

Protection of China's overseas interests under the background of fierce game between China and the United States

Li Qingyang^a, Wang Weimin^{b,*}

Shanghai University of Political Science and Law, School of Government, Shanghai, 201701, China
^a772695312@qq.com, ^bwangcontact@163.com

*Corresponding author

Abstract: With the escalation of the game between China and the United States in recent years and the continuous fermentation of the conflict and crisis between Russia and Ukraine, the protection of China's overseas interests is more seriously facing a new situation. In this context, this paper summarizes previous studies on the protection of China's overseas interests, and comprehensively proposes four types of major risks faced by China's overseas interest protection: economic and financial, terrorist security, overseas public opinion, and cultural differences. On this basis, it analyzes the main characteristics of the four types of risks, and focuses on the path and mode of China's overseas interest protection in the new era through the dual perspectives of strength construction and system construction.

Keywords: Overseas Interests; Protection of Overseas Interests; China-US Relations

1. Introduction

Over the past eight years, the Belt and Road Initiative has opened up a new model of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits between China and participating countries, and won wide praise from the international community. However, as the international environment has become increasingly complex and the strategic competition intensified, China's large and growing interests overseas are facing a growing security threat, not only has the traditional security threats, also easy to suffer all kinds of new hybrid security threat to ambush, including agent attacks, color revolution, public opinion warfare, group activity control, long arm jurisdiction of sanctions, and so on. At present, a problem that needs to be solved urgently is the contradiction between the huge growth of China's overseas interests and assets stock and the relative lag of China's overseas interests protection mechanism and power.

2. Overview of research status

Up to now, China has a huge stock of overseas interests, and the protection of China's overseas interests is naturally derived.^[1] Face in one hundred from the change and the increasingly intense game, nationalism, realistic resurgence, security and competition have great powers beyond the trend of economic issues and cooperation after the Cold War, the sort or face the change of international pattern, major uncertainty to the world order, China's overseas interests protection will become a national important concerns.

2.1. Domestic research status

It has only been more than 10 years since the issue of "China's overseas interests" entered the domestic academic field in 2004. As far as domestic academic circles are concerned, the concept and influence of overseas interests have become a research hotspot, especially since the 17th National Congress of the CPC put forward the "going out" strategy. From the perspective of research methods and perspectives, Su Changhe focuses on the analysis of China's overseas interests from the perspective of external actors' interaction, highlighting the main features of China's overseas interests, such as global connections, non-sovereignty and the form of international contracts.^[2] And Mr Zhang is more focused on the interests of the internal behavior body extension to explain overseas interests, national

interests abroad is the necessary and natural extension of national interests, including core interests abroad is important overseas interests is the extension of national security interests, the interests of the state foreign development extension, edge overseas interests is an extension of the national cultural interests.^[3]In a survey of overseas interests, Wang Duanyong concluded that there should be at least three levels of overseas interests by comparing the attitudes and behaviors of different countries towards overseas interests: core, important and marginal.^[4]On this basis, other scholars analyzed the great significance of overseas interests to national development, and believed that this is the core element of the strategy of the rise of great powers. For example, Men Honghua and Zhong Feiteng put forward that the boundary between domestic and international has become blurred under the background of globalization, so overseas interests, as the extension of national interests, are a major issue related to the national economy and people's livelihood.^[5]

With the proposal of the "Belt and Road" Initiative in 2013, this issue field has attracted more and more attention from domestic scholars, and the research results have grown rapidly. The main contents of the research include: First, the definition of China's overseas interests, such as Dao Shulin's "China's national interests theory", Chen Weishu's "China's interests theory", Su Changhe's "comprehensive interests theory" and Zhang Shuguang's "national interests theory".^{[6][7][8]}Second, the reasons for the expansion of China's overseas interests were explained from both external and internal aspects. Feng Zhongping, Zhang Zhi, Ye Xiaojiao, Jiang Kai, Bai Yun and others emphasized that the deepening of globalization was the external driving force for the expansion and prominence of China's overseas interests. Wang Duanyong, Tang Xianxing, Feng Zhaokui, Wu Zhicheng and Wu Lili believed that China took the initiative to "go out" and deeply integrated into the international economic system, especially the proposal of the "Belt and Road" Initiative, which constantly expanded the connotation and extension of China's overseas interests. Thirdly, Chen Weishu proposed to investigate the distribution of China's overseas interests from four aspects: business type, regional type, temporal type and main type. Scholars such as Men Honghua, Tang Hao, Fu Mengzi, Chen Ye, Bi Yurong and Cao Yunhua analyzed the distribution characteristics of China's overseas interests from the aspects of industry, region and multiple subjects.

