

The “Belt and Road” Strategic Concept and the Reestablishment of the “Eurasian Order”

HU Jian

HU Jian, Professor, Director, Center for Soft Power Studies, SASS

E-mail: hujian@sass.org.cn

This paper in Chinese was originally published in *Contemporary World and Socialism*, 2015 (04).

Abstract: Since the “Belt and Road” strategic concept was put forward, the academic theoretical circles have argued about its positioning, but their viewpoints are biased. An accurate understanding of the scientific positioning of the “Belt and Road” must be gained by probing into the framework of the development strategies laid out by China and Eurasian countries, as well as the unsuccessful reestablishment of the “Eurasian Order” after the Cold War. From this perspective, the “Belt and Road” strategic concept is a new attempt to politically reshape the “Eurasian Order” after the Cold War; within it, all countries along the “Belt and Road” will undertake economic action to reestablish the “Eurasian Order”. China was the first to propose the “Belt and Road”, after noticing actual opportunities and risks in the development process. For China, as a rising power, the biggest strategic risk is being deemed as a challenge to the current dominant power, the United States. Therefore, China should innovate strategy, diplomacy, and values, and prevent the corresponding risks to making progress in construction of the “Belt and Road” and the reestablishment of the “Eurasian Order”.

Keywords: The Belt and Road; The Eurasian Order; Strategic Concept; Risk Prevention

It is widely believed that China will be the global power to reestablish international order. There are arguments for and against it. While it may seem inevitable, China will not be the dominant power in the reestablishment of the international order, but rather China and the rest of the world will jointly reestablish the international order in the common development process for the sake of the destiny of the world community. Since the Second World War, the Eurasian Order has been unsound. Initially, separation by the “Iron Curtain” of the Cold War made Eurasia into “two halves of a walnut”¹. After the Cold War, the Eurasian Order was fragmented and plagued by terrorism, separatism, extremism, and traditional geopolitical games of the great powers. Therefore, the implementation of the Strategic Concept of the “Belt and Road”, as proposed by China, is intended to not only promote China’s economic development and break the bottleneck of internal economic development, but also join hands with the countries along the “Belt and Road” to achieve common development

¹ Walter Lafeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945-1975*, Commercial Press 1980, p.56.

and common prosperity so as to simultaneously enjoy economic development and reestablish the new Eurasian Order.

I. Arguments on the Positioning of the “Belt and Road”

After the Strategic Concept of the “Belt and Road” was put forward in 2013, the views of academic circles have broadly diverged on its positioning. To sum up, the following views now prevail:¹

First, the “Belt and Road” is a grand strategy of China’s rise. In this view, the past 30 years of reform have left many problems for China internally, and such reform itself implies many drawbacks. China’s development and the world economic development are closely linked, so China’s internal problems are also the world’s problems. Therefore, the “Belt and Road” is actually a strategic initiative under overall internal and external arrangement.² In this regard, the “Belt and Road” is not only an economic development strategy, but also a long-term political strategy related to whether China can come out top in the world in the future. At the same time, the “Belt and Road” is a strategy designed to transform the international order, which is China’s strategy for providing public goods for the world.³

Second, the “Belt and Road” is China’s new internationalist diplomatic strategy. In this view, the “Belt and Road”, which was proposed after the 18th National Congress of the CPC, demonstrates an ideological continuation of this Congress and an embodiment of the diplomatic strategy. The 18th National Congress of the CPC put forward the idea of Building a Global Community of Shared Destiny. The “Belt and Road” is a specific form of the idea of a “Global Community of Shared Destiny”, and demonstrates China’s new internationalist diplomatic strategy. This diplomatic strategy marks the transformation of China’s diplomacy from focusing on internal development to focusing on global concerns; from insisting on non-interference to making creative intervention⁴; and from giving more while asking for less to achieving mutual benefit with the rest of the world. The new internationalism of the “Belt and Road” emphasizes the internal importance of the Eurasian region, which is a priority under China’s new internationalist diplomacy strategy of the “Belt and Road”. This strategy lays stress on the need to strengthen political influence within Eurasia, but its core remains economic interest.

