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# EUROPE AND GLOBALIZATION: FRAMEWORK FOR APPLYING DOUBLE- STANDARDS

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### Abstract

*The term of “globalization” has been very much used in recent days in order to explain a series of phenomena, especially from the economic field. Indeed, after a thorough research, globalization could be mostly relegated to the economic field. However, the term can also designate a series of other processes, from other fields of activities.*

*The present paper shall deal with an analysis of two economic colossus – the European Union and China by applying to them the variable of “globalization”. It is globalization that made possible the establishment of such relations, as well as their effective management and constant improvement. Even if the relations have had their ups and downs, the general framework provided by globalization helped appease conflicts when they were about to break out, and even offered an alternative to situations which seemed impossible to manage (as is the arms embargo).*

*The paper shall be structured as follows: an analysis of the term from several perspectives, including the social and economic one, followed by its application to the given situation: the European Union-Chinese relations. In this regard, given time and space constraints, we shall limit the research to only two types of cooperation: economic and political and security-related cooperation. The final chapter of the paper shall also refer to several elements of discontent within this relation, such as the arms embargo, the disrespect for human rights in China and the unstable situation of Taiwan. However, these elements of discontent shall only be referred to when necessary, leaving a deeper analysis of them to a future academic endeavor.*

## 1. Introduction

Globalization is often a topic of discussion nowadays, being considered a source of both advantages and disadvantages. Globalization is also used as a partial answer to a series of questions regarding the recent developments in security, politics, economy, culture, etc.

In the present paper it we would be analyzing the European Union and Chinese relations from the perspective of globalization. However, the fact that these two colossus, quite different in organization and approach to a series of matters, have engaged in political, economic and security related relations is a result of the existence and manifestation of globalization as a process and trend.

The present paper aims to investigate the manner in which the Sino-European Union relations have developed throughout time, under the impact of the globalizing process. In this regard, the first chapter shall deal with a brief description of the concept of globalization in order to set the framework of analysis that shall be applied to the present research. However, due to the comprehensiveness of the concept, aspects pertaining to globalization shall be revealed also throughout the article, when discussing the economic and political relations between the European Union and China. A second part of this first chapter shall address the history of the European Union and China relations in the context of globalization.

A second chapter will address in more detail the existing forms of cooperation between the two: economic, political and security-related cooperation. However, the cooperation between them has not always been smooth – therefore, a third chapter shall be allotted to the major aspects generating disagreement between the European Union and China. It is here that the human rights issue shall be discussed, along with the troubling situation in Taiwan and the arms embargo imposed upon China.

The motivation for choosing this topic lies in the particularities of the existing relations between the two, as well as in the belief held by the author that such relations would be highly difficult to forge between such distant and different actors, in the absence of such a unifying bond as that one provided by globalization.

## 2. History of the European Union and China relations in the context of globalization

### 2.1. Brief history and explanation of the concept of “globalization”.

An analysis of “globalization” as a concept, as well as from the point of view of its history and evolution has to be performed based on the writings of Thomas Friedman- “The World is Flat: A Brief History of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, Parag Khanna- “The Second World: Empires and Influence in the New Global Order” and Joseph E.

Stiglitz – “Globalization and its Discontents”, to name but a few of the most important writers in the field. All these three writers have drawn complex investigations on how globalization began manifesting throughout the international community; their analysis combines the economic dimension of the examined phenomenon with the social and cultural aspects of the matter.

To begin with, a brief definition of the term “globalization” refers to a worldwide society in which the events occurring in one part of the respective society become in a very short amount of time noteworthy and significant to the other part of the same society. It can be characterized by impressive progress in the field of technology, communication and information, providing people with instant access to new developments, available for them worldwide, but no longer restricted by the need to travel the distance (William K. Tabb, *Unequal partners: A Primer on Globalization*, New York, The New York Press, 2002;). In addition to this, globalization also led to the development of multinational and transnational companies, which led to a boost in global economy.

