

China's Energy Diplomacy and Its "Peaceful Rise" Ambition: The Cases of Sudan and Iran

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China has underscored its intention for peaceful development with the vision for a "harmonious world." But at the same time China is keen to play a more proactive role in the international rule-making process, addressing its dissatisfaction with the existing international system. This article examines whether China's energy diplomacy vis-à-vis Sudan and Iran has helped or hindered its ambition for peaceful development. China's dealings with Sudan have departed from its long-standing principle of non-interference in internal affairs to one of active intervention, a change intended to help build China's image as a "responsible power." China has also demonstrated its ambition and determination to play a more assertive role in dealing with Iran's nuclear crisis to facilitate safeguarding China's energy and economic interests. Yet Beijing has been willing to sacrifice its energy interests when necessary in order to be perceived as a responsible stakeholder within the current international establishment. While it might be natural for China to aspire to a more active international role that befits its economic status, China's objective of building a harmonious world and its peaceful rise ambition will remain unattainable dreams unless Beijing is prepared to accept some universal principles to guide its energy diplomacy.

Keywords China's rise, harmonious world, energy diplomacy, Sudan, Iran

Introduction

Chinese diplomacy has undergone enormous change since the onset of the open door era in the late 1970s. Moving away from Maoist ideology-based revolutionary diplomacy, China has since embarked on a more pragmatic economic diplomacy. This has enabled China to benefit from an international environment that is more favourable for its economic development. With the unprecedented economic growth achieved over the past couple of decades, China became the world's largest exporter in 2009, at the same time surpassing Germany to become the third largest economy in the world. In 2010, China

overtook Japan to take the second spot, immediately leading to predictions that China would surpass the United States by 2020 to become the world's top economic power (Mufson 2010). China's growing potential has made rising China a persistent issue of debate, particularly since the mid-1990s, focusing on whether China's rise poses a threat to the current international system. Since the turn of the 21st century, the debate has been linked to China's energy diplomacy, and questions are being asked not only about whether China can rise peacefully, but also whether it can be a responsible stakeholder on the international stage.

China's search for overseas energy resources started in the 1990s, soon after it became a net oil importer in 1993. Initially, China's energy diplomacy was focused on the nearby belt regions, consisting of Russia and Central Asia, as well as on the Middle East and North Africa. By the time China became the world's second largest oil importer in 2009 its energy diplomacy had become global. With Chinese National Oil Companies (NOCs) operating in more than 50 countries around the world—including in the so-called rogue states of Sudan and Iran—China's energy diplomacy soon triggered considerable concern and criticism from the outside world. One of the main concerns raised was whether China could keep the right balance between its energy security interests and the need to be a responsible stakeholder. In other words, the key issue was whether China's energy diplomacy would facilitate or hinder its strategy of peaceful rise. Raising this question by no means suggests that China's search for overseas energy might be pursued by military means, or that it would potentially trigger armed conflicts. Rather, by examining China's dealings with the states of concern in its search for energy, I hope to reveal the fundamental principles that underpin China's energy diplomacy and to conclude whether or not China aims at challenging the existing international order and forcing its way as an emerging power, as argued by many scholars of international relations.

This article intends to answer this question by investigating China's energy diplomacy towards different regions and the implications for China's peaceful rise aspiration. It argues that China is not a revisionist power that aims to challenge the current international system, but is happy to conform to established international standards. However, China is not completely satisfied with the established rules and, therefore, is also keen to play a greater role in the rule-making process. The controversies triggered by China's energy diplomacy are partially due to the pragmatism of such diplomacy based on the non-interference principle. But more than that, they also indicate uneasiness with China's ambition to build a "harmonious world" (*hexie shijie*), which implies a more assertive role by China in international affairs under a multi-value system. The analysis below has four parts. Section two reviews the endless theoretical debates over China's rise and the scholarly interpretation of Hu Jintao's harmonious world proposition. The purpose of this section is to provide a theoretical framework for the case studies presented in section three, and also to help present the new thinking in

China's foreign policy principles. In section three, the two case studies focus on China's energy diplomacy vis-à-vis Sudan and Iran and describe the evolution and major features of China's energy diplomacy concerning the two nations. The final section is the conclusion that highlights the findings from the case studies and evaluates the likely implications of China's energy diplomacy for its peaceful rise approach.

China's Rise and the Theoretical Debates

Despite its long history as the Middle Kingdom, China enjoyed little recognition or significance in the modern international system until the late 1970s. Indeed, after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, China faced international isolation for more than two decades and only began to reintegrate itself with the international system in 1972, marked by its return to the United Nations (UN). But prior to its open-door era beginning in 1978, Beijing viewed itself as an outsider of the international system and developed the well-known Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence (FPPC) (*heping gongchu wuxiang yuanze*)¹ as the basis for its foreign policy.

At the peak of Maoist revolutionary diplomacy, China publicly asserted that it would not work with the biased and unjustified international system, expressing its desire to replace it with a new revolutionary world system (Zhao 2006). Mao's diplomacy made little impact on the outside world, but concerns over the likely implications of China's policy for the world system seem to have never been forgotten. As early as the 1970s, for instance, the former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (1973-77) already warned: "Once China becomes strong enough to stand alone, it might discard us. A little later it might even turn against us, if its perception of its interests requires it" (Kissinger 1979, 1091).

In September 1989, after the East European transitions, Deng Xiaoping invoked the famous *taoguang yanghui* principle (often translated "hide one's brightness and nourish one's capability") with the implication that China could indeed be a potential threat. But taken into context with Deng's other statements, such as "We should never seek leadership and this should be our basic policy," and "We should concentrate on just one thing: to get our own business done well" (Deng 1993, 321, 363), a more appropriate translation of the term *taoguang yanghui* should instead be "not to show off one's strength, rather focus on self-improvement." Deng's thinking can be viewed as a transition from the FPPC position to a focus on China's peaceful rise, which stresses the non-interference principle in the process of China's development.

