

China's View of International Order in the New Era: Concepts, Policy Orientation and Practical Approaches

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International order is one of the most overarching, long-term and strategic issues in world politics, whose current situation and future trend have drawn widespread attention from the international community. China has upheld, safeguarded, and contributed to the current international order, and is one of the major forces that will influence its future evolution. At present, the world is undergoing once-in-a-century profound changes. Amid the chaotic international situation, the increasingly severe global competition and the unclear prospect of order transformation, it is of great significance to clarify China's view of international order in the new era from the perspectives of concepts, policy orientation and practical approaches. By so doing, we can gain a full understanding of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy and the major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in the new era, and more accurately grasp the future development of international order.

China's Perception of the Current International Order

Each country's perception of international order is not static. Instead, the surrounding international environment and the self-positioning of the countries play a vital role. It is also the case with China, whose perception of international order is influenced by the changes in the international

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system,¹ the international power structure and its own international status and positioning. Chinese leaders and scholars, when discussing international order, often use the terms “post-war international order”² and “current international order.” The two terms are connected to some extent but also have obvious differences in different contexts. Objectively speaking, the current international order originated from the post-war international order, and is the sum of institutions, mechanisms, norms and rules which have gradually played a practical role in the world through interactions among a diversity of actors. At present, it is in the process of a transition. As it is the product of interaction among various forces and faced with multiple shocks and challenges, countries diverge greatly from each other on their views of the current international order.³ “Comparing China’s view on international order with those of the United States and other Western countries, we can observe that both sides adopt totally different terms when referring to and describing international order. However, their understandings of international order are not diametrically opposed.”⁴

The Chinese government has a relatively narrow and clear definition of the current international order. According to spokesperson of China’s Foreign Ministry, “the current international order is jointly established by the international community with the UN at its core, and purposes

1 International system is an organic and unified whole that features the mutual influence and interaction of various actors in the international community. International order builds on certain international structure, and contains rules of international conduct and corresponding supporting mechanisms. International system includes international structure and international order, and is mainly manifested by them.

2 The definition of “post-war international order” involves broad and narrow interpretations. In a narrow sense, it lays stress on the political and security arrangements which has been constructed by the victorious nations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter before and after the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War. Thus, the order is also referred to as “post-war peace order.” In a broad sense, the concept contains not only the political and security order, but also an economic order, which is represented by the global economic, trade and financial system based on institutions including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Overall, China’s policy community recognizes the post-war international order as the political and security order formed by international legal documents such as the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation, and the UN-centered international norms and institutions based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. See Yao Yao, “China’s Concept of New International Order and the Post-War System,” *China International Studies*, No.6, 2020, pp.6-7.

3 Yao Yao, “China’s Concept of New International Order and the Post-War System,” pp.7-8.

4 Da Wei, “China’s Choices in a Changing International Order,” *International Studies*, No.1, 2021, p.104.

and principles of the UN Charter as its basis. Its basic principle is that all countries should respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, treat each other as equals and refrain from interfering in each other's internal affairs.”⁵ This definition emphasizes the current international order as recognized by China, and involves obvious value and policy connotations.

Current international order not perfect, and in need of reform

When talking about the current international order, President Xi Jinping, while admitting it is not perfect, said that it is not necessary to overturn it or start all over again. “What we want is to reform and improve the system on the basis of careful maintenance.”⁶ The flaws of the current international order mostly lie in two aspects. On the one hand, the multilateral international framework, with the United Nations as the main body and consisting of the World Trade Organization, the World Bank and other relevant international institutions, was designed dominantly by Western countries, and reflects more their values and interests. On the other hand, the institutions and rules in the current international order were established based on the international political and economic situation in the early post-war period. With increasing challenges in the process of economic globalization and the diversification of international actors, the existing order has been unable to effectively address all kinds of problems, and the risk of security disorder and unbalanced development is on the rise.

Despite the deficiencies of the current international order, China recognizes the value and rationality of its basic framework. “Although the current UN-centered international order is imperfect in terms of efficiency and execution, it is already an international framework close to the ideal of

5 “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei’s Regular Press Conference on November 10, 2015,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, November 10, 2015, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1313657.shtml.

