In the post-Cold War period, the UN assumed much significance in resolving outstanding issues related to development, trade, health, education, environment, security etc. at the global level. It was looked upon as the ‘world government’ charged with the responsibility of maintaining peace and order and smooth management of global affairs. ‘Good governance’ emerged as the central organizing concept for all UN-system activities and it led to the establishment of values, goals, and commitments for member states to improve the conditions of the entire mankind. It also paved the way for codification of a plurality of rules and regulations aimed at proper utilization of both human and natural resources and promotion of harmonious world order. Considering the significant increase in the role and responsibilities of the UN in the post-Cold War period, scholars like Laura Zannoti have described it as the ‘governmental international regime’ (Zanotti 2005:461-87). China, as a permanent member of the Security Council, has actively participated in these moves and played a key role in all UN efforts in various fields towards better management of world affairs. Though China is worried about the growing hegemonic influence of the US in the wake of its Afghanistan and Iraq wars, it still views the UN as a useful forum to resolve issues like disarmament, refugees, colonization and poverty. China believes that the UN would make a greater contribution to world peace and development and its authority has not been shaken by the US unilateralism. China wants the UN to play the leading role in the reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan. For strengthening the international political and economic order, China insists on the settlement of all political and economic disputes through the UN, WTO, and other international negotiation mechanisms.

In the post-Cold War period, China has emerged as one of the major supporters of the UN-based world order. China’s basic attitude towards the UN can
be summed up in two points: the first is greater adaptation to UN treaties and conventions; the second is emphasizing the role of the Security Council in international affairs. China has increasingly participated in the UN peacekeeping operations and other activities such as reconstruction and humanitarian assistance in conflict-ridden countries. Even the Chinese government has begun to encourage the Chinese NGOs participating in the UN conferences and programmes. Thus, as China seeks effective institutional engagement at the global level, its position as the permanent member of the UN Security Council signifies its status in world affairs and provides definite institutional openings. However, before discussing about China's adaptation to the UN, we must look at how China's relations with the UN have evolved over the years.

**China's UN policy in the Maoist Era**

During the first two decades after its establishment as an independent nation, the PRC largely remained outside the global community under the influence of Maoist worldview. Mao ensured that China developed both its economic and military capabilities strictly according to the ideological parameters that were formulated at the very outset. China's domestic as well as foreign policies were mostly ideology-driven during this period, as a result of which, China was denied entry to all the important global fora, including that of the United Nations.

However, unlike its completely indifferent attitude towards the League of Nations, China was very much receptive towards the United Nations from the beginning. Commenting on the San-Francisco Conference then in progress, Mao Zedong declared on April 24, 1945:

*The Chinese Communist Party fully agrees with the proposals of the Dumbarton Oaks Conference and the decisions of the Crimea Conference on the establishment of an organization to safeguard in peace and security after the war. It welcomes the United Nations Conference on International Organization in San Francisco. It has appointed its own representative by China's delegation to this conference in order to express the will of the Chinese people (Mao 1945, SWB III, FE/01:306-07).*
In the aftermath of the Korean War (1950-53), the UN under the influence of the US adopted resolutions condemning the actions of the PRC and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) which led China to regard the United States as the principal enemy. However, in its policy pronouncements, in the 1950s, the PRC’s support for the principles of the UN Charter remained largely unchanged. Despite her exclusion from participation, the principles of the charter were cited in numerous bilateral treaties that the PRC signed in the 1950s (Hsiung 1970:89-90).

However, after the Indonesian withdrawal on 7 January 1965, China started a virulent attack on the UN. China’s main allegation against the UN was that it had been working at the behest of the US in all matters and the US was controlling the world affairs using the UN as an instrument. For China, in the final analysis, the United Nations was a paper tiger (Peking Review 1965:7-9). “As a matter of fact”, an editorial of Jen-min jih-pao (Renmin Ribao) wrote, “the UN has degenerated into a dirty international political stock exchange in the grip of a few big powers; the sovereignty of other nations, particularly that of small ones, is often bought and sold there by them like shares” (Peking Review 1965:7-9). It is significant to note here that during this period, Beijing regarded Washington as the principal threat to Chinese security and strongly resented the US efforts to influence global policy.

China’s rhetoric against the UN now included new preconditions for joining the organization. Whereas the expulsion of Chiang Kaishek’s representatives had been the only precondition before 1965, thereafter Beijing demanded the expulsion of “all imperialist countries”, the admission of “all independent countries”, the cancellation of the UN resolutions against the PRC and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), the adoption of a resolution condemning the US as an aggressor, and a review and revision of the Charter to enter into the UN (Chen 1965:11-12). The PRC then gave a kind of ultimatum to the UN: “Either the Organization hide itself of United States domination, corrects its mistakes and gets

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1 The PRC’s last statement on the UN before Indonesia’s withdrawal was contained in Premier Zhou Enlai’s report on the work of the government delivered at the First Session of the Third National People’s Congress on December 21-22, 1964, which stated that “unless the UN expels the representative of Chiang Kaishek and restore China’s legitimate rights in their entirety, we will have absolutely nothing to do with the UN”. See Peking Review, No.1, January 1, 1965:19.
thoroughly reorganized, or a revolutionary United Nations will be set up to replace it” (*Peking Review* 1965:11).

Thus, China during this period questioned the legitimacy of the UN and its role in managing global affairs. China tried its best to put in place an alternative global forum which would have no place for the major Western powers like the US and for that China sought the help of the developing countries of the Third World. However, when her call for reorganization or a replacement of the United Nations received very little attention and support, China's interest in the world organization declined rapidly during the next few years. At the 22nd Session of the General Assembly, the question of Chinese representation in the United Nations was discussed, debated and put to vote, the results of which was very discouraging for China. Commenting on the disappointing results of the vote, the PRC declared on December 8, 1967:

> Speaking frankly, the Chinese people are not at all interested in sitting in the UN, a body manipulated by the United States, a place for playing power politics, a stock exchange for the United States and the Soviet Union to strike political bargains and an organ to serve the US policies of aggression and war (*Peking Review*1967:21).

Thus, the PRC continued its rhetoric against the United Nations, portraying it as a mere tool of manipulation in the hands of super powers like the US and the USSR.

It was no coincidence that China adopted an ideology-driven radical foreign policy at the time when domestically it was going through an upheaval in the form of Cultural Revolution. Thus with the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, Chinese foreign relations underwent a further radicalization, reflecting the heightened radicalism of Chinese domestic politics. “In the early part of the decade, China was independent from the two super powers but actively involved in world affairs; at the height of the Cultural Revolution, China turned almost completely inward, isolated from the rest of the world” (Harding 1984:182). During the Cultural Revolution, China recalled all its ambassadors, save one to Cairo. China cut off all kinds of relations with the Soviet Union and vehemently attacked its revisionist
policies. However, the PRC soon realized the negative fallouts of its isolationist
foreign policy and began to reorient its foreign policy in the early 1970s. And the
termination of China's Cultural Revolution coincided with the beginning of a new
and pragmatic foreign policy. This new foreign policy adopted by the PRC
leadership represented much more than a restoration of a pre-Cultural Revolution
status quo. "It demonstrated an extraordinary-almost unprecedented-degree of
flexibility and moderation by extending the permissible limits of normalization
toward former enemies such as the United States, Japan and Yugoslavia" (Kim
only formally apologized to foreign countries for what had happened to their
embassies in Beijing during the Cultural Revolution, but agreed to make restitution
as well (Dreyer 1996:314). This more accommodative posture enabled China both to
reestablish relationships that had been broken off during the Cultural Revolution
period and initiate flexible approach towards the United Nations. All the rhetoric
against the UN and the extraneous preconditions for participation disappeared.
China also abandoned its efforts to create a parallel international organization sans
the influence of the superpowers. Instead, China launched a new and concerted
campaign to gain entrance into world body. As part of this campaign, China sought
to expand its relations with many countries by sending delegations and providing
aid. Moreover, the official media of the PRC started carrying articles dealing with
the United Nations (Kim 1974:103). Finally, all these changes and China's
diplomatic maneuverings paid off. The PRC's acceptance as a legitimate member of
the international community was given formal endorsement in October 1971 when
the country was admitted to membership in the United Nations and made a
permanent member of the UN Security Council (Dreyer 1996:322).

When seated in the UN in 1971, the PRC tried to portray itself as the
champion of the causes of the Third World by representing their interests and
grievances in the world forum. During this period, China supported Third World
demands for a 'New International Economic Order' and expressed its willingness to
work with the established governments in the developing world to achieve such
reforms. Chinese foreign policy during this period was summarized in the theory of
the “Three Worlds” formulated by Mao Zedong in February 1974 and presented publicly by Deng Xiaoping in an April 1974 speech to the Sixth Special Session of the UN General Assembly (United Nations 1974:72-75). Deng’s speech proclaimed an end to the unity of the socialist camp, the disintegration of the Western imperialist bloc, and the validity of the three-world theory. According to this theory, the main characteristic of international affairs was the growing resistance of the developing countries (the Third World), supported by the more developed countries of Eastern and Western Europe and Japan (the Second World) against the economic and political hegemonism of the United States and Soviet Union (the First World) (Harding 1984:192). Mao’s great strategic concept has been subsequently reaffirmed in each speech by the head of the PRC delegation during the General Assembly debate, since his death (Feeny 1980:142). Indeed, the PRC Foreign Minister Huang Hua forcefully outlined the practical utility of the theory in his speech of September 29, 1977, when he stated -

The great significance of this thesis lays in the fact that it provides the people of the world with a powerful ideological instrument with which to identify the main revolutionary forces, the chief enemies and the middle forces that can be won over within the international struggle of today (United Nations 1977:56).

In November 1977, the theory was officially reaffirmed to represent the cornerstone of China’s UN policy (Mao 1977:10,41). Beijing appealed to all Second and Third World countries regardless of their social or political systems to join it in a united front against the two superpowers. Opposition to hegemonism was now viewed as the essence of the Chinese foreign policy. In short, China used the UN forum to reflect its ideological and geopolitical concerns.