According to Parag Khanna, geopolitics and globalization have been tightly connected and highly interdependent (Such reasoning is derived from Arnold Toynbee’s book “East to West: A Journey Round the World”, as Parag Khanna mentions in the preface of his book “The Second World”). – “Geopolitics is the relationship between power and space. Globalization refers to the more ample and deeper connections between the peoples of the world with regard to all sorts of exchanges” (Khanna, Prefață, *Lumea a doua. Imperii și influență în noua ordine global*, Polirom, 2008, p. 9;). However, he claims that the two can be separated, given that he is approaching in his work the countries of the so-called “second world”, meaning the former socialist countries, which are likely to challenge the existing balance of forces of the three major global empires: the United States, the European Union and China.

Thomas Friedman’s book is a sequel of another book entitled “Lexus and the Olive Tree” in which he describes the forces which globalized the world at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which led at the time to the fear that the globalization was in fact an American process, which would eventually affect the entire world. Such fears developed based on the rapid evolution of American entrepreneurship of all kinds and inherently generated a reaction of rejection towards globalization, denouncing the latter as a form of “American cultural imperialism” Thomas Friedman - *Pământul este plat. Scurt istorie a secolului XXI*, Polirom, 2007, p. 409;.

Globalization manifests under different aspects. A form of globalization can be that of the fact that a

Chinese worker who moved away from home to the United States, can still have access to parts of veritable Chinese culture through the accessing of the internet broadcasted news bulletins, radio programmes, TV shows from his native country. This is what is known as a form of “regional globalization” (Friedman, *op.cit.*, p.411), showing that the demand for keeping one’s culture is so dire that regional cultures become globalized, instead of globalization swallowing these individual cultures. The fact that these people can access their culture from abroad implies that they will eventually introduce it to the community they live in, allowing the latter to access it as well. Globalization can also be translated into easy access to technology which allows people from all over the world to perfect their skills and develop themselves professionally. Thus, it appears that globalization is not an exclusively economic phenomenon, but rather one engendering new forms of communication and innovation, or, to put it bluntly, as a culture of sharing.

Moreover, “globalization” as a phenomenon cannot be regarded as entirely negative, or entirely positive. More likely, globalization is responsible with conferring power, as well as depriving one of power, homogenizing and particularizing, along with bringing together democracy and authoritarianism (Friedman, *op.cit.*, p.413). A mere form of globalization expressing itself is the very existence of Internet and Google and the many possibilities provided by their worldwide access.

According to Joseph Stiglitz, globalization, in the form of export development, contributed actively to removing Eastern Asian countries from the grips of poverty (Joseph Stiglitz, *Mecanismeleglobaliz rii*, Polirom, 2008, p. 41;), by facilitating access to international markets and technology, leading to an increase in productivity.

However, globalization in Eastern Asia has been promptly controlled and regulated by the governments of these countries (Joseph Stiglitz, *Mecanismeleglobaliz rii*, Polirom, 2008, p. 42;), by taking an active role in the planning and implementing of technology and choosing the sectors of development for their countries, instead of leaving it to the market to regulate them.

## **2.2. History of European Union-China relations**

The relations between the European Communities (which after the Maastricht Treaty of 1993 became the European Union) and People’s Republic of China have been established in 1975 and strengthened in 1982 through the signing of 1985 Trade and Cooperation Agreement (*Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the European Economic Community and the People’s Republic of China - 1985* , [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/international/files/f1748\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/international/files/f1748_en.pdf));). However, these relations have been very tense throughout time for several reasons

and the aim of the present chapter is to investigate both the evolution of these relations as well as the causes for tension.

There are several similarities that have put the basis of the European Union-China relations. Both Europe and China are ancient civilizations, which makes them unique and both have been throughout history expansionistic powers. They have been sufficiently integrated from the military, economic and demographic point of view, as well as geographically unified in order to be able to extend their influence worldwide.

