

CHINA AND THE NEW WORLD ORDER IN THE ERA OF GLOBALISATION

Stelian – Ioan BOIA*

Abstract. The paper is trying to present a post – realist approach in order to explain the essence of the Chinese foreign policy, its main strategic trends of thoughts, and its perception about the complex contemporary world. Daoist and Confucianism roots within the content of some key-concepts of the Chinese strategic contemporary trends are also identified as an effort to better understand the Chinese strategic culture and the way it shapes the future of international relations. Accommodating interests of the main characters is not a kind “idealistic objective”, but rather it reveals a new foundation for realizing a “harmonious global society”, by connecting different perceptions of the main civilizations about the “global governance” and about mankind as a “community of common destiny”. Far from expressing some utopian views “such as analyzing some of the main Chinese key-concepts as being the “harmonious world”, a “New Security Concept” or “New Type of Relations between Great Powers” it can represent the beginning of a new stage in implementing “global governance” paradigm.

Keywords: complex interdependences, Peaceful Rise, global world, global governance, soft power, dialogue, cooperation

The Contemporary International System, Inter-polarity, Multi-polarity, Globalism

The model of the international system in the beginning of the 21st century is a subject of constant doctrinaire debates in the international relations, its nature and dynamic being regarded differently by the main actors, from the perspective of their specific goals of foreign policies. There is not a unanimity regarding the qualification of the contemporary international system. According to some authors, this is a post-unipolar period when some political conditions from the Cold War reappear, thus emerging the danger of tensions in the international political context among its key-actors.

Another side of the international relations doctrine believes that we rather live in a post-imperial era when the Cold War also means a period where a “global American empire” could not be built starting from the management of the economic globalization values¹, the term of Great Powers being considered lapsed and inappropriate.² The exponents of the English School of International Relations believe

* Vasile Goldis Western University of Arad, Department of Psycho-Social and Humanistic Sciences, 15 Eminescu str., Arad, Romania, e-mail: stelianioanboia@yahoo.com.

that the existence itself of international law is a clue of the existence of an “international society of states”³. Connected to this there is the concept of “harmonious society” from the official doctrine of foreign policy of China, which ties the traditional “harmony” concept to the “international society” concept, subsequently taking us to the concept of “global harmonious society”⁴, due to the global objectives performed by the daguo/great powers globally; on the contrary, to others, it expresses a measurable reality of power, by different hard and soft criteria⁵ which create a hierarchy among the states. In other opinions, the nature of the contemporary international system would be distinct of unipolarism and also bipolarism, believing that the world of the 21st century is moving towards a multipolar organisation.⁶

In the age of globalisation, bipolarism becomes a model of organisation of the international system based on dualist logic, on the one hand, situated between corporatism and ultra-liberalism (resulting in the proliferation of various regional markets and movements of regional integration and alter-internationalism (a pretty inconsistent trend, to which there can be attached movements, currents, tendencies, anti-corporate the most diverse ideologies from anti-neo-colonialism to ecologism, social-democracy, feminism, to spiritual movements and religious cults)).⁷ This type of postmodern bipolarism – as opposed to the classic in the Cold War period – is not perceived as being exclusively a model of the states’ world – the one who exclusively organises the relations among states – but its essence rather regards a postmodern view on the world, unlike the classic one, which does not attend to the rigid, Westphalian arrangement of the world.⁸

In other opinions, after the unipolarist period of the American superpower⁹, we arrive again at the period of classic bipolarism based on the realist paradigm, of rivalry between the two superpowers, on the same dualist logics, of the zero-sum game, of fencing, of the confrontation among different power centres.¹⁰

Therefore, there is no unique reference point regarding the nature of the contemporary international system, but a multitude of paradigms, defined and applied by the states in their foreign policies. This diversity of paradigms is simultaneously applied to the contemporary international system by actors, hence the difficulty of the researcher to view the contemporary world using just one paradigm.

Therefore, the dynamic of the international system is established by the way of permanent inter-relations among the numerous paradigms that the key-actors, followed or not by the groups of small or medium states, distinctly and simultaneously implement in the international political field. There is no dynamic of the contemporary international system that is exclusively established by a single great power. Some authors believe that the contemporary world is structured based on the peaceful coexistence of four international systems: the Western system (the relations between USA and Western Europe and the interior of the Western hemisphere), the great powers in Asia, the conflictual world of the Middle East and Africa, all these systems being in different historical stages. We can rather speak of a unique combination of paradigms that define postmodern world, governed by rules and politics, by specific values and norms, by chaotic areas that generate insecurity, by

developing worlds and modern worlds, each of these suffering mutual influences because of the intensity of the globalisation phenomenon.

