

China and the United States in the XXI Century: Rivals or Partners?

China is currently expanding military power that might threaten the United States in military terms. The China's tendency to enhance its military positions is harmful because it diverts attention from the main threats, namely, economic and cultural dominance of China in the world.

We are going to compare the current development of relations of China and the U.S. model of cooperation with the United States and Britain in the XX century. In the early XX century Britain was the most powerful country. The British authority cannot be disputed by anyone in such spheres as economics, politics and military affairs. The British pound sterling is among the major world currencies, which is also a reason for Britain to be proud of. In addition, the elements of British culture can be found in the countries all over the world, which means that Britain also has a strong intellectual impact on the world.

Before 1970, there was a strong competition in politics, economy and culture between the U.S. and Britain, which has always been carefully concealed under the disguise of partnership. Indeed, as long as the two countries were allies, they maintained more or less friendly relationships, but further on the two countries turned to open rivalry, as a result of which the U.S. reached its peak in the world politics, leaving Britain way behind (Guangui, 2007).

U.S. never intended to start armed clashes with Britain despite the fact that in the mid-XX century the United States had a sufficient capacity to unleash the struggle. Moreover, Britain itself has contributed to the cold relationships in the manner Britain now opposes the USA in the recent conflict with China. Involved in two devastating wars, Britain depleted its economy, which has led to the economical triumph of the USA.

The same scenario including the elements of international conflict is taking place now in the U.S. and China. Washington declared war on global terrorism; however, the very definition of terrorism suggests that the war is going to last for decades and even centuries. In addition, the maintenance of the war against terrorism means restricting the freedom of the First American society, as well as greatly damages the reputation of the United States on the world stage.

Before the First World War, Britain was the leader in the global capital market, controlling more than 40% of global investments. After the war, London has received huge foreign debt, much of which went to the USA. In the first years after the war, debt service took up to 40% of total government expenditure (Guangui, 2007).

After World War II, Britain failed to keep up with the U.S. in industrial and technological terms. The assistance program, Lend-Lease meant to move the British economy on a path of war. Naturally, the export of British goods in 1944 amounted to only 31% in 1938 (Hong, 2001). In fact, the Chinese industry is also supporting the American military campaign.

Many economists do not consider the debt of the United States to China a serious factor now, emphasizing the unique position of the U.S. currency, but no one can guarantee that the U.S. dollar is going to remain stable.

Significantly Chinese manufacturers advanced in the field of high technology products, just as the United States did in the early 20-th century. Of course, the technology gap is still huge, but over the past decade it has declined.

One can say that the Chinese economy is heavily dependent on the U.S. market, while maintaining the overall trend in which China is actively differentiating their markets and the U.S. has stepped up debt, this could change.

Even in ideological terms, it is possible to draw parallels between the history of the United States in the early XX century and the current China. Now Beijing is ready to deal with any regimes and political systems, without political conditions, while the U.S. basic condition of any relationship puts democracy, open markets and the fight against terrorism (Harding, 1992).

U.S. unwillingness to compromise on these issues is only good for China. A number of countries supported the partnership between the USA and China; however, several states considered the relationships between the USA and China short-lasting (Harding, 1992).

Now the U.S. claim their right to struggle for the independence of all people around the world, just as Britain considered themselves entitled to dictate conditions worldwide as an ideal colonial power, carrier-Western values to uneducated people. Therefore, as well as in the XX century when the world preferred the United States for business, without involving the policy, China became a more attractive partner because it did not impose its political values on the other people's politics.

Of course, all this does not mean that military conflict between China and the U.S. is impossible, but China is likely to prefer the peace option "capture" of world domination. However, if the U.S. would be prepared only to force development options, it would mean that not enough attention will be given to economic aspects of competition.

China truly threatens the U.S., but not in military terms, but purely economic and cultural. And if not to take a decisive action now, then soon, the U.S. will not have any other ways to fight China, except for military operations, which in any case would be disadvantageous to both countries and the world.

