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## The Debate on China's Peaceful Rise – Part I

LSE IDEAS

**Yang Jun, Political Counsellor of the P.R China Embassy of the United Kingdom – China's peaceful development is sincere and real.**

International focus and media commentary betray deep anxiety of the west about the rising China.. This anxiety is unwarranted. China has consistently vowed that it will not be the first to use nuclear weapons, will not seek hegemony, and that its rise will be peaceful. However, many Europeans and Americans are still worried about China's foreign policy future evolution. This kind of anxiety is rooted in Western practice of judging China using their own historical experience and frameworks which suggest that a 'risen' China will be hegemonic. But China is developing along the trajectory set by its own cultural and historical experience – shaped by an emphasis on peace and harmony. China is heading towards a future akin to the Tang dynasty – a benign and open regime which greatly favoured foreigners. The Ming Dynasty Admiral Zheng He's seven expeditions showcased not just China's wealth and maritime prowess, but also its non-aggressive approach to the world. This approach is key to China's domestically and economically focused developmental drive. To meet the needs of more than 1.3bn people whose per-capita income, at \$5,000 or so, is around the 100th in the world – China needs peace at home and abroad. International Cooperation is essential in a globalised and increasingly multipolar world. Peaceful development will consistently remain central to China's rise.'



**Q: What does harmony mean to China – it appears to stress international harmony but, at home, Beijing is seen as imposing harmony from the top. Does anybody taking on the government legally ever win their cases?**

A: 'Clearly, there is much concern about China. A lot of work has been done to reassure others, but much more needs to be done. Harmony in the Chinese perspective is an understanding of natural phenomena. There is much diversity among plants and animals in nature, but all species live together without tension or violence. That is the lesson of harmony from nature. The states within the global community could live in peace and harmony despite their many differences, without any hierarchy'.

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