

The Opportunities and Challenges of "Belt and Road Initiative" in Current China from the Perspective of Risks

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Abstract—At present, The Belt and Road Initiative contains huge development opportunities, but also faces with significant risks and challenges. A detailed analysis of its potential risks has important strategic significance to promoting Chinese comprehensive deepening reform and improves the level of opening to the outside world. It is also of great strategic significance to create a common of shared destiny community with the countries along the line, and create a peaceful international environment for development.

Keywords—*Belt and Road Initiative; risk; response*

I. INTRODUCTION

The so-called "Belt and Road Initiative" strategy, from the point view of its process, generally refers to the strategic conception of building a "Silk Road Economic Belt" proposed by President Xi Jinping during a visit to Kazakhstan on September 7, 2013; and also refers to the great initiative of jointly building "twenty-first Century Maritime Silk Road" proposed by Chairman Xi Jinping when he made a speech at the Congress of Indonesia on October 3, 2013, which this is the debut in the international arena of "Belt and Road Initiative" strategy. After planning and actively promoting for over one year, Chinese government officially released the plan of action *The Vision and Action To Promote The Construction of Silk Road Economic Belt and twenty-first Century Maritime Silk Road* during the annual conference in the Boao Asia Forum in March 2015. This is the programme of action for the implementation of "Belt and Road Initiative" Strategy. In a sense, "Belt and Road Initiative" is not a real entity, but a thoughtful and cooperative development ideas and initiatives. By borrowing the historical symbol of "the Silk Road" from the ancient, it relies on the exiting bilateral and multilateral mechanisms between China and relevant countries, uses existing effective platform of regional cooperation and holds high the banner of peaceful development to actively develop the economic partnership with the countries along and jointly build the community of shared interests, destiny and responsibilities characterized by political mutual trust, economic integration and cultural inclusive. Therefore, actively promoting the "Belt and Road Initiative" strategy, not only needs a global economic perspective, but also demands the international political and cultural perspectives.

II. MAJOR RISKS AND CHALLENGES IN THE CURRENT "BELT AND ROAD" INITIATIVE

The countries along The "Belt and Road Initiative" line, not only are full of diversity and heterogeneity, but also have different cognition to China. Some countries are even at the core in the big-power politics. Undoubtedly, these factors have increased risks on pragmatic and cooperative economy, politics and security. How to deal with diverse demands for developments, complex regional security situation and constantly rising geopolitical risks, which are the main challenges that The "Belt and Road Initiative" initiative faced with, mainly included in the following four aspects:

A. Political Risks

The main foothold of The "Belt and Road Initiative" strategy is economic cooperation and cultural exchanges, which does not involve sensitive areas such as politics, security, etc. But from the aspect of objective effect, the "Belt and Road Initiative" has great significance to safeguard national economic security, crack down on the three forces and create an international environment for peaceful coexistence. In this sense, the grand vision of the "Belt and Road Initiative" is not only a great cause for the economic development, but also a macro-plan for national security strategy, thus we should examine its significance and role from the perspective and height of safeguarding China's political security.

The political environment is very complex and geopolitical risks are prominent in the countries along which "belt and road" initiative is launched. For example, there are many religions, diversified cultures and various political forces in the Central Asia on the "Silk Road Economic Belt". In history, there regions are full of conflicts. At present, conflicts in these regions are also continuing. At the same time, the region is also greatly affected by religious extremism, separatism and international terrorism called "three forces", so the "Belt and Road Initiative" construction is faced with great political risks hidden in the process of Promotion. To be specific, these political risks concentrate mainly in three aspects:

First, the Risk of Political Systems

Many countries along the route of "Belt and Road" initiative exist such political risks as unstable political situation, political corruption and imperfect legal system. Some countries are still in the stage of political and economic transformation, therefore, all kinds of social issues are very critical and serious and uncertain factors increase, particularly in Central Asia which are experiencing the transition from the highly centralized political system to constitutional democratic political system and facing such decisions as what kind of country should they construct and what kind of national political system should they establish, which are vague prospect for them. Due to the above-mentioned factors, their stability of political system cannot be guaranteed. Once the outbreak of national security crisis or political unrest, China will definitely be influenced in a negative manner.

Second, the Non-traditional Security Threats

The destructive activities with the terrorism as its core featuring terrorist force, religious extremist forces and ethnic separatist force are the important factors that threaten the implementation of the "Belt and Road Initiative" strategy and are becoming the biggest non-traditional security threats in the region increasingly. Influenced by the international anti-terrorism situation and the change of regional security situation, the various extremist organizations in the region present the characteristics of the intersection of peoples, the integration of guiding ideologies, decentralization of activities and fragmentation of organizations, and at the same time, the connection with international terrorist organizations have also been strengthened. For example, in recent years, the "East Turkistan" terrorist forces in China and other countries collude with each other, frequently making attacks on targeting China and seriously threatening Chinese citizens' personal and property safety.