Third, the “Belt and Road” is China’s new “Marshall Plan”, namely, China’s economic diplomacy strategy for foreign economic aid. In this view, since the

¹ Views on the “Belt and Road” are published by the media, and a few of them are theoretical research findings. Therefore, the views given herein, which are cited from the news media, do not indicate the specific sources. For the views of theoretical research findings on academic media, their sources are cited.

² Huang, Renwei, “Strategic Thinking of New Ideas for Building” [In Chinese], *Social Outlook*, 2014(6).

³ Zorawar Daulet Singh, “Indian Perceptions of China’s Maritime Silk Road at Sea”, in *Journal of Defense Studies*, Vol.8, No.4, 2014, p.136; Yao Qinhu, “The Belt and Road Is a Great Strategy for China’s Rise” [In Chinese], *Social Outlook*, 2015(6).

⁴ The concept of “Creative Intervention” was first put forward by Wang YiZhou. See WANG Yizhou, “Innovating Non-interference Principle and Making More Protection Efforts for Overseas Interests” [In Chinese], *International Politics Quarterly*, 2013(2).

financial crisis, the world economy has been in the doldrums, with low development momentum. An important reason behind this situation is that a variety of developing countries have insufficient growth momentum. China is the second largest economy in the world, so it can convert its internal high savings to foreign aid investment, which plays an important role in infrastructure construction of the developing countries. This can not only lift the “bottleneck” of infrastructure in developing countries, but can also help China solve problems of high savings and foreign exchange reserves. This type of aid investment will bring substantial returns to the investor country, and help curb protectionism in its infancy.¹

Fourth, the “Belt and Road” is not only China’s economic development design, but also a cooperation and development initiative between China and neighboring countries. In this view, the “Belt and Road” is a strong vision, but it should not take the wrong path. It is not a political and strategic consideration, but rather an entirely economic design – the continuation of the strategy of opening and a shift from one-way opening to two-way balanced opening. The “Belt and Road” is an important vehicle for China’s capital outflow, while the priority for China’s capital investment is infrastructure. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and The Silk Road Fund provide important endorsement for China’s capital investment. To a certain extent, the “Belt and Road” is also China’s external transfer strategy for excess capacity.²

The above views may not cover all aspects. However, it is believed that all prevailing views on the “Belt and Road”, including the abovementioned ones, are partially incomprehensive. First, China insists on peaceful development; any strategy developed by China can neither challenge the existing dominant countries nor transform the existing international order. China is merely a participant and builder. Meanwhile, China is unable to provide global public goods as a dominant country. Even if China has the capability, it can only provide global public goods with the existing dominant countries. Second, China’s cooperation with Eurasia upholds the principle of equality. China and the Central Asian countries conform to the *Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization*. They uphold “the Shanghai Spirit” of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for cultural diversity, and pursuit of common development, and promote cooperation between China and the Central Asian countries in such fields as security and economy. Therefore, the “Belt and Road” is not China’s new internationalist strategy designed to exert political impact on Eurasia. Third, if the “Belt and Road” is defined as China’s “Marshall Plan”, this must be under the premise that China is sufficiently able to deal with the financial crisis and has sufficient economic resources to maintain an economic aid program. But it is clear that China not only lacks such external ability, but also faces

¹ Michele Penna, “China’s Marshall Plan: All Silk Roads Lead to Beijing?”, in *World Politics Review*, December 9, 2014; HUANG Yiping, “The Belt and Road under China’s Economic Diplomacy Strategy” [In Chinese], *International Economic Review*, 2015(1).

