

Chinese vision of the emerging world order

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It's an honour for me to be here under the kind invitation from respected Tanvir Ahmad Khan, Chairman and Director General of the Institute of Strategic Studies. Thank you very much, Mr. Khan.

Since 1951, Pakistan and China have developed an all-weather friendship and partnership, probably unique in the world. On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between two countries, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao paid an official visit to Pakistan last month. The meeting between top leaders on both sides set up the new directions, aims and basis for the development of bilateral relations in the future. Therefore, I think it will be helpful to hold this seminar; I appreciate it very much.

Current situation and developing trends

The financial and economic crises we just experienced changed the world greatly and reinforced the possibility of a new world order. Compared to the past, several features of the current situation's development are worthy of attention.

- (1) The shift of the globalization process from the extensive development to a new stage of intensive development. During the period from the end of the Cold War to the outbreak of the financial crisis, the globalization process manifested itself in the expansion of market economy to the former socialist countries, one-way industrial shift from developed countries to developing countries, expansion of virtual economy, new liberalism advocating big society and small government was very popular and lack of economic and financial supervision. After the outbreak of the financial crisis, the globalization process entered into a new stage of development, which manifests itself in the economic structural adjustment and promotion, emergence of two-way industrial shift, paying more attention to the role of government in macro regulation and management, return to entity economy, stricter supervision, and more effort being made on global governance. A good example is the establishment of G 20.
- (2) The multi-polar power structure emerged. Major developed countries were hit hardest by the most serious crisis since the Great Depression

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in 1930s. Now, in face of the high deficit, high debt, high unemployment and difficulties of structural adjustment, many developed countries are entering the road of slow declining. Predicted growth for them in 2011 is about 2.2%. On the other hand, the emerging economies such as China, India, Brazil, Russia and South Africa suffered greatly from the crisis, but they rebounded much faster. It seems the industrial and economic readjustments of these countries are much more effective. The emergence of the former colonial and semi-colonial countries as global powers would change the world order fundamentally.

- (3) Asia becomes the centre of world geopolitical gravity. This change was brought about by sustainable high growth. In 2010, China's contribution to the world economic growth is about 25%, that, in addition to the share of India, comes to about 40%, and that made by the whole East Asia is more than 50%. With the emergence of Asia, more and more countries, both the developed and the developing, begin to pay more and more attention to the region. The US military focus has shifted to the region.
- (4) With the rapid development of globalization and global networking, the global citizen society is forming. The influence of NGOs on even ordinary people on both domestic and global affairs is growing very fast. The emerging global citizen society would change the traditional world order fundamentally.

Increasing concern of international community

Against the background mentioned above, China attained economic growth at as high as about 10%, and held 2008 Beijing Olympics and 2010 Shanghai world Expo successfully. China's emergence was regarded as the most important development in world politics.

Some think tanks and scholars predicted China would exceed the US as the largest economy in the near future. More and more foreign scholars wonder how China would use its increasing strength. Among the Western and non-Western scholars, some believe China will become a more responsible stakeholder in current international order, some warn

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the emergence of China as a global power would result into serious conflict with the international system and major powers as its builders and sustainers. Some think the current international order is “easy to join and hard to overturn”; it is so stable and effective that China could not replace it with an alternative successfully. The development exceeds the expectations and imagination of most foreign officials and experts.

The position of Chinese government on the new world order

Early in 1990s, top Chinese leader Dong Xiaoping mentioned establishing the new international order different from the new world order pushed forwards by US President George Bush, which means a more powerful US hegemony or Americanized world. Dong Xiaoping’s new international order includes political and economic dimensions. The two key issues to be addressed are peace and development. It should be based on the five principles of peaceful co-existence and China should take an active part in the process.

