

**ASIA PROGRAM**

# **CHINA AND ITS FOREIGN POLICY**

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**ASIA FOCUS #123**



## PROLEGOMENA

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Hybrid political system or “democratorship”, China has adopted the double use of a Hard and Sharp power by axing its priorities on the necessary establishment of a “cultural safety” (wenhuanquan)<sup>1</sup>. If its foreign policy choices stay largely subordinated to economic interests, culture, since the past twenty years, has become an essential side of Chinese diplomatic initiatives abroad. Not suffering from any form of dissidence, they respond to the need to create cultural industries that are unique to it in the audiovisual and digital domain but also in order to forge a speech allowing the reinterpretation of history serving the strength, Chinese of course<sup>2</sup>. In this context, the policy of the New Road of Silk – also called OBOR (« One Belt One Road »; « Yi dai yi lu » in the Chinese language) – initiated in 2013 by Xi Jinping is both a commercial type of strategy and a cultural project with a global vocation. It aims to exploit deposits in the potentialities offered, for example, by the higher education for elites in the South. It relies on a culturalism postulate according to which China has its own values, not only neo-Confucian but also Marxism. These ones have a universal vocation that the State-party wants to promote with ambitious cultural diplomacy. To these first observations, is added another one. Since the 2000s, Chinese diplomacy is all the more proactive as the number of Chinese nationals abroad has steadily increased. Its nationals were less than 300.000 at the beginning of the 80s; in 2015 they were more than 125 million<sup>3</sup>.

To the name of national cohesion and the challenge still asked by the singularities represented by Taiwan, Hong Kong or the acting Sino-American minorities (in California particularly) or the Sino-Australian, Beijing will always be tempted, from far or not, to want to seduce and control them. Chinese TV channels and satellites relay stations around the world are moving in this direction. From regional strength, China has become *de facto* a global strength. Therefore, one can legitimately wonder about the very nature of power. Obviously, its strategic choices are built since the end of the Cold War in the wake of the evolution of relations that Beijing has with Washington. If during almost thirty years, relations have constantly oscillated between attraction and repulsion, the acts on both sides have since radicalized. The notions of “strategic partner” then “strategic competitor” have left room to a bitter vocabulary irresistibly evoking the schmittian definition of “the enemy”<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel Lincot, *Chine, une nouvelle puissance culturelle. Soft power et Sharp power*, Paris, MKF editions, 2019

<sup>2</sup> Emmanuel Lincot, - « Un « rêve chinois » savamment diffusé ? », *NECTART - Comprendre les mutations culturelles et numériques*, n° 7, juin-juin 2018, pp. 81-87.

<sup>3</sup> Mathieu Duchâtel, *La Chine et le terrorisme international : vers une rupture majeure*, ECFR, 27 th octobre 2016 :

[https://www.ecfr.eu/paris/publi/la\\_chine\\_et\\_le\\_terrorisme\\_international\\_vers\\_une\\_rupture\\_majeure](https://www.ecfr.eu/paris/publi/la_chine_et_le_terrorisme_international_vers_une_rupture_majeure)

<sup>4</sup> Carl Schmitt, *Du politique. Légalité et légitimité et autres essais*, Puiseux, Pardès, 1996 ; *La notion du politique - Théorie du partisan*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1972

The “Thucydides’ trap<sup>5</sup>” as recently formulated by Graham Allison enters in this category. Less radical in the intonation but still evoking the fact that “*the Popular Republic is engaged (...) in an ideological war that does not say its name*”<sup>6</sup> the Sinologue Jean-Pierre Cabestan now abounds in an analysis largely shared in the West while one tends, only 10 years ago, to qualify more simply China of “*disconcerting*”<sup>7</sup> strength. Now, the risks of conflict with China are reals. In return, diplomats and Chinese soldiers have to take count of it. Objectively, what are their motivations? Which causes can unite them? The claim of sovereignty yesterday violated of course. The feeling of having caught up in a few decades a considerable delay comforting them in a position last too. In this point of view, the reattachment of Taiwan and the territorial claims of Beijing in the south of China’s sea are not negotiable. This is one of the stumbling blocks between Washington, its allies, and the regime of Beijing whose defense minister, the General Wei Fenghe has reminded in June 2019 at the Shangri-La dialogue of Singapore that China was ready to confront the United States of America<sup>8</sup>. To this more and more exacerbate nationalism is added a multi-referential indoctrination. Constitutional democracy, neoliberalism or democratic socialism conveys erroneous values. Leninist structure in each level of the government and those of embassies more particularly, the party exercises its pre-eminence within the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Some states of the Marxism culture like Vietnam or mostly North Korea come directly under its sole jurisdiction.