China's vision of the Contemporary International System; The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and the Multipolar World

In what concerns China's role in reshaping the new course specific to the international political system in the contemporary world, which corresponds to its foreign affairs priorities, it is mainly based on the paradigm of multi-polarity, starting from the analysis of official political speeches and the Chinese doctrine for international relations. It is essential that we correctly and fully understand the vision of this power centre on the contemporary world and on the relations among the states in the 21st century, because its rise can highly influence the dynamic of the entire international system.¹¹

The Chinese seem to refer to time differently as opposed to Europeans. Long periods prevail; the Chinese think in generous amounts of time. China leads a long-term policy, which could encompass two stages. In the first stage, China must create an economic base, and multiply its financial resources so as to strategically develop and politically assert itself. After that, China can manifest as a great power regionally and globally. The first stage is still far from being accomplished.

But what is the part and role played by China in the new world order after Russia lost its role as superpower after the collapse of the communist regimes in Europe in 1989? The global rise of China, which started with the visit of the American president to Beijing in 1972, and the reorientation of the Chinese policy under Deng Xiaoping in 1979, is honestly considered the most important political event of the era of globalisation.¹² In fact, this is what mostly changed the world situation. Obviously, even the politics of the most populated country in the world needed to adopt the new position as the second economic power in the world. On the other hand, China needed to prevent spreading the impression that there is a new force that threatens the order, even though, by virtue of the post-war auto-isolation, it is not responsible for the existent order. China could not remain passive. For both reasons, China understood that it was time to act as an important power, thus exploiting its long diplomatic tradition. So, it acted, as it could be observed from a distance by "rebellious" gestures or "revisionism".¹³ China left behind the opposition of Mao Zedong in the formula of N.S. Khrushchev of the "peaceful coexistence" and moved forward on the path opened by the alliance of Mao Zedong and Richard Nixon of profiling among the powers to participate at directing the world. The formula of the "peaceful rise", adopted at some point, would be replaced by proactive solutions, especially after surpassing the danger of isolation, linked to the tragic ending of the protests in the Tiananmen Square.

The reorientations were elaborated under the presidency of Jiang Zemin. He came up with the motto "great nations" (*daguo*) and the insurance of "security" (*anquan*) and, in the foreign policy, the vision of "harmony" (*hexie*) and of "unity without uniformity" (*he er butong*). Meanwhile, of course, a new danger of terrorism emerged in the international life, so China joined the action of fighting against it. With

the ingravescence of the situation in the Middle East, China, dependent on imported oil and raw materials, developed more and more efficiently in Africa.

Beyond the contextualization of general options, the principles of the “peaceful coexistence” founded in the ‘50s undeniably remained to this day the official base of the Chinese foreign policy.¹⁴ It is about the mutual respect of territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-aggression, mutual non-interference in internal affairs, equality and mutual advantages, peaceful coexistence. China made some specific emphases when applying these principles, which the analysts rightfully brought out. For instance, in the context of fighting terrorism, after the attacks on New York and Washington by Islamic terrorists in 2001, China accepted the circumstance of “national sovereignty under the control of the UN Security Council. Changing the train of thought, China sees the value of “national independence”, especially after the collapse of the power of communist parties in Europe around 1989, not as an opposition to the world domination of a single power, like they once did, but as a support for multilaterally finding “equitable solutions” (gongzheng).

