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# **CHINESE HARMONIOUS WORLD POLICY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON SOUTHEAST ASIA**

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## Abstract

This paper explains the concept of Chinese harmony policy toward Southeast Asia and the improvement of China-Southeast Asia relations as successful indication of China new policy idea of “Harmonious World” and Harmonious East Asia. Firstly, the paper will briefly introduce the concept of Chinese harmony world policy which raised by Chinese President Hu Jintao on his speech to the 17<sup>th</sup> Chinese Communist Party Congress, emphasized on the peaceful development and greater harmony in China’s international Relations. Secondly, I will look at the international views of China’s rise and answer the question, will China be a threat to Its neighbors and Southeast Asian region by using the realist and liberal perspective whether China rising will be threat or ensure peace and economic cooperation with Southeast Asia? Thirdly, the paper discusses the implication of China’s harmonious world policy on China-Southeast Asia relations in the context of Chinese peaceful development policy, Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence of Chinese Foreign Policy with ASEAN, and China’s win-win policy of building harmonious of sustained peace and common prosperity with ASEAN.

**Key Words:** China, Southeast Asia, Harmonious World, Peaceful Development, Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, and Win-Win Strategy.

## Introduction

The year 2011 marks the 62th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China PRC, and new China’s diplomacy also has gone through a journey of 62 years. More than 60 year history of the People’s Republic of China can be divided into the first 30 years after its founding and the second 30 years since its opening up and reform in 1978. The major diplomatic task of the first 30 years was to oppose the threat from big powers, consolidate national independence, and safeguard sovereignty and territorial.<sup>1</sup> The second 30 years was dedicated to creating a good international and peripheral environment for its domestic economic construction and to promote China’s development in accordance with the development and changes of the international situation.<sup>2</sup>

Like many other growing economic power in history, China has to adjust its foreign policy to

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<sup>1</sup>Zhang Qingmin, “China’s Diplomacy,” China International Press, ISBN. 2010.1, p. 1-6.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

global development and international trends but unlike those emerging powers with diplomatic competition resulting in war, China as a rising power tries with a new policy based upon “Harmonious World” conception to seek mutual benefits and carry out collective development while pursuing its own prosperity. China has repeated that it would take a road of peaceful development and committed itself to building a harmonious world for lasting peace and common prosperity. China also proposes a new idea of “harmonious Asia-pacific” to deal with those countries and economics in the region. What are the real meanings in this “Harmonious World” conception? What are China’s motivations to put the new conception as guidance of China’s policy and its implications on China’s relationship with Southeast Asia? The purpose of this article is to analyze the conception, a strategic thinking to those of President Hu Jintao’s predecessors, and try to answer to the above question. My argument is that China’s “Harmonious World” conception has a positive impact on the relationship of China with Southeast Asia mainly because China seeks for economic cooperation, peaceful development, and good neighboring policy in order to live together with mutual benefits and common development in the region. Since it was officially presented by the Chinese President at the United Nations summit in 2005, the term “harmonious world” has become one of the most popular for talking about China’s ideal of international order in the age of China’s rise. What will the world order look like in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? What role will China play in the process of shaping the future world order? What will China do in the construction of the new world order? All these are hot issues throughout the world.<sup>3</sup> I could be argued that harmonious world is China’s first concept of a future world order. The next point of this paper tries to explain the concept of harmonious world with its implication of China’s diplomatic strategy and policy under the framework of “harmonious world policy.”

## **“Harmonious World” Is the New Diplomacy of China**

The “Harmonious World” conception has attracted academic and policy analyst attention since a speech made by President Hu Jintao at the summit commemorating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations in 2005.<sup>4</sup> It was a first brought forward by President Hu Jintao in his delivery to Asia-Africa Summit held in Jakarta on 22 April 2005 and then the concept was written into the

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<sup>3</sup> G. John Ikenberry, “The Rise of China and the Future of the West: Can be the Liberal System Survive?” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 1, January/February 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Hu Jintao, “Written Speech by H.E. Hu Jintao President of the People’s Republic of China at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the United Nations 60<sup>th</sup> Session,” New York, September 15, 2005 (<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn>)

document of Joint Statement on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century International Order between China and Russia on 1 July 2005. Hu Jintao's position on the Harmonious World includes these main points such as respecting every country's right to independently choose its own social system and path of development, encouraging inter-civilization dialogue and exchanges, allowing culture to complement one another through competition and comparison because diversity of civilizations is a basic feature of humanity and important driving force behind human progress and promoting international relations more democratic and jointly build towards a harmonious world where all people coexist and accommodate each other. Besides, President Hu put forward the conception of Harmonious Asia Pacific in his speech to APEC Summit in Hanoi in November 2006.

Now it is true that China is responding to the changing of global and dynamics landscape, some elements of the thinking of building a harmonious world goes a long way over 50 years of new China's history since the Revolution in 1949. When the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, the first revolution generation led by Chairman Mao Zedong did not expect to establish a harmonious relationship with the countries who in the backyard of the American imperialism. Chairman Mao had rejected the rules and norms of the current international system initiated and created by the Western imperialism led by the United States and even sought to overthrow it through revolution instead. At that time, Mao's legacy of diplomatic strategy is the principles of self-independence, self-reliance, five basic principles for peaceful co-existence, and opposing hegemony. For Hu's Harmonious World concept does not look the contemporary era as a revolutionary and war times but an era of peace, development and cooperation. This stand has been basically a copy of Deng Xiaoping's thinking, which was opposite to the Mao's view on era. Deng Xiaoping advocate the current era as peace and development<sup>5</sup>.