**China's UN Policy in the Post-Mao Era**

In 1976, Mao passed away and with that ideology ceased to be the most important determinant of Chinese foreign policy. After Deng came to power in 1977, the emphasis shifted from ideology to economic considerations and by the end of 1978, “Chinese foreign policy began to reflect Deng's preoccupation with China's
modern problematique: how to quickly enhance the nation's wealth and power as the means to obtaining its rightful place in the world” (Hamrin 1979:43).

In the 1980s, under Deng Xiaoping, China changed its policy from that of 'confrontation' to 'accommodation'. China signaled its readiness and willingness to work within the existing international framework where China found an increasing degree of acceptability. A degree of convergence of China’s view of the UN with that of other members was also clear. On its fortieth anniversary, Zhao Ziyang told the UN General Assembly that the UN was a global organization, ‘whose universality and importance grew with the passage of times, an organization irreplaceable in the historical mission it shoulders and the impact it exerts on the world’ (Foot 1999:236). During this period, by moving towards a more market-oriented economy and opening itself to the outside world, China found itself having to embark on a major foreign policy shift (Pang 2005:75). Beijing introduced independent foreign policy of peace and development at the Chinese Communist Party’s 12th National Congress, which was incorporated into the country's revised constitution. As a permanent member of the Security Council, China re-evaluated the UN’s importance in its foreign policy and began to intensify its participation in UN activities including peacekeeping. Concerning UN affairs, China adopted a principle as “actively taking the initiative and gradually deepening the participation” (Luzhi and Tiechen 1993:98). China adopted a flexible attitude and gradually started to participate in the UN peacekeeping regime. In 1981, the Chinese government declared its principled support to those peacekeeping operations which are in accordance with the spirits of UN Charter. It also came forward to assume financial obligations to UN peacekeeping operations (Xi 1993:199).

On 18 December 1981, ten years after the PRC was admitted into the UN, the Chinese delegation voted in favour of UN Resolution 498 granting an extension to the UN Peacekeeping forces in Cyprus (Pang 2005:75). In 1982, China paid dues to the operation in Lebanon. On 22 September 1988, the Chinese permanent representative to UN, Li Luye wrote to the UN Secretary General and proposed to join the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. In this letter, he said:
Peacekeeping activity has been an effective measure of UN to maintain international peace and security, and contributes to the alleviation of regional conflicts and the peaceful settlement of disputes. China is willing to work with UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations to contribute to the peacekeeping operation (Qimei and Xinfang 1995:88).

China was soon accepted for membership of the UN Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (Gill and Reilly 2000:41-59). In 1989, China for the first time dispatched a contingent consisting of five military observers who joined the UN Disengagement Observer Group (UNDOG) in the Middle East, and 20 Chinese non-military personnel became members of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group in Namibia (UNTAG). During the revival of international peacekeeping in the later 1980s and early 1990s, China has become, among more than 60 other member states of the UN, one of the peacekeeping countries. China's cooperative attitude towards the UN and peacekeeping operations suited its role as the self-proclaimed leader of the developing world, since these institutions were important to many developing states (Kim 1991:91). In China's first official statement issued on 1 April 1989, Ambassador Yu Mengjia urged the international community to give 'powerful support' to United Nations peacekeeping, because facts had proved convincingly that it had become an effective mechanism in realising the purposes of the UN Charter and in finding a political settlement for regional conflicts (Fravel 1996:1104). Moreover, these moves indicated China's confidence in its position and its desire for active participation in the UN, commensurate with its status as a great power.

China's UN Policy in the Post-Cold War Period

In 1991, the Cold War came to an end with the collapse of the Soviet Union. It also marked the end of the bipolar system of the world. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and its empire, Beijing had to face the fact that the United States now remained the sole superpower. Moreover, this occurred at a time when Washington had stepped up its criticism of Beijing over human rights (in the aftermath of
Tiananmen Square incident), trading practices and missile sales. The Gulf War of 1991 further strengthened the perception that the US dominated the global system and it was feared that in this post-Cold War era, the West was using the new opportunities to impose its views and policies upon others.

However, not perturbed by the changes in the international scenario, domestically China continued to pursue its vigorous programme of economic development and globally it continued to play a very responsible role in the world community. The policy makers in China felt that the country being the only socialist country (China's own claim) in the 'new world order', it needed the UN more than at any other period since 1945 (Pang 2005:76). China began to expand its activities in the UN in order to balance the political pressures from the US and some of its allies in Asia. While, earlier (in the early 1980s), Beijing was one of the most vocal critics of (international) intervention in any form, in the post-Cold War era, as consensus started emerging in favour of a more proactive role for the UN in resolving the protracted conflicts confronting the world, China had to reformulate its policy and position (Carlson 2004:12-13).

The first move in this direction came during the prelude to the Gulf War-in 1990. Although Iraq had been an important customer for China's weapons sales, China condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. It also agreed to observe the UN boycott against shipping arms to Iraq (Dreyer 1996:312). The Gulf War demonstrated, how valuable a co-operative China could be. It voted for all 10 UN resolutions that ordered military and economic sanctions against Iraq and abstained on resolution 678 that permitted the use of force to compel an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait (Foot 1999:240). Analysts like Samuel S. Kim felt that China's initial acquiescence to UN-authorized action against Iraq should be viewed within the context of China's economic and political isolation following the suppression of student-led demonstrations in the spring of 1989 (Kim 1994:422-24). According to the argument of these analysts, Chinese policymakers understood that supporting the fight against Iraq would have a broad set of political and economic benefits for China and it would help the country to regain its status and reputation as a responsible global power.
Although China was always apprehensive about the possibility of a Western-led international intervention under the UN banner, it nevertheless became more actively involved in the peacekeeping operations of the UN in the post-Cold War period. In the 1990s, there was a significant enhancement in China’s contribution towards the UN peacekeeping operations (UNPKO). China pledged to send observers to the United Nations’ Truce Supervising Organization (UNTSO) in 1990 and the Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) in 1991 (Carlson 2004:16). Subsequently, in a more high-profile policy measure, Beijing deployed a large number of observers to the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), despite being a one-time supporter of the Khmer Rouge it gave concrete and verbal support to the UN activity in Cambodia backing the negotiated settlement and electoral process and even sending an engineering battalion to work under UN auspices (Foot 1999:241). In addition, China sent a small group of 20 military observers to the UN mission in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) in 1993 and 1994 to assist with the monitoring of a cease-fire between warring factions, and also contributed a small force to the UN Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) between 1993 and 1997. In January 2000, the Chinese government dispatched fifteen civilian troops to the UN Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET). This was the first time that China sent civilian police to UN peacekeeping operations. In January 2000, the first detachments of Chinese peacekeeping civilian police, 15 civilian troops were sent to UNTAET. At the beginning of 2001, China also began to send civilian police UNMIBH and later increased the number of such troops (from 5 to 15). Here it is noteworthy that in 1997 China agreed to participate in the Standby Arrangement of UNPKO. In January 2002, during the UN Security Council’s open discussion on African situation, Wang Yinfan, Chinese permanent representative to UN declared that the government of China has made the decision of enhancing the level of Chinese participation in the Standby Arrangement, and participating more actively in PKO, including the operations in Africa. China decided to create a peacekeeping center for training civilian police in Langfang City, Beijing, the largest in Asia. China also dispatched a police contingent of 12 to Kosovo. In January 2002, China formally participated in the class-A stand by arrangements mechanism, making
preparations to provide engineering, medical and transport teams for peacekeeping missions. China is able to provide these operations with one UN-standard engineering battalion, one UN-standard medical team and two UN-standard transport companies. By 2002, China had sent more than 650 military observers, 800 engineering troops and 198 civilian policemen to take part in 10 UN peacekeeping operations. In 2003, China sent a 175-member engineering company and a 43-member medical company to conduct duties in the Democratic Republic of Congo. A team of 550 Chinese peacekeepers was then sent to Liberia, China’s largest single contribution to any mission. It also agreed to deploy a contingent of 550 troops to Liberia as part of the UN peacekeeping mission. In 2004, Beijing decided to send 125 police officers to Haiti to support the UN-led international effort to stabilize the country. China’s peacekeeping forces have suffered casualties, with five killed and dozens wounded (Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, 1998, 2000 and 2002). According to China’s official statistics, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) has participated successively in 13 UN operations since its first dispatch of military observers to UN peacekeeping operations. By mid-2004, it had sent more than 2000 officers and soldiers, including military observers, liaison officials, consultants, staff officers and engineering officers to UN peacekeeping operations (Pang 2005:76-77).

Meanwhile, China has increased its engagement with the UN Security Council. Until the mid-1990s, China regularly abstained from Security Council resolutions that invoked Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which authorizes the use of force in order to signal its opposition to the erosion of sovereignty. In recent years, however, Beijing has begun to support these measures. In November 2002, for example, it voted for Resolution 1441 on weapons inspections in Iraq : one of the few times that China has supported a Chapter VII measure since joining the United Nations in 1971 (Medeiros and Fravel 2004:391). However, compared with that of other major powers, the level of China’s participation in UN peacekeeping operations is still relatively low. In particular, China has not, as of 2004, sent any combat troops to peacekeeping operations. That reflects China’s reluctance of being directly involved in military conflicts in other countries. In fact, in 1992, when UN
Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali put forward his “Agenda for Peace”, China was the first Security Council member to publicly oppose this as it contained too many sovereignty-diluting features (Kim 1995:51). China maintained that “UN reforms should contribute to maintaining the sovereignty of its member states. Sovereign states are the subjects of international law and the foundation for the formation of the UN. The maintenance of state sovereignty serves as the basis for the establishment of a new international order” (Qian1994:29). The Chinese press at home and representatives in the Security Council repeatedly issued warnings about the danger of shift from Chapter VI (non-mandatory pacific settlement provisions) to Chapter VII (Mandatory enforcement measures) of the UN charter.

In most of the 1980s and 1990s, China often abstained on UN resolutions that authorized the use of force for peace enforcement. In the case of Cambodia, in the early 1990s, China strongly opposed to change the UN mission from a strictly peace-keeping Chapter VI mission to an active war-stopping, peace-enforcing Chapter VII role. Even in such a clear-cut case of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, China did not vote to support the US military operation to drive Iraq out of Kuwait in 1991 (Jianwei 2005:166). Over the years, China tried to convince the Security Council that the enforcement actions should be limited to protect the security of UN troops in peacekeeping operations, which, in fact, became customary in many Security Council resolutions to authorize peacekeeping operations (Chen 2001:103).