China declared its will to accomplish “two major objectives of foreign policy – peace and development (weihm heping, cuojin gongtong fazhan). Obviously, China is vitally interested to keep an international context free of major conflicts as a condition to its own development. That is why there are not enough arguments on its side for the hypothesis of some analysts, according to whom the appeal to the above-mentioned values would be purely conjectural. The support for the peaceful course of the world and the globalization led to incomparably more advantages to the country than any other alternative. As a matter of fact, we can observe that Beijing has promptly and efficiently used the chance of development emerged after the long period of peace in Europe and as a result of the globalisation. The significant change that actually re-launched China’s diplomacy was “the marginalization of the fight against hegemony”, in favour of the theme of “international cooperation”.¹⁵ This immediately had several practical consequences. Thus, the relation China – USA could be normally developed, in a competition of course, that was to be expected between the two great powers of the world. For example, China criticised the “unilaterality” of the intervention in Iraq, but it did so in terms that denote the understanding of the complexity of the situation, less severe than those used by some European powers. Another practical consequence was the transit from the emphasis on the world “multi-polarity” towards the promotion of “multilateralism” (duobianzshuyi)¹⁶, using, before anything else, the international bodies. China’s fundamental option obviously continues to be for “multilateral diplomacy”. The third practical consequence was the re-launch of “regional politics”. China was no longer limited to the policy of good neighbours, but took a step towards the policy of mutual benefit and cooperation initiatives. Therefore, the economic, tourist and other neighbour exchanges took off. It was rightfully observed that “China’s good neighbour diplomacy constitutes regional politics with a variable geometry”.¹⁷

The horizon of China’s international action remained “harmony”. The concept was re-launched by Jiang Zemin, and then taken by his successor, Hu Jintao, and it is stated by the current president, Xi Jinping. Some analysts see in the appeal to this concept the effort of the Chinese diplomacy of preventing the interferences of

other countries in its internal politics, for example, in the field of human rights.¹⁸ The appeal to “Asian values” proved to gain no results, so some claim that it led to “harmony”. Of course, one cannot exclude the political calculations for any option or country. Currently, diplomacy is not performed at a distance from the pressures of the internal politics. However, in China’s case, first and foremost, it is about a tradition which greatly precedes any calculation that can be made today. Practically, it is about the vision elaborated by Confucius, which the Chinese from then and now consider more adequate in approaching the world. The use of a vision may, as always, take one turn or another, but the Confucianism still existed.

China’s Proclamation of the *Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence* happened during the visit of the Chinese Prime Minister, Chou En Lai in Myanmar, in 1954. On the 28th of June 1954, in Delhi (and 29th of June 1954 in Yangon, China and Myanmar), China and India obtained accords of admission to this set of principles, which established a proto-base of common report of some countries in Asia in their foreign policies. From the Sino-Indian Common Declaration results that these principles are to be applied not only in relations among the signing nations of the document, but also in the general context of international relations. In April 1955, after the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung (Indonesia) of the 29 independent states in Asia and Africa on the strength of which the *Declaration Concerning the Promotion of World Peace and Cooperation* was edited and adopted, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence were included in the set of ten principles of the conference in Bandung.¹⁹ The Five Principles have subsequently been recognised and accepted by more and more nations, international organisations and restated on the occasion of international meetings, in the documents of the UN General Assembly, but also in the documents of establishment of China’s diplomatic relations with over 160 states, in treaties and in different other documents signed by China with other countries.²⁰

Being of Westphalian inspiration (derived from the characteristics of a world of sovereign and equal states), the Five Principles are: mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty of the other party, mutual non-aggression, non-interference/non-meddling in the other party’s affairs, respect towards mutual equality and to act for the mutual advantage, peaceful coexistence.²¹

To other authors, peaceful coexistence is regarded in the context of the analysis of China’s role in the global regime.²² They implicitly operate a connection between the Westphalian world and the global one, both being regarded through the prism of a post-realist and non-conflictual paradigm concerning a peaceful rise of China. The peaceful coexistence is thought to be articulated on a model of a multipolar world where there is, however, a strong trend towards the development of a “global government”, although the latter is not directly related to the Chinese doctrine, the Five Principles, it is only indirectly indicated through references to “global issues” and “global objectives” of cooperation among nations, especially among the *daguo*, such as “world peace”, “economic development.”

