CHAPTER FOUR

BETWEEN HARMONIOUS WORLD AND “WAR OF ORDER”: CHINESE MEANINGS OF JUST WAR AND THEIR REEMERGENCE

Nadine Godehardt

INTRODUCTION

The determining principles of Chinese foreign policy are, amongst others, peace, development, and cooperation (heping, fazhan, hezuo).¹ Although promoting peace is a universal goal, hardly any state emphasizes its peaceful and defensive orientation as consistently as does the People’s Republic of China (PRC).²

The concept of a harmonious society (hexie shehui) further highlights the constant significance of economic success and the general political direction of China. A harmonious Chinese society, however, can only be accomplished in agreement with a peaceful and stable international environment—a harmonious world (hexie shijie).³ The new security concept (xin anquan guan) further underscores this goal. It emphasizes the need for more cooperation, particularly through a stronger Chinese engagement in regional or international economic and security institutions.⁴

However, China's plea for harmony very much relies on the country's domestic stability. It still describes the foundation of China's increasing “going out” mentality, which “marks a shift in the leadership's understanding of China's position in the world.” China is no longer a detached outsider of world politics but is increasingly becoming an engaged insider. China's voice matters and her new role is widely discussed in the academic debate.

The image of China's peaceful rise, which the Chinese government is keen to advance in the world, stands in contrast to the Western view of China's ascent as a threat. China's economic and military growth is often regarded as a potential threat to the (East) Asian security structure and as a challenge to the U.S. American, European or Western understanding of the world. The uncertainty about China's true military capabilities and political intentions further supports the image of a “dangerous” China. Hence China's ascent (and yet to a lesser extent India's ascent) challenges the traditional Eurocentric worldview. Analysts speak of a power shift from the West to the East. Bestsellers have been written entitled *The Post-American World* by Fareed Zakaria or *The New Asian Hemisphere. The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East* by Singaporean Diplomat Kishore Mahbubani. Zakaria focuses on the “rise of the rest” which he underscores is not only an economic phenomenon but also one that “has political, military, and cultural consequences” and is going to condition a post-American world order in the future. Meantime, Mahbubani focuses on the interdependence between Asia's rise and Western modernization.

---