Marxism constitutes an ideology defended by the higher instances of the State-Party. As remarked with relevance by François Bougon, “*the right in its boots Marxism has to succeed its synthesis with the Chinese tradition illustrated by Confucius or Mencius, but also by Han Fei (dead in 233 before JC). This rehabilitation of the thought of Xi Jinping’s favorite philosopher, creator of legalism, which advocates the primacy of fear, strength, and control to serve authority, made some say that we are witnessing the advent of a “new totalitarianism of market”, a totalitarianism adapted to the XXI century – the price to pay for the “Chinese dream”*”<sup>9</sup>. In other words, it means the possible return to ideological self-sufficiency, but, without the spirit of a return so far in the Mao Zedong era. The proof is that the Confucianism, banished under the Cultural Revolution is, in its most authoritarian interpretation, an essential reference not only for the regime but also for a very large number of intellectuals favorable to the “*conservatism revolution*”<sup>10</sup> that Xi Jinping wants to lead. This ambition depends largely on a situation of Chinese economy in

<sup>5</sup> Graham Allison, *Vers la guerre : L’Amérique et la Chine dans le piège de Thucydide ?* Paris, Odile Jacob, 2019

<sup>6</sup> Jean-Pierre Cabestan, *Demain la Chine : démocratie ou dictature ?* Paris, Gallimard, 2018

<sup>7</sup> Jean-Marie Holtzinger, *La Chine puissance déconcertante* Paris, Revue de la Défense Nationale (RDN), 2011

<sup>8</sup> Nathalie Guibert, *Les Etats-Unis et la Chine installent une nouvelle guerre froide*, Le Monde, 2 juin 2019 : [https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2019/06/02/les-etats-unis-et-la-chine-installent-une-nouvelle-guerre-froide\\_5470523\\_3210.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2019/06/02/les-etats-unis-et-la-chine-installent-une-nouvelle-guerre-froide_5470523_3210.html)

<sup>9</sup> François Bougon, *Dans la tête de Xi Jinping*, Paris, Actes Sud, 2017

<sup>10</sup> Emmanuel Lincot, *Le pouvoir chinois face à de nouveaux défis », - Asia Focus (IRIS) n° 34 - juin 2017 :* <http://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ASIA-FOCUS-34.pdf>.

restructuration. China and its government stay confronted with major challenges, among which is the need to increase the annual number of 20 to 30 million Chinese on the other side of the development barrier to achieve the goal of a “harmonious society” in 2049. This supposes a GDP growth rate of at least 6% per year. This is the obligation, finally, to resolve the mountains of problems asked by the aging of the population and its needs in terms of education and health, among others.

In brief, there are considerable issues which are, for now, developed to an unknown scale in modern countries. The external obstacles are no less formidable. One of them consists of China and its diplomacy to impose its own views among the “*international system*” (guojixitong) in order to have a bigger hold on the “*global governance*” (quanqizhili).

## REFORM GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

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It is one of the priorities given since 2014 by Xi Jinping to Chinese diplomacy. In 2018, the leader of the State has insisted on the fact that this diplomacy had to “*be socialist with Chinese characteristics*”<sup>11</sup>. Fundamentally, it is so recalled the coherence between the intern and extern political choices of the regime. In fine it is also about to change the “*international order*” (guojizhixu) and especially the culture of the highest authorities that Chinese diplomacy is working on. These American withdrawals concerning the Paris agreements on climate, the JCPoA<sup>12</sup> or the UN Commission on Human Rights, largely facilitate the Chinese initiatives. They’re all going in the direction of a “*sinicization*” of the institutions inherited of Bretton Woods<sup>13</sup>. The ultimate goal is for China and its diplomacy to impose their own standards. Thus, in a crucial domain which is the one of the law, the international press report that only a few settlements of disputes centers in China (for example, Shenzhen and Xian) would be used to settle disputes over investments made on the Silk Roads<sup>14</sup>. In this process, the eventual intervention of foreign professionals could be limited to an amicable phase, the decisional phase being reserved to Chinese referees. If verified, such a mechanism might appear to be contrary to current good international practice and would raise a problem of compliance with the general principle of the right of the parties to a fair trial if the co-contracting party of a Chinese party was to limit or deny the free choice of his referee. The combined effect of such elements (localization in

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<sup>11</sup> ‘*Xi thought on diplomacy leads the way*’ Chinadaily.com, 28 of June 2018:

<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201806/28/WS5b34179da3103349141df593.html>

<sup>12</sup> Désigne l'accord de Vienne sur le nucléaire iranien ou plan d'action conjoint (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action ou JCPoA traduit en français par l'International Atomic Energy Agency comme Plan d'action global commun (PAGC)).

