

The Security Challenges of the “One Belt, One Road” Initiative and China’s Choices

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Abstract

The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road initiatives (“One Belt, One Road”) are of significance in enhancing China’s open economy. This article explores the dual security challenges faced by the “One Belt, One Road” initiative. These challenges include both traditional security challenges, such as great power competition, territorial and island disputes, and political turmoil in the region, as well as non-traditional threats such as terrorism, piracy, and transnational organized crime. This article analyzes the present situation of security cooperation in the region covered by “One Belt, One Road” and also suggests that China needs to pay special attention to three issues, namely the supply of public security goods, the interests of the United States and Russia, and the pivot of Pakistan, besides developing its own strength.

KEY WORDS:

“One Belt, One Road” (OBOR) initiative, security cooperation, China’s choice

Introduction

During Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Kazakhstan and Indonesia in September and October of 2013, he proposed the initiative of building the Silk Road Economic Belt (hereafter referred to as "One Belt") and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (hereafter referred to as "One Road"), which links China with South-east and South Asia, Eurasia, Africa and Brazil through trade, investments, transport and energy infrastructure projects, tourism, education, culture and other areas of cooperation (Mitrovic 2016: 76). The "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) initiative was included as the focus of the year's work in the Chinese "Government Work Report" in 2015. It is of great strategic significance for China to comprehensively improve its open economy level, and to explore deeply the current situation and challenges of its security cooperation, which is of great practical significance to ensure the realization of the strategic interests of OBOR.

The status quo of OBOR regional security cooperation

As early as 2012, the idea to "promote all-round improvements to China's open economy" was put forward at the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC). At that congress, calls were put forward for coordinating bilateral, multilateral, regional and sub-regional cooperation, and promoting interconnection with neighboring countries. In 2013, the decision of the CPC Central Committee (CPCCC) on 'Some Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening the Reform', proposed that China should accelerate the construction of infrastructure connecting China with neighboring countries and regions, and work hard to build a Silk Road Economic Belt and a Maritime Silk Road, so as to form a new pattern of all-round economic opening. In 2015, the CPC Central Economic Work Conference proposed to "do a good job of OBOR initiative construction and implementation". OBOR involves three continents including Asia, Europe and Africa. In terms of the spatial

scope, the “One Belt” area across the Eurasian continent can be divided into three parts: the core area, extension area and radiation area.¹ The “One Road” through Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean West Coast routes, can be divided into three sections: Southeast Asia routes, South Asia and the Persian Gulf routes, and Red Gulf and the Indian Ocean west coast routes.² At present, OBOR regional security cooperation presents a multi-level cooperation pattern, including bilateral cooperation, multilateral cooperation and regional cooperation. The current situation of security cooperation discussed in this paper is limited to the various security mechanisms (organizations) formed by multilateral and trans-regional cooperation.

“One Belt” regional security cooperation

Core area (Central Asia) security cooperation

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), established in 2001 to resolve regional border disputes and create border military trust, has evolved over the past decade and more. The SCO now participates in the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism at its core, combating drug smuggling, transnational organized crime and other trans-border criminal activity requiring security cooperation. In recent years, its cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, culture and other non-traditional security areas has been continuously expanded, especially in the economic field, which has enhanced the overall competitiveness of the region through regional cooperation. In addition, the “Collective Security Treaty Organization” (CSTO), signed by Russia and Central Asian countries³ in 1992, was a security cooperation mechanism and military alliance in Central Asia. But with the influence of the United States in the 21st century extended to Central Asia, this mechanism is increasingly related to security-oriented cooperation.

1 The core area includes China, Russia and five Central Asian countries; the extension area includes India, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Belarus, Armenia, Ukraine and Moldova; the radiation area includes Western Asia, the European Union, and can be connected to Japan, South Korea and other East Asian countries.

2 The Southeast Asia routes includes China and ASEAN as a whole; the South Asia and the Persian Gulf routes includes Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Oman; the Red Gulf and the Indian Ocean west coast routes includes Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique.

3 The countries include Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

Expansion area security cooperation

This area mainly includes two sub-regions in South Asia and Eastern Europe.⁴ After the Cold War, the South Asian countries gradually abandoned the idea of seeking security alone⁵ and embarked on a regional security-oriented cooperative path. Through friendly exchanges, the countries in the area initially formed a regional security environment of peace and mutual trust. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) proposed strengthening intraregional security cooperation to combat terrorism and piracy at its 17th Summit in 2011.