² TANG Zhuchang, “Positioning, Risk and Cooperation of the Belt and Road” [In Chinese], *Social Outlook*, 2015(6); In addition, some foreign scholars also hold similar views, such as Rajeew Ranjian Chaturvedy, “Decoding China’s Silk Diplomacy at Sea”, see from <http://www.ipcs.org/article/military-and-defence/decoding-chinas-silk-diplomacy-at=sea-4771.html>.

many development imbalances internally. Internal development remains China's most important task. In other words, the "Belt and Road" is not China's foreign aid program, but rather its external initiative for resolving internal development problems. Finally, the "Belt and Road" is China's economic development design, but is also its external transfer strategy for excess capacity. Excess capacity certainly exists in China, but the development priority of the "Belt and Road" is infrastructure. China's infrastructure has no problem with excess capacity. Its most advanced high-speed rail technology is applied to contribute to infrastructure construction in the countries along the "Belt and Road". In other words, advanced science and technology are used to render technical services for the development of the countries along the "Belt and Road".¹

In summary, first of all, the "Belt and Road" is an important focus for overall arrangement of internal and external landscapes, and is a conceived economic development strategy for connectivity. Internal connectivity is a top priority. China's internal development has been hampered by obstacles for a long time. Natural geographical divisions lead to regional imbalance. If internal connectivity is unavailable, internal development is unbalanced, which accordingly fails to fundamentally change the regional dualistic phenomenon in China's internal development. In echo with internal connectivity, it is necessary to promote external connectivity. China is a state of both land power and sea power. Therefore, it must open up and reach out from both the sea and the land to expand its external interests to the utmost extent. Opening in the past three decades was mainly the opening of the eastern coastal areas. Although the inland areas made progress in opening, they mainly opened to Asia-Pacific. At that time, opening mainly referred to embracing the outside world. However, within the framework of the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road", the new opening of the eastern coastal areas highlights "Going Global", overseas development, and maritime development.

On one hand, it is necessary to expand maritime rights and interests. On the other hand, it is necessary to set up the Trans-Pacific Economic Circle (in particular the Asia-Pacific Free Trade Area), strategically establish a community of interests with the Asia-Pacific countries, and promote Asia-Pacific's pattern of cooperation and win-win. On the land, China's opening lags behind mainly because its strategic focus is in the eastern part; western development is relatively backward with poor basic conditions, and few land channels stretch towards "Going Global". In addition to the Second Eurasian Continental Bridge and the China-Pakistan Corridor, only a handful of channels towards Russia are available. Even the Second Eurasian Continental Bridge is constrained by many factors, such as the relative instability of Central Asia, railroad tracks of different widths between China and the Central Asian countries, and legal problems of countries along these channels. The China-Pakistan Corridor is subject to the unstable situation in Pakistan. The internal highway of the China-Pakistan Corridor in the southern Xinjiang goes through complex terrain and is

¹ HU Jian, "Astropolitics and Beidou Diplomacy" [In Chinese], *Social Science*, 2015(7).

subject to weather constraints. These difficulties should be overcome technically. Therefore, the most important part of connectivity is infrastructure. In addition, connectivity should not only cover hardware facilities, but also software facilities, i.e., connectivity of systems and mechanisms. Due to a dualistic phenomenon in the development course, market systems and mechanisms between China's eastern and western parts neither form a unified domestic market, nor synergize the domestic market and Eurasia's international market. Therefore, the "Belt and Road" has the important purpose of forming a big market with connectivity systems and mechanisms in Eurasia, ultimately shaping Eurasian cooperation patterns with connectivity in terms of the flow of capital, technology, talent, information, and cargo.¹

II. The Second Reestablishment of the Eurasian Order

The Eurasian Order is related to global security and stability. Eurasia was the place of origin of the two world wars. The Westphalia System, Vienna System, and Yalta System were initially international game-playing outcomes with focus on the Eurasian Order, and were important parts in establishment of international order. In other words, they were the components of the international system. Since the end of the Cold War, the Eurasian Order has undergone and is undergoing two major reestablishments: reestablishment after the collapse of the Soviet Union, which has been completed with lingering influence, and the strategic concept of the "Belt and Road" which has been launched and will correct the mistakes of the first reestablishment.

