

The Convergence of "The Belt and Road Initiative" and the Overarching Concept of National Strategic Security

Yixin Zhang^{1,a}, Nur Ayuni Binti Mohd Isa^{1,b}, Si Chen^{1,c}

zhangyixin0221@gmail.com^a, nurayuni@upm.edu.my^b, chensilawyer@163.com^c

Department Of Government And Civilization Studies, Faculty of Human Ecology,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia¹

Abstract: "The Belt and Road Initiative" is China's first national policy since reform and opening up, and its introduction is significant in history. Both "One Belt" and "One Road" are centered on the notion of economic development, although they have different focuses and goals. In terms of economic development, "One Belt" focuses on interconnection to promote China's and neighboring countries' economic development; "One Road" focuses on cooperation between China and Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and other countries and regions to promote economic cooperation between China and these countries and regions. "The Belt and Road Initiative" encourages China's economic cooperation with these countries and regions. From the standpoint of international relations, "The Belt and Road Initiative" is critical for China to maintain its dominant position, counterbalance US hegemony, and challenge the Western system in the post-Cold War era; "One Road" is an important way for China to maintain its dominant position and promote peaceful development in the post-Cold War era. "The Belt and Road Initiative" is critical for China's post-Cold War supremacy and promotion of peaceful growth.

Keywords: The Belt and Road Initiative; Silk Road Economic Belt; National Strategic Security

1. Introduction

As a plan for the economic growth of its neighbors, "China proposed the Belt and Road Initiative" concept in May 2014. In this strategy, the "One Belt" refers to the land-based Silk Road Economic Belt, which extends from Xinjiang in northwest China through Central Asia, West Asia, South Asia, Europe or Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic Ocean before ending at the Mediterranean. The "One Road" refers to the maritime Silk Road Economic Belt. That is, from the southeast coastline region of China, Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific Ocean, to Europe or Africa. The Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road Economic Belt are both referred to as "One Belt" and "One Road" in this strategy. The objectives of China's post-Cold War economic development initiatives, the Belt and the Road and the Silk Road, are to advance economic growth among China and its neighbors.

2. The division and combination of "The Belt and Road Initiative."

Whether China is successful in achieving a peaceful ascent is, in part, dependent on how the Belt and Road is combined and divided. China's economy has transformed from a closed one to an open one over the past few decades as it has continued to expand and surpassed other nations to become the second-largest economy in the world. In the process, China has also incurred significant costs, some of which are connected to its national strategies, such as the significant importation of resources and energy, the development of overseas engineering projects, and the defense of its interests. In this way, the aforementioned issues and challenges are resolved by the Belt and Road Initiative. China must take these past experiences and lessons to heart and fully absorb and internalize them. In September 2013, while on a visit to Central and Southeast Asia, President Xi Jinping suggested the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. As a crucial component of China's overseas economic development plan, the Belt and Road Initiative was subsequently unveiled. China also put forth the "Belt and Road" initiative at the same time to complement the existing multilateral development banks' cooperation programs, such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and to deepen relations between China and the nations that make up the route. The two ideas associated with "The Belt and Road Initiative" are starting to converge in this setting. China's overseas economic growth strategy will give significant consideration to how "One Belt" and "One Road" are combined and separated in the future years. Since the reform and opening up, "The Belt and Road Initiative" is China's first national policy, and its launch has enormous historical significance [1].

The fall of the Soviet Union in the late 1970s and early 1980s significantly altered the political climate of the world and signaled the end of the Cold War. After the Soviet Union fell apart, the United States was left as the sole superpower, and it completely repressed China on the political, economic, and military fronts [2]. After the Cold War ended, the United States' policy toward China underwent a fundamental change. On the one hand, the United States no longer viewed China as a Cold War foe, and on the other, the United States attempted to balance China by capitalizing on its quick development in the fields of economics, politics, and the military. China must take the lead in this situation to change its approach to the United States in order to obtain the upper hand in the rivalry with the United States. A crucial indicator that China has moved into a new phase of economic development is the "Belt and Road" strategy. As General Secretary Xi Jinping said, "Since its inception, the Belt and Road construction has become one of the most popular international cooperation initiatives in the world today, which not only plays an important role in promoting economic development and improving the livelihood of the countries concerned but also in promoting regional peace and stability and advancing China's "The Belt and Road Initiative" is of great significance not only for promoting the economic development and livelihood improvement of the countries concerned but also for promoting regional peace and stability and advancing the diplomacy of major powers with Chinese characteristics. Implementing "The Belt and Road Initiative" is conducive to enhancing the economic development and livelihood improvement of all countries and will certainly inject new momentum into improving the international order."

