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The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence:

China's path to a global community with a shared future



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WRITTEN BY:

Hagan Sibiri, Ph.D.
Senior Research Fellow, ACCPA
E: hagansibiri@gmail.com

As the world grows increasingly complex and interdependent, the need for global cooperation and peaceful coexistence has never been more urgent. Amidst the complexities of nations grappling with the challenge of establishing a framework to promote international harmony after the second world war, rising geopolitical tensions and great power competition the idea of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, was proposed by China in 1954. This was included in the China-India and China-Myanmar joint statements, which jointly called for making them basic norms for state-to-state relations. These principles have since become the basis of China's foreign policy, shaping its interactions with other nations and offering a blueprint for sustainable peace in a multipolar world. This year marks 70years since it was formally proposed as the norms for handling international relations.

The conference marking the 70th Anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence held in Beijing on June 28, 2024, was attended by about 600 people, including former foreign political figures, representatives of international and regional organizations, envoys from more than 100 countries, experts and scholars, and media and business representatives. The gathering commemorated the 70th anniversary of the five principles for the purpose of carrying it forward under the new circumstances, building together a community with a shared future for mankind, and providing a strong driving force for human progress.

China's President, Xi Jinping was also in attendance and led the celebration by delivering a speech to mark the anniversary hosted by Chinese Premier Li Qiang, who presided over the conference.

The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence

The five principles of peaceful coexistence makes us understand that all nations share the responsibility for maintaining peace and committing to a path of peaceful development. At the heart of the five principles is the recognition that in an increasingly multipolar world, countries with different social systems, development stages, and national interests must

find ways to peacefully coexist and thrive together rather than resorting to zero-sum competition or confrontation.

The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence are crucial for peacebuilding in a multipolar world. They provide a foundation for managing complex international relations, promoting cooperation, and ensuring that nations can coexist peacefully despite their differences.

1. Mutual Respect for Territorial Integrity and Sovereignty:

Nations should recognize each other's sovereignty and refrain from infringing upon their territorial boundaries. This principle emphasizes the importance of respecting national borders and avoiding interferences. It means that countries must respect each other's right to independently choose their own political, economic, and social systems. It opposes the acts of imposing one's will on others.

By upholding this principle, nations can foster mutual trust and reduce the likelihood of conflicts arising from territorial disputes. In a multipolar world, where diverse political systems and ideologies coexist, respecting sovereignty is vital for maintaining harmonious international relations paving the way for countries to be valued and heard when it comes to participation in global affairs.

2. Mutual Non-Aggression:

This principle commits countries to not using military force or the threat of force against each other. It rejects the use of aggression or invasion, as a means of resolving disputes. It seeks to create a secure environment where countries can engage in dialogue and resolve differences peacefully to help build a stable international order.

In a world where multiple powers possess significant military capabilities, adherence to non-aggression is crucial to avoid intensifying of conflicts. By refraining from aggressive actions and armed conflicts, nations can focus on building constructive relationships and addressing common challenges collaboratively, strengthening the foundations of global security.

3. Non-Interference in Each Other's Internal Affairs:

Respecting the internal affairs of other nations is crucial for maintaining international harmony. This principle upholds the right of all countries to independently determine their own paths of development, without external interference or coercion.

It rejects any form of external interference, ensuring that each country has the right to govern itself without outside influence prohibiting countries from meddling in the internal affairs of others. This will ensure that each country can chart its own path to development and governance, contributing to global stability.

4. Equality and Mutual Benefit:

Fair and equitable interactions among countries helps to create a more balanced and just global order, reducing economic disparities. This principle urges countries to treat each other as equals, regardless of size or power, and to engage in mutually beneficial cooperation rather than pursuing unilateral or zero-sum strategies. Cooperation should be based on mutual benefit, shared interest fostering win-win solutions for shared prosperity.

5. Peaceful Coexistence:

The principle of peaceful coexistence is the overarching guiding principle that underpins the effective implementation of the other four principles. The principle emphasizes on the peaceful and harmonious coexistence of nations with different social systems and interests. It acknowledges the diversity of the international community for the promotion of tolerance and understanding. Countries should seek peaceful solutions to disputes and conflicts. Dialogue, negotiation, and diplomacy are essential tools for maintaining peace.

Building a global community with a shared future

Building a global community with a shared future promoted by China, envisions a peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable world where countries support and respect each other. A world where countries cooperate closely to address common problems and ensure everyone benefit, solidifying a win-win. The goal is to benefit all with the opportunity for development, to diversify development paths, to help all nations share development outcomes and to encourage common development and prosperity for all countries.

China's commitment to the five principles of peaceful coexistence reflects its vision for a global community with a shared future. The vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind is the most effective strategy for sustaining, promoting, and enhancing the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in the current global context. China's commitment to these principles has been evident in its diplomatic initiatives and

international engagements. These principles have guided China's foreign policy over the decades, shaping its approach to issues ranging from territorial disputes to global governance.

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) embodies the principle of equality and mutual benefit advocating for a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalization. By investing in infrastructure projects across Asia, Africa, and Europe, delivered under the Global Development Initiative which has got to do with building on UN's 2030 SDGs for greener and healthier global development, China aims to promote shared economic development and connectivity, aligning with beneficiaries' goals and benefiting all participating countries rather than seeking geopolitical dominance. This approach helps build a balanced and just global order.

The Global Security Initiative (GSI) embodies the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence by advocating for common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security. It emphasizes achieving development and security through cooperation, promoting a balanced, effective, and sustainable security architecture that addresses both the symptoms and root causes of conflicts. Every country has the right to defend its security and interests without resorting to confrontational actions such as supplying weapons, imposing sanctions, or seeking military revenge, as these only intensify conflicts. Instead, the GSI encourages dialogue and consultation as the primary means to resolve differences, as exemplified by China's active mediation in the reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Iran. This approach aligns with the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty, non-aggression, and peaceful coexistence, fostering an environment where countries can resolve disputes amicably and maintain regional and global stability.

The Global Civilization Initiative which advocates for the respect for the diversity of civilizations and the common values of humanity is also aimed at increasing understanding and friendship among peoples, promoting tolerance and mutual learning among civilizations. This Chinese initiative also factors in the five principles to advance humanity modernization process and build a community with a shared future for mankind.

In the realm of non-interference, China has consistently advocated for respecting the sovereignty of nations in international forums. China's dedication to peaceful coexistence is also reflected in its participation in global organizations such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization and the BRICS+. Strengthening ties with countries through strategic partnerships and bilateral agreements, focusing on mutual respect and benefit. By engaging in multilateral diplomacy, China works to address global issues collaboratively, emphasizing dialogue and cooperation over confrontation.

Conclusion

The five principles of peaceful coexistence proposed and evident in china's international relations has a profound implication for peace building in our contemporary multipolar world. These principles being acknowledged in international relations is a beacon of hope and a roadmap for a better future.

It offers a guiding philosophy that aligns well with contemporary initiatives such as China's vision of building a community with a shared future, UN agenda 2030 and Africa's Agenda 2063 seeking to foster sustainable development, peace, and cooperation on a global scale. These have made the five principles of peaceful coexistence more relevant, even after seventy years.

Written By:

Dr. Hagan Sibiri

Senior Research Fellow, **Africa-China Centre for Policy & Advisory**



CONTACT

Building No. 49-01, North Legon,
Accra, Ghana
+233 303 965259
info@africachinacentre.org

www.africachinacentre.org