Reestablishment of the Eurasian Order, driven by collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, is based on political forces, and was thus a form of political reestablishment. On one hand, in the context of the collapse of the Soviet Union, tremendous change to Eastern Europe, and the end of the Cold War, "the focus of the Eurasian geopolitical strategy accelerated inland contraction".² The main reason is that NATO did not disband after the end of the Cold War, which continued to squeeze towards Russia so that Russia's strategic depth continuously shrank. On the other hand, a variety of international political forces launched games, while the geopolitical strategic interests of major powers fiercely conflicted. When major Eurasian powers (such as China, Russia, Europe, Japan, India, and ASEAN) reestablish the Eurasian geopolitical structure, the United States, as an extraterritorial political power, still exists as a special power in Eurasia, and is the most important power in establishing the Eurasian Order.³ From the Cold War to the present, the process whereby political powers reestablish the Eurasian Order has continued, and will persist in the long run.

¹ These views are narrated by HU Jian in other papers; see HU Jian, "New Silk Road: China's Strategic Concept for Internal and External Connectivity" [In Chinese], *Social Outlook*, 2014(6); HU Jian, "The Belt and Road: Strategic Connotation and Urban Layout" [In Chinese], *Social Outlook*, 2015(6); LU Gang, "The Belt and Road: A Great Plan for Eight-pronged Action" [In Chinese], *Social Outlook*, 2015(6).

² TANG Yongsheng, "Major Changes in Geopolitical Relations of Eurasia" [In Chinese], *World Economics and Politics*, 1999(1).

³ JIANG Qi and WANG Yaodong, "China's Strategic Choices under New Geopolitical Situation of Eurasia" [In Chinese], *Journal of Shanghai Administration Institute*, 2000(2).

“Operation Desert Fox” (1998), the Kosovo War (1999), the Afghan War (2001), the Iraq War (2003), the “Color Revolution” (2003-2005: the Commonwealth of the Independent States; 2010-2011: the Middle East and North Africa), the Russian-Georgian War (2008), and the unresolved Ukraine Crisis (since 2013) demonstrate the historical logic and reality of the political reestablishment of the Eurasian Order. At the same time, sub-political forces such as terrorism, separatism, and extremism are involved in this reestablishment process. However, the process is generally failing, and is unsuccessful because it is a zero-sum game.

Can Eurasia escape the zero-sum game dilemma? Is there another way to reestablish the Eurasian Order? Before the strategic concept of the “Belt and Road” was proposed, Eurasian politicians had a lot of ideas and made unremitting efforts to accomplish it. For example, in October 1992, President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan was the first to propose the establishment of an Asia-wide regional security cooperation organization at the 47th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, with a view to urging experts, scholars, and leaders to “discuss peace and security issues in Asia or Eurasia”. This propelled dialogue and consultation among the Asian countries, reaching consensuses on regional situations, eliminating mutual misunderstandings, confrontations, and conflicts, safeguarding regional stability and peace, handling issues of common concern through amicable negotiation, promoting the establishment of security guarantee mechanism in Asia, and boosting regional economic development and social prosperity. He suggested that the official name of this regional security cooperation organization be the “Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA)”. The initiative was agreed by the heads of state at the Bishkek Summit of the “Shanghai Five” in August 1999, and stated:

“All parties attach great importance to the maintenance of regional peace and stability, and support... the progress of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, as proposed by the Republic of Kazakhstan...”¹ In 1998, President Askar Akayev of the Kyrgyz Republic set forth a proposal for the “Silk Road Diplomatic Strategy”, and advocated using the Silk Road as a bridge between the Eurasian countries and civilizations.² His initiative was also agreed by the heads of state at the Bishkek Summit of the “Shanghai Five”, and stated:

“All parties support ‘Silk Road Diplomacy’ for the revival of the Silk Road in contemporary international cooperation as proposed by President Akayev of the Kyrgyz Republic, with a view to promoting the sustainable development of the regional economy and the strengthening of regional peace and stability”.³ Since the “Shanghai Five” was upgraded to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in the early 21st century, member states have tried to take advantage of regional

¹ “The heads of China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan Issue a Joint Statement” [In Chinese], *People’s Daily*, August 26, 1999.

