Harmoon Centre for Contemporary Studies is an independent, nonprofit, research, cultural and media institution. Its main focus is to conduct studies and researches about the Arab region, especially Syria. It also works towards cultural and media development, enhancing the civil society performance, and spreading democratic awareness and values of dialogue, as well as respect for human rights. The Centre also provides consultation and training services in political and media fields to all Syrians on the basis of Syrian national identity.

To achieve its objectives, the Centre conducts its activities through five specialized units, (1) Policy Studies Unit, (2) Social Researches Unit, (3) Books Review Unit, (4) Translation and Arabization Unit, and (5) Legal Unit.

A set of action programs are also adopted, such as the program for Political Consultations and Initiatives; Program for Services, Media Campaigns, and Public Opinion Making Program; Program for Dialogue Support and Civil and Cultural Development Program; Syria Future Program. The Centre may add new programs depending on the actual needs of Syria and the region. In implementing its programs, the Centre deploys multiple mechanisms, including lectures, workshops, seminars, conferences, training courses, as well as paper and electronic press.
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Introduction

A quarter of a century ago, in 1992 in particular, Deng Xiaoping - the Chinese leader at the time and the founder of the contemporary Chinese Renaissance - made his famous journey to Southern China to examine China’s available potentials to go on the progress lane towards a comprehensive renaissance.

This trip followed major changes in the world at that time, including the collapse of the “socialist system” in Eastern Europe in 1989, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1990 after failed attempts to reform. It also came three years after the famous protest organized by Chinese students in the summer of 1989 in Tiananmen Square, demanding democracy influenced by the above major changes. This protest has almost destroyed the reform program adopted in the late seventies of the last century, if not for the intervention of the army which broke it by force.

On this trip, Xiaoping delivered a series of speeches which were considered by the Chinese people as his "commandments" for the nation. In his commandments, Xiaoping drew attention to the issue of education, gave it special attention, and focused on the need for leadership candidates to possess sufficient political maturity, and to be well-trained young revolutionaries and skilled people.

In his journey, Xiaoping emphasized the continuation of China’s Renaissance project based on what the Chinese call "socialism with Chinese characteristics."

Thus, it is safe to say that the current Chinese president, Zhin Bing, is one of those who Deng Xiaoping placed on the ladder of leadership before his departure, in a practical application of his "commandments" to the nation. He looks different from his two predecessors: President Jiang Zemin (1993 - 2002) and President Huise Jintao (2003-2012) in terms of charisma and aspirations. He is really the true successor of Deng Xiaoping.
First: The Rise of China

Since the triumph of the Communist Revolution of 1949, China has been a regional player, mainly on the international politics stage as an active and influential player.

At the global level, after the Chinese role in the Korean War, Beijing embarked on the Afro-Asian Conference hosted by Indonesia in Bandung in 1955, represented by its Prime Minister, Xu Enlai.

In Bandung, China’s opening on third world countries - including the Arab world - seemed real. However, China’s position at the global level was strengthened further when it penetrated the depth of North Vietnam during the three Indochina wars in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Thus, China has become an important international player that could not be ignored in major global crises, especially in Asia.

When the American Republicans led by Richard Nixon decided to get out of the Vietnam quagmire, in which the two Democratic administrations of Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson got involved, Washington had to recognize Beijing and recognize its Asian and international status. Thanks to what was known as the "ping pong diplomacy," Henry Kissinger succeeded in "engineering" opening up onto China and inviting it to the top of the international forum. In October 1971, China was recognized as a "great world power" when it took over the seat of the national China (Taiwan) at the United Nations and became one of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

Ding Hsiao Ping founded socialism with Chinese characteristics, using some market economy mechanisms according to a pragmatic approach, under which the Chinese leadership developed a strategic plan of action divided into three stages: the first aimed at solving the food and clothing problem between 1981 and 1990; the second was to raise the living standards and achieve a life of well-being between 1990 and 2000; and the third, which extends until 2049, aims to advance China to the level of developed countries, by utilising an action plan of modernization in four main areas: agriculture, industry, technology and the armed forces.
Today China, as a global economic giant, is very different from the radical China restricted by the austerity of the "Cultural Revolution" (1966-76), which ended with the fall of the so-called "Gang of Four" and the start of the opening up phase led by Deng Xiaoping.

