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## CHINESE PEACEFUL RISE AND DEVELOPMENT. THE THEORY OF “CHINA’S THREAT”

*"China ... can give the world the gift. This gift will be a happy compound of  
Western dynamism with traditional Chinese stability"*

**Arnold Toynbee**

### ***China's reforms and opening-up policy***

People's Republic of China (PRC) has achieved phenomenal economic growth and unprecedented development “miracle” in human history. From the middle of the first decade of this century China has become a significant player in the global economy, it has flourished into a formidable economy, ranked the second largest in the world, and stands as the largest, the fastest growing and the most heavily engaged in international business and investment.

The sustained and rapid growth of China's economy, since the late 1970s, initiated by Deng Xiaoping (8 March 1978 - 17 June 1983), driven by reform and opening-up policy, became one of the most important milestones of the global economy during the past quarter century<sup>1</sup>. The reform and opening up has enabled China to complete the historic transformation from a semi-closed society into a fully open one. Today, the openness of Chinese society and its integration with the outside world have reached unprecedented levels<sup>2</sup>. The consequence of integration into the global economy, economic development has made China into a major force and advocate of globalization. China has become the strategic center of the “global factory” that produces the commodities consumed globally, above all in the centers of global capitalism<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> China's Road to Development in a Global Perspective, China in Peaceful Development, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 2007, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> China. Questions and Answers, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 2008, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Arif Dirlik, Post-Socialism Revisited: Reflections on “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics”, It's Past, Present and Future, Seeking Changes, The Political

China since early 1990s has absorbed around half of the direct foreign investment going to developing countries. In some years in the early 21st century, China's exports or imports have accounted for around half of the growth in world trade and its output for around half the growth in world production. China has contributed the majority of growth in demand for some industrial raw materials in the century so far<sup>4</sup>. The development of China is not only to provide economic materials for the international community, but also to carry forward and put into practice the essence of traditional Chinese culture that has been deposited for several thousand years, making contributions to the international society at the ideology and culture level<sup>5</sup>.

In order to realize the countries sustainable, rapid and healthy development, China is committed to deepening reform and opening up, developing the economy and solving issues directly bearing on people's livelihood, such as prices, environmental protection, education and health care. China is striving to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor and correct the regional imbalance. Beijing has put forward an ambitious goal to quadruple the per-capita Gross domestic product (GDP) of 2000 by 2020. In the process of building an innovation-oriented country, China's new central leadership has put forward the scientific outlook on development<sup>6</sup>. Beijing achieves development with its own efforts, while seeks mutual benefit and common development with other countries in keeping with the trend of economic globalization, and it should work together with other countries to build a harmonious world of durable

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Development in Contemporary China, Central Compilation and Translation Press, Beijing, 2011, p. 191.

<sup>4</sup> Ross Garnaut, *Thirty Years of Chinese Reform and economic Growth: Challenges and How it Has Changed world development*, The Political Development in Contemporary China, Central Compilation and Translation Press, Beijing, 2011, p. 169.

<sup>5</sup> Cheng Tanquan, *The Road of China, Recognizing and Understanding China Series*, China Renmin University Press, Beijing, 2013, p. 190.

<sup>6</sup> China. Questions and Answers, ..., p. 3.

peace and common prosperity. This is a path of scientific, independent, open, peaceful, cooperative and common development<sup>7</sup>.

As Chinese President Xi Jinping notes: “Reform is a powerful force that drives development. In line with the general objectives of improving and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics and modernizing our country’s governance system and capacity for governance, we should improve the systems whereby the market plays the decisive role in allocating resources while the government also plays a better role. While placing particular emphasis on economic reform, we should work more quickly to improve systems and mechanism in all areas and remove all systematic barriers to effective development in order to provide sustained impetus for development”<sup>8</sup>.

At present, China has entered a period of opportunity for making the transition from an upper-middle income country to a high-income country. At the same time, it has also entered a challenging stage of institutional reform, with profound changes taking place with regard to both the tasks and constraints that the country faces in reform<sup>9</sup>.

President Xi said in his speech at the APEC CEO Summit of October 7, 2013: “The Chinese economy has entered a new stage of development and is now undergoing a profound transformation of the growth model as well as structural adjustment. This requires us to constantly overcome difficulties and tackle tough problems. It is inevitably accompanied by growing pains and the distress and discomfort that come with adjustment but that is a small price to pay. Rainbow often appears after a storm. There is a saying that no mountain is too high to climb and no road is too long to walk. No matter how high the mountain or how long the road, if

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<sup>7</sup> China’s Peaceful Development, Information Office of the State Council, The People’s Republic of China, Beijing, September 2011, p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. Recommendations for the 13<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development, Central Compilation and Translation Press, Beijing, 2015, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Liu Wei, Upgrading China’s Economy, Qiushi, Vol. 5, No. 4, Organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Beijing, 01.10.2013, pp. 72-73.

only we advance with perseverance, we will eventually achieve our goal”<sup>10</sup>.