<sup>13</sup> Harold Thibault, Brice Pedroletti et Marie Bourreau, *La Chine à l'assaut des Nations Unies*, Le Monde, 31 mai 2019 : [https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2019/05/31/la-chine-a-l-assaut-des-nations-unies\\_5469897\\_3210.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2019/05/31/la-chine-a-l-assaut-des-nations-unies_5469897_3210.html)

<sup>14</sup> Julie Zaugg, *La nouvelle route de la soie prend l'eau*, Le Temps, Genève, 23 septembre 2018 ; Frédéric Le maître, *La « longue marche » de la Chine vers le droit international*, Le Monde, 11 juin 2019 : [https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2019/06/11/la-longue-marche-de-la-chine-vers-le-droit-international\\_5474478\\_3232.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2019/06/11/la-longue-marche-de-la-chine-vers-le-droit-international_5474478_3232.html)

China and exclusively Chinese referees) could lead to a form of “nationalization” of the regime of dispute settlement through the control of the action for annulment. This “nationalization” is the result of the localization of the arbitration in China, and most of the interpretation and the application by Chinese judges of the applicable rules, not only of Chinese right but also of the principles and norms of international law, including the *lex mercatoria*.

Chinese diplomacy is also strength of proposal. More than once, it has illustrated its capacity to develop multilateral initiatives to a large scale. Thus, the summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) on one hand, the China-Africa Cooperation Forum (FOCAC) on the other hand, took place successively in 2018 on the Chinese territory. Highly symbolic, the summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) took place the 9th of June 2018 in Qingdao, in the province of Shandong, a Confucius country<sup>15</sup>. As the G7 closed in a tense atmosphere between the United States and their allies on the other end of the planet, Chinese president, Xi Jinping, welcomed the State leaders of the eight countries of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), including Russia, four former soviet republics of central Asia, but also India and Pakistan, full members since 2017. Retrospectively, this event has widely served as a platform to one of the most prominent guests, the Iranian president Hassan Rouhani; Iran is expected to adhere, in the coming months, to the said Organization. If SCO is an interstate structure, essentially consecrated to the questions of safety and against terrorism fight, China conceived it as one of the tools of its effort to promote a “*new type of international relationships*”. Created in 2001, it was first known under the name of Shanghai Group in 1996 when it came to monitoring the transition to independence of former soviet republics of central Asia. All of these countries have shared an authoritarian culture of governance, legitimated by orthodox choices both in the cultural and ideological domain. A culture of ultra-security is also one of the essential components of the cooperation between each of these countries. If the fight against Islamist terrorism is a leitmotiv, it also translates an increasing capacity of the SCO members to deploy technical means to assure a monitoring and practice widespread censorship and standards of their respective companies.

Created in 2000, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)<sup>16</sup> reunited for the seventh time, in Beijing on September 3 and 4, 2018<sup>17</sup>. Gathering 54 delegations coming from the continent, in addition to the leaders of the UN, the African Union, and the 26 African and international organizations. This forum had for theme “*community of destiny and mutually advantageous partnership*”. It consecrated mostly the rise in power of China,

<sup>15</sup> Brice Pedroletti, *La Chine accueille le sommet de l'Organisation de Shanghai sur fond de rivalités régionales croissantes*, Le Monde, 10 juin 2018 :

[https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2018/06/09/la-chine-accueille-le-sommet-de-l-organisation-de-shanghai-sur-fond-de-rivalites-regionales-croissantes\\_5312303\\_3210.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2018/06/09/la-chine-accueille-le-sommet-de-l-organisation-de-shanghai-sur-fond-de-rivalites-regionales-croissantes_5312303_3210.html)

<sup>16</sup> Olivier Mbatia, *La Chine en Afrique. Histoire, géopolitique, géoéconomie. Préface d'Emmanuel Lincot*, Paris, Ellipses, 2012

