

# Foreign policy of China

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The **People's Republic of China** is a Communist state that came to power in 1949 after a civil war. It became a great power in the 1960s and today has the world's largest population, second largest GDP (nominal) (after the U.S.) and the largest economy in the world by PPP. China is now considered an emerging global superpower.<sup>[1][2][3]</sup> The main institutions of foreign policy are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the International Liaison Department of the Chinese Communist Party, and the United Front Work Department.<sup>[4]</sup>

In 1950-1953 it fought an undeclared war in Korea against the United States. Until the late 1950s it was allied with the Soviet Union but by 1960 they began a bitter contest for control over the local Communist movement in many countries. It reached détente with the United States in 1972. After Chairman Mao Zedong died in 1976, Deng Xiaoping led a massive process of industrialization and emphasized trade relations with the world, while maintaining a low key, less ideological foreign policy, widely described by the phrase *taoguang yanghui*, or "hide one's talent and bide one's time".<sup>[5]</sup> The Chinese economy grew very rapidly giving it steadily increasing power and ambition.

Since Xi Jinping assumed to General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party in 2012, China has expanded its foreign policy ambitions on the global scale, with special emphasis on the East China Sea. China is investing heavily in global infrastructure, citing a desire for economic integration. It is also investing in strategic locations to secure its trade and security interests. It calls these programs "One Belt, One Road" and the "Maritime Silk Road", which it sees as part of its goal of self-sufficiency.<sup>[6]</sup> In the 2019, the Pew Research Center made a survey on attitude to Xi Jinping among six-country medians based on Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines and South Korea. The survey indicated that a median 29% have confidence in Xi Jinping to do the right thing regarding world affairs, meanwhile a median of 45% have no confidence. These number are almost same with those of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (23% confidence, 53% no confidence).<sup>[7]</sup>

Since 2017 it has engaged in a large-scale trade war with the United States. It is also challenging U.S. dominance in the Pacific and Indian Ocean, expanding its military naval and diplomatic efforts.<sup>[8]</sup> Part of this is the String of Pearls strategy securing strategic locations in the Indian Ocean and Strait of Malacca region.<sup>[9]</sup>

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## Long-term goals

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Political scientist Dmitry Shlapentokh argues that Xi Jinping and his top leadership are developing plans for global predominance based on rapidly growing economic power. The ideological framework is a specialized blend of Marxist–Leninism, coupled with China's pre-1800 historic claims to world dominance. China's trade policy and drive for access to essential natural resources, such as gas, are articulated in terms of these ideological approaches. Beijing balances both purely economic goals with geopolitical strategies regarding the United States, Russia and other powers. Balancing those two powers gives China a clear advantage, for its totalitarian government could plan for generations and could change course regardless of the wishes of the electorate or clearly defined interest groups, as is the case with the modern capitalist West.<sup>[10]</sup>

Lowell Dittmer argues that in dealing with the goal of dominance over East Asia, Beijing has to juggle its relations with the United States, which has more military and economic power in the region because of close U.S. ties with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, Australia and other countries.<sup>[11]</sup>

Regarding the Middle East, where the United States has staked out a major position, China is tentatively moving in a much smaller scale. Analysts argue that Beijing is not yet ready to become a major force in shaping regional politics.<sup>[12][13][14]</sup>

China has shown a moderate interest in the Caribbean region in recent years, but not nearly on the same scale as its interest in Asia and Africa. It has been developing ties with Cuba, the Bahamas, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic and Haiti, as well as Colombia. These small countries have not by 2019 noticeably changed their foreign or domestic policies because of their new economic linkages with China. Nevertheless, the governments pay more attention to Beijing's views. On the other hand, China's push into the Caribbean is increasingly resented by the United States and further escalation between the two major powers is a possibility in the region.<sup>[15][16]</sup>

## Status of Taiwan

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China considers Taiwan area administered by Republic of China, part of its inviolable sovereign territory. In China's view, Taiwan is a separatist, breakaway province that must be reunified, by force if necessary. China exerts efforts for countries recognizing the ROC to switch their recognition to the People's Republic of China (PRC).<sup>[17][18][19][20]</sup> This has forced Taiwan to go to great lengths to maintain its extant diplomatic relations, particularly with countries that recognize the Republic of China as the one "China".<sup>[21]</sup>

It has passed the controversial Anti-Secession Law authorizing the use of military force in the event of unilateral separatist activity by the Government of Taiwan,<sup>[22]</sup> as outlined in § PRC's condition on military intervention.

## South China Sea

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China has staked its territorial claims in the disputed South China Sea with the Nine-Dash Line. Its claims are disputed by other countries.<sup>[23][24]</sup> The contested area in the South China Sea includes the Paracel Islands,<sup>[note 1]</sup> the Spratly Islands,<sup>[note 2][25]</sup> and various other areas including Pratas Island and the Vereker Banks, the Macclesfield Bank and the Scarborough Shoal. The claim encompasses the area of Chinese land reclamation known as the "Great Wall of Sand".<sup>[26][27][28]</sup>

The United States Navy has conducted freedom of navigation operations asserting its position that some waters claimed by China are international waters.<sup>[29]</sup>

On July 12, 2016, an arbitral tribunal constituted under Annex VII to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ruled that China has no legal basis to claim "historic rights" within its nine-dash line in a case brought by the Philippines. The tribunal judged that there was no evidence that China had historically exercised exclusive control over the waters or resources within the Nine-Dash Line.

The ruling was rejected by both Taiwan and China.<sup>[30][31]</sup> The People's Republic of China and the Republic of China (Taiwan) stated that they did not recognize the tribunal and insisted that the matter should be resolved through bilateral negotiations with other claimants.<sup>[32]</sup> However, the tribunal did not rule on the ownership of the islands or delimit maritime boundaries.<sup>[33][34]</sup>

Scholars have been probing the Chinese motivations and long-term expectations. One approach is to compare trends in multilateral Code of Conduct negotiations between 1992 and 2016. In general, the sovereignty issue regarding contested waters is no longer a central major concern. For three reasons: the inconsistency of China's official claims over time, China's increased bargaining power, and the importance of the shelved sovereignty axiom since the era of Deng Xiaoping.<sup>[35][36]</sup>

## Economics

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Beijing has encouraged and helped finance Chinese firms to develop enormous overseas interests since 2000. More established American and European corporations have strong locks on major markets, so the Chinese companies focus on areas with high political risks, such as Myanmar. The communist government in Beijing has increasingly intervened to secure these overseas business interests. The Chinese businessmen are encouraged to cultivate social institutions in key markets. In the case of Myanmar, China is confronting a much better established position of India.<sup>[37][38][39]</sup>

## See also

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- South China Sea disputes
- Belt and Road Initiative
- Maritime Silk Road
- String of Pearls (Indian Ocean)
- Political status of Taiwan
- China and the United Nations
- Foreign policy of Xi Jinping
- Community of Common Destiny
- Old friends of the Chinese people

## Notes

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1. The Paracel Islands are occupied by the PRC, but are also claimed by Vietnam and the ROC.
2. The Spratly Islands are disputed by the Philippines, PRC, ROC, Brunei, Malaysia, and Vietnam, who each claim either part or all the islands, which are believed (hoped) to sit on vast mineral resources, including oil and gas.

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