Security cooperation in the Eastern European region is based on the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) security system, focused on the relationship with Russia, without a complex network interaction model. With a strong security dependence on Russia, Belarus and Armenia have built an exclusive military-political alliance with Russia through the CSTO. But there are large conflicts of interests in the region, specifically between Russia and Ukraine and Moldova. Therefore, these countries had such a strong tendency of de-Russianization that they did not join the collective security system, and established the "Guam Group".⁶

Radiation zone (Europe) security cooperation

The long-standing historical interaction between European security actors and security threats has resulted in the formation of three major regional organizations for European security cooperation. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which responds to changes in the security environment in Europe, proposed a new strategic concept in 1991, 1999 and 2010 successively, and has played an important role in intervening, resolving and participating in the process of European security governance. The European Union (EU) has built up its security and defense capabilities through more than half a century of unremitting efforts, and is playing a growing role in resolving regional conflicts. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) seeks to prevent and resolve conflicts and to restore the damage caused by war.

4 Here Eastern Europe is the region of the former Soviet republics, including Belarus, Armenia, Ukraine and Moldova.

5 These modes include the nonalignment mode represented by India, the alliance mode represented by Pakistan and the "protectorate" model represented by Nepal.

6 The "Guam Group" is an informal regional coalition formed in 1997 by Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova. Uzbekistan joined in 1998 and withdrew from the organization in 2005. The organization was renamed the Community of Ethnic Communities at the Kiev Summit in May 2006.

“One Road” regional security cooperation

Regional security cooperation in the Southeast Asian route

In order to make up for the weakness of each country in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the organization tried to establish ASEAN-dominated security and non-traditional security cooperation. This cooperation came in a context of drastic change in the security situation in South-East Asia, the weakening of ideology, and the gradual emergence of specific peripheral security issues after the Cold War. The various forms of security mechanisms in Southeast Asia include the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF); the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asian Pacific (CSCAP) and others, which enhance their status and influence in regional security affairs. In the new century, ASEAN has actively consolidated and expanded security cooperation, built a security community, strengthened cooperation in cross-border crimes such as anti-terrorism and combating drugs, and at the same time promoted the establishment of a mechanism for the meeting of defense ministers to address the shortcomings of the ARF in building a regional security order. In addition, it is an important feature of security cooperation in the region that the security cooperation mechanism dominated by Western powers will become the leader of regional security cooperation.

Regional security cooperation in the South Asia and Persian Gulf route

Security cooperation in the South Asian region has already been discussed, and will not be repeated here. The security cooperation between the Middle East and the Persian Gulf mainly focuses on the six countries' security communities.⁷ The six countries of the Gulf have given priority to military cooperation and defense cooperation since the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). At the end of the 20th century, on the one hand these countries sought to form an alliance with the West to achieve self-protection during the Gulf crisis and war, and on the other hand, they continued to strengthen security cooperation amongst themselves to remedy their shortcomings after the war. In the 21st century, these countries continued to increase their security identity and strengthened their communication and collaboration in the face of

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7 The six countries refer to the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

the situation in Iraq, the Iranian nuclear issue and other complex areas of pressure. This security cooperation has been able to play a certain role in maintaining stability.

Regional security cooperation in the Indian Ocean West Coast routes

Security cooperation in this region focuses primarily on piracy off Africa's east coast. The pirate threat extends from the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden to Kenya, Tanzania, the Seychelles, Madagascar and Mozambique. Piracy is especially a threat in the Gulf of Aden which is one of the busiest waters in the world and where at least 20,000 ships carry 12% of the world's oil every year (Chalk 2010: 96). In response to the threat of piracy, the Indian Ocean West Coast countries and the international community have launched active cooperation through the formation of a multi-level anti-piracy system. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has adopted resolutions 1816, 1838, 1846, 1851 and 1897 to combat piracy. Under the authorization of these resolutions, the international community, including China, has implemented multinational naval escort missions. With the concerted efforts of all parties, this anti-piracy work has achieved remarkable results.

OBOR initiative of the dual security challenges

In this vast territory, the OBOR initiative not only deepens regional economic cooperation, but also faces a huge security risk. This paper divides that risk into traditional security and non-traditional security.

Traditional security challenges

Great power geopolitical games

In recent years, the world's great powers in the area of the OBOR have put forward their own regional initiatives, seeking to enhance their regional influence.