However, China was not the only rising power that faced suspicion and scrutiny from the status quo powers in the post-war era. For instance, Japan alarmed the world in the 1970s with its impressive economic growth, and more

recently the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) have emerged as a new power group on the world stage. Yet none of these emerging powers has been viewed as a threat that could challenge the established international system—not even post-Soviet Russia despite its reluctance to get along with the Western powers (Rise 2000, 57-8). Two issues seem to have distinguished China's rise from its peers. One is that China's rise is actually a re-emergence of the Middle Kingdom, in Joseph Nye's words. China is not a new major power in the Asia-Pacific region; it was a world leader until the 16th Century (Nye 1998, 66). The other view is the Middle Kingdom syndrome, as held by Thomas Fingar (2012, 200). According to Fingar, the Chinese believe that "their country is superior and entitled to dominate its periphery (and by extension the world), and that it has suffered from nearly two centuries of overweening dominance by barbarian imperialists. ... Whether and how this may differ from other manifestations of big-power chauvinism is probably less important than the fact that these beliefs are widely accepted as true in China, and taken into consideration by other countries when assessing what motivates Chinese leaders to act as they do" (2012, 200).

Following China's steady growth and the end of the Cold War, the *China threat* theory (*Zhongguo weixie lun*) re-emerged in the 1990s, represented by Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro's article, *China: The Coming Conflict with America* (1997). The authors argued that China is seeking to replace the United States as the dominant power in Asia and this would conflict with an established American objective: preventing any single country from gaining overwhelming power in Asia. A debate over whether China will become a threat to the world has been going on ever since (Segal 1988; Roy 1996; Yee and Storey 2002; Shambaugh 2005). After the U.S. bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in May 1999, the hawkish view gained more influence in Washington, as expressed by Condoleezza Rice (2000, 55-6), then Foreign Policy Advisor to Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush:

Even if there is an argument for economic interaction with Beijing, China is still a potential threat to stability in the Asia-Pacific region. Its military power is currently no match for that of the United States. But that condition is not necessarily permanent. What we do know is that China is a great power with unresolved vital interests, particularly concerning Taiwan and the South China Sea. China resents the role of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region. This means that China is not a "status quo" power but one that would like to alter Asia's balance of power in its own favour.

In the new century, and largely as a result of China's energy diplomacy with rogue states, the debate evolved beyond the China threat proposition to questioning whether China is a revisionist power aiming to alter the existing international system (Foot 2001; Masud 2004; Jiang 2009).

The View of the Realist School

Focusing on the dynamics of the changing power balance in international relations, classical realist scholars have viewed China's growing potential as an unavoidable threat to the existing world order. They have employed mainly two sets of theories to explain likely consequences of China's rise. One was the *balance of power* theory which contended that the probability of war was lower in a bipolar international system—the closer the military capability between the major powers, the stronger its deterrence effect. After the U.S.-USSR bipolar system disappeared, conflict was most likely when a rising power (China), dissatisfied with the status quo, sought equality with the dominant state (USA), in a region or system and was willing to use force to reshape the rules and institutions of that system (Gilpin 1981; Layne 1993; Wohlforth 1999; Mearsheimer 2001; Huang and Chu 2009). The other was the theory of *hegemonic stability*. This view held that in an anarchic international system "the presence of a single, strongly dominant actor in international politics leads to collectively desirable outcomes for *all* states in the international system." (Snidal 1985, 579) Any attempt to maximize one's power could be viewed as a revisionist threat (Waltz 2000; Johnston 2003). In contemporary times, as Mearsheimer (2004, 2) argues, it is almost impossible for any state to achieve global hegemony, hence the best outcome that a state can hope for is to be a regional hegemon, as the United States has done. Yet regional hegemons do not want peers. Therefore, the United States would not tolerate China to be a regional hegemon in Asia. Looking at history, Steven Mufson (2010) maintained that "rarely have rising powers risen without sparking a major war that reshaped the international system to reflect new realities of power."

The defensive realist school addressed China's intention, instead of its growing potential, arguing that China's increasing integration with the international system could help prevent armed conflicts with the existing powers. Avery Goldstein (2001), for instance, claimed that China had followed a fairly conservative, cautious foreign policy that was unlikely to present a significant threat to international security over the near-to-medium term. According to Goldstein (2001, 836), in addition to the core survival concerns, "China's contemporary grand strategy is designed to engineer the country's rise to the status of a true great power that shapes, rather than simply responds to, the international system," but the strategy "lacks any obvious ambition or reason to indulge a thirst for international expansion, let alone domination." Therefore, it was inappropriate to compare Beijing's diplomatic approach with some of the 20th century's most disruptive actors—Wilhelmine or Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan and the Soviet Union. Responding to the concern about how China would use its power if it came to equal or exceed that of the United States (Cohen 2009, 38), Quansheng Zhao presented a model of managed great power relations (2009, 250). According to Zhao, the United States and China are likely to be the only two

superpowers of the 21st century; thus they “need to find accommodating ways, such as mutual acknowledgement of each other’s core interests, that allow the two countries to coexist as ‘stakeholders’” (2009, 250).

Employing the theory of economic interdependence, Moore and Yang (2001, 191) claimed that due to greater economic interdependence in the world today, China’s rise would not pose any threat to other nations. They held that “the webs of interdependence spun by China’s growing participation in the world economy will serve as the best guard against Beijing’s becoming a source of instability in East Asia” (Moore and Yang 2001, 191). Their position was shared by a group of Chinese scholars who maintained that China was comfortable with the current international system and had been an active participant over the past few decades. By 2006, China had already joined more than 100 international organizations and signed nearly 300 international treaties. China’s perception and attitude towards multilateral diplomacy had also undergone important changes, making it a responsible power within the system (Deng and Wang 2005; Yan 2006; Deng 2008; Wang and Wang 2008, Feng 2009; Buzan 2010; Qin 2010).

China’s Peaceful Rise: Harmonious World vs. Responsible Stakeholder

Joining the heated academic debate based on Western international relations theories, Chinese officials have offered their new thinking on China’s rise. However, their views have faced challenges from U.S. officials who are highly anxious about a stronger China. In 2005, Zheng Bijian, then Executive Vice-Principal of the Central Party’s School, declared that China would rise peacefully by transcending the traditional ways for great powers to emerge saying:

The most significant strategic choice the Chinese have made was to embrace economic globalization rather than detach themselves from it. ... China does not seek hegemony or predominance in world affairs. It advocates a new international political and economic order, one that can be achieved through incremental reforms and the democratization of international relations (Zheng 2005, 20).