Thus, since the early 1980s, throughout the post-Cold War years, China has maintained a ‘traditional’ view of peacekeeping by stressing the importance of sovereignty and emphasizing consent and impartiality. Foreign Minister Qian Qichen very clearly outlined China's position in his speech at the 46th Session of UN General Assembly:

It is our consistent view that peacekeeping operations should strictly conform to the principles of the UN Charter and the norms of international relations. Such operations should be undertaken only with the consent and cooperation of the parties concerned, and an impartial and unbiased attitude must be maintained. No peacekeeping operations on humanitarian aid programs should be permitted to interfere in the
Again, in the 1999 UN General Assembly meeting, when UN Secretary General Kofi Annan signaled a new era of activism in humanitarian intervention highlighting the increasing need for UN role and proclaiming that “state intervention is being redefined by the forces of globalization and international cooperation”, China’s Foreign Minister, Tang Jiaxuan quickly responded that the issue of human rights is an internal affair of a country, and should be addressed mainly by the government of that country through its own efforts (Franck 2001:191-204). He emphasized the preeminence of sovereignty and non-intervention as the guiding principles of the international system and the primary role of individual state actors in implementing human rights. On 27 August 2007, a Chinese general was appointed to command a United Nations peacekeeping mission for the first time. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Maj. Gen. Zhao Jingmin to lead the mission in the disputed territory of Western Sahara, where U.N. peacekeepers have monitored a ceasefire between Morocco and the Polisario Front, an armed separatist group, since 1991. Thus, it is very much apparent that China’s involvement in UNPKO has increased significantly and that China has adapted itself to the changed international situation in the post-Cold War period by adopting a more pragmatic and flexible attitude and policy, but not by compromising its core beliefs. It is believed that the participation in UNPKO has become an important part of China’s effort in international security cooperation and military diplomacy. However, despite the increased involvement of China in UNPKO, the level of its participation is still very low when compared with some other countries like the US, UK, France and Russia. The composition of Chinese peacekeeping force is also limited to military observers, civilian police and logistic groups. Thus, China still keeps a cautious attitude towards UNPKO.

China’s Stand on UN Peacekeeping in Post-Cold War Period

Since the end of the Cold War, apprehensions have been raised regarding the neutrality as well as the effectiveness of the UN led interventions to establish peace
and harmony in different countries and China has been more vocal in raising such questions. China maintains that:

UNPKO should be in accordance with the spirit and principle of the Charter of UN, particularly with the principle of sovereignty and non-intervention; UNPKO should acquire the approval of the party-nation in advance, while remaining strictly in neutrality and not using force except for self-defense purpose; UNPKO should insist on peaceful measures, such as mediation, reconciliation and negotiation, to settle disputes and avoid frequently resorting to compulsive actions, carrying out military intervention in the name of UN and adopting dual standard; UNPKO should adhere to the principle of practical and realistic, and act according to its own capability, and should avoid carrying out peacekeeping operation under immature conditions, let alone being a party of conflict and diverging from the basic guideline of PKO (Tang 2003:76-77).

China’s stand reflects its concerns regarding the expanding influence and dominance of the US-led western powers in the guise of humanitarian interventions. It still is a vocal votary of the principle of state sovereignty and non-interference and repeatedly emphasizes a common response of all the concerned countries to the problems through cooperation and mutual understanding. In an official statement issued in 1996, China maintained:

The United States is neither a world government nor has it been vested with authority to act as one by any widely accepted international organization or conference. Nonetheless, it is trying in every way possible way to pretend to be a “world judge of human rights”, one that has issues reports year in and year out to make unwarranted charges against other countries. The move, which goes against the historical trend and ma-made conflicts over human rights, runs utterly contrary to the spirit of the UN Charter and popular sentiment of the international community, and will necessarily meet with the opposition of more and more countries, including China. (Beijing Review 1997: 15)

However, despite its guarded approach towards the multilateral mechanisms, with the participation in UNPKO regime, China has set herself into an adaptive learning course. There is no doubt that China has adopted a very flexible and realistic attitude towards the PKO and has taken effective measures to contribute to it. During the Kosovo crisis in 1999, China was against NATO’s military strike upon Yugoslavia,
without the UN authorization. Yet China voted for the establishment of United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), and participated in the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) which clearly shows China's eagerness to participate in the multilateral security initiatives.

China maintains that the success of UNPKOs would mainly depend on the 'democratization of international relations'. In this regard, China has expressed its strong support for the UN Secretary-General’s Reports on the prevention of armed conflict (2001)\(^2\), which highlighted this point. In its official response, the Chinese government said:

The United Nations should play an important role in the promotion of the democratization of international relations. Armed conflicts in the Middle East, the Balkans, the Great Lakes region of Africa other countries and regions could be stopped as early as possible and new conflicts could be prevented if all sides concerned could really follow the basic norms guiding state-to-state relations. Although the role and capacity of the United Nations has its own limitations, as the secretary general has pointed out in the report, preventing armed conflict represents an important orientation in the field of maintaining international peace and security as well as an important task of the United Nations. China is willing to make its own contribution, together with other member states, to strengthening the capacity of the United Nations for the prevention of armed conflict (Wang 2001: www.china.org/eng/13543.html).

China also underlines the crucial role of the Security Council in providing legitimacy to peacekeeping operations, urging it to become more responsible in determining the need and the tenure of such operations and in developing relevant policies and guidelines in this regard (Pang 2005:79). China shared the opinion with other states that the Security Council should be at the core of all such operations from beginning to end, and pledged to work towards improving the Council’s working environment. It noted:

The workload of the Security Council has been increasing at such rate that, as time goes by, it will undermine the council’s efficiency, functions and ability to handle important peace and

security issues in a timely and effective manner... Improving working efficiency and increasing transparency constitute two important components of the reform... And the focus of the Security Council must be on primary issue of maintaining international peace and security. It is unpractical to move the important issues of all fields of the United Nations into the Security Council (Shen 2001: www.china.org/engl8082.html).

Again in a joint statement issued during Chinese President Jiang Zemin’s visit to Moscow in 1997, both sides emphasized the responsibility of the Security Council in maintaining world peace. The statement maintained:

The UN and its security council should be strengthened and that the UN efforts in maintaining world peace and security merit a positive appraisal. Believing that the UN as the most representative and authoritative organization composed of sovereign states has a world capacity that no other international organization can possibly replace, both sides are convinced that it ought to be allowed to play an important role in the establishment and maintenance of a new international order. The UN peacekeeping efforts should focus on the prevention of the occurrence and spread of conflicts. Peacekeeping operations can be undertaken only by the decision of the UN Security Council and the approval of the countries concerned, and in strict compliance with the Security Council mandate and its supervision. (Beijing Review 1997:7/8)

China regards the support and contribution of member countries as essential for the ability of the Security Council to perform its core functions of maintaining international peace and security effectively. Official statements declared that:

Important should be attached to keeping regular consultations with troop-contributing countries and listening to their pertinent views in all stages of the set-up and implementation of a peace keeping operation...[and] that such a mechanism should continue and improved and, without prejudice to the efficiency of the work of the security council, more flexible forms of exchange and communication with troop-contributing countries should be considered to inspire free exchange of views. Troop-contributing countries should also be encouraged to express to the council their concerns in a more timely and flexible manner... As to strengthening co-operation between the secretariat and troop-contributing countries, we support the establishment of closer partnership between the secretariat and troop contributors and the secretariat should do its utmost to provide facilities to the latter. We would recommend that the secretariat continue to give timely
and accurate briefings to troop-contributing countries, which should be in line with those given to the Security Council (Shen 2001: www.china-org/eng/7795.html).

After the Cold War, the international regimes including the PKO have played an important role in international relations and have gradually become a major lever for adjusting the relations among nations and maintaining international peace and security. In the contemporary world, it is very difficult for any country to exclude itself from the security regimes and thus remain isolated. China understands that its active participation in the UNPKO, one of the most important multilateral security regimes, will definitely strengthen the security matrix between it and the outside world and help in enhancing its international image. Thus, while there has been a certain change in China's attitude towards the UN's role in maintaining peace and security across the world in the post-Cold War period, it has always vociferously campaigned for protecting state sovereignty as a sacred principle of international law so as to prevent any kind of multilateral intervention against itself.

**China's role as a Security Council Member**

After gaining entry into the UN with the status of a permanent member of the Security Council, China was very keen to play an active role at the global level and exert its influence. In the early 1970s, when the decolonization movement was in full swing world over, China openly espoused the cause of developing and colonized countries and shared its experiences on how to fight against the forces of colonialism and imperialism. It posed itself as the representative of the Third World and confronted both the Western countries led by the US and the bloc of Soviet Union. After adopting the policies of reform and opening up, China made a significant adjustment in its attitude towards the UN and established cooperative relationship with other permanent members of the Security Council. China's stand towards the UN can be summed up in two points- first strengthening cooperation with other big powers and second emphasizing the role of the Security Council in international affairs.
Some Western analysts feel that China is too cautious a player and it always goes for minimum participation possible in the UN as it frequently abstains from voting. Though China had increased its affirmative votes consistent with the US in General Assembly from 10.95% in 1989 to 22.2% in 1996, it was still at a lower level compared to other permanent members. At the same time, France and UK shared more than 80% affirmative votes with the US and Russia had 60% affirmative votes consistent with the US (Economy and Oskenberg 2001:73). In defence of lack of decisive votes in the UN, China maintains that it has a unique status compared to other permanent members because of its different background and experience. In 1996, Ling Qing, the former Chinese standing deputy in the UN, mentioned four characteristics concerning China’s unique status in the UN:

- First, China was a developing country with a vast size and population, so it had its particular weight in the UN.

- Second, as a permanent member of the Security Council it had an important say in the UN.

- Third, as a representative of the developing countries it had to guard their interests and espouse their aspirations.

- Fourth, China was a socialist country and was carrying out an independent foreign policy of peace and development without allying with any of the big powers and certainly without any ideological discrimination. Such an independent position gave China more space to be an active player in the world stage (Li 2003:101-02).