6 “Xi Jinping Meets with Foreign Dignitaries of 2019 Imperial Springs International Forum,” Central People’s Government of China, December 3, 2019, http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2019-12/03/content_5458185.htm.

human justice.”⁷ Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi also pointed out, “The current international system was built by our forefathers from the ashes of the Second World War. It is the result of our collective efforts and wisdom. It’s like a well-designed building with multilateralism being its cornerstone and the UN and other international organizations being its key pillars. Over 70 years has passed, so there has been some wear and tear, to be sure. But the building still shields us from wind and rain and still plays an irreplaceable role in promoting world peace and development. What we should be doing is to renovate the building rather than constructing another structure.”⁸

Current international order under accelerated transformation

In the new era, Chinese leaders have paid close attention to the development and changes of international order, believing that it is in the midst of major transformation. In his November 2014 speech at the Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs, President Xi Jinping pointed out, “The world today is undergoing major transformation and at the same time full of new opportunities and new challenges. International system and international order are witnessing profound adjustments, and the balance of international forces are moving in a direction conducive to world peace and development.” Therefore, “we should be keenly aware of the protracted nature of contest over international order; on the other hand, we need to recognize that the direction of international system reform will remain unchanged.”⁹

In his keynote speech at the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference in March 2015, President Xi once again pointed out that “the international situation continues to experience profound and complex changes,” and that “readjustment is accelerating in international landscape and order.”¹⁰ At

7 Fu Ying, “Adhering to Cooperative Security, Common Development, Political Inclusiveness, and Joining Hands to Build a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind,” *People’s Daily*, May 16, 2017, p.8.

8 “Foreign Minister Wang Yi Meets the Press,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, March 8, 2017, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1444204.shtml.

9 *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, Vol.2, Foreign Languages Press, 2017, p.442.

10 “Full Text of Chinese President’s Speech at Boao Forum for Asia,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, March 28, 2015, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1250690.shtml.

the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), Xi clearly made the statement “changes in the global governance system and the international order are speeding up.” In December 2017, at the Conference of Chinese diplomatic envoys stationed abroad, Xi pointed out that “major changes unseen in a century are taking place in our world.” The accelerated transformation of international order is, of course, an important part of the once-in-a-century profound changes. The impetus for the transformation mainly comes from three aspects:

First, the collective rise of emerging markets and developing countries has provided new impetus for the reconstruction of international order. Since the beginning of the new century, especially after the 2008 international financial crisis, while Western countries have been mired in debt crisis and sluggish economic recovery, some developing countries and emerging economies have bucked the trend, contributing 80 percent of world economic growth. The stark contrast demonstrates a trend of rising East and declining West, and has changed the balance of power in the international system, leading to “greater balance in global power configuration.”¹¹ The rapid growth of emerging market economies and developing countries has also resulted in changes in the international architecture and values, making reform of the international order even more necessary.

Second, being increasingly dissatisfied with the current international order, the United States has attempted to build a new order favorable to itself. The relative decline of the US has increasingly restrained the advance of its hegemonic strategy. Economic globalization has also aggravated the wealth gap within the American society. Those who lose or fail in the tide of globalization often become active supporters of populism, conservatism and anti-globalization. In this context, the US, finding some multilateral cooperation mechanisms falling short of its expectations and constraining the expansion of its influence, has been trying to modify the rules and

11 “Full Text of Chinese President Xi Jinping’s Speech at Opening Ceremony of 2018 FOCAC Beijing Summit,” *Xinhua*, September 3, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-09/03/c_129946189.htm.

rebuild the order so that it can continue to obtain maximum benefits and regain its confidence and “comfort.” To this end, the US has been attacking multilateralism and free trade with unilateralism and protectionism, decoupling foreign trade relations and withdrawing from international organizations and treaties, which seriously undermines international cooperation. As a result, “the international order is at a critical crossroads, and in essence, it is a question of where to go between multilateralism and unilateralism.”¹²