According to Khanna (Khanna, *op.cit.*, pp.16-17;), while the European Union is constantly allowing countries to join, China is attempting to regain its lost position of the “Middle Kingdom”, by transforming neighboring countries into semi-autonomous provinces, subordinating them through demographic expansion and economic integration.

The European Union is dominated by consensus. Its member states remain sovereign and work together in projecting a common European vision, in many fields, to the wider world. Given that the EU is the largest global market, it can thus impose standards on technology and regulations in the field. The European Union is considered to be the most successful empire of history, as its role is not to dominate, but rather to discipline the countries and people within. This empire needs to be constantly extending in order to stabilize its demographic decline and increase the workforce market (Khanna, *op.cit.*, pp.30;).

The Asian equivalent of European Union expansion is the PaxSinica (David C. Kang, *Hierarchy, Balancing and Empirical Puzzles in Asian International Relations*, in *International Security*, Vol.28, No. 3, Winter 2003-2004, pp.165-180;) based on the establishment of a hybrid diplomatic union between old imperial principles and modern institutions. The “tribute custom” (This consisted of a tribute paid beginning with the Xia Dynasty, from all the Asian countries to China, who was at the time at the center of Asia. China returned the favor through rich gifts and a higher tribute paid to its vassals, than the one it actually received from them – this was a form of demonstrating political dominance.) of the third millennium BC, which at the time was a form of extending influence to the territories which were not within the direct reach of China, has been revived in the present, with capitals such as Tokyo, Seoul and Singapore having, unconsciously subordinated their sovereignty to China.

China is currently competing for the energy reserves of the Gulf, Central Asia and South America, attempting to subdue “second world” powers such as Russia and India. It also offers support to all the regimes the United States have been attempting to suppress, such as Cuba,

Venezuela, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Iran, Uzbekistan, Myanmar and North Korea.

It is a fact that China has been taking a strong stand in the surrounding area. Japan, Korea, Australia and Singapore have been noted to change their macro-strategies while placing themselves in an interdependence relationship with China.

Asia, and especially the Chinese are very happy of the interest manifested by Europe for Eastern Asia, considering it a “strategic partner who supports the Chinese development of a new regional order” (Khanna, *op.cit.*, p.239;). This support manifests itself in the form of commercial and economic cooperation as many Asia businesses choose to deposit their reserves in euro, protecting themselves from the fluctuations of the American dollar. Moreover, the need to engage in commerce outside that with the United States is even more obvious in the fact that Singapore hosts the Asia-Europe Meeting in an attempt to increase European commercial power to the extent in which Europe will be able to replace the United States in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) platform.

In addition to this, the impact of the Chinese diaspora (Given the spread of the Chinese diaspora and the fact that the communicated numbers of Chinese people living in one country or another, have not been unitarily sent for a single year for all the countries involved, we would depict on several opinions and state that the Chinese diaspora counts approximately 50 million people - *Reforms urged to attract overseas Chinese, Xinhua*, March 11th, 2012,

[http://www.china.org.cn/china/NPC\\_CPPCC\\_2012/2012-03/11/content\\_24865428.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/china/NPC_CPPCC_2012/2012-03/11/content_24865428.htm);) needs to be acutely taken into consideration, given the fact that they contribute actively to the changing of global demography.

Taking everything into consideration it appears that globalization has had a great impact both on the individual development of the two entities of the present research, as well as for the overall parameters of cooperation between the two. However, this cooperation shall be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters.

### 3. Forms of cooperation between the two:

#### 3.1. Economic and trade relations

An explanation for the development of the Sino-European Union relations, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the fact that China is such a gigantic competitor, that all other partners need to find ways of internalizing it – either bringing a part of their business to China, selling products to China or simply buying from China.

It appears that China has been embracing globalization quite well, due to lower costs for technology and the breaking down of barriers in creating cultural contents (Friedman provides the

example of the evolution of the podcast industry in China, launched by Gary Wang, a young Chinese having a degree in Engineering from both France and the United States, who created the Toodoo website, where people upload various podcasts. Wang is the example of regional globalization, through which local contents (styles, literature, opinions, and videos) become global.).