These aspects reflect the Chinese perspective on what it calls its ‘unique’ position and status in the UN. However, these four points only highlight the advantaged position of China’s status. Therefore, there is a need for an elaborate analysis of China’s actual position in the UN with both the positive and negative facets.
A Permanent Member with a Colonial experience

China is an ancient country with a long cherished history, orient civilization, vast territory and large multi-nationality population. In the Security Council dominated by the Western civilization, China represents a diversity of region, geography, nationality and culture. Moreover, it is the only country in the Security Council that had faced subjugation and oppression by the imperialist and colonial powers. Thus, it shares common experiences and interests with other developing countries of the Third World who had undergone similar phases in their history. China advocates equality among nations, maintenance of state sovereignty against undue interference by the ‘big’ states and peaceful coexistence among countries with different cultures and systems. The Report of China’s 16th Party Congress highlighted this perspective again as “maintaining the diversity of the world in favour of promoting democracy in international relations and diversifying development models” (Party Congress Report 2002:43). However, China’s call for collaboration with the developing countries on the major issues reflect the intent to enhance its bargaining powers vis-à-vis the developed countries within the Council.

The Constraints of Policy and Ideology

China’s international influence is restrained to some extent because of the ambiguous policy formulations both at the domestic and international level. While on the one hand it defines itself as the developing country representing the interests of the Third World, it shares more common interests with the big powers on the other. Such dual nature of policy may provide more diplomatic space and choices in certain contexts but in many situations it proves to be a shortcoming. The Western countries never trust China and it does have conflict of interests with the developing countries at the same time. After opening to the outside world, especially after the entry into the WTO, China is gradually integrating into the mainstream of the world. But China’s domestic political system and ideology are unacceptable to the Western countries as they demand China to join the Western liberal traditions of democracy by shunning its ideological rigidities. The development of China is regarded as the
rising of the “China threat”. Not only do some developed countries hold a distrustful attitude toward China, but it holds true for some developing countries also. The pressures and containment from outside make it more difficult for China to play an active role in the world.

The most important factor that constricts Chinese international influence is its domestic dimension. Some domestic issues such as Taiwan, Tibet and human rights issue have made China tread very cautiously in international affairs. These issues are main obstacles that restrict the international role of China. Internally, these issues draw a lot of attention of the government to deal with its domestic problems and weaken its inclination and resources to act as an international player. Internationally these issues are used to undermine China’s influence in global affairs. Now China is in a stage seeking development, without a clear strategy to play a proper international role. It neither possesses enough capacity and confidence to play an international role, nor has a favourable international environment for doing so. The Chinese government and analysts therefore believe that Chinese priorities are domestic development and stability, not seeking a leading role in international affairs. As a developing country, development and national unity are the two most important priorities of China.

**China’s ‘Power’ in the Security Council**

As has been discussed earlier, Chinese comprehensive power, with two components of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ power, is not as strong as other permanent members. In comparison to other members, China is still in a disadvantageous position in terms of both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ power. There is considerable gap between China and other permanent members in terms of military and economic power. China’s lower financial contribution to the UN also limits its influence in the world body. As for ‘soft’ power, even the United Kingdom and France are more influential than China with more experience in multilateral diplomacy. The two countries have “both a large number of technical skills, in drafting, committee work and so on” (Taylor and Groom 2000:299). They also have extensive trans-regional ties through the
Commonwealth and Francophone systems. China is still very limited in aspects such as multilateral diplomatic ability, organizing skill, language application, personnel participation and so on. Paul Taylor put state membership in the UN into different groups. According to his typology, China, the US and the former USSR belong to the "status quo powers", having a position in the organization which can match their status in global society and they see the UN as "an instrument of their foreign policy" (Taylor and Groom 2000:299). He identified the UK and France as another kind of "status quo power". In the UN, China does not possess great power like the US and also lacks the flexibility and freedom enjoyed by France and the UK. China uses its less powerful position in the Council in comparison to other members as an explanation of its low level participation and attitude of status quo. Prof. Wang Yizhou argues that "the 5 permanent members were quite different in their power, influence, alliance capacity and the decision-making arrangements, although they shared the same rights according to the Charter" (Wang 1995:404). He believes different power would lead to different decision-making arrangements shaping the hierarchy of the Council. "The US was a leader of the Western world as well as a 'super permanent member' in the Council. In most cases, the UK and France were followers of the US." Therefore, China would like to have a policy called "stay calmly, defend positively and watch for a chance" (Wang 1995:404). This reflects both a popular Chinese perspective of the UN and a Chinese definition of its status in the Security Council.

**China's Voting Pattern in the Security Council**

China adopts a very cautious approach towards the UN, not wanting to antagonize either the 'big' powers or the developing countries through its behaviour. Its ambivalent attitude is best reflected the way it votes in the Security Council. In more than three decades, from late 1971 to the end of 2002, China cast only four vetoes out of a total 133 (3%), as against 13 by the Soviet Union/Russia (9.7%), 14 by France (10.5%), 27 by the United Kingdom (20.3%), and 75 by the United States (56.4%). These figures exclude a 1981 Sino-US 'veto war' during closed door deliberations on a recommendation on the appointment of the Secretary-General;
those behind the-scenes vetoes are not included in the official UNSC documents (Kim 2004:45-46).

The four vetoes cast by China had little to do with playing second fiddle to France or Russia in obstructing or opposing ‘Western interests’. The first two vetoes were cast in 1972- one on the question of Bangladesh and another on an amendment in regard to Middle East. The Bangladesh veto was in effect a proxy veto cast on behalf of an ally (Pakistan), but two years later China reversed itself, giving full and unqualified support for Bangladesh’s UN membership. The second veto was cast along with the Soviet Union on an amendment to a three-Power draft resolution (S/10784) on the Middle East question. The third and fourth vetoes were cast in 1997 and 1999 on Taiwan related cases. The 1997 veto was on a draft resolution (S/1997/18) authorizing a small UN peacekeeping operation for Guatemala, vetoed because of that country’s pro-Taiwan activities, but here again China reversed itself 11 days later allowing the Council to approve the United Nations Human Rights Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA). China’s fourth veto was on a draft resolution (S/1999/201) to extend the mandate of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Forces (UNPREDEP) in the former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia for a period of six months as a punitive strike at Macedonia for establishing diplomatic relations with Taiwan in January 1999. None of the four vetoes had the paralyzing effect on the decision-making process of the Security Council; none fits the case of playing second fiddle to Moscow or Paris; and none had much to do with obstructing or opposing the interests of the western countries.

According to Samuel Kim, “China has managed to exert considerable leverage, if not normative influence, in the decision-making process, not by hyperactive engagement or coalition-building leadership but by following an indeterminate strategy that has vacillated between tacit cooperation and calculated aloofness” (Kim 2004:48). Despite its ‘principled opposition’ to a wide range of issues in the Security Council, China has generally expressed this opposition in the form of ‘non-participation in the vote’ or ‘abstention’. Given its long-standing assault on the veto as an expression of hegemonic behaviour, Beijing has made a concerted effort not to allow itself to be cornered into having no choice but to cast a
solo veto. In the post-Cold War period, however, 'abstention' has become, in most cases, a kind of normative veto and an expression of 'principled opposition' without standing in the way of the majority will in the UNSC. From August 1990 to December 1999, for example, China cast no less than 41 abstentions as an expression of its principled opposition on such issues as the use of force, humanitarian intervention and the establishment of international criminal tribunals. Thus China is sometimes forced to affirm a resolution (as in the case of Resolution 827 on the international war crimes tribunal in Bosnia) which violates its most cherished principle of the non-violability of state sovereignty, with nothing more than the habit-driven ritualistic pronouncement of a 'principled position'.

The most obvious explanation for such behaviour is the desire to retain maximum leverage as part of its indeterminate strategy of becoming all things to all nations on the many issues intruding upon the Security Council agenda. Like nuclear weapons, the real power of the veto lays not so much in its actual use as in the threat of its use or non-use. To abstain is to apply the Chinese code of conduct of being firm in principle but flexible in application, or to find a face-saving exit with a voice in those cases that pit China's realpolitik interests against idealpolitik normative concerns for China's international reputation. Of the P-5, as Barry O'Neill has argued, with some exaggeration, China is the most powerful member of the UNSC, because it holds its veto power from an extreme political position, standing alone (O'Neill 1997:211). Despite the habitual claim that support for and solidarity with the Third World is a basic principle in Chinese foreign policy, Beijing has emerged as perhaps the most independent actor in global politics, a veritable group of one.

In any event, the pattern that emerges with respect to China's voting behaviour in the Council, particularly abstentions on Chapter VII enforcement draft resolution, is neither positive engagement nor obstruction, but situation-specific and self-serving pursuit of the maxi-mini strategy. Some Chinese scholars feel that by abstaining China refuses to bear the responsibility as one of the permanent members of the Security Council and thus fails to use its normative power. Pang Zhongying has criticized China's excessive use of abstention as tantamount to abandoning its
responsibility— as compromising rather than enhancing China's identity as a responsible great power (Pang 2002:73).

With the demise of the Washington-Moscow-Beijing strategic triangle, however, China's responsible use of the veto power in the UNSC remains the only way that it can project its identity as a great power. This identity also puts Beijing in a dilemma, as it is pulled in one direction by the developing countries with whom it needs to build coalitions, and in another by those who are most powerful in the global system (Foot 2001:242). With the recent and unexpected revival of Taiwan's UN bid, the veto power is seen as the most potent instrument and impregnable shield that can defend the integrity of the People's Republic as the sole legitimate Chinese government in the world organization.

China's role in the Security Council is largely determined by the complexities and the changing nature of the post-Cold War period and the growing demand for global solutions to the regional and local instabilities. While China is very keen to play an important role in global affairs as a permanent member of the Security Council, it also wants to maintain its distinct identity as a developing country and not to identify completely with the Western powers.

**China's Adaptation to UN treaties**

The emergence of China as a global player and its remarkable growth as an economic powerhouse has significant implications not only for the country's future but also for the world order. For the UN system in particular, it represents an opportunity to help China deliver on Millennium Development Goals (MDG), strengthen multilateralism and reinforce global and regional stability. Recent studies suggest that China has made great efforts towards ratifying and implementing key UN conventions (UN Theme Group on the Rule of Law 2005:1-2).