Third, the international order established after World War II can no longer meet the needs of global governance, making corresponding adjustment and reform imperative. The establishment of the post-war international order has its limitations. On the one hand, it could not foresee the tremendous changes of today’s international situation, and the design of some mechanisms and the way of operation of some organizations cannot meet the new requirements of global governance. On the other hand, with the development of network and artificial intelligence technology, new problems are gradually exposed and the original design fails to solve them. As global problems expand and the governance deficit increases, multilateral international institutions and the global governance system, as an important basis of international order, are entering a process of disintegration and reconstruction, which objectively puts forward a huge demand for the reconstruction of international institutions.

China as beneficiary of the current international order

Being the first nation to sign the United Nations Charter, China participated in the design and construction of the post-war international order. Under the international order or international system underpinned by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, the world has maintained overall peace and stability, and China’s political, security

12 “Full Text of Chinese President Xi’s Speech at APEC CEO Summit,” *Xinhua*, November 17, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-11/17/c_137613904.htm.

and economic interests have basically been effectively safeguarded. On the political front, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China has gained its rightful place in the international arena and is able to play an influential role. On the security front, the international collective security regime with the United Nations at its core has made outstanding contributions to safeguarding world peace and stability. After World War II, although interstate conflicts and wars still break out from time to time, frictions and collisions among major powers have been effectively curbed, creating rare favorable conditions for international security. As an active promoter and defender of international security, China also enjoys the benefits of world peace. The existing international security order basically meets China's demand for international security and provides favorable external conditions for its development. In terms of economy, after more than 40 years of reform and opening-up under the current international economic order, China has gained its position as the world's second largest economy and has achieved national modernization in many fields. While China safeguards and expands its interests mainly through its own efforts, it is undeniable that the current international order has created important favorable conditions and environment. As President Xi Jinping pointed out, "China is the current international system's builder, contributor, and developer, and participant, and also beneficiary."¹³ In March 2017, when answering questions from foreign journalists at a press conference for the fifth session of the 12th National People's Congress, spokesperson Fu Ying said, "As for international order, what China values is the international system or international order with the United Nations at the center. We think that we were involved in its creation, and that we are beneficiaries and contributors."¹⁴

13 "Remarks by President Obama and President Xi of the People's Republic of China in Joint Press Conference," The White House (President Barack Obama), September 25, 2015, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/09/25/remarks-president-obama-and-president-xi-peoples-republic-china-joint>.

14 "Fu Ying: China Is Beneficiary and Contributor to the International Order and Willing to Be a Reformer," *China Daily*, March 4, 2017, https://cn.chinadaily.com.cn/2017qglhkms/2017-03/04/content_28433218.htm.

China's Policy Orientation

As early as the 1980s, based on scientific analysis of profound changes in the international situation, Comrade Deng Xiaoping put forward the need to establish a fair and rational new international political and economic order, a policy position that lasted until the beginning of the 21st century. In 2002, the 16th CPC National Congress reiterated that “We stand for establishing a new international political and economic order that is fair and rational.” As China continues to integrate into the international system and achieve great economic success, which substantially elevates its international status, its notion of international order has also changed, with the position of establishing a new international order gradually fading away. Since the 17th CPC National Congress, the relevant expression has become “working to make the international order fairer and more equitable.” Entering the new era, China is closer than ever to the center of the world stage, closer than ever to the goal of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and to this goal, China is more confident, and more capable than ever before. Therefore, the international community is paying close attention to China's trajectory after becoming stronger. When talking about international order, the Chinese government and leaders have now emphasized the country's role as a “defender, builder and contributor” and expressed their readiness to work with other countries to make the international order more just and equitable.¹⁵

Safeguarding rightful content of the current international order

The original design of the post-war international order was created to solidify the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War, which embodies the

15 It should be noted that Chinese leaders' statements about international order, rather than being identical on all occasions, often change depending on where and to whom they speak. For example, on February 17, 2017, President Xi Jinping stressed when chairing a symposium on national security work “to lead the international community to jointly shape a more just and rational new international order.” See “Xi Jinping Hosts a Symposium on National Security,” *Xinhua*, February 17, 2017, www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2017-02/17/c_1120486809.htm.

principles of international justice and the aspirations of the international community. It unprecedentedly restricts the expansion of state military forces, significantly magnifies the impact of common human values on international norms, and places more attention on the demands of non-Western countries.¹⁶ The rational and progressive nature of the post-war international order is therefore beyond doubt.