The peaceful coexistence is thus conceived so it ensures the development of a Chinese diplomatic line of “equal relations among all”, concerning the development of bilateral relations with all states but, at the same time, China expressed the idea of equality among nations and, especially, of the equal right of all nations, regardless if

they are large or small, strong or weak, “to participate at consultations in order to establish international relations/world affairs”. This Fifth Principle is very important in order to be able to correctly decrypt how China sees the organization of a harmonious international society. In other words, a strategic balance is introduced between the two worlds: the international one, based on the equal nations and global sovereignty, based on cooperation among the *daguo* (great powers), where China acts simultaneously.²³

Only by creating an international-Westphalian, yet post-realist, society, can we get to build the next stage, of obtaining a harmonious global society, especially as a result of the joined efforts of all the great powers in the beginning of the 21st century. The Third principle of peaceful coexistence makes references to the harmonious society, the concept of harmony being essential in the Chinese traditional strategic political way of thinking: all nations must respect each other and treat each other equally; they must seek cooperation in mutual benefits, exist in harmony and seek a common ground of solving their disputes. “Existing harmoniously” means a clear refusal to cooperate in the realist paradigm, which affects all political actors, great or small, strong or weak, who are engaged in the conflict and submitted to a military logic, of suspicion and perpetual hostility.

The analysis of the contents of each of the Five Principles: the right of every nation to freely choose their political, economic and social systems, so the enunciation of an anti-hegemony policy, the non-interference/non-meddling in the domestic affairs of another state, the harmonious existence of nations, encouraging the discovery of common points by settling their differences, solving international conflicts through peaceful means, the right to participate at consultations on international affairs, granted to each country, reflect the type of harmonious society where China aims to operate in the 21st century, including the support of third world countries in order to maintain the balance of the international system before the hegemonic temptations of other *daguo*.²⁴

It is about a political and diplomatic balance of China between the two worlds, which are different as a model: *the Westphalian world*, built on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the states, which do not accept super-national authorities and global governments, and the *global world*, based on joining the states’ sovereignty, on the formation of super-national authorities and global government. So far, China managed to balance the two foreign affairs tendencies and lines, by internationally soliciting other countries to respect the first principle of peaceful coexistence, of Westphalian nature – the right of each country to freely choose their own economic, political and social system, therefore a clear reference to the state sovereignty, but, at the same time, actively engaging in the multitude of organisations, forums and regional and global dialogue groups, thus increasing its role in some financial institutions and global normative regimes such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations²⁵, with a key-role in outlining a global proto-government.

As some authors noticed, at the beginning of the 21st century, China took a pro-active political-diplomatic stance, deciding to participate at the determination of the regional and global power balance systems, based on the principle “if you can’t

fight them, join them”²⁶, thus increasing its level of participation and degree of influence on regional and global affairs, avoiding falling in the “Splendid isolation” trap by the exacerbation of a dualist vision, of separation from the global world, of “retreating into itself”. According to other authors, in the 21st century, if China identified itself and acted as a regional power, with strategic interests in South-East Asia, it would agree to “act together with other nations in order to prevent a state or a group of states from dominating the international military or economic system, especially in Asia.”²⁷ Therefore, from this point of view, we cannot refer to politics of isolation or misalignment of China and the alliances, but to pro-active, anti-hegemonic politics, fully agreeing with the Five Principles of peaceful coexistence.

The anti-hegemonic policies are not to be taken as China’s opposition to other *daguo* (great powers), or as one that is marked by a logic of conflicts, but as a diplomatic line that agrees with the imperatives of the globalization of the contemporary world. Concepts such as “The peaceful statement of China”, “The new relation with the Great Powers”, “The harmonious society”, they all mean to outline the vision of international politics but also globally, among the *daguo*/great powers where China takes on the role of harmonising, of seeking dialogue and common interests, of expanding the global work agenda among nations, especially among the great powers, and not the role of competition/challenger of the international system. The concepts of “the peaceful rise of China” outlines a long-term global objective, that of “universal property and long-lasting peace”²⁸, making China a “great power responsible for the fate of the planet.”²⁹

In order to fully and correctly analyse a fundamental concept for the current foreign policy promoted by China, as a regional or even global power pole, as another part of the doctrine considers, namely the concept of “Peaceful Assertion/Rise of China”, it is necessary to mention the historical importance for the assertion of China as an empire and its consolidation as a political entity of the *Chaogong* system.

Dating back from the times of the Shang dynasty, between the 18th and 19th centuries BC, this proto-system developed in China’s rapports with the nomadic populations was based on a set of relations destined to maintain peace and stability at the borders of the territory controlled by the dynasty. Later, the *Chaogong* system was made official in the second century BC and practiced until the 19th century, when the clash with the great European civilisations happened, which were based on different sets of values and ways of reporting to cultures and civilisations different from their own. The territories ruled by the emperors of China were seen as a civilising lighthouse, from which the imperial values and civilisation were being spread to other peoples and nations; they were “an attraction to those willing to emancipate.”³⁰ Therefore, we can refer to the essence of this system as *soft power*³¹ or as imperial civilising power, in the peaceful way, as peaceful consolidation of the cooperation and contact with other peoples or nations.