The former Chinese President Hu Jintao also proposed a harmonious world vision in a speech at the UN’s 60th anniversary on September 15, 2005. In order to build such a world, Hu held, “all countries should join hands in coping with global threats” by upholding multilateralism and inclusiveness, and “encourage and support the efforts to peacefully settle international disputes or conflicts through consultations and negotiations” (Jiang 2005). Only a week later, however, Robert Zoellick, then U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, raised a question over how China would use its influence, and asked the U.S. government to urge China to become a responsible stakeholder in the international system. He specifically mentioned China’s energy security strategy as a central issue that could hurt China’s reputation and lead others to question its intentions (Zoellick 2005). He

continued:

China's involvement with troublesome states indicates at best a blindness to consequences and at worst something more ominous. ... Uncertainties about how China will use its power will lead the United States—and others as well—to hedge relations with China. Many countries hope China will pursue a 'Peaceful Rise', but none will bet their future on it (Zoellick 2005, 1, 5).

In responding to Zoellick's suspicion, some Chinese scholars (Li 2003; Liu 2003; Zhou 2003; Ni 2006; Hu 2007) have insisted that China would remain committed to the doctrine of peaceful rise despite its potential for a much more assertive stance, largely due to its still low economic status in *per capita* terms. In October 2005, Beijing issued its white paper on *China's Peaceful Development Road*, which employed the notion of peaceful development to replace peaceful rise. The paper held that "China persists in its pursuit of harmony and development internally while pursuing peace and development externally; the two aspects, closely linked and organically united, are an integrated whole, and will help to build a harmonious world of sustained peace and common prosperity" (State Council Information Office 2005). Since then, peaceful development has become the standard term used by the Chinese government and scholars when talking about China's growing strength. Nevertheless, for the outside world the possible impact of China's rise seems to continue to be a serious concern.

Indeed, in line with its constantly increasing potential power, China is no longer satisfied with merely co-existing with other countries but is seeking a greater role in the process of rule-making within a multi-value world system. As stated by then Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, during his visit to Australia in April 2006, "China firmly defends world peace; it is a player, defender and constructor of the international system" (Chen 2006, 37). Chinese scholars have also begun to interpret Hu's harmonious world notion as a means to promote a greater role for China in international affairs through peaceful means. In August 2006, a workshop was organized by the *Banyue Tan* magazine (published by the *Xinhua News Agency* and sponsored by the Propaganda Department of the Chinese Communist Party) at which the highlight of the discussions focused on the meaning and implications of the harmonious world concept. Kang Shaobang, from the Central Party's School, for instance, said that the notion was built on the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, but that the meaning had gone beyond these principles. It was aimed to encourage communications between different parties and to incorporate all the parties into the rule-making process internationally. Wang Genhua, Director of the Policy Studies Department under the Chinese Foreign Ministry, stated that the idea of the harmonious world was based on Chinese tradition and value systems, which varied greatly from the Western concepts of democracy and freedom—although he did not illustrate

what the Chinese value system was all about. He believed that the notion would help enhance China's soft power and allow it to play a greater role in maintaining world stability and development. Zheng Qirong, vice-principal of the University of Foreign Affairs, also claimed that the harmonious world concept indicated China's positive shift in its diplomacy—from a revolutionary and observer on the international stage to a constructor, joint rule-maker, and stakeholder of the international system (*Xinhua* August 23, 2006).

There can be no doubt that today's China is better integrated with the international system than ever before, and its government is willing to play a constructive role in defending the current system as well. Nevertheless, as suggested by the harmonious world vision, Beijing has shown more explicitly that it is dissatisfied with the unipolar system and is keen to promote a multipolar world. Therefore, it does not seem sensible to argue that China is a revisionist state that aims to challenge the global establishment; nor is it accurate to claim that China is a status quo power that will fully obey the existing order. As will be discussed in the two cases below, in order to be recognized as a responsible stakeholder by the international community China has moved away from its long-standing non-interference principle in dealing with Sudan. In the meantime, Beijing has demonstrated its readiness for more assertive energy diplomacy in dealing with Iran, as a means of safeguarding its energy and political interests. The reason for choosing the two cases for this research is partly due to the controversies they have triggered, and also because the two countries are among China's major oil suppliers: By 2011, oil imports from the Middle East accounted for 51.2% of China's total oil imports (with 10.9% of oil supply from Iran), followed by Africa at 23.7%, with Sudan's share being 5.1 % (Tian 2012, 60).

China's Energy Diplomacy towards Sudan

Sudan was the largest country in Africa before the separation of the South in July 2011, and it was among the first African countries to recognize the PRC in 1959. China started oil exploration in Sudan in 1995, not due to Sudan's proven oil reserves, which only ranked 20th in the world in 1990 (Li 2012), but because of close bilateral relations that had been developing since the early 1990s (Large 2008b, 38). Prior to China's entry in 1995, two Western oil companies—France's Total and Canada's Arakis Energy Corp. (later sold to Talisman Energy Inc.)—had initiated activities in Sudan. However, they were later forced to withdraw as a result of U.S. sanctions on Sudan due to its close links with Islamic international terrorism at this time (Goodman 2004; US Embassy in Sudan 2012). Chevron also operated in Sudan following the discovery of oil in the country in 1978, but withdrew in 1992, due in part to the disruptions caused by the second civil war that started in 1983, and in part owing to U.S. sanctions triggered by Khartoum's

support of the Iraqi regime during the first Gulf War. In addition, Sudan faced isolation from the Middle East nations because its ruling party—the National Islamic Front—was allegedly associated with international terrorism, including the attempted assassination of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak in June 1995.

It was at such a time of isolation by the West and its own neighbours that Khartoum turned to Beijing in 1994, asking for help in oil development. At the time China was also under Western sanctions following the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989, and thus it desired to establish energy-based cooperation with Sudan where it faced little competition (Large 2008b). According to Chen Fengying of the China Contemporary International Relations Institute, as a newcomer to the international markets, Chinese companies needed to search “for oil where American [and] European companies were not present, and Sudan represented a viable prospect” (Goodman 2004).

Following a visit by Sudanese President Brigadier Omar al-Bashir to Beijing in September 1995, CNPC signed a contract to develop Block 6 in Sudan's Heglig Oilfield. In order to reduce the investment risk and to enable Sudan to avoid placing all of its eggs in one (Chinese) basket, the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPOC) was established in 1997 as a joint venture. The partners were CNPC (40% stake), Petronas (Malaysian, 30%), Talisman (25%), and the newly created Sudan Petroleum Company (Sudapet, 5%) (Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company 2007). The presidency of GNPOC has been held by China due to CNPC's dominant share within the consortium. When Talisman decided to withdraw in 2002, it sold its 25% stake for U.S. \$758m² to India's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (*New York Times* October 31, 2002). In March 1997, the GNPOC consortium won the right to develop Blocks 1, 2, and 4 in Heglig. In April 1999, a 1,506 km-long oil pipeline linking Heglig Oilfield to Port Sudan was built allowing Sudan to supply its crude to international markets. In August 1999, two decades after its oil discovery, Sudan was for the first time exporting oil (Shinn 2007). Thanks to Chinese and other partners' investments, by 2010 Sudan could also declare that it owned 6.7 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, compared with 0.3 billion barrels in 1990 (Li 2012).