First of all, the definition of China's overseas interests. Based on the analysis of China's surrounding security environment, Dao Shulin defines "China's overseas interests" as "national interests outside China", which is part of China's national interests. In terms of classification, it includes overseas political interests, overseas economic interests and even overseas cultural interests, as well as overseas security interests accompanied by safeguarding these interests. Overseas Chinese staff, expatriates and relevant institutions are the carriers of China's overseas interests. Chen Weishu refers to "China's overseas interests" as China's overseas interests, which is different from China's national interests and are related: National interests include domestic interests and overseas interests, but China's overseas interests are different from national overseas interests. The latter are specific interests related to the overall interests of the country from the perspective of the central government, while the former is not limited to this. The former is not limited to this. It also includes various local interests that are concerned about from various social levels, namely, the official and non-governmental perspectives, institutions and individuals. Therefore, overseas interests have a wider scope than the overseas part of national interests, including the interests at the national level, legal person level and individual level. In his 2009 article *On China's Overseas Interests*, Su Changhe defined overseas interests as "China's national interests outside China's sovereign jurisdiction, mainly in the form of international contracts, which is generated by the Chinese government, enterprises, social organizations and citizens through global contacts". Later in 2011, in *A New Perspective of China's Overseas Interests Management*, he defined overseas interests as a comprehensive concept that is subordinate to national interests but different from core interests.

Secondly, in explaining the expansion of China's overseas interests. Domestic studies mainly explain the expansion of China's overseas interests from both internal and external aspects and have different focuses. In terms of external factors, Feng Zhongping analyzed the root of China's overseas interests from the cooperation between China and Europe based on common interests. Zhang Zhi highlighted the expansion of China's overseas interests under the background of globalization in his doctoral dissertation. Ye Xiaojiao and Jiang Kai pointed out that globalization is the external root of the expansion of China's overseas interests based on the logical analysis model of "interests -- overseas interests -- China's overseas interests". From internal factors, Tang Xianxing doesn't think the interests of China's overseas expansion are the result of the reform of domestic, and the expansion of the degree of opening to the outside world, Scott Wu and Tussah Zhuang Dong is to expand China's overseas interests associated with "area" initiative, believed to be China's endogenous power led to the constant expansion of China's overseas interests.

Finally, in the aspect of explaining the distribution of China's overseas interests. Weishu Chen proposed formats, domain, tense and main states four aspects, the formats is refer to the overseas interests in specific professional or vocational social reflect the state of the functions, such as energy, manufacturing, foreign contracted projects, diplomatic and military interests, domain state refers to the overseas interests reflect status in different countries and regions, such as in the interests of the United States, in Russia's interests, interests in Sudan and so on, tense refers to overseas interests at different times of the state, such as in certain civil strife, when the collapse of the government interests and interests in the financial crisis, the interest in military conflict or war, and interests in economic growth, etc., the main state refers to the owner directly overseas interests (or main beneficiaries), that is, the distribution of legal rights and interests, such as the interests of the central government, the interests of holding or participating enterprises, the private interests of citizens and so on. Scholars such as Men Honghua, Tang Hao, Fu Mengzi, Chen Ye, Bi Yurong, Cao Yunhua, Zhang Yan and others' views on the distribution of China's overseas interests can be summarized as the distribution according to the characteristics of industry, region and subject. In general, although the specific details are different, the macroscopic concept of the distribution of China's overseas interests is the same.

