China will do its best not to be involved in any major international crisis or in any major war in its peripheral area. As it experiences rapid economic development, China wants to make sure its peaceful rise as a major power will be gradually accepted by the international community. China will try its best to avoid a confrontation with the United States and other major powers. Furthermore, China wants to achieve more cooperation with the United States and other major powers in order to deal with traditional security threats such as nuclear proliferation on the Korean Peninsula, as well as nontraditional security threats such as terrorism.

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Notes

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