### ***China's peaceful rise (Héping juéqǐ) and peaceful development (Héping fāzhǎn)***

At the beginning of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and on the occasion of the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC), Beijing declared solemnly to the world, that peaceful development is a Chinese strategic choice to realize modernization, make itself strong and prosperous, and make more contribution to the progress of human civilization.<sup>11</sup> A phrase “peaceful development” was a direct descendent of Deng Xiaoping’s\* “peace and development” (Héping yǔ fāzhǎn). Later Chinese President Hu Jintao (15 March 2003 - 14 March 2013) introduced the more subtle and more powerful idea of a “Harmonious World” (Héxié shìjiè)<sup>12</sup>. In his speech at the XVIII Congress, President Hu also introduced a “socialist medullary valuable views” - the “three advances”, “a set of 12 values” or “values in the 24 hieroglyphs.” By structure “valuable beliefs” refer to three different levels:

1. *the level of the state: the wealth and strength, democracy, civilization and harmony.*
2. *the level of society: freedom, equality, justice, the power of law.*
3. *the level of individual: patriotism, dedication to the work, honesty, friendship and kindness*<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> How to Deepen Reform Comprehensively. Xi Jinping, The Party Literature Research Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Foreign Language Press, Beijing, 2014, p. 55.

<sup>11</sup> China’s Peaceful Development, Information Office of the State Council, ..., p. 1.

\* Chinese revolutionary and statesman, the paramount leader of China from 1978 until his retirement in 1989.

<sup>12</sup> Joshua Cooper Ramo, Brand China Foreign Policy Centre, London, February 2007, p. 11. <http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/827.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Ломанов А., Идеология КПК после XVIII съезда и «серцевинные ценностные воззрения», XVIII Съезд КПК: Новые задачи и перспективы развития (Материалы ежегодной научной конференции Центра политических исследований и прогнозов Китая ИДВ РАН, Москва, 20.03.2013), Информационные материалы. Серия В: «Общество и государство в Китае в

Peace is the core word of China's foreign relations and the independent foreign policy of peace is the soul. Loving peace, maintaining world peace and striving for a peaceful international environment are the basic concepts of China's foreign affairs. The two Chinese characters for the word of "peace" (pronounces - Hépíng) have a rich definition. The character "he" has a radical for "mouth", meaning a living man on one side and radical for "crops", meaning crops of grain, fruit and vegetables on the other. To the people in ancient China, it was "he" when everybody had food to eat. "Ping" originally means flat and no turbulence and its extensions mean calm, even-tempered, tranquil, equality and mutual benefit as well as to reduce turmoil or confusion and to put down wars. When the characters of "he ping" (peace) are used in international, it means no war, not to resort to force to invade the territory and sovereignty of other countries, not to resort to war to solve international issues and to oppose wars aggression in any form<sup>14</sup>.

The diplomatic strategy of peaceful developments is a product of learning the essence of the traditional Chinese Confucian "philosophy on concordance" in the new era, reflecting the traditional positive mean thinking of Confucianism. The diplomatic ideas in ancient China were deeply influenced by "benevolence", "righteousness" and "etiquette" held by Confucius and Mencius, which stressed that great powers should treat small countries with etiquette, and not bully small countries or threatens their survival. "Harmony being the most precious", "harmony without sameness", "cherishing the men from afar" and "elevating morality and restraining military forces" are the core of the Confucianism-based diplomatic culture of China<sup>15</sup>. So China has always been steadfast in maintaining world peace and has been actively participating in resolving international conflicts instead of poisoning any threat to the world<sup>16</sup>.

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период реформ», Вып. 28, Москва, 2013, стр. 6-7. URL: [http://www.ifes-ras.ru/attaches/books\\_texts/InformMaterialy\\_Iss28\\_2013.pdf](http://www.ifes-ras.ru/attaches/books_texts/InformMaterialy_Iss28_2013.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Liu Binjie, China's Philosophy on Foreign Affairs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, China in Peaceful Development. Foreign Language Studies, Beijing, 2006, pp. 16-17.

<sup>15</sup> Cheng Tanquan, The Road of China, Recognizing and Understanding China Series, China Renmin University Press, Beijing, 2013, p. 190.

<sup>16</sup> China. Questions and Answers, Foreign Languages Press, ..., p. 3.