Beijing's new approach has been accompanied by a more brave global policy with the rise of Qi Jinping, who led China out of the global financial crisis strong and confident, and launched ambitious projects to spread Chinese influence around the world. The "Land Belt Link" project across Asia and the Middle East to Europe was the most ambitious.

China's long-term strategic plan extends up to the middle of this century. Before that, China continues to count itself as a developing country that seeks progress and modernity. This vision includes the current Chinese President's (Chinese dream) project, which runs up to 2020. The new markets that China is trying to enter are expected to push the Chinese economy forward, particularly in Africa and the Middle East.

At the beginning of his reign, in September 2013, President Jinping introduced the (Economic Belt of the Silk Road) and (the Marine Silk Road) for the 21st Century as his most important plans for China's relationship with the world, and for China's role in the world of the future, which in itself represents a classic response from a ground force to the dominance of the United States Navy on the oceans and seas of the world.

The Chinese "Belt and Road" initiatives, as they have been called, include a land belt stretching from China through Central Asia and Russia to Europe, and a sea route that passes through the Straits of Malacca in South-East Asia to India, the Middle East and East Africa. This makes the Arab region pivotal and important in this Chinese plan, especially as it includes developmental trends such as pipeline construction, mineral exploration infrastructure, transport and communication facilities, as well as the construction of infrastructure and giant projects such as the Nicaraguan Canal Project and the railway line between Beijing and Moscow, to strengthen their presence in strategic places in the world where they can access raw materials.

In the first nine months of 2015, direct investments by Chinese companies in the (Belt and Road) countries amounted to about US $ 12.03 billion, an increase of 66.2 percent over the
same period of the previous year. That figure is about 15.3 percent of China's total non-financial direct investment outside of China.

Ch. Jinping's plans seem to be a quantum leap in Deng Xiaoping's China's renaissance strategy of 1978, shifting from China's thinking of the local economy to the world's relationship and prestige in the wake of the dazzling economic success of recent decades. But the plan does not seem to be a surprise, and it is not a change in China's strategy, it is a logical development, and a complement to the reform and opening-up approach that China wants to take in the centennial of the Communist Republic of China in 2049.

But China's plans and orientations under President Chi Jinping have an ambition that goes beyond the economic dimension to the political one, especially since China has requirements in its geographical area, the most important of which is reclaiming the island of Taiwan to be part of the motherland, and its border disputes with the neighbours such as the Philippines, which could not be achieved before China becomes a "place under the sun" in the world of political and military decisions globally.

Therefore, China is working to impose its view on its regional adversaries backed by Washington in connection with territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas. The strategic conflict on this sea is still burning, as China's peaceful rise is viewed with much suspicion and distrust by these adversaries, just as it claims sovereignty over a number of islands and coral reefs in the China Sea.

On the other hand, inside China, Chi Jinping has succeeded in strengthening his power both in front of the military and within the Communist Party. Despite some protests, as long as the regime is successful in economic and development fields, he seems legitimate in the eyes of his people. There is no doubt that there are intellectuals who challenge his legitimacy and demand more freedoms, but in reality they remain relatively few, and their legitimacy is greater abroad than within China.

We can say today that China's relations with the nations of the world are not governed by the logic of the revolution, but by the logic of the state, which is not guided by radical slogans, but by the reality of common interests.
Second: China in an intersected and entangled world

1. Catching up with the developed world

In 2016, Vladimir Putin, Barack Obama and Donald Trump were the most talked about personalities in the press and the international media in general, but the 2017 man would be the Chinese President Chi Jinping, who received a significant share of the spotlight in recent months. He is at the head of a country that has not been on unsuccessful overseas adventure in general. While it is true that his country’s economic growth is less robust than in recent years, most other countries continue to hold China to its economic growth rate despite its decline, on top of that, the promised crisis that many expected to hit China did not occur. If the emerging economies and the economies of the BRICS countries, which includes together with China (Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa), suffer from difficult economic and financial times, this is not the case for China, which continues to rise and is working to rectify its economic delays behind the United States.