To my view, as a guidance of Chinese diplomatic policy, the harmonious world conception has represented in current Chinese foreign policy with an emphasis on peace, development and cooperation such as politics, economic and culture. The harmonious world conception has also been utilized to guide China's regional policies with conception such as harmonious periphery, harmonious East Asia and harmonious Asia Pacific. Gradually, harmonious world conception has

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<sup>5</sup> Jean-Francois TAIN, "Chinese Political Geography in Southeast Asia" Radio French International in Khmer [www.khmer.rfi.fr](http://www.khmer.rfi.fr)

been reflected in a series of China's bilateral relationships with other countries. For instance, China's policy to the Southeast Asia stays in principle with a constructive cooperation relationship as well as a stressing multilateral cooperation and avoiding face to face confrontation. China building the harmonious policy and constructive cooperation with Southeast Asia based on the principles of non-interfering in each other internal affairs. China would continue developing its relations with Southeast Asia even though some Western analysts maintain that China's involvement in Southeast Asia will be threat to this region.

During the first two decades of reform and opening up, China had to maintain a peaceful international environment so that it could concentrate its energy on economic development. Entering into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, China realized that it has integrated every much into today's world and that its stability and development can be a positive influence on international society. On the one hand, China's development needs cooperation from other countries and also the world's peaceful and prosperous processes need China's contribution. China is trying to promote a win-win structure to define its relations with other countries.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, China had broadened its concern from domestic development to taking into account both internal and external affairs. The turning point was the Central Meeting on Foreign Affairs Work in August 2006 where President Hu Jitao stressed that China should take domestic and international situations into consideration.<sup>7</sup> He also point out that China must grasp the development direction from the mutual relations of international and domestic situations, make good use of development opportunities from the transformation of international and domestic conditions, create development conditions from the complementary advantages of international and domestic resources, and control the overall development situation from the combined actions of international and domestic factors.<sup>8</sup> At the 17<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the CPC in October 2007, President Hu Jintao stated "China cannot develop in isolation from the rest of the world, nor can the world enjoy prosperity and stability without China," which showed that China has already surpassed the stage of seeing the world from its own demands, and began to see itself from the international perspective.<sup>9</sup> Hu Jintao's wording report at the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress is an extremely

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<sup>6</sup> Guo Jiping, "China's Peaceful Development and World's Common Prosperity," Renmin Ribao People's Daily, March 31, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> "China to Adhere to Mutual Benefits and Win-Win Strategy" <http://news.xinhuanet.com>

<sup>8</sup> "Stick to the Path of Peaceful development and Strive to Construct Harmonious World," Editorial, Renmin Ribao People's Daily, August 24, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Hu Jintao, "Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive for New Victories in

rigorous document, diplomatic principles, foreign affairs objectives and diplomatic strategy. President Hu said “the world today is undergoing tremendous changes and adjustments.” Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi told news reporters during an interview that “President Hu’s report at the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress operated from a strategically advantageous position, analyzed the current world situation which is transforming and adjusting, and elaborated the profound connotation of building a lasting and peaceful harmonious world of common prosperity. It is a solemn declaration of China’s persistence in peaceful development, and set the direction for China’s future diplomatic work.”<sup>10</sup>

The idea of harmony world has become a strategic conception of constructing a new world order through diplomatic effort.<sup>11</sup> Harmonious world being the development of an independent foreign policy of peace to a higher level, has become the major item in the three ideas of Chinese government; peace, harmony and win-win, and it clearly declares to the outside world China’s resolution to peaceful development. On the other hand, it can be a good policy for China and Southeast Asia to use this policy in order to resolve the issues that both sides always maintain about common interest and prosperity.

## **International Views on China’s Rise**

This part of the paper, I will look at the global views of China’s rise and try to raise the concept of China’s threat by using two approaches of international relations theory such as realist and liberalist to answer the question will china be a threat to the world and Its neighbors southeast Asian Nations?

Since the end of the Cold War, China’s rise has become a global phenomenon. Although there are some disputes about the speed and extent of China’s rise, much attention has been paid to the question whether China’s growing power will be threat or ensure peace and cooperation with its

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Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in all Respects,” Report to the Seventeenth National Congress of CPC on Oct. 15, 2007, Renmin Ribao, People’s Daily, October 25, 2007.

<sup>10</sup>Yang Jiechi, “Important Announcement of China’s Policy for Peaceful and Development Road,” from [http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2007-10/15/content\\_6887008.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2007-10/15/content_6887008.htm)

<sup>11</sup> Qing Yaqing, “Harmonious World: A New Concept in China’s Diplomacy,” Lilun Cankao, Theory References, No. 5, 2007, pp. 22-23.

neighbors and a global in large.

Classical international relations theorists believe that, in international politics, the quality of diplomatic and foreign policy is not only the most important element of national power, but also an immeasurable and unstable element. According to Hans J. Morgenthau, a nation that has strong capabilities but underdeveloped diplomacy must yield to one whose diplomacy is prepared to make the most of whatever other elements of power are at its disposal, thus making up through its own excellence for deficiencies in other fields.<sup>12</sup> According to the realist assumption, states are unitary actors rationally pursuing their self-interest, neo-realist theorists Robert Keohane believes “regimes can be viewed as intermediate factors, or intervening variables between fundamental characteristics of world politic such as the international distribution power on the one hand and the behavior of states and non-state actors such as the multinational corporations on the other.”<sup>13</sup> Joseph Nye also argues, if sate can establish international norm consistent with its society, it is less likely to have to change. If it support institutions that make other states wish to channel or limit their activities in ways dominant sate prefers, it may be spared the costly exercise of coercive or hard power.<sup>14</sup>

In the new era of Chinese diplomatic relations, harmonious world and its impacts on China’s diplomatic transformation are the conception still faces challenges in the theoretical analysis. Academically, for my perspective is that a systematic theory is urgently needed to explain harmonious world and harmonious East Asia. It is necessary to enhance conducting academic research to fulfill the policy making. First question should be addressed is how to communicate this conception with mainstream theories in the field of international studies. It seems that international relation theories have not had basic approaches to explain harmonious world conception but in China some Party theoretical authority argues that the conception has many in common with a theory of international governance prevailing globally recent years.<sup>15</sup> As a matter of fact, realists have their own arguments that the nature of international governance may not be

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<sup>12</sup> Han J. Morgenthau, “Politics among Nations: the struggle for power and peace,” 6<sup>th</sup> edition, revised by Kenneth W. Thompson (New York: McGraw-Hill 1985), p. 159.