With the deepening of the "Belt and Road" Initiative and the expansion of overseas interests, the academic circle has gradually shifted its research focus to how to identify and respond to various risks that may threaten overseas interests. Security risk, political risk, economic risk and competition power, for example, niu from the international system and international environment, bilateral relations and other Angle lists may pose a threat to the interests of the overseas factors, including the international environmental risk, political risk, security risk, natural disaster risk, cultural differences and business risk. On this basis, Yu Jun also analyzed the enlightenment of India and the European Union to protect China's overseas interests. Zhong Feiteng, Xiao He, Wu Mengke and other scholars also pointed out that the protection of China's overseas interests risk should also include the risk content of citizens' overseas personal safety, sea passage security, value identification and strategic misreading.

At the same time, more and more scholars began to combine the risk study with the cooperation projects of countries along the "Belt and Road". For example, Wang Yiwei and Ma Zhengang both pointed out that countries along the Belt and Road routes suffer from weak government control and poor security environment, and Chinese companies often underestimate these risks when making overseas investments. In his 2017 article Opportunities and Challenges of the Belt and Road, Wang Yiwei pointed out all kinds of risks that the Belt and Road may face: The space along the Belt and Road is a double junction between plates and civilizations, which is characterized by instability. The project itself also involves a large amount of infrastructure construction, and the cycle is too long to produce immediate results. Specifically there are political, economic, legal, moral and safety risk, lead to the root of the five types of risk is that "neighbourhood" all the way along the country's political instability, the dollar interest rates and capital flow on the financing challenge, robust and part of the participating countries law is not mixed and disorderly, and some of China's overseas project faces a terrorist attack, population flows, safety problems such as cultural conflicts. Other scholars focus more on measures to resolve risks. For example, Zha Pan and Zhi Dongsheng proposed from the perspective of enterprises to promote Chinese enterprises participating in the "Belt and Road" Initiative to build a security system as soon as possible, and central enterprises should also play a leading role. Zhao Minghao pointed out that "the Belt and Road" is faced with the problem of "security", so it is necessary to establish a security risk assessment system, realize the risk dispersion and strengthen the security risk awareness of enterprises, so as to form a quick response and multi-linkage security risk response mechanism. Cui Shoujun goes one step further from the perspective of China's overseas security system construction is pointed out that China should draw lessons from the historical experience of developed countries, to continue using the "top-down" diplomacy and politics at the same time, supplemented by "bottom-up" market and private means, building three-dimensional protection system, government continues to play the leading role at the same time, Fully mobilize the enthusiasm of social and market players, break the horizontal separation, in order to establish a cross-unit horizontal cooperation type of overseas security system. From the perspective of the latest results of domestic research, this paper mainly analyzes the maintenance methods of China's overseas interests from the perspective of historical path.

2.2. International research status

Foreign academic circles paid attention to overseas interests early, even dating back to the period of large-scale overseas expansion after the Great Geographical discovery. In the early period, they focused on the study of Britain's overseas interests, especially the English-Spanish War in the 16th century and

the English-Dutch War in the 17th century. In recent years, the study of overseas interests mainly reflects the following aspects:

Firstly, national interests are redefined. For example, JP Pham, Michael Williams, Condoleezza Rice, Jean Garrison and others emphasized the influence of national interests on foreign policy from the perspective of realism. By reviewing Hans Morgenthau's classic realistic works, JP Pham defined the reality and necessity of American national interests, and proposed that Morgenthau's realism guided American diplomacy based on the historical experience since American independence, especially the early years of the founding of the United States and some thoughts of federalism.^[9] Michael Williams focuses on the theoretical level to describe the basis of neoconservatism and its relevance to the national interests of the United States. Based on this, he compares and criticizes the classical realists Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau.^[10] In the article "Promoting National Interests" in 2000, Condoleezza Rice focused on the current situation of international politics after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the reality of America's international status and the correct handling of relations with emerging powers. After 2008, in *Rethinking America's National Interests*, Condoleezza Rice put forward a realist theory that the United States was challenged by China's rising influence, and discussed the trilateral relationship between China, the United States and Russia in a long section, believing that interests brought China and Russia closer.^[11] Jean Garrison more clearly pointed out that the important condition for the construction of American national interests is to have a good and complex foreign decision-making, especially to deal with the Sino-US relations.^[12]