² Askar Akayev (President of Kyrgyzstan), “The Silk Road Diplomatic Strategy”, *Modern International Relations*, 1998(12).

³ “The heads of China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan Issue a Joint Statement” [In Chinese], *People’s Daily*, August 26, 1999.

multilateral organizations to reestablish the Eurasian Order. The above-mentioned initiatives, especially the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), play crucial roles in promoting cooperation and stability in Eurasia in the past decade.¹ However, obstacles such as sub-political forces and distrust still plague Eurasia, and seriously hamper the above-mentioned initiatives' and institutions' attempts to reestablish the Eurasian Order. As a result, fragmentation still exists, with the possibility of further deterioration. This implies that it is very difficult for political efforts to reestablish the Eurasian Order.

China is an important country for Eurasia, and fragmentation will pose a major obstacle to China's peaceful development. As well as the political reestablishment of the Eurasian Order, China pioneers economic reestablishment as well. In September 2001, after the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was founded, China proposed that prime ministers of six member states signed *The Memorandum Between the Governments of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on the Basic Objectives and Orientation of Regional Economic Cooperation and the Launching of a Process of Trade and Investment Facilitation* in Almaty. In September 2003, prime ministers of six member states adopted the *Plan for Multilateral Economic and Trade Cooperation of Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization* at the Beijing Summit of Heads of Government, and declared in *The Joint Communiqué* that: "The main task of regional economic cooperation between member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is further strengthening trade and investment facilitation at this stage".² However, in the past decade, multilateral economic cooperation is confronted with many difficulties, while bilateral cooperation is less effective. Therefore, reestablishment of the Eurasian Order by economic means must have a new breakthrough. Against this backdrop, China's strategic concept of the "Belt and Road" has innovative significance, and will play an irreplaceable role in reestablishment of the Eurasian Order.

Reestablishment of the Eurasian Order by economic means aims to jointly promote prosperity and development of the Eurasian countries through regional economic cooperation. The two main approaches as follows:

1) Embedding of interests: A dominating country embeds its own interests into the interests of other countries concerned through economic cooperation, so as to form a community of interests and responsibility.

2) Interlinking of markets: A country's domestic market is linked with markets of other countries through economic cooperation, especially trade and investment (including mutual acceptance between a country's market mechanism and other countries' market mechanisms under specific cooperation), thus forming a unified and

¹ PAN Guang and HU Jian, *First New Regional Cooperation Organization in the 21st Century - A Comprehensive Study of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization* [In Chinese], Press of the Party School of the Central Committee of the CPC, 2006, pp. 47-57.

² *Joint Communiqué of the Meeting of Heads of Government of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, official website of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, <http://www.sectsc.org/CN11/show.asp?id=164>.

integrated market. As a result, all countries concerned constitute a community of responsibility and shared destiny, so as to maintain the normal operation of the unified market.

