

## **Project # 5: "New" Geopolitics and China's Foreign Policy: Actors, Agendas and their Relevance to Brazil**

As Singapore's Prime Minister and notable Asian strategist Lee Kuan Yew once said, "the size of China's displacement of world balance is such that the world must find a new balance. It is not possible to pretend that this is just another big player. This is the biggest player in the history of the world."<sup>1</sup> Kevin Rudd, who was Australia's Prime Minister between 2007 and 2010 (and also for a short period in 2013) and is considered a keen observer of Chinese foreign policy, has interpreted recent Chinese development as being equivalent to the English Industrial Revolution and the global information technology revolution happening at the same time and not over 300 years, but in 3 decades.<sup>2</sup>

In 1980, China's GDP was less than \$300 billion; in 2015, it exceeded \$11 trillion, making China the second largest economy in the world. According to the International Monetary Fund, in terms of purchasing power parity, by 2014 the Chinese economy (GDP/PPP: \$17.6 trillion) had already surpassed that of the United States (GDP/PPP: \$17.4 trillion). China is the largest producer of ships, steel, aluminium, furniture, clothing, textiles, cell phones and computers, as well as being the largest consumer of cars, cell phones and Internet commerce. For the first time in modern history, according to *The Economist*, Asia has become richer than Europe and will surpass North America by 2020.<sup>3</sup>

This transformation goes beyond the economic field, reaching labor productivity, the improvement of social indicators (average life expectancy, literacy and access to higher education), the expansion of higher education, investments in research and development, poverty reduction, production of an extraordinary number of millionaires, etc. While China is a crucial element when rethinking global geopolitics, as Graham Allison (2017, opus cit.) reminds us, the country has never forgotten Mao's dictum:

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<sup>1</sup> In ALLISON, Graham; BLACKWILL, Robert D.; WYNE, Ali. *Lee Kuan Yew: the Grand Master's Insights on China, the United States, and the World*. Cambridge (MA): MIT Press, 2013, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> In RUDD, Kevin. "The West Isn't Ready for the Rise of China", *New Statesman*, 16 de julho de 2012. Artigo disponível no seguinte link: <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/international-politics/2012/07/kevin-rudd-west-isntready-rise-china> (acesso em 01/07/2017).

<sup>3</sup> *Apud* ALLISON, Graham. *Destined for War. Can America and China escape Thucydides's Trap?* New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017.

power grows when it originates from the barrel of a gun. Even though it has devoted "only" 2 percent of its GDP on average to the defence sector since the late 1980s (while in the US this number reaches about 4 percent), three decades of the above-mentioned 10% growth rates have allowed China a considerable increase in its military capabilities, by about 8 times in less than 40 years.

Given this context of profound political, economic and strategic transformations, this research project aims to analyze the new contours of global geopolitics given the unprecedented development of China and its conversion into a superpower that challenges the international status quo.

The objectives of the project are as follows:

- 1) To analyze the updates of the literature on geopolitics (in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Mandarin) in recent years, mainly since the 1990s;
- 2) Based on official documents and on the available literature (in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese and Mandarin), to analyze the main discursive outlines of Chinese foreign policy, its history since World War II, its main actors, with special attention to its instrumental use of the international development cooperation agenda – particularly under the ambitious "One Belt, One Road" program announced by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2017.