The bilateral trade relations between China and Sudan resulted in substantial development in the new century. Chinese oil companies, such as CNPC and Sinopec, became major players in Sudan's oil sector, both upstream and downstream; they also built a refinery and a tanker terminal (Goodman 2004; Large 2007). By 2005, Sino-Sudanese trade reached \$3.9bn and China became Sudan's top trading partner. However, such a relationship was quite unbalanced: While oil counted for 71% of Sudan's exports to China, it counted for just 5.2% of China's oil imports; and China's exports to Sudan (mainly mechanical and electronic goods) were only 0.2-0.3% of China's total export trade (Tian 2006, 4; Large 2008b, 6-7). In 2011, oil from Sudan accounted for 5.1% of China's oil imports, ranking 7th after Saudi Arabia (19.8%), Angola (12.3%), Iran (10.9%),

Russia (7.8%), Oman (7.2%), and Iraq (5.4%) (Tian 2012, 60).

China and the Darfur Crisis

Beijing's dealings with Khartoum might have served its energy supply objective, but it soon became obvious, especially after the Darfur crisis emerged in 2003, that China was paying the price in terms of its political reputation. Darfur, meaning land of the Fur, was an area that had faced many years of ethnic tension over land and grazing rights between the mostly nomadic Arabs and the farmers from the indigenous African tribes of the Fur. In early 2003, two main rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Army and the Justice and Equality Movement, began attacking government targets, accusing Khartoum of oppressing black Africans in favour of Arabs. The government responded with a brutal counter-insurgency campaign. By 2010 about 2.7 million people had fled their homes, and the UN estimated that approximately 300,000 people had died, most from disease (*BBC News* February 23, 2010). The Darfur crisis sparked severe criticism from Western nations and humanitarian groups who condemned the mass killing of civilians by the Khartoum militias. The International Criminal Court at the Hague even charged Sudan's President, Omar al-Bashir, with "three counts of genocide" in Darfur (He 2010, 157; International Criminal Court 2012).

The Darfur crisis was certainly rooted in the historical conflicts between Sudan's northern and southern ethnic groups (i.e., the majority Arabs in the north and indigenous Africans in the south). China was merely one of the countries operating in Sudan's oil industry, along with Japan, Malaysia, and India. However, probably due to its position as a dominant economic partner and a key international political patron, China was selected as the target of criticism in dealing with the Darfur crisis (Large 2008a, 3-6). For instance, a report by Peter Goodman at the *Washington Post* held that Sudan's oil exports had increased the stakes and also the government's ability to pursue the battle in Darfur (Oil exports in 1999 allowed Khartoum to collect \$500m in revenue, of which 80% was spent on weapons). China was further accused of being the largest arms supplier to Sudan and of helping set up three weapons factories near Khartoum (Goodman 2004). Moreover, China was believed to be able to wield influence over Khartoum that could have assisted in brokering a peace deal, but rather chose not to use it in the name of its non-interference principle. The only support China offered was \$610,000 worth of humanitarian aid to Darfur in August 2004, following a visit to Khartoum by China's special envoy Lu Guozeng. Between June 11, 2004 and July 31, 2007, the UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted 20 Resolutions pertaining to Sudan and Darfur. Beijing voted for a majority of them, but abstained on six votes in order to prevent possible sanctions against Sudan (Large 2008a, 8; Biswas 2012).

China's non-interference position over Darfur did not do much to help solve the crisis, but intensified debates about whether China would be a responsible

stakeholder. The reasons behind China's policy were partly linked to its oil interest in Sudan. As observed by Zhu Weilie, Director of Middle East and North African Studies at Shanghai International Studies University, "Oil from Sudan makes up one-tenth of all of China's oil imports. ... If we lose this source, how can we find another market to replace it? China has to balance its interests" (Goodman 2004).³ Others argued that Deng Xiaoping's *taoguang yanghui* strategy could also be responsible since, given Sudan's comparative insignificance in China's foreign trade (bilateral trade accounted for only 0.5% of China's total), it would not serve Beijing's interest to play much of a role in Sudan's domestic affairs (Large 2008a, 8).

However, faced with mounting international pressure over Khartoum's violation of human rights, and especially when China's own credibility started to be questioned, Beijing began to adopt a firmer stance against Sudan to show its willingness to be a responsible stakeholder. In November 2006, the Chinese Ambassador to the UN, Wang Guangya, during negotiations in Addis Ababa on the so-called Annan Plan, proposed a compromise deal for expanding the UN peacekeeping role in Darfur. Wang's proposal was viewed by U.S. Envoy to Darfur, Andrew Natsios, as having played "a vital and constructive role" in negotiating the settlement (Large 2008a, 9). Also, during his February 2007 visit to Sudan, Chinese President Hu Jintao reportedly told President al-Bashir: "Darfur is a part of Sudan and you have to resolve this problem" (Large 2008a, 9). Furthermore, three months later, in May, China appointed Ambassador Liu Guijin as Special Envoy to Darfur. Liu held that China was keen to make great efforts, together with the international community, to help improve the situation. In July 2007, Liu again promised that efforts would be made to prevent Chinese weapons from reaching Darfur, saying that China would do its best to prevent the weapons from finding their way into the wrong hands and from doing the wrong things (Liu 2008; Large 2008a, 10-1). On July 31, 2007, under the presidency of China, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1769, leading to the establishment of a peacekeeping force under the hybrid UN-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). In January 2008, Beijing also sent 140 engineers and troops to Darfur as its contribution to the peacekeeping force under UNAMID (Large 2008a, 9-10; Montesquiou 2008). Compared with China's diplomatic tradition, its dealings with Sudan were a significant shift from the non-interference principle. The only other exceptions were China's involvement with the Six-Party Talks with North Korea, and the P5+1 (the five UNSC permanent members plus Germany) talks with Iran.