<sup>13</sup> Robert O. Keohane, “After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy,” Princeton University Press 1984, p. 64.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “Soft Power,” *Foreign Policy*, vol. 90, no. 80, 1990, pp. 153-71.

<sup>15</sup> Yu Keping, “Harmonious World and Harmonious Diplomacy,” *Chinese Newspaper, Wenhui Bao*, Shanghai, 16 April 2007, p10



in change but continuity in the foreseeable future. They believe that the historical record suggest that war is an inevitable part of international relations. According to American President Bush that the US is in war and fighting for a safe world, not for a harmonious world. For harmonious world, liberalists would prefer to take a sense of global society consisting of a variety of international actors tied together by computer and information technology. The process of globalization is pushing forward individual human rights and the global marketplace and the international system has formed a complex interdependence which decreases the utility of military force to achieve goals. It seems that liberalist argument that globalization requires economic cooperation is something similar to harmonious world but the liberal position that the concept of a national economy is obsolete could not be harmonized with the harmonious world conception. To my view, harmonious world is a theoretical initiative trying of China to build a theoretical system based on Marxism with Chinese characteristics. Key element of Marxism stresses that the international system is characterized by the persistence of class struggle, encouraging international proletarian class to unite and fight against capitalist class for the purpose of building a non-class existed world. With this approach, the existent world should have been a society full of conflicts and struggles for a non-class conflict world. This is why the harmonious world conception has created a new theory with Chinese characteristics while persisted in essential Marxism and Chinese foreign policy. Whether China's rise or emerging in the East Asia and in the world will be threat to its neighbors is a big issue that have been widely discussed in the Western international relations academic and among Western and East Asia political elites. Most Western neo-realist of international relations scholars has pessimistic view about China's rising in East Asia and Southeast Asia regional security.

### ***The Ideas and Arguments of China Threat***

For most Western scholar who has argued that China will be a threat to the security of East Asia in the new century choose the use of power structure transformation analysis to support their point. The power structure perspective is one of assumptions of neo-realist paradigm. According to this paradigm, when any state becomes more powerful, it will inevitable seek greater regional and then world-wide political influence which will cause the change of the power structure in the region and in the world. The change of the power structure caused by the burgeoning of a newly rising regional and world power usually poses a long-term danger for the security of the region

and even for the stability of the world.<sup>16</sup>

With pessimism of Western international relations scholars, China is a rising power in the East Asia region and to some extent in the world from the end of the last century to the beginning of this new century. According to the power structure analysis and the established power versus rising power pattern, under the current power configuration in East Asia, China is a threat to the security of East Asia region and the United States and its main ally in East Asia Japan, both being the established powers whose motivation is to counter-balance the rising power. Based on this analysis some Western IR scholars have predicted with pessimism that Asia is likely to see more international conflicts in the near future.<sup>17</sup>

According to those scholars, the history of international relations also strongly supports their argument. In late 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the period between the two world wars, Germany turned out to be the threat to the security of the West Atlantic region as an emerging and rising power. It was Germany's aspiration to expansion that caused the two world wars. Just like Germany, Japan was a rising power before the Second World War and its expansion in the Pacific region in the 1930s and 1940s eventually led to the Pacific War. It is said that history is the great laboratory within which international action occurs.<sup>18</sup> The historical pattern that a rising power dissatisfied with its secondary status may try to enhance it by confronting the dominant but declining country seems universal. According to one realist study in the West, war is most likely when the power of a rising, dissatisfied country becomes equal to that of a dominant state. Then power parity provides the opportunity to act for those who are committed to changing the status quo.<sup>19</sup> The logic has been applied to China as a rising power seeking to change the status quo in the East Asia region.

According to most Western scholar's view, China is either an authoritarian state or a state shifting slowly from authoritarianism to democracy. The domestic political conditions are such

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<sup>16</sup> Jiang Ye, "Will China be a Threat to Its neighbors and the World in the Twenty First Century,?" Ritsumeikan University Annual Review of International Studies, 2002. ISSN 1347-8214. Vol. 1, pp 57

<sup>17</sup> See in the following books such as, Michael E. Brown, et al, eds., East Asia Security, MIT Press, 1966, Robert Ross, et al, eds., "East Asia in Transition toward a New Regional Order," M.E. Shape. Inc. 1995, Mutiah Alagapa, "Asia Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences," Stanford Univ. Press, 1998, Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, "Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present and Future ," Rand 2000 etc.

<sup>18</sup> Morton A. Kaplan, "System and Process in International Politics," New York: Krieger, 1976, p. 3

<sup>19</sup> Douglas Lemke and Suanne Warner, "Power Parity, Commitment to Change, and War." International Study Quarterly, Vol. 40, 1996, pp. 235-260

that the competitors for leadership in China usually adopt strong foreign policies that would garner popular support with nationalist sentiments on the one hand, and elites support from the institutional remnants of authoritarian rule, especially the military, on the other.<sup>20</sup>

### ***The Conception of China Threat from the Realist Perspective***

Needlessly to say, it is mainly the realist of International Relations theory that help Western analysis to argue about the China threat. As we known, power politics is the basis of realist International Relations theory. For realist international relations are best understood by focusing on the distribution of power among states, security and interest, because relations among states take place in the absence of a world government, which means that the international system is anarchy. According to those who have argued that China has been or will be the threat, it is mainly because China's national power has been increased recently that the international power structure has undergone great changes, which will lead China to be a threat to its neighbors in the region and the world at large, especially Southeast Asian Nations.<sup>21</sup> But if we agree with the method of realist argument, we still need to ask a key question, whether China's national power has really increased to such an extent that it will threaten the security of the region and even that of the world.

