

THE LEADER, THE POLICIES, AND THE BRI: A WALTZIAN PERSPECTIVE

Paulo Bittencourt¹

Rodrigo Passos²

Resumo: O ponto de partida do texto é a distinção waltziana das três imagens para argumentar que os interesses da China se direcionam para aspectos do seu interesse imediato, do desenvolvimento de suas capacidades e questões fulcrais da segurança internacional. Neste sentido, aborda-se a imagem do indivíduo como a liderança de Xi Jinping, as políticas econômica e militar integradas com a Iniciativa Cinturão e Rota e seus desdobramentos como componentes ligados ao Estado. O aspecto sistêmico internacional contempla o nexos deste com a Iniciativa Cinturão e Rota. A análise da liderança de Xi Jinping aponta um perfil de anticorrupção e de proatividade na elaboração e decisão sobre a política externa. O grande desenvolvimento das políticas e capacidades econômicas e militares, entrelaçadas com a Iniciativa Cinturão e Rota, não escapa à perspectiva defensiva que guia a China desde 1964. Além disso, a perspectiva sistêmica situa a grande capacidade chinesa, agora bastante visível em todas as suas capacidades e na concretização da Iniciativa Cinturão e Rota.

Palavras-chave: Waltz; Iniciativa Cinturão e Rota; China.

Abstract: The starting point of the text is the Waltzian distinction of the three images to argue that China's interests are directed toward aspects of its immediate interest, development of its capabilities, and core international security issues. In this sense, the individual image is approached as the leadership of Xi Jinping, the economic and military policies integrated with the Belt and Road Initiative and its developments as components linked to the state. The international systemic aspect contemplates its link with the Belt and Road Initiative. Xi Jinping's leadership analysis points to a profile of anti-corruption and proactivity in devising and deciding foreign policy. The great development of economic

¹ PhD in Political Science by the University of São Paulo (USP) and Researcher at the International Relations Research Centre (NUPRI-USP). Lecturer at São Paulo State University (UNESP), Marília.

² Associate Professor at São Paulo State University (UNESP), Marília.

and military policies and capabilities, intertwined with the Belt and Road Initiative, does not escape the defensive perspective that has guided China since 1964. Besides, the systemic perspective situates the great Chinese capacity, now quite visible in all its capabilities and in the realization of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Keywords: Waltz; Belt and Road Initiative; China.

INTRODUCTION

According to Sørensen (2015), following the processes of economic reform and opening in China, a polarised debate emerged over whether China was a revisionist or a status quo power. The author states that Western analysis is dominated by a “neorealist approach” (Sorensen, 2015, p. 67), which, by ignoring domestic-level dynamics of Chinese politics, portrays China as an aggressive power, as exemplified by conflicts in the South and East China Seas.

Sørensen’s argument is that there was (for the time of writing) no clear path in China’s behaviour, and the clearest blueprint one could follow was the Communist Party’s leadership to demonstrate its legitimacy and monopoly of power domestically in order not to seem weak or yielding (Sorensen, 2015). As for China’s international approach, it would not be possible to define it as either a revisionist or a status quo power, simply because its actions lacked a clear direction.

Writing more recently, Scobell and He (2026) state that China’s interests are way more parochial than frequently assessed, and that believing China has imperial intentions risks misinterpreting its pattern of behaviour and escalating and overreacting to its foreign policies.

Trying to offer a more detailed “neorealist” perspective, this paper argues from a Waltzian standpoint that, even though China’s interests may be restricted to its immediate interest geographical area, and may be focused in developing the country’s capacities to perform its political and economics tasks more smoothly, these developments do not happen in a vacuum and, therefore, they bring on important international consequences that are most

dramatically illustrated under the security dilemma (Herz, 1950). This is because of the effect of anarchy in which states coexist (Waltz, 1979).

Agreeing with both Sørensen (2015), and Scobell and He (2026) on the need to address empirical, interacting-unit level elements to the analysis, this paper still grants great importance to the systemic element that conditions the actions of states. In other words, we start from domestic-level elements, but try to understand the systemic implications of them, conciliating the author's view with Waltz's (2001) claim that both first, second and third images are fundamental for complete analysis on conflicts, whether armed or not, because conflict is intrinsic to social relations (Waltz, 1971).