After about ten years, Chinese president Hu Jintao advanced a new concept of “Harmonious World”. He took steps in terms of pushing the establishment of the new international political and economic order when he paid a visit to Russia in May 2003. (1) Democratization of international relations, (2) respect for and upholding of diverse civilizations, (3) a new concept of security with mutual trust, equality, mutual benefit and collaboration, and (4) strengthening the role of UN, balanced development of world economy. It seems to me, his suggestions on the establishment of the new international political and economic order concretely embodied the idea of a harmonious world.

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The logical premise of the Chinese idea to establish a new world order lies in the shortcomings of the existing one. As you know, the current international system was built up and dominated by Western powers. During a long period, developing countries were excluded from the process of making of international regimes, rules and norms. There still exists a great deal of inequality, injustice and realpolitik in the current international system.

Chinese academic vision of the world order

With the increasing concerns of the outside world about the relations between the emerging China and the current international system, more and more Chinese experts have begun to think about it.

Realist school

The members of this school focus on the reality of globalization and interdependence, current power structure and the limitation of China's power. They are relatively careful in imagining the future world order. So far, one consensus within this school has developed:

- (1) China is a beneficiary of the current international order. The great achievements we made came partly from the timely economic reform and openness in conformity to the rapid globalization of market economy, and partly from characters of the order such as openness and systematic mechanism.
- (2) It is not necessary to overturn to replace it with a new one, even though it is not satisfactory. In other words, it is not perfect enough to not need any improvement. On the other hand, it is also not so bad as to be overturned.
- (3) It will take a long time to establish a fair and reasonable world order. There is no question that the emerging China has both the will and the capacity to contribute to the improvement in the current world order. But, it needs the participation of more and more developing countries. It is beyond the capacity of a few of powers, not to speak of China's own capacity.

Idealist school

Generally, with the rapid emergence of China beyond expectation, most Chinese scholars and officials are not ready for the changes taking place in relations between China and the international system; a few of them have a clear vision about what a better world order should be. Puzzling over the disorder of the current world order, and encouraged by China's increasing strength and influence, the members of the school tried to absorb wisdom from the traditional culture and to imagine a better world order. Therefore, I classify them as *Traditional Cultural School*.

An effort has been made by Mr. Zhao Tingyang, a scholar on Chinese philosophy at Chinese Academy of Social Science. He tried to imagine the world order in future by the concept of "Tianxia", which means "all-

under-heaven” in English. Geographically, “Tian” is the heavens, the sky, while “xia” is below, lower, it means everything below the sky. Psychologically, “Tianxia” includes “all the people”. Institutionally, it includes the world institutions. By doing so, he underestimates the complexity of the world consisting of more than 200 countries. The concept “Tianxia” was used by the emperors to describe their rule over the empires and he also neglects the possibility of being criticized to seek a new hegemony or a new Chinese Empire. At the same time, Mr. Zhao didn’t describe the “Tianxia” order in detail, such as the policy-making architecture, leadership, mechanism, rule, and so forth.

Another effort has been made by scholars and officials who are in favour of Mr. Hu Jintao’s “harmonious world” idea. These scholars and officials understand the shortage and complexity of the current world order. They are also relatively optimistic about the development of interdependence among the countries and China’s increasing global influence. They concede that a harmonious world is more an expectation than a reality. It is very difficult to achieve the goal of a harmonious world in the near future, but it is worth trying hard towards this direction.

Actually, the propositions and suggestions made by top Chinese leaders over past years embody the result of academic research and policy study. But, so far, we have not found in official speech and academic findings any systematic descriptions in detail about the harmonious world.

Skeptical school

The members of this school regard the new world order, particularly the harmonious world, as something of utopia. They dismiss the difference between the reality and the expectation. They are deeply impressed with the existing disorder, contradictions and conflicts in world affairs, pessimistic about China’s future and its role in international affairs. They criticize the idealist school for neglecting the complexity of the current international order and underestimating the difficulties on the way to reach the harmonious world.