In the realm of great power politics, David Kang affirmed that, China in 2003 appears to be reemerging as the gravitational center of East Asia.<sup>22</sup> Thus the remarkable development of China is causing the world a stir, and the question of whether a more powerful China will be a revisionist or a status quo remains.<sup>23</sup> Given its demographic sheer size, the magnitude of its economic development and military power and growing global influence, it still remains an authoritarian government managed by a one-party system. Thus, its heightened global influence combined with its authoritarian regime give international relations scholars from realist to liberal democratic peace theorists a reason to worry. "The current debates over the implication of

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<sup>20</sup> Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, "Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present and Future," Rand, 2000, p. 198.

<sup>21</sup> Jiang Ye, "Will China be a Threat to Its neighbors and the World in the Twenty First Century?" Ritsumeikan University Annual Review of International Studies, 2002. ISSN 1347-8214. Vol. 1, pp 63

<sup>22</sup> David C. Kang, "Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Framework," International Security 2003. pp 57-85

<sup>23</sup> Ibid: p. 67-68

China's rise in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have focused on whether an authoritarian and nationalistic China would adhere to international norms and fully integrate itself into the existing global system."<sup>24</sup> From the realist perspective, China's emergence characterizes the typical behavior of rising states in an international system. Just like what history have been and theory suggests, states behave as rational actors on the move to maximize its interest. As the power if the rising state increase, so will its attempt to balance against the predominant state and change the status quo of the international system. According to Robert Gilpin, "the rising state as its power increase, will seek to change the status quo attempts to change the rules governing the international system the dominant power counters this challenge through changes in its policies that attempt to restore equilibrium in the system. The historical record reveals that if it fails in this attempt, the disequilibrium will be resolved by war."<sup>25</sup>

For Ikenberry, as China grows more powerful, he suggests two things that are likely to happen, China will want to use its growing capabilities to reshape the rules and institutions of the regional and international system to better reflect its interest; and China will increasingly look like a security threat to other states in the system.<sup>26</sup>

From democratic peace theorists perspective, a less democratic or authoritarian government is more likely to go to war than democratic states. An authoritarian state is also more likely to challenge the contemporary international relations order to alter its status. Owen noted in his article how non-democratic states can be dangerous: "Non-democracies may be dangerous because they seek other ends, such as conquest or plunder."<sup>27</sup>

Base on both realist and democratic peace assumption, many western scholars have supported the concept of China threat. But it should be noted that most provocative arguments on the China threat have developed within the line of Western international relations theories, especially from the various realist assumptions which are very much based on their own historical experiences.

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<sup>24</sup> Sheng Ding, "To Build a "Harmonious World": China's Soft Power Wielding in the Global South," *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, 2008, pp 193-213.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Gilpin, "War and Change in World Politics" Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 187

<sup>26</sup> John Ikenberry and Michael Mastunduno, eds., "International Relations Theory and the Asia-pacific," New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

<sup>27</sup> John M. Owen, "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace," *International Security*, 1994. pp 87-125

Unlike the claims of China threat advocates, China has been very successful in establishing cooperative with neighboring countries. China has had a history of border disputes with its neighbors both in Southeast Asia and North East Asia, but so far, it has maintained an environment conducive to further cooperation in the region.

Chinese foreign policies have focused on strengthening cooperation, one of “peace and development as central themes of its diplomacy.”<sup>28</sup> According to Alice D. Ba, he explained the rationale for China’s embrace of cooperation, China’s interest lay in creating a stable environment so that it could continue developing its economy and creating the foundations for future economic growth, both to ensure the domestic and international legitimacy of the communist regime, and also ultimately, to contribute to overall national strength and security.<sup>29</sup>

To my view, with the experience of the Post-Cold War order, since the economic reform that has brought China to its current status in the world order, western scholars still failed to explain the 30 years of long peace and no balancing threat in East Asia.

### ***The Conception of China Threat from the Liberalist Perspective***

When western neo-realist of International Relations scholars tries to apply power structure theory to analyze the China threat, they seem to neglect the fundamental structural changes in the international system. It is quite clear that the power structure theory emphasizes the strength of the state and treats the states as the dominant actors in the international system. But for all the strength of states as the principle actors in the international system, the dominant of states as the focus of political authority is declining with impact of globalization on the international system since the end of the Cold War.<sup>30</sup> For example now any state is not only unable to decide the exchange rate of its own currency in terms of economic power but also unable to decide go to war as easily as previously in terms of political power. Using the power structure analysis without noticing or mention the fundamental changes in the structure and in the actors in the

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<sup>28</sup> Avery Goldstein, “The Diplomatic Face of China’s Grand Strategy: a Rising Power’s Emerging Choice,” *The China Quarterly*, No. 168. pp 835-864.

<sup>29</sup> Alice D. Ba, “China and ASEAN: Re-navigating relations for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Asia,” *Asian Survey*, 2003. pp 622

<sup>30</sup> Jiang Ye, “Will China be a Threat to Its neighbors and the World in the Twenty First Century?” *Ritsumeikan University Annual Review of International Studies*, 2002. ISSN 1347-8214. Vol. 1, pp 58

current international system, the arguments about the threat from China as a rising power appears less persuasive.

According to Thomas L. Friedman described, “a new international system has now clearly replaced the Cold War by globalization, integration of market, finance, and technologies in a way that is shrinking the world from a size medium to a size small and enabling each of us to reach around the world farther, faster, and cheaper than ever before. It’s not just an economic trend, and it’s not just some fad. Like all previous international systems, it is directly or indirectly shaping the domestic politics, economic policies, and foreign relations of virtually every country.”<sup>31</sup> Friedman’s description of globalization may exaggerate the case to some degree, but most people would agree that globalization has directly or indirectly reshaped the foreign relations of almost every country big or small, including the United States, an established power and China, a rising power.