Secondly, the specific protection and expansion of national interests. For example, Ashley Jackson and Stephen J. Blank et al. analyzed the specific path of the expansion and protection of national interests from both historical and realistic perspectives. From a historical perspective, Ashley Jackson analyzed the end of the imperial era, especially the rise and decline of the British Empire, in order to examine the realistic national interests, emphasizing the role of overseas national interests, and evaluated the means by which Britain maintained these interests at the end of the 20th century. Stephen J. Blank pointed out the important role of Eurasia to the national interests of the United States more concretely and concretely, and especially emphasized the increasingly strong dependence of Russia on China, and the strategic position and strategy of Central Asia to the United States. In the end, this paper studies the protection of national interests from the perspective of policy, such as the policy report of the National Interests of the United States submitted by the National Interest Committee of the United States in 2000. This report firstly defined by the American national interest at the time, and guided by regional orientation and two dimensions in this paper, the need to pay attention to the specific content of the United States to maintain national interests, the last time limit to distinguish between the United States for different principle of different kinds of interests should be taken.

Abroad so far, no specific to the interests of the Chinese overseas related research, the research interests of the state level foreign scholars prefer starting from the theory to the recent focus on focus on China, but foreign academia in the specific country's national interests abroad studies, less use of the term "overseas interests". In China as the object of study, foreign scholars pay more attention to the rise of China to the world the great impact of the political and economic pattern, and for China's overseas interests protection of research is still in its infancy, a few results are mainly concentrated in the areas of the economy, with the quantitative analysis of the paradigm of China's overseas trade, finance and investment for research.

For example, Jeremy B. Rosen focused on the impact of China's economic rise on the world order. In his 1997 article "China, Emerging Economies and World Trade Center", he emphatically analyzed the possible results of China's accession to the WTO.^[13] While Serge Michel and James Laurenceson made in-depth analysis of the economic and trade exchanges between China and African countries and between China and five ASEAN countries respectively. In recent years, the research focus of Western scholars is still in the fields of politics and sociology. For example, Elena Barabantseva, a famous scholar, focuses on the identity of China's overseas ethnic minorities, and rarely deals with the risks of China's overseas projects. However, with the attention paid to China's "Belt and Road" Initiative, China's overseas interests have gradually entered the field of view of foreign scholars. From the perspective of "One Belt and One Road", studies on China's foreign trade, foreign investment, energy cooperation, international agenda-setting, and competition and cooperation relations between major countries are all related to China's overseas interests. However, in general, the studies are scattered, and there is a general attitude of resistance to the expanding trend of China's overseas interests.

From the point of research results at home and abroad, common theoretical is relatively short, inadequate research and fragmentation in severe cases and no system defects, such as the common "practical" and "didn't see the forest for the trees" wait for a phenomenon, and repeated phenomenon is

relatively serious, with the existing need to form a sharp contradiction. From the perspective of foreign research results, they are basically influenced by ideology, and basically serve the political needs of anti-China, and lack of impartiality and objectivity.

In general, the research on overseas interests is still in the boom stage, showing the following characteristics: first, the dispersion of the research is obvious, which is reflected in international politics, international trade, foreign investment, international law and other fields, and there are few results that directly takes "the protection of China's overseas interests" as the core of the analysis; Second, there are a wide range of topics involved, but few systematic studies. Third, it involves more specific issues and less strategic analysis.

3. Risk sources and characteristics

In recent years, the risks faced by China's overseas interests mainly include the following aspects: economic and financial risks, terrorist attack security risks, overseas public opinion risks, cultural differences risks and so on. These four types of risks affect the maintenance path of China's overseas interests in different aspects and have different characteristics. The following will analyze the characteristics of the four types of risks based on specific cases and put forward possible solutions in the following part.