Personal viewpoint

No matter whether we are ready or not for China’s emergence as a global power and consequential global responsibility, more and more foreign countries want to know how Chinese government and Chinese people imagine the future world order. This is a big challenge we face. We need to address it.

Personally, I favour the idea of “Harmonious World” with a realistic viewpoint. In my view, unlike the abstract and vague concept of “Tianxia”, while understanding the complexity of sovereign state system, detestable concept of “hegemony” with much more realpolitik and anarchy with endless wars; the “harmonious world” concept means a new world with full respect for sovereignty of each state, regulatory competition, reasonable dialogue, common development without confrontation, war and hegemony. Therefore, I try to outline the ingredients of a harmonious world as follows:

Firstly, the five principles of peaceful coexistence should be the basis of the new world order. Shortly after the birth of the New China, Chairman Mao Zedong stated on many occasions that China was ready to establish diplomatic relations with all countries which are willing to observe the principles of equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty.

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In his meeting with the members of an Indian government delegation on December 31, 1953, Zhou Enlai put forward for the first time the ‘Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence’; namely, mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence. In response, the Indian side agreed to take the five principles of peaceful coexistence as the guiding principles for bilateral negotiations. After that, the five principles of peaceful coexistence were adopted and expanded by the international community as the basic norms in developing state-to-state relations.

Of course, more than a half century has passed since the time when the five principles were proposed; a lot of changes have taken place in the world. But, there is some continuity between different periods is historical process. The five principles are not outdated so far. In the foreseeable future, they will still be essential for world order. A harmonious world would be absolutely unimaginable without adherence to the five principles of peaceful coexistence. Philosophically, diversity is the source of beauty

and vigour. In an era of increasing globalized world, the diversity of civilizations, with cultures and models included, needs more attention and respect.

Secondly, a collective leadership in global governance architecture, keeping a balance between the representativeness and the effectiveness, needs to be set up. With the emergence of new market economies, the world is entering an era of multi-polarity. More and more scholars and officials in most countries notice that although the US is still the only superpower in the world, its relative power position and global influence has begun to decline. In view of the high deficit, high debt and high unemployment at home, the prolonged anti-terror war, and increasing global challenges and competition from other great powers abroad; the US capability falls short of its wishes.

Meanwhile, other big powers do not have enough experience, will and capability to take more responsibility. In order to prevent a power vacuum, dialogue, collaboration and cooperation among the main powers should be reinforced greatly. G20 took the leadership in dealing with the financial and economic crises over the past years. However, many people concede that G20 is vastly representative and hence probably too large to be effective. Maybe, a way out is to form a smaller group within the framework of G20. I am more confident in the leadership of G20 than in that of any other mechanism.

Many powers have been trying hard to take new permanent membership of the UN Security Council for more than ten years. But the difficulties of reaching an agreement go beyond their imagination. In my thinking, some kind of median programme is more attractive. That means an addition of non-permanent membership with longer term, but the new permanent membership or that with veto. Any reform and adjustment in the leadership architecture should be made by democratic process and as a result of negotiations among the governments.

As to the leadership mechanisms on the regional level, a rotation of chairmanship might be much better. This kind of arrangement could encourage each country, big and small, to join the leadership and work together for the regional peace, stability, security and development. A harmonious world would be composed of harmonious regions. As a first step, Chinese government advocates and pushes forward the establishment of “harmonious surrounding environment”.

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Thirdly, a parliament-like institution might be needed to reflect the emergence of global citizen society. Its seats could be allocated in the light of population and the election process of representative could be together with the domestic election.

Lastly, the emerging China as a global power is absolutely a positive factor for the establishment of Harmonious World. Because, Chinese government and Chinese people pursue the traditional philosophical ideas of “harmony” and “He Wei Gui”, meaning “peace is most valuable”. Therefore, China would firmly pursue the strategy of peaceful rising and oppose any power-politics and hegemony. The more powerful China is, the more possible a harmonious world is.

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