To my views, according to the liberal international relations theory assumptions, states will make more cooperate in term of economic and trade cooperation, they depend on each other in order to reach the common interest and avoid the conflict. I would to argue that, in the context of globalization, no doubt, globalization has led the integration and the interdependence of all the actors in the international system to an unprecedented degree and the cooperative attitude of the state still the main actor in the international system. Importantly, China as a rising power seems to be orienting itself much more than the established powers toward cooperation, because it perceives that the political power of the states in the contemporary international system is less matter. Unlike Germany in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century or Japan in the period between the two World War, China as a rising power prefer to merge into international and regional cooperative regime like WTO, IMF and World Bank, etc and China try its best to cooperate with the establish powers and follow the international norm and rule.

Since the People’s Republic of China was founded, the pillar of China’s foreign policy has been “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” laid out by the late Premier Zhou Enlai. Although Chinese behavior in the international community during the Mao ear often contradicted the “Five

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<sup>31</sup> Thomas L. Friedman and Ignacio Ramonet, “Dueling Globalizations: A Debate Between Thomas L. Friedman and Ignacio Ramonet” *Foreign Policy*, Fall 1999, pp 110-127

Principles” to some extent, such as a contradiction has largely disappeared since the 1980s when Deng Xiaoping began to Change Mao’s revolutionary ideology and initiated the policy of reforming and opening up to the world.<sup>32</sup> This certainly will lead China to persist in the policy of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in dealing with any other countries, especially with its neighbor countries such as Southeast Asia and its main trade partners like United States and other rest of the world.<sup>33</sup>

In this case, I would argue that, the harmonious world conceptions are implemented as a new policy through multilateral diplomatic approach. The implication of harmonious world concept is significant of international relations study to understand the Chinese new approach of foreign policy with Southeast Asian and the rest of the world. With respect to China’s peaceful development policy, concept of harmonious world and society provides an alternative approach of how China and ASEAN can build and international order of peaceful coexistence. Regarding theoretical implication, harmonious world and society conception is conduct to apply the China’s harmonious world policy and its implication on China-ASEAN relations in three points. First, political and security have always been one of the top priority areas of cooperation between China and ASEAN since 1991. Second, economically, economic interdependent as a part of harmonious world has been carried out with economic and trade cooperation with developing nations in Southeast Asia. Economic cooperation between the two sides expanded rapidly. After the establishment of the economic relations between China and ASEAN, an economic partnership has gradually been endorsed. Third, Culturally, China and ASEAN should learn from each other in the spirit of seeking common ground while shelving differences, respect the diversity of China and ASEAN culture, and make joint efforts to advance human civilization.

According to the realist predict, emergence of China will be a rising threat and eventually there will be a hegemonic war between China and the United States. But so far, after reform and open up to the outside world, Chinese economic gradually growth and now China becomes the second economic power in the world, but China never show the threat to its neighbors and region. On the contrary, Chinese foreign policy is embracing the idea of peaceful development, living

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<sup>32</sup> Jiang Ye, “Will China be a Threat to Its neighbors and the World in the Twenty First Century?” *Ritsumeikan University Annual Review of International Studies*, 2002. ISSN 1347-8214. Vol. 1, pp 63

<sup>33</sup> Soong-Bum Ahn, “China as Number One” *Current History*, September 2001, pp. 250-256. p 252

together with peaceful coexistence and harmonious and cooperation in order to bring peace and order with Southeast Asia and other rest in the world. Thus, the realist perspective and western scholar are failed to explain the China's rising after the Cold War, especially after the reforming and open up to the outside world in 1979s and the long peace 30 years in East Asia.

The following part, I will look the implications of Chinese harmonious world policy toward Southeast Asia by using the differences approach.

## **The Implication of Chinese Harmonious Policy on Southeast Asia**

Since the normalization of China's relations between ASEAN countries like Vietnam, Cambodia, Singapore, Laos and Indonesia in the early 1990s, there has been a dramatic change in the security, economic and strategic partnership and cooperation in the region. For the past 20 years, China and ASEAN have ironed out many differences through its unique multilateral establishment. Through signing the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation at the 9<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit in October 2003, it also agreed on to sign with other ASEAN members the Declaration on Conduct in the South China Sea committing all countries as signatories for peaceful resolution to the issues. For instance, China and Vietnam already marked the completion of land border demarcation and the erection of boundary markers in 2008, a significant event in bilateral relations.<sup>34</sup> Both sides has formed a China-ASEAN Free Trade Area and maintaining its "peaceful development" foreign policy in the region, China suggests that as the world's fastest growing economy it is willing to promote stronger ties with ASEAN. Although some ASEAN countries especially those who had a troubled history with China still harp on the "China threat" theory and remains skeptical about the intention and motives of a rising China, the greater economic interdependency will continue to ease such fears in the future.<sup>35</sup>

The sustainability of this partnership is dependent on whether both sides are willing to continue and uphold the present level of cooperation. During the China-ASEAN Commemorative Summit held at Nanning in October 2006, ASEAN and Chinese leaders agreed to enhance the strategic partnership between the two sides. Noting the growing economic ties, the leaders pledged in their joint statement that they will not only continue to cement and strengthen existing political and security ties, but also expand socio-cultural cooperation. Most notably, the leaders reaffirmed

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<sup>34</sup> Xinhua, "China-Vietnam Border Demarcation Finished," China Daily, (2009-02-23). Retrieved April 11, 2009 from [www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-02/23/content\\_7503495.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2009-02/23/content_7503495.htm).

<sup>35</sup> Lai Hongyi and Lim Tin Seng, "ASEAN and China: Toward a Harmonious Relations," pp 28



their long-term commitment to establishing and East Asia community through the utilization of various regional institutions such as ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN plus Three and East Asia Summit. In the years ahead it is reasonable to expect China-ASEAN relations to grow and mature and the region to enter a new age of integration, peace, harmony, prosperity and good neighborliness.<sup>36</sup>

This part of the paper, I will try to examine the three perspectives of Chinese harmonious policy toward Southeast Asia such as Chinese peaceful development policy, Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence of Chinese foreign policy and Chinese Win-Win policy as a main approach to explain the relationship between China and Southeast Asia since normalization in 1990s.