However, China’s diplomacy is not very intrusive, and its international strategic weight is less than its economic weight; generally, it tends to refrain from intervening on international issues and seeks to define its interests in the long run, and it is contented with that. Since the beginning of this century, China has not participated in any foreign military intervention, unlike Russia and the United States. In this way, China has protected its economy and its popularity, and has invested in development rather than engaging in costly and unsafe military adventures.

It should be noted that this policy of non-intervention dates back to 1953 when the Prime Minister at the time, Xu Enlai laid down (the five principles of China’s peaceful coexistence), that China would adhere to:

1. Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.
2. No mutual aggression.
3. Non-interference in internal affairs.
4. Equality and mutual benefit.
5. Peaceful coexistence.
These principles have grown in the course of China’s historical track because it is a developing country that has lived for more than 100 years under the yoke of imperialism and colonialism. This policy has achieved the desired success, along with the quality of China’s assistance, not only financial, but also the implementation of various vital projects.

However, this "policy of non-interference" did not prevent Beijing from conducting arms deals with regimes subject to Western sanctions, such as the regimes of Iran, Syria and Sudan, and seeking lucrative business deals with such regimes, despite that its trading partners sponsored violent extremism, participated in genocide, or used chemical weapons against civilians in their countries. Western media and international human rights organizations have condemned China for such decisions, but to no avail. In response to these condemnations, Chinese experts stress the sovereignty of states and non-interference in their affairs, or refer to the "double standards" of the United States in its partnership with regimes such as Saudi Arabia, the torture of terrorism suspects at Guantánamo Bay and elsewhere, and the engineering of non-democratic coups.

This "policy of non-intervention" could not remain unaffected by the changes in major international strategies, nor keep China away from being intertwined with these changes.

2 - Chinese-American entanglement

After the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, most of the United States’ attention was focused on the Muslim world and the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, while China was playing the role of a rising force, the United States has stepped up its ties with Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines and has forged new partnerships with Vietnam, India, and Myanmar.

In 2002, after North Korea admitted to possessing a nuclear bomb, in October of that same year President George W. Bush asked the Chinese President at the time Jiang Zemin to use his influence to end North Korea’s nuclear program. But Zimin said North Korea was not China’s problem, but Bush’s. In January 2003, Bush tried again, but Zimin did not move, and Bush warned China that the United States was considering striking North Korea. This is when China turned and took it seriously. In August 2003, under pressure from Beijing, North Korea agreed to join China, the United States, South Korea, Japan, and Russia in six-party talks. It is true that
the Six-Party Talks eventually collapsed, but the Americans’ conclusion was that the regime in Beijing would respond well when threatened with serious actions. China’s insistence on refraining from taking decisive positions on difficult foreign policy issues could no longer go on, and avoiding intractable and complex problems has become difficult. Since then, the Korean issue has been prominent in China’s international strategy.

The past eight years have been marked by major global transformations. Since President Barack Obama took office in Washington in 2009, there have been several changes to the global geostrategic situation and the positions of major powers on the international map.

During Obama’s two-term rule of 2009-2017, Washington has softened its military presence in several areas. The Obama administration has pursued this option to contain the results of the George W. Bush administration’s over-expanded strategic and military policies, pushing the United States into the financial crisis in 2008. In contrast, Russia reverberated to the international stage, while Beijing launched a series of regional and international projects, promoting its rise on the global power ladder, while Europe has been subjected to difficult tests as it is known.

