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## CHINA'S POSITION IN TODAY'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS FRAMEWORK

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### Abstract

The article analyses China's position in the contemporary system of international relations, with a focus on its growing influence in the global arena. The paper examines key aspects of China's foreign policy, including economic diplomacy and the One Belt, One Road initiative, as well as its military ambitions and the modernisation of its armed forces. It analyses China's achievements in expanding trade partnerships and strengthening its geopolitical position, as well as the internal and external challenges the country faces. Possible scenarios for the future of international relations involving China and its role in shaping a new world order are examined. It concludes by emphasising the need for strategic management to respond effectively to the challenges and opportunities that shape China's future on the world stage.

**Keywords:** China, international relations, economic diplomacy, One Belt, One Road, geopolitical influence, the future of world politics,

China's standing within the contemporary framework of international relations represents one of the most prominent and intensively debated topics in global politics. [1] Over the past several decades, China has undergone profound transformations, transitioning from a developing nation to becoming one of the world's foremost economic and political powerhouses. This substantial growth and fortification of China's global position has garnered the attention of both its allies and competitors, challenging the existing international order and precipitating significant shifts in the dynamics of international relations.

China's growing role is evident in its economic clout, active participation in global institutions, and the creation of new initiatives, such as the One Belt, One Road, that span multiple countries and regions.[2] China has also significantly increased its influence through diplomatic and trade channels, expanding its presence not only in Asia but also in Africa, Latin America, and Europe. This expansion is accompanied by an active economic diplomacy and security policy aimed at protecting national interests and expanding its influence in strategically important regions.

Concurrently, China's influence on global processes has become increasingly palpable. Its actions in domains such as international trade, security concerns, and the environmental agenda

profoundly impact the global community.[3] China's initiatives are often subject to controversy and conflicting assessments, underscoring the complexity and diversity of its role in the contemporary world.

Economic diplomacy is the centerpiece of China's foreign policy, aimed at strengthening its influence in the global economy and ensuring sustainable economic growth. It encompasses a wide range of initiatives, including trade agreements, investment projects, and economic cooperation, aimed at expanding international ties and promoting Chinese interests abroad.[4] The One Belt, One Road initiative, launched in 2013, is one of China's most ambitious economic diplomacy programs. The project aims to build a new global infrastructure network that will connect China to Europe, Asia, Africa, and other regions through the development of transport corridors, ports, railways, and other infrastructure[5]. The main objectives of the One Belt, One Road include:

1. Expanding trade routes: creating new and upgrading existing routes to deliver goods to increase global trade.
2. Enhancing economic integration: deepening economic ties between participating countries, stimulating investment flows and joint projects.
3. Increasing political influence: strengthening ties with project partners and expanding China's geopolitical presence.

The economic impact of the One Belt, One Road is evident in China's significant investment in infrastructure projects in member countries, which helps improve their transport and energy infrastructure.[6] This, in turn, opens up new markets for Chinese goods and services, increasing China's export potential and providing it with access to key resources.

From a geopolitical perspective, One Belt, One Road strengthens China's position on the world stage, allowing it to expand its influence over regions that have traditionally been in the orbit of other major powers. In some participating countries, the project has strengthened political and diplomatic ties with China, helping it to promote its interests in international institutions and regional organizations.[7]

China has been actively developing trade agreements with various countries aimed at removing barriers to trade and investment cooperation.[8] These agreements include both bilateral and multilateral arrangements aimed at reducing tariffs, improving business conditions, and encouraging foreign direct investment. Under the One Belt, One Road, China has concluded many such agreements, allowing it to significantly expand its network of trading partners and strengthen its role as the world's leading exporter and importer.

One of the most discussed aspects of the "One Belt, One Road" initiative is the so-called "debt trap". [9] China provides large loans for the construction of infrastructure projects in member countries, which often results in these countries being unable to service their debts on time.

This raises concerns that China may be using the financial dependence of debtor countries to gain strategic assets or political concessions.[10] However, the empirical evidence on the existence and extent of the "debt trap" phenomenon remains inconclusive, with some studies suggesting that China's lending practices are not significantly different from those of other major creditors [11] [12].

