

Abstract

In a speech in 2005 Robert Zoellick called on China to become a “responsible stakeholder” in the international system. This notion soon became an official American concept widely used in US-China relations. Washington urges Beijing to become a responsible country, which sustains and enhances the international system. Zoellick’s concept encourages the engagement of China and bilateral cooperation between China and the US/Western world. Beijing accepts the concept as an important part of US-China relations; on the other hand Chinese leaders seem hesitant and cautious regarding certain aspects of Zoellick’s idea of “responsible stakeholder”. This paper will first define the American concept and compare it with Chinese political concepts; in the second part, it will concentrate on the various examples of the practical application of the concept. A case-study dealing with China’s role in the Six Party Talks (where the US considers China to be a “responsible stakeholder“) will demonstrate the duplicity of Chinese behavior and show that China in most cases prefers to follow its own “vital” interests rather than acting as a “responsible stakeholder”.