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NEW POLICY BRIEF:

In Search of China's Foreign Policy

This Policy Brief takes stock of recent developments and future trends in China's foreign policy. It questions China's progress in shaping its diplomacy and international relations in a way that reflects its global economic size and strength. Preoccupied with domestic priorities and challenges, successive Chinese leaders have clung to the country's policy of non-interference in other countries' affairs. China has given little idea of what it wants from the world beyond meeting its own vast economic needs, commanding respect and expanding its regional influence. Though complaining regularly about continuing western dominance of existing multilateral institutions, it has made no proposals for re-designing them.

From a global perspective China's growing interactions with the rest of the world are a positive development, yet from Beijing's perspective, they create potential vulnerability. Not only are its international relations shaped to a remarkable degree by priorities, problems and pressures at home, but its domestic affairs are directly affected by external events.

China may be an emerging superpower, but it is still far from a fully-fledged one. Its economic scale and strength are impressive but, in a number of ways, quite fragile. Yet China's preference for a "hands off" stance in international relations also has drawbacks and disadvantages, above all for China itself. However, taking co-operation much further faces some obvious hurdles and updating China's foreign policy will take more than simply streamlining the bureaucratic machinery. It needs to involve making some fundamental choices about strategic priorities and old dogma and doctrines, and how they relate to Beijing's domestic agendas.

The study can be downloaded [here](#)

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