Third, the Threats of War and Coup

Numerous countries in the route of "Belt and Road" are developing countries. Under the influence of complicated factors such as the domestic social and class conflicts, the problem of ethnic religion and so on, these countries generally implement the party politics. However, due to the struggle and conflicts between governing party and opposition party in some countries, the political situation is fragile and unstable, which will cause political turbulence and threats of wars and coup in several countries in this region. In addition, it is easy for external forces to interfere with domestic affairs due to ethnic and religious conflicts and diversified historical and cultural background in the route of "Belt and Road", thus stirring up turmoil and conflicts, even wars, coups and revolution, which is a very serious challenge for "Belt and Road Initiative" construction.

B. Economic Risks

At present, from the economic point of view, there are mainly three risks on "Belt and Road Initiative" strategy: The first is the risk of capital output. China's current capital output is mainly based on infrastructure and Engineering. But the return on investment is not optimistic since the small

population, relative slow economic development, backwardness of economic development, small capacity of market, poor investment environment and vague prospect on profits of large-scale infrastructure. As a matter of fact, it will cause such situations as heavy investment, big risks, long period and little profit for capital output. This means that Chinese economic integration in the region is difficult to be effective in the short term, sometimes difficult to get the real acknowledge from the local society, and may cause a rebound in the local forces and populist vigilance. The second is the lagging construction on the platform and mechanism of investment and financing in the area along the line. The unbalanced economic development in the route of "Belt and Road" decides the different expectations and desiring needs. The unbalanced economic development in the route of "Belt and Road" decides the different expectations and desiring needs. Limited number, scale and financing capacity on infrastructure invested by bilateral trade, wide gap between capital supply and total need, underdeveloped capital markets in this region, especially in the bond market and less usage for unofficial capital will greatly increase economic risks.

The third is international financial risk. The "Belt and Road Initiative" construction is faced with the challenges from the unstable international monetary market and the fluctuation of exchange rate and debt risk will become an important factor to impact the "Belt and Road Initiative" strategic situation overall.

C. Cultural Risks

The countries in the route of "Belt and Road" have diversified, distinct and complicated cultures and many of them unify the states and the church. Therefore, in the process of "output from the East" and "westward", China will inevitably face an exchange and collision with the long and powerful Islamic and Christian civilizations. How to seek common ground while reserving differences to reach consensus and work together? Therefore, how to solve the possible conflicts in the process of "going out" by cultural exchange and integration has become the difficult problem to be solved on the agenda. In addition, because of cultural and ideological differences, there are also unavoidable differences in the concept, direction and pattern of development in all countries. So when we focus on the huge prospects of economic and trade cooperation concerning the "Belt and Road Initiative" grand idea, how to avoid divergences and differences of religions, nationalities, cultures and ideologies between China and the countries along the "Belt and Road Initiative" and how to avoid these differences to evolve into cultural conflicts and political contradictions have become a real challenge and difficult problem that must be concerned.

D. American Factors

In recent years, the global strategy of the United States has been leaning to the Asia Pacific region to carry out the strategy of "returning to the Asia Pacific", trying to balance China in security affairs. In addition, the United States has certain doubts and prejudices about the rise of China, which have prompted the United States to carry out a comprehensive strategy of containment and suppression on China in political and economic aspects. These practices, to a certain extent,

stimulate China' neighboring countries to provoke China in the territorial marine disputes destroy political environment of regional cooperation and have negative influence on the construction of "Belt and Road". As one of the most important external factors affecting China's surrounding environment, the United States will have a prominent impact on China's planning and implementation of "Belt and Road Initiative", and American factors will be an important factor affecting the success or failure of China's "Belt and Road Initiative" construction. We must study and discuss in depth to minimize the negative impact.

In the eyes of the US side, Chinese advancement for "One Belt And One Road" construction could impact the US-led trans-pacific partnership talks, hurting U.S. economic interests in the Asia-pacific region. Moreover, the Silk Road in history is not only an important international trade route, but also an "important channel" for China to show its strength and maintain regional order as a regional power. Under the guidance of "return to the Asia-pacific" strategy, in order to maintain their own economic interests and dominance in the Asia-pacific region, the United States is bound to take various interference measures to hinder the construction of "Belt and Road".

After the Second World War, the United State is the creator of world order as well as rules of the game. Therefore, from the perspective of reality, if China wants to push forward the implementation of the "Belt and Road Initiative: strategy, we cannot ignore the American reaction and its interests.

III. COUNTERMEASURES AND SUGGESTIONS TO DEAL WITH "ONE BELT AND ONE ROAD" RISKS

In view of the above mentioned risks, this paper intends to discuss and study suggestions to deal with strategic risks and challenges from four perspectives.

A. *Political Co-ordination of Diplomatic Strategy*

In the overall layout of "Belt and Road Initiative", diplomacy plays an important role in the strategic position. As long as the diplomacy achieves a breakthrough, "Belt and Road Initiative" has a reliable guarantee. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on building the peaceful development area in neighboring countries and it is the priority for "Belt and Road" initiative to maintain regional stability.

In the spirit of peaceful development and by using flexible and diversified diplomatic means to strengthen dialogue and communication, we should enhance policy coordination and cooperation among governments, seek to coordinate with the countries in the route, try to establish multilateral consultation mechanism and strengthen political mutual trust, thus forming the political impetus and gradually reducing or eliminating their misunderstanding on the initiative.