China's development model has been drawing attention to more and more politicians and scholars across the world, figuring out China's role-model effect. The Chinese path of development seems defy the mainstream Western paradigm of international relations (IR), for China's rapid development was accomplished without undermining the existing international order, nor threatens the peace of the world<sup>17</sup>.

Viewed in the broader, global and historical context, the path of peaceful development may be defined as follows: China should develop itself through upholding world peace and contribute to world peace through its own development<sup>18</sup>. So, China's prosperity has been boosted in opening up while its growth has promoted the development of the world<sup>19</sup>. China's idea of peaceful development is gradually taking shape and may emerge as a significant value innovation in world history, even though it has been questioned by increasingly "radical" Chinese people, with China's rapid growth in national strength and new changes in China's diplomatic situation<sup>20</sup>.

In this regard Xi Jinping noted: "The tide of history is mighty. Those who follow it will prosper, while those who resist it will perish. Looking back on history, we can see that those who launched aggression or sought expansion by force all ended in failure. This is a law of history. A prosperous and stable world provides China with opportunities, and China's development also offers an opportunity for the world as a whole. Whether we will succeed in our pursuit of peaceful development to a large extent hinges on whether we can turn opportunities in the rest of the world into China's opportunities and China's opportunities into those for

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<sup>17</sup> Zhang Pei, *Theories of International System and China's Peaceful Development*, International Review, Vol. 37, Shanghai Institute for International Studies (SIIS), Shanghai, Winter 2004, p. 50.

<sup>18</sup> *China's Peaceful Development*, Information Office of the State Council, ..., p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> China. *Questions and Answers*, Foreign Languages Press, ..., p. 25.

<sup>20</sup> Shi Yinhong, *China's Rise and the International Pattern*, Contemporary International Relations (CIR), Vol. 24, No. 4, China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), Beijing, July/August 2014, p. 68.

the rest of the world so that China and other countries can engage in sound interactions and make mutually beneficial progress”<sup>21</sup>.

### ***The theory of “China’s threat” (Zhōngguó wēixiè)***

Thereby China’s development leads to the rise of China and for realist theory, the rise of a great power will inevitably challenge the balance of power of the international system. Hence the conflict and war arise between the rising power and international system, which is the very theoretical source of “China’s threat”<sup>22</sup>.

China’s rise is being viewed with uncertainty and anxiousness in the West. It’s rapid economic growth, military modernization and in recent years surge in energy demand have made many in the United States (U.S.) talk about “China threat”. Policy makers, strategic thinkers and academicians have started exploring strategies of “containing China” and rejecting the concept of “peaceful rise”<sup>23</sup>. Once upon a time, there were numerous “China failure” theories circulating the international community, all claiming that China’s development would be short-lived and unsustainable. Nowadays, the “China failure” theories have been replaced by various “China threat” theories<sup>24</sup>.

However, the Chinese foreign policy establishment has been fully aware of the possible negative reaction that China’s growing economic and military power might cause in the international community. They understand that without effectively addressing this issue of “China threat”

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<sup>21</sup> Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 2014, p. 273.

<sup>22</sup> Zhang Pei, *Theories of International System and China’s Peaceful Development*, *International Review*, Vol. 37, Shanghai Institute for International Studies (SIIS), Shanghai, Winter 2004, p. 50.

<sup>23</sup> Fazlul Haque, *Is China a Threat to World? China- Through My Prism*, *Defense Forum*, Autumn 2013, p. 112. <http://www.cdsndu.org/userfiles/file/00001/00001-20141231084839/9%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E6%98%AF%E4%B8%96%E7%95%8C%E7%9A%84%E5%A8%81%E8%83%81%E5%90%97-%E8%8B%B1.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Wang Yi, *Peaceful Development and the Chinese Dream of National Rejuvenation*, *China International Studies*, China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), Beijing, January/February, 2014, p. 20.

in the U.S. and its neighboring countries, its rise will not be well received by the international community at large. Chinese elites have first-hand experience how the perception of “China threat” could damage Beijing’s image and reduce the effectiveness of China’s diplomacy<sup>25</sup>.

Worth to note, that the “China threat” theory appeared for the first time at the beginnings of the 1990s, when China’s economy and comprehensive national strength experienced unprecedented fast growth. In August 1990, a Japanese professor wrote an article describing China as a potential adversary in view of its comprehensive national strength and sustained development. In 1992, the “China economic threat” theory also emerged following the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping’s tour of South China which provided the launch for the known economic growth<sup>26</sup>. The “China threat” theory prevailed for a while in Southeast Asia, with different versions subsequently appearing in some of China’s Asian neighbors. But then it subsided somewhat as China’s contribution to the prosperity of Asia and beyond grew. However, it flared up once again after 2005, though with a reduced following<sup>27</sup>.