1. THE LEADER

Following Waltz's classical separation between first, second and third images, and, furthermore, following his guidance that no image is sufficient in itself (Waltz, 2001), we start first with the leadership style that Xi Jinping has imprinted to his period as Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party, and how he has approached Chinese foreign policy. To be clear, both the first and the second image boundaries become somewhat blurred in the specific case of the Belt and Road Initiative, for reasons we believe will become clearer along this and the following sections.

Maintaining the survival of the Chinese state can be seen as the core interest for the government, which conflates the survival of the regime with the survival of the state (Lanteigne, 2020; Scobell; He, 2026). Indeed, since the Chinese Revolution in 1949, the grand strategies of the Chinese state dealt to some extent with the idea of coping with threats to the regime (GOLDSTEIN, 2020). Goldstein (2020) asserts that after the Cold War, China gained room for addressing grand strategies of rejuvenation, but still keeping in mind its survival, which, despite not being immediately threatened in this new moment, was an ever-present concern. In this context, Xi Jinping's grand strategy for regaining standing as a great power for China was crafting his version of the Chinese Dream³, seeking to *reassure* its rise was peaceful, *reform* the existing order according to Chinese interests, and *resisting* to threats to the vital interests of China. Marks and Siebens (2023) note a greater salience of China in

³ The very concept of a Chinese Dream dates back to Mao Zedong, and had different meanings in different political contexts (WANG, 2014).

international affairs during Xi's mandate, which is also noted by Goldstein (2020) and Wang (2017).

As Shichen Wang (2017) notes, the foreign policy decision making process in the political system of contemporary China is fragmented, and is distributed between the state, which conducts official foreign affairs, the party, which conducts some relations through the Party Liaison Ministry, and the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which can conduct foreign relations in accordance to directives of the Ministry of Defence (WANG, 2017). There are many actors involved in the process of foreign policy making in China, but the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party is the most important one, setting the general directives for the foreign policy of the country, while "party, military, and state institutions have to interpret such indications" (Ghiselli, 2021, p. 19).

Li (2015) recollects Xi Jinping's career in decision positions in order to stress the leader's repertoire of being able to impose his will if necessary:

Xi applied for CCP membership ten times but was rejected repeatedly before his hard work eventually allowed him to become party secretary of his village. In twenty-five years from 1982 to 2007, Xi held major executive positions that require independent decisions. Xi, for instance, served as party secretary of a county in Hebei province from 1982 to 1985. He then moved to Fujian province and worked there for seventeen years from 1985 to 2002, serving as mayor or party secretary of two cities and one prefecture, and then governor and party secretary of the province. From 2002 to 2007, Xi was governor and party secretary of Zhejiang province. Both Fujian and Zhejiang are large, economically dynamic coastal provinces. In 2007, Xi took over as party secretary of Shanghai, but moved to Beijing to become a new member of the CCP Politburo Standing Committee after a few months (Li, 2015).

Wang (2017, p. 34) highlights that Xi's leadership can be characterised by his domestic anti-corruption policies and his proactive foreign policy internationally. The former policies were taken to secure power, while in the foreign policy process, a more participative design was adopted, despite the centralisation of the decision in the figure of Xi (Wang, 2017, p. 42).

This centralisation, however, was not out of the blue. It comes from a trend of political reforms inaugurated by Deng Xiaoping, increasing the number of civilian cadres relative to the PLA representatives in decision-making parties (Miller, 2015). The PLA, in this sense, became an ever more autonomous military sphere, in which the substantive expertise in the selection and promotion to the PLA elites was necessary (Miller, 2015). Miller (2015) argues further that most of the reforms proposed by Xi's leadership, whether organisational, military, economic or belonging to other realms, had been long discussed before implemented and were endorsed by the Party Congress. Conclusively, Miller writes that

were China to go to war, the strength of party leadership over the PLA may be sorely tested, whether by impulses on the part of the PLA brass to intervene more assertively in the party leadership's councils or, conversely, on the part of the party's civilian leaders to insert themselves deeply into PLA operational decisions (Miller, 2015).

It is possible to argue, from the studies previously recapped, that during the Xi era a centralisation in the decision-making process has been under way, and that Xi has had experience in managing situations of independent decision-making. Despite the increasing of the groups participating in the process, we argue that this is due to China's augmented capacities of performing tasks internationally (militarily, economically, socially), the recent purges in the military point to a consolidation of the centralisation we have been describing⁴.

