

“China Rising – what can stop her?”

Henry Kissinger’s latest book is called, “On China.” It tells you where his thoughts are and perhaps where ours should be as well. China is an emerging superpower in the world, and in some minds a *super threat*. She has the money, the motives and the military power to project herself in a less-than-friendly way upon even the largest nations. Are we about to see a new cold war (or even a hot one) develop? Many think so. Students of Bible prophecy know enough to sit up and take note. The Lord Jesus warned that in the last days there would be, “*rumours of wars.*” (Matthew 24:6), and the current speculation about China would definitely fall into that category.

Material Threat

China is currently engaged in a massive game of ‘land-grab’ around the world, especially in Africa and Latin America. Their strategy, known as the, “*Go-Out Policy,*” involves buying and leasing property in key locations, sending out labourers and producing crops for sale on both the home and world markets. This is hardly surprising as China has only 8% of the world’s tillable farmland to feed more than one-fifth of the world’s population. Very simply, they need the food. But it is not just farm land that they are after. They have recently bought up stakes in Canada’s oil sands, a Guinean iron-ore mine, oil fields in Angola and Uganda, an Argentinean oil company and a major Australian coal-bed methane gas company. Many are beginning to ask, ‘What is going on?’

The answer is simply this: China is rich in people but short on resources. Pressure is on her leaders to meet demands and maintain the control of their people. They also want to dominate the sources of these essential supplies for what they rightly perceive to be difficult days ahead. However, to do this is even harder than it sounds. Neptune Investment Management (which runs a leading Chinese investment fund) estimates that it will need to buy two companies the size of B.P. each year for the next twelve years to meet its growing domestic energy demands. China is the second largest oil consumer in the world. And, of course, the oil situation in our world has changed in recent years...

In his book *Jerusalem Countdown*, John Hagee makes the following observation: “*When the United States went to war with Iraq in 2003, China began to make a huge shift in its oil policies. Until then, most of China’s oil had come from Iraq. But with the entry of America into the country of Iraq, China could no longer put all its “oil apples” in the one basket of Iraq’s oil reserves...*” (P118). Some military analysts believe this explains China’s massive Naval build up as well as growth in other sectors of her armed forces. She preparing to secure her necessary requirements.

Not long ago Michael Klare, a professor of peace and world security studies, made this insightful comment: “*For now the focus is on terrorism and Afghanistan. But when that dies down, all eyes will be on China and its rush for resources.*” He looks set to be proved right. Reading of these ‘Monopoly’ style developments you can’t help reflecting on the words of Solomon: “*There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: A man to whom God has given riches...but a foreigner consumes it. This is vanity, and it is an evil affliction.*” (Ecclesiastes 6:1-2).

Military Threat

At the same time as pursuing natural resources, China is also expanding her armed forces. Analysts have noticed significant growth in her military budget in recent years raising question marks in people's minds. Former defence secretary for the USA, Donald Rumsfeld, put it best when he said, *"Since no nation threatens China, one must wonder: Why this growing investment?"* It is an ominous warning. Whereas in the past she outnumbered America in troops only, today China has a stunning array of weapons technology at her disposal as well. This is partly due to her diligence in 'borrowing' from others. Some of our readers may remember how, in the late nineties, a U.S. F-117 Nighthawk stealth fighter was shot down during the Balkans conflict. Following that incident there were reports that the Chinese bought up as many pieces of the wreckage as possible from local farmers in the hope to clone the technologies involved. Well, now she has her own stealth fighter, the Chengdu J-20. This apparently explains why the American special forces burnt the Black Hawk helicopter that crashed in the recent mission to capture/ kill Osama Bin Laden – to stop Chinese intelligence sources getting their hands on it. She has an ability to 'glean' from what others leave behind.

China has also raised concern with her new space missile, the Dongfeng 21 D. This anti-ship ballistic missile can sink aircraft carriers and is a specific threat to the U.S. fleet. According to one source this device is a 'game changer,' that, *"could alter the balance of power in the Pacific."* After being launched into space, the missile then re-enters the Earth's atmosphere and is manoeuvred towards its target using satellites, drones and over-the-horizon radar. Admiral Robert Willard, the top U.S. commander in the Pacific has warned that it has already reached 'initial operational capability.'