The *Chaogong* system, and later, the concept of “Peaceful rising” of China mainly aimed at maintain a “harmonious world”. According to the doctrine, the concept of “harmonious world” launched by President Hu Jintao in 2005 aims to assert China’s commitment to global peace and stability and the desire to form a more just and equitable international system³² inside and at the borders of the Chinese

empire. This goal could not be reached through an aggressive, military conception of occupation and brutal imposition of the Chinese civilisation, on the contrary, by the constant practice of a relation based on respect and on the attraction provided by the empire, like the world of civilisation and order³³ towards the world beyond its borders.

The idea of the empire as a “lighthouse of civilisation” is especially important in building a type of non-aggressive empire based on the practice of *soft power*, on the attraction of provinces instead of militarily conquering them. As “holders of unique and unequalled material and spiritual values”, the emperors of China believe they had nothing to ask for from other peoples and nations. The vision of a peaceful empire which spreads the rays of its great civilisation without armed forces, without aiming at getting the military supremacy over other peoples, but aiming at achieving peace and harmony with the surrounding world, defined, in its millennial history, this space of civilisation and its political establishments. The emperors of China believed that the “harmonious society” could only be based on relations of peace, cooperation, mutual respect of peoples and nations towards the imperial institution of the Chinese emperor and also China’s respect towards these peoples – an imperial attitude that excluded the interference in their domestic affairs, but also the forceful imposition of the Chinese culture and language.³⁴

The Chaogong system started from the idea that China shared her political and cultural values: for example, the cultivation of the governors’ virtuosity, the meritocratic system, “the well-governed state”, based on the ethical norms and self-improvement of the individual, of morality and education standards both concerning the governors of China, and the peoples China had contact with, standards which, when followed by both countries, led to the avoidance of conflicts and riots emerged from the lack of education and morality – namely barbarism – to the borders of the empire.

Therefore, this system was meant to ensure the consolidation of the empire by the practice of peaceful relations with other peoples and nations, including regions such as Persia, Arabia, India, states on the coast of West Africa, Japan, states in Central and West Asia. As a matter of fact, in the golden age of the Chinese empire, we can talk about the constant enforcement of soft power imperial politics, which are very different from the way the European powers, for example, perceived the international political scene and relations among the great actors and different civilisations.

From the “New Relation among the Great Powers” to the “Global Government”

In order to correctly understand China’s foreign policy in the beginning of the 21st century – in our opinion, strongly structured upon the *soft power* component – we need to look at it from its historical perspective as well. We should never consider it as being completely separated from the concepts of Chinese traditional politics derived from Confucianism, especially: the model of the state built on virtue and etiquette, moderation and generosity, translated as respected for the values of order and peace. During its millennial history, China built and implemented *a type of culture based on ethical values* as a guiding principle, both for the relation within its society and for the relation

with other peoples and nations. Another characteristic, typical for the Chinese cultures, which has been used even as a trump card in international political relations is, in the specialists' opinion, its extraordinary ability to assimilate other cultures. Invaders have been assimilated and converted to the Chinese culture, not being able to start its extinction, the occupants (nomadic peoples) imposing an ephemeral military supremacy over the Chinese civilisation in lack of cultural support.³⁵ In history, the tolerance towards cultures, other ideas and their integration in its civilisational ensemble are other characteristics of the Chinese culture, deriving from the doctrinal debates of the Hundred Schools of Thought during the Spring and Autumn periods (770-475 BC) and Fighting Kingdoms (475-221 BC) but also from the long coexistence of various philosophers and religions in the Chinese cultural space: Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism or from the tolerant acceptance of Christianity, Islam and other religions.³⁶

In ensemble, the Chinese culture is defined by a set of traditional values – emphasis on ethics, group interest, moderation or common ground, self-improvement and harmony.³⁷ The concept of “harmony” is one that especially gets strong connotations in outlining a strategic view of China on the international political environment at the beginning of the 21st century. The vision of a multipolar world and a “harmonious society” (here, international), together with the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence are nothing but reformulations of the Chinese traditional conception of a harmoniously and peacefully organised diverse world (where the status quo does not represent the mandatory result of a conflagration among the great powers), based on principles of mutual respect, tolerance, decency and ethics among the state actors (through expansion in the global world and regarding non-state actors, such as corporations).