<sup>17</sup> Rémy Darras, *Chine-Afrique : affluence record de chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement au sommet de Pékin*. Paris, Jeune Afrique, 2 septembre 2018 : <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/623311/economie/chine-afrique-affluence-record-de-chefs-detat-et-de-gouvernement-au-sommet-de-pekini/>

the first commercial partner of Africa, recalling at the same occasion that Beijing never stopped, since the two last decades, to increase its help to the development<sup>18</sup>. This seventh FOCAC was part of a continuation of initiatives all-around China took in the educative and cultural domains destined to Africa. Thus, by welcoming in June the third annual meeting of the national commissions of UNESCO in Shanghai, Chinese authorities were strong supporters of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and were offering, for the first time, a project allowing every country to participate at the same level. It was a clean break with the former goals only allowing the industrialized countries to act as funders<sup>19</sup>. Symbolically, new relations to encourage North-South and South-South cooperation could be put in place, all the more easily since the United-States had withdrawn a year earlier from UNESCO.

This China-African diplomatic empathy never denied since the Cold War. In 1971, it translated by the integration of China's popular Republic to the Safety Council of the UN and this, at the expense of the "other China", Taiwan. As François Danjou reports, "*after the establishment, in March 2016, of Beijing links with The Gambia and the departure of Sao Tome Principe (December 2016), Panama (June 2017), Burkina Faso (May 2018) and the Dominican Republic (May 2018), the defection of Salvador reduces the official international mark of Taipei to 17 small countries. Without weakening, China pursues its pressures...it really wants to rally to its cause the former Swaziland, last survivor in Africa of the Taiwanese diplomatic network*"<sup>20</sup>. The seduction of the authoritarian Chinese example against the drastic conditions imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the requirements of the Western strengths in terms of human rights often prevails<sup>21</sup>. It's also a culture of results and the conditions proposed by Beijing as an aid to development explaining the infatuation of Africa for China. China offers equally 30.000 scholarships to African students and 200 searchers are invited each year to pursue their work in China. China has become a privileged destination of African students with an average increase of 35% per year in the last ten years in the number of students. According to the numbers of the Chinese ministry of the Education, 41.677 African students were in China in 2014. In addition, since these past four years, China receives via China Africa Press Center Program African reporters coming to confront with politic, culture, arts and China's history. An

<sup>18</sup> Frédéric Lemaître, *Sommet Chine-Afrique : « Pékin n'est pas néocolonialiste mais hégémonique. Entretien avec Jean-Pierre Cabestan »*, Paris, Le Monde, 3 septembre 2018 :

[https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/09/03/sommet-chine-afrique-pekine-n-est-pas-neocolonialiste-mais-hegemonique\\_5349720\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/09/03/sommet-chine-afrique-pekine-n-est-pas-neocolonialiste-mais-hegemonique_5349720_3212.html)

<sup>19</sup> *Les Commissions nationales portées par « L'élan de Shanghai »*, UNESCO.int, 16 juin 2018 :

[http://www.unesco.org/new/fr/member-states/single-view/news/national\\_commissions\\_of\\_the\\_world\\_to\\_benefit\\_from\\_the\\_elan/](http://www.unesco.org/new/fr/member-states/single-view/news/national_commissions_of_the_world_to_benefit_from_the_elan/)

<sup>20</sup> François Danjou, *L'Afrique, la Chine et l'Europe* Question Chine, 1 août 2018 :

<https://www.questionchine.net/l-afrique-la-chine-et-l-europe>

<sup>21</sup> Barthélémy Courmont, Emmanuel Lincot, *Le consensus de Pékin*. Paris : Monde Chinois Nouvelle Asie, n° 25, juin 2011 ; Barthélémy Courmont, Emmanuel Lincot, *La Chine vue du Sud*, Monde Chinois Nouvelle Asie, n°38-39, juillet 2014.



immersion program which doesn't let any place to improvisation or critic reportages on the regime, but which aims to rally to China the African elites<sup>22</sup>.

Although it was already largely superior to the promises of the G20 in 2016, it is to be expected that the Chinese geopolitical efficiency will improve further thanks to the decision to create a direct aid agency headed by Wang Xiatao, No. 2 of the Reform and Development Commission. Modeled on the American agency US AID, the creation of the Chinese agency inaugurated on April 18<sup>th</sup> in the presence of Yang Jiechi, former ambassador in Washington and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, member of the Political Bureau and Wang Yi, successor at the head of Waijiaobu (Chinese ministry of Foreign Affairs), marks the wanting of Beijing to rationalize a sector until then broken up into dozens of decision-makers and to give its strategy of direct aid to its overall political project. It can be added that this efficacy is also due to a constant professionalization of Chinese diplomacy and its agents both in the mastery of vernacular languages and in their regional expertise<sup>23</sup>. This expertise had to respond to priorities, the one resulting from the collapsing of the Soviet Union, and in China's peripheral regions most particularly. On its western flank, all are Muslims. Chinese province of Xinjiang which borders on a number is itself Muslim.

