THE PLACE AND ROLE OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN THE GLOBAL SECURITY SYSTEM

by Marceli Burdelski

China is today the most populated country in the world. The end of the twentieth century resulted in the growth of international importance of China. It was reflected in the influence of Chinese diplomacy and economy on the global international system. The recent international success of China do not overshadow the fact that China is still a middle scale world power. The area of North-Eastern Asia has played the key role in the security system of the People’s Republic of China.

Chinese security policy has been determined by the influence of the following factors:

1. The historical background (achievements of the Chinese school of strategy studies, Sun Tzu);
2. The influence of political and military experiences of the board of leaders of the PRC in the period of the finished five decades (Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Zhu Teh);
3. The influence of an inter-political factor (the decision-making process concentrated in the hands of the 21-person Politburo of CPC CC), the traditional Sinocentrism;
4. the role of the international surroundings of China (the circle of neighbours, the regional circle, the global circle).
I. THE THEORETICAL CONDITIONING OF CHINESE SECURITY POLICY

In the period after the Cold War, the original Chinese school of international relations was formed. Already in the eighties, at the inauguration session of the Chinese Society of International Law in Beijing, the President of the Society, Huan Xiang, specified the rules of the new school: *Dangdai Zhongguo waijiao* (Modern Chinese International Relations). Its main ideas were defined basing on Marxism-Leninism theories by Mao Zedong modified by the theory of Deng Xiaoping.

The Marxist rhetoric should not screen the traditional thinking of Chinese leaders on the subjects of strategy. An outstanding researcher of Chinese foreign policy, S. Kim, claims that Chinese foreign policy often faces problems resulting from the conflict between dogmatic rules and pragmatic practice.

To explain the basic conditionings of Chinese foreign policy the following hypotheses should be provided:

1. The conditionings of continuity and change in Chinese foreign policy;
2. What is the particular and basic behaviour of China in foreign actions; in comparison to other countries. Why is it so?
3. What is the nature of the void between values and the reality, between the rules of foreign policy and actions in the sphere of foreign policy, as well as between the intentions and results in the foreign policy of the PRC. And what are the reasons.
4. What is relatively of bigger importance for the creation of the image of the PRC foreign policy: the internal (social) factor or the external one. Which one of them affects the internal and foreign policy of the PRC and how is it performed?

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A. CHINESE DEFINITIONS OF A GREAT POWER

In the period of the last five decades, Chinese leaders numerously declared the necessity to regain the status of a world power for China. Nevertheless, they did so using camouflage, declaring that China would never become a superpower. The meaning of China in the international security system has been recently evaluated in various ways by researchers.\(^2\) Polish researchers, J. Rowiński and J. Bylica claim that in Chinese literature, the term of a great power appears in two connotations: qianguo and daguo. The first term denotes “a strong country”. It is present only in Chinese socialist writings. In the everyday language, a great power is expressed with the term “daguo”. Daguo means a big country, and it is an undeniable feature of China. This term does not have a pejorative meaning, which is characteristic for the term: chao daguo, literary “a big country that has crossed the line”. It is supposed to denote a Superpower. China declares that it will never become a superpower. A superpower is connected with the term: hegemony. In Chinese, we can adopt the term: baquan zhu. A fight with hegemony was the basic task of Chinese foreign policy in the sixties and the seventies. It

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was a fight with Soviet hegemony. Presently, in the years after the Cold War, the anti hegemony rhetoric is aimed against the United States.

A loudly discussed article by PhD G. Segal, “Does China Matter?” is devoted to the problems of Chinese powership. It was published in the American quarterly “Foreign Affairs”. G. Segal states that China, inhabited by one fifth of the whole humanity, constitute a salient element of the world system of international relations. The basic research hypothesis of the article by PhD Segal is the verification of the factors that define the power character of China.

B. THE ECONOMIC FACTOR

In terms of economy, Chinese power character is of various dimensions. However, there are more disadvantages than advantages here. As far as the contribution of China in the world economy is concerned, in 1800, China gave 33% of the world’s production industry, Europe 28%, the United States 0.8%. In 1900, Chinese contribution fell to 6.2% (Europe 62%, the United States 23%).