Based on "The New Silk Road: Transport and Trade in Greater Central Asia", edited by scholar Frederick Starr in 2007, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, in July 2011 in Chennai, India, proposed the "Greater Central Asia" idea and "new Silk Road" concept. Clinton (2011) advocated for the establishment of a link between South Asia, Central Asia and West Asia, and a transport and economic development network. She further described the "new Silk Road" program to the international community at the UN General Assembly meeting in September. The program proposed that Afghanistan's neighboring countries should make investments to maintain the leading position of the United States in Eurasian hinterland development. China's influence has been weakened in the region, which has influenced economic cooperation between Central Asian countries and China, thus leading to the reduction of cohesion of the SCO. The United States has also continued to promote the "Asia-Pacific rebalancing" initiative by: actively creating the Indo-Pacific⁸ concept; extending the Asia-Pacific borders to the Indian subcontinent; continuously strengthening the Asia-Pacific military force; using the territorial disputes surrounding China's maritime territories to vigorously support its allies in that and related disputes; and finally by implementing the offshore initiative of balancing China with its neighbors.

In 2009, the EU proposed the "New Silk Road Plan" to strengthen links with Central Asia and neighboring countries in energy, commerce, personnel and information, through the construction of the "Nabucca Natural Gas Pipeline". The EU has actively invested to ensure its own energy supply security at the same time as enhancing its influence in Central Asia. In addition, the EU is concerned about the worsening of regional disputes and demands that all parties settle their disputes through dialogue and cooperation within a multilateral framework. The involvement of the EU, on the one hand, is conducive to balancing the influence of the United States and Russia in Central Asia. On the other hand, the situation in Central Asia is becoming more complicated and therefore not conducive to regional cooperation promoted by China's "Silk Road Economic Belt".

In 2002, Russia, India and Iran co-sponsored the "North-South Corridor Project", proposing that Europe's international transport corridors run

8 This concept was first proposed in 2010 by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Hawaii (U.S. Department of State 2010).

through India, Iran, the Caucasus and Russia, to maintain their traditional regional influence. In recent years, Russia has proposed the initiative of the integration of Central Asia, namely the "Eurasian Union" vision, aiming at accelerating the process of economic integration of the CIS. After the Cold War, Russia has always regarded Central Asia as its traditional sphere of influence. Despite the support of the "Silk Road Economic Belt" program during the Sino-Russian summit meeting in May 2014, during the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Russia was suspicious of China, which then influences all-round cooperation between China and Central Asian countries.

Japan put forward the "Eurasian diplomatic initiative" in the Cabinet of Ryutaro Hashimoto as early as 1997, and proposed the establishment of the "Central Asia + Japan" dialogue mechanism in 2004, followed by proposing the establishment of a "freedom and prosperity of arc" in 2006. Japan has enhanced its political and economic influence in this region by strengthening economic cooperation with the Central Asian countries while promoting economic development and the internationalization level of these countries. At the same time, Japan has made use of the rich oil and gas resources in the region to ensure the security of its energy supply. In October 2013, Abe's cabinet intensified its concern with Asia and Europe, pointing out that Tokyo is the starting point for the new Asia-Europe Silk Road, and a geopolitical trader. Japan is also actively developing Pacific and Indian Ocean coastal countries to strengthen their military presence. These initiatives are intended to enhance a "line of defense" to contain China.

India, Iran and Afghanistan promote the South Asian "Southern Silk Road" construction project together, trying to link the "Maritime Silk Road" and "Land Silk Road" together. India, based on its geographical advantages, is seeking to dominate the Indian Ocean and has guarded against the existence of external forces in the Indian Ocean. In particular, the Chinese so-called "string pearl initiative" is viewed by India as a strategic siege. Raja Mohan doubts whether India will allow China's maritime Silk Road to be implemented through the Indian Ocean because geopolitical and security factors are too strong (Mohan 2014). This has a negative impact on China's cooperation with countries in South Asia. In particular, India's strong marine initiative is bound to affect China's energy channel security.

In addition, India actively pursued the “Eastward” initiative, is involved in the South China Sea issue in economic, political and military competition with China, and enhanced the influence of Asia-Pacific affairs radiation, thus increasing China's strategic pressure in the direction of Southeast Asia.

Territorial and island disputes

For historical reasons, there are various territorial and island disputes in the OBOR area and the results of dispute settlement directly affect the security guarantee of the implementation of the initiative. The current disputes include:

On the ocean, disputes include: the “South China Sea dispute” between China and some Southeast Asian countries; “China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) 981” drilling rig caused the so-called Sino-Vietnamese “Paracel islands sovereignty” dispute in May 2014; China, the Philippines and Vietnam intensified the “Spratly islands sovereignty” dispute; there exist disputes over the Diaoyu islands and an exclusive economic zone in the East China Sea between China and Japan. The essence of these maritime disputes is the dispute between the leaders of regional order and their followers, and the rise of China. In the short term, China cannot find a solution acceptable to most of the disputing parties to ease the tense situation. This will not help deepen the all-round cooperation between China and ASEAN, thus affecting China's overall right to formulate a new round of trade rules.