Of all the UN treaties, the treaties related to human rights are regarded as the most important ones. In fact, out of the twenty-five treaties that were identified by the UN Secretary General as the core group representative of the UN's key objectives, fourteen are human rights treaties. So far, China has ratified or acceded
to eleven UN human rights treaties, nine of which are core treaties of the UN. In addition, China has ratified six of the international humanitarian treaties, concluded with the help of the International Red Cross. Some human rights treaties contain provisions that require countries to submit regular reports on the treaty's status. In recent years, China has submitted a number of reports on the progress made in implementing relevant human rights treaties. These include five reports on the *Racial Discrimination Convention*, six reports on the *Women's Convention*, three reports on the *Torture Convention* and two reports on the *Children's Convention*. In 2003, the Chinese Government submitted, as scheduled, its initial report to the UN with respect to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The report gave an overall account of the efforts made by China in promoting and protecting economic, social and cultural rights in recent years (UN Theme Group on the Rule of Law 2005:5-12).

As the 'opening up' and economic reform policies required China to establish a rational and transparent legal structure in place, a comparatively complete legal system centered on the Constitution has been formed, with laws covering almost every aspect of life. In the area of citizens' rights protection, China has made or amended a large number of laws in recent years. These laws can be understood as legislative measures adopted to implement the human rights treaties. In addition to legislative measures, China has also adopted a range of administrative, judicial and other measures to protect citizens' rights. The Chinese government has established a number of political, economic and cultural regulations extending special treatment to minorities so that all kinds of discrimination could be eliminated. For example, the government has formulated a special employment policy requiring state-owned enterprises located in minority dominated regions to give preference to local minority people in the recruiting process. Furthermore, so as to ensure the effective protection of women and children's rights, the Committee for Internal Judicial Affairs of the National Peoples' Congress (NPC) and the standing committees of the sixteen provincial, autonomous and municipal People's Congresses have established special departments to handle matters concerning women and children. The State Council has established a Work Committee for
women and children in order to coordinate and encourage governmental departments
to incorporate standards guaranteeing the rights of women and children into their
work. However, problems remain in implementing the human rights treaties and for
that matter other UN treaties as well in China, as the Chinese Constitution does not
include provisions concerning the legal status of treaties. The implementation of a
treaty depends to a large extent on the existence of relevant Chinese legislation.
However, even if such legislation did exist, it would not mean that treaties would
automatically be implemented. The Chinese supreme legislative organs, the NPC
and its Standing Committee, usually consult or refer to international agreements in
the process of drafting laws, but under the guiding rule or principle on legislative
processes, the Chinese law-making bodies have no legal duty to refer to treaties. The
General Principle of the Law on Legislation 2000, do not prescribe the international
treaties should be referred to or consulted as guiding rules for legislation. Therefore,
with regard to implementation of international treaties, Chinese legislative organs
have wide powers and flexibility to decide the law-making process and it is not
necessary for them to consult international treaties.

While drafting the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of
Women to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of
Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Standing Committee examined this
UN treaty in detail. The drafting of this law was regarded as an integral part of
China’s international obligations. However, the content of this law does not
precisely reflect CEDAW article by article and there is no provision on the
relationship between the treaty and the Chinese law. It is obvious that the Law on
the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Women is not a form of individual
transformation of CEDAW. Therefore, Chinese courts can only refer to relevant
Chinese law or can apply the treaty indirectly.

Problems in the Adaptation to the Treaties

The PRC, as a party to some of the international treaties, has not taken the
relevant domestic legislative measures with regard to their implementation. As a
result, these treaties cannot be easily implemented in China. For example, in spite of China’s accession to the Convention Regarding the Status of Refugees in 1982, the Chinese government has not formulated any special law or regulation to implement the convention. There is no definition of ‘refugee’ in Chinese law; the Constitution provides for asylum to foreigners only for political purposes, a very limited provision in comparison to that of the Refugee Convention. Article 1(2) of the Convention extends the status of ‘refugee’ to “any person who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion is outside of the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country” (UN Theme Group on the Rule of Law 2005:16). Since the PRC does not have any legislative measures concerning refugees it lacks legal procedures dealing with discrimination against refugees. Thus, the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees cannot be fully implemented in China.

The discrepancies between the Chinese laws and the UN treaties also create difficulties for the implementation of such treaties. Again, the differences on the principle of non-discrimination lead to partial adaptation of some of the very important human rights conventions in China. In fact, a majority of the human rights treaties contain the principle of non-discrimination. Some Conventions such as the Racial Discrimination Convention and the Women’s Convention aim to eradicate discrimination. Chinese law differs in some respects from these treaties. For example, according to Article 1(1) of the Racial Discrimination Convention, the term ‘racial discrimination’ means “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin”, but no such definition exists in Chinese law. In China, prevention of racial discrimination is confined merely to the issue of minority equality, which is narrower than the provisions of the Racial Discrimination Convention. Various types of discriminations exist in Chinese society, of which the most prominent and fundamental is the inequality between rural and urban residents. For instance, Chinese farmers do not enjoy equal franchise rights with city residents. Article 16 of the Electoral Law of the National People’s Congress and Local People’s Congress,
amended in 1995, states that “the number of people represented by each rural deputy is four times the number of people represented by each urban deputy” (UN Theme Group on the Rule of Law 2005:16).

However, of late, China has become attentive towards the human rights concerns and has made efforts to create parity between international conventions and domestic law. The Chinese government has actively participated in the process of formulating international human rights legal instruments, such as the Legally Binding Normative Instrument for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance or the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The PRC has taken steps towards ratifying the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention and is implementing measures towards ratifying the two conventions prohibiting forced labour. In recent years, China has adopted a number of legislative measures and made improvements in safeguarding citizens’ rights. Most importantly, on 14 March 2004, the Second Session of the Tenth National People’s Congress (NPC) adopted a variety of constitutional amendments and for the first time the words “the state respects and safeguards human rights” were included in the Constitution (Article 33). This clause was a welcome step in the direction of development of human rights in China. Beginning in the 1990s, the Chinese government, for the first time in the PRC’s history, amended and drafted a series of laws empowering Chinese citizens to file suits against the government and its officials. Article 2 of the 1990 Administrative Procedural Law, the State Compensation Law enacted in 1994 and the Administrative License Law effective in July 2004, all establish such mechanisms. In accordance with these laws, compensation committees have been set up in intermediate People’s Courts and higher, which now hear compensation cases and thus mitigate people’s grievances.

Moreover, Chinese legislation is increasingly incorporating measures for the protection of human rights in criminal procedures, an important dimension of the rights protected by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The Criminal Procedure Law, as amended in 1996, now embodies, to a certain extent, the principle of the presumption of innocence. It states that no one should be convicted before there is a ruling by the People’s Court. In addition, more
emphasis has been placed on victim’s rights. Victims are now listed as litigants and are granted a wider range of rights. The 1979 Criminal Law, amended in 1997, has further refined the three basic principles of conviction and penalty according to the law, equality before the law and punishment commensurate with the crime. Another dimension deals with the right to political participation. Since the promulgation of the new Organic Law of Villagers’ Committees in 1999, public participation at the rural grass-roots level has developed considerably. Until 2003, twenty-eight provinces, autonomous regions and centrally administered municipalities devised or revised measures for implementing the Organic Law of Villagers’ Committee and 31 of these bodies have since established procedures for electing villagers’ committees. In many provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities in China fifth or sixth term or even more term villagers’ committee elections have been completed with an average participation rate of 80 percent. In some southern provinces, this rate even exceeded 90 percent. However, gap between China’s legal system and the ICCPR still exists. For instance, according to Article 9-19 of the 1998 Regulation on the Administration of Social Organizations Registration, the applicant, upon setting up a social organization, must accept the double examinations procedures and gain approval from the organ in charge of operation and of administration and registration, thus making the process of establishing an organization rather complicated.

Thus, despite the best efforts, China has not been able to adapt various UN treaties and conventions in the country. Like the human rights treaties, other UN treaties in the field of environmental protection, labour and gender issues face similar problems in being implemented in China in the absence of required laws and regulations and effective mechanisms to implement such international treaties. The Chinese legal system does not include consistent regulations dealing with the relationship between international treaties and national law. A uniform rule dealing with the application of treaties in Chinese legislation still does not exist, in particular because the Chinese Constitution has no provision for the legal status of the international treaties. The discrepancy that exists between the Chinese law and the international treaties is the main roadblock against the implementation of UN
treaties and unless this discrepancy is removed, China would always be at the receiving end of the adverse international observations and monitoring.

From the above analysis, it is apparent that China is in the process of learning as it adapts to, and internalizes, prevailing rules, norms, and procedures of UN bodies and their treaties. And learning is never a one way process. As China has made significant reforms in the legal and judicial sphere as per the requirements of different regimes (of the UN), it has sought to introduce new priorities of rights and to influence existing UN norms and procedures. The question of state sovereignty often raised by China poses challenges for the UN regimes as they go for interventionist policies against target countries. The UN human rights regime in particular has been under continual challenge as it has to maintain the balance between its dual functions as a "foundation of authority and an arena of struggle" (Kent 1999:9). The United Nations and its specialized agencies play a pivotal role in setting standards of human rights at the global level and also in promoting and monitoring their implementation in various countries. In the absence of any intergovernmental organization that could provide a credible mechanism to monitor China's human rights at the regional level, the UN bodies are the principal mechanisms of multilateral monitoring. There have been three main phases of China's interaction with the international human rights regime in the United Nations. The first phase of engagement, characterized by little attention to human rights issues, began when the People's Republic of China replaced Taiwan in the UN in 1971 and became subject to the norms and constraints that the regime imposed. The second phase (1979-89) occurred within the UN system and was inaugurated when China began participating in the UN Human Rights Commission, thus formally abandoning its earlier policy of avoidance and noninvolvement in human rights matters. During this phase, China was subjected to the pressures of the regime. The third phase began with the strong application of the regime in the aftermath of the strong crackdown by the Chinese government on the Democracy Movement in June 1989. In this phase China was subjected to extensive monitoring as well as rigorous, overt and sustained multilateral and bilateral pressures. China signed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
(ICESCR) in 1997 and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1998 though it did not ratify them. It was a party to four other major human rights treaties: the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It was also a member of the UN Commission on Human Rights and the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and like other member states, it was subject to the jurisdiction of the thematic working groups and special rapporteurs (Kent 1999:15).