In preparation for the expected strategic conflict with China, the first Obama administration launched the concept of the "axis of Asia" which meant that the US role and the destiny of global politics would be determined in Southeast Asia. In a symbolic reference to that policy, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton broke a long tradition of the American foreign ministers since George Marshall of making their first foreign visit after being appointed to the European continent, replacing it with a tour in Southeast Asia.

Over the past eight years, if Obama has laid the strategic foundations to qualify the US for the leadership of the international system, mitigating international tensions, Putin and Chi Jinping were working to improve their country’s positions, taking advantage of the US retreat, preparing for a conflict that could grow after Obama, Regardless of who was the next US president.

China has made itself the banner of free trade in the face of America. Being the biggest winner of globalization in the twentieth century, it intends to redraw trade in the twenty-first century, in its own way. "We will not close the door to the world but will expand it," Chinese
President Chi Jinping said in November after Trump was elected. At the Davos Economic Summit of 2016, in which he participated for the first time, the Chinese President defended his vision of a "more all-encompassing globalization" and encouraged "the re-positioning of globalization in its proper perspective". In this proposal, he addressed the US President Donald Trump, who promised to abandon the transatlantic free trade agreement, set up customs barriers with his neighbours and China, and criticised the World Trade Organization.

Before the Trump presidency began, it was clear that US-China relations were facing a very complex problem. The differences and tension between the two countries were rapidly growing over many issues and files, especially with regard to trade, relations with Taiwan, territorial disputes and military movements in the South China Sea, all of which were difficult issues in which satisfactory solutions were difficult to reach. The post-Obama world is likely to witness more severe forms of strategic conflict than the geopolitical rivalry between the major powers in the post-Cold-War era.

There is no doubt that America was up to the challenges in its world domination battles since World War II and even in the recent years, moving its battles of domination beyond the ocean. But shifting the power focal point in the current international system due to the expected rise of other international powers over the next two decades, such as China, could threaten that control, and Washington would have to share its global influence in the medium term. Donald Trump does not seem to be able to handle it easily.

The United States, as a superpower, has divergent interests in the South China Sea and is associated with neighbouring states on that seashore. These interests, of a strategic nature, can be summed up by ensuring that military superiority continues to intensify its presence, counter the expansion of China as its first international rival, maintain freedom of navigation for its fleet and fleets of allies, and monitor developments of the expansion of Chinese troops outside its regional perimeter, as well as signs of China’s pursuit to establish military bases abroad.

During the Obama era, China has implemented plans to establish new artificial islands in waters it has declared sovereignty over, despite other claims that they were under the rule of America’s allies such as the Philippines, which fear - in addition to South Korea, Vietnam and Japan - China’s successive claims of sovereignty over the water sectors that represent the vital
economic artery of these countries. At the time, the Obama administration moved to encourage the Philippines to address the dispute over the artificial islands with China in its own way, despite the White House’s endorsement of the International Court of Justice ruling in Hague in July last year, which opposed China’s claims to its sovereignty on the disputed areas.

The work that the Obama administration first tried to accomplish to build the Asian Alliance still has a long list of complementary measures to become an effective policy that could deter China. This fact was made clear during the G20 summit in early September 2016 in the Chinese city of Hangzhou when Chinese boats, were discovered patrolling the Philippine shallow waters called Scarborough Schul, although the United States had already warned China against establishing further artificial islands there.

Since, presidential candidate Donald Trump suggested a tougher stance toward what he called "bad China" even before he won the elections in November last year. In his official campaign statement, Trump wrote: "There are some people who wish I did not refer to China as our enemy, but that is in in their description already."

After taking office in the White House, Trump did not stop making his remarks about China via television and through Twitter. He accused it of deploying military forces in the South China Sea, manipulating its currency, and blocking attempts to rein in the Korean dictator Kim Jong-un. Trump had also angered Beijing, after hinting at the possibility of increased political recognition of Taiwan, an island based on democratic rule, which China considered part of its territory.