## THE SECURITY CHALLENGE AND THE STRATEGIC UNCERTAINTY

After Indonesia (260 million of inhabitants), Pakistan (200 million of inhabitants) is the second Muslim country of the world where, since 2015, China wants to establish a "strategic corridor" in order to link grand west regions to the Pakistanis port of Gwadar. It should assure free access to oil resources in the Middle East bypassing the Straits of Malacca controlled by the Americans and their allies, and through which passes to this day 80% of energy transit to East Asia. China has also taken the measure of an important phenomenon: Islam is today largely Asiatic and not Arabic<sup>24</sup>. In its most radical forms and its identity claims as to the one manifested by the Uighurs, Islam may be associated with the Chinese regime to a true security challenge<sup>25</sup>. The large reorganization of armed forces decided in 2016 by Xi Jinping indicates that the immense west zone (40% of the territory) including the provinces of Xinjiang, Tibet, Qinghai, Sichuan, Chongqing, Gansu, Guizhou, and Yunnan became a priority goal. Near to the terrorist hotbed of central Asia and Afghanistan, populated by ethnic minorities basically uncontrollable, this new theater will be in charge of facing internal threats coming from Tibet and Xinjiang, with new military effective gathering more than a tier of Chinese armed forces. The new territorial and structural image of People's Liberation Army (PLA) thus envisaged is part of the project to modernize the Chinese armies, which is due to be completed in 2020<sup>26</sup>. What to

<sup>22</sup> Sébastien Le Belzic, *Le Soft power chinois cajole l'Afrique*, Paris, Le Monde, 14 mars 2016 : [https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2016/03/14/le-soft-power-chinois-cajole-l-afrique\\_4882360\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2016/03/14/le-soft-power-chinois-cajole-l-afrique_4882360_3212.html)

<sup>23</sup> Sabine Mokry, *Chinese Experts Challenge Western Generalists in Diplomacy* The Diplomat, 15 th August 2018: <https://thediplomat.com/2018/08/chinese-experts-challenge-western-generalists-in-diplomacy/>

<sup>24</sup> Marc Gaborieau, Marc, *Un autre islam : Inde, Pakistan, Bangladesh*, Paris, Albin-Michel, 2007

<sup>25</sup> Emmanuel Lincot, *Carnets ouïghours de Chine. Préface de Thierry Zarcone*, Paris, Koutoubia, 2009

<sup>26</sup> Jean-Paul Yacine, *Vaste réorganisation des forces armées*, Question Chine, 3 février 2016 :

say? Even if China is far from wanting to give up the maritime option of its New Roads of Silk project, this one is constrained by a real strategy of containment that refines Americans, Indians, Japanese and Australians. Resurface, in this new configuration of the "Great Game", "Heartland" theories developed more than a century ago by Mackinder, opposed to the "Rimland" one dear to Mahan. To this day, these theories seem complementary in the strategic choices initiated by Beijing, but they are indicative of the tensions and strategic antagonisms that China will face every year more.