On land, after World War II the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, the Sino-Indian border dispute and the Palestinian-Israeli territorial dispute have still not been resolved. After the Cold War, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, in the “One Belt” area a number of sovereign states have emerged. Border demarcation between these countries has not been completed. Tajikistan's enclave, Vorukh, lies in Kyrgyz territory. The border between the two countries is 911 kilometers long, with only 567 kilometers delineated and more than 70 disputed areas. On 11 January 2014, the two countries entered an armed conflict in the border area. Between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, twenty percent of the border is not defined. Between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, the Fergana border is also not clearly defined. Kyrgyzstan has in Uzbekistan an enclave village of

Barak, while Uzbekistan has the enclaves of Sokh and Shakhimardan in Kyrgyzstan. These enclaves have clashed with local residents. In addition, the three countries are not compromising on the sharing of water resources. These border territories, enclave disputes and water disputes have become an important factor in the worsening situation in the region. The disputes in Central Asia directly negatively affect the SCO's future of political mutual trust, security and economic cooperation, and is not conducive to maintaining the stability of the western region of China.

Regional political turmoil in individual countries

Most of the countries in the OBOR area are developing countries which are affected by complicated factors such as social class contradictions and ethnic and religious problems. These countries generally practice party politics. However, due to the struggle for government, the political situation in some countries is vulnerable and uncertain. Integration of national interests and recognition of a common sense of belonging is more difficult, which leads to continuous lack of formulating important internal and foreign policy. For example, political developments in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have been through ups and downs. In particular, Kyrgyzstan's North-South contradictions are still sharp and seasonal protests are becoming normalized. Kyrgyzstan announced that it will actively participate in the construction of the "One Belt", while in December 2013 it announced its withdrawal from the construction of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway, which increases the difficulty of project coordination. In addition, Somalia along the Indian Ocean, Yemen, Iran, and Pakistan are increasingly becoming potentially dangerous countries or regions. As the OBOR initiative to promote China's future is bound to increase investment in the region, increase imports, frequent personnel exchanges, these countries will increase the economic cost of investment and reduce co-operation efficiency, and thus affect China's overseas interests.

Non-traditional security challenges

The terrorism threat

The destructive activities of the "three forces" (terrorist forces, religious

extremists, and national separatist forces), which are the core of terrorism, are an important factor threatening the implementation of the OBOR initiative, increasingly becoming the largest non-traditional security threat in the region. Despite the differences between extremist organizations' political aims, organizational forms, personnel composition and activities, their common feature is that they oppose secular regimes and advocate the establishment of an Islamic state with political and religious unity. As a result of changes in the international anti-terrorism situation, and changes in the regional security situation, extremist organizations in the region are characterized by a cross-cutting of personnel, guiding ideology, decentralization, fragmentation, and other links with international terrorist organizations. The United States withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan in 2014 is likely to lead to an escalation of the conflict within that territory, resulting in Islamic extremism and terrorism which may "overflow", affecting regional stability. In addition, in recent years East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) terrorist forces, linked to each other at home and abroad against Chinese targets, from time to time to carry out attacks which are a threat to Chinese people's personal and property safety.

Sea channel safety

Maintaining secure access is an important consideration in the implementation of the OBOR initiative, which will make sure the sea channel stays open rather than cut off. Ninety percent of global commercial trade and sixty-five percent of the world's total oil volume go through ocean shipping, with the Indian Ocean providing half of the world's container shipments and seventy percent of the transportation of petroleum products from the Middle East to the Pacific. The Indian Ocean routes are strategically important for global trade such as the Strait of Mendoza, the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca, with forty percent of the world's trade flowing through the Strait of Malacca and forty percent of crude oil trade flowing through Hormuz Strait (Kaplan 2009: 19-20). Most of China's ocean-going oil trade is concentrated in the Straits of Malacca, the Indian Ocean to the Middle East and North Africa. If oil is the blood of the industry, then the channel connecting the Indian Ocean from the Middle East, and through the Malacca Straits channel, has actually become the lifeline of China's economic growth. Therefore, it is very important to maintain the secure passage of the Malacca Strait,

the Strait of Hormuz and the Mande Strait on the “One Road”. Regarding the Malacca Strait, the challenge mainly comes from the United States, which also tries to control the Strait. The Strait of Hormuz is beset by a deteriorating security situation within the region, while the Mande Strait is challenged mainly from the pirate threat. According to the Global Piracy Report of the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), in 2013 piracy off the coast of Somalia declined significantly; it has fallen from 237 events in 2011 to 15 in 2013 (ICC 2014). However, the threat of attacks still exists, especially off the Somali coast and the Gulf of Aden.