Concerning the BRI and the centralisation process more directly, Baogang He (2019) affirms that

the BRI provided a unique opportunity for Xi to concentrate, extend, and legitimate his power. As a grand project, the BRI requires substantive power to achieve its goal, thus it has helped Xi to pick up the pace with which his concept of the 'China Dream' and the BRI are to be seen to have 'attained the status of party and state dogma.'(...) The successful implementation of the long-term BRI project offers a strong justification to abandon the two-term

⁴ According to the Centre for Strategic and International Studies Database (CSIS, Washington), "since 2022, over 100 senior Chinese military officials have been officially purged or gone missing". Available at: <https://chinapower.csis.org/data/chinese-pla-military-purges/>, accessed on April 27, 2026.

rule, which was finally achieved in the Constitutional revision in March 2018. More importantly, the BRI granted Xi greater external legitimacy when he was on the central stage of the BRI Summit in May 2017, attended by 29 heads of state and 60 representatives of international organisations (He, 2019, p. 183).

Therefore, it is possible to argue that, while at the same time a domestic process of centralisation of power was underway in China, it was also reinforced and legitimised by the BRI, whose positive expectations provided ground for Xi's projects of rejuvenating the nation under his version of the China Dream. How China behaved through economic and military policies during the last years is a matter for the next section.

2. THE POLICIES

We share Yu's perspective (YU, 2017) that China kept a low-profile attitude when it was still a developing nation filled with "thorny domestic issues and limited financial resources," but could adopt a more salient foreign policy after these issues were mitigated and, specially after the 2008 financial crisis in the United States, out of which China was an important actor. Still, while Xi's foreign policy signature is an ambitious one, we still share Scobell and He's (2026) view that China might be more concerned with parochial interests rather than other maximalist goas as an offensive realist view would have us interpret (MEARSHEIMER, 2014, 2018). Therefore, we do not find that it follows that China is behaving offensively, but rather that its actions are out of a balance of interests resulting from domestic interest and an assessment of international constraints. In this section, we are analysing two clusters of policies frequently addressed in the literature: the military policies and the economic policies, always considering the interests related to the Belt and Road initiative, which is one of the most important projects of the Chinese foreign policy under Xi Jinping (Wang, 2017; Yu, 2017).

Economic Policies

The Belt and Road Initiative serves four purposes for China, according to Yu (2017), of which we highlight three. First, it serves an infrastructural purpose, which strengthens bilateral ties between China and its partners, increasing the exchange of goods produced in

China to these areas. At the same time, it serves a going-out strategy for Chinese State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), which in short means more revenues for Chinese investments. Thirdly, it serves the role of developing underdeveloped areas inside China, such as the Western areas of the Country, allowing them to be more connected to the main productive regions of the country and to potential consuming markets. As we see it, these purposes show China using foreign trade as a source of income for increasing its domestic economic capacity. Furthermore, it improves the country connectivity worldwide, overcoming chokepoints, investing in infrastructure, and, as a by-product, gaining leverage over its partners. In this sense, our perspective draws closer to Magri's (2017, p. 7, emphasis added), for whom the BRI "is a *comprehensive national development strategy* designed by the government, with a potentially strong international development impact". Such a view is shared by Alessia Amighini (2017).

This model, according to Xing Li (2019, p. 29) is an attempt to substitute the export-oriented trend in Chinese economy to a model based on consumption and outward investment. For Li (2019, p. 35), the Chinese economy works as a nodal point, as both an engine for the growth of East and Southeast Asia, but also as a hub for economic integration. In short, as Kissinger had noted on his work *On China*, Chinese international presence for long was imperceptible until it was unavoidable (Kissinger, 2012): "today, virtually all East Asian countries count China as their largest trading partner and largest market" (Li, 2019, p. 36).

He (2019, p. 181) argues that the presence of SOEs in the projects involved in the BRI point to a subordination of economic interests to a political rationale. It is compatible with our Waltzian perspective, in which the economic rationale has to do with the capacity of states to perform tasks – in this case, economic tasks –, and it corresponds to the set of capacities a state has (Waltz, 1979).