In December 2001 China became a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) - *China and the WTO*,

[http://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/countries\\_e/china\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/countries_e/china_e.htm);, which meant that Beijing would be agreeing to respect the same rules on imports, exports and foreign investments as the other member states and engage in the same type of economic competition as other countries. However, China’s accession to the WTO engendered a rapid need of acceleration of all economic processes throughout the world, due to recent (at that date only) visibility acquired by offshoring (Friedman, *op.cit.*, p. 120, provides a definition of the term “offshoring is when a company relocates on of its factories from Canton (Ohio) abroad to Canton (China)”. There, the factory shall produce the same product, in the same manner, but benefitting from cheaper workforce, smaller taxes, lower medical insurance costs as well as subsidized energy costs)) as a form of cooperation in the economic field. China ensured foreign companies that should they transfer offshore factories there, they would be protected from international laws in the field, as well as standard business practices, turning China into a very appealing production platform.

Despite the reluctance to engage in relations with China after the 1989 Tiananmen massacre, manifested by the European authorities, the Chinese growing economy became a focus point for many European businessmen to visit China. The incredible growth of the Chinese economy, going from 14.3 billion dollars in 1985, to 45.5 billion dollars in 1994 (Robert G. Sutter, *Chinese Foreign Relations*, Maryland, Rowman&LittlefieldPublishers, 2008. pp.340-344;) (while in 2013 the GDP value was 9,020.31 billion dollars - *China (People's Republic of China) Economic Statistics and Indicators, Economy Watch*, <http://www.economywatch.com/economic-statistics/country/China/>;

<sup>1</sup>Ibidem, p.342), determined a re-launching of trade relations. The first Asia-Europe Meeting took place in 1996, and despite the grim perspective presented by the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997, trade relations between China and the European Union continued to grow - *China (People's Republic of China) Economic Statistics and Indicators, Economy Watch*, <http://www.economywatch.com/economic-statistics/country/China/>;

<sup>1</sup>Ibidem, p.342;. The first European Union-China Summit took place in 1998 and has been held yearly ever since.

The advances made by the European Union in its relations with China are owed to the urge manifested by France to establish closer ties with China, at the same time as did the Russian Federation. However, given the French President's Nicholas Sarkozy's plans to set up a meeting with the Dalai Lama (and also approach the dramatic situation of Tibet in relation to China) during the 2008 EU-China summit, the relations reached a low level, as Chinese authorities decided to cancel the respective summit Ben Hoff and John Dyer, *Business Fears over Chinese-French Rift*, *Financial Times*, November 27, 2008;).

According to the European Union's External Action Service, it appears that the European Union is the biggest trading partner of China, while the latter is "EU's largest source of imports and 2nd largest two way trading partner" - [http://eeas.europa.eu/china/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/china/index_en.htm); (after the United States of America which is the first largest two way trading partner). The European Union imports from China mainly industrial and consumer goods such as machinery and equipment, clothing and shoes, pieces of furniture, lighting devices as well as toys, whereas it export to the China machinery and equipment, motorized vehicles, aircraft and chemicals-<http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/china/>; It is a fact that China and the European Union have been trading over 1 billion euros per day. Available data show that in 2013, trade in goods between the two amounted at 428.1 billion euros, while trade in services ranged in 2012 at 49.9 billion euros (*Facts and figures on EU-China trade. Did you know?*, March 2014, [http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2009/september/tradoc\\_144591.pdf](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2009/september/tradoc_144591.pdf);) – however, the latter remains open for improvement in the future.