Regional economic integration pressure

The purpose of China's OBOR initiative is to establish closer economic and trade ties with Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East and Europe, to further develop mutual cooperation and a broader space for development, to promote regional development and prosperity through technology and investment, and to promote China's economic upgrading and rebalancing. The United States has proposed to construct the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) to hinder the process of regional integration in East Asia and to divide the ASEAN-led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which has gradually formed in the Asia-Pacific region. At the same time, Europe and the United States work hard to build the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership agreement (TTIP), advocate more liberal international economic and trade rules, and hinder the process of economic and trade cooperation between Asia and Europe. TPP and TTIP build on the interests of the West's own network, thus blocking the strategic objectives of OBOR.

Transnational organized crime

China has been promoting economic and trade relations among countries in the OBOR initiative. At the same time, transnational organized crime, one of the “three major world catastrophes” according to the United Nations General Assembly, has become increasingly rampant and has seriously affected the economic development and social stability of all countries involved. Current types of transnational organized crime include: a) drug smuggling, specifically the spread of opium production in Afghanistan to the world. The “drug economy” and religious extremism in Central Asia

combined, impact on China's western security; b) illegal immigrant crime, China's labor export and overseas employment at the same time, resulting in a variety of crime with foreign labor service; c) transnational economic crime, such as money laundering and telecommunications fraud.

China's choices regarding OBOR security issues

Through the implementation of the OBOR initiative, China can form a new pattern of opening up in all directions along its coast, inland and border areas. Such openings will also raise the level of economic development and economic share in China's western inland areas. It will ensure the safety of maritime transport and strengthen political mutual trust. In the future, in order to achieve "policy communication, transportation connection, trade facilitation, currency circulation, [and] community consensus", China must manage its security risks, China not only needs to strengthen its own power, but also needs to build on and pay attention to three points: 1) provision of safe public goods; 2) managing the interests of great powers; 3) Recognizing Pakistan's 'pivot' role.

Cooperation to achieve the provision of safe public goods

Traditional and non-traditional security in the OBOR region is intertwined, involving a large number of sovereign state disputes which no country can face and resolve on its own. Therefore, China need only to establish a more open and cooperative concept in order to mobilize the region to actively participate in the implementation of OBOR, and ultimately achieve a mutual beneficial and win-win situation. In fact, China's presence in the region has been to uphold security cooperation. As of August 2016, China has sent 24 fleet escort missions, and carried out security escorts for more than 6,000 Chinese and foreign ships. Moreover, it has successfully assisted and rescued more than 60 Chinese and foreign ships. Ahudul Sahibi, former mayor of Kabul, Afghanistan, argues that China attaches great importance to the development of the Silk Road with regard to energy efficiency and safety, having initiated the Silk Road Initiative in 2000 and reintroduced a multilateral initiative in Central Asia.

In the future, China not only needs to put forward the concept of security, but also needs to further implement specific practices. This paper argues that China needs to understand the needs of the countries in the region and actively provide public goods for regional security governance. Despite China's limited defense capacity in the traditional security field, China's current maritime military power is nothing more than a "counter-interference" (Rourke 2012) force vis-a-vis the United States. But China's advantages in non-traditional security areas will be obvious. In addition to its increasing economic strength, China can advocate for the establishment of a variety of regional security funds for national security cooperation, based on the principle of economic profit-making, so as to ensure economic security and achieve the desire of a "community of common destiny". Once the idea of public goods is put forward, measures and plans should be followed in a timely manner, and the implementation requires consideration and dedication. On many occasions, China has repeatedly proposed to promote the South China Sea maritime security order and ecological protection action, and has set up a 3 billion RMB yuan "China - ASEAN Marine Cooperation Fund" in 2011, but ASEAN is still not clear how to apply and use these funds.

