

GIARI “Political Integration and Identity” Seminar

Title: “China and United Nations: from the Perspective of Chinese Participation in Peacekeeping Operations”

Speaker: Dr. LIU Tiewa (Deputy Director of the Research Center of United Nations and International Organizations at Beijing Foreign Studies University)

Moderator: Professor Shinohara Hatsue, GSAPS, Waseda University

Venue: Room 710, Building No. 19, Waseda University

Time: Tuesday, January 25, 2011, 13:00-14:30

Summary of the Lecture

Dr. Liu began the speech by expressing her gratitude to Professor Shinohara, supervisor of her Ph.D. study at GSAPS several years ago. She also made a brief self-introduction on her own academic background which is highly relevant to the topic. Her PhD dissertation was an examination of America’s changing influence in international organizations by doing case studies of IMF, UNESCO, and UN Security Council, and thus her expertise focuses on UN and international organizations studies.

The talk mainly consisted of three parts. Briefly reviewing china’s principles and involvement in UN peacekeeping operations; summarizing major features of China’s involvement in peacekeeping after cold-war; and explaining China’s changing attitude towards involvement in UN PKOs through the perspectives of three mainstream IR theories.

Dr. Liu first stressed the important position of PKO and the change of conception of PKO after cold-war. Based on this, she elaborated China’s principles on UN PKO as follows: china supports UN PKO according to the UN Charter as an effective method to maintain peace through UN; sovereignty and territorial integrity should be respected; the target state should actively cooperate with the other states participating in PKO; every PKO mission should have specific tasks; no country should be allowed to intervene the other countries’ domestic affairs; PKO is under the authority of UN Security Council; PKO costs should be fairly and reasonably distributed.

Then she divided the history of China’s involvement in UN PKO into three milestone stages and elaborated them respectively. **1) Opposing UN PKO in 1949-1978.** Precisely speaking, China didn’t have any PKO activity in this period. This was largely because China held a negative view about UN and other international organizations. They were controlled by western powers while third world countries had little leverage. Thus it reflected the inequality of international political reality. **2) Limited involvement in 1979-1989.** In the 1970s, the “three not doing” principles dominated China’s policy toward UN PKO, i.e., not participating in voting on PKO resolutions; not paying for any PKO activities; not donating troops to ongoing PKO activities. However, by the end of 1980s, after realizing its philosophy more compatible with the value and idea of UN PKO, China began to engage in active and gradual involvement. **3) Deepening and expanding participation after cold war.** The past two decades saw a ramping increase in the number and scale of China’s PKO activities. Dr. Liu exemplified a series of watersheds of China’s PKO dispatches, and pointed out that these increasing activities received quite controversial evaluations internationally.

As for the major features of the involvement after cold war, Dr. Liu summarized them as seven points. **1) From regional to global participation.** But she also highlighted that this global

participation had aroused both positive and negative evaluations. **2) Increasing contribution to UN PKO.** Dr. Liu showed China's increasing budget and personnel contribution to UN by detailed statistics, and especially cited General Zhao Jingmin to demonstrate that China's participation had been more accepted. She also exemplified the newly established PKO troop training center in Langfan, Hebei Province, which has been attracting considerable international concerns. **3) Under the UN authority.** This has four aspects of connotation, including: to uphold the council authority by adhering to multilateralism when it comes to major issues on peace and security; to improve the efficiency of the security council so as to respond to threats more effectively; to improve the Council's decision-making by giving greater expression to democratic rules; to pay closer attention to Africa and highlight African interests. **4) National sovereignty and non-intervention principle.** Actually sovereignty and non-intervention have been always reiterated by Chinese government. **5) Minimum or non- use of force.** China emphasizes the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-use of force in international relations. This is an important principle of UN Charter as well as a basic norm of international law. **6) Adherence to neutrality in PKO.** She made a distinction between neutrality and impartiality noting that China emphasizes neutrality rather than impartiality because sometimes impartiality might cause situations that are out of control. **7) Multilateral cooperation instead of unilateral activities.** It is worthy noting that China's foreign policy has a long history of favoring multilateralism and discarding unilateralism.