In 1997, Chinese contribution amounted only to 3.5% of the world’s GDP, the United States 25.6%. in the world list of the greatest economies (1997), China can be found on the seventh place. China overtook Brazil, in 2003, China was on the fourth place. In 2007, on the third place, below the United States and Japan. According to the methodology of the World’s Bank, China is now on the second place in the world. Faced with the crash of the world’s economy, they still impress others with an 8% growth.

When evaluating the amount of the GDP per capita, China is on the 81st place. When adopting the method of counting the GDP used by the World Bank, the PPP (Purchasing Power Parity) amounted to 11.8% of the world’s GDP, which gave China the 65th place, below Latvia and above Jamaica. While in the ranking based on the U.N. Human Development Index, China was on the 107th place, along with Albany and Namibia, which is a rather questionable achievement.

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4 G. Segal, Does..., p. 25.
It is an unquestionable fact that China, after 200 years of difficulties, achieved respectable economic success. These achievements have been especially impressive in the last twenty years. The impressive statistics must sometimes arise doubts. China has in the recent years had high inflation 6%, now in the first quarter of 2009 – deletion (0.5–2%). It has been caused by resentment of Chinese society towards consumption. All these years of sacrifice result in still little stabilisation of the market. Moreover, numerous products are of low quality, and some of them are way out of line. Chinese authorities have been trying to turn economy aimed export into one satisfying the demand of the domestic market.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) unchangeably provides annually the Chinese development indicator lowered by 2%. China, in its own statistics, have reached in the last twenty years an average indicator of economic development of 12.5%. Segal questions this result. What is problematic about Chinese economy are the gaps among its sectors: ineffective state industries, strenuously reformed by the government of the Prime Minister Zhu Rongji; agriculture with 64% of employment, the countryside with gigantic problems, economic spheres and the the private sector producing effective economic growth.

Other indicators are similarly not impressive. International trade can serve as an illustration. In 1997, contribution of the PRC in international trade amounted only to 3%, just as much as the Republic of Korea and a little less than the Netherlands. Obviously, it is an enormous progress in comparison to the year 1979. similarly, the contribution of China to the trading turnover of important partners: the USA, Western Europe is scarce (especially as far as import is concerned).

The same reservations can be addressed to FDI (Foreign direct investment). Most of foreign investments in China come from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and from the Chinese oversees. As for the USA, investments in the PRC are only one tenth of all their ventures. Recently, the pace and scope of investments in China has weakened. The sum of foreign investments in China in the last three decades amounted to over one trillion USD. In 2007, this sum was 74 billion USD. Chinese investments abroad amounted to 18.7 billion USD. Japanese investments have decreased in the last five years by half. Chinese market is very promising for the future, however today, the consumption possibilities of an average Chinese family are little. Products
created in special economic spheres are generally devoted to export. The entrance of China into the WTO provided new opportunities for China. The sale of new cars and mobile phones has increased. In 2007, there were 480 million mobile phones.

C. THE MILITARY FACTOR.

According to experts, Chinese defence doctrine is directed to defence. China is now unable to act offensively. China has ventured into an intense programme of modernisation of its own army for the years until 2025. Its main goal is to achieve strategic advantage in the Taiwan Strait, as well as an improvement in the relations between China and Taiwan once Ma Inju was appointed to his position and Kuomintang came back to power. The decrease in the tension has considerably influenced the level of security in the Taiwan Strait.