The trade cooperation has been enlarged to over 50 sectorial dialogues, covering as many areas, such as industrial policy, customs, nuclear energy, consumer protection, education (*EU-China Dialogue Architecture- Main Elements*, [http://eeas.europa.eu/china/docs/eu\\_china\\_dialogue\\_s\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/china/docs/eu_china_dialogue_s_en.pdf);

) etc. China invested more than 200 million euros in the Galileo Project (*China Gets Galileo Application Projects*, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2005, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2005-07/28/content\\_3281211.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2005-07/28/content_3281211.htm);) and has been negotiating the purchasing of 150 Airbus planes (Tim Hopher, *China in talks with Airbus on possible \$20 billion aircraft deal – sources*, *Reuters*, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014,<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/19/us-airbus-group-china-idUSBREA2I06E20140319>) worth 20 billion dollars. In addition to this, despite

being under an arms embargo, which shall be detailed in the next subchapter, it appears that European Union countries got 400 million euros from "defense exports" to China and has also agreed to further sales of military submarines and radar technology - Andrew Rettman, *Leaked cable shows fragility of EU arms ban on China*, *EU Observer*, 25.07.2011, <http://euobserver.com/china/32658>;

However, these increased trade relations were bound to take their toll. In 2005, the "textile war" (or "bra wars" as was also named by the press at the time) broke out having on the one side the discontent European manufactures and on the other the cheaper Chinese imported merchandise whom the former were losing to. In short, the European producers were faced with a massive import of Chinese textile goods, which were cheaper and practically eliminated the demand for European produced-merchandise, which was in fact more expensive (due to production costs, while in China such production costs were insignificant, allowing the Chinese producers to sell them at lower prices than the regular European prices charged for the same type of merchandise) The situation was diffused when the European Commission intervened and managed to sign an agreement with China in June 2005 establishing new quotas for ten categories of textile merchandise, which were supposed to be kept yearly between the 8- 12.5% growth quotas - *Europe's textile war with China— and itself*, *The Economist*, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005, <http://www.economist.com/node/4314327>;. This agreement reached its end in 2007, but its utility was immense as it allowed the European producers time to adjust to global, unfettered competition as far as production of goods was concerned.

During the recent economic crisis, as a result of the many claims launched by several European countries to the IMF and the European Union for bailouts, China volunteered to buy a high amount of Eurozone bonds from Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain, some of the most affected countries. Since these bonds were highly expensive, and their value is doubtful, it might be considered that China was in fact buying influence and leverage within the European Union (AndrewRetteman, *China: EU bailout leaves 'fundamental problems' unresolved*, *EU Observer*, 08.07.2011, <http://euobserver.com/china/32608>);, in order to be able to smooth any trade conflicts that might occur in the future.

### **3.2. Political and security-related**

The political and security-related cooperation between the two entities refers mainly to the double –standard of the European Union applied in its relations with China: firstly imposing an arms embargo on account of the violence of the Tiananmen massacre of 1989, and then commissioning planes and weapons to China. In

addition to this, the Chinese position regarding the situation in Kosovo shall be discussed in this part of the article. It must be specified that most of the aspects presented in this part of the paper are very much inter-related and that even if some of them shall not be presented in greater detail here, they will be presented in the last part of the paper related to the major points of discontent between the two.

The violent suppression of the Tiananmen Square of 1989 led the European Union and the United States of America to impose an arms embargo on China (Q&A: *China arms embargo row*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4329613.stm>;) consisting of a halt in military relations as well as any kind of trade in arms. The embargo is still in place, although China has repeatedly asked for it to be removed, given that in the view of the Chinese authorities such a measure is based on political discrimination and prejudice (*China asks EU to scrap 'prejudiced' arms embargo*, *The Hindu*, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article96436.ece>;

). The latter was founded on the accusations of human rights violations repeatedly perpetrated against its own populations such as the use of death penalty, crackdown on Internet users, the use of torture and the ruling of unfair trials, the repressions in Tibet and of the Uighur community, as well as other religious and spiritual communities (*Amnesty International Briefing Paper EU-China and Human Rights since Tiananmen*, April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2004;).