Despite the compromise over the Darfur issue, Beijing was not in full cooperation with the international community. One example was its disregard for the arrest warrant against Sudanese President al-Bashir for the atrocities in Darfur that was issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in July 2010. Instead, as recently as June 2011, President al-Bashir was Beijing's guest on a state visit. In responding to criticism from human rights groups, Chinese Foreign

Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said that China was not a signatory of the ICC treaty and thus had every right to invite Mr Bashir. Moreover, Hong held that “China has reserved its opinion towards the International Criminal Court lawsuit against President Omar al-Bashir” (*BBC News* June 27, 2011). China’s former ambassador to Ghana, Dai Yan, further argued that it was impossible for China not to deal with a certain country just because the West wanted to put sanctions on a certain person. China’s action might have had close links to its oil and economic interests in Sudan, but it was also said that al-Bashir’s visit was tacitly condoned by Washington, who called on China to help broker peace between the North and the South (Moore 2011; Perlez 2012). Regardless of the truth, China’s shifting position over Darfur has shown its desire to be viewed as a responsible rising power. But when it comes to situations that do not serve its interests or fit with its value systems, Beijing has appeared to be prepared to assert its position based on its harmonious world aspiration.

China’s Dealings with South Sudan

In January 2005, the government of Sudan signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) with the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement, bringing to an end the civil war that had lasted for more than twenty years. Under the CPA, the Southerners were granted greater autonomy and the right to determine their future by referendum, after the expiration of the CPA in 2011. That referendum subsequently led to South Sudan’s independence on July 9, 2011 (International Criminal Court 2012, 3-4). China had reservations about Sudan’s potential division but again remained neutral during the CPA era. In March 2005 and July 2007, Beijing twice invited Salva Kiir, the then vice-president of Sudan and later the first president of South Sudan, for a visit. Despite Kiir’s official capacity in the Sudanese government, Beijing reassured Kiir that China’s oil investments in Sudan would continue even after a possible secession by South Sudan in 2011. In August 2007, a Chinese delegation paid an official visit to Juba (the capital of South Sudan since July 2011), and a new aid package followed soon after, including support for hydro-electric projects and infrastructure construction (Large 2008a, 13).

However, China’s gesture was not appreciated by Juba which viewed Beijing as an ally of Khartoum. Therefore, when the dispute between the two Sudans over the transit fee intensified in January 2012, Juba expelled Liu Yingcai, the Chief Executive of the Chinese and Malaysian-owned oil company Petrodar in late February, for non-cooperation (*BBC News* February 22, 2012). The dispute was rooted in the fact that 70% of Sudan’s oil reserves were located in the landlocked South while all refining and export infrastructure remained in the North; Juba had to export crude via Port Sudan in the North after South Sudan became independent in July 2011 (see Figure 1). In their bilateral negotiations, Juba offered \$0.74 per barrel transit fee for oil through the GNPOC pipeline and \$0.66

Figure 1. Oil Reserves and Pipelines in Two Sudans

Source: *BBC News* February 22, 2012.

per barrel for the Petrodar pipeline. Khartoum, however, demanded a fee of \$36 per barrel, covering transit, processing, marine terminal, and transportation (International Crisis Group 2012, 26-7).

Unable to reach an agreement on January 28, 2012, Khartoum was reported as accusing the South of not paying its fees and started seizing South Sudan's crude oil stored at the Red Sea port as compensation for unpaid transit fees. In return, South Sudan shut down all the oil fields, accusing Sudan of stealing its crude (*BBC News* January 28, 2012). Furthermore, on April 17, 2012, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and Darfur rebels destroyed oil installations in Heglig (*BBC News* February 22, 2012). The shutdown of the oil fields did not significantly affect China's energy supply, but it greatly impacted the economies of the two Sudans, as oil income accounted for 40% of Sudan's state revenue, and 98% of South Sudan's state revenue relied on oil returns (Manson 2012). In order

to prevent another war between the two sides, China was again compelled to interfere, urging South Sudan to withdraw its forces from the Heglig area, under UNSC resolution 2046. Beijing also invited South Sudan's President Salva Kiir for a visit on April 25, 2012, during which then-President Hu Jintao called for a return to talks and an end to conflict between the two countries (Manson and Hook 2012). With the efforts of the UNSC and the African Union, plus China's support, on September 27, 2012 in Addis Ababa, Omar al-Bashir and Salva Kiir reached an agreement to restart oil exports from South Sudan and to establish a demilitarized zone; they also agreed on principles of border demarcation. However, right before the revival of oil production on November 27, Sudan raised new conditions demanding that South Sudan disarm the SPLA (Hanson 2012). This not only further worsened economic conditions in the two Sudans, but also showed the limits of the role that can be played by third party mediation.

In summary, China's energy diplomacy towards Sudan was driven by its special economic and political ties with Khartoum and was facilitated by U.S. sanctions on Sudan that allowed Chinese NOCs to operate without much competition from international oil majors. Prior to the Darfur crisis, China's foreign policy was largely dominated by its pragmatic economic diplomacy, using non-interference as its preferred principle as it did not require China to take sides when disputes occurred. Therefore, Beijing kept itself at a distance from the Darfur crisis and tried to remain neutral when the two Sudans entered into conflict over oil revenues. It showed the necessary flexibility to help solve these problems only under the weight of growing international pressure. But the Chinese stance in Sudan does not mean that China has fully abandoned the non-interference principle. As Large has correctly observed, "China has not been so politically involved in other ongoing peace initiatives or African conflict zones, including in West Africa or the Central African Republic" (Large 2008b, 40). Moreover, the failed attempts China made to mediate the dispute between the two Sudans might actually have made it less interested in any direct interference with the Sudans' other disputes on its own, but more willing to work with other powers, like the United States, to help solve regional conflicts.

With China's growing economic potential and its harmonious world ambition, the principle of non-interference should be abandoned completely in China's foreign policy framework, thus paving the way for China to demonstrate its commitment to become a responsible stakeholder. In order for Beijing to further deepen its integration with the world system and to ensure its own peaceful development, China will also need to inject some universally accepted principles into its harmonious world vision, including the notion of human-rights.