D. THE POLITICAL FACTOR

China has undergone in the last twenty years a significant evolution of the political system. The changes in the political system do not keep pace with the changes in the economic system. Domestic problems have often caused conflict situations on the international scene. “The shadow of the Tienanmen Square” will influence for a long time still Chinese foreign policy and China’s position on the international arena. Modern issues, such as the Falun Gong case, the problems of human rights influence the position of China. To conclude, taking into consideration the successes and failures of China, their weakness and strength, it must be recognised that the PRC is a world power of increasing importance.
II. RULES OF CHINESE SECURITY POLICY

1. INTERNATIONAL SURROUNDINGS OF THE PRC REFERRING TO SECURITY

In the evaluation presented by the authorities of the PRC, in the published White papers: China National Defence in 2000 and China National Defence 2006, the opinion is dominant that in the international situation, positive trends are predominant nowadays. "Peace and development remain the two major themes in today's world. The trend toward multi-polarity and economic globalization is gaining momentum. Relations among big powers are complicated, with many interwoven contradictions and frictions… Worldwide, the forces for peace are prevailing over the forces for war. A new world war will not break out for a fairly long time to come." The evaluation of situation in the area of the Eastern Asia is very interesting. The situation in the region is considered stable. Chinese authorities consider it positive that countries of the Eastern and South-Eastern Asia have overcome their financial crisis. It is viewed as important that there has been a development in the cooperation with ASEAN, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea (10+3), as well as in economic, financial and security spheres. The Chinese party perceives as very positive the progress in soothing the tension on the Korean Peninsula.6

Very critical remarks were formed towards the United States, which according to the authors of the White papers, implement hegemony policy.7 As instances of such policy, the following were considered:

- The fact that the NATO, ignoring the Security Council, performed a military attack on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which resulted in a deterioration of the international situation, as well as in tension, the development of National Missile Defence (NMD) and Theater Missile Defence (TMD) systems, which according to Chinese author-

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5 Cs National Defense, Information Office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, October 2000, Beijing, p. 3.
6 China’s National Defense…, p. 4.
7 Cs’s National Defense…, p.4.
ities disturbs the balance as far as strategic weapons are concerned, and constitutes a threat for Chinese security. As a special threat towards the country, China considers the promise to increase the availability of the TMD system for Japan and Taiwan.

- China also accuse the United States of supporting the separatist forces in Taiwan, they also see the act of the USA Congress, Taiwan Enhance Act, as an involvement in the domestic affairs of China,
- The authors of the papers also criticised the content of the American – Japanese Indicators for Defence that states about including Taiwan into an area secured from foreign intervention.
- The authors of the papers sustain traditional prejudice as to the intentions of Japan’s defence policy, accusations of re-militarisation appear.

The authors and editors of a book published by the Washington Council of Foreign Relations – M. Oksenberg and E. Economy evaluate similarly the behaviour of China and its attitude towards its international surroundings.\(^8\)

The researchers appreciate the changes that are in progress in the international surroundings of China. They also distinguish five categories that characterise the attitude of China to its international surroundings:

**Defence of Chinese independence**

In their rhetoric, Chinese leaders have adopted the Western understanding of independence, rendering it a sacred and basic rule of foreign policy. Sustaining territorial integrity and national independence have become primary aims. It is also the most important explanation of rejecting political pluralism and the Western concept of human rights. Quoting Deng Xiaoping, “… The window should be only half opened, with a mosquito-net”.\(^9\) It means the necessity of control as to human rights, telecommunication and environment protection.


Sustaining the status of China defence on a high level

China consider their surroundings as safe. It is important to consider as safe the sector of frontier with Russia. The remaining two problematic sectors have no influence on the two-sided relations. In the White papers, China declared a desire to solve frontier problems in peaceful negotiations.10

We can observe a change in Chinese attitude to the issue of frontier controversies. The dominance of the realistic attitude among Chinese decision makers in foreign policy result in the fact that frontier controversies are becoming an issue of little importance.11

China also has disputable sectors on the border with India, with KPR, a 33-kilometre section along the peak of Paektusan, a collective border controversy concerning the Spratly Islands with Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Brunei; a controversy over the sea border with Vietnam in the Gulf of Tonkin; the case of the Paracel Islands, as to which there are claims from Vietnam and Taiwan; claims as to the Senkaku Islands (the Senkaku Islands/ Chinese: Diaoyu Tai) sustained also by Taiwan.12

China perceives American intentions to support Taiwan's aspirations as a threat to its vision of security. Taiwan became a trump card in the strategy game the USA–Japan–China. The anxieties and suspicions of China give

birth to Japanese aspirations. China have blocked Japanese endeavours to achieve a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. The position of Japan in international political relations is inadequate to the role of Japan in the world economy. In the era of globalisation and growing economic and political inter-dependencies, ignoring Japan does not make any sense.