As an important participant in the construction of the post-war international order, China takes safeguarding lasting world peace as its starting point, adheres to the principle of non-expansion, and takes fairness and justice as the basic norms of international relations. China supports a strong United Nations as the core of the collective security system, and remains firm in cooperation between, as well as the special role of, major powers within the UN framework. It also advocates national self-determination and decolonization.¹⁷ As a major builder and beneficiary of the post-war international order, China has emphasized that “it won’t overturn what it helped to build, nor will it want to start everything anew.”¹⁸ President Xi also stressed several times on international occasions that China will “defend the post-war international order”¹⁹ or “join efforts to safeguard the outcomes of World War II as well as the post-war peace and order.”²⁰ Xi pointed out, “The current international order is not a perfect one. But as long as it is rules-based, aims to be equitable and pursues win-win outcomes as its goal, such an international order should

16 Jia Qingguo, “70 Years after the Victory of the World Anti-Fascist War, A Review of the Post-War International Order,” *Popular Tribune*, No.10, 2015.

17 Chen Xinsheng and Wu Xin, “China’s Endeavor in Constructing the Post-War International Order,” *Study Times*, October 19, 2015, p.6.

18 “China’s Role in the Global and Regional Order: Participant, Facilitator and Contributor - Speech at the Luncheon of the Fourth World Peace Forum,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, June 27, 2015, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/wjbz_663308/2461_663310/t1276595.shtml.

19 “Xi: China and Russia Legislatures Should Jointly Safeguard WWII Outcomes and the Post-War International Order,” Xinhua, September 23, 2014, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2014-09/23/c_1112597812.htm; “Xi Jinping: Speech at the Symposium to Commemorate the 69th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War,” Central People’s Government of China, September 3, 2014, http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2014-09/03/content_2744972.htm.

20 “Xi Jinping Meets with Prime Minister Manuel Valls of France,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, January 30, 2015, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1234275.shtml.

not be discarded at will, still less should it be dismantled and rebuilt all over again.”²¹

Maintaining the rightful content of the post-war, or current, international order is the basis and prerequisite for its reform and improvement. “China does not want to create a new set of rules apart from the current international order, but hopes to see a common ‘roof of the world,’ which is broad enough to respect diversity and tolerate the interests and values of countries with different social systems and development levels. Thus, improving and developing the prevailing international order requires both respecting tradition and innovation, as well as both construction and deconstruction.”²²

Reforming and innovating the current international order

Though the post-war international order with UN as its centerpiece is based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, it is undeniable that the order is still dominantly derived from Western historical experience. In particular, the post-war international economic order is basically dominated by the United States and the West, which greatly benefits Western developed countries. The design of the order was not decided through democratic procedures, but rather by a few major powers. Moreover, many principles of the post-war international order have been discarded or eroded by the combined influence of power politics and monopolistic capital, while the rightful elements within the order fails to play their due role, leading to many shortcomings in the prevailing international order.²³ Due to the inherent deficiencies of the post-war international order, which does not fully reflect the needs of developing countries and cannot adapt to the changes in the international landscape, it must be reformed so that “it can better reflect the new reality, meet countries’ needs and catch up with the changing

21 “Full Text of Chinese President’s Speech at BRICS Business Forum in South Africa,” *Xinhua*, July 25, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/26/c_129920686.htm.

22 Fu Ying, “Adhering to Cooperative Security, Common Development, Political Inclusiveness, and Joining Hands to Build a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind.”

23 Yao Yao, “China’s Concept of New International Order and the Post-War System,” p.10.

times.”²⁴ As President Xi pointed out, “To reform and improve the current international system does not mean to start all over again, but to push it towards a more just and equitable direction.”²⁵ Although what Xi mentioned here is the current international system, in fact it is also a clear statement of China’s concept of international order.