China's Dealing with the Iran Nuclear Crisis

In contrast to the Sudan case which was underpinned by special political ties from the outset, Beijing's initial dealings with Tehran seemed apolitical and cautious. Adopting a passive stance in political affairs in the Middle East throughout the 1990s, China probably wished to rely on the United States to guarantee order and stability in the region (Andrews-Speed, Liao and Dannreuther 2002; Gentry 2005, 115). The only similarity in the two cases is that in both China pursued pragmatic diplomacy to capture all opportunities to gain access to petroleum supplies, including the deposits left by other oil majors for political reasons. When it was compelled to take sides with regard to the Iranian nuclear program, starting in 2006, Beijing employed its harmonious world strategy to protect its own interests in Iran. To be precise, Beijing has supported some UN endeavours to stop Iran's uranium enrichment to prevent nuclear proliferation but has also helped lessen the severity of sanctions against the Iranian regime to protect its energy interests. In the end, China has chosen to cooperate with other major powers to be a responsible stakeholder in the international community, but its non-cooperation with the Western powers when its energy interests are involved has become ever more evident.

As one of the major petroleum producers, at the end of 2011 Iran had 9.1% of proven global oil reserves (ranking 4th) and 15.9% of the world's natural gas reserves (second only to Russia's 21.4%) (BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2012). After China became a net oil importer in 1993, the Middle East was one of its key oil supplying regions, and at its peak in 1998, the region was responsible for 61% of China's total oil imports (Tian 1999, 14). In the early days, China's oil imports from Iran remained insignificant, at only 67,900 metric tons (4.3% of China's total) in 1993. But the figure grew more than tenfold by 2000 to 7 million tons (mts) (10% of China's total imports) and was almost quadrupled by 2011, to 27.76mts (10.9% of the total) (Tian 1995; 2001; 2012). Beijing also signed a series of bilateral treaties with Tehran for trade promotion and protection (June 2000) and long-term crude trade (March 2002), as well as a framework agreement on petroleum cooperation (April 2002) (Yang and Yang 2005, 101). However, the disclosure of Iran's secret nuclear program, in August 2002, led to a dramatic deterioration in Tehran's relationship with the West, and also added complexity to the Sino-Iranian relationship.

On the one hand Beijing showed constant support for the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty aimed at hampering Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons. In addition, China voted "yes" in support of a series of UN Security Council resolutions demanding that Iran cease uranium enrichment, and imposing sanctions on Iran for its refusal to comply with the resolutions. In 1997, under U.S. pressure, China also withdrew its nuclear cooperation with Iran, and in January

2006 China joined the P5+1 talks with Iran over its nuclear program (Garver 2011, 75).

However, in terms of energy business with Iran, China did not stand together with its Western counterparts at all times. For instance, in October 2004 Sinopec signed a \$100bn deal with the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) to help develop and exploit Iran's massive Yadavaran oil field; this happened despite a request by the U.S. Embassy in Beijing that China withdraw from the bidding. Sinopec instead tried its utmost to pursue its bidding for the exploitation project in Iranian oilfields, and subsequently succeeded in reaching an agreement by which it would receive 150,000 barrels per day (bpd) of oil over 25 years, and would also import 250mts of liquid natural gas (LNG) over the same period (*People's Daily* February 6, 2004). Earlier, in March 2004, China's state-owned Zhuhai Zhenrong Corporation also signed a \$20bn deal with Tehran to import 110mts of LNG over 25 years (*People's Daily* February 6, 2004).

Explaining the Sinopec position, some Chinese analysts, such as Pan Jiping of the Oil and Gas Strategic Research Center under the Ministry of Land and Resources, claimed that Washington's concern over Iran's nuclear program was only an excuse; its real intention was to establish a monopoly over Middle East oil. They therefore argued that Beijing should not concede its energy interests to serve American objectives. Wang Anjian, Director of the Global Energy and Resources Research Center at the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences, also held that "The Americans want to check China and it's quite normal. Not only in the area of energy and resources the same holds true in other areas as well, including politics, military, economy and diplomacy. I believe that Chinese leaders at the top are surely got prepared for this" (*People's Daily* February 6, 2004).

By ignoring the U.S. warning over sanctions, the Chinese NOCs also benefited from the withdrawal of Western companies, as in the case of Iran's Azadegan oil field. Discovered in 1999, Azadegan is one of the largest oil fields in the world, with an estimated oil reserve of 42 billion barrels, according to seismographic studies conducted beginning in 2000 by a Japanese consortium led by INPEX (*BBC Energy Monitor* February 2, 2010). In October 2006, the INPEX-led consortium was forced to reduce its share by 90% due to heavy pressure from the United States. This allowed CNPC to step in with an offer to extract 75,000 bpd of oil from wells in North Azadegan. In January 2009, CNPC signed a \$1.76bn buy-back contract with NIOC to take the lead in developing the North Azadegan oil field in two phases: first to increase the oilfield's production capacity to 25,000 bpd within three years, and then to 115,000 bpd within six years (Jiang 2005). In 2006 Sinopec agreed to help improve the capacity of Iran's Arak refinery, and in December 2007 concluded a contract for the first phase development of the Yadavaran field based on the 2004 MOU (*Xinhua* December 10, 2007). Furthermore, at the end of 2006, China's offshore oil company

CNOOC, signed an MOU to develop Iran's North Pars gas field, with a more detailed deal (excluding the price of gas) being reached in November 2008 (*Fars New* November 17, 2008, see Figure 2). These deals made China Iran's top oil purchaser and operator. However, in order to assuage the United States, Beijing restricted its activities in Iran to exploration/service contracts and MOUs (Oxford Analytica 2010). When Washington intensified its pressure over CNOOC's \$16bn contract with Tehran, which was supposed to be signed in February 2008, CNOOC officials cancelled their visit to Iran at the last minute (*Fars New* November 17, 2008), a gesture to please Washington and also to illustrate that Beijing had no intention of challenging U.S. dominance in the Gulf.