As has been discussed, the process of adaptation by China to the UN and to its various specialized agencies is still evolving. While adapting, China’s effort is to assert position of the ‘Third World’ on human rights and other such issues by reshaping the norms of the regime rather than to fully comply with the regime, as it was currently constituted. Though China has made significant concessions as a member of different international regimes (on human rights, environment etc) under the auspices of the UN, it does not want to follow the norms and standards set by the Western countries completely. It wants to maintain its distinct identity as the champion of the interests of the developing countries. In fact, China has succeeded in influencing the global discourse on issues of importance such as human rights and environmental protection in such a capacity. China has been able to put forth its views in important UN forums such as the World Human Rights Conference at Vienna (1993).3 So, it is a two way process- both the UN and China making mutual adjustments in important policy areas, thus impacting each other in the process.

China's stand on Global Terrorism and the UN's Role in the Contemporary International Order

After the September 11 terrorist attacks, terrorism has emerged as the biggest threat to the mankind. As a result, there have been intense efforts at the international level for better co-operation and co-ordination among the countries to eradicate this menace from the world scene. As China, over the years, has been facing a number of incidents due to increasing terrorism and separatist movements within its own borders, it has significantly changed its more-reserved attitude towards the UN peace enforcement after the 9/11 attacks. For the first time since China entered the UN in 1971, China voted to endorse an American use of force against a sovereign country (Afghanistan) in the UN Security Council. Although China opposed the United States-led war against Iraq in 2003 - as did France, Russia and Germany - it nevertheless endorsed an intrusive UN Security Council resolution to disarm Iraq, another sovereign country. While China's support for increased international co-operation in combating terrorism is clear, it is wary about the growing US unilateralism in world affairs, in the post 9/11 period (Ma 2003: personal interview).

Though China committed its support to the US efforts in the war against terror, nevertheless it maintained that such war should be fought under the overall leadership of the UN. Just in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan enumerated China's stand on the issue in a press conference:

The UN is an inter-governmental international organization with the widest representation it has a unique role to play in the international co-operation against terrorism. We support increasing multilateral co-operation at the UN, its security council and other fora. The UN's actions within its capacity will enjoy our support so long as it is conducive to the fight against terrorism and help safeguard world peace and stability. (Tang 2002:166)

In fact, Beijing has laid down several conditions to be met before it endorses US military operations: actions should be based on 'concrete evidence', should strictly observe international law, should not hurt innocent civilians, and should be carried out with authorization from the UN Security Council (Jing-dong 2005:117). China strongly objects to any kind of interference in domestic affairs and the potential
expansion of the US military involvement in the East Asian region under the pretext of humanitarian intervention and war against terrorism.

Chinese perspectives in the post-Cold War period revolve around consistent themes of multipolarity, a greater UN role in world affairs, state sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs. China wants to be consulted on important international issues and believes key security issues should be handled through the UN Security Council, where Beijing wields veto power as a permanent member. At the UN Security Council summit in September 2005, Chinese President Hu Jintao in his speech called for further strengthening the Security Council while expressing concern on border disputes, territorial conflicts, regional discord, and other traditional and non-traditional security concerns like poverty, terrorism, transnational crimes, and outbreak of communicable diseases. Hu made the following suggestions:

• Adhere to multilateralism in order to uphold the authority of the security council ("only by strengthening multilateral co-operation and, in particular, strengthening the role of the United Nations and upholding the council’s authority, can we effectively cope with the increasing global threats and challenges and genuinely achieve universal security");

• Enhance the security council’s efficiency to enable it to respond more effectively to threats (especially terrorist outbreaks);

• Improve the decision-making authority of the Security Council in accordance with democratic principles, which would enable developing countries- the majority of UN members- to play a fuller role ("democratization of international relations is the trend of the present era and should be embodied in the Security Council... China stands for an enlarged Security Council based on a broad consensus, and increased representation of developing countries. African countries in particular, thus giving more countries, especially the
small and medium-sized countries, greater access to its decision making”;

Enable the Security Council to focus more carefully and fully on African concerns (Xinhua News Agency 2005, China Quarterly 2005:1023).

Given China’s relatively weak, but rising international position, China has repeatedly emphasized the importance of the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. In the post-Iraq War Scenario, the Chinese officials and scholars have very openly articulated their apprehensions about the growing dominance of the US in World affairs. Prof. Ye Zicheng of Peking University says:

There could appear two mutually contradictory world orders. One is the current international order and the other is the order that is being plotted by the US hawkish forces, which took the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks as an excuse for launching the Afghan and Iraq Wars to gradually realize their hegemonic ambition. The United States has become both the safeguard and the challenger of the current world order, the paradox of an ambitious superpower aiming to establish a Pax Americana (Zhou 2003:44).

Ye emphasizes the importance of the UN and multilateral negotiation mechanism to maintain the balance of power in the World system:

Three pillars support the current international order. One is international law and the principles guiding international relations, including the equality of sovereign countries, territorial integrity and political independence, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs and the peaceful settlement of disputes instead of resorting to force or threatening with force, which is aimed at stopping invasions and safeguarding collective security. The second pillar is the international political and economic order, namely, the settlement of political and economic disputes through the UN and WTO. The third is the international negotiation mechanism, which includes the veto right of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (Zhou 2003:44).
Similarly, another scholar Shen Jiru of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences argues for making the UN strong enough to contain the growing influence of the US:

Although faced with many difficulties, the UN made great efforts to resolve issues including disarmament, refugees, colonization and poverty. After the Cold War, the international situation released and the international community hoped the UN could make a greater contribution to world peace and development. However, the United States created a split within the UN on Iraq issue, arousing opposition throughout the world. At present, many countries, including those that support the war, demand that the United States let the UN play the leading role in the reconstruction of Iraq (Zhou 2003:45).

Significantly, since the 9/11 incident, the Chinese government has raised and dealt with the issue of terrorism in all major official documents and government papers issued either for domestic or international purposes. For example, the 'Position Paper on UN Reforms' released by China on 7 June 2005 says, "China stands for, and supports, the fight against terrorism in all forms and manifestations. International counter-terrorism efforts should give full play to the UN leading and coordinating role, address both the root causes and symptoms and avoid politicization and double standards" (Government of the PRC 2005: http://www.chinadaiy.com.cn/English/doc/2005-06/08/content_449696_2htm).

China hopes for a consensus on the definition of terrorism. The definition may draw on, as appropriate, the existing international conventions and related provisions of Security Council resolutions. Member states and civil society must comply with the UN Charter and relevant norms of international law while participating in the fight against terrorism (Government of PRC 2005: http://www.chinadaiy.com.cn/English/doc/2005-06/08/content_449696_2htm). There are two significant aspects of the Chinese approach which emerge in these most recent publications: first, the Chinese government's stress on a consensus in the defining terrorism at the international level and second, the consistent emphasis on the need for the UN to take up the leading role in dealing with the issue of terrorism at the international level (Panda 2006:199-207). Moreover, Chinese analyses of international terrorism not only focus on the origin, evolution and characteristics of terrorist groups and activities, but also seek
to uncover the root causes of terrorism and the links to international political, economic, and social justice. At the 13th APEC Ministerial Meeting in October 2001, China took the leadership in formulating the parameters of the international war against terrorism, which emphasized the paramount role of the UN in all such operations. The main points of this consensus position were as follows:

- Firstly, that the rest of the international community should join AMM ministers in recognizing that terrorism in all its form is a threat to international peace and security and as such, should be condemned and combated;
- Secondly, that all anti-terrorist resolution adopted by the UN Security Council should be implemented;
- Thirdly, that international co-operation against terrorism should be strengthened under the aegis of the UN and the UN Security Council;
- Finally, that the struggle against terrorism was a struggle between just and evil, and between civilization and barbarism- not merely a conflict between different ethnic groups, religions or cultures (Xinhua News Agency 2001, *China Quarterly* 2002:274).

The Defence White Papers released by the PRC government in recent years also highlight China’s concerns on the growing threat of terrorism at the global level and its support for more coordinated and collective efforts to deal with the threat. The 2004 National Defence White Paper “supported the UN, particularly the Security Council in playing a leading role in this regard, and seriously implemented Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism issues, as was shown by its reports to the Council on the implementation of Resolution No. 1373. It has actively supported and participated in the drafting of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism and the International Convention on the Suppression of Nuclear Terrorism” (Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, 2004:http://www.china.org.cn/e-whiteI20041227Iindex.htm)

In fact, China’s response to the 9/11 incidents in the US was very quick and strong and it produced a ‘Position Paper against International Terrorism’, which was
released on 25 September 2001. According to this paper, “China supports all efforts aimed at strengthening anti-terrorism conventions within the framework of the United Nations, including the early completion of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. China encourages all states to become parties to the existing international anti-terrorism conventions as soon as possible and to effectively implement such conventions” (Government of PRC 2001: http://www.china-un.ch/eng/gjhyfy/qqwt/t85705.htm)

Yet another paper of October 2002, China Active in Global Counter-Terrorism released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) argues that China's stance on international counter-terrorism is ‘clear and persistent’ and “China supports the fight against all forms of terrorism and abides by relevant resolutions passed by the UN General Assembly and Security Council”. China holds that all actions against terrorism should have unassailable evidence and a clear target and adhere to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. China opposes arbitrarily widening the scope of strikes in the name of fighting terrorism and it also opposes identifying terrorism with any specific country, ethnic group or religion (Government of PRC 2002: http://www.china-un.ch/eng/zt/zgfk/t89060.htm).