We could go on listing China's determined growth in other areas of military hardware, including her five new 094 submarines (each carrying twelve JL-2 nuclear missiles), underground Naval bases, and new anti-satellite weaponry. But perhaps, the greatest concern for all of us is a more subtle one, and far closer to home. A few years ago Britain's GCHQ produced an intelligence briefing that warned of the cyber threat posed by China. Apparently, the concern comes from computer hardware components made by Huawei Technology, the largest networking and telecommunications equipment supplier in China and one of the largest providers of cell phone networking systems in the world. These components, which form key parts of BT's network, are feared to contain malicious elements which could be activated in a war-like situation to halt critical services such as communications, power, and water supplies. If this is true, then China could, in effect, switch us 'off'. One commentator said, *"While British Telecom has taken preventive security measures to reduce this risk, the government is said to believe that the enhanced security measures would not be effective against deliberate attack by China. It is widely believed that China is already equipped to make 'covert network modifications' and/or 'compromise equipment in ways that are very hard to detect' and that might later 'remotely disrupt or even permanently disable the network.' "*

Security experts are not happy about other aspects of cyber-warfare either. In recent years 'custom Trojans' which hack into computer networks and then feed back vital information, have been discovered. According to The Times newspaper (1/12/07), *"A big study gave warning this week that Government and military computer systems in Britain are coming under sustained attack from China and other countries. It followed a report presented to the U.S. Congress last month describing Chinese espionage in the U.S. as so extensive that it*

represented 'the single greatest risk to the security of American technologies.' Ian Brown of Oxford University, one of the report's authors, said that attacks traced back to China have been found attempting to crack Whitehall passwords. The report identified China as the country most active in internet-enabled spying operations and attacks but says that 120 other countries are using the same techniques."

There is little doubt that China has military ambitions in all domains of warfare that we should consider seriously. As her infamous 'one-child policy' has made her a ticking time bomb where the old are set to outnumber the young these ambitions must be pursued sooner rather than later.

Monetary Threat

One of the reasons Beijing has been able to fund all these above mentioned projects is due to her massive economic growth. In 1990 China accounted for something like 14% of global manufacturing, whereas today it is in the region of 37%. Her trade with Africa alone has grown from £6.3 billion in 2000 to more than £66 billion last year. This has obviously brought her great financial power, which in itself is a potential threat to the West. Now being the biggest foreign holder of U.S. Treasury notes (estimated at \$3 trillion), she could bring down the U.S. dollar overnight – if she wanted to. At the moment it is not in her best interest to do so because America is one of the biggest importers of her goods. However, should relationships between the two countries deteriorate she could easily wage, 'economic war' on the West with devastating results.

Chinese Puzzle

Putting all this together it is easy to see why Napoleon said, "*China is a sleeping giant. When she awakes she will shake the world.*" Even in his day he had a vision of how daunting she could become. Whether by might or by money she looks set to overwhelm and overcome the rest of the planet in the next few years. Even more so after Russia is destroyed in the Gog and Magog war, as many believe she will be (Ezk.38) – removing the other major super-power, apart from America.

And yet... there is a mystery here. Looking at China through the telescope of Bible prophecy we see her strangely absent until the battle of Armageddon where the Kings of the East cross the dried up Euphrates in the sixth bowl judgment (Rev.16:12). Until that point she is nowhere to be seen. (Some even doubt that this is China, though this would appear to be the majority view).

How strange. What could be so devastating to her that it takes the full length of the Tribulation for her to become a serious power in the world again? There is one answer that stands out above all the others, and that is THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH. In 2007 the 'Bible A Month Campaign' estimated that 15,000 people in China give their lives to Christ every day! And that is only an estimate, and a very conservative one at that. Some believe that there are now over 130 million unregistered believers in China, with the numbers ever increasing. Of course accurate figures are impossible due to the secrecy of the unregistered church. But stop and think about this for a moment: if the rapture happens in the near future, just how many will be snatched away in the twinkling of an eye from that land? Literally, multi-millions! The potential set-back for China could be staggering, removing believers from all

walks of life. Perhaps it will effect her more than any other country in the world. We can only speculate, but it would seem a real possibility that this is how the Lord will 'keep things on track' prophetically in the last days.

And what an exciting prospect for us all to gather with our Chinese brethren in the air when the Lord Jesus comes. Certainly His own words will be fulfilled when He said that, "**many will come from the east and the west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.**" (Matthew 8:11). And to that we say, "Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus!"

- Jon Ikin

This article first appeared in "Prophetic Witness" magazine, August 2011