As He (2019) points out, at least three Ministries deserve special attention concerning BRI issues: the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Commerce. These were the organs responsible for issuing the 2015 Vision and Proposed Actions Outlined on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road (Wang, 2016; Zhang, 2017; He, 2019). However, these are not the sole institutional actors that play a role in domestic BRI politics. Inside the

National Development and Reform Commission, the Leading Small Group on the BRI is also an important forum, playing an advisory role (HE, 2019) and acting in between the Politburo and the Chinese Communist Party Standing Committee (Lanteigne, 2020). Due to different concerns and specializations of each of the ministries involved in the BRI, its mobilisation is not uniform (HE, 2019).

Furthermore, there is also the issue of the political administrative division of Chinese regions, which also play a role for attracting BRI investments from Beijing. Such a competition between provinces for the favour of investments or justification of projects can generate domestic criticisms and dissidence: “To ensure the success of the BRI and that the leader’s vision be implemented, the Party/State has established control mechanisms to deal with the domestic criticism of the stateled project. Control mechanisms deal with ideas and dissidents, while mobilisation is about resources” (He, 2019, p. 189).

While it occurs as an economic project, which is clearly captured in Chinese official rhetoric (Kugelman, 2019), it is also undeniable that the development of the BRI occurs at the same time China pursues a modernization of its military capacities (Ferdinad, 2016; Tunsjo, 2018). The connectivity projects China pursues under the rubric of the (economic) BRI can be used for military purposes, and the gains obtained through trade may be reverted to military buildup (Monteiro, 2014). This is why it is important to keep an eye on the military and strategic policies China has been pursuing which, despite domestic, also have important international consequences.

Military Policies

It is in the post-2013 context (hence, after the implementation of the BRI) that China would inaugurate its first military base overseas, in Djibouti: “what was meant to be a simple logistics hub turned out to be a base capable of hosting armored vehicles and helicopters” (Ghiselli, 2021, p. 1). As Ghiselli (2021) also notes, the conflation of domestic interests of China to its foreign interests rendered their interest in developing a sea power ever more powerful. The influence of Alfred Mahan ideas in the PLA seem apparent.

Marks and Siebens (2023, p. 230) bring on an important remark on Xi Jinping’s speech during the 13th National People’s Congress, according to which building a strong military in the new era had as prerequisite the strategy of military-civilian integration:

this integration leverages the power of state-owned civilian companies to function as an extension of military power. SOEs play an important role in supporting strategic military interests by laying down port and basing infrastructure, establishing logistics, and providing maintenance support to Chinese naval and ground forces deployed to PKOs (Marks; Siebens, 2023, p. 130).

However, the military power is not solely used for war waging, but can fulfil a range of other, more subtle purposes, from deterrence to coercion, or, as became the expression for this matter, Military Operations Other than War (MOOTW) (Siebens; Lucas, 2023). In the context of the BRI's Maritime pathway, Zhang (2017, p. 322) notes the establishment of the logistics hub in Djibouti, the Chinese management of Gwadar Port in Pakistan and the more assertive presence of China in disputed territories in South China sea as an attempt of China to reconfigure its geographic space along the BRI. It also can serve the purpose of integrating civilian and military structure, as proposed by Marks and Siebens (2023) and by Siebens and Lucas (2023).

In addition, two relevant points need to be considered. One from a geopolitical and geostrategic point of view, which tangents the classical formulations of projection of land power and naval power. Another refers to the consequences of a probable projection of naval power.

The projection of power as capabilities in different dimensions has a classical theoretical formulation and great impact on geostrategic assessments that is tangent to China. Beijing considers the centrality of Eurasia as a wider space that would have a decisive determinism for power projection. Its summary formulation would point to the control of the center of Eurasia (the heartland) as a starting point for power projection on the two continents, with the control then unfolding to the rest of the world. Various reasons, such as location, points suitable for great mobility of troops and strategic rear, mineral and natural wealth, territorial closeness and difficult access by the Arctic included some of the arguments in defense of this thesis.

In this sense, the theorist of such a thesis was the British geographer Halford John Mackinder (1904). For lack of space and not to lose the focus of the text, the great impact of Mackinder's central thesis will not be discussed.