The Defence White Paper released in December 2002, while reiterating China's commitment towards the global fight against terrorism maintained that such fight must strictly adhere to the principles of the UN Charter and must be based on a broad consensus among all the countries regarding the multilateral operations. It says -

The Chinese government is of the view that the international community should strengthen dialogue and consultation and develop cooperation, join hands in preventing and fighting against international terrorist activities, and make efforts to eradicate the root cause of terrorism. The fight against terrorism requires conclusive evidence, clear targets and conformity with the purpose and principles of the UN Charter, and the universally acknowledged norms of international laws. In this regard, the leading role of the UN and its Security Council should be brought into full play, and all actions taken should be conducive to the long-term interest of preserving regional and world peace. Terrorism should not be confused with a specific nation or religion; neither should dual
In fact, in the post-9/11 scenario, China has very actively participated in all counter-terrorism campaigns launched by the UN and has tried to implement a series of resolutions on the anti-terrorism issue passed by the United Nations and its Security Council. It has even submitted to the Security Council Anti-Terrorism Commission a report on the implementation of Security Council Resolution No. 1373. China has acceded to the International Convention on Stopping Terrorist Explosions, and signed the International Convention on Severing Financial Aid to Terrorism. China has acceded to ten and signed another one of the twelve international anti-terrorism conventions. It has also held anti-terrorism consultations respectively with the USA, Russia, UK, France, Pakistan and India, and has taken an active part in the work of the Security Council Anti-Terrorism Commission (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Beijing December 2002: http://www.china.eng.cn/e-white/20021209/index.htm).

On 20 January 2003, Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan put forward four-point proposition for deepened war on terror at the Anti-terrorism Meeting of Foreign Ministers of UN Security Council. First, with peace and security for all mankind as the central theme of counter-terrorism, efforts should be made to cultivate a new security concept featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation and to resolve or mitigate such regional hotspots as the Middle East and Iraq. Second, with universal development and common prosperity as the foundation of counter-terrorism, efforts should be made to promote the economic development of all countries, narrow the wealthy gap and attain the development goals laid down by the UN Millennium Summit. Third, with closer communication among and
integration of different civilizations as the safeguard of counter-terrorism, efforts should be made to promote understanding and tolerance among diverse civilizations and cultures. Fourth, with stronger exchange and cooperation as the key to counter-terrorism efforts should be made to give scope to the leading role of the UN and help developing countries build up their capacity in compliance with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter (Department of Policy Planning of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People’s Republic of China 2004:340-341). Thus, China, through various policy statements, official releases and global forums always maintained that the UN should play the central role in finding out the socio-cultural and economic solutions to the problem of terrorism, so that its root cause can be addressed instead of merely resorting to military interventions under the US influence.

**China's Dilemma on War against Terror**

While China's support for increased international cooperation in combating terrorism is clear, its attitude toward the use of force in response to the September 11 terrorist acts remains ambivalent. Beijing's reservations about providing unconditional support for US military actions reflect its consistent opposition to intervention in other countries' domestic affairs. When the US moved towards war against Iraq without the UN approval, China along with France and Russia strongly opposed the use of force in Iraq and called for the peaceful solution of the Iraq issue under UN Security Council Resolution 1441. Though, China did not openly criticize the US, it nevertheless questioned the legality of the American action, after the attacks started on Iraq. By stating that the American action was not in conformity with Resolution 1441', China left no one in doubt that it did not agree with the US interpretation of the phrase 'serious consequences' in UNSCR 1441 as legitimizing the use of force in case Iraq refused to disarm (Suryanarayana 2003:8). China showed increased levels of opposition to the invasion of Iraq as the National People’s Congress (NPC) expressed ‘grave worries’ during its ongoing session and called on the US to comply with the will of the international community (Suryanarayana 2003:8).
Throughout the Iraq crisis, China insisted on maintaining the role and authority of the UN Security Council in solving the Iraq issue and gave full support to the inspection work of the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), and the IAEA (PTINews2003: http://www.ptinews.com/nemtstory.asp?main=International & ID-14941 & recognize). China itself was willing to offer personnel and technical support to the United Nations inspectors searching for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq (ABC Australia News2003: http://www.goasiapacific.com/news/Go Asia Pacific BNA_796355.htm). While expressing solidarity with the US, China's repeated emphasis on the continuing relevance of UN inspection in Iraq appeared to maintain a balance its two positions. Moreover, China successfully used this opportunity to bring to the attention of both the US and the UN, the terrorist activities by the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) in its own territory. As a result, the US added the ETIM to its list of proscribed terrorist groups - in August 2002. In September 2002, the UN also added the ETIM to its 'list of terrorists and terrorist supporters associated with Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda network' (Gunitskirk 2002: http://www.cdi.org/terrorism/etim.cfm).

China worries about the possibilities of the United States using the pretext of humanitarian intervention to challenge its sovereignty over minority regions such as Tibet and Xinjiang. US/NATO intervention in Kosovo and more recently in Iraq sent warnings to policy-makers in Beijing that the United Nations could be bypassed and that sovereignty could be ignored and violated. The Bush administration's rhetoric about treating terrorist groups and the states that harbor them alike only heightens China's anxiety. Hence, China demands 'concrete evidence' and a UN role in all sorts of military operations, which are launched as part of counter-terrorism measures (Jing-dong 2006: http://nautilus.org).

China faces a serious dilemma in crafting its response to the US war on terrorism. On the one hand, it wants to be seen as resolute and unfailing in its political support for action against terrorism. On the other, it does not want to be closely associated with the US military actions that violate state sovereignty and invite retaliation. Beijing wants to join international efforts in the fight against
terrorism because international support may help it confront growing terrorist activities in support of separatist movements in Xinjiang. At the same time, China is concerned that US military operations may set precedents for future interference in domestic affairs and the further erosion of the UN's authority. China wants to seize the opportunity to improve Sino-US relations, but also wants to exploit the opportunity to extract US concessions on Taiwan, Missile defence, and its policy towards Xinjiang and Tibetan separatists. These long-term normative and practical concerns are pitted against the more immediate challenges of crafting the right policy in a volatile situation (Jing-dong 2006: http://nautilus.org).

China's formal position in regard to humanitarian crises arising out of internal conflicts is to oppose any form or military intervention unless such action is approved by both the sovereign power and the UN Security Council. China's resistance to such intervention proposals is usually passive, exercised by some form of abstention in a UN Security Council resolution on intervention. This policy may be classified as passive participation or reluctant intervention. While China has often articulated strong views on potential intervention actions, fearing undermining its UN standing, such veto actions are usually reserved for Taiwan related matters. China's opposition to intervention takes a particularistic dimension where relations with Taiwan are involved (Morphet 2000:151-66).

China's position is more flexible regarding military intervention in respect of cross-border incursions where only UN Security Council approval would be viewed as essential. In respect of such international conflicts, it has also been more amenable to non-military forms of intervention such as sanctions and boycotts etc. And when a military response has seemed necessary, China has usually gone along with such response, only insisting on UN Security Council approval. The US led-war on terrorism tested this general approach seriously. While China went along with the US claim to be exercising self-defence, as permitted in the UN Charter, it strongly favoured UN Security Council approval. A deeper and long-standing concern with the sovereignty principle tended to shape China's support for US intervention first in Afghanistan and later in Iraq. China continues to encourage a
more substantial UN role, being truly a reluctant intervener. Nevertheless, where the UN is involved, China has shown a greater willingness to participate.

**China's Stand on UN Reforms**

The predominant role of the UN Security Council in managing global affairs has been questioned from time to time. There have been demands to reform it in order to make its functioning more democratic and transparent. In 1979 for the first time some developing countries put forward the issue of reform on the agenda of UN. After the end of the Cold War and subsequent change in the world order the campaign by various countries to reform the Council gathered steam leading to endless debates in this regard. In 1993 the Open-Ended Working Group was constituted by the UN to formally discuss about the reform issue (Li 2003:107). From 1993 onwards, there were several initiatives to reform the composition as well as the working methods of the Security Council. Finally in 2003 by appointing a *High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change*, Secretary General Kofi Annan sent a strong signal for an increased push for reform. The Panel, consisting of a number of international dignitaries, was asked to analyze and assess future threats to peace and security and to evaluate existing approaches, instruments and mechanisms, including Security Council reform, and was meant as stimulus for further discussion in this regard. In December 2004, the Panel released its report *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*. It included 101 recommendations for change and ‘grand bargain’ for the reform of Security Council. It proposed two models A and B for the enlargement both of which suggested expanding the Council to 24 members. Model A proposed six new permanent seats, with no veto, and three new two-year term elected seats. Model B proposed to create eight new seats, renewable every four years, and one new two-year non-renewable seat (Freiesleben 2008:121). In March 2005, the Secretary General issued *In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all*, his follow-up report to the High-Panel report. It endorsed the recommendations of the report and called for creating a consensus on these proposals. Without elaborating on China's stand on countries seeking permanent membership, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Zhang
Qiyue, welcomed the high-level panel's proposals on "enhanc[ing] the international collective security mechanism with the U.N. at its core," and emphasized the need for consensus: "Any reform scenario should be discussed by the U.N. members in a democratic manner so that extensive consensus can be reached. The U.N. reform is concerned with interests of every member country, and there are still many differences in this regard" (Xinhua 2004). Beijing is well aware of the nature of these "many differences" and how difficult it is to achieve an "extensive consensus" in "a democratic manner" that addresses the "interests of every member country."

China was one of the first countries to come out with a comprehensive Position Paper on the United Nations Reforms on June 7, 2005, which discussed in detail, various security and development issues among other things and once again reiterated China's emphasis on a bigger, stronger and more effective United Nations to manage the global affairs. In this Position Paper, China while welcoming the report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, UN Millennium Project Report and the report of the UN Secretary-General, all of which contained some useful approaches for the rejuvenation and reform of the UN, advanced some basic principles which must be followed when reforms are undertaken in the UN. These five principles are as follows:

- Reforms should be in the interest of multilateralism, and enhance UN's authority and efficiency, as well as its capacity to deal with new threats and challenges.

- Reforms should safeguard the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter, especially those of sovereign equality, non-interference in internal affairs, peaceful resolution of conflicts and strengthening international cooperation, etc.

- Reforms should be all dimensional and multi-sectoral, and aim to succeed in both aspects of security and development. Especially, reforms should aim at reversing the trend of "UN giving priority to security over development" by increasing inputs in the field of development and facilitating the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
Reforms shall accommodate the propositions and concerns of all UN members, especially those of the developing countries. Reform should be based on democratic and thorough consultations and the mostly broadly based consensus.