3.1. Risk sources

First, China's overseas interests face economic and financial risks. In this respect, it mainly refers to the sanctions that China may face from the United States and the West. In the first half of this year, the US Senate passed a draft bill to draw up a list for China-Russia cooperation projects and prepared to confiscate Chinese assets, which is in essence to draw up a list for subsequent US sanctions against China, and may even confiscate China's assets and foreign exchange reserves in the US. Even if there is no conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the US will probably pull the list at some point in the future, because financial trade itself is a weapon. The House of Representatives proposed the list, asking the State Department to make a mistake in the Sino-Russian cooperation of the US sanctions against Russia that China violated, and then prepare to put pressure on China. The US government has established a mathematical model to simulate the effect of sanctions on China, and its enforcement measures are likely to include: cutting off the SWIFT settlement system; Freezing or confiscating Chinese cash, bonds, real assets in the United States or purchases of U.S. Treasury bonds; And mobilizing other countries to block China's financial channels or industrial chains.

Secondly, China's overseas interests also face the security risk of terrorist attacks. This is mainly reflected in the fact that Baluchistan terrorism in Pakistan threatens China's overseas interests. Although the threat of terrorism in Pakistan has decreased slightly on the global level, it still ranks seventh, second only to Afghanistan in South Asia. Pakistan's cape province mainly concentrated in the northwest and southwest of baluchistan province, on the one hand is because the government management ability is weak, and the serious problem of corruption on the one hand because baluchistan region of ethnic separatist forces, China's relevant personnel and facilities as a key target, showed a trend of accelerated. One is because they believe that the construction of "CPEC" is robbing Baluchistan's resources, the other is to exert more pressure on the Pakistani government, and the third is to attract higher attention from the international community.

Thirdly, there is the risk of overseas public opinion. Overseas public opinion risk is mainly reflected in the response of traditional western countries to China's expanding overseas interests. The West today thinks that China will use force to assert its interests in a way similar to its own, which will lead to security problems. Take China's infrastructure investment in Africa, for example. English professor Ferguson believes China will hold the sword in Africa, China open factory in Africa mining giant but inadequate infrastructure, more needs to build infrastructure, but after build infrastructure will find payback period is very long, need to the area of political and social stability, and this is the logic of western colonists, logic of imperialism China will also think so. But there is one fundamental difference between China and them, they are for their own selfish, for their own genocide of other races in the world; China serves both itself and the world. We should also learn from the experience of Westerners to serve the world and ourselves.

Finally, there is the risk of cultural differences. Taking Chinese investment in Peru as an example, Chinese companies face the risk of local cultural differences without being familiar with the history of

Peruvian communities. The Peruvian government's fourth attempt to negotiate with local communities on "allowing the restart of Minmetals Resources' Las Bambas copper mine" still ended in failure. On April 14 this year, the local community entered the protest on the grounds that it had not complied with its social investment commitments, causing Las Bambas to suspend operations from April 20. Las Bambas is the largest overseas acquisition project in the history of Chinese metals mining, accounting for 76% of Minmetals' total production. Protests over Las Bambas' road-closure have been sporadic but less violent than this one; The two triggers were the mine's failure to meet its social investment commitments and the expansion of Las Bambas.

3.2. Overseas Interests Protection System

In the face of the current characteristics of China's overseas interest risks and the latest background of the fierce game between China and the United States, in order to construct the overseas interest protection mode and overseas interest protection path in line with Chinese characteristics, this paper puts forward the following points:

First, it is necessary to enhance the ability of overseas interest protection. It is not only necessary to increase investment and set up preventive and emergency protection mechanisms. At the same time, it needs deterrent protection forces, especially overseas military presence. At the same time, it also needs an international security force with Chinese characteristics to reflect the responsibility of a major country.

Second, it needs coordination and coordination among foreign related departments. At present, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the overall coordinating agency for China's external work, but its domestic political status does not match its proper position. As China rapidly enters the center stage of world politics, the interests of Chinese citizens and overseas will also rise in international attention, and China's diplomatic resources must be more focused and efficient. At the same time, cooperation among the government, enterprises and non-governmental organizations should be strengthened to safeguard China's overseas interests in a more favorable and convenient way.