The theory of “peaceful rise”, which was replaced by the concept of “peaceful development”, was an attempt to counter the “China threat” theories by emphasizing the peaceful way in which China could emerge as a world power<sup>28</sup>.

This approach was particularly associated with Zheng Bijian (1993-

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<sup>25</sup> Jianwei Wang, *China’s Peaceful Rise: A Comparative Study*, EAI Fellows Program, Working Paper 19, The East Asia Institute, Seoul, May 2009, p. 3. [http://www.eai.or.kr/data/bbs/eng\\_report/2009052017544710.pdf](http://www.eai.or.kr/data/bbs/eng_report/2009052017544710.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> Bertrand Ateba, *Is the Rise of China a Security Threat?* Polis / R.C.S.P. / C.P.S.R. Vol. 9, Numéro Spécial, 2002, p. 3. <http://www.polis.sciencespobordeaux.fr/vol10ns/ateba.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> Fazlul Haque, *Is China a Threat to World? China- Through My Prism, ...*, p. 112.

<sup>28</sup> Yongnian Zheng, Sow Keat Tok, *China’s ‘Peaceful Rise’: Concept and Practice*, Discussion Paper 1, China Policy Institute, The University of Nottingham, United Kingdom, November 2005, p. 2. <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/cpi/documents/discussion-papers/discussion-paper-1-china-peaceful-rise.pdf>



2002), a former vice-president of the CCP Central School<sup>29</sup> and has been central to the foreign policy drives initiated by China's fourth generation leaders since 2003<sup>30</sup>. Chinese political elites argues that for various reasons China could take a route very different from other major powers in history and China's rise will be peaceful and beneficial both to the Chinese people and the rest of the world<sup>31</sup>.

China's prosperity, development and long-term stability represent an opportunity rather than a threat to its neighbors<sup>32</sup>, it doesn't invade nor threaten any country or nation, even when it is powerful. Beijing adheres to friendly exchanges on equal terms among countries, and hopes to solve disputes through peaceful and conciliatory means by way of talks and negotiations. Beijing also seeks for friendship and good neighborliness with surrounding countries to keep stable, friendly and cooperative relations with them, even when their relations turn complicated and appear tense<sup>33</sup>.

Here one may make an observation on Chinese heritage, where is absent the concept of building a superpower, based on naval might to maximize its global dominance like British and the Americans. Zheng He's (15<sup>th</sup> Century) voyages showed capacity, but no ambitions to dominate the seas or build maritime empires. They were stopped, when proved the absence of enemies threatening China from the seas<sup>34</sup>.

According to the former President of China Institute for International

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<sup>29</sup> Pablo Bustelo, China's Emergence: Threat or 'Peaceful Rise'? Area: Asia-Pacific - ARI N° 135, the Elcano Royal Institute, 2005, p. 3.

<http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/850/bustelo850.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Yongnian Zheng, Sow Keat Tok, China's 'Peaceful Rise': Concept and Practice, ..., p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> Jianwei Wang, China's Peaceful Rise: A Comparative Study, ..., p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> China's Peaceful Development, Information Office of the State Council, ..., p. 27.

<sup>33</sup> Liu Binjie, China's Philosophy on Foreign Affairs in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, ..., pp. 74-75.

<sup>34</sup> Graeme Dobell, China Rises, China Acts. The Strategist. The Australian Strategic Policy Institute Blog, 04.06.2015. <http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/china-rises-china-acts/>

Studies Ma Zhengang, China, being the only developing country in the United Nation's Security Council (UNSC), has all along adhered to principles, promoted justice, opposed power politics and respected the rights and interests of the developing countries. At the same time, it has never imposed its own will on others, let alone attempting to "transform" or "rule" other countries. The fact that China never attaches any political strings when providing assistance within its ability to other countries is a proof in point<sup>35</sup>.

However, no country has ever faced such a set of challenges as China. The country faces deep economic, political and social challenges and is trying to deal simultaneously with the challenges of globalization, transition and development. Every effort of policy has to be directed towards avoiding potentially catastrophic outcome as the possibility of social and political disintegration is real<sup>36</sup>. It can also be predicted that significant and progressive changes will take place with China's peaceful rise. The success in dealing with this historical challenge will guarantee China a long-standing position as a world power<sup>37</sup>.