The strategic concept of the “Belt and Road” is a new idea designed to reestablish the Eurasian Order by economic means. The two approaches mentioned above are not fragmented under the strategic concept of the “Belt and Road”, but rather play complementary and simultaneous roles under the same means. On one hand, the strategic concept of the “Belt and Road” is initiated by China, and thus China undoubtedly plays a leading role in advancing it, embedding its own economic development interests into those of all other countries along the “Belt and Road”, thus forming community of responsibility and shared destiny. On the other hand, China promotes the “Belt and Road” in order to launch its most important infrastructure construction, achieve connectivity with the Eurasian infrastructure of market systems and mechanisms, and build a unified Eurasian market rather than change the market systems and mechanisms of all other countries along the “Belt and Road”. In this way, China and these countries create the aforementioned community of responsibility and shared destiny. Although the “Belt and Road” is in its infancy, it has begun to present a way out that is completely different from the reestablishment of the Eurasian Order by political means. This is because the “Belt and Road” completely abandons the zero-sum game, and reestablishes the Eurasian Order under the goals of peaceful cooperation and win-win development. Thus, it will evolve towards a higher level of peace and integration rather than allow the Eurasian Order to deteriorate towards fragmentation.

III. Opportunities and Risks Confronted by the “Belt and Road” in Reestablishing the Eurasian Order

The “Belt and Road” resorts to economics in a new attempt to reestablish the Eurasian Order. The Eurasian Order is the crux of international order. Therefore, no matter what means are taken to reestablish it, opportunities and risks coexist in the process of implementing the strategic concept of the “Belt and Road” and reestablishing the Order by economic means.

From the perspective of opportunities, efforts by political forces to reestablish the Eurasian Order have been unsuccessful, with disastrous aftermaths. This offers the possibility to try to reestablish the Order in other ways (especially economic). Advocated by China, the strategic concept of the “Belt and Road” is based on its experience in convergence with the international system over the past three decades. China converges with the international system in benefit-embedded style. “With progress in the development of marketization, internationalization, and globalization of the Chinese economy, China’s convergence into the world system presents a higher level. In fact, China’s ability to change the world system is also enhanced”.¹ For this

¹ HUANG Renwei, *Time and Space for China’s Rise* [In Chinese], Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences

reason, China does not subvert the existing international system, but initially forms bundled interest relations and a community of interests with dominant countries and other countries of the international system. It is because of its unique experience that China proposes the economic development strategy of the “Belt and Road”, which is ultimately designed to reestablish the Eurasian Order.

Second, the success of China’s economic transformation and rise exerts a demonstrative effect on many Eurasian economies in transition. The most important significance of China’s rise lies in the fact that thanks to its successful economic transformation, China has made a leap in the scale of its economy, and sees no political and social unrest. Most importantly, China’s economic transformation achieves ‘the overall increase in interests and widespread social benefits’, gaining universal recognition.”¹ At the same time, China’s economic development has a spillover effect on the outside world, especially the majority of developing countries in Eurasia. In the past, China’s emphasis on internal development and the resulting driving effect on the outside world (especially neighboring countries) were objective phenomena. Proposal and implementation of the strategic concept of the “Belt and Road” are important initiatives taken by China to spread the effects of its internal development to the outside world.

Third, the Eurasian countries (especially those in transition) want to uncover the mystery of China’s rise. They expect that China will reestablish the Eurasian Order, believing that there is a unique “key” to China’s economic development, which has significance to the rest of the world. Therefore, debates over the “Beijing Consensus” and the “China Mode” actually prove the influence of China’s development on the outside world, and reveal the expectations of Eurasian countries after they are stung by “transformation hardships”. Therefore, after the strategic concept of the “Belt and Road” was proposed, it was generally recognized by the countries along it. They all hoped that their own development could fully echo with the strategic concept of the “Belt and Road”. In this context, the progress of the “Belt and Road” contributes to the reestablishment of the Eurasian Order through the “roll-puff effect” or the “snowball effect”.

From the perspective of risks, the “Belt and Road” was first proposed by China, which has long been regarded as a challenger to the dominating United States. In the past, the Eurasian Order (especially Asian economic and security order) was dominated by the United States. A few years ago, the West criticized China’s “Unpeaceful Rise” due to worries about China and the United States as they rivaled for dominance of security, which aggravated the risk of war.² However, now that

Publishing House, 2002, p.4.