How to promote "The Belt and Road Initiative" to better go more profound and more practical, General Secretary Xi Jinping put forward eight aspects of policy recommendations [3]. Political mutual trust is the cornerstone, mutual benefit and win-win situations are essential,

policy communication is a must, facility connection is a guarantee, seamless trade is the driving force, financial integration is the support, and people-to-people interactions are the basis. The basis is a shared political trust. During the Belt and Road International Cooperation Summit Forum's opening ceremony, General Secretary Xi Jinping said, "We will adhere to the principle of co-business, co-build, and share, and strive to build an open, inclusive, inclusive, balanced and win-win economic globalization. We will uphold the spirit of openness and cooperation, mutual benefit and win-win, promote the in-depth docking of the 'Belt and Road' with the development strategies of various countries, accelerate the construction of the 'three networks and one chemistry' (information highway, transportation network, e-government network, and information development), enhance international connectivity, and promote countries to strengthen policy communication, facilities connectivity, trade smoothly, financial integration and people-to-people contact." The only way to achieve mutual advantage and win-win in collaborative development is to uphold the idea of political mutual trust. [4]. To promote "The Belt and Road Initiative" construction, The creation of an effective framework for cooperation and communication is required among governments and related organizations to enhance political mutual trust so that the interaction between different countries and people can be smoother and international cooperation can be smoother. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen policy communication and coordination and eliminate barriers and divisions in policy communication [5]. General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed the concept of "policy communication," which aims to eliminate political differences and barriers between different countries through policy communication. To this end, it is necessary to clarify policy communication's direction and goals and develop a scientific and reasonable cooperation framework and strategic plan [6].

In the post-Cold War era, China must use "The Belt and Road Initiative" strategy to defend its core interests, counterbalance U.S. hegemony, and challenge the Western system. It is a significant emblem of China's new stage of economic development. It is crucial to safeguard China's national interests in the Belt and Road initiative because the country is dealing with a challenging international environment as well as complicated home issues [7].

3. National strategic security should become the fundamental anchor point of the integration of "The Belt and Road Initiative" strategy

National strategic security is a large and complex concept that includes many dimensions. While safeguarding territorial sovereignty security, China should first safeguard economic and energy security. There are a few nations along "The Belt and Road Initiative" that have territorial and marine sovereignty disputes with China that cannot be swiftly resolved. Economic and energy security in China is currently a crucial issue that is closely tied to the nation's long-term stability and peaceful rise [8]. We cannot rely simply on commerce or on foreign capital to solve our economic and energy security problems; instead, we must rely on our own strength. We must be fully aware of the vulnerability of China's financial system on the financial front. We must move slowly and avoid taking any chances on the path to RMB internationalization. By coordinating our efforts on the political, military, and economic fronts, we can guarantee China's economic and energy security. Energy and financial security are

mutually supportive, and financial stability is a crucial pillar of energy security[9]. China will have secure access to energy thanks to a strong banking system. The majority of the "Belt and Road" countries are in the early stages of economic growth and have weak financial systems. In this situation, China is heavily dependent on foreign energy sources. Over 70% of China's oil imports come from abroad, and over 40% of its natural gas comes from outside the country. Russia, Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia are the main sources of these imports; although having relatively little oil reserves, they play a crucial role in the global market for crude oil. China is currently dealing with a major energy security issue. Regarding energy security, China has benefits as well. China is the biggest developing nation in the world, and it has the most stable and abundant oil and natural gas reserves. China is also the biggest producer and user of coal, as well as the second-largest importer of oil in the world.