The ethical element introduced in the international world of the 21st century due to China's influence as a global power centre in a multipolar world, was announced to be of great importance, leading to a consolidation of the relations of cooperation and peace among peoples but also among the great powers, to the development of some common points of view in the global agenda, to the structure of several global objectives, which would lead to common politics among the “great powers”. However, this term, which is derived from the realist logic, is not very tolerated in the official speeches of China because it reminds of a world based on the logic of rivalry and power politics, rather than the principles of non-violence in Confucianism and Daoism.³⁸

The ethical element, together with the concept of “harmonious (international) society” become important dimensions of China's foreign policy in the 21st century, leading to the development of some ways of thought and international diplomatic actions meant to offer extra stability, peace and cooperation for peace among nations. In what concerns the Confucianism, harmony represents the highest principle in solving relations among the government and the governed, in families, in a society, but also in the relations among peoples and nations, which we get to by practising the *common ground, moderation* (zhong yong).³⁹ Nowadays, when applying its foreign policy conception based on the concept of “harmonious world” and on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, China develops relations of cooperation and partnerships

with the USA, Russia, Japan, the ASEAN, India, the EU, the states in Latin America, the African Union and the Gulf states, also assuming a decisional key-presence in some organisations and BRICS groups, the UN Security Council and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.⁴⁰

Also as an implementation of the concept of “Peaceful rising” (zhongguo heiping jueqi) or “Peaceful assertion of China”, an ancient concept in Chinese military strategy and philosophy, also present in Sun Zi’s art of war 2500 years ago as the “bushan ersheng” strategy, “the art of winning without fighting”⁴¹, connected to the political theory of the “window of opportunity” open to China in contemporary international relations, can be regarded as *soft power* and the practice of an active cultural diplomacy, of globally spreading the knowledge concerning the Chinese civilisation and its values. These values are based on the cult of the ancestors, the respect towards the scholar, the cultivation of ration and high virtues, the cultivation of organised meritocratic systems, the government after the example of the officials’ virtues, the respect for human beings and their rights, peaceful and respectful contacts with other cultures and civilisations, the harmonious society and the peaceful coexistence with other civilisations.⁴²

The complex process of “Peaceful Assertion/Rising of China” encompasses more and more the pro-active cultural component (the creation of Confucius institutes, centres where they teach Chinese, of familiarisation of collaborators of Chinese corporations with China’s cultural values, the intensification of connections of cultural cooperation with other countries, the active support given by other countries to Chinese communities to promote the originality of the Chinese civilisation in the host-countries, the celebration of one year of official Chinese civilisation in other countries.⁴³

The traditional cultural conception based on spiritual values offered by Daoism and Confucianism is also found in the NSC (New Security Concept), which some authors believe to be based on a three-dimensional approach on security (comprehensive security, cooperative security, common security) and on values such as mutual respect, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation among nations. This approach is fundamentally opposed to the idea of zero sum game, military hegemony and the concept of power politics, in fact aiming to create a *harmonious international political environment*.⁴⁴ Launched for the first time in 2003 by Zbeng Bitszyan, the rector of the Central Party School of the CCP and subsequently included in numerous official speeches, conferences and articles concerning China’s foreign policy,⁴⁵ the concept includes a strong dimension of peace and economic development, which explains the idea of assertion through *soft power*. The side of “economic development” was highlighted in 2004 and connected to a political strategy that followed the traditional line of Confucianism based on “harmony” (the assertion of the concept of “harmonious world”) in September 2005, a concept included in the CCP official doctrine and considered as one of the characteristics of the Hu management.⁴⁶

“The Peaceful Assertion of China” was also connected to the concept of “harmonious diplomacy”, aiming at China’s foreign partners’ acceptance of this country’s accumulation of political and economic power with no intention of military conflict or expansionism, a rise based on *win-win cooperation* and the idea of mutual

benefit. In the Chinese doctrine of international relations, the emphasis on the soft side in the “Peaceful rising” concept was presented as implying a certain type of soft responsibility for China, one based on the spiritual side, rather than on the material one.⁴⁷