### ***Chinese Peaceful Development toward Southeast Asia***

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is a century of peace, development and cooperation, and peaceful development is a requirement of the times. Not only should China stick to peaceful development but all so all countries of the world should promise, choose and fulfill it. We all should discard the improper zero-sum game rules, dangerous mentalities of hot war and Cold War and old roads that have led the human to confrontation and war many times and instead should join forces and make efforts together to carve out a bright road for the peaceful development.

Chinese government has released the White Paper titled “China’s Peaceful Development” at the beginning of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in which it firmly declared to the world that China will unswervingly follow the path of peaceful development.<sup>37</sup> China’s path of peaceful development has become a strong commitment of the Communist Party of China, the government and the Chinese people. Despite the great unrest, adjustment and transformations in the world since the beginning of 2011, China has shown a clear and sincere attitude and determination to firmly practice the idea of peaceful development and has persistently explored a path of peaceful rise as a major power.<sup>38</sup>

Since the early to mid-1990s the People’s Republic of China has sought to allay regional

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid

<sup>37</sup> Le Yucheng, “China adheres to peaceful development” People’s Daily Overseas Edition, September 29, 2011 from [www.english.peopledaily.com.cn](http://www.english.peopledaily.com.cn)

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

concerns about the “China Threat” in order to promote closer ties with Southeast Asia. China’s grand strategy has been set with Southeast Asia such as “good neighborly relations,” “new concept of security,” and “peaceful development.”<sup>39</sup>In September 2005 this strategy was further refined by the adoption of Hu Jintao’s concept of a “harmonious world.”

China’s peaceful development doctrine build on firm bilateral and multilateral foundation laid in the late 1990s. In February 1999 China and Thailand signed Southeast Asia’s first long-term cooperative framework agreement. By the end of 2000 all other members of the ASEAN had signed similar agreements, including Indonesia and the Philippines. These documents set out the principles for bilateral relations and committed the parties to regular high-level exchange and consultations as well as cooperation in a wide range of specific fields.<sup>40</sup> Beijing strengthened multilateral relations with Southeast Asia by converting China’s dialogue status into a strategic partnership in October 2003, the first such arrangement between China and a regional organization. China also became the first country to accede the ASEAN’s Treaty of Amity and Cooperation at that time. In late 2004 China and ASEAN adopted a five-year plan of action (2005-2010) to flesh out the bones of their strategic partnership. This plan extended multilateral cooperation in the field of nontraditional security as well as in security dialogues, personnel trainings, and military exchanges.

China also has advanced its economic agenda by promoting the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area ACFTA in 2001 and negotiating the China-ASEAN Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation in November 2002. A high point was China’s hosting of a summit in Nanning in October 2006 to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of China-ASEAN dialogue. This meeting reconfirmed commitment to the ACFTA and identified the following priority areas for cooperation: agriculture, information, Mekong Basin development, transportation, energy, culture, tourism, and public health. By the end of 2006 China and ASEAN had agreed up on 28 “cooperation framework mechanism,” including regular consultations between senior officials on strategic and political security cooperation, and annual conference of foreign ministers, and an annual summit of heads of government.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Carlyle A. Thayer, “Southeast Asia Reactions to China’s Peaceful Development Doctrine: Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand,” pp. 5-14

<sup>40</sup> Ibid: pp 7

<sup>41</sup> Ibid: pp. 8-9

In case of South China Sea, early this year the issue came into international spotlight, a few countries took the opportunity to make waves and expected to harm China's interests through little tricks. Although the South China Sea issue has a direct bearing on China's interest and Chinese people's feelings, the Chinese government did not resort to verbal abuse or military power. Instead, it attached great importance to the regional stability and peace as well as the people's welfare and made great efforts to reduce tension and resolve dispute in accordance with the principle of building friendly relationship and partnership with neighboring countries.<sup>42</sup>

China also vowed that, "Beijing remains committed to dialogue as the key to resolving disputes among claimants to the Spratly islands in the South China Sea."<sup>43</sup> This incident shows how China, a military superpower, did not use its disparity to provoke further conflict with a much smaller state. This incident also illustrates that territorial disagreements will ensue in the area given differing states interest, and the United States military presence provides for more neutral ground; a more calculated conflict management and resolution,<sup>44</sup> however, is also needed among claimant countries in the long run. While there is still no mechanism that exists to help solve these territorial issues, so far, for more than 15 years that this has been an issue, the territorial and border dispute has not been deterrence to what China and its Southeast Asia neighbors accomplished in terms of deepening regional ties. According to the theory as I mentioned earlier, the concept of harmonious world policy and peaceful development become more acute among neighboring states because the general important of the relationship increase.

In term of bilateral relations, in case of China and Cambodia, since the normalization of relationship both sides has reached the goal and established a comprehensive strategic partnership.<sup>45</sup> Zhou Yongkang, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, said China and Cambodia have become good neighbors, friends, brothers and partners since the establishment of ties 53 years ago.<sup>46</sup> Zhou said Chinese economic

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<sup>42</sup> Le Yucheng, "China adherers to peaceful development" People's Daily Overseas Edition, September 29, 2011 from [www.english.peopledaily.com.cn](http://www.english.peopledaily.com.cn)

<sup>43</sup> Xinhua, "China's Peaceful Development a Factor in World Peace," September 13, 2011 from [www.english.peopledaily.com.cn](http://www.english.peopledaily.com.cn)

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> "China's Foreign Affairs in 2011", Department of Policy Planning, Ministry of Foreign Affairs PRC, pp 52

<sup>46</sup> Xinhua, "Zhou Yongkang said during he met with a Cambodian People's Party (CPP) officials delegation led by

development not only contributed to global peace and stability, but also created opportunities for Cambodia and other countries in ASEAN as well.

