

The European Union and China in Security Relations – Already Strategic Partners?

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Abstract

The provision for security policy is a rather new factor in EU-China relations. Since the foreign and security policy of the EU has advanced in recent years, most of the EU policy papers and bilateral EU-China summits place security at the heart of the relationship. Since 2003, the EU conducts a so-called “strategic partnership” with China. China’s erstwhile stiff foreign policy recently experiences incremental change, more international engagement and activity. Its credo of non-interference in sovereign states is not rock-solid any more. This paper analyzes recent changes and developments in EU-China security relations with the question of interest, whether and where China modifies its foreign and security policy towards more international engagement and what that means for EU-China security relations. By using a constructivist-realist approach on analyzing selected cases, where change in China’s security policy appears, skepticism arises about China’s normative motivations, that were supposed by some authors. The paper concludes that China carefully approaches towards multilateralism and international cooperation, but doesn’t take positions of the EU seriously. Changes in China’s foreign policy doctrine might be based stronger on realist than on normative goals.

Keywords: EU, China, Strategic Partnership, Security Politics, Realist-constructivism.



I. Introduction

1. Security politics in EU-China relations

Security politics is a rather new factor in the European Union (EU) relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC). Following EU's progress in its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in recent years, most of the EU policy papers and bilateral EU-China summits "place security at the heart of the relationship."¹ Taking their institutional and political differences into account, the effectiveness of the security partnership is still questionable. And in practice, economy comes first. At the latest EU-China summit in May 2009 in Prag, security issues have clearly been outperformed by the current global economic crises.

Since 2003, the EU conducts a so-called "strategic partnership" with China as well as 27 "sectoral" dialogues.² According to the European Commission, those sector dialogues reflect the comprehensive characteristics of the relations, which "are increasingly mature and realistic" (European Commission 2006: 1). But are the EU and China already strategic partner in security politics, and what do they expect from each other in this field? For Javier Solana, the High Representative of the CFSP, the Iran nuclear issue to avoid nuclear armament was already an example of an "active" strategic partnership between the EU and China.

China's erstwhile stiff foreign policy experienced incremental change and more international engagement and activity. China agrees for multilateral engagement and its credo of non-interference in sovereign states is not rock-solid any more, like the example of Sudan in Africa shows. But still, the strategic partnership in security politics is constricted by a number of factors, like arms deployments to struggling states like Zimbabwe by China, despite an EU arms embargo. Consequently, authors reflect the limitations of the current potential of EU-China security relations, like differences in understandings of multilateralism or multipolarity,³ the thwarting EU-arms embargo on China, different perceptions of threats on behalf the EU and China, as well as institutional limits of the EU foreign policy and misperceptions thereof by China.

This paper analyzes recent developments of EU-China security relations on selected cases with the research question, whether the so-called EU-China strategic partnership already yield fruits in security politics. Finally, the paper analyzes the recently warming cross-Strait developments and the positions of the EU following Taiwan's changed China policy. Methodically, changes are

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1. Marcin Zaborowski, *EU-China Security Relations* (EU Institute for Security Studies, 2008).
 2. See, e.g., the "Current Architecture of EU-China Relations," *European Commission*, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/china/docs/architecture.pdf. China also has "strategic partnerships" in Asia with Japan and India.
 3. Kay Moeller, "Mechanism Building between Asia and Europe," paper presented at the 23rd Taiwan-Europe Conference (Taipei: Institute of International Relations, National Chengchi University, December 19-20, 2006).



analyzed by constructivist and realist assumptions, which are sensitive towards normative foreign policy approaches, but also towards realist motives. The paper concludes that China carefully adopts multilateralism and international cooperation, although on a yet limited scope. In the selected cases, a “strategic partnership” between the EU and China in security politics is still hardly to demonstrate.

2. Analyzing Change: Realist Constructivism and China-EU Security Relations

A combined neorealist-constructivist approach for analyzing certain aspects of International relations was first suggested by Samuel J. Barkin in the *International Studies Review*.⁴ In his article “Realist Constructivism,” Samuel J. Barkin argues that the opposition between realist and constructivist schools of thought in international relations may not be as clear-cut as is commonly supposed. He focuses on the question, how classical realist ideas are compatible with constructivist perceptions about the role of norms and other inter-subjective factors in assembling social and political results. Barkin’s argument to integrate these approaches emphasizes mainly on the tension between normative transformation and the limits imposed by power in international politics. He proposes to focus on “the relationship between normative structures, the carriers of political morality, and the uses of power.”⁵ “The realist constructivism would look at the way in which power structures affect patterns on normative change in international relations and, conversely, the way in which a particular set of norms affect power structures.”⁶

Realist constructivism consists of two core hypotheses: firstly, international politics is the product of social construction; secondly, international politics has by no means transcended power politics. Therefore, the core inquiry of realist constructivism is the different forms of power and their respective effects on the social construction of international politics. Realist constructivism could address issues of change in international relations in a way that neither idealist constructivism (with its ultimate static view of political morality) nor realism can manage. Realist constructivism underlies a wide understanding of power, including soft and hard power, but also cultural factors as an explanation. It is open for cognitive perceptions, as well as material interests. It is also open for the constructivist argument, whereas norms can change over time. The constructivist perspective has ideas and norms as its focus and is open for change in international politics through communication, cooperation and institutionalization. Whereas neo-realism can be seen as skeptical towards cooperation and more statically (“zero-sum games,” multilateralism vs. multipolarity, sovereignty vs. interference), constructivism is better suited in explaining change, more optimistic about institutional learning and in general about cooperation through normative motivations. Neo-realism con-

4. Samuel J. Barkin, “Realist Constructivism,” *International Studies Review*, No. 5 (2003), pp. 325-342.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 338.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 337.



tends that regional security depends on how power is distributed among the major players. The realist/ neorealist approach has its strengths in analyzing the classical power and security politics and bears mainly the aspect of capabilities like military and economic power in its instrument cabinet. Both approaches have their own advantages in analyzing security relations of such different entities like the EU and China.