The philosophy of history behind such a thesis would account for the historical confrontation conditioned by geography involving the terrestrial power that controls the continental heart with the naval power. The confrontation of the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States would be the summary application of such a thesis. After the end of the Cold War, the weakening of the Soviet Union (Huntington, 1991) would open a path to the projection of Chinese power in the vacuum created by such decay in the heartland of Mackinder. What was seen throughout the twentieth century was an alliance between China and Russia that maintained terrestrial Russian supremacy on the surface of its Eurasian territory, despite increasing Chinese presence and collaboration. Such a framework may potentiate a breakdown of the balance of power in the international system insofar as both are nuclear powers and China can use such an alliance to strengthen its position in the international system.

A quick attempt to apply Mackinder's perspective in favor of China may lead to the understanding that the spread of the BRI throughout Eurasia, beyond Africa and Latin America may also be a clear initiative to geopolitically neutralize the United States as a naval power through the projection of land power.

The theoretical and geopolitical counterpoint to land power would be the supremacy of naval power controlling the seas, enunciated by U.S. Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan (1970). Also corroborating a thesis of strong geographical determinism, such a theory also served as an explanation regarding the US global prominence. Such prominence in the seas could also be subject to future questioning and military confrontation between the US and China in the Pacific.

Such a scenario is discussed and seen as very likely by Mearsheimer (2010), assessing China as an aspiring regional hegemon. According to Mearsheimer, such a condition is that which characterizes the dominant state in the international system. By engaging with geopolitical references, Mearsheimer identifies a much more Asian than Eurasian vocation in China, which also supports his assessment of a future Sino-American naval conflict in the Pacific.

A rather relevant point needs to be noted. There is a likely and relevant innovation in Chinese military policies that would partly explain the choice of some vectors over others in the more recent course of the twenty-first century. In this case, the absence of an emphatic

search for the construction and commissioning of nuclear aircraft carriers is striking in the Chinese case.

A preliminary assessment would show that such power-projection vectors are obsolete. In addition to the very high cost, the aforementioned vector has a very slow displacement capacity and is increasingly vulnerable to low-cost technologies, such as the use of aerial and naval drones in the context of a "swarm" and high saturation in the military theater of operations.

According to a US expert (Brose, 2020), China does not need such an aircraft carrier. The likely scenario for the near future is the enormous quantity and high quality of Chinese technology of drones and hypersonic missiles that would neutralize US aircraft carriers in different ways. The proliferation of drone swarms and low-cost autonomous weapon systems can overburden carrier defenses with thousands of simultaneous and coordinated attacks.

Besides all these remarkable capabilities, all evidence until now follow a Waltzian previous assumption: China has become more pacific after acquiring nuclear weapons in 1964 (Waltz, 2012, p. 4). These capabilities have not been taken into an offensive perspective, since in Waltzian terms the international system has a relevant balance tendency in the mid-long term. The systemic aspects will be covered in the next section.

3. THE BRI AND THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

The discussions conducted in the previous sections should be considered in tandem with the discussion in this section. To be clear, so fundamental are the leadership and the policies to understanding the international consequences of the BRI as is the international system itself, and this is a Waltzian starting point (Waltz, 2001). Furthermore, we are interested in the international-political consequences of the initiative, and it is a restricted scope, which is also a Waltzian presupposition (Waltz, 1979). Together, these points provide us with what we term a "Waltzian perspective."

Flint and Zhu (2019, p. 100) recognize the political consequences of the BRI when they assess that the economic intentions of the initiative cannot be separated from its intended or unintended geopolitical consequences in a context of decline of American

hegemony and increasing Chinese influence. Given the conflation the recent literature in international relations has made on international politics and geopolitics, it seems appropriate to state that, in a Waltzian framework, we are concerned with the political consequences of economic projects, such as the BRI.

It seems that these considerations are not out of question, starting by the very name of the project. As Flint and Zhu also note, Chinese scholars and policymakers branded the project as an initiative instead of a strategy in a rhetorical manner so that the geoeconomic aspect of the project was emphasised, while assuring the American military should not feel frightened by the expansion of the Chinese presence to a wider geographical area (Flint; Zhu 2019, p. 96). In 2017,

the government standardised the term as the 'Belt and Road Initiative,' forbidding the use of the term 'Belt and Road Strategy' to reduce suspicion and resistance. The proposal for the replacement of 'Belt and Road Strategy' with 'Belt and Road Initiative' came from the Center for China and Globalization (CCG) think tank whose members are largely returned scholars and professional experts from the USA and Europe. They submitted a policy brief to Zhao Gaolin who approved the proposal in 2017. It should be noted that CCG had its own agenda to promote closer integration with the West and avoid confrontation (He, 2019, p. 191).