There have been several European countries (Germany, Denmark, Netherlands and Sweden) militating for a lifting of the arms embargo, conditioning on the Chinese authorities taking active steps on the improvement of the human rights situation (*Hu meets Merkel As Germany Reaffirms EU Arms Ban*, *Deutsche Welle*, <http://www.dw.de/hu-meets-merkel-as-germany-reaffirms-eu-arms-ban/a-1773563>;) . A majority of the European Union member states, with France acting as a *porte-parole* for them, stated that the ban should be lifted, but not be conditioned on the human rights accountability of China. Despite the on-going difficult situation of human rights protection (or more likely, the absence of human rights protection), the European Union considered lifting the ban out of security-related reasons, arguing that such a ban prevented the European Union and China to cooperate on military and security-related grounds. Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative claimed that "The current arms embargo is a major impediment for developing stronger EU-China co-operation on foreign policy and security matters" (Andrew Rettman, *Ashton pragmatic on China in EU foreign policy blueprint*, EU Observer, 17.12.2010,

<http://euobserver.com/china/31538>); being seconded by the Chinese Ambassador to the EU Song Zhe who stated "It doesn't make any sense to maintain the embargo ... With it [in place] we will develop our own arms even faster. So, at the end of the day, it is the [arms] companies in Europe that are losing out" - Andrew Rettman, *Ashton pragmatic on China in EU foreign policy blueprint*, EU Observer, 17.12.2010, <http://euobserver.com/china/31538>;). Despite such avid support manifested by the European Union officials in this regard, the plan of lifting the ban had been rejected and its' reopening postponed for an indefinite date. A major role in keeping the ban was played by the United States, which also have their own arms embargo in place with China. In their view, a lifting of the arms embargo would only contribute to an increase in capabilities of the Chinese military - Anton La Guardia, *US fury over EU weapons for China*, *The Telegraph*, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/1481253/US-fury-over-EU-weapons-for-China.html>;

It seems that the political and security -related cooperation between the European Union and China has been revolving around this arms embargo. At the end of the 1990, when the European Union was contemplating a NATO intervention in Kosovo, and actively supporting it, the Chinese authorities took a strong stand against it, considering it a form of US expansion in influence. Nevertheless, by 2001, China moderated its position in this regard, hoping that this might contribute to a lifting of the arms embargo (Sutter, *op.cit.*, pp.357-362;). At the time, the maintenance of the arms embargo had been strongly supported by the United States, which prevented China from reaching its goal. Both the European Union and the United States of America shared deep concern on the authoritarian policies of China, its disrespect for human rights and its position constantly threatening the integrity of Taiwan.

To conclude, it appears that as far as economic and political cooperation between the European Union and China are concerned, globalization played a rather tricky role. On the one hand, it contributed to the extension of European economic ventures in China. On the other, it highlighted the double standards applied by European authorities - criticizing it for disrespect of human rights and maintaining an arms embargo, but at the same time engaging in productive economic business with this country. For the layman, such an attitude might be a puzzling one, but to the scholar this is just another example of how international affairs are conducted in a globalized world.

#### 4. Major points of disagreement

Given the fact that the present articles aims to analyze especially the relations between the

European Union and China from the point of view of the impact that globalization had on their evolution, and also given the small dimensions of the article, the major points of discontent between the two entities shall only be presented briefly in this part. Thus, an extended individual approach of them shall be relegated to a future research.

#### **4.1. Human rights issues**

There are several issues that have been generating discontent in the Western European countries, especially in those already engaged in economic relations with China. There is no freedom of the press as well as no civil society organizations in China. Therefore, China needs to engage in a series of political reforms that would be reflected also on the evolution of its economy, opening it even more and providing its people with the freedom of choice.

In addition to the unfair trials, the existence of the death penalty, the situation in Tibet and the mistreatment of various religious and spiritual communities documented by the Amnesty International report mentioned above, Human Rights Watch (*Human Rights Watch, World Report 2013*, <http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/china;>) mentioned also land seizures, forced evictions, abuse of power from corrupt cadres, imprisonment of journalists, to name but a few.