For now, China can always count on its strategic partnership with Russia in order to face the threat represented by the USA. But Moscow wants to keep a hand on its square meadow, most particularly in Asia. This explains the creation of the Russian Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), in 2015. The EEU is sometimes associated with a vague revival of the Soviet Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON). The true difficulty for Russians is not having the same financial means as the Chinese. Russia being an economy of rent, is risking in the long term to be dangerously exposed to an asymmetry in its relations with China and so not to be able to resist very long, in territorial depths, with the economic and energy ambitions of China, since the Extreme East-Russian towards the South-West and North-West of the country. India may be considered in the longer term as a true "challenger" by China. A lot of frontier disputes remain between the two countries. Otherwise, Indian growth is already superior to China's. Even if enormous difficulties remain, most particularly in the domain of human development (education, health, access to drinkable water...); India tries to create an alternative to the Chinese project with a priority given to the maritime routes linking Africa to the Pacific Ocean. India is geographically at the center of these exchanges. Sign of the time: the expression "Indo-pacific" is more often used to talk about a space where India pretends to have a historic legitimacy and not only through the "MAUSAM" project (also on cross-cutting railway projects on which it can contribute: BCIM [Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar], INSTC [International North-South Transport Corridor] ...). A strategy of setback begins with the creation of an Indian base in Seychelles, but also in a reconciliation initiated by New Delhi with the Sultanate of Oman and the Gulf monarchies in the West, as well as Singapore and Vietnam to the East. What does it mean? We are entering an era where every state wants to secure further from its frontiers a certain number of interests which, obviously, aren't convergent. This reverse strategy will undoubtedly mean that India and its possible allies (USA, Japan, Australia...) will have to strongly employ themselves, technologically and financially on a very long-term vision, to hope to counteract the Chinese OBOR/BRI projects in and around countries bordering the Indian Ocean (also bordered by the Arabian sea and the Bay of Bengal) which, thus, have already taken a step ahead, giving the word "Initiative of Belt and Road" a meaning fraught with consequences to be expected... Clearly, China has indeed, already largely anticipated this strategy of setback since we can enumerate 104 OBOR projects passed (at the end of 2017), present and future (since 2018) concerning these countries around the Indian Ocean. It represents 28.8% of a total of 361 OBOR projects so far; a breakdown of projects in 10 major countries of the sensitive zone, including 30 in Pakistan (border regions of the countries only), 17 in Indonesia, 13 in Tanzania, 11 in Bangladesh, 10 in Thailand, 9 in Kenya, 8 in Sri Lanka, 3 in Myanmar, 2 in Iran and 1 in India.



The amount of these 104 OBOR projects can be estimated to a bit more than 420 billion dollars, so 21.6% of the total of 1940 billion of dollars rewarding the 361 OBOR projects past, present, and future until now. More precisely, 84 OBOR projects concerning these countries around the Indian Ocean, or 32.8% of a total (ASIA FOCUS # 71- ASIA PROGRAM / May 2018 7) of 256 ongoing or future OBOR projects since 2018, captured up to now. The amount of these 84 OBOR projects for the countries around the Indian Ocean can be estimated at just over \$ 410 billion, or 22.8% of a total of \$ 1800 billion about the 256 OBOR projects ongoing or future, showing thus a very strong predicable acceleration of Chinese OBOR projects from 2018 and in the future (compared to the projects completed at the end of 2017, see below) on this highly sensitive area of the world, in both the number of projects and estimated value. On these 84 OBOR projects in relation with these countries around the Indian Ocean, 22 relate to Pakistan (coastal regions of the country only counted), 15 Indonesia, 11 Tanzania, 10 Bangladesh, 10 Thailand, 7 Kenya, 3 Myanmar, 3 Sri Lanka, 2 Iran, and 1 India. Without taking into account the OBOR projects completed at the end of 2017 in this same region of the Indian Ocean, because we could number 20 OBOR projects or 19% of a total of 105 OBOR projects completed to this date. The amount of these OBOR projects concerning these countries around the Indian Ocean could be estimated to almost \$ 10 billion, or 7.3% of a total of \$ 137 billion about these 105 OBOR projects completed. Of these 20 OBOR projects related to these countries around the Indian Ocean, 8 concerned Pakistan (coastal regions of the country only counted), 5 Sri Lanka, 2 Indonesia, 2 Tanzania, 2 Kenya, and 1 Bangladesh. However, the dependence of some countries on China exacerbates the tensions and thereby undermines all economies.

The example of the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka is an interesting case. The Chinese outbidding caused a crisis obligating the Sri Lankans partners to not honor their debts. A compromise – which was probably searched by the china's part from the very beginning of the negotiations – forced the Sri Lankans to concede the port for a 99 years concession. Numbers of specialists since these theories of Joseph Nye see on this the perfect illustration of what is called the “Sharp Power”; an insidious strategy that Chinese and Russian would have shared, and using a very large spectrum of coercive means with the aim of neutralizing the opponent.

## CONCLUSION

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China has recovered a strong voice and original visibility on the international plan. At the contrary of the Deng Xiaoping years when Chinese diplomats were most often showing a low profile, China no more hesitates to affirm itself high and loud. At what price? It was Russia, with which the cordiality of the exchanges is only pure circumstance; China evolves in an environment which is globally hostile to it. And for good reason: the dictatorial practices of its regime against the Uighur and Hong Kong communities are scaring. They act as an anti-Taiwanese opinion foil, confronted in its choices of

independence de facto. In the same way, the refusal of China to respect the principles of international and maritime rights in the litigation area opposing it to Vietnam and Philippines is creating major obstacles to the instauration of a trust climate. The relative peace and war less and less improbable will sum without a doubt the uncertain climate with which china will have to be confronted in the next months to come... ■

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