Japanese – Chinese economic relations have been developing very dinamically. Japan is the second trading partner of China. The value of foreign direct investments (FDI) of Japan in China is growing. Chinese leaders claim that Japan has not apologised to China enough for the crimes of the years 1931–1945. Japan has apologised a few times, nevertheless, the apologies have been always considered not satisfactory.  

Japan is officially not in possession of any military forces (a Constitutional ban). In reality, Japanese forces of self defence are the best technically equipped and paid in the world.

China declares active involvement in the creation of security infrastructure in the area of Eastern Asia. In this respect, the United States constitute both their biggest partner and opponent. The further development of strategic relations between China and the United States will determine the shape of the regional security system in the future.

New American administration of the President Barack Obama is now trying to re-evaluate the basic focal points in the strategic vision of American policy towards China.

Preventing the proclamation of independence by Taiwan

The work of diplomacy and special forces of the PRC also includes endeavours to undermine the international status of Taiwan and preventing Taiwan from gaining its independence. These actions include objections against unofficial visits of the representatives of Taiwan’s government abroad. The PRC prevents Taiwan from entering the UN and international govern-

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ment organisations. However, the Minister of Health of Taiwan has recently participated a WHO session with the permission of China.

**Securing a positive image of China in the world**

Diplomacy supports the image of China as a country that is dynamically developing. China does have real successes and has reasons to be proud. Predominantly, the agenda of the UN is used. Chinese diplomacy ventures into counteraction against negative consequences of domestic problems of China, such as the case of human rights or of Falun Gong.

**Promoting economic development**

Promotion of economic development is a primary task of Chinese diplomacy. An increase in export and attracting direct foreign investments create a positive atmosphere for foreign investors. China joining the WTO will contribute to a more intense involvement of this country in the world trade turnover.

### III. THE PRIORITIES OF CHINESE SECURITY POLICY

1. **EFFORTS TO FORM A MULTI-POLAR SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Creating a multi-polar system is a basic strategic goal of Chinese diplomacy. China’s attitude towards the world system and its evolution is very pragmatic. China is in favour of a vision of the world based on harmony of the countries-powers that create it together. Chinese reaction to structural changes in the world system seems the right one. T.J. Christiansen rightly claims that “China feels great in the global choir of realist policy of the post-Cold War world. Their analysts have a better feeling of the traditional theory of balance of powers than numerous Western leaders and analysts”\(^\text{15}\). Chinese leaders have a vision of the world similar to political realists. The

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The present strategy of Chinese security was born in the years after the Cold War. China could reject complicated, difficult manoeuvres, inevitable for survival in the bipolar system. Experience gained from the Persian Gulf, from the fall of the UCCR and the communist system in the Eastern Europe, as well as from the isolation and boycott that took place after the events of 4 June 1989, encouraged China to create international environment that would be friendly towards economic reform and economic development. China began to solve disputable issues with its neighbours, to eliminate the sources of tension. China has re-defined its concept of security.

The concept by Mao was based on conscious mounting of the danger. An instruction of Mao for the year 1976 was: "Be modest, gather seeds, dig deep tunnels and be prepared in case of war".\textsuperscript{16}

On other occasion he said, "The sooner the better, if a nuclear war starts".\textsuperscript{17}

Today’s doctrine of security is based on contradictory ideas. Current analyses underline the positive changes, but they also point at the dangers for Chinese security.

