



China's Global Vision and Xi Jinping's Belt & Road Initiative

Asst. Prof Hoo Tiang Boon

Coordinator, Master of Science (Asian Studies)
Programme, RSIS, NTU

China as a 'Natural' Power

- Chinese belief in the 'natural' position of China as a great power
- Yan Xuetong (阎学通)
- 'The rise of China is granted by nature'
- 'Regaining China's lost international status rather than obtaining something new'
- 'Restoration of fairness rather than gaining advantages over others'; correcting a 'historical' mistake

Great Expectations

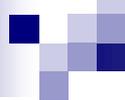
- 19th Party Congress: a specific road map of China's ascendancy
- China has entered a 'new era' where it should 'move closer to the center stage' in the world
- By **2020**: a moderately prosperous society (小康社会); basic 'military mechanization' achieved and a 'big' improvement in strategic capabilities
- By **2035**: basic realization of 'socialist modernization'; completion of military modernization
- By **2050**: a 'leading' global power in 'national strength and international influence'; 'world-class' military

Striving for Achievement

- Continuing debate on the applicability of Deng Xiaoping's 'Taoguang Yanghui' (韬光养晦) strategic guideline, i.e. *'keep a low profile'*
- From 'Yousuo Zuowei' (有所作为) to 'Fenfa Youwei' (奋发有为), i.e. 'get some things done' to *'striving for achievement'*
- Fenfa Youwei as the new 'normal' of Chinese diplomacy ("中国外交进入 '奋发有为' 新常态")
- Wang Yi describes current Chinese diplomacy as 'Jiji Qinqu' (积极进取), i.e. *'forging ahead actively'*
- Less passivity, greater pro-activism

Striving for Achievement

- 2014 Central Foreign Affairs Work Meeting
 - ‘China’s *dependence* on the world and its involvement in international affairs are deepening...’
 - Important for China to be ‘proactive’ and ‘foster a more *enabling* environment’ for its continuing development
- Development of a ‘*distinctive diplomacy befitting the role of a major power*’
- 中国方案 (Chinese ‘solutions’ in global affairs)
- No longer an identity disconnect (developing country versus major power identities)?



Global Governance

- As a policy interest, global governance has elevated in strategic priority
- The CCP outlined its vision of global governance for the first time at the 27th study session of the Politburo (2015)
- Depicted now as an integral component of Chinese foreign strategy

Global Governance

- Stronger emphasis on positioning China as one of the rule-makers of global order
 - ‘...laying down rules for the international order and international mechanisms’; ‘...deciding in which direction the world will head’
 - ‘...international balance of power has shifted,’ hence China should ‘take the chance and ride the wave’ of global reform to leave a ‘Chinese mark’ on the evolving order (Xi Jinping)
 - Extends beyond existing regimes to setting rules/agendas in new domains such as cyberspace, outer space, deep sea, polar zones and climate change
- China does not seek to overturn the extant order or replace it with a fundamentally different one
- But it seeks to work within this order to steer its evolution toward a version that better aligns with Chinese visions *and* interests

Belt-Road Initiative

- The BRI as a key ‘vessel’ to operationalize Chinese global governance
- The BRI is not ‘new’ per se; many of the projects linked to it predates the BRI (see Jiang Zemin’s ‘going out’ strategy)
- An organizing structure for China to more coherently plan and implement the globalization of Chinese enterprises, financial resources, and human resources
- It is not a Chinese ‘Marshall Plan.’ But it does have strategic and economic dimensions

Belt-Road Initiative

- Economic/geo-economic motivations include:
 - Securing the supply of resources and energy needed to fuel the country's continuing development
 - Opening up new foreign markets and production bases
 - Better utilizing China's massive reserves and diversifying its capital outflow destinations
 - Addressing the issue of Chinese economic overcapacity
 - Spurring the development of China's less-developed western regions
 - Promoting the internationalization of the Yuan
 - Internationalization of Chinese economic 'standards' and practices
 - Consolidating its position as the focal point of a global supply and production system that is increasingly centered on Asia

Belt-Road Initiative

- Chinese writings deny that the BRI has a hidden politico-strategic agenda, but point to a number of ‘non-economic interests’
- *Assumed* to help bolster China’s soft power
- Operationalize its new, more ‘proactive’ diplomacy
- Showcase the ‘wisdom’ of Chinese solutions
- Product of strategic necessity to circumvent a more threatening strategic environment in East Asia—the need to look “westwards,’ toward regions where the strategic room for maneuver is perceived to be greater
- Assert a bigger role and ‘voice’ on the world stage

HOO TIANG BOON

CHINA'S GLOBAL IDENTITY

Considering the Responsibilities
of Great Power



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY PRESS

Reviews

"Dr. Tiang Boon Hoo's book represents a comprehensive review of the evolution of Chinese discourse on its "great power responsibilities". It is balanced, sophisticated and nuanced, a must read for all who wish to understand China's foreign policy and foreign relations in the contemporary period."—**Jia Qingguo**, Dean, School of International Studies, Peking University

"A critical factor shaping the future of international peace and stability is whether China will be a responsible steward and reformer of the existing order. For scholars and policy-makers seeking to understand Chinese foreign policy, one important stream of evidence is what the Chinese government and scholars say in a systematic way about that policy. Professor Hoo Tiang Boon successfully uses the latter to reveal the former in this important book."—**Richard C. Bush**, Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution

"How will China behave on the world stage in the years to come? There are few more pressing questions in international relations. Tiang Boon Hoo's pathbreaking study explores it through a deep dive into the evolution of Chinese debates about what it means to be a great power. He unearths a surprisingly rich and diverse discourse that underlies official policies, and shows how Chinese think about their global roles and responsibilities. Probing in its research and nuanced in its findings, *China's Global Identity* should be read by all scholars of Chinese foreign policy."—**David Shambaugh**, Gaston Sigur Professor of Asian Studies, Political Science, & International Affairs, George Washington University