### ***China's Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence toward ASEAN***

Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence are important international norms.<sup>47</sup> China's diplomacy has been characterized by the developing peaceful and friendly relations with all countries on the basis of these five principles.

China has continuously adhered to the five principles of peaceful co-existence in its foreign relations and has energetically developed relations with different countries of the world. On the basis of the five principles of peaceful co-existence, China's relations with developed countries have maintained stability on the whole. Relations with its neighbors are the best since the founding of the PRC, and its solidarity and cooperative relations with developing countries have been further strengthened, making China's international and peripheral environment the best since 1949.<sup>48</sup> The Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence was first proposed by Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai when meeting with an India delegation visiting China in December 1943 to negotiate with its Chinese counterpart on question concerning their relations in the Tibet regions of China. Premier Zhou Enlai proposed in his talks with the Indian Delegation: "Immediately after its birth, New China has set its principles in handling its relations with India, namely: mutual respect for territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, peaceful coexistence."<sup>49</sup>

The Chinese delegation led by Zhou Enlai participated in the Asian-African (Bandung) Conference participated by 29 countries from Asia and Africa, which was held in Bandung, Indonesia in April 1955. The 10 principles on international relations adopted in the final communiqué of the conference is an extension of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. Thereafter, China has settled the boundary issues that were left over from history with Burma,

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H.E. Say Chhum , Chairman of Permanent Committee CPP," Oct. 12, 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Zhang Qingmin, "China's Diplomacy," China International Press, 2010.1, ISBN 978-7-1312-6. pp 82

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> Ibid: pp 82-83

Mongolia, Pakistan, and Afghanistan consecutively on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence.<sup>50</sup>

The five principles were put forward with initial emphasis for guiding China's relations with countries with different social system. But late historical experiences have revealed that if the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence are adhered to, countries with different social systems can live in harmony and maintain amicable cooperation. Even countries with similar social system may come into sharp confrontation or even conflicts. Whether relations between countries are good or bad depends on whether or not they strictly adhere to these principles.<sup>51</sup>

China is not only advocated but a practitioner of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. So far this principle has been written in the communiqué or other important bilateral instruments between China and 171 countries that have diplomatic relations with China. China sticks to the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence in establishing and developing relations with all countries of the world, and has formed a good foreign relations structure.<sup>52</sup> On the international stage, China proposes to build a peaceful, stability, fair, and reasonable international political order and international economic order based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence.<sup>53</sup>

According to what I have maintained above, this part of paper will try to answer the question how Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence works to ensure peace, stable and order in Southeast Asian after normalization? The 1945 Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence put forward by Premier Zhou Enlai are about "mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence." The Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence have remained China's guiding principles to promote and ensure peace and harmony within its foreign policy. In the framework of China and ASEAN relations, the concept of China's Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence is similar to the "ASEAN Way" that we consider as an important norm of China and ASEAN foreign policy. Following the Five

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<sup>50</sup> See China's Premier Zhou Enlai reiterates the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence at the Asian-African Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia in April 1955.

<sup>51</sup> Zhang Qingmin, "China's Diplomacy," China International Press, 2010.1, ISBN 978-7-1312-6. pp 84

<sup>52</sup> Ibid

<sup>53</sup> Ibid: pp 85

Principles of Peaceful Coexistence adhering on the mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's international affair, equality and mutual benefit, and Peaceful Coexistence and ASEAN Way, China and ASEAN had respected on each other's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty. In case of Southeast China Sea issue, if both sides respect to this principles, the possibility in use of force to resolve the problem will not happen. Both sides will resolve the issue by peaceful negotiation base on common interest and prosperity in the region.

### ***China's Win-Win Policy on Southeast Asia***

As Chinese President Hu Jintao announced in his speech, "For our neighboring countries, we still continue to follow the foreign policy of friendship and partnership, strengthen good-neighborly relations and practical cooperation with them, and energetically engage in regional cooperation in order to jointly create a peaceful, stable regional environment featuring equality, mutual trust and win-win cooperation."<sup>54</sup> Indeed, Beijing's soft power offensive in East Asia helping China achieve its foreign policy goals in this region, and transforming its neighborhood into its desired "harmonious world."<sup>55</sup>

Since the normalization of the relationship between China and ASEAN in 1991s, China put forward the idea of creating a secure, amicable, and prosperous neighborhood, and has tried to build a good-neighborly relationship and partnership with its neighbors in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. China has enhanced friendly and substantive cooperation with its neighbors, helped resolve hot spots, and participated in or facilitated the formation of the regional multilateral mechanism. These foreign policy efforts have helped create a peaceful, stable, equal and mutual trust, and a cooperative and win-win peripheral environment, making China's relations with its neighbors the best in the annals of its neighborly relations.<sup>56</sup>

The good peripheral neighborly relations are manifested first in its relations with Southeast Asian countries. The Chinese government's policy during the Asian financial crisis in 1997 and its

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<sup>54</sup> See the full text of President Hu's keynote speech at the 17<sup>th</sup> CCP National Party Congress published by China Daily, October 25, 2007

<sup>55</sup> Sheng Ding, "To Build a Harmonious World: China's Soft Power Wielding in the Global South," Journal of Chinese Political Science, 2008, pp 206

<sup>56</sup> Zhang Qingmin, "China's Diplomacy," China International Press, 2010.1, ISBN 978-7-1312-6. pp 105-106

attitudes toward the remaining boundary disputes with certain countries changed the perception of Southeast Asian countries toward China. Respond to this policy, all ASEAN member countries do not consider China as a threat and dangerous for them. On the contrary, all ASEAN members strongly supported “On China’s Policy.”<sup>57</sup> China use soft power and carry out the “win-win” policy to strengthen the relationship with ASEAN and cleaning its reputation in Southeast Asia. Since normalization, ASEAN feels warm and trusts with China, because of Chinese leaders have considered economic development is more important than ideology and the main desire of China’s win-win policy is peace, stable, and development within China and in the region around China as well.<sup>58</sup>

In the political realm, China has enhanced mutual trust with ASEAN members by actively participating in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and has reached agreements of concrete substance through multilateral dialogue and cooperation, including the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, the Joint Declaration of ASEAN and China on Cooperation in the Field of Non-Traditional Security Issues, and Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia in 2003.<sup>59</sup> China is the first non-ASEAN country to formally join in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, and has even played a position role in maintaining stability. All of these have served to create favorable conditions for maintaining stability in Southeast Asia.