Building a community with a shared future for mankind as the overarching goal of international order reform

Building a community with a shared future for mankind is not only the overarching goal of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics in the new era, but also China’s ultimate goal in promoting the reform of international order and improving the global governance system. “A community with a shared future for mankind is a vision for the evolution of the world power configuration and global governance from the perspective of reforming and improving the international order. It is based on the consideration of various new factors in the world’s development in the 21st century, and aims to answer the philosophical and historical question of where mankind is going.”²⁶ The core of building a community with a shared future for mankind is to build an open, inclusive, clean world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security, and common prosperity. Politically, it promotes mutual respect and equal consultation, and calls for a total rejection of the Cold War mentality and power politics by forging a new path that chooses dialogue over confrontation and partnership over alliance. In terms of security, it persists in resolving disputes through dialogue, dispelling differences through consultation, coordinating responses to traditional and non-traditional security threats, and opposing terrorism in all its forms. Economically, it calls on all parties to work together to promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, and make economic globalization more open, inclusive, balanced

24 “Foreign Minister Wang Yi Meets the Press,” March 8, 2017.

25 “Remarks by President Obama and President Xi of the People’s Republic of China in Joint Press Conference,” September 25, 2015.

26 Fu Ying, “Adhering to Cooperative Security, Common Development, Political Inclusiveness, and Joining Hands to Build a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind.”

and beneficial for all. Culturally, it remains firm in respecting the diversity of civilizations, encouraging communication rather than isolation, mutual learning rather than conflicts, and coexistence rather than unilateral superiority. Ecologically, it persists in environmental friendliness, cooperating in tackling climate change, and protecting the earth on which mankind depends. Building a community with a shared future for mankind is “China’s solution to help promote the transformation of international order and system.”²⁷

Paths to Maintaining and Reforming International Order

In order to “defend the UN-centered international system and the international order underpinned by international law”²⁸ and to promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind, China has actively put into practice the concept of a new international order, demonstrating its role as a responsible major country.

Safeguarding multilateralism and upholding the purposes and principles of the UN Charter

Multilateralism is an effective way to maintain peace and promote development. It is about “having international affairs addressed through consultation and the future of the world decided by everyone working together.”²⁹ The United Nations is the banner of multilateralism, and multilateralism based on the UN Charter reflects the historical progress of human society from war to peace, from privilege to equality, and from monopoly to consultation.³⁰ China has repeatedly stressed that it “firmly

27 Wang Yi, “Work Together to Create a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind,” *People’s Daily*, May 31, 2016, p.7.

28 “Position Paper of the People’s Republic of China on the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, September 10, 2020, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1813751.shtml.

29 “Let the Torch of Multilateralism Light up Humanity’s Way Forward: Special Address by H.E. Xi Jinping at the World Economic Forum Virtual Event of the Davos Agenda,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, January 25, 2021, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1848323.shtml.

30 Yang Jiechi, “Firmly Safeguarding and Practicing Multilateralism and Continuously Promoting a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind,” *People’s Daily*, February 21, 2021, p.6.

upholds multilateralism, the international system with the UN at its core, and the international order based on international law.”³¹ “The purposes and principles of the UN Charter are the fundamental guidelines for handling international relations. They constitute a cornerstone of stable international order and must be unswervingly kept and upheld.”³² China endorses the post-war, or current, international order mainly because it is based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. “To this day, the purposes and principles of the UN Charter have not become obsolete and are still a good recipe for solving various international problems; many of the turmoil and chaos in the world today have their roots in the failure to implement or even the violation of these purposes and principles.”³³ The confrontation and injustice that occur in the world today are not due to the obsolescence of the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, but precisely to their failure to be effectively implemented. In his 2017 speech at the UN Office at Geneva, President Xi Jinping solemnly declared, “China will firmly uphold the international system with the UN as its core, the basic norms governing international relations embodied in the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, the authority and stature of the UN, and its core role in international affairs.”³⁴

Promoting democratic, rules-based and rational international relations featuring win-win cooperation

The core of democratization of international relations is the equal participation of all countries in international affairs and the rejection

31 “Xi Meets UN Chief,” *Xinhua*, April 26, 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-04/26/c_138013631.htm.