In the meantime, Ivan Medeiros, former senior adviser to former US President Barack Obama, warned the Republican president not to try to challenge Beijing on this wide range of issues. "You cannot do everything at the same time, and you cannot engage with China about Taiwan, trade, North Korea, and the South China Sea at the same time, simply, it will not work that way, and eventually you will end up in a big battle with China, and that battle will not be of any use to the United States."

Following remarks made by US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson during a hearing before the US Senate Committee, in which he called for "the need to prevent Chinese ships from
reaching the disputed Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, China Daily Newspaper, the official media representative for the administration in Beijing, came out with broad tilts asking Tillerson and Washington to prepare themselves for a “devastating confrontation with China” in the event they decided to apply the speech uttered by the foreign minister candidate.

It is remarkable that the Chinese Foreign Ministry issued a formal warning to Trump on 25 Jan, only days after his inauguration, warning him to “keep out of the disputes in the South China Sea.” The ministry’s Spokeswoman Hua Shunying said that “the United States was not a party to the dispute in the South China Sea, and we urge it to respect this fact, to speak and act politely so as not to harm peace and stability in the South China Sea.” In addition to that, China has warned the United States off destabilizing the Asia-Pacific region after the new US Defence Secretary, Jim Mattis, pledged that his country would support Japan in any military confrontation with Beijing over disputed islands.

What really worries the Chinese is not only the statements made by US President Donald Trump and his team, but also the talk in Western media of a deliberate plan by the new US administration to separate Beijing from Moscow in exchange for American-Russian rapprochement.

A report by a group of prominent Chinese affairs experts and specialists - some of whom have dealt with Beijing for more than 50 years - was handed over to the White House in early February and published in Washington DC on the seventh of the same month, stressed that relations between the two nuclear-armed countries (the US and China) would deteriorate rapidly, leading to economic and possibly military confrontations if no compromise was reached on the disputed issues, including trade, Taiwan, and the South China Sea.

In this atmosphere, the summit that joined the US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Chi Jinping took place on April 6 and 7 at the US president's resort in Maralago. This summit came as a surprise, as the US diplomatic posture toward China seemed to have made a full U-turn.

The North Korean issue has been the focus of that summit, of which only few details have been leaked out, except that the Chinese president was informed of Trump’s intentions to delete the idea of launching a trade war on China from his program, and Trump told the
Chinese President during a meeting on 6 of April that he was ordered to strike a Syrian air base after a poison gas attack on Syrian civilians. Some saw that China had responded to the US diplomatic position by abstaining in the Security Council on Thursday the 13th of April, on a Western draft resolution condemning the use of chemical weapons by Bashar al-Assad, while its ally Russia used its veto power to stop the project, which requested that Bashar al-Assad was to open the air bases before the international investigation commission and enable it to question senior Syrian officers on the attack.

After the summit between the two leaders, on 11 April, the Chinese president called the US president and told him that China wanted a peaceful solution to the crisis on the Korean Peninsula. The next day, the newspaper "Global Times" pointed out that the attack on Syria has made it difficult to exclude the possibility of the United States hitting North Korea. The newspaper pointed out that "Trump’s team was determined to resolve the nuclear problem of North Korea." In order for Trump to show his desire to negotiate, he said that if China cooperated in North Korea file, the United States would take into account China's interests in its trade with them.

Does this mean that the issue is taking a different track? Many doubt that, especially as the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi declared on 13 April, warning of the possibility of "war at any time", and calling on all parties to calm down before reaching and "irreversible and uncontrollable situation".
3. Chinese-Russian entanglement

Chinese leaders are aware of the historical contradictions that surrounds their country's relations with their neighbour "the hungry land" (the Chinese name for Russia). These contradictions are constantly reflected in the policies of both countries; as Russia has worked to diversify its relations with Asia, China has diversified its relations in Europe, especially Eastern Europe. Chinese-Ukrainian cooperation touches on sensitive aspects for Russia, such as China's investment in Ukrainian strategic military infrastructure. Additionally, Beijing is improving its relations with Greece, Czech Republic, and Serbia.