This aspect of China's economic diplomacy has drawn criticism from both debtor countries and the international community. Opponents of the project point to the risks of debt dependence and argue that the DSDP could lead to unsustainable economic development in the participating countries. [13] Nevertheless, China continues to insist that the initiative is aimed at mutually beneficial cooperation and creating new opportunities for economic growth. Overall, China's economic diplomacy and the One Belt, One Road initiative play a key role in strengthening China's position in the global system of international relations, despite the existing challenges and criticisms.

China's security and defence policy has attracted considerable attention in recent years, both in the region and in the international arena.[14] It covers a wide range of aspects, including the modernisation of the armed forces, the protection of national interests, and China's ambitions both within its region and beyond its borders.

China's efforts to modernize its armed forces have been a source of concern for other major powers, who view this process as a way to increase China's regional and global influence. China has been investing heavily in the development of new military technologies, including advanced aircraft, naval vessels, and missile systems.

In addition to military capabilities, China has also been using its economic power to exert influence in strategically important regions. The Belt and Road Initiative, for example, has been seen as a way for China to expand its economic and political influence in Eurasia and Africa through massive infrastructure investments.

At the same time, China's growing assertiveness in territorial disputes in the South China Sea and East China Sea has been a major source of tension between its neighbors and the United States. Beijing's claims over the South China Sea have led to confrontations with other claimant states, and have raised concerns about the potential for military conflict in the region. In response to these challenges, China has been pursuing a more proactive foreign policy, aimed at increasing its global influence and countering what it perceives as attempts by the United States and its allies to contain China's rise.

Overall, China's position in today's international relations framework is complex and multifaceted. It is a major economic power, with a growing military capability and a more assertive foreign policy. At the same time, China's actions have raised concerns about its long-term intentions and the impact of its rise on the global order. [15] [16]



China has made significant strides in its foreign policy through active economic and military expansion. [17] Economic diplomacy, represented by the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, has allowed China to strengthen its economic ties and expand trade routes, as well as consolidate its influence in various regions. Military modernization and active participation in international peacekeeping operations have helped China to establish itself as an important player on the world stage. These achievements contribute to strengthening China's position in international relations and expanding its influence at the global level [18].

However, China's growing assertiveness in territorial disputes and its desire to protect its core interests have also been a source of tension with its neighbors and the United States. This has led to concerns about China's long-term intentions and the potential for regional instability.

Despite its successes, China faces various challenges. Domestic problems include economic inequalities, political repression, and environmental issues that can influence foreign policy. [19] External challenges include territorial disputes such as the Taiwan issue and conflicts in the South China Sea, as well as other countries' reactions to China's growing influence [18]. These factors could hamper China's efforts to strengthen its position in the international arena and create additional difficulties in diplomatic and trade relations.

China plays a key role in shaping the new world order. In a globalized and multipolar world, China seeks to create a system in which its interests are taken into account and protected [20]. Through economic initiatives, diplomatic engagement, and military presence, China is influencing global processes, and establishing new rules of the game in international relations. In this context, China can contribute to the creation of a new global balance of power, where its interests will be integrated into international structures and rules.

In conclusion, China's position in the contemporary system of international relations is characterized by both significant achievements and serious challenges. In recent years, China has made notable achievements in economic diplomacy and military modernization. The "One Belt, One Road" initiative has played an important role in expanding economic ties and strengthening China's influence in the global arena. The modernization of its armed forces and its participation in international peacekeeping operations have also helped to strengthen its position.

Nevertheless, China faces internal and external challenges that may affect its future development. Domestic issues, such as economic inequality and political instability, as well as external challenges, including territorial disputes and international reactions to China's growing influence, require careful management.

The future of international relations involving China will be determined by the country's ability to adapt to changing conditions and respond effectively to challenges. Possible development scenarios include both further strengthening of China's position and increasing

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international tensions. China's role in shaping the new world order will continue to evolve, and its influence on global processes will become an important factor in determining the future of international relations.

Overall, China faces unique opportunities and challenges that will shape its strategic behavior on the world stage. Managing these challenges and capitalizing on the opportunities will be key factors in determining China's future in the international system.

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