32 “Xi Jinping Delivers an Important Speech at the High-level Meeting to Commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations (UN),” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, September 22, 2020, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1817250.shtml.

33 “Wang Yi: UN Should Stay True to its Original Aspiration and Firmly Uphold the Purposes and Principles of its Charter,” *Xinhua*, November 28, 2016, http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2016-11/28/c_1120008043.htm.

34 “Work Together to Build a Community of Shared Future for Mankind: Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping at the United Nations Office at Geneva,” *Xinhua*, January 18, 2017, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-01/19/c_135994707.htm.

of hegemonism and power politics. President Xi Jinping pointed out, “Matters that fall within the sovereign rights of a country should be managed only by the government and people of that country. And affairs of the world should be addressed by the governments and peoples of all countries through consultation. Herein lies the democratic principle in the handling of international affairs which should be universally observed by the international community.”³⁵ Another important manifestation of democratization is the sovereign equality of countries and their autonomy in choosing their own development paths. “The essence of sovereign equality is that the sovereignty and dignity of all countries, whether big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, must be respected, their internal affairs allow no interference and they have the right to independently choose their social system and development path.”³⁶

The key to rules-based international relations is to abide by international law, especially the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and not adopt double standards. As President Xi Jinping pointed out when commemorating the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, “We should jointly promote the rule of law in international relations. We should urge all parties to abide by international law and well-recognized basic principles governing international relations and use widely applicable rules to tell right from wrong and pursue peace and development. ... In the international society, there should be just one law that applies to all. ... There should not be double standards when applying the law. We should jointly uphold the authority and sanctity of international law and the international order.”³⁷ Regarding climate change, he also stressed,

35 “Follow the Trend of the Times and Promote Peace and Development in the World: Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping at Moscow State Institute of International Relations,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, March 23, 2013, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1033246.shtml.

36 “Work Together to Build a Community of Shared Future for Mankind: Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping at the United Nations Office at Geneva.”

37 “Carry Forward the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence to Build a Better World Through Win-Win Cooperation: Address by H.E. Mr. Xi Jinping at Meeting Marking the 60th Anniversary of the Initiation of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, June 28, 2014, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1170143.shtml.

“It is imperative to enhance the standing and role of international law in global governance, ensure effective observance and implementation of international rules, uphold democracy, equity and justice, and build international rule of law.”³⁸ As for the special role of major powers in building rules-based international relations, Xi said, “Big countries should lead by example in advocating and upholding the international rule of law and in honoring their commitments. There must be no practice of exceptionalism or double standards. Nor should international law be distorted and used as a pretext to undermine other countries’ legitimate rights and interests or world peace and stability.”³⁹

To make international relations more rational, relevant systems and rules should reflect the new changes in the international political and economic landscape. Those unjust and unreasonable institutional arrangements should be changed, while the voice of developing countries be increased. As President Xi stressed, “Countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are all equal members of the international community. As such, they are entitled to participate in decision-making, enjoy rights and fulfill obligations on an equal basis. Emerging markets and developing countries deserve greater representation and voice.”⁴⁰

Promoting a new type of international relations is the basic path to building a community with a shared future and, of course, the basic path to developing the international order, because a community with a shared future for mankind serves as the ultimate goal of international order construction. The new type of international relations is characterized by mutual respect, fairness and justice, and win-win cooperation.

38 “Work Together to Build a Win-Win, Equitable and Balanced Governance Mechanism on Climate Change: Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping at the Opening Ceremony of the Paris Conference on Climate Change,” November 30, 2015, https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/XiattendsParisclimateconference/2015-12/01/content_22592469.htm.

39 “Xi Jinping Delivers an Important Speech at the High-level Meeting to Commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations (UN).”