However, some experts believe that Beijing, focusing on the achievement of their own economic welfare, will adhere to the five principles of peaceful co-existence\* and will not try to expand the area of its geopolitical influence<sup>38</sup>. In the formation of the inter-state relations, China's modern leadership is attempting to be abstracted from ideology,

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<sup>35</sup> Ma Zhengang, China's Responsibility and the "China Responsibility", Theory, China International Studies, China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), Beijing, Summer 2007, p. 7.

<sup>36</sup> Peter Nolan, China and Crossroads, Seeking Changes, The Economic Development in Contemporary China, Central Compilation and Translation Press, Beijing, 2011, p. 15.

<sup>37</sup> Shi Yinhong, China's Rise and the International Pattern, ..., p. 71.

\* Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

<sup>38</sup> Гузенкова Т., Карпов М., Глобализация по-китайски, или Китай в странах СНГ и Балтии, Страны СНГ и Балтии в глобальной политике Китая, Российский институт стратегических исследований (РИСИ), М., 2013, стр. 17.

religion and value concepts of different countries. The main emphasis in international relations done on the development of relations between the states, based on the principles of international law and peaceful coexistence, regardless of ideology<sup>39</sup>.

Beijing explains the peaceful policy of China with their cultural and historical characteristics, which is based on the foundations of traditional civilization. As Xi Jinping noted: "The argument that stronger countries will inevitably seek hegemony does not apply to China. It is not in the DNA of this country, taking into account the duration of the Chinese historical and cultural background. In addition, China clearly understands that it needs peaceful and stable internal and external conditions for its own development"<sup>40</sup>.

In really, China's achievements in reform and development have proved that the Western model of modernization is by no means the only path for pursuing modernization. Instead, a nation's future depends on its people's endeavors to cope with their specific national conditions, and therefore no one single country can define for others what are the main problems and possible solutions of a state. This represents an unprecedented example of world historic significance set by China in modern world history<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> Никифорова В., Пять принципов мирного сосуществования и их влияние на внешнеполитический курс КНР, Вековой путь Китая к прогрессу и модернизации: К 100-летию Синхайской революции: Тезисы XIX Международной научной конференции «Китай, китайская цивилизация и мир. История, современность, перспективы (Москва, 19–21 октября 2011 г.), ИДВ РАН, М., 2011, стр. 42. [http://www.ifes-ras.ru/images/abook\\_file/konf6.pdf](http://www.ifes-ras.ru/images/abook_file/konf6.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> Ломанов А., «Китайская мечта» как идеологический символ руководства Си Цзиньпина, Китайская Народная Республика: политика, экономика, культура. К 65-летию КНР, ИД «ФОРУМ», М., 2014. стр. 53. [http://istina.msu.ru/media/publications/book/6b7/57c/8862215/knr\\_2014.pdf](http://istina.msu.ru/media/publications/book/6b7/57c/8862215/knr_2014.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> Shi Yinong, China's Rise and the International Pattern, ..., p. 69.

**ՉԻՆԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԽԱՂԱՂ ԱՃՆ ՈՒ ԶԱՐԳԱՑՈՒՄԸ:  
«ՉԻՆԱԿԱՆ ՍՊԱՌՆԱԼԻՔԻ» ՏԵՍՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ**

Չինաստանն իր երկարատև դինամիկ զարգացման շնորհիվ 21-րդ դարի առաջին տասնամյակի կեսից վերածվեց համաշխարհային տնտեսության նշանակալից խաղացողի՝ դառնալով աշխարհում մեծագույն երկրորդ և ամենաարագ աճող տնտեսությունը և հավակնելով համաշխարհային գերտերության կարգավիճակի: Չինաստանի արագ աճը՝ մտահոգություն առաջացնելով միջազգային հանրության շրջանում, պատճառ դարձավ «չինական սպառնալիքի» մասին տեսության առաջացմանը, որին Պեկինը հակադարձեց Չինաստանի «խաղաղ աճի» տեսությամբ և «խաղաղ զարգացման» հայեցակարգով: Ըստ Պեկինի՝ երկրի խաղաղ աճն ու զարգացումը Չինաստանի ռազմավարական ընտրությունն է՝ արդիականացման, ուժեղ, կայուն և բարեկեցիկ երկիր դառնալու ճանապարհին: Պեկինը վստահ է, որ ավելի լայն և գլոբալ համատեքստում Չինաստանն իր զարգացման միջոցով պատրաստ է նպաստել համաշխարհային խաղաղությանը, իսկ համաշխարհային խաղաղությունը կարող է նպաստել Չինաստանի զարգացմանը: Ավելին, Չինաստանի զարգացումը կարող է խթանել նաև մարդկային քաղաքակրթության առաջընթացին: