

**CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN 2015:
BALANCING ITS INTERNATIONAL
RESPONSIBILITY AND
NATIONAL INTEREST**

ZHENG Yongnian & LYE Liang Fook

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Executive Summary

1. China had committed to more international responsibilities on peace and development in 2015. It also pledged to uphold the existing world order with the United Nations at the helm.
2. On the United Nation's 70th anniversary, Chinese President Xi Jinping, in his debut at the United Nations, strongly backed UN development priorities.
3. At the UN Summit on Sustainable Development, Xi said China would provide an initial US\$2 billion (US\$12 billion by 2030) to help developing countries implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
4. In his address to the UN General Assembly, Xi committed to providing more global public goods such as establishing a 8,000-strong standby peacekeeping force and establishing a US\$1 billion China-UN Peace and Development Fund for world peace and development.
5. With other developing countries, China stressed development cooperation. At the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Johannesburg, Xi pledged a sum of US\$60 billion over the next three years to implement various cooperation initiatives with African countries.
6. In September 2015, China held its first military parade to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. Russia celebrated a similar event earlier in the year. China and Russia continue to see value in a strategic partnership.
7. China-US ties were tested by their differences over cybersecurity and the South China Sea (SCS) issue. These two issues overshadowed Xi's state visit to the United States in September 2015.

8. China had to contend with the United States' resolve to fly, sail and operate its military assets in areas in the SCS claimed by China. Likewise, China indicated its strong resolve to protect its sovereign claims in the SCS.
9. On a positive note, China was regarded as an instrumental player in the climate change deal in Paris in December 2015. US President Barack Obama expressed his appreciation to Xi in a phone call for the important role China played in securing the deal.
10. China-ASEAN relations have been negatively affected by the SCS issue. Among ASEAN member states, China-Philippine relations remain testy due to the on-going arbitration case between the two countries.
11. China's efforts to re-direct its ties with ASEAN towards cooperation have limited results. To the Philippines and Vietnam, its participation in China's One Belt, One Road initiative is not possible without addressing their differences over the SCS.
12. The brightest spark in China's foreign policy in 2015 was its ties with Europe, particularly with the United Kingdom. The latter broke ranks with the United States to join China's initiated Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.
13. In 2016, China can be expected to persist in developing a new model of major country relations especially with the United States, a difficult task given the continuing contest for power and influence between the two countries in the SCS.
14. China will continue with its One Belt, One Road initiative by identifying and implementing specific projects that could serve a positive demonstrative purpose.