On the one hand, we should strengthen the in-depth understanding on the politics of countries along "Belt and Road Initiative", so as to predict and respond to the changes in the political situation and avoid the impact on construction due to political changes. On the other hand, we should strengthen security cooperation with the local community, build a

cooperative mechanism for counter-terrorism, and establish a permanent security mechanism, information gathering and notification mechanism. When devising strategies within major foreign policy, we should enhance our patience, express our sincerity, promote the establishment of regional peace and dialogue, regional security and crisis management mechanism to prevent the dispute escalation from worsening. In accordance with the needs of development and cooperation, we should continuously improve the all-directional and multi-level communication mechanism and jointly establish and maintain a stable, harmonious and friendly development environment.

B. *Construction of shared community of interests economically*

Economic cooperation is one of the two pillars for the construction of "Belt and Road". Strengthened economic cooperation and trade exchange conform to the world trend and the needs and desire of economic development for those countries in the route, which will become an important and new engine for the world economic development. China has made great achievements in economic development over the past 30 years since reform and opening-up, laying a good economic foundation for the implementation of "Belt and Road Initiative". On the one hand, China can not only provide a broad market for emerging countries, but also provide an important source of funds. On the other hand, large-scale investments in infrastructure construction will help these countries to eliminate the bottlenecks of economic growth and promote the sound development of the global economy. At the same time, the overall transformation and upgrading of China's opening to the outside world brought by "Belt and Road Initiative" will help China to drive domestic economic growth and achieve the goal of sustainable economic development in China. Along the countries in the route of "Belt and Road" not only can take a ride on China's economic development strengthen infrastructure construction, promote industrial upgrading, but also can increase trade among countries and speed up the pace of economic development, thus making the construction of "Belt and Road" become a great cause to benefit each country in the route of it.

Therefore, in order to have a long-term development of "Belt and Road" initiative in the future, we must adhere to the principles of joint discussion, construction and sharing, actively connect with development strategies of countries in the route and take measurements and demonstrate successful examples to reach consensus with those countries. Meanwhile, it should promote broader cooperation in larger areas between China and participating countries, deepen cooperative space with neighboring countries in the field of trade and investment and integrate interests, motivate the enthusiasm and initiative of countries in the route, endeavor to build geo-economic cycle, construct new pattern of regional economic integration and intensify and create the sound situation for regional mutual benefit and win-win result so as to jointly build "shared community of interest" in which.

C. *Intensifying cultural exchange and communication*

Culture is an important factor for "Belt and Road Initiative". Only by associating with culture can economy have a long

development. Only by associating with culture can economy have a long development. So the cultural exchange and cooperation as another pillar of "Belt and Road" initiative will play an irreplaceable and leading role in the construction of "Belt and Road". Therefore, it is critical as well as urgent to focus on and study cultural exchange in the planning of "Belt and Road" initiative.

To promote cultural exchange between China and the countries in the route of the "Belt and Road Initiative", we need to base on the spirit of modern Silk Road characterized by "friendly mutual trust, equality and mutual benefit, mutual inclusive and learning advantages from each other and win-win cooperation" to deepen people-to-people and cultural exchanges and cooperation with countries in the route, promote the dialogues among different civilizations, gather and release strong and positive energy from cultural development and realize more effective and inclusive increase, thus taking root of the awareness of shared community of destiny.

D. Focusing on win-win cooperation with the United States in the aspect of the relationship with major countries

As the only superpower country in the world, the United States and its Allies system have a global influence, especially dominant position in the Marine affairs, which determines the future of the Marine Silk Road in the 21st century. "One Belt strategy of China has some conflicts with the US's global strategy. The United States, on the one hand, is full of doubts about China's rise, and worries that China's overall strength will surpass that of the United States through the integration of the entire Eurasian continent with the help of the "land Silk Road economic belt". On the other hand, China's "maritime Silk Road" strategy will also significantly affect US maritime power and maritime hegemony. In this context, the United States under the guidance of the strategy of "return to the Asia-pacific", will be more frequent to involve in Asia-pacific

affairs. Any behavior that deepens relations with its neighboring countries in China will be seen by the United States as a threat. Therefore, American factors will be an important factor affecting the success of "Belt and Road Initiative". The stability of the relationship with the United States and its Allies is also an inherent requirement of the "Belt and Road Initiative" initiative.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, "Belt and Road Initiative" construction is a systematic project. In making overall plans, we must, on the one hand, consider the requirements of each country from the macroscopic and microscopic aspect to make full use of such advantages as geography, capital, manufacturing, infrastructure, information and political cooperation among countries, try to build shared community of interest, destiny and responsibility featuring political mutual trust, economic integration and cultural inclusion and achieve the rise and prosperity of Asia. On the other hand, we must face up to the difference of political system, terrorism threat, economic risk and cultural difference, adopt flexible policies and endeavor to resolve and remove risks and obstacles in the construction of "Belt and Road".

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