Press Release: 22 October 2015

This House welcomes China as a Global Superpower

“The way China looks at the world is sharply different from ours”

Proposition 1: Charles Haswell
Haswell opened his case by stating that he would try to “steer a middle course on China”. He acknowledged problems over the human rights record of China and said that the debate depends on whether or not we view China as a threat on a global level. “We misunderstand how internal, rather than external pressures determine things in China” he said. He argued that China’s internal political problems are so great that it consumes the political spectrum. He went on to describe the main problems in China—maintaining the rule of law and trying to keep up economic progress. He conceded that there isn’t a consensus in favour of democracy due to pressing concerns over instability. “Democracy is a luxury China cannot afford” he said. He concluded by noting that if we welcome the rise of China with hostility, we will receive hostility in turn.

Opposition 2: Professor Jonathan Adelman
He began his case by disagreeing with Haswell by noting that corruption in China is “active” and “rife” and that the incumbent government has been highly partial in its approach to tackling corruption. He noted that the broader issue is the rise of a great power. He noted that overwhelmingly non-democratic regimes are willing to fight and achieve that power. “The way China looks at the world is sharply different from ours” he said. China dreaming is not just about prosperity, but their role in the world and the role they have been denied. There is a feeling of “malice”. He concluded by noting that we want a democratic world, a world in which human rights are respected and “this is a world which those in opposition do not believe in”.

Proposition 2: Andrew Mitchell
He started his case by noting that the Chinese President’s attempt to tackle corruption is genuine and he wished him well in this. He praised the commitment of China to climate change and their commitment of reducing the level of emissions to 200 GW of Wind Power and 100 GW of solar power. He remarked that China has been funding the US deficit, “buying US deficit”. He argued that progress is being made in China and people have a history in China of being bullied. China has stuck by and abided international treaties. He concluded by arguing that the perspective of China should be acknowledged and the West should show some humility when looking at its own failures in the past.

Opposition 2: Afua Hirsch
She spoke about her experience in Africa spending her time researching the involvement of China in extraction in Africa. She framed her argument from her perspectives in Africa. China is Africa’s largest trading partner and by 2012 would have financed 1.1 trillion dollars in the African continent. She argued that Chinese behavior is a form of imperialisation which has led to local unemployment and the destruction of African wildlife. “In Ghana there was a decision in the 1980’s to nationalize the government. They have used Ghanaian’s to exploit so-called small scale mines” she said. Chinese actions have destroyed long-term agricultural resources and China is the dominant power in this area.” For every 5 Chinese man that is employed, one local is employed”. Last year 1000 of Africa’s remaining 1000. She concluded that the Chinese attitude towards African’s is a mirror of what is purported in the global media. “China as an imperialist nation is doing more harm than good”.

Proposition 3: Malcolm Rifkind
He started by saying that China is re-emerging in a role it should never have lost. “I welcome China as a super power and China is gradually becoming a country we have to notice” he said.” One of the consequences of being a global super power is that you have responsibilities as well as rights”. He said that China has a responsibility to re-assure it’s neighbors that it’s increased military power has to be used responsibly.
government has accepted that if the court so rules, we must expect that to follow. China is a far more prosperous and open country than it was. He did not accept the argument that China is not ready for democracy. The idea that China is not ready for democracy. Chinese people are perfectly capable of delivering on democratic government. When I was last in Beijing, he was able to be more open than he could otherwise have been. If the economy fails and the government becomes unpopular you have a peaceful institutional way of dealing with this. The Chinese position is one we can take great satisfaction from. He concluded by noting that “unless China succeeds, not only will the Chinese people suffer and the world will be a poorer and less safe place”.

Opposition 3: Kun-Chin Lin
He tried to frame the debate in terms of the UK’s position itself in the global power shift? “China is a de-facto super power and the way we negotiate our future will depend on us acknowledging this. Where does the UK fit in President Xi Jinping’s ambitions? Compared to his predecessor Hu Jintao work. He noted that the UK is going to find it difficult to negotiate it’s path with China. “We are running a seriously worsening trade deficit with the Chinese and it’s not so much the UK can use this relationship in a positive way” he noted. “It’s unclear what standards we would abide by if China was a power? Does the UK want to be caught in Chinese international standards? What would the US say when India backed by the US bids for the UN Security Council seat?

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For footage of the event go to https://www.youtube.com/user/cambridgeunionsoc