¹ HU Jian, “Knowledge, System and Interest: Three Dimensions for Insights into China’s Reform” [In Chinese], *Journal of East China Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)*, 2013(1).

² Zbigniew Brezinski and John J. Mearsheimer, “Clash of the Titans”, in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 146, January/February, 2005, pp.46-50; John J. Mearsheimer, “China’s Unpeaceful Rise”, in *Current History*, April 2006, pp.160-162.

China has more weight in the international economic and financial areas, the West is more and more worried that it will subvert the US-led international economic and financial order through its own economic and financial strengths. The “Belt and Road” and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank are considered as China’s specific practices to subvert the USD-based financial order. If so, the “Belt and Road” will be subjected to blocking and containment by the United States. This is a possible strategic risk in the implementation of the “Belt and Road”.

Second, the traditional geopolitical contention of Eurasia is still very intense. Although the Eurasian countries are seeking economic development, the traditional geopolitical game is still one of the important reasons for instability in the region. Order is haunted by the shadow of the Cold War. At the same time, not only do Eurasian powers lack enough trust in each other (such as Russia-EU, China-India, and India-Pakistan), extraterritorial countries (especially the United States) exert a crucial impact on the establishment of the Eurasian Order. In the Kosovo War (1999), the Afghan War (2001), the Iraq War (2003), the “Color Revolution”, and the Ukraine Crisis (since 2013), the United States has served as a ghostly intervener of the Cold War, plunging into the traditional geopolitical game with the mindset of punishment for disobedient Eurasian countries. This is another possible political risk in the implementation of the “Belt and Road”.

Third, sub-political forces are aggressive in Eurasia. The core of the “Belt and Road” is the area covered by the SCO and ASEAN. Caucasus-Central, Asia-Afghanistan, Central Asia-South, and Asia-Southeast Asia are “crescent” zones of terrorism.¹ To date, non-traditional security threats, such as terrorism, separatism, and extremism, remain the most direct sub-political threat in Central and Southeast Asia, and are the most realistic non-traditional risk in the implementation of the “Belt and Road”. These factors also incur security risks for economic investment income and infrastructure of the “Belt and Road” projects.

IV. China’s Risk Prevention in Reestablishing the Eurasian Order

The subjective aim of China’s strategic concept of the “Belt and Road” is to share the opportunities of its development with the rest of the world, and build a community of shared destiny. However, “a subjective imaginary China” prevails in the West, especially the dominant United States. The fundamental reason is that “institutionalized bias” exists in the cognition of China due to the influence of ideology.² As a result, China’s initiatives tend to be perceived solely as narrow-minded national interests. Faced with such a severe bias, China needs risk prevention in the practice of implementing the strategic concept of the “Belt and Road”.

1 HU Jian, “Empire Aftermath of Central Asia and Its Governance Mechanism” [In Chinese], *World Economy Study*, 2004 (2).

2 HU Jian, *Roles, Responsibilities, and Growth Paths: Fundamental Strategic Issues for China in the 21st Century* [In Chinese], Shanghai People’s Press, 2010, p. 113.

First, it is necessary to accelerate the development of a new China-US relationship. The United States did not wholly accept the wording of the earlier “new China-US relationship” because it did not want to allow China to define it. With the proposal for the strategic concept of the “Belt and Road” and the reestablishment of the Eurasian Order, it is necessary and urgent for China and the United States to eliminate the US prejudice against China through developing new relations between the two great powers. The key to developing a new China-US relationship is whether sound development can be maintained for a long time.¹ However, this “cannot be achieved by China’s unilateral restraint. The China-US relationship, established on the basis of China’s unilateral restraint, is essentially unequal, which is not a bilateral relationship under sound development”.² Only when the China-US relationship is based on the values of “non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual respect, cooperation, and win-win” can it truly be established and developed.