Even if the struggle between China and the U.S. would not move to the stage of armed conflict, it is likely that between the two powers a cold war would erupt (Harding, 1992).

Relations between the United States and China worsened because of the dual position of America. On the one hand, the economical rates of the country can serve as the most vivid example of a sequence of American foreign policy, regardless of which party is in power. Seven U.S. presidents, starting with Richard Nixon, have confirmed the importance of cooperation with China and its own commitment to its politics, even though China did experience certain complexities in relationships with the USA during Reagan's, Clinton's and George Bush's administrations, according to what Tyler (2000) says.

President Bush and U.S. Secretary of the State Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell described the current relations with China as the best since the beginning of rapprochement with Beijing in 1971. Two of the presidents – American and Chinese – planned to exchange visits and also hold several meetings in international forums (Guangqi, 2007).

But suddenly a dual approach became obvious. Government officials, members of Congress and the media were attacking the policies of China in diverse fields - from the exchange rate up to Beijing to build its military might, in many cases this is done in such a tone, as though China has been conditionally released offender. Many feel China as the most serious threat to U.S. security Harding (1992).

Over the next few decades the increasing political and economical role of China and Asia will be leading to a significant restructuring of international relations, with the center of gravity in international affairs gradually shifting from the Atlantic region, where it has been located for the last three centuries, towards the Pacific

region. In the modern Asia, there are the most dynamically developing countries possessing more opportunities to implement their own perceptions of national interest.

Quite often, strengthening the political role of China in the international arena is compared to a similar rise in influence of the German Empire in the early XX century, implying that the China-US strategic confrontation is inevitable. In this case, the best that could make the United States – as it should to prepare such a confrontation. This conclusion is just as dangerous as it is not true. The system of international relations prevailing in Europe in the XIX century proved that the major powers defend their interests with help of force. In each of these countries people believed that war would be short and end the advancement of its own strategic position.

Only irresponsible people can engage in such calculations in the context of globalization and the nuclear age. The war between the major powers today would be a catastrophe for all participants, taking into account the scale of post-war reconstruction of the reasons that led to this conflict.

Another special factor that contributed to the confrontation in the international arena in the early XX century was the provocative style of German diplomacy. In 1900, the coalition between Russia, France and Britain seemed absolutely impossible - so many contradictions existed among them. Nevertheless, after 14 years, this coalition became a reality owing to the aggressive diplomacy of Germany: increasing naval power, it challenged England, but Russia and France; the first being the Bosnian crisis in 1908, and the second being in the Moroccan crises of 1905 and 1911.

However, the implementation of imperial ambitions by military means is not in the style of China. China achieves its goals through patience, careful consideration and taking into account the slightest subtleties of the issue – it is hardly a radical escalation of the conflict.

However, it would be wrong to consider China the analog of the Soviet Union and apply policy of military containment, adopted during the Cold War. The Soviet Union was heir to the imperial tradition, which means that it was the policy for the period between the reign of Peter the Great and the end of the Second World War, turned a small Moscow State Power into Russia, extending to the center of Europe. The Chinese state is, in fact, has been within its current borders for 2000 years. The Russian empire was governed by force, while China is regulated at the expense of the cultural traditions, backed by large state power does not go to the fore.

In Asia, however, the strategic situation is very different. In formulating policy in the region, the United States should not focus all their attention on China's military program. China is certainly building up its armed forces, which were neglected during the first phase of economic reforms. However, even the maximum estimated military budget of China is only 20% of American, which is barely higher than Japan's military budget, and is certainly much inferior to the combined military expenditure of neighboring countries - Japan, India and Russia (Harding, 1992).

The modernization of Taiwan's armed forces with American help should not be forgotten, either. On the basis of decisions taken in 2001, Russia and India have the right to possess nuclear weapons. During the crisis threatening the livelihood of Japan, the country is also able to acquire nuclear weapons for a short time; if the problem of North Korea's nuclear program is resolved, it may do so officially. When China speaks of its commitment to international cooperation and denies any plans

for a military confrontation, it is not so much about China's preferences, but the recognition of the strategic realities. If in the medium term China represents any danger, it is more likely to be a political and economic threat rather than a military one.