40 “Jointly Shoulder Responsibility of Our Times, Promote Global Growth: Keynote Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping at the Opening Session of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2017,” *Xinhua*, January 17, 2017, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-01/18/c_135991184.htm.

The principle of mutual respect emphasizes the need to abandon the traditional law of the jungle where the strong dominates the weak, and insist on the equality of all countries, be they big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor. Matters within the sovereignty of each country should be handled by its own government and people, and the development path chosen by each country according to its own national conditions should be respected, while interference in the internal affairs of countries by external forces should be resolutely opposed.

Fairness and justice require that the fate of the world be in the hands of all peoples, and that global matters be discussed jointly by the governments and peoples of all countries. We must respect each other's concerns and accommodate each other's interests, promote the formulation of international rules that reflect the interests and concerns of all parties in a balanced manner, and ensure equal rights, equal opportunities and equal rules for the development of all countries. Together with the concept of mutual respect, the principle of fairness and justice basically reflect the aspirations for democratic and rules-based international relations.

The notion of win-win cooperation is characterized by the pursuit of mutual benefits for two or more parties, and the rejection of the old thinking of zero-sum game and winner-takes-all. All countries in the world, regardless of their sizes, must take into account the legitimate concerns of others in pursuing their own interests, combine their own interests with the common interests of all countries, strive to expand the convergence of interests, and enhance the common interests of mankind. While seeking their own development, they should actively ensure common development with others, so that all countries and peoples can enjoy the fruits of development together.

Fostering a fairer and more reasonable global governance system

Global governance is closely related to international order. The basic purpose of global governance is to resolve global issues through binding and effective international institutions or mechanisms in order to maintain

a stable international political and economic order. President Xi Jinping once pointed out that the reform of the global governance system is “not about dismantling the existing system and creating a new one to replace it. Rather, it aims to improve the global governance system in an innovative way. ... To build a more equitable, just and effective architecture of global governance meets the common aspiration of all countries.”⁴¹ At a collective study session of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee in October 2015, Xi stressed that it is necessary to promote changes to those unjust and unreasonable arrangements in the global governance system, push international economic and financial organizations to effectively reflect the changes in the international landscape, particularly to increase the representation and voice of emerging market economies and developing countries. In addition, the rules of global governance should be more democratically decided and more strictly based on international law, so that the global governance system can reflect the will and interests of the majority of countries in a more balanced manner.

In order to reform and improve the global governance system, and build a fairer and more equitable international order, China adheres to the concept of global governance based on extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. “The global governance system is built and shared by the world, not monopolized by a single country.”⁴² “What kind of international order and global governance system is good for the world and good for all peoples of the world should be jointly discussed instead of being decided by one country or a small group of people.”⁴³ President Xi Jinping particularly emphasized the equal rights of China and other developing countries in the formulation of international law. On how to build a more just and reasonable global governance system, Xi’s answer is to make joint efforts to overcome the “four deficits” in global

41 “Interview with Chinese President Xi Jinping,” *The Wall Street Journal*, September 22, 2015, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/full-transcript-interview-with-chinese-president-xi-jinping-1442894700>.

42 “Interview with Chinese President Xi Jinping,” *The Wall Street Journal*, September 22, 2015.

43 Xi Jinping, “Speech at the 95th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China,” July 1, 2016, http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/qs/2021-04/15/c_1127330615.htm.

governance: calling for fairness and reasonableness to address the governance deficit; calling for consultation and understanding to address the trust deficit; calling for joint efforts and mutual assistance to address the peace deficit; and calling for mutual benefit and win-win results to address the development deficit.⁴⁴

Building a new pattern of economic globalization through the Belt and Road Initiative

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a typical example and an important Chinese proposal for its participation in the construction of international order and global governance.⁴⁵ As a Chinese solution and a practical platform for engaging in global openness and cooperation, improving the global governance system, promoting human common development and facilitating the building of a community with a shared future for humanity,⁴⁶ the BRI “with a future-oriented vision and based on the philosophy of global governance and the ultimate goal of a community with a shared future for humanity, essentially aims to reopen the world economy through effective international supply and generate new international demand, thereby benefiting future global development and helping improve the structure and level of global governance.”⁴⁷ As Xi announced at the inaugural Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in 2017, the BRI “should be an open one that will achieve both economic growth and balanced development.” “We should build an open platform of cooperation and uphold and grow an open world economy. We should jointly create an environment that will facilitate

44 “Xi Outlines 4-Pronged Proposal on Global Governance,” *Xinhua*, March 27, 2019, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-03/27/c_137925702.htm.