Third, it is necessary to establish a system for protecting overseas interests and give full play to the initiative of enterprises and citizen groups. On the one hand, Chinese enterprises need to be encouraged and helped to go global, strengthen targeted research and provide personalized products. On the other hand, we need to encourage Chinese legal, insurance, financial and other enterprises to go abroad to protect our overseas interests.

Fourth, we need to make macro-adjustment in the allocation of external resources to achieve a balance between developed and developing countries. In the traditional sense, China's external resource allocation is mainly in the United States, Europe and Japan, and it does not pay much attention to the resource allocation of developing countries. But with the development of China, the importance of developing countries to China's rise, at the same time developed countries endogenous risk and adjustment of relationships between countries, China should foreign resources, such as diplomacy, education from developed countries to developing countries, the variable importance for plasticity preference, with better, more focused way to protect my interests abroad.

4. Conclusion

With the rise of China, the relationship between China and the United States has dominated world politics in the first half of the 21st century. The maintenance of China's overseas interests is also faced with new characteristics brought by the change of the nature of Sino-US relations. This paper reviews the scholars' discussion on the maintenance of China's overseas interests and summarizes the characteristics of China's overseas interests in the current new stage: more urgent economic risks; The security risk of persistent terrorist attacks; Foreign public opinion risk with ideological bias; And the risk of cultural differences that are difficult to eliminate in the short term. According to this new characteristic, this paper puts forward four measures, which can be classified into two directions: strength level and system level. We will see an increasingly powerful China. How to handle the relationship with China is the concern of politicians around the world. At the same time, how to position the emerging China is also the concern of Chinese politicians and Chinese people. In modern times, China has no history of invading other countries. On the contrary, post-independence China emerged as a force opposing hegemonism and supporting multi-polarization. China has long adhered to the principle of peaceful coexistence and independence in handling its relations with other countries,

and this principle will continue to be implemented in safeguarding its overseas interests.

References

- [1] Xuetong Yan (1997). *Analysis of China's National Interests*, [M]. Tianjin People's Publishing House.
- [2] Changhe Su (2009). *On China's Overseas Interests*, [J]. *World Economics and Politics*, pp13-20.
- [3] Shuguang Zhang (2009). *Diplomatic Management of the Risks of China's Overseas Interests*, [J]. *World Economics and Politics*, pp6-12.
- [4] Duanyong Wang (2009). *National Differences in the Realization and Protection of Overseas Interests: A Literature Review*, [J]. *International Review*, pp29-37.
- [5] Menhua Hong, Feiteng Zhong (2009). *The History, Current Situation and Prospect of China's Overseas Interests Research*, [J]. *Foreign Affairs Review*, pp56-71.
- [6] Mengzi Fu, Shulin Dao, Zhongping Feng (2004). *China's Overseas Interests*, [J]. *Current Affairs Report*, pp17-25.
- [7] Weishu Chen (2009). *The Overall Vision of the Study of China's Overseas Interests -- A Practice-based Research Outline*, [J]. *International Review*, pp8-13.
- [8] Changhe Su (2011). *A New Perspective of China's Overseas Interest Management*, [J]. *Exploration and Free Views*, pp37-42.
- [9] JP Pham (2008). *What Is in the National Interest? Hans Morgenthau's Realist Vision and American Foreign Policy*, [J]. *American Foreign Policy Interests*, pp 187-193.
- [10] Michael Williams (2005). *What is the National Interest? The Neoconservative Challenge in IR Theory*, [J]. *European Journal of International Relations*, pp 307-337.
- [11] Condoleezza Rice (2000). *Promoting the National Interest*, [J]. *Foreign Affairs*, pp 45-62.
- [12] Jean Garrison (2007). *Constructing the 'National Interest' in the Making of Policy in U.S. -- China: How Foreign Policy Decision Groups Define and Signal Policy Choices*, [J]. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, pp 105-126.
- [13] Jeremy B. Rosen (1997). *China, Emerging Economies, and the World Trade Center*, [J]. *Duke Law Journal*, 1519-1564.