Nevertheless, the past few years have witnessed a more assertive approach by China to protect their energy and economic interests in Iran. This was probably an attempt to project its harmonious world vision, given the long-delayed process of settling the nuclear crisis with Iran. In the hope of forcing Iran to suspend its nuclear program, Washington restrained its own companies and other Western companies from supplying petrol to Tehran in September 2009. After facing decades of international sanctions, such a move was deemed to be crippling to Iran, as it had insufficient refinery capacity to meet domestic demand for petrol (*Telegraph* September 23, 2009). Iran then turned to its potential allies—China, India, and Venezuela—for help. This time, Chinese NOCs did not disappoint Tehran and, beginning in September 2009, provided 30-40,000 bpd of petrol, equal to a third of Iran's total petrol imports (*Business Monitor* 2009). Earlier, in August, a Chinese consortium signed a \$2-3bn deal with Iran to develop the capacities of Abadan and Persian Gulf Star refineries, which would initially increase refining capacity to 210,000 bpd of crude, and would eventually enable a maximum capacity of 360,000 bpd (*Tehran Times* August 2, 2009). On September 9, 2013, China's Sinopec and a South Korean company (whose name was not revealed) reportedly finalized a deal with Iran to invest in a project of worth \$1.5bn to revamp Iran's Esfahan Oil Refinery with the aim of boosting the refinery's gasoline and diesel fuel production capacity. Negotiations for launching other similar projects at the Abadan Refinery were also ongoing, according to the report (*Tehran Times* September 9, 2013).

On September 24, 2009, a week before the UN Security Council's meeting to discuss a few cases relating to peace and security, including the Iran case, Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu reiterated China's opposition to new sanctions against Iran, arguing that "We believe that sanctions and exerting pressure are not the way to solve problems and are not conducive for the current diplomatic efforts on the Iran nuclear issue" (Jiang 2009). It seemed that the ineffective sanctions had diminished Beijing's enthusiasm for enforcing more UN sanctions against Iran, and China was rather more keen to ensure that its energy and economic ties with Tehran would not be further undermined. Consistent with this view in February 2011, China signed another deal with Iran to invest

Figure 2. Map of Iranian Energy Projects



Source: Davis et al. 2012, 18.

\$2.5bn for developing projects in the South Azadegan oilfield, which had an output of 55,000 bpd. The Chinese aimed to enhance the output to 320,000 bpd within four years, and then to 600,000 bpd after completion of the entire project (Press TV 2011). During an official visit to Iran by a senior Chinese official, He Guoqiang, in July 2011, more agreements were signed on infrastructure and trade cooperation aimed at strengthening the already strong bilateral political and economic ties (*Xinhua* July 16, 2011). Soon after, Tehran and Beijing entered into talks about the introduction of a barter deal to exchange Iranian oil for Chinese goods and services, seeing that U.S. financial sanctions had prevented China from paying at least \$20bn for oil purchases (Bozorgmehr, Fifield, and Hook 2011).

In view of China's financial and technological support to major infrastructure projects in Iran, John Garver has argued that China will not let concerns over

Table 1. Major Chinese Investment/Development Projects in Iran's Energy Sector

Date	Field/Project	Company or Companies	Value in US\$
May 2002	Masjide-Soleyman (oil)	Sheer Energy (Canada), China National Petroleum Company	80 million
January 2004	Azadegan (oil)	Inpex (Japan), CNPC agreed to develop North Azadegan, Jan.2009	200 million (Inpex) 1.76 billion (CNPC)
October 2004	Yadaravan (oil)	Sinopec (China), deal finalized Dec 9, 2007	2 billion
June 2006	Garmsar bloc (oil)	Sinopec deal finalized in 2009	20 million
July 2006	Arak Refinery Expansion	Sinopec, JGC (Japan); Work may have been taken over by Hyundai Heavy Industries (South Korea)	959 million (initial work; extent of Hyundai project unknown)
December 2006	North Pars Gas Field (offshore gas, including gas purchases)	China National Offshore Oil Co.	16 billion
January 2009	North Azadegan	CNPC	1.75 billion
February 2010	South Pars: Phase 11	CNPC (drilling was to have begun in March 2010, still delayed)	4.7 billion
September 2013	To revamp Iran's Esfahan Oil Refinery	Sinopec and unrevealed South Korean company	1.5 billion

Sources: Davis et al. 2012, 15; *Tehran Times* September 9, 2013.

Iran's nuclear issue frustrate its strong economic ties with Tehran. He has held that Beijing's support of the U.S.-led international sanctions against Iran was only half-hearted because it viewed such sanctions as counterproductive and ineffective and believed that they would ultimately fail (Garver 2011, 81-2). Leverett and Leverett (2011) have also warned that "The United States cannot forever ask other countries to act in ways that are harmful to their interests. No country of any consequence can sustain such a course indefinitely." On November 19, 2012, in response to a question about the IAEA's latest report (which said Iran was expanding its nuclear capacity by installing more centrifuges at an underground enrichment plant), Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying insisted that "China has always considered that dialogue and cooperation is the only right way to properly resolve the Iranian nuclear issue" (*Xinhua* October 24, 2012). Hua also urged all parties concerned to make constructive efforts to seek a comprehensive, long-term and appropriate solution at an early date (*Xinhua* October 24, 2012). Despite Beijing's rhetoric, Garver claims that China's real intent is to offer support to Tehran in the UN Security Council in order to ensure access to Iran's petroleum resources, while also cooperating strategically with the

United States to maintain a favorable macro-climate in relation to other issues (Garver 2011, 77).

Indeed, Beijing was not ready to confront Washington over Tehran on political grounds. After the U.S. and EU sanctions against Iran went into effect in summer 2012, China “appeared to reassess the benefit of its economic relationship with Iran” (Keck 2013). Under U.S. legislation, the American President was required to sanction countries that refused to reduce their reliance on Iranian oil; and any company falling under the sanctions would be denied access to the U.S. financial sector (Torbaty 2012). In April 2013, CNPC announced it was pulling out of the deal to develop part of Iran’s South Pars gas fields, which constituted a breach of a \$4.7bn contract reached in July 2009, after Total’s withdrawal for political concerns. Probably also due to Western pressure, CNPC delayed developing the field for a few years despite Iran’s dissatisfaction, and ultimately decided to terminate the project (*Tehran Times* April 23, 2013). Beijing has also started to reduce its non-energy related investment in Iran over the past couple of years. According to Assadollah Asgaroladi, Director of the Sino-Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Chinese non-energy related investment in Iran dropped from almost \$3bn in 2011 to just \$400m in 2012, and their bilateral trade in 2012 amounted to \$37bn, down 18% from \$45bn the previous year (Keck 2013). By July 2013, China’s import of oil from Iran was further reduced by 12.6% from a year earlier, resulting in Iran falling from third place to sixth place as China’s oil supplier. To offset its shortfall, China dramatically boosted oil imports from Iraq; in July alone, Iraqi oil supplies to China soared 135% from a year before, while deliveries by September 2013 rose 47% (Lelyveld 2013).