The Taiwan issue is one of the few exceptions; it is often called as a 'catalyst' of potential conflict. The conflict can burst out if both sides forget about restraint, which can ruin all the results of the USA and China collaboration. However, this development is far from inevitable. Almost all countries that behold the major powers have recognized China's position, perceiving Taiwan as an integral part of the country.

In terms of overall balance of forces, as well as large and highly educated population of China, its vast markets, growing role in world economy and global financial system promises the world, with the increasing international influence of China, can enhance both opportunities and risks. However, anyone who does not seek to destroy China as a functioning organism shows that such opportunities are inherent in the very global economic and financial processes that America has so far managed to successfully develop (Walder, 2006).

The true intention of China will become clear when it will face a choice between cooperation in the common interest and trying to use its increased influence for squeezing America from Asia. The best strategy against foreign hegemony now is to maintain close ties with all major countries in Asia, including China. In this sense, the Asian recovery will be a test for American competitiveness in the emerging new world today, especially in Asia. The traditional goal of the United States is avoiding anyone's hegemony in the Asian region (in the Shanghai communiqué in 1972 it was proclaimed as the joint objective of America and China)

and remains relevant. However, implementing this goal will demand primarily political and economic means, even though the country is supported by the U.S. military might.

In case of confrontation between the U.S. and China, the vast majority of Asian countries will try to remain neutral. At the same time, the Asian countries have more reasons to strive to build a multilateral system of international hardware in the region together with America, not only to develop Asian nationalism. In the Asian countries, nobody wants to see a product made according to the American model. For example, India believes that America is united by its strong common interests in confronting radical Islam, emphasizing some aspects of combating the spread of nuclear weapons and ensures the sustainability of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Therefore, Asia saw no inconsistency in improving relations with the United States and declaring the conclusion of strategic partnership with China. As for America, its statements with the air of ideological 'crusade' and a commitment to the policy of containment on the model of the Cold War can only contribute to friendly attitudes from New Delhi and Beijing. In addition, the actions undertaken by the USA can produce an explosion of outrage among the Muslim population in India.

China seeks cooperation with the United States, which are pursuing their own interests for many different reasons, among which there is the narrowing gap between developed and developing regions of China. An urgent need to adapt the political system to the increasingly rapid progress of economic and scientific-technological revolution has been recently spotted in Asia, and was marked that potentially disastrous blow to 'cold war' with America may cause the continuous poverty until higher standards of living are introduced.

The policies that the USA follows at the moment cannot find the support in Asia. Asian countries will not stop trading with China. Whatever happens, China will not disappear. America's interest in maintaining cooperation with China stems from the fact that the above-mentioned strategy will contribute to stability in the international arena.

As a result of consistent implementation of its tasks in China, by 2050 the USA must achieve its economical goals, such as full socialist modernization, maturity of the socio-economic development, significant improvement status in the international arena and exit at the top of the world's total public power. In addition, the USA is supposed to find a way to reach the highest rank of middle-GNP per capita, creating a wealthy, happy life for the people, turning the country into a powerful state with a high level of physical, legal and spiritual civilization, as Walder (2006) explains.

The policy of preventive action makes no sense when dealing with a country of the size of China. Nobody is interested in ensuring that future generations of Chinese will view the U.S. as a permanent enemy. Similarly, China does not need to believe that America is focused exclusively on its narrow domestic or regional interests.

It is important to take into account the psychology of both parties. China should be cautious about the political steps that can be aimed at distancing America from Asia, as well as such important for the United States issues as human rights. On the other hand, the actions undertaken by the USA should influence the flexibility and breadth of the position of America against China. America must understand that any threatening tone in relations with China will be associated in Beijing with disdain of the imperialist powers.

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