According to the statistical information of "2017 China's Energy Development White Paper", China's coal production in 2017 was 2.21 billion tons, up 9.1% year-on-year; crude oil production was 492 million tons, up 0.5% year-on-year; natural gas production was 2.39 trillion cubic meters, up 7.9% year-on-year; and electricity generation was 7.1 trillion kilowatt hours, up 5.4% year-on-year. In 2017, China's crude oil imports were 570 million tons, up 8.7% year-on-year; natural gas imports were 361.2 billion cubic meters, up 11.2% year-on-year. By the end of 2017, the cumulative import c.i.f. China's crude oil was about US\$571/barrel, an increase of 20% compared with 2015. China's overall energy consumption control target is 4 billion tons of standard coal over the "13th Five-Year Plan" period, with the share of coal consumption decreasing below 50% and the share of non-fossil energy in primary energy consumption reaching more than 15%. The coal business will transition from being "coal-based" in the traditional sense to being "coal-based and clean and efficient utilization." The expansion rate was 28.6%. Industrial gas demand among residential consumers grew faster at 15.9%; urban gas for public services and power generation both had negative growth. China's natural gas will lead to rapid development in the future, against the backdrop of promoting energy restructuring and driving the creation of a clean, low-carbon, safe, and efficient energy system. According to the data, China's imports of natural gas and oil are rapidly increasing.

It would be too simplistic to understand "The Belt and Road Initiative" as purely economic and trade or to think of it as the internationalization of the RMB. However, economic and trade cooperation is a mutual choice, and both sides are willing, so when we propose "The Belt and Road Initiative," some countries will be suspicious, fearing that there will be "private goods." Moreover, the big countries will inevitably interfere and obstruct, and it is easy to get into the dilemma of "going it alone." In the economic and trade cooperation with the countries concerned, it is difficult not to be "headstrong," but it is also challenging to do "self-singing."

China's current focus is on economic construction, and all work is still focused on economic development. As we have the world's largest foreign exchange reserves, some industries have severe overcapacity, so it is inevitable to "go out." However, to prevent this kind of blind development, we should discuss more about the return rate of economic cooperation. Moreover, the politics and culture of each country are very different, especially in some countries, we have a good relationship with the people in power now, but if they step down, our relationship with them will change a lot. It will have a significant impact on our interests. In international relations, there are no eternal enemies, no eternal friends, only eternal interests. This reasoning sounds simple, but the problem is that friendship is based on interests,

friendship for exchange, and the price paid is too high; how is it possible to ensure that their interests are not damaged? In the current international economic and trade exchanges, economic cooperation will stumble once the political relationship has changed.

We must therefore pay close attention to the capital financing concerns related to "The Belt and Road Initiative". The capital financing provided by China for the construction of "The Belt and Road Initiative" is not problematic. Because China consistently follows the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the socialist system with Chinese characteristics in the development of "The Belt and Road Initiative," insists on placing economic construction at the center of its policies, and adheres to the main line of reform and opening up, it is determined that we can carry out the development of "The Belt and Road Initiative." Due to the lack of funding, we are more than capable of not disrupting the normal economic structure or the smooth advancement of the socialist cause with Chinese features. We must understand, however, that the financing for "The Belt and Road Initiative" should take into account both short- and long-term national and social interests. Table 1 displays the GDP growth rate from 2009 to 2019, as well as the changes in worldwide import and export of goods and services.

Changes in global total import and export of goods and services and GDP growth rate from 2009 to 2019 (Unit: trillion U.S. dollars,%)

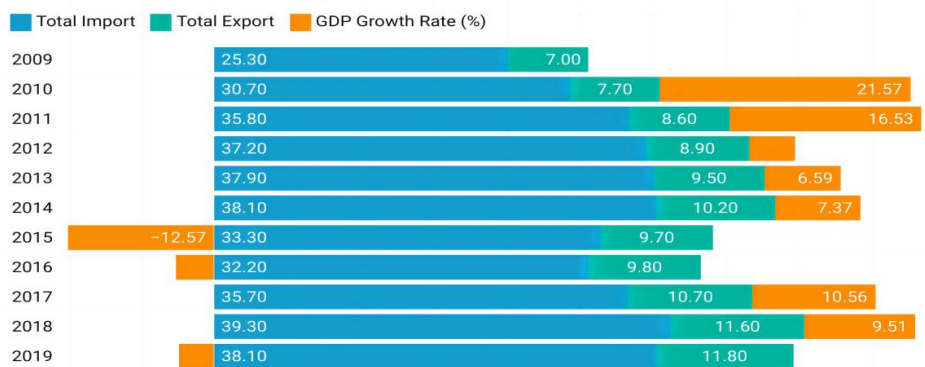


Chart: Yixin Zhang • Source: Institute of Business Studies • Created with Datawrapper