45 Zhang Yuyan, “Understanding the Once-in-a-Century Profound Changes,” *International Economic Review*, No.5, 2019.

46 “Address at a Symposium Marking the Fifth Anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI),” August 27, 2018, in *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, Vol.3, p.486.

47 “Wang Jing: Belt and Road Initiative Reshapes New Era Pattern of Globalization,” June 3, 2020, <https://h5.drcnet.com.cn/docview.aspx?chnid=5722&leafid=22592&docid=5854003&uid=80091203&version=ydyl>.

opening up and development, establish a fair, equitable and transparent system of international trade and investment rules and boost the orderly flow of production factors, efficient resources allocation and full market integration. ... We should also focus on resolving issues such as imbalances in development, difficulties in governance, digital divide and income disparity and make economic globalization open, inclusive, balanced and beneficial to all.”⁴⁸

The Belt and Road Initiative is a powerful interpretation of China’s position as a contributor to global development. “In the face of a persistent downturn in the world economy, China’s support for the industrialization and modernization of countries along the routes through the Belt and Road construction meets their urgent need to improve infrastructure and will certainly activate their growth potential. This will undoubtedly help stabilize the world economic situation and promote global economic growth.”⁴⁹ Against the backdrop of rising anti-globalization and protectionist sentiment in the West, the BRI, by exploring a new pattern of decentralized globalization,⁵⁰ is China’s solution to the flaws of the international order and provides an important new public good for global governance.⁵¹

Conclusion

The world today is full of uncertainties. New and old problems such as war, poverty, environmental degradation and disease intertwine, while populist, nationalist and anti-globalization sentiments prevail. Negative policies that may lead to isolation, confrontation and division are on the rise. China’s view of international order in the new era addresses the above-mentioned reality


48 “Work Together to Build the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road: Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping at the Opening Ceremony of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation,” *Xinhua*, May 14, 2017, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-05/16/c_136287878.htm.

49 Fu Ying, “Adhering to Cooperative Security, Common Development, Political Inclusiveness, and Joining Hands to Build a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind.”

50 “Wang Jing: Belt and Road Initiative Reshapes New Era Pattern of Globalization,” June 3, 2020.

51 Fu Ying, “The International Order and China’s Action,” *People’s Congress of China*, No.4, 2016.

in order to overcome the unreasonable and unjust elements in the current international order, and ultimately build a community with a shared future for humanity. It answers the question of the times of what is happening to the world and what we are to do about it. It follows the trend of the times and the universal call of the international community, and expresses China's good will and objective need to share the future with all and seek development in peace.

The Chinese view of international order in the new era inherits and carries forward the ideological underpinnings and spiritual temperament of the Chinese Communists' pursuit of fairness and justice in human society, and highlights the Party's consistent principles of national independence, independent choice of development path and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. It continues the historical process of China's full integration into the world since the reform and opening-up, and further confirms China's transformation from a revolutionary to a contributor in its international identity. China's new-era concept of international order reflects its cultural characteristics and historical experience, and is an organic combination of its local concern and global vision, and of its traditional and modern values. The Chinese solution to the construction of international order and global governance constitutes a body of knowledge based on Chinese cultural traditions, reflecting China's development experience, rich in Chinese characteristics while being globally relevant. Developed on the basis of China's enduring search for solutions to its own development problems and the common problems of mankind, the body of knowledge offers new options to countries and peoples around the world who wish to seek development while maintaining their independence, and thus contributes Chinese experience and wisdom to national and global governance.⁵² 

52 Su Changhe, "China's Solution to Global Governance and its Global Significance," *People's Daily*, November 5, 2017.