In the economic realm, the bilateral trade and economic relations between China and ASEAN members have been forcefully strengthened through the cooperative framework of ASEAN and China, Japan and South Korea.<sup>60</sup> China and ASEAN have signed the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between ASEAN and the People’s Republic of China in 2002, laying out plans for establishing a China-ASEAN free trade zone by 2010-2015, greatly pushing forward the economic cooperation between China and Southeast Asian countries.<sup>61</sup> Since the implementation of Trade in Goods Agreement of a Framework Agreement for Overall Economic Cooperation between China and ASEAN in 2005, more than 7,000 kinds of goods in

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<sup>57</sup> Jean-Francois TAIN, “Chinese Political Geography in Southeast Asia” Radio French International in Khmer [www.khmer.rfi.fr](http://www.khmer.rfi.fr)

<sup>58</sup> Ibid

<sup>59</sup> Zhang Qingmin, “China’s Diplomacy,” China International Press, 2010.1, ISBN 978-7-1312-6. pp 108

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

<sup>61</sup> Ibid

bilateral trade began to enjoy tariff reduction, booming bilateral trade by large scale.<sup>62</sup>

To my arguments, throughout the political and economic perspectives, the main goal of China's win-win policy is to promote common interest and development. In this case, China has turned its own economic development into opportunities to be shared with ASEAN countries, and stressed the necessity of mutual-dependence and cooperation so as to jointly shape peaceful surrounding environment in Southeast Asia.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has presented a concept of Chinese harmonious world policy and its implication on Sino-ASEAN relations after normalization, and tries to raise some arguments of how Chinese harmonious world policy works to ensure peace, development and cooperation. China's harmonious world conception covers the basic principles such as respecting every country's rights to independently choose its own social system and path of development, encouraging inter-civilization dialogue and exchange, allowing cultures to complement one another through competition and comparison because diversity of civilizations is a basic feature of humanity and an important driving force behind human progress and promoting international relations more peaceful and jointly build toward a harmonious world where all civilizations coexist and accommodate each other. Harmonious world conception is a guidance of Chinese diplomacy with an emphasis on peace, development and cooperation. There are some features in the process including China's peaceful development, five principles of peaceful co-existence, win-win strategy, economic interdependence, and cooperation as a major part of both sides work together in constructing the harmonious relations in the region.

In case of the China's threat conception, most Western scholars and realists of IR theory who has argued China will be a threat to the security of Southeast Asia is still failed to explain the relationship between China and ASEAN after normalization. Sixty two years after founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and 30 years since its reform and open up, China has achieved the goal of peaceful development and economic growth within ASEAN fruitfully. Since the economic reform that has brought China to its current status in the world order, western

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid



scholars still failed to explain the 30 years of long peace and no balancing threat in East Asia, especially with Southeast Asia. According to the realist predict, emergence of China will be a rising threat and eventually there will be a hegemonic war between China and the United States. But so far, after reform and open up to the outside world, Chinese economic gradually growth and now China becomes the second economic power in the world, but China never show the threat to its neighbors and region. On the contrary, Chinese foreign policy is embracing the idea of peaceful development, living together with peaceful coexistence and harmonious and cooperation in order to bring peace and order with Southeast Asia and other rest in the world. Thus, the realist perspective and western scholar are failed to explain the China's rising after the Cold War, especially after the reforming and open up to the outside world in 1979s and the long peace 30 years in East Asia.

By contrast, the conception of China's threat from liberal perspective has showed that, in the context of globalization, no doubt, globalization has led the integration and the interdependence of all the actors in the international system. According to the liberal international relations theory assumptions, states will make more cooperate in term of economic and trade cooperation, they depend on each other in order to reach the common interest, prosperity and avoid the conflict. Importantly, China as a rising power seems to be orienting itself much more than the established powers toward cooperation, because it perceives that the political power of the states in the contemporary international system is less matter. Thus, China show its relations with ASEAN in term of soft power, economic cooperation and considers ASEAN as a good neighbor, good friend, good brother and good partner. As a result of China's promotion of its "good neighborly strategy," no country in Southeast Asia views China as a threat to the region.

Furthermore, the implication of China's harmonious policy on Southeast Asia, since the normalization of China's relations between ASEAN countries like Vietnam, Cambodia, Singapore, Laos and Indonesia in the early 1990s, there has been a dramatic change in the security, economic and strategic partnership and cooperation in the region. As I mentioned above, Chinese peaceful development, five principles of peaceful coexistence and China's win-win policy has played a critical role for China's harmonious policy with ASEAN. In recent years, we observed that China has been very successful in improving its relations with ASEAN countries. The development of China's policy toward Southeast Asia, especially since the normalization,

we can argue that China's harmonious world policy can address ASEAN's fear about the future impact of a stronger China have made these states optimistic and hopeful that a more powerful China will be a force of peace, stability, cooperation and prosperity for the region.

From Southeast Asia perspective, China is a big and powerful neighbor that will figure prominently in any effort to build the relationship with harmony, peace, cooperation as well as economic prosperity in Southeast Asia. But however, some concerns still remain over whether a more powerful China may decide to increase its influence or to dominate the region.

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