It is true that the "strategic partnership" with Moscow at present is a priority for China, but as experts and analysts point out, the reason for this "strategic partnership," lies in China's strong need for Russian energy resources, as well as common interests in Central Asia.

As for the Russian President Vladimir Putin, from the moment Syria became the appropriate stage to launch his new strategy, he looked directly towards China. In February 2012, we saw how Russia and China's permanent representatives to the United Nations, voted in the Security Council, in a joint veto against a Western-backed Arab draft resolution on Syria, shocking the world's diplomatic and media circles.

On several occasions, the Chinese refused that their position regarding the Syrian issue was identifying with the Russian position. Their abstention at the Security Council meeting on 13 April on a Western draft resolution condemning the use of chemical weapons by Bashar al-Assad, while their Russian ally used the right to veto it, could confirm that.

Experts also point out that the Russian president may work to exacerbate the US-China contradictions over the South China Sea, as it is useful to diversify Chinese and American capabilities from the European stage and to increase the flexibility of Russian diplomacy among the major powers. The Chinese have also expressed concerns about diplomatic and media reports indicating that the United States was working on aggravating the Chinese—Russian contradictions.

New images of Chinese nuclear ballistic missile transportation to China's north eastern border with Russia have been leaked to the media, at an important strategic location that
would enable the Chinese army to attack both the US and Russian capitals, Washington and Moscow. The Chinese are believed to be behind the leak.

According to information and pictures published in newspapers in Hong Kong, Britain, and Russia, the Chinese Ministry of Defence began sending (Dong Feng 41) ballistic missiles to Heilongyang Province in the far northeast of China near the border with Russia, which is a strategic location, that is in the event of a war, China would be able to strike with its intercontinental missiles (with a range of 15,000 kilometres), both Washington and Moscow alike.

4. China and the Korean issue

There seems to be a belief in Washington that if China cooperates with the United States on the Korean issue, North Korea will certainly stop testing its ballistic missiles and reconsider its nuclear program. This vision is based on two factors: first, the United States threatens to use military force, second, China threatens to cut energy and food supplies. In an interview with the Financial Times in early April, days before his meeting with the Chinese president, the US president stressed that "if China cannot solve the North Korean problem, we will, that is all I have to say". Is it certain that North Korea will back down in the context of such a scenario, even if characterized by such strict seriousness?

The Chinese know that the North Korean President Kim Jong-un is not an easy-to-influence puppet. Chinese President Chi Jinping sees things differently; he believes that the war on the Korean peninsula will have disastrous consequences for China and the US allies, especially South Korea and Japan, and being involved in this war will cause a massive flood of refugees. China’s interests on the Korean peninsula are far more complicated than how they are usually portrayed in the West. North Korea is more than a foreign policy problem for China, it represents the multifaceted issues affecting the internal debate happening in China, while drawing its track towards the future.

China’s own pressure on North Korea, except for food and energy, is very limited, as Chinese leaders themselves say, and Kim Jong-un’s policy bothers them of course, because it
allows the United States to increase its military presence in the region and deploy a missile
defence system in South Korea.

In fact, the Chinese have the ability to exert great pressure on North Korea, they can stop
buying its coal, or economically strangle it. But even if they are displeased with Kim Jong-un’s
behaviour, they also fear a massive collapse of his regime, that could leave huge implications
for them. They also fear any other strategic implications whose consequences cannot be
foreseen, such as the deployment of US troops on their borders in the event of unity between
the two Koreas.

The Chinese are deeply aware that North Korean leaders will never give up their nuclear
weapons; they are the only life insurance policy they have. Therefore, the Chinese ultimate
goal is to keep Kim’s behaviour as predictable as possible, as they are really afraid to push him
to what cannot be expected. Even if the Chinese president increases pressure to some extent
- this is likely to happen- few expect Kim Jong-un to abandon his nuclear weapons. In the
nineties of the last century, North Korea continued its nuclear program, while the famine was
claiming the lives of 10 percent of its population.