This paper draws special importance on the international system, or on what Waltz call the "third image." Being an image, this is not a "level of analysis," but rather a way of conceiving of international politics so that the international is different from the domestic-level, and contains dynamics which are necessary for any explanation to be complete (Waltz, 1979). In other words, the international *exists*.

As noted by Flint and Zhu (Flint; Zhu, 2019), the BRI was conceived in a moment of relative decline of American unipolarity (HANSEN, 2011). In an attempt to increase its domestic capacities and increase its presence overseas, the United States launched, in 2011, what it called its Pivot to Asia (Clinton, 2011). Despite criticisms that the Pivot was but a retcon (Jensen; Shibuya, 2015), i.e., an attempt to make sense of policies that otherwise lacked

some tougher coherence, the fact is that the having the then-Secretary of State and the government of the United States focusing attention on Asia was something to be aware of.

It is in this context that, in 2013, the Belt and Road was officially launched:

In March 2013, a speech was given by Chinese president Xi Jinping in Astana, Kazakhstan, initiating the strategy of the 'Silk Road Economic Belt'. In November 2013, a further speech was given by President Xi in Jakarta, Indonesia, launching 'the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road'. Both speeches combined marked the birth of the grand strategic vision of the fifth generation of Chinese Communist leadership. This vision is commonly referred to as the Belt and Road Initiative (Yu, 2019, p. 187).

Therefore, despite attempts to accommodate Chinese and American policies on both sides, it is undeniable that both met each other also with suspicion. Washington saw the Chinese attempts to establish new connectivity roads through both its economic and also political perspectives, concerned on how a more active China would undermine American alliances in the Asia-Pacific, the dollar dominance, and political leverage. The frequent attempts to establish regional forums, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which deliberately excluded China (Ferdinand, 2016), is evidence of this. In this context, therefore, the BRI is definitely an important nexus between international politics, geopolitics, and connectivity under the form of transportation (Lin, 2019).

The United States, after its long period of unipolarity, fighting against terrorism and operating against insurgencies (Mittelmark, 2021) has come to meet the resistance of China to its economic grip, and a strategic competition came underway. No longer would terrorism be considered the main threat to the United States in its National Security and Defence documents, but rather, Great Power Rivalry. This is so because both states are competing for increasing their domestic capacities, but such a competition involves also a degree of suspicion on what can be done against them – a consequence of the international arena.

China, in turn, was a major beneficiary of the hyperglobalisation fostered during the unipolar moment under the American political project (Tomé, 2023; Sorensen, 2022; Hansen, 2011). Now, it cannot – and may not want anymore to – hide its capacity, and is pursuing its own strategies through ways of exercising power that leave aside the military

power and make use of other levers of power, such as economics, political stability and competence. After all, these elements are also components of the state power (Waltz, 1979, 2001; Bittencourt, 2025).

4. CONCLUSION

This text briefly sought to integrate an analysis of the three images of Waltz to recent events in China as a function of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The first image focused on Xi Jinping's Chinese leadership. As an image that has its relevance but cannot formulate a sufficient analysis, it showed a set of different aspects of the internal and external decision-making process, focused on foreign policy and relevant aspects such as the Belt and Road Initiative and a proactive role of Xi Jinping. In addition to other decision-making bodies, the leadership profile of Xi Jinping is quite suggestive about the dynamics of Chinese political elaboration towards a relevant perspective of developing its capabilities and its international projection.

The analysis of the second image unfolds into economic and military policies. There is a significant development of these policies and their intertwining with the Belt and Road Initiative as the main aspect of China's overseas performance. However, such logic is also not sufficient. This requires the analysis of the third image.

The third image is quite relevant in Waltz's theoretical apparatus and it is also important for this analysis. The competitive context of the anarchy of the international system is undoubtedly its hallmark. The unfolding of this in terms of mutual distrust between the US and China is clearly identifiable. Several aspects are imposed in terms of an end process of US unipolarity, the Chinese economic rise that intertwines with the global reach and scope of the Belt and Road Initiative. Balance appears here as an important logic in the whole of this process. China shows its significant capabilities far beyond the military dimension, demonstrating also its formidable economic capabilities, its political stability and competence, aspects that also make up a state's power.

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