\textbf{a. Role of the United States in the Asian security system from Chinese point of view}

- China wants to participate in multilateral actions, in which the United States have sustained for years the dominant position, e.g. to take part in the world financial institutions, such as IMF, or the World Bank.
- For China, the following are of significant meaning: the mechanisms of control of proliferation of nuclear weapon, participation in the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, as well as international mechanisms of control of missile systems. China exports technology and missiles to Iraq and Iran, which arises contempt of the government of the United States.
- China takes part in bilateral and multilateral actions to support peace and stabilisation on the Korean Peninsula, on the Eastern and Southern Chinese Sea, and in the Taiwan Strait, they desire to be a member of the WTO, they want to implement a system of government that is

\textsuperscript{17} R. Terill, op.cit., p. 445.
based on the rule of law. Chinese anxiety has been recently evoked by the escalation of actions connected with the breaking of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapon regime by the DPRK. As an answer to launching an inter-continental missile and to the nuclear test, China supported the 1784 Resolution of the UN Security Council, which designs new sanctions against the DPRK, including the possibility to control ships that carry devices and components serving the construction of nuclear weapon.

- China desires to develop and intensify the strategic dialogue with the United States. The agenda of this dialogue includes numerous topics:
  - Reform of the UN system, widening the UN Security Council;
  - Evaluation of the nuclear programme of India and Pakistan. During the summit meeting Clinton-Jiang, in June 1998 – both parties decided to strengthen diplomatic pressure that aimed at making the governments of India and Pakistan to participate in the NPT and TBT;
  - Both parties exchange military representatives on a high level. American warships paid an official visit in Hongkong once it had been regained by the PRC. The Minister of Defence of the PRC Chi Haotien and the Chief of the General Staff of the PRC Zhang Wangnian have visited the United States;
  - This dialogue includes economic subjects. The United States have negotiated with China its conditions to be admitted to the WTO. The United States suggested inviting China to the G-8 summit. Economic cooperation will intensify in the conditions of globalisation. It must be added that in 1999, China was definitely given the clause of the highest privilege, with no necessity of prolonging it every year;
  - China has been in a dialogue with the United States as to human rights. There is an annual American report concerning human rights prepared by the Department of State of the USA. The Chinese party prepares a counter-report. China signed and ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social Rights, as well as the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Chinese attitude to human rights was characterised in a speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the PRC Tang Jiaxuan at the 54th Session of
the UNGA: “Securing independence is an unquestionable condition of international existence. Protection of human rights, or a humanitarian intervention cannot become more important than a state’s sovereignty. Human rights should be respected in every country, depending on its political, social and legal conditions. Interpretation of human rights can be thus dependent on: a political system, the level of economic growth, history, cultural background. It cannot be imposed by any state or organisation. Every aberration from the rule of sovereignty or its violation destroys the universal norms of international relations and leads to an outburst of hegemony. World peace is endangered then”.

III. RULES AND CONDITIONS OF CHINESE DEFENCE POLICY

The rules of Chinese defence policy reveal its defensive character. It results from the Constitution of the PRC and from the Act on National Defence of the PRC. White papers characterise the basic tasks of defence policy of the PRC in the following way:

1. Consolidating national defence, resisting aggression, defending the country’s sovereignty, its unity and territorial integrity, as well as security. China aims at modernisation of their army, but only for self defence. China does not desire a war and they will solve their international conflicts and situations resulting from history in a peaceful way. Which does not change the fact that hegemony and politics from the position of power still exist and are developing, which means for China obstacles in unifying the country and China reserves the right to defend sovereignty and security with military means.

2. Creating and consolidating national defence policy in an independent manner and by deterrence. Deterrence is an element of defence strategy. China will not bind itself with any power by an alliance or a military pact. China develops its military research, new technologies, defence industry and develops new kinds of weapon to scare other countries off.