At foremost, it widens the perspective on EU-China security relations. It acknowledges, that security relations are not only based on arms deployment or direct military threats of one country. The expanded security concept of today encompasses also human trafficking, environmental issues, human rights or the structure of political institutions (“good governance”), based on the rule of law and many more issues, that are indirectly or in the long run important for the security of a Nation and other Nations. For the West and after the cold war, non-interference as such is not a highly appreciated political value any more. Multilateral security concepts are accepted as the best ways to reach security, which may also mean interference in foreign countries by force. Those ideas are not shared by all countries outside the Western world, like China, Russia, or Iran. Consequently, this approach is also open for different understandings or approaches of security politics and underlying concepts of different actors, like the EU and China and their perceptions. Both China’s and EU’s international role become more and more important alongside with enhanced actor qualities to both of them. How is the envisaged “strategic partnership” in security politics between the EU and China tackled by those questions? In introducing the EU’s security strategy and China’s position on security issues first, I then analyze selected cases on security issues, that are especially important for the EU in Africa, and especially important for China in Asia.

II. China’s Place in the Multilateral Security Strategy of the European Union

The December 2003 European Council meeting agreed the European Security Strategy (ESS). It ambitiously defines the EU’s strategic objects on nonproliferation, terrorism, regional conflicts, failed states, organized crime and competition for energy and other natural resources. Javier Solana, the European Union High Representative for the CFSP, places a stronger Europe with other great partners, such as China, as ‘a pillar of the organization of a new world’.⁷ Security relations became – at least rhetorical – a center concern of European engagement towards China.

Three overall conditions can be depicted responsible for augmenting security relations between the EU and China. First, the EU’s Common Foreign

7. Javier Solana, “The EU Security Strategy: Implication for Europe’s Role in a Changing World.” *European Union*, http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/discours/77889.pdf



Security Policy (CFSP) has become more ambitious to fill a regional and global foreign policy and security role. This holds true the more as soon as the Lisbon Treaty finally will get into force. Secondly, the EU perceives China as the rising world power with a “significantly more active and sophisticated [Chinese] foreign policy” (European Commission 2006: 1). The “tyranny of distance” as a picture for the “secondary relationship”⁸ doesn’t fit any more in economic, but also in security relations. Third, and interconnected with the two previous factors, the understanding of security policy has experienced a tremendous change since the end of the cold war and is not limited any more to conflicts between states or proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. France and Germany both call their partnership towards China ‘strategic’ (France since 1997, Germany since 2004). UK signed a strategic partnership with China in 2004, less than one year after the Sino-European strategic partnership was announced. The ‘expanded security concept’ includes a policy of legal protection, of social, material, and cultural but also ecological topics. Great Britain departed from the traditional emphasis on force, power and material interests in its 1998 Strategic Defense Review, as the first power to do so. Germany during the 1990ies took small steps to adjust its foreign security policy to out-of-area operations, and since 2006 explicitly includes economic interests in the so-called *vernetzte Sicherheit* (comprehensive security).

In 2004 at the annual summit, the EU-China Joint Statement on Non-Proliferation and Arms Control was drawn up. The EU acknowledges China’s role in the Six-Party Talks on the North Korea nuclear issue, its increasing commitment to UN peacekeeping and it “welcomes the association of China to the diplomatic efforts initiated by the EU to resolve the nuclear issue in Iran.”⁹ When taking a look on the Joint Statement of the EU-China Summit in Beijing on 28 November 2007 with its 47 common statements, most of the first fifteen statements dealt with security issues. This reflects also China’s rise, which means a major shift in the global political, but also security environment.¹⁰ The first two statements had the common “strategic partnership” as topic, the next three dealt with the one China policy, the EU arms embargo on China, and non-proliferation and disarmament.¹¹ Moreover, in the latest Communication from the Commission, the EU states, that the “EU and China need to work together as they assume more active and responsible international roles, supporting and contributing to a strong and effective multilateral system.”¹² Later the Commission also expresses its wish towards an “effective multilateral system” within the UN, but also states “divergences in values, on

8. Michael Yahuda, “China and Europe: The Significance of a Secondary Relationship,” in Thomas Robinson, David Shambaugh, eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

9. European Council 2006: 7.

10. Frank Umbach, “The Legs of the Triangle – The EU-China Relations,” in Winfried Jung, ed., *The New Strategic Triangle: China, Europe and the United States in a Changing International System* (Beijing, KAS-Schriftenreihe China, No. 76, 2007) pp. 36-45.

11. The 11th summit was cancelled by China in the end of October in 2008.

12. Commission 2006: 2.



which dialogue must continue.”¹³ At the summit in Prag 2009, the two actors agreed, that the bilateral relations also have international implications.

But the security relations and the strategic partnership between the EU and China as such are also characterized by distorting forces. Distorting forces are due to different concepts on the execution of bilateral and international relations. Shall it be allowed to intervene by military force in domestic politics of Nation states by multilateral United Nation forces? Are the situations of Tibet and Taiwan matters for expanded European security concerns or mere domestic Chinese ones? In addition, the EU arms embargo on China is one of the most irritating aspects to distort the strategic partnership. The EU combines the embargo with the human rights situation in China – for sure not very logical, but it acts as the last symbol of the European outrage after the suppression of the Tiananmen protests in 1989. China argues, the arms embargo politically discriminates China and is still in force only because of the opposing influence of the USA, which appears as a misperception. In the EU, only the French and the German governments in the personalities of former French President Jacques Chirac and the former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder wanted to lift the embargo since 2003. Beside them and the tiny island of Malta, no other European state was in favor to lift the embargo. And Schröder also had a strong opposition within his own government and his coalition partner, the Green Party, which is a strong human rights agent. Moreover, as a Chancellor he had the smallest majority in the German Parliament in its history. It appears as probable, that Schröder and Chirac wanted to show China their good will to have more success on their large business trips to China and acted only tactically. The German opposition leader and today’s Chancellor Angela Merkel never considered lifting the arms embargo, because of lack of progress in the human rights situation in China. The Anti-Secession Law of China in 2005, that legitimized a Chinese war strike against Taiwan as soon as Taiwan declares its independence then choked any attempts in the EU to lift the embargo. At the latest EU-China summit in May 2009 in Prag, the arms embargo was no topic in the discussions between the two actors.

But also China itself is a matter of global security concern in ecological, cultural and human rights issues for the EU. In previous years, the EU urged China to include “greater transparency in equipment development and acquisition.”¹⁴ But the Council also welcomed ongoing and increasingly close cooperation and coordination with China on non-proliferation, on the basis of the EU-China Joint Declaration on nonproliferation and arms control agreed at the 2004 EU-China summit. An analyses of the essence of the strategic partnership between EU and China therefore must take arms proliferation into account.

Economically, the growing wealth gap, social, gender and regional imbalances as well as the stress on healthcare and educational systems challenges the stability of China. Politically, and hence much more controversial for

13. Commission 2006: 4.

14. EU Council 2006: 7. China is under suspicion to have a much greater budget for military equipment that is officially announced.



China is the Commission's paper claim, that "a more independent judiciary, a stronger civil society, a free press will ultimately encourage stability, providing necessary checks and balances."¹⁵ Democratic institution-building and its support are also aspects of European strategic security goals. Since the 2007 "Freedom House Survey" observed a decline in a fifth of the world's countries in liberty and self-government, especially in South Asia,¹⁶ the "democratic rollback"¹⁷ might become a factor that turns supporting democracies and democratic institutions still more important for the EU in the future.

The most important topics at the summit in May 2009 were the global economic and financial crises, trade and investment issues as well as climate change and energy security. But also regional Asian security issues have been discussed, where an exchange of views took place over the Korean Peninsula, Iran, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Pakistan.¹⁸ Already the agenda of the EU-China summit in 2007 included a "broad range of bilateral, regional and international issues including Burma/Myanmar, the Korean peninsula, Africa, Iran, the Middle East, Kosovo, and climate change and energy."¹⁹

Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Pakistan are considered as countries of conflict by the EU where China yields considerable influence.²⁰ In the case of Burma or Myanmar, China is even considered as a hindrance to set the country and its people free of the military junta. A European Commission official for external relations said, "as long as China holds its protective hand over Myanmar (Burma) nothing will be done."²¹ Already the Commission paper of 2006 rejected China's traditional "foreign policy as one of strict non-interference, since China "takes on a more active and assertive international role, [so non-interference] ... becomes increasingly untenable."²² The paper accents this "common interest in strong multilateralism, peace and security should also reflect on closer co-operation and more structured dialogue on the Middle East, Africa and East Asia, and on cross-cutting challenges such as non-proliferation."²³

In sum, the EU perceives China both as a challenge and a solution for some of its own policies and goals. Engagement, bilateral and multilateral partnerships are held as convenient strategies for the EU-China relations. Nevertheless, the EU has not yet defined a security policy "vis-à-vis China nor has

15. Commission 2006: 3.

16. Arch Puddington, "The 2007 Freedom House Survey: Is The Tide Turning?" *Journal of Democracy* (2007), pp. 61-73.

17. Larry Diamond, "The Democratic Rollback. The Resurgence of the Predatory State," *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2008), pp. 36-48.

18. <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=PRES/09/147&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

19. http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/china/summit_1107/index.htm

20. http://ec.europa.eu/news/external_relations/090520_en.htm

21. *EU Observer*, <http://euobserver.com/884/28135>.

22. Commission 2006: 3.

23. Commission 2006: 11.



it changed the focus of its trade policy”²⁴. The declarations between the EU and China on security issues appear somehow as lofty, although they have concrete issues and countries in scope.

III. China’s Perspective on EU’s Multilateral Security Engagement

In 2003, Brussels China policy culminated in the first PRC policy paper towards the EU, which can be seen as an almost direct response to the topics mentioned in previous EU papers, although the introductions of the security concepts of the EU and China have quite different openings. While the EU perceives the new challenges primarily as threats, China considers the current international security environment as an opportunity to “discard the old way of thinking and replace it with new concepts and means to seek and safeguard security”²⁵. “China will continue to pursue its independent foreign policy of peace and work closely with other countries for the establishment of a new international political and economic order that is fair and equitable, and based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence,” (China’s EU Policy Paper 2003). Furthermore, “the trend towards world multipolarity and economic globalization is developing amid twists and turns. China will, as always, respect diversity in the world and promote democracy in international relations in the interest of world peace and common development.”

The policy paper, the first on China-EU relations ever, states, that the EU is a major force in the world. The relationship was ‘now better than at any time in history’. The paper also states that there are no fundamental differences between the EU and China. But also “given differences in historical background, cultural heritage, political system and economic development level, it is natural that the two sides have different views or even disagree on some issues”. The paper states both stand for “democracy in international relations” and an enhanced role for the UN. Nevertheless, there was no mention of democracy being extended to ‘domestic relations’. China’s attitude toward multilateral regimes remains ambivalent. On the one hand, China has actively participated in international organizations. In some of these, China even owns a very important status, such as United Nations (UN). On the other hand, however, China still views international regimes, especially international security institutions, with suspicion. Beside Taiwan and the one China doctrine, sovereignty questions of territorial and maritime nature, international terrorism, religious fundamentalism and ethnical separatism, Liu Jingqin described the “China threat” (as foreign countries may perceive China’s rise) as the fourth main

24. “Realism in EU-China Relations,” *The Asia Pacific Times*, <http://en.dgap.org/midcom-serveattachmentguid-1dc7e208a09d52e7e2011dc910c9fccc0222f822f8/07-10-01--es-apt.pdf>.

25. Ministry of Foreign Affairs: China’s Position Paper on the New Security Concept, 31 July 2002.



factor of security challenges of China.²⁶

China's international main concept of politics is still based on a traditional view of sovereignty and its basic value of "noninterference".²⁷ But multilateralism is not neglected by China, especially when using it to criticize the unilateralism of the USA. So a Chinese stance for multilateralism with the UN became audible especially in the aftermath of the US intervention in Iraq. Qian Qichen, China's foreign minister, said in 2004, that the "United Nations, as the core of the collective security mechanism and the best venue for multilateral interchanges, should continue to play its important role in international affairs. Facts have proved that no major international issues can be tackled by just one or two countries or a group of countries laying down the law." In stressing the primacy of the UN Security Council, China emphasizes a body in which it has a veto as a Permanent Member and is thus able to maintain its sovereignty. As Scott puts it: "As a rising great power, China may indeed welcome multilateral constraints on the USA, but is less ready to accept them in terms of its own freedom of action."²⁸

In recent years, China's security policy has changed towards more multilateral engagement. In 2001, China has sent small peace-keeping forces to Bosnia and Kosovo (15 police in 2001 and twelve police in 2004 respectively).²⁹ Even in Middle East, China practices an, albeit very cautiously, diplomacy to ameliorate the Arab-Israeli conflict. China decided to dispatch a strong peacekeeping contingent to Lebanon. China is already the second-largest supplier of personnel to UN missions among the permanent members of the Security Council. In Africa, e.g., China contributes to seven of the UN's nine missions on the continent. China favors pragmatic solutions and approaches in its multilateral attempts, which are different to the European experiences. China might be less focused on institutional approaches, but interest-based approaches with variable norms, depending on the issue that is currently tackled in a specific forum. The EU certainly welcomes China's participation in UN peace-keeping, which is a step away from the insistence on non-interference in the affairs of third countries.

According to Sandschneider, the much-touted strategic partnership with China has remained a paper tiger so far and suffers from the innate weakness

26. Liu Jingqin, "Die Chinesisch-Europäische Zusammenarbeit verstärken, den Weltfrieden sichern," VI. Chinesisch-Deutscher Sicherheitsdialog: Sicherheitspolitik Chinas und der EU – Vergleich und Kooperationsperspektiven (Peking, 14.-15. Mai 2007).

27. Deputy Foreign Minister Zhai Jun: "We never impose on other countries our values ... and we do not accept other countries imposing their values on us." See: *Newsweek*, February 19, 2007, p. 25.

28. David Scott, "The EU-China 'Strategic Dialogue': Pathways in the International System," in David Kerr, Liu Fei, eds., *The International Politics of EU-China Relations* (London: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 34.

29. But already in 1988, China joined the UN Special Committee on Peace-Keeping Operations and sent five military observers to the UN Truce Organization in 1990.



[...] China sees multilateral agreements as a means to an end.”³⁰ China also uses the term multilateralism in EU-China talks, but not as frequent as the EU, whereas the EU also uses the term multipolarism (especially French politicians), but not as frequent as China. Wacker and Wesner (2007) reveal the dissatisfactions about China’s perception on the EU and its stricter policies towards China. China’s emphasis on the principle of non-interference, e.g. in its policies towards African despots, is quite contrary to the European approach that “fosters early, rapid, and when necessary, robust intervention”.³¹

Both concepts and priorities also signify stark differences, although both have a certain and special kind of an expanded security concept. The discovery of multilateralism by China gives way for speculation. To find hints about the potential of the strategic partnership on security relations, current conflicts in Africa and Asia might give insight about a potential change of China’s security policy and cooperation with the EU. Is there a normative change in China’s foreign security politics towards more interference in international relations? What does that mean for the so-called strategic partnership? Do the concepts have some positive effects on current conflicts, where the EU and China are more or less stakeholders? The next sections analyse selected cases, that are important or even in the center of European or Chinese security goals in Africa and East Asia.

IV. Selected cases and empirical analyses

1. China-EU Security Relations in Africa: Sudan and Zimbabwe

Notwithstanding the growing importance of bilateral relations and regular warm statements, the EU recognized China’s Africa policy quite clear as a risk for EU’s new Africa approach. In October 2008, the European Commission has issued a new communication, which aims to conduct a trilateral dialogue between China, the EU and Africa.³² The European Parliament accuses China to sell weapons to conflict zones in Africa despite United Nations embargos, like to Sudan, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of Kongo.³³ The EU criticized Beijing because of its close relations with the government of Sudan, despite a genocide taking place in Darfur. At the EU-China summit in 2006 the EU reaffirmed its attachment to the principles of “good governance” and human rights in Africa. But China emphasized the five principles of peaceful co-existence, including the principle of non interference in internal affairs, as well as the mutual respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

30. <http://en.dgap.org/midcom-serveattachmentguid-1dc7e208a09d52e7e2011dc910c9fccc0222f822f8/07-10-01--es-apt.pdf>

31. European Council, A Secure Europe in A Better World, 11.

32. http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/COMM_PDF_COM_2008_0654_F_COMMUNICATION_de.pdf

33. <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=12103>.



The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is seen by the EU as potentially “the greatest threat”³⁴ to Europe’s security. In 2004, Beijing and Brussels signed a joint-declaration on non-proliferation and arms control and an agreement on joint research for the peaceful use of nuclear energy at the EU-China summit in The Hague. But in this respect, China is critically perceived by the EU, since it assisted Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program and missile technology exports to Iran. Those missile-related technology sales also motivated the USA to veto China’s entry into the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in 2004. Beijing has not signed the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, which has been signed by ca. 90 countries.

a. Sudan

Since 2005 a UN- embargo on Sudan is in place, where since begin of the civil war more than 300 000 people were killed and over 2, 2 million people are or have been on escape. China buys two third of Sudanese oil, signifying the important economic relations between both countries. When criticized by other Nations of its close relations to Sudan, China argues being a latecomer in the run on raw materials, compared to the USA and other Nations. In 2008, the EU (that has been reluctant for many years to intervene in Sudan) sent French-dominated troops to Sudan. The European Union Force (EUFOR) mandate was to protect refugees from the Sudanese region of Darfur and the Central African Republic, as well as internally displaced people.³⁵ In January 2009, the UN adopted a resolution to take over the deployment of United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) from EUFOR on 15 March 2009. EUFOR Chad/RCA has been the largest, most multinational EU operation in Africa to-date, involving 3,700 troops and 23 EU Member States.³⁶

But also China has adjusted its policy towards Sudan, where China has long insisted that the massacres in Dafur where an internal matter. In April 2006, China has abstained from voting on a UN Security Council measure imposing targeted sanctions on four Sudanese government officials. But a few months later, the risks to Chinese economic interests on the ground have changed. While the conflict escalated, it spread across the border into Chad, in whose oil sector Beijing had just planned to invest (Kleine-Ahlbrandt, Small 2008). China’s fear of instability there led to the change of China’s non-interference position, and in September 2006, China urged the Sudanese government to accept a plan by the UN to deploy a hybrid UN-Africa Union peacekeeping force of 20, 000 troops. With the latest Sudan deployment in June 2008, China’s UN peacekeepers exceed 10, 000 soldiers all in all. At the request of the UN Secretary Ban Ki-Moon, China decided to participate in a

34. European Council, *Secure Europe in a Better World*, 3.

35. “Sudan Troops Clash with EU Force,” *BBC News*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7276288.stm>.

