Is There a Strategic Partnership between the EU and China?

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• Three questions to be answered:
  – What?
  – Why?
  – How?
• Outline
  – The EU-China strategic partnership and its definitions
  – Examination of EU-China relations with international relations theory
  – Prospect for EU-China relations
• The EU-China strategic partnership since 2003
  – Javier Solana:
    • We really do have a partnership which is getting wider and deeper. Our goals are converging across a wide range of international subjects… we are natural partners in many ways.
• The EU-China strategic partnership since 2003
  – Wen Jiabao:
    • By ‘strategic’, it means that the cooperation should be long-term and stable, bearing on the larger picture of China-EU relations. It transcends the differences in ideology and social system and is not subjected to the impacts of individual events that occur from time to time.
• The honeymoon period did not last long. Problems:
  – Textile dispute
  – Arms embargo
  – Improved transatlantic relations
  – ....

• Period of reflection and adjustment
The EU as a liberal player emphasizes liberty and human rights

– Support China’s transition to an open society, based on the rule of law and respect for human rights and democracy
– Arms embargo kept as a bargaining chip
• The EU as a liberal player emphasizes democracy
  – Democratic states will not fight against each other
• The EU as a liberal player emphasizes the importance of institutions
  – Welcome China to join IGOs
  – Establish a wide range of bilateral dialogue at different levels
• The EU as a liberal player emphasizes cooperation instead of balance of power
  – Promote multilateralism
• China as a realist player attaches great importance to the balance of power
  – Multipolar world
  – Partnership with the EU to balance against the US
• China as a realist player attaches great importance to its independent foreign policy
  – Respect for sovereignty: human rights issue; emphasize Chinese characteristics
  – Respect for territorial integrity: the Taiwan issue, the Tibet issue
• China as a realist player is unsatisfied at the current international order:
  – ‘China will continue to pursue its independent foreign policy of peace and work closely with other countries for the establishment of a new international political and economic order that is fair and equitable, and based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence’.
• Problems:
  – The bilateral institutional framework, e.g.: summits and PCA
  – The EU as a normative power: not much influence on China
  – The EU has limited hard power: weak partner for China
  – Actor: the EU not speak with one voice
• Prospect for EU-China relations
  – Several scenarios
  – The most probable: an equal partnership characterized by reciprocity
• References


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