Reforms should proceed gradually from tackling more manageable problems to thornier ones and be carried out in a way that will maintain and promote solidarity among members. For those proposals on which consensus has been reached, decision may be made promptly for their implementation; for important issues where division still exists, prudence, continued consultations and consensus-building are called for. It is undesirable to set a time limit on force a decision (Government of PRC 2005:1-7).

This paper under the heading of “Strengthening of the UN” discusses many measures that should be adopted to enhance the efficiency of various organs including that of the UN Secretariat. On Security Council reforms, while China talks about increasing the membership of the Council by including more developing countries, it does not favour according permanent status to any of the new entrants. Instead, China wants new member countries to be included in the Council only on a rotational basis (Government of PRC 2005:6).

Speaking at the Security Council Summit on 14 September 2005, President Hu Jintao urged the UN to reach a broad consensus regarding the reforms and provide more representation to the developing countries, especially the African countries in the Council (Hu 2005: http://www.china-un.org/eng/zt/shnh60/t212914.htm). Ambassador Wang Guangya also emphasized that the UN reforms can progress 'only on the basis of full consultations and broad agreement' and through extensive consultations and consensus building, while speaking at the 61st Session of the General Assembly (Wang 2006: http://www.china-un.org/eng/zt/gaige/t283181.htm). He also warned that ‘any reform formula that only addresses the concerns of a few big powers in disregard of the wishes of the small and medium-sized countries’ would not be accepted by China (Wang 2006: http://www.china-un.org/eng/zt/gaige/t283181.htm). Apart from the general principles on UN reforms, China has also put forward three principles to be followed
specifically with regard to Security Council reforms. First, the Council reform should be based on democratic discussion with a view to reaching the broadest possible consensus without any deadline on vote. Second, the reform should reflect the spirit of mutual compromise, maintaining solidarity among all the member countries. Third, the reform should be a gradual process in which the interests of overall UN reform should be kept in mind (Wang 2005: http://www.china-un.org/eng/zt/gaige/t220921.htm). China’s insistence that the UN reform process should be slow, gradual and only through consensus is based upon its apprehensions that the entry of countries like Japan and India into the Security Council will greatly undermine its position as the sole permanent Asian voice in the Council. What distinguishes China from India and Japan is its permanent membership in the Security Council and declared nuclear status thus making it the most important (Asian) player in the international forums and the sole Asian negotiating partner of the United States on global security matters. China’s Asia strategy thus obliges Beijing to keep both Japan and India out of the veto-holding club. Beijing also fears that with Japan and India inside, Washington, when its interests were at stake, could work around Russian intransigence and French resistance, and outweigh Chinese opposition. China’s rhetoric on multipolarity and Asian solidarity notwithstanding, it does not want any other major Asian country to sit on the Council as an equal (Malik 2005:17). China, therefore, demands that any reform proposal to be adopted must garner support and endorsement from 90% of the member countries, which China perfectly knows is not possible under present circumstances (Government of the PRC 2005: http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/xw/t193754.htm). China has openly called for the withdrawal of the reform proposal by the Group of Four (consisting of Japan, Germany, India and Brazil) after the African countries rejected it. Terming this proposal as unpopular, China’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations Wang Guangya stressed that if implemented, this Proposal would certainly damage the authority and effectiveness of the Security Council (Wang 2005: www.eyeontheun.org/documents-item.asp?d=2793&id=4445). China is particularly worried about Japan’s candidature for the Security Council seat and that is why it maintains that Tokyo needs to win a consensus in East Asia to its claims to
a permanent seat before it can aspire to play a larger role at the UN. This is then linked to the running row over Tokyo’s attitude towards Japan’s record during its invasion of China and other Asian countries in the Second World War. The protest in China in 2005, which included attacks against Japanese embassies and consulates, appeared designed to demonstrate the strength of opposition to giving Japan a larger role. Moreover, China is concerned about the way Japan and the United States are strengthening their alliance which Beijing sees as being aimed against it.

Though China’s opposition to other three aspirants (Germany, Brazil, India) is rather symbolic, the danger for the non-Japan three is that, in its anxiety to stop Tokyo getting a permanent seat, Beijing will veto the whole reform package. Beijing is also opposed to the scheme to replace the commission on Human Rights with a smaller and more permanent Human Rights Council, whose members would be directly elected by the General Assembly and could be much more active in tackling China’s human rights record. The same goes for the idea of creating a special UN rapporteur to report on the compatibility of counter-terrorism measures with international human rights laws.

After its low-profile record at the United Nations, a Chinese campaign against the reform package would be a new departure. Nevertheless, Beijing is intent on doing all it can to hold back Japan. China does not want to lose its privileged position as the sole Asian power with a veto power and all its rhetoric on UN reforms amply testify to this.

An Assessment of China’s Role in the UN in the Post-Cold War Period

When China joined the UN with the status of a permanent member of the Security Council, it sincerely wanted to play an active role in the world body. During that period, the de-colonization movement provided China good opportunity to exert its influence and it chose to identify itself with the developing countries of the Third World and support their struggle against imperialism, colonialism and apartheid. It took the lead in opposing the policies of both the superpowers; the US and the Soviet Union. Ideology used to be the single most important determinant of
Chinese foreign policy during this period that ensured China remaining a reluctant participant in the international organizations including the UN. China’s confrontationist attitude towards the dominant powers helped in sidelining it in the world forum.

In the 1980s, with the adoption of the ‘opening up’ and reform policies, China significantly adjusted its attitude towards the UN and started establishing cooperative relationships with other permanent members. China’s basic attitude towards the UN in the post-Cold War period can be summed up in two points: the first is strengthening cooperation with other big powers; the second is emphasizing the role of the Security Council in international affairs (Li 2003:125). In the Security Council, China posits itself as a developing country highlighting the sovereign equality of all the member states and always at the forefront against the interventionist policies of the western powers. It advocates the peaceful coexistence among countries with different cultures and systems. The report of the 16th Party Congress highlighted this perspective as “maintaining the diversity of the world in favour of promoting democracy in international relations and diversifying the development models” (16th Party Congress Report 2002:43). While changes in the international system after the Cold War have increased the opportunities for better cooperation among the major power, China has adopted a more conservative policy, especially towards the peacekeeping activities of the United Nations. The US and many other countries are in favour of expanding the role of the United Nations in response to the increasing integration of the world. China through its statements and voting behaviour in the Security Council, has opposed non-traditional aspects of peacekeeping because it apprehends that it might erode state sovereignty substantially or increase the likelihood of multilateral interventions in the internal affairs of the states. In fact, China has emerged as a strong defender of state sovereignty on the world stage. Specifically, China objected to the justification of military intervention on humanitarian grounds alone as well as the Security Council authorization to a nation to use armed forces on behalf of the United Nations.

Apart from the Taiwan question, China itself is confronted with ethnic tensions in the minority areas of Mongolia, Tibet and Xinjiang and possible crisis of
legitimacy faced by the CPC as a consequence of the economic and social modernization and opening up of society. China sees its own vulnerability to the kind of military intervention as in Kosovo on the pretext of promoting democracy on human rights. "China expressed its objection to the United Nations' involvement in internal affairs by stating that 'if handled improperly (this) will make the United Nations a party to the conflict or even make it an instrument of a few countries in interfering in other countries' internal affairs, thus throwing United Nations operations into difficulties and failure"(Choedon 2005:42).

Yet China has not openly defied or used its veto power to prevent the gradually expanding role of the United Nations as to secure its economic, military and political powers, it has no option but to work within the existing system as an active participant. In fact in the post-Cold War world, China has greatly enhanced its participation in various global forums including the UN and has enthusiastically joined the multilateral efforts to tackle the problems like environmental degradation, trade imbalances and terrorism. One indicator for China's increasing embrace of multilateralism at the global level is its strong advocacy of the core role of the UN in the post-Cold War world order and conflict resolution (Zhang 2002:16). Since entering the UN in 1971, China's perception of the UN, particularly its function of collective security in international and domestic conflict resolution, has experienced some significant changes, from being suspicious and nonparticipatory to being a more active and conscious advocate of multilateralism and the UN (Wang 2005:164-65). The highlight of China's UN politics was the Millennium Summit of permanent UN Security Council members, which was proposed by Beijing and held in New York City in September 2000 (Deng 2005:59).

Chinese leaders in recent years, particularly after 9/11, have repeatedly emphasized the irreplaceable position and supreme authority of the UN in international affairs. During Secretary General Kofi Annan's visit to China in 2001, President Jiang Zemin noted:

China attaches importance to the role of the UN and supports the organization to perform its functions in accordance with purposes and principles of the UN Charter. The organization has done a lot of useful work in keeping world peace, in helping regional conflicts, in
enhancing the awareness among the international community on economic and social development, and in pushing forward the talks on disarmament (SWB 2001:4051).

The Chinese leadership emphasizes further consolidation of the authority of the UN Security Council in dealing with international crisis. In his speech to the Australian parliament in Canberra in October 2003, Chinese President Hu Jintao urged the world to give full support to the UN in solving security issues (Hu 2003:12). Beijing’s evaluation of the United Nations has become more and more positive. Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing described the UN as “the most universal, most representative and most authoritative international organization in the world today” and that “the hope of the world rests on a strong UN” (Li 2003:3). While addressing the 59th UN General Assembly, Zhaoxing called on all countries to come together putting aside all differences to advance “democratization in international relations” through a new concept of security based on mutual trust, mutual benefits, equality and cooperation, and a recognition that all disputes should be resolved through peaceful dialogue (China Quarterly 2004:1153).

China also feels that in the era of globalization, the UN is the only political and global forum which could protect the rights and interests of the developing countries and ensure equitable distribution of resources among the countries (Hu 2005:1023). The acceleration of the Sino-UN linkages, with a steady increase in Chinese membership and participation in practically all the major global institutions, along with increasing Chinese accession to UN-sponsored multilateral treaties, has set in motion a process of mutual legitimation and empowerment between China and the global community as symbolized and structured by the United Nations and its affiliated institutions (Kim 2004:51). Beijing will, no doubt, continue to push for the United Nations playing a greater role in world politics to preserve China’s prerogative as a permanent member of the UN Security Council.