3. China develops the strategy of active defence. Chinese army practices various strategies of military operations.
4. China performs consequently a modernisation of their weaponry (recently, the Chinese National People's Congress agreed on a rise of military expenses in this year's budget, March 2009). Navy has been significantly modernised. New air planes have been introduced to the air forces, Su-27 and Su-29. Russia is the main importer of weapons to China. There is still an embargo on weapon and strategic technology delivery to China, introduced by the United States and the European Union after a bloody pacification of student riots by Chinese authorities in June 2004. missile army has been consequently modernised, including nuclear forces. China performs the space programme. It announced sending the first astronaut in the space in the future.
5. The programme of development of civil defence has been improved.
6. The programme of modernisation of the military forces is connected with actions in the whole area of economy, and constitutes its part.
7. China treats its nuclear forces in an entirely defensive character. It does not want to impose their political system on other countries. It will not tolerate any interference in China's domestic affairs.
8. Solving the issue of Taiwan is one of the strategic priorities. China supports the formula, “one country, two systems” suggested by Deng Xiaoping.
9. It expects a change in the attitude of local authorities in Taiwan as to this significant issue\(^{19}\).

Nowadays, China realises the programme of weaponry modernisation, which will end in 2050. Chinese army fulfils mainly defensive functions. China pays a lot of attention to the role of security and defence policy. One is for certain, that the issues of safety, both on a global scale and in the region of Eastern Asia-the Pacific Ocean, cannot be solved without the involvement of China. The meaning of China should increase in the future.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The role of China has been growing in the recent years. Today, it is impossible to solve any global issues without the involvement of China. There are voices of replacing G-8 with G-2, with the participation only of China and the United States.
2. China contributes to the efforts of transforming the global order from the unilateral model to a multilateral one.
3. The military doctrine of China is entirely defensive in character.
4. China desires to create friendly surroundings that support the policy of economic development.
5. China tries to lessen the negative consequence resulting from their weak points, such as:
   - The issue of Tibet,
   - Uyghur separatism,
   - Falung Gong,
   - Human rights.
6. The 21st century will unquestionably belong to China.

APPENDIX A – THE PRC’S MILITARY FORCES

Military Forces:
2.840 000 (of which 1.275,000 come from draft), 136.000 women, the army is in the process of reduction.

Time of military service:
Qualified draft: the land forces and and the navy 3 years, air forces 4 years, Reserves: 1.2000 000 + people's armed police created in a provincial system.

Strategic missile forces:
Number; 125 000 They have 6 bases (of armies on the same level) with specialised regiments ICBM 9 intercontinental ballistic missiles: 17+ 7 CSS-4 (DF-5), range 11 000–14 500 km, power 3–4 MT, new missiles are planned
of the range from 8 000 to 13 000 km Df-31, DF-41 IRBM (intermediate-range ballistic missiles) 10+ 10 CSS3 (DF-4) range 5 500 to 6 300 km, power 3 MT. SLBM (submarine-launched ballistic missiles); JL1 (CSS-N3), number 12, range 1 700–2000, power 200–500 KT, planned JL-2 range 8 000 km, China is also in the possession of short-range nuclear missiles SRBM (short-range ballistic missiles DF-11/M-11 (CSS-7) range 300 km, DF-15/M-9 (CSS-6) range 500–600 km.

Anti-missile defence:
Bases in Sinjiang and Shanxi, anti-satellite early-warning systems.

**Land forces:** 2 090 000 including 1 075 000 from draft, 7 enormous military regions, 21 military regions, 3 special divisions, 24 integrated Group Armies (syn. to a corps), **Divisions 91, tanks 10 500, helicopters 111, armed vehicles 5 500.**

**Navy:**
Number of people: 260 000
Aircraft carrier 1, submarines 63, minesweepers 119, boarding craft 73, air planes 541, helicopters 176, 1 marines brigade

**Air forces:**
Number of people: 470 000
Fighters: 2 556, including SU 27–50, planned 272, remaining F/J-10, FJ-8 modernised MiG, as well as Mig-21, Mig-19, Mig-17, bombers H-6, H-5 Tu-16–420, transporters IL-76–425, patrol/reconnaissance 290, air force divisions 3.

APPENDIX B – COMPARISON OF DEFENCE EXPENDITURE IN 2000 IN CHOSEN COUNTRIES (BILLION USD UNITS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2000 Defence Expenditure (Billion USD)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>291.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>30.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>22.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>14.6</td>
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