Second, it is necessary to set up a multilateral diplomatic platform and innovate neighboring diplomacy. The new China-US relationship should not focus on the China-US relationship alone. To a large extent, whether it can develop soundly depends on consensus and long-term stable framework,³ and also on whether China and neighboring countries can establish a wide range of common interests. Crucial to this is a community of shared destiny on a multilateral diplomatic platform in neighboring countries.⁴ It should be built for cooperation, dialogue, equality, openness, non-alignment, and multiple levels.⁵ The ultimate goal is to allow these platforms to contribute to the building of a community of shared destiny for China’s efforts in establishing new surrounding relations and order.⁶

Third, it is necessary to carry forward the “Shanghai spirit”, and establish the values of the community of shared destiny. Which cooperation mode is adopted depends on the values. In the implementation of the strategic concept of the “Belt and Road”, China should not act alone; it must rely on the countries along the “Belt and Road” as joint participants. In this process, China it to find important countries with matched strategic interests. Some scholars put forward the concept of a “Strategic Fulcrum Country”. In the author’s opinion, this concept is not sound. The term “fulcrum” implies expediency, and may be abandoned once it is not instrumentally valuable. On the contrary, a “Country with Consistent Strategic Interests” is a stronger idea.⁷

¹ HUANG Renwei and LIU Hongsong, “Three Signs of Success of China’s Peaceful Development Path” [In Chinese], *International Review*, 2012 (5).

² HU Jian, “China’s Peaceful Development: Logic, Experience, and Prospects” [In Chinese], *Exploration and Contention*, 2013(7).

³ DA Wei, “Establishment of Future-oriented Strategic Consensus and Long-term Stability Framework for China-US Relations” [In Chinese], *Modern International Relations*, 2015(6).

⁴ XI Jinping, “Letting Awareness of the Community of Shared Destiny Take Root in Neighboring Countries”, http://news.xinhuanet.com/2013-10/25/c_117878944.htm.

⁵ HU Jian, “Five Strategic Reasons for Accepting India and Pakistan into the SCO”, http://theory.gmw.cn/2020-07/13/content_16285340.

⁶ ZHANG Yunling, “Return of China’s Regionalism Conception and Establishment of a New Order” [In Chinese], *World Economy and Politics*, 2015(1).

⁷ HU Jian, “Five Strategic Reasons for Accepting India and Pakistan into the SCO”, http://theory.gmw.cn/2020-07/13/content_16285340.

China should be interdependent with countries with consistent strategic interests”, and should uphold the “Shanghai spirit” of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for cultural diversity, and pursuit of common development = with the countries along the “Belt and Road”.

Finally, it is necessary to consistently expand and innovate international morality. On one hand, the implementation of the “Belt and Road” calls for compliance with traditional international morality, such as international norms, maintenance, and struggle for international peace, advocacy and pursuit of international equality, upholding and support of international justice, awareness and enhancement of global interests, care and promotion for human well-being and economic aid for underdeveloped countries without political conditionality.¹ On the other hand, it is more important for China to advance the “Belt and Road” under the principles of “Sincerity, Trust, Amity, and Mutual Benefit”, to enrich and innovate international morality. The new connotations of international morality include:

1) Providing new international public goods that are mainly committed to win-win development and comprehensive security;

2) Providing new impetus to economic development. During the global economic downturn, in the implementation process of the “Belt and Road”, it is necessary to advocate scientific and technological innovation, build an innovation-oriented country, and infuse new vitality into economic development for the countries along the “Belt and Road”;

3) Providing new ways of cooperation, i.e., open cooperation, cooperation unrelated to a third party, and non-aligned cooperation;

4) Providing new approaches to foreign aid, especially providing paid services for the countries along the “Belt and Road” with the help of China’s high-speed rail technology and Beidou Navigation Technology. In this way, the strategic concept of the “Belt and Road” is endowed with the scientific and technological content of the Third Industrial Revolution.

¹ LIU Xinghua, “International Morality and China’s Diplomacy” [In Chinese], *Foreign Affairs Review*, 2007 (6).