Being sensitive to the interests of countries in the region, especially the interests of great powers

The OBOR initiative is mainly facing security issues related to domestic factors specific to particular countries, and territory and island disputes more based on historical reasons. In this regard, China should pay attention to the interests of the region's countries. Specifically regarding China's territorial and island disputes, the country should continue to adhere to the "sovereign to me, shelving differences and seeking joint development" principle, to take into account the economic interests of the other parties to the disputes and actively resolving it through bilateral consultations. China should adhere to the principle of "non-interference in internal affairs", play a constructive role in bringing relevant parties together, and resolve and maintain regional stability peacefully when facing the political turmoil in the countries concerned.

In addition, regional security issues introduce the great power factor. Great power competition in the OBOR region will follow a normal trend, the essence of which is the shift between emerging powers and conservative powers.

Therefore, China should address the security risks in the region while bringing in great powers as “stakeholders”, to strengthen cooperation with each other and properly coordinate relations. The United States and Russia play an essential role here. As a hegemonic country, the US has a wide range of interests in the region, while Russia, as a regional, traditional country, still has a certain influence on the various security issues in the region.

At present, China, the US, and Russia can make full use of existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms, adopt flexible and diverse forms of cooperation, promote cooperation at different levels, strengthen political trust and seek points of common interest. Russia is closer to China than to the US, sharing with China the common mission of national rejuvenation. China and the “Eurasian Union” need a certain degree of “docking” to jointly safeguard the “Silk Road Economic belt” in the field of security. At present, there is a structural “security dilemma” between China and the United States in the traditional security field. China’s development is “zero-sum” next to US global hegemony. Sino-Russian coordination can easily be regarded as a mechanism to “exclude the US”. Moreover, there is a strong factor for the United States to become involved in territorial and islands disputes: avoiding political unrest in the region. Therefore, Sino-US security cooperation should be more related to anti-terrorism, anti-piracy, cracking down on transnational organized crime and other non-traditional areas. Gradually, as confidence is built, the two countries can deal with common challenges through a variety of existing dialogue and communication mechanisms.

Recognizing Pakistan’s “pivot” role

In geographical distribution, the OBOR initiative of security assurance in the south and north depends on the effective interaction between “One Belt” and “One Road”. Although the strategic concept of the Bangladesh-China-India-Burma (BCIM) Economic Corridor and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) can link “One Belt” and “One Road”, the “two corridors” are too broadly connected to each other. Facing security challenges here is not obvious, but the real effective interaction lies in playing the role of a “pivot” state. The “One Belt” and “One Road” have common areas, mainly including India and Pakistan in South Asia. China and India have long-standing disputes over territory, so China must pay attention to Pakistan’s “pivot” role. To this end, China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative partnership can ensure that this role can be played.

In the “One Belt”, China can use Pakistan's influence on Afghanistan and its own geopolitical conditions, including ETIM forces in the Central Asian region and various terrorist organizations, to ensure the safety of western China. China can use the traditional relationship between the United States and Pakistan to “bridge” and strengthen security cooperation between China and the United States. China can use the belligerence between India and Pakistan to contain India and to reduce its security pressure from the southwest direction. In the “One Road”, China is not a coastal state of the Indian Ocean and also subject to the naval force constraints. China can use the media to participate in Indian Ocean affairs in Pakistan, to ensure the safety of sea lanes. Although China has repeatedly stressed that it will not set up military bases overseas, this does not affect China's rational use of the Gwadar port in Pakistan. Its location is important for the fight against piracy in the Indian Ocean west coast ensuring energy security in the Gulf region.

Conclusion

The OBOR initiative requires that China should work together to strengthen balanced development of a comprehensively open economy, involving both land and sea. However, in implementation, “One Belt” seems to take priority, and the Chinese government promotes high-speed rail and other equipment manufacturing “going out” as an opportunity to actively promote land-based transport infrastructure construction, which is quicker than transporting goods over sea. But I believe that we need to give priority to the use of marine resources in the future. Several cities in China opened the China Railway Express, but the traditional maritime transport trade will remain in a dominant position for a very long period of time. The time advantage of land transportation is also affected by various security risks - the security challenges facing the OBOR initiative mentioned above - wherein land security challenges account for the vast majority of security risks. Through the international community's efforts in recent years to combat piracy, control the ocean and resolve island disputes, the risk to sea-lanes has been greatly reduced.

In the future, China will work with all the countries in the region to actively respond to various security risks and challenges, and successfully implement the OBOR initiative. Eventually, China and other countries will become a “community of destiny” and a “community of interests”, which will help safeguard China's national interests, including security, build a responsible image of China, enhance China's soft power, and create a favorable international environment for China's modernization drive.

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