#### **4.2. The situation in Taiwan**

Taiwan is a strategic region for China, which could account for the extreme interest taken by the Chinese authorities in this area throughout time. Also known as the Republic of China, but not recognized by the People's Republic of China, Taiwan is considered by the latter to be its 23<sup>rd</sup> province under its authority and sovereignty. China threatened to resort to the use of military force, should Taiwan attempt to declare its independence - *The Anti-Secession Law*, [http://english.people.com.cn/200503/14/eng20050314\\_176746.html](http://english.people.com.cn/200503/14/eng20050314_176746.html).

The Chinese lobby throughout the years led to diplomatic isolation for Taiwan, with barely any state recognizing its independence. A future annexation of Taiwan would bring China access to a high-class center of high-tech industries, as well as a great economic force. Taiwan is the largest foreign investor in the Chinese factories and enterprises. The more pragmatic economists of Taiwan would like to see a growing common market with China in order to facilitate such investments, while China contributes actively to such efforts by a system of loans addressing the small and average Taiwanese enterprises operating in China. Given that China is the largest export market of Taiwan, one can hardly believe that China intends a massive attack on the former - Garrett Banning, John Adams and Franklin Kramer, *Taiwan in Search of a Strategic*

*Consensus*, Atlantic Council Issue Brief, march 2006;.

#### **4.3. Arms embargo**

The salience of the arms embargo has been presented in an extended manner in the above chapters of the article. While China has been militating actively for a lifting of the ban, it has faced the strong opposition of the European Union and the United States in this regard, the latter two disputing whether to condition on an improvement of the human rights situation in China. The matter seems to be an open-ended one, as it appears that Chinese authorities are looking forward to some lucrative military contracts with European states, especially with France (see the above Airbus commissioning).

Based on the research completed so far, as well as the many disputes generated by the need to lift the arms embargo, it is my firm belief that the latter is very likely to be lifted in the near future out of economic reasons. Given the recent intention of Chinese authorities to commission a number of Airbus planes from France and the increasing lobby performed in the direction of lifting the embargo, this will happen eventually, even in the absence of an improvement in the situation of human rights protection in China.

#### **5. Conclusions**

All things considered, European Union-Chinese relations have been strongly affected by the forces of globalization. Given that globalization can also be translated into a form of economic development that could help countries engage in long-distance profitable economic relations, the same occurred in the European Union-Chinese relations. Attracted by the advantages offered by small costs of production, as well as set of economic facilities they would not have enjoyed in their own countries, many European Union –member states engaged in economic transactions with China. However, such relations also had drawbacks, as at first some of the European countries were confronted with a massive influx of cheap goods imported from China which took out of the market competition their own produced goods (which were more expensive due to the higher costs of production).

In addition to this, globalization provided for a framework in which to apply double-standards. Thus, European businesses have no problem in relocating to China or establishing business contacts with Chinese businessmen, although, on an overall level, the European Union has been very critical of the lack of human rights protection in China. Moreover, an arms embargo against China has been in place since 1990, but European Union countries accepted billions of dollars' worth military commissioning from Chinese authorities. Finally, the article has presented also several point

of discontent among these relations, referring to the difficult approach of the arms embargo, the situation of human rights and the controversial status of Taiwan. Of the three, the situation in Taiwan could be considered an example of the impact of the globalizing forces on its position within the international community. Due to its strong economic status, Taiwan has been considered a noteworthy investment venture on a worldwide basis, which leads many scholars to consider that, under these circumstances, a military intervention from China in the area is highly unlikely.

Given the space limitations of the present article, not all aspects could have been analyzed in detail. Therefore, further research can be done on aspects referring to human rights protection as well as the particular situation of Taiwan. Naturally, the larger framework of globalization could be kept as a general framework even for these particular case studies.

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