Believed to be one of the most important of the contemporary bilateral relations by the Chinese officials and in the Chinese doctrine regarding international relations, China’s relations with the USA are regarded through the prism of the innovative, based on openness, mutual respect, mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence. These elements of the Chinese diplomacy, active since the end of the 19th century, shows once more the depth and spiritual and ethical side, the specific print of the Chinese diplomatic culture, but also China’s interest to build, together with other power centres, a “harmonious international society” at the beginning of the 21st century. These elements also show the effort to surpass the still active mentality of “Cold War” among the great powers and to constantly consolidate a global agenda where the great powers identify their common perspectives and interests, starting from the existent interdependences caused by globalization. Through such an innovative concept, China aims to raise awareness among the great powers about the needs to extend their dialogue fields and not to have them closed to negotiations, not to isolate themselves and not to allow the spread the logic of suspicion and armament, of hostile behaviour and the propagation of suspicion, which leads to the realist logic.⁴⁸

Proposed by Xi Jinping in his speech in Washington (2012) as a key-concept for the relations between China and the United States, also proclaimed at the 4th USA-China reunion in May 2012 (Strategic and Economic Dialogue between the USA and China) and subsequently reiterated by a series of Chinese officials, “The New Relation” is based on several fundamental strategic and diplomatic coordinates: “mutual understanding and strategic trust”, a beneficial mutual cooperation, each party’s respect for the other’s fundamental interests, strengthening the cooperation and coordination in international relations and global affairs.⁴⁹

In its essence, the concept of “New Relation among the Great Powers”, proposed by China to the USA as a set of bilateral relations, is post-realist, emphasizing the perspectives of complex interdependences of multi-polarity, of equal cooperation among nations, of ethical component in international relations.⁵⁰ The report base of this new frame-concept for the relation between the two great powers is considered by Chinese analysts as wanting to represent a model for the development of new types of relations among all the great powers of the 21st century. Although it aims at a special category of actors in the contemporary international system, the “New Relation among the Great Powers” is meant to ensure a greater stability, trust and cooperation in the international system, in rapport with other power paradigms. This concept operates in a register completely different from the dualist paradigm of Huntington (the conflict among civilisations), which irreparably put China and the USA in opposition, considering them a priori engaged in an antagonistic relation, according to the zero-sum game. The post-realist world, where China operates, is no longer a world of irredeemable adversaries engaged in a conflict on all levels: political, military, economic, social, and cultural. It is a world of

opportunities, of openness towards different cultures, of tolerance, of diversity, of peaceful coexistence, of mutual respect, of non-interference, thus noticing an original apposition of the Westphalian approach (the world of sovereign states) and the world of complex interdependences where the actors are interconnected in an age of globalisation.

When speaking about China-USA relation, we need to mention another dague/great power – the Russian Federation. Historically, the analysts quote the reference that Boris Yeltsin made in 1992 when he visited Beijing, “by laying the foundations for the New Type of Relation between the two countries”, and also Jang Zemin’s phrase from a speech in 1995 in Moscow, according to which the “New Type of Relation” is viable and will bring benefits not only to the Chinese and Russians, but also international peace and development”.

Conclusion

In our opinion, the international system in the beginning of the 21st century does not reflect a uniform reality, exclusively expressed by a single paradigm – for example, a realist one. For a too long time, the realist and ultra-realist paradigm have been used excessively to explain and illustrate the nature and dynamic of that which the political actors (the states) believe to be an “international system”.

The world of the 21st century is rapidly changing, the state actors no longer being the situation of exclusively regularise the international system with the classic power game (hard power). We live in a complex, modern world which includes regional, infra-regional and trans-regional sub-systems that connect the global and local actors, the state and non-state actors in a multitude of regimes and post-Westphalian power games.

It is a world of inter-polarity, a world based on complex interdependences among actors, on global asymmetrical threats and the rise of new actors, both states and non-states or super-states. On the one hand, we live in a multi-polar world; on the other hand, unipolarism continues to exist, at least in what concerns the hard power of the military capacity of the United States, which are in the position of a hyper-power. It is necessary to notice that the objective of global government cannot be reached without connecting the two fundamental paradigms where the world of the 21st century will operate: the paradigm of multi-polarity (based on peaceful coexistence) and the paradigm of inter-polarity (which connects both state actors and non-state actors as global actors).

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