36. *The European Council*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=1366&lang=de>.



hybrid force of the United Nations and the African Union. They repaired bridges, 7500 kilometres of roads and treated nearly 50, 000 patients. Wei Yanwei, vice director of the Peace-Keeping Affairs Office of the Ministry of Nation Defense, said “Chinese peacekeepers not only fulfill their obligations for peacekeeping missions, but also convey Chinese people’s friendship and love of peace to the local people and destination countries.”³⁷ Also civil concerns might contribute to China’s changed attitude. Due to the intensive business contacts in the oil industry, thousands of Chinese workers live in Sudan. In October 2008, five of them were killed by Sudanese rebels.³⁸

But China follows its interest also in opposing UN goals. According to a report of the radio broadcast BBC, China broke the UN-Weapon embargo on Sudan.³⁹ BBC said, in Southern Sudan, China educates Pilots on flying Chinese fighters. Also anti aircraft missiles of Chinese provenience were found by rebels in Sudan. And in March 2009, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir for war crimes in Darfur, which is also supported by the EU. It indicted Bashir on seven counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, torture and rape. With respect to genocide, the three-judge panel said it had insufficient proofs. But China expressed its regretfulness and worry over the arrest warrant for Bashir. The foreign ministry spokesman Qin Gang, said China was opposed to any action that could interfere with the peaceful situation in Darfur and Sudan, stating, that stability is the foremost goal in Sudan.

One might argue, the most important goal for China in Sudan is the stability of the government. Not only the EU, but also African politicians, especially those of democratic countries like South Africa, criticized China for its uncritical attitude toward Sudan in the civil war. South Africa’s president Thabo Mbeki called China a new ‘colonizer’, and some African governments have finally joined the West in calling for action on Dafur. Thereupon, China didn’t abstain on a vote at the U.N. on a measure that called for a new U.N. peacekeeping force in Darfur. However, in recent years, China’s politics toward Sudan has shown some changes, as this section shows, towards more multilateral engagement.

b. Zimbabwe

Another case in Africa for potential EU-China multilateral security cooperation (or conflict) is Zimbabwe. Non-proliferation of weapons to Zimbabwe is a central security concern of the EU in Southern Africa. Since 2002, the EU has already an arms embargo against Zimbabwe as a part of sanctions

37. See: *China Daily*, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2008-06/30/content_6807441.htm.

38. The Telegraph, “China calls for ICC Case against Sudan President Omar al-Bashir to be dropped,” http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandin_dianocean/sudan/4940876/China-calls-for-ICC-case-against-Sudan-president-Omar-al-Bashir-to-be-dropped.html.

39. *Der Spiegel*, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,565623,00.html>.



against Robert Mugabe. The embargo bars the 27 EU states from supplying arms or equipment for military operations. In April 2008, the case of the Chinese arms ship *An Yue Jiang* destined for Zimbabwe provided concern in European politics, media and in African neighbor countries of Zimbabwe as well.⁴⁰ The ship was reportedly carrying three million rounds of ammunition, 1,500 rocket-propelled grenades and 2500 mortar rounds.⁴¹ China argued, Zimbabwe is one of China's main trade partners and allies, and there was no international arms embargo on China, so neglecting any meaning of the EU arms embargo on Zimbabwe. In Europe, especially the British Premier Gordon Brown actively advocated a Chinese embargo, making China directly responsible for potential future bloodshed in Zimbabwe.⁴² Finally, the Chinese arms ship returned to China. But it seems not because of European pressure or because of the in anyway diffuse or rather weak protests of African neighbor governments, but because of the International Transport Workers Federation, that asked its members across Africa not to help unload *An Yue Jiang*.⁴³

Obviously, the agreed dialogue on export control of weapons at the EU-China summit in 2007⁴⁴ didn't bear any fruits in these two cases. When making a conclusion upon the cases of Sudan and Zimbabwe, China conducts a flexible approach between "non-interference" and "internationalism," which is issue-oriented, from case to case, with China ignoring international institutions somehow. Whereas China participates in a UN mission in Sudan, it delivers weapons to the Sudanese government troops at the same time. China doesn't pay attention to weapon embargoes of the EU or even the UN, like the Zimbabwe case shows. When multilateralism is in line with realist goals, then China is also ready to act multilaterally. Kleine-Ahlbrandt and Small argue, that for China noninterference becomes "increasingly unhelpful, as it learns the perils of tacitly entrusting its business interests to repressive governments" (Kleine Ahlbrandt, Small 2008: 39) and the *Newsweek* argued: "As an increasingly powerful China involves itself more and more with the complex global marketplace and political scene, the ground is shifting under its feet,

40. See: "Zimbabwe Arms Shipment returns to China," *Guardian*, April 24, 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/apr/24/zimbabwe.china?gusrc=rss&feed=networkfront>.

41. BBC News: China may recall Zimbabwe weapons. China already sold military hardware to Zimbabwe of around US\$ 200 million in recent years, including 12 fighter jets.

42. *Guardian*, 24 April 2008: "If violence flares further in Zimbabwe, those supplying the weapons will be left with blood on their hands."

43. "Dockers refuse to unload China arms shipment for Zimbabwe," *TimesOnline*, 18 April 18, 2008. Several African civil organizations planned to organize protest against the upload of the ship. Anxious about its blossoming relations with Africa and about anti-China protests, China finally recalled the ship home, when South Africa and other countries followed that example.

44. <http://www.google.de/search?hl=de&q=Docjers+refuse+to+unload+china+arms&meta=>.

45. Council of the European Union: 10th China-EU Summit. Beijing, 28 November 2007. Joint Statement, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-12/03/content_7194426.htm.



and China's dedication to absolute sovereignty may be starting to evolve.⁴⁵ Those arguments might be exaggerated. To put in realist sense: The Chinese engagement in Sudan can dialectically also be interpreted as an interference to uphold non-interference in a failed state, since China, last but not least, augments its influence in Sudanese political affairs also to avoid the arrest of the president of Sudan by the penalty order of the ICC.

2. China-EU security relations in Asia: the cases of North Korea, Tibet and Taiwan

China has strong trade relations with dictatorships like Myanmar and North Korea, and crosses over the embargos imposed by the United Nations or other countries. Moreover, when it comes to countries on China's periphery, such as North Korea, Myanmar, or the Central Asian states, the prospects of regime change might worry Beijing about being encircled by new democracies. In the South China Sea, China was able to encapsulate the many sovereignty conflicts with other countries and seems to work seriously on its peaceful rise (or development, as China says in the meantime). Most of China's 29 neighbor states are more or less well functioning democracies, and China conducts peaceful relations and careful multilateral engagement. East Asia is also of outstanding economic importance for Europe.⁴⁶ In that vibrant region, China turns into the centre of EU's thinking on security issues.⁴⁷ Although, as Scott argued, the South China Sea issue has yet been ignored by the EU (Scott 2007).⁴⁸

For Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the EU Commissioner for External Relations, '[s]ecurity in the Far East is a topic of direct concern to European interests. It is part of the overall global responsibility for security and stability that lies at the heart of the EU's role in foreign policy.'⁴⁹ Her most important topics in a speech before the European Parliament were (1) how to respond to the rise of China; (2) ensuring stability on the Korean peninsula; (3) a peaceful resolution of tensions between China and Taiwan. The third point is quite unusual, because normally the EU avoids political discussions surrounding Taiwan.

46. *Newsweek*, February 19, 2007, p. 25.

47. Even between Taiwan and Japan arose conflicts over some islands in the Pacific (in Mai 2008). In 2008, a conflict between Cambodia and Thailand over a several football-fields small territory led to some minor exchange of unseeded missiles.

48. Council of the European Union 2006: Press Release. External Relations. 16291/06. The EU-China strategic partnership; Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament (2006): EU-China: Closer partners, growing responsibilities.

49. These conflicts are left to the USA, which might find the idea of a SEATO (South East Asian Treaty Organization) as attractive to counter an economic overweight of China in a soon to be established free trade area between ASEAN and China. Differently to the US-China relations, there are no geopolitical divergences between the EU and China in the South China sea.

50. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, "Security in the Far East," <http://europa.eu/rapid/press-ReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/421&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.



The case of North Korea is the most severe security threat in East Asia at the moment. For China, Tibet and Taiwan are central, domestic issues, where no foreign state is allowed to interfere. Both the Tibet and Taiwan issues are covered by the one China principle, that is accepted also by the EU. But for the EU, the cases of Tibet and Taiwan are also regular topics from a security perspective in a wider scope (peace, human rights, civil rights, democracy). These three hot spots get explored in the following section.

a. North Korea

Since August 2003, the multilateral Six-Party Talks with North and South Korea, USA, Russia, China and Japan, have convened in Beijing for several meetings to negotiate curbing the nuclear program of North Korea. China is North Korea's most long-standing ally and main trading partner. One the one site, China fears a rush of refugees across its border and has supported North Korea with energy and food assistance. But China is also resistant to impose UN resolutions and sanctions against North Korea, which serves as a buffer zone between China and U.S. military troops in South Korea. In September 2005, the summits resulted in an agreement in which Pyongyang agreed to give up its quest to become a nuclear power. But North Korea indeed became a nuclear power when it conducted an underground test in October 2006. China quickly condemned the test – to the relief of the world, and China infringed on Korea's sovereignty. China took the lead, within the UN in drafting a sanctions resolution against Pyongyang. Referring to the six-party talks on the nuclear issue of North Korea held in Beijing in autumn of 2008, Solana said he warmly welcomes the Chinese leadership in seeking a resolution to the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue and appreciates the “dedication of the Chinese negotiators.” The EU continues to “monitor the situation closely” and to provide “all possible support for this process.”⁵⁰ The EU doesn't play an active role in the talks, but obviously recognizes the forefront position of China. But on 25 May 2009, the second North Korean nuclear test came along with the underground detonation of a nuclear device. In addition, Pyongyang also conducted several missile tests. Afterwards, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1874 to condemn the test and tightening sanctions on the country. The Foreign Ministry of China released a statement that condemned in comparatively harsh words the nuclear test.⁵¹ The statement also strongly demanded that North Korea “return to the tracks of the six-party talks”.

b. Tibet

While the EU welcomes China's fight on terrorism, it is very well aware that China may use it as an excuse to bash human rights in its separatist regions, like Tibet and Xinjiang in China's North West. Therefore, the EU urges

51. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-03/16/content_315308.htm.

52. “The DPRK ignored universal opposition of the international community and once more conducted the nuclear test. The Chinese government is resolutely opposed to it,” http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-05/25/content_11433096.htm (accessed 06/26/2009).



China to obey to international human rights law, refugee law and humanitarian law. But for China, the Tibet issue has to be held strictly out of any negotiations between the EU and China, since it is an internal issue. But for the EU, human rights in Tibet became an important topic in 2008 and were also discussed at the EU-China summit in May 2009. In March 2008, the harsh reactions of Chinese authorities on Tibetan unrest led to great concern in Europe. The EU called for an end of the violence and asked for free access of press to Tibet. China requested an apology of European governments because of civil protests.⁵² The events in Tibet in March 2008 with finally around 6000 arrested Tibetans (according to press statements) were condemned by the EU and its 27 ministers of Foreign affairs.⁵³ Shortly before the Olympic Games began and under the pressure from Europe and the USA, China restarted talks with the Dalai Lama, without making any compromises.⁵⁴ On November 26th, the Chinese cancellation of the 11th EU-China Summit, scheduled for 1 December in Lyon, provided the drum beat of the year in the turbulent EU-China relations in 2008.⁵⁵ First time ever since the institutionalisation of the EU-China summits one side cancelled the meeting. The decision was motivated by the fact that the French President Sarkozy, in the second half of 2008 also President of the EU Council, announced to meet the Dalai Lama on 6th December in Poland during a private meeting occasionally to the 25th year of Lech Walensa to be given the Peace Nobel Prize. China cancelled the summit, because France “did not accept the conditions for the summit,” as Beijing officials stated.⁵⁶ The European Council described the Cancellation as “spectacular” and as an unprecedented step in the relations. John Fox, former ambassador of Britain in China and member of the Think Tank European Council on Foreign Affairs, said that the cancellation of the summit by China puts the

53. See the “Statement by State Secretary Janez Lenarčič on behalf of the EU Council on the Situation in Tibet at the Extraordinary Plenary Session of the European Parliament” from 03/26/2008: “The Chinese side requested an apology for the numerous protests in Europe and compensation for any possible damages sustained to Chinese Embassies.” http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/Speeches_Interviews/March/0326SVEZ_EP_Tibet.html (accessed 10/26/2008).

54. See http://diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/article_imprim.php3?id_article=10951 (accessed 02/20/2009): “With the approach of the Olympic Games, which must be a great show of fraternity, France calls the attention of the Chinese authorities to the importance of respecting human rights.”

55. <http://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/ausland/asien-und-ozeanien/China-sagt-Gipfel-mit-de-r-EU-ab/story/15630520> (accessed 02/20/2009).

56. http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/article_imprim.php3?id_article=12246 (accessed 02/20/2009) “The European Union, which had set ambitious aims for the 11th EU-China Summit takes note of and is disappointed at China’s decision. The European Union intends to continue promoting the relationship of strategic partnership that it enjoys with China, particularly at a time when the global economic and financial situation calls for extremely close cooperation between Europe and China.”

57. See report in the German daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ): <http://www.faz.net/s/RubDDBDABB9457A437BAA85A49C26FB23A0/Doc~E8F7FD3B038944A998C22710224F2C713~ATpl~Ecommon~Scontent.html>.



strategic partnership in question.⁵⁷

In the case of Tibet, the idea of non-interference remains paramount. This is not new or surprising. But it is interesting to note, that China appears as still more sensitive or assertive towards partners on its own sovereignty issues, while in other regions or situations, China's policy might experience an incremental change. Here, already a very small incident led to severe discord between the EU and China. China modifies its stance on non-interference somehow in distant places of the world, like in Africa or in the special North Korean issue. These modifications may follow only to a lesser extent a changed idea about non-interference, but might in fact be consistent to a realist adaptation of a new international environment and a modified Realpolitik.

c. Cross-Strait relations

With respect to cross-Strait relations, a more engaged role of the EU might be of no interest by China, although the European Union sees itself as an agent for democracy and human rights in international affairs. Taiwan therefore, from a normative perspective, should appear on European radar screen. With regard of the EU relations towards China and Taiwan are also regularly analyzed (Schucher 2007; Su 2006; Tang 2006; Coppieters 2006; Schubert 2003; Clark 2003; Cabestan, Scott 2007). Most authors conclude that there is more potential for the EU for getting engaged in cross-Strait relations.

With the new President Ma Ying-jeou, since May 2008 after a landslide victory in office, Taiwan itself opened a window for more European engagement, which can lead to "soft" pressure on China to accept more "international space" for Taiwan, meaning Taiwan's participation in organisations, where statehood is not conditional. The EU has criticized Beijing in 2005 for the Anti-Secession Law (that legitimizes a war strike against Taiwan in case of an independence declaration), and Taipei for the suspension of the National Unification Council and Guidelines in 2006.⁵⁸ But China's EU policy paper of 2003 demands the following with respect to the one China policy (China's EU policy paper 2003).

- ◆ Prohibit any visit by any Taiwan political figures to the EU or its member countries under whatever name or pretext; not to engage in any contact or exchange of an official or governmental nature with Taiwan authorities.
- ◆ Not to support Taiwan's accession to or participation in any international organization whose membership requires statehood. Taiwan's entry into the WTO in the name of "separate customs territory of Taiwan, 'Penghu, Jinmen, Mazu'" (or Chinese Taipei for short) does not

58. <http://www.euractiv.com/de/assenpolitik/peking-eu-china-gipfel-ab-brussel-besturt/article-177556> (accessed 02/20/2009).

59. Christopher Holtby, "The Roles and Responsibilities of the EU," in David Kerr, Liu Fei, eds., *The International Politics of EU-China Relations* (London: Oxford University Press, 2007).



mean any change in Taiwan's status as part of China. EU exchanges with Taiwan must be strictly unofficial and non-governmental.

- ♦ Not to sell to Taiwan any weapon, equipment, goods, materials or technology that can be used for military purposes.

At the beginning of the century, Taiwan was portrayed as “the missing link” in EU multilateral and bilateral policies (Neves, Bridges 2000: 270). The USA acts for three decades as the security guarantor of the status-quo in China-Taiwan relations due to the Taiwan Relations Act.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the Taiwan Relations Act is constantly under pressure, since the USA also acknowledges the one China principle towards the People’s Republic of China. Since the “Joint Communiqué of the PRC and the USA” from August 1982, the USA also assured China to „gradually...reduce its sale of arms to Taiwan, leading, over a period of time, to a final resolution”⁶⁰.

In 2003 the EU stated on its official homepage: “The EU recognizes Taiwan as a separate customs territory, not as a sovereign state” Nevertheless, there has been an incremental change in favor of Taiwan on EU’s site. The EU no longer speaks of Taiwan as a mere separate customs territory, which is no sovereign state, but highlights: “However, it has solid relations with Taiwan in non-political areas, such as economic relations, science, research, education and culture.”

In the 2006 Commission paper on China the paper outlines its policies: “opposition to any measure which would amount to a unilateral change of the status quo” and “strong opposition to the use of force”.⁶¹ The EU encourages “pragmatic solutions and confidence building measures, support for dialogue between all parties; and, continuing strong economic and trade links with Taiwan”.⁶²

In 2007, like in previous releases, the EU council confirms its one China policy.

“The Council remains committed to its One China policy. The Council is convinced that stability across the Taiwan Straits is integral to the stability and prosperity of East Asia and the wider international community. The Council welcomes initiatives by both sides aimed at

60. With the unique provision of the Taiwan Relations Act, which has the status of national law in USA, the US committed itself to “provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character, and to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan”. Taiwan Relations Act, Public Law 96-8 96th Congress. See Tilman Aretz, *The Greater China Factbook* (Taipei: Taiwan Elite Press, 2007), pp. 561-562.

61. Joint Communiqué of PRC and the USA, see: *Ibid.*, p. 566.

62. There is actually no reason, to differentiate in the EU’s opposition between a unilaterally change (that is, Taiwan’s declaration of independence), and the use of force (by China to unify Taiwan with the mainland), since it is clear for everyone, that an independence declaration would be equivalent to a Chinese war strike.