After nearly 20 years of direct interaction, China has certainly established a stronger presence in Iran and the Middle East in general. Compared with the 1990s, Beijing’s reliance on Middle East oil has increased considerably, from 11.96mts in 1996, to more than 130mts in 2011 (Su and Tian 1998, 8; Tian 2012, 60). Accordingly, China has become more influential in the Persian Gulf as well. Therefore, it was quite natural to see a more assertive approach in China’s position over the Iran nuclear crisis. By resisting Washington’s efforts to obstruct Tehran’s nuclear ambition via sanctions, Beijing could achieve a two-fold objective: to pursue its harmonious world blueprint that suggested a multi-valued international system, on the one hand, and to allow the Chinese NOCs access to Iran’s petroleum resources to help ensure China’s energy security, on the other. The question that was left unanswered, though, was what would be China’s value system, and what key principles were to be associated with the system? There was apparently a lack of explicit principles in China’s harmonious world proposition, which made it difficult to predict how China could build a harmonious world while also maintaining its position as a responsible global stakeholder.

For the moment, Beijing has not been able to offer an alternative means for dealing effectively with the Iranian nuclear crisis, except for insistence on

its bottom line: to prevent Tehran from obtaining nuclear weapons. According to Yin Gang from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, although China prefers a political settlement of the nuclear issue, Iran should not count on China's unconditional support (Oster 2009). He has held that "If the solution to the nuclear issue is through nonpolitical means, or a military attack cannot be avoided, I don't think China has the power to stop such [a] military attack" (Oster 2009). China has indeed continued to work with other major powers to address the Iran nuclear issue, through IAEA and P5+1 meetings with Iran. As of 2013, three rounds of P5+1 meetings have already been held, in Almaty (February and April) and Istanbul (March), "as a way to build confidence with Iran as the country steadfastly maintains its right to enrich uranium in the face of harsh international sanctions" (Blitz and Dyer 2013). The six powers have offered some relief on sanctions on Iranian petrochemicals and trade in gold in return for a scaling down of Tehran's nuclear program. However, no agreement has been reached as the positions of the two parties remain far apart (Khalaf and Bozorgmehr 2013).⁴ The actions China has recently taken suggest that it is willing to sacrifice certain practical interests in exchange for being recognized as a responsible stakeholder. The next task for China is to identify common criteria, if any, between a responsible stakeholder and the harmonious world vision, or the latter will only remain an aspiration.

Conclusion

China's rise onto the world stage as one of the two largest economic powers, along with the United States, has become an undeniable fact. The Chinese government is increasingly more confident about its foreign policy options, and it is keen to assert China's positions via peaceful means. As indicated by its energy diplomacy towards Sudan and Iran since the 1990s, Beijing has made various efforts to showcase their desire to be a responsible stakeholder that is able to peacefully emerge as a world power. In its dealings with Sudan, Beijing has moved away from its non-interference principle to illustrate its responsible power status and has played a positive role in helping solve the Darfur crisis and in mediating the conflict between the two Sudans despite not always with success. China's position towards Iran has demonstrated its ambition to play a greater role in the international rule-making process, while protecting its economic and energy interests by withholding full cooperation with the Western powers. Nevertheless, due to the lack of well-defined principles and guidelines to operationalize its harmonious world vision, China has not been able to provide an alternative option to help solve the Iran nuclear crisis. As a result, it has had to choose either to cooperate with Iran in order to ensure its energy supply and face the associated foreign criticism or to sacrifice its interests in Iran under Western pressure in

order to maintain its reputation as a responsible stakeholder.

In both cases, China has shown that it is not attempting to challenge the hegemony of the United States and other major powers; nor has it tried to alter its peaceful development strategy. This stance lends credibility to China's professed benign intentions. Yet China's energy diplomacy has not consistently facilitated its ambition for peaceful development due to two main problems. One problem is that China has not given up the non-interference principle completely, probably in order to retain its competitive advantage in Africa and/or in other developing regions. But if China means to be more proactive and responsible in international affairs, abandoning the non-interference principle would be an essential and unavoidable step on the path. The other problem is that China must ensure that its harmonious world vision is compatible with certain universally accepted principles in today's world. Energy diplomacy could be used as a means for Beijing to help establish new principles for its foreign policy, but this has not yet been accomplished. Until then, there could be little chance for China to emerge peacefully as a truly global power.

China has started the journey towards being a responsible stakeholder and constructing a harmonious world but has yet to convince the world that its harmonious world ambition would be compatible with the current international order. Chinese scholars assert that China is willing to be a responsible stakeholder, and thus should be allowed to play a greater role in the international system, but they remain at variance over how to pursue the harmonious world aspiration. If it is by supporting the U.S. hegemonic status, there is no need to raise such a desire in the first place; but if it is by projecting its own value system onto the international order, Beijing ought to clarify such a system and also test its acceptability within the international establishment (Wang 2006; Zheng 2012). Of course, other established powers also need to embrace a rising China and be prepared to work with the emerging power on issues related to world peace and energy security. China should be allowed and welcomed to play a greater role in international affairs and be given more time to find a balance between its own interests and those of other nations.

Notes

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1. The five principles are: mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; mutual non-aggression; non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual

benefit; and peaceful coexistence. They were proposed by Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in 1953 while meeting an Indian delegation, and were included in the Communiqué of the Bandung Asian-African Conference in April 1955.

2. Unless otherwise indicated, all subsequent dollar figures indicate U.S. dollars.

3. This statement was somewhat of an exaggeration: the highest figures of Sudan's share of China's oil imports were 8.3% (in 2001) and 9.3% (in 2002), and declined thereafter to 5.4% in average between 2002-2012 (Tian, in various years).

4. Hasan Rouhani was elected Iran's new President in June 2013 and assumed office on August 3. In his statement at the United Nation's General Assembly, on September 24, President Rouhani promised to resolve the nuclear issue in the next 12 months, triggering a lot of hope of resolving the long lasting crisis. However, according to a BBC report on October 9, someone who was present during an informal exchange following the President's on-the-record remarks said: "The impression we got was that President Rouhani would regard the giving up of even one of their 18,000 [uranium enrichment] centrifuges as an unbearable blow to national pride." Iranian Foreign Minister Mohamed Javad Zarif also allegedly said, on the record, that Iran regarded its right to enrich nuclear fuel as "non-negotiable" (Urban 2013). Therefore, it seems still too early to expect a quick solution for the Iranian nuclear problem even with the change of leadership.

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