Dr. Liu then answered the main question, i.e., why China had changed its attitude toward UN PKO, explaining the transformation by using the frameworks of three mainstream IR theories. **First, the Constructivism perspective,** which focuses on norms, beliefs, knowledge and understanding, holds that as a UN P5 (Five Permanent Members in Security Council) member state, china needs to go further in the PKO areas to build national images and to live up to its responsibility as a P5 state. China has put forward a phrase "being a responsible great power" (*fuzeren de daguo*). This is something quite recent. At the very beginning, China did not participate the international organizations, did not trust any guidelines. The speeches delivered by Primer Zhou Enlai and other leaders then showed we were conserved and prudent about UN. Plus, China used to hold a very negative image about UN. However, as China developed, especially when recognized as a reliable partner, it began to become active in UN PKO. The commonly-quoted motto, "we come for peace", is a demonstration. **Second, the Neo-liberalism explanation,** which highlights the regulation of institutionalism, argues that countries must learn how to behave and cooperate in the institutions under the international framework. In the past, China knew little about the international organizations. Under institutionalism, if China wants to achieve its goal, it has to resort to negotiation and consultation with other states. Therefore China must participate in the international organizations and tries to acquire some negotiating skills and master the game rules. In some occasions, China tries to join the decision-making process and make the rules. China has advocated the "three mores", namely, to cooperate with more states more frequently in more forums than ever before. **Third, the Neo-realism view,** adhering to sovereignty power and interests, attributes the motivation to what China can gain from PKO. China has to prove its peace rising tendency to the other countries. Its engagement to UN demonstrates that China is a responsible power which is ready and willing to assume its obligations. Another advantage of participating in PKO is the direct exercise of Chinese army. This is also a chance to globalize its army to gain mutual understanding on military build-up.

Finally, Dr. Liu drew the conclusion that China's policy toward PKO would be "**selective**

and active” in the near future. It is “selective”, because the limited resources at the present time would not permit China to overstretch its participation too much. The world agenda in a fiercely changing era is beyond China’s capability. It is “active”, because China has been insisting on active participation in the PKO ever since it realized the importance and significance in the 1980s. Especially Haiti earthquake inspired China to recognize the necessity of the missions in the world.

At the end of her speech, Dr. Liu spared several minutes introducing the Research Center of United Nations and International Organizations at Beijing Foreign Studies University, which was recently founded on December 18th, 2010. The incentive of the establishment of the center originated from Tokyo since she was encouraged by Professor Shinohara and other Japanese scholars to expand the researches on UN and international organizations in China. She also reached out to Japanese academia for cooperation on this project, by stressing that Tokyo was the first stop of their visits.

The last part was the Q&A session. Here is a succinct version of the record.

Q1: What drives the selection as you said the policy was “selective”?

A: China has to restrain itself because of budget and personnel limits. National interests like economic interests should be taken into account. China tends to take care of the neighboring area first. Remote areas with really serious problems like Haiti would also be considered.

Q2: What would be China’s role in the management of UN and other organizations?

A: Most international organizations today adopt weighted voting system. China’s voting right in organizations like IMF has been increased in recent years, which means China will play more important role at the management level of international organizations.

Q3: How about China’s interests in Africa?

A: China does have great economic interests in Africa, for example, a lot of business and companies. However, China would not intervene in African countries’ internal affairs. China takes a neutral stance on the political values and regimes of African countries.

Q4: Who makes the decision on PKO in China, the Military or the Party leaders?

A: Generally military weighs higher than the Party, but it is kind of cooperation or combination. The military sector and the foreign ministry both play important roles in it.

Q5: What brought China to the expanding participation in PKO?

A: China faces a dilemma in defining its own role. Expanding participation would cause US containment, but remaining passive would arouse more criticism from both developed and developing countries. As the sole P5 developing country, China is required to be more responsible.

Q6: If situations like Somali case happened, would China be willing to sacrifice?

A: On the “responsibility to protect” China is cautious and conserved. The responsibilities of these missions are not clear there. China has no clear remarks on that. Interviews remain to be taken.

Q7: Why didn’t China care about its national image in the past? What change triggered the transformation in China’s PKO?

A: China always cares about its image, but ideological dispute in cold war obstructed mutual understanding. In the context of economic booming, China has developed an idea of “going out in a way of multilateral diplomacy”, namely integrating itself into the world comprehensively.

Q8: What’s the unique consideration of China’s PKO? How does China balance its capability and willingness to participate in PKO?

The uniqueness is the emphasis on sovereignty and non-interference principles. Both would be considered, capability on the first place and willingness the second.