63. Commission 2006: 11.



promoting dialogue, practical cooperation and increased confidence building, including agreement on direct cross-strait flights and reductions in barriers to trade, investment and people-to-people contacts. The Council encourages both sides to continue with such steps, to avoid provocation, and to take all possible measures to resolve differences peacefully through negotiations between all stakeholders concerned. The Council encourages both sides to jointly pursue pragmatic solutions related to expert participation in technical work in specialized multilateral fora.”⁶³

The EU is not indifferent towards Taiwan, and is interested in being involved in the issue, shown also in the rising statements of the EU (Istemic 2007). In 2008, the cross-Strait relations are a vivid aspect of EU press releases on Asia. Since the election in Taiwan on March 22 2008, the Presidency on behalf of the European Union issued no less than four press declarations of support for the restart of cross-straits dialogue.⁶⁴ The first two EU statements comment the elections (22 March) and the inauguration of Taiwan’s new President Ma and

“believes that the establishment of a new administration in Taiwan provides a unique opportunity for the two sides to make further progress in their practical relations...with the benefit to the people on both sides of the Strait and would enhance regional peace and stability”.

The third statement (issued June 13 2008) dealt with the re-establishment of the dialogue between the authorized non-governmental organizations engaged in talks on issues related to exchanges across the Taiwan Strait.⁶⁵ Again, the EU “welcomes the efforts undertaken by both sides in improving cross-strait relations, especially agreements on air transport and tourism”. In this statement, the EU highlights Taiwans authorities, that

“have adopted a new approach, in promoting the ‘meaningful participation’ of Taiwan in international activities. It reiterates its support to Taiwan’s participation in specialized multilateral fora, especially where Taiwan’s participation is important to the EU and global interests, ...”

This extra praise may be seen in connection for Taiwan’s try to participate ‘meaningful’ in UN organizations, which was shattered by China a few days before. The European Parliament, but also other national parliaments in European national states, support the new Taiwanese approach, especially within

⁶⁴. European Council 2006: 9.

⁶⁵. The Press Declarations on Cross Strait Relations between 22 March 2008 and 19 September 2008 can be found on <http://www.deltwn.ec.europa.eu/print.php?sid=91> (accessed 17.10.2008).

⁶⁶. Probably, the EU forgot to mention the one China mantra in that statement, but this has been busily caught up in the fourth and latest statement (19 September 2008), where at first the EU “reiterates its policy of One China.”



the “parliamentary friends of Taiwan” - groups.⁶⁶ A German parliamentary visiting group urges for a common European position: „The EU needs a common policy to deal with cross-strait issues and that is the goal we are working on“.⁶⁷

When Taiwanese interests are identical with those in Europe and the USA, pressure upon China might rise; also with respect to one of the most successful democracies in the whole of Asia. But still, China targets its rocket arsenal against Taiwan. Taiwan. And there are no (strong) European statements to remove them.

The support for Taiwan still remains rhetorical, but there are signs that it may rise in the future, not least because of the democratic success of Taiwan.

V. Conclusion: An Incomplete Strategic Partnership

Official EU statements affirm a changing Chinese foreign and security policy to open a window for the EU and China to cooperate bilaterally and multilaterally on common goals and effective multilateralism, which is the foreign policy mantra of the EU. Indeed, China’s recent multilateral engagement is quite impressive: it deployed large peace-keeping contingents for UN missions, is engaged in the Iran nuclear case and an indispensable actor in the Six party talks on North Korea. The EU and China already work close together in many fields of mutual interest in common or multilateral and regional institutions.

But does a more multilateral engaged foreign policy necessarily mean a normative change towards more multilateralism and lesser emphasis on classic foreign policy principles? From constructivist perspective, China’s foreign policy might indeed take less emphasis on non-interference and a stronger stance on multilateralism and internationalism. But also neorealist analyses in each of the selected case studies affirm strong rational arguments for a changed Chinese behavior. In Sudan, China’s first goal might be supporting the current government, and UN peacekeeping forces contribute to its stability. In Zimbabwe, China didn’t pay attention to the EU weapons embargo and critics. Finally it seems that not the British premier Gordon Brown, but a trade union was able to avoid a large armament supply.

In North Korea, China keeps aware of any regime change aspirations. North Korea, refugee streams might come into China, destabilizing the China-North Korea border. And it is in the rational self-interest of China, not to have another nuclear power and neighbor in its direct vicinity, after India and Pakistan. From neorealist lenses, the cases of Tibet and Taiwan are still

67. Vgl. China Post vom 11.09.2008: *3 more European lawmakers support Taiwan’s U.N. bid.*

68. “German Parliamentarians Encouraged by ‘Mild’ Bid,” *China Post*, May 9, 2008.



very clear – interference is absolutely discharged by China. Very sensitive, China reacted even on symbolic meetings of European politicians with the Tibetan spiritual leader. In 2008, China was not ready to compromise in any aspect with the Dalai Lama.

The cross-Strait situation is a different caliber like the explored security issues in other parts of the world. The EU is a strong supporter of Taiwan's "meaningful participation" in international organizations that don't require statehood, but strictly adheres to the one China principle. There is still more room for the EU, especially in demanding the removal of the arms on Taiwan. A stronger EU engagement may contribute to alternative concepts and cooperation to raise the "international space" for Taiwan beyond the classic sovereignty conflict.

Is the new Chinese engagement in multilateral issues just "old wine in new skins," an adaption of old classic policies to the new international environment, in which state to state conflicts are no longer the only security problem? And what would that mean for security cooperation between China and the EU and a stronger engagement of the EU in cross-Strait relations? For multilateralism become effective, the EU should identify issues of common interest and make multilateral solutions relevant to partners and involve them in the setting of norms, according to Wissenbach (2007). Scott argues, that China's great power aspirations might perhaps encourage similar EU aspirations for international power and prestige, while the EU's emphasis on multilateralism might also encourage similar multilateralism trends in China. China's cooperation on many security issues and hot spots is already indispensable, like in arms embargoes and UN missions. The constructivist-realist approach proved as useful, since a realist crosscheck of the assumed norm change in foreign policy gives arguments for a skeptical summary. China won't automatically turn to become a strategic partner in security relations and cooperation in the future, as not only the unprecedented cancellation of the EU China summit in November 2008 for a minor incident showed The influence of the EU on China in security relations is rather marginal. In sum, China's multilateralism appears as rather virtual in realist terms, but so does, in turn, Europe's effective multilateralism.



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