Perhaps more rationally, the Chinese may be working quietly with others, according to
some data, to find an alternative to the leadership of Kim Jong-un, who in turn is assassinating
anyone found to be in close contact with the capital Beijing, he even executed his uncle Zhang
Song Thaek, and other potential candidates, including his half-brother, who was assassinated
by a special North Korean squad with “BX nerve gas” at a Malaysian airport last February.
Third: China and the Syrian issue

From the very beginning China has taken a conservative and negative attitude toward the Arab Spring revolutions. In the case of Syria, it lined up with Russia against the Syrian revolution which aimed at eliminating the Assad regime. Even on the academic level, most of the Chinese researchers refrained from using the terms (revolution) and (Arab Spring), and opted for terms like (unrests) and (change).

This is evident in the Chinese media great effort in portraying events in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and Syria very negatively from the outset. This can be explained by China’s fears of similar revolutions in their territory, and concerns about opening up the door to future foreign interference in China, with Western governments and many human rights groups accusing Chinese leaders of cracking down on dissidents at home.

It is well known that in its historical relations with the Arab countries, China has supported all the initiatives of the Arab League and has affirmed that its support for the decisions of the Arabs themselves is more legitimate. However, by using its veto in the Security Council for the second time, when the Arab League sought approval for its plan of action on the Syrian issue in early February 2012, it set itself in direct confrontation with the Arab consensus.

However, the Chinese veto caused divergent reactions in wide diplomatic and political circles, in which it challenged the will of the international community, represented by the consensus of the members of the Security Council (except Russia) on the need to condemn the dictatorial and oppressive Assad regime. On top of that, the Chinese position represents a farce and a horrible shock, even a crime as it is a participation - by the Chinese and the Russians- in the killing of the Syrian people. But the Chinese say their use of veto power with Russia does not mean support for Bashar Assad’s regime, but rather an attempt to compromise between the ruling regime and opposition forces to spare the Syrian people the scourges of violence and the flames of civil war.

To date, China has not ceased to provide the regime with weapons, equipment and other gear. Over the last six years it has had no concrete or effective operational role, rather than receiving representatives of the regime and of opposition parties, without any significant
results, and just issuing the statement of the six points, which called for a cease-fire, and resolving the crisis through internal dialogue.

What is being circulated in the US and Western political and media circles is that China, which relies heavily on the Middle East to secure its oil needs, has not intervened sufficiently in the problems plaguing the region, and that its role on the Syrian issue was limited to the use of veto power in the Security Council for four times to drop draft decisions relating to dealing with this issue.

But there is also those who see a link between the Chinese veto and the growing mistrust between the Chinese leadership and the Obama administration, since the US arms deal with Taiwan in 2010 worth more than $6.4 billion, the deal that fuelled the already raging flames of the hot files between the two countries.

However, after China took a new position in the Security Council on Thursday, 13 April, it abstained from voting on a Western draft resolution condemning the use of chemical weapons by Bashar al-Assad, while its ally Russia used its veto power to stop the project. So, are we about to witness a change in the Chinese position on the Syrian issue?
Conclusion

The verbal escalation between Washington and Pyongyang has caused tension leading to concerns in the world and the neighbouring countries, particularly South Korea and Japan, fearing that the situation could degenerate into military action and turn into a full scale war in which weapons of mass destruction might be used.

Satellite images of artificial islands built by China in the disputed area around Spratly Islands in the South China Sea showed advanced Chinese defence batteries that were capable of dropping US air force planes taking off air bases in northern Australia.

The Russian news agency Sputnik recently raised an interesting question of who would win in the event of a war between the world’s greatest powers: the United States, Russia, and China.

In similar situations, major international powers have been able to avoid a wide-ranging war since the end of the Second World War and have sought to achieve their interests by other means, most notably the proxy war in different parts of the world.

Now, in our time, the wars of economy, trade, and technology have become effective instruments in international conflict. Does this tremendous change in the world have a role in repelling the possibility of a major world war braking out soon? Or does it weaken but not cancel it?