Changes in global total import and export of goods and services and GDP growth rate from 2009 to 2019 (Unit: trillion U.S. dollars,%)

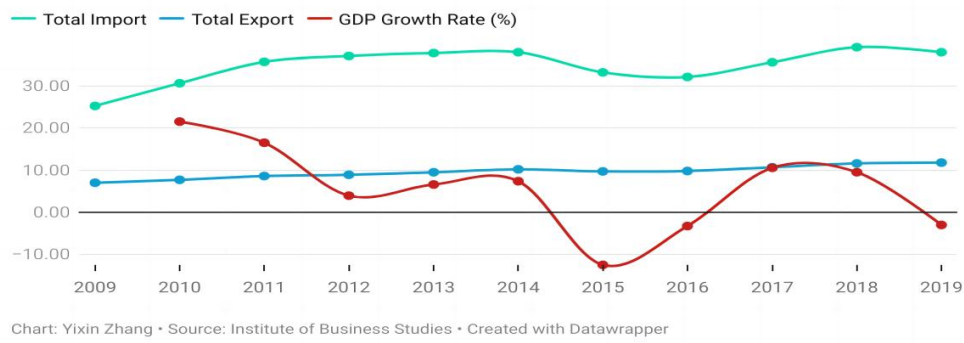


Table 1 Changes in global total import and export of goods and services and GDP growth rate from 2009 to 2019 (Unit: trillion U.S. dollars,%)

In addition, "The Belt and Road Initiative" along the East China Sea, South China Sea, and Xinjiang are sensitive areas related to national security; if these issues are not dealt with promptly, trade exchanges will change. We often say, "The advantages outweigh the disadvantages," and "money" is like a benefit, but no one can guarantee that people will not come to eat it. However, the appropriate "military" can not be better to protect their own country. It has been over 30 years since the military was laid down, and the military and experience need to be improved; long-term peace will undoubtedly affect the military and the people's morale. The "rise of peace" is our desire, but we can not ignore the deterrent function of the big stick, and we can not ignore the positive role it plays in the face of severe security threats. Although we can not play the banner of "peaceful rise," we can not relax the importance of the national security environment; if our surrounding environment becomes very safe, or even "very safe," this will undoubtedly bring tremendous pressure on the construction of our national defense forces.

Realistically, we can use the big stick to deter countries that try to use various means to undermine our peaceful development environment. President Obama's inauguration speech mentioned "big stick," an American political term meaning "deterrence. In his speech, Obama said: "We cannot rise peacefully without effective means. We must use stick and force, not peace. There is no constraint on the development of military power; the only question is how to use it best. International peacekeeping, naval escorts, and international military exercises are all ready-made options that have worked well in maintaining international peace and the interests of all countries. However, their content is still relatively narrow, and it remains to be explored whether more options will be available in the future [10].

4. Conclusion

China should strive to take a central position in global development. Like the center of a wheel, the starting point of the New Silk Road is at the innermost part of the "spokes," and in the

middle is China's huge market, increasing transportation and information network, like an integrated circuit on a computer. Therefore, we should break out of the shackles of "starting point thinking" and accept the shackles of "axial thinking." From this point of view, China's neighboring relations are neither complicated nor destructive; on the contrary, it has excellent potential for development far beyond the United States and Russia. Given its current strengths and advantages, China has a good chance of becoming the most critical country in the world in the foreseeable future, provided it is appropriately utilized. China's geographic location and population size, economic strength, and ability to build infrastructure, especially the rapid development of high-speed rail and other modes of transportation, will allow it to maximize its development in this position. Our growing military is a powerful army with a sharp sword, but never lighter than a single shot. We firmly believe that with the "One Belt, One Road," China will usher in a better tomorrow.

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