

# A Research on the China-US Relations under the Background of "Belt and Road" Initiative : Competition Interaction and Coping Strategies

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**Abstract:** *With the ever-changing world situation, the "Belt and Road" initiative (BRI) proposed by China is considered as a profound and meaningful strategy. It is essential for China's long-term prosperity and stable development. Starting from a brief introduction into the background of the launch of the BRI, this paper aims at finding out the fundamental reason that the United States opposes the "Belt and Road" initiative. It shows that BRI has been regarded by the US as China's new geopolitical strategy aimed at extending its sphere of influence, fostering new norms of international economic cooperation, and promoting a new world order. In order to dispel the US's doubts, this paper recommends that Chinese should in turn be responsive to American concerns about BRI, which are shared by many in Europe, India, Australia, and beyond. Therefore, as the largest two economic powers, China and the US should push forward the development of China-US ties through cooperation. China should be also open to the US participating in BRI. By working together, the BRI can achieve win-win results for all. Meanwhile, China should reverse the inherent concept of the United States and realize the "Belt and Road" initiative between the two countries benevolent interaction and cooperation under the framework of BRI.*

**Keywords:** *the "Belt and Road" initiative, China, China-US relations*

## 1. Introduction

The war between Russia and Ukraine has sounded the alarm for countries around the world and cast a shadow over the development of the world economy. As a responsible major country in the world, with the rapid development of the country's comprehensive strength, China has been strongly interfered by the United States, especially with the important strategic thought of the "Belt and Road" initiative proposed by Chinese leaders in 2013, which has been received by Western countries unanimously opposed. On March 28, 2015, under the authorization of the State Council of China, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce of China jointly issued a document entitled "Vision and Promoting the Joint Construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road". The official document of the "Belt and Road" initiative, the content of which further clarifies the principles and legal status of the "Belt and Road" initiative, and also provides guidance for Chinese subsequent series of diplomatic strategies[1]. The proposal of the "Belt and Road" initiative has aroused extensive attention and discussion, and has also produced a great sensation in the world countries around the world have made different interpretations according to their own national conditions. Some countries are welcoming and encouraging, some are waiting and skeptical, and some are opposing and hostile. Among them, the most critical is the attitude and cognition of the United States towards the "Belt and Road" initiative. At present, the competition between major powers is becoming increasingly fierce and severe, and the relationship between China and the United States affects and determines the trend of the international situation. Accurately judge and analyze the attitude of the United States towards the "Belt and Road" initiative, and explore ways for China and the United States to strengthen exchanges and deepen cooperation under the "Belt and Road" initiative framework, which is of great significance to the smooth implementation of the "Belt and Road" initiative.

## **2. The competition cognition of the United States on the historical development of the "Belt and Road" initiative**

### ***2.1 The United States is full of doubts about geopolitics with Chinese characteristics***

After the "Belt and Road" initiative was proposed, although countries around the world showed a positive attitude on the whole, some Western political and academic circles still held an attitude of doubt and disbelief, especially the US geopolitical circle was very active. When they interpret the geopolitics with Chinese characteristics, they think according to their usual thinking, compare with China through the rise of the United States and other countries in history, and believe that China is constantly learning to imitate them. Zbigniew, a famous American geostrategist, once said: "The persistence and effectiveness of the U.S.'s control and discourse power in Eurasia will directly affect its dominance over global affairs, so from the U.S. perspective looking at it, the Eurasian continent is his most important geopolitical target." [2] Their starting point is the geopolitics of the West, and the purpose of imagining China is to carry out a regional monopoly. China has repeatedly emphasized that the "Belt and Road" initiative is a friendly development with the Eurasian countries through non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual respect, and win-win cooperation. Openness, inclusiveness and win-win are its basic principles, and it does not exclude anyone willing to participate in a cooperative attitude. To countries and regions that are developing together, they will not engage in political division or confrontation in international relations, nor will they threaten or invade other countries through military means. However, many regions involved in the "Belt and Road" initiative overlap with many regions in the Eurasian continent, which is extremely sensitive to the United States, so it will inevitably attract the United States high attention and a series of specific adjustments to strategic measures.

### ***2.2 The United States believes that the implementation of China's "Belt and Road" initiative will threaten its international status***

The United States believes that the implementation of the "Belt and Road" initiative will threaten its international status, mainly in the following three aspects: First, many scholars in the West compare the "Belt and Road" initiative of China with the "Marshall Plan" launched by the United States after World War II. This is China attempt to use a series of economic and political means to expand its influence around the world and to divide and consolidate its own power. They believe that China is trying to achieve the purpose of the rise of a great power through the implementation of the "Belt and Road" initiative in order to surpass the United States economically. Second, since the reform and opening up in 1978, China has gradually explored a development path and model with Chinese characteristics, resulting in rapid social and economic development and a higher and higher international status. China has always adopted the concept of win-win cooperation and mutual benefit in its foreign policy, and has established good cooperative relations with many countries in the world in terms of economy, trade, politics, technology and culture. In the forefront, this undoubtedly stimulates the nerves of the United States. Third, the technological innovation of China has also achieved the United States is naturally worried that the continuous rise of China will shake its world hegemony.

### ***2.3 The United States does not know enough about Chinese cultural thinking***

From the analysis of some politicians and scholars in the United States, they believe that in the new era with J P Xi at the core, China is abandoning the development line of "hide its strengths and bide its time". Expanding intentions and showing strength to conduct international exchanges. Minister Y Wang said, "Chinese people do not have many genes for expansion, nor do they have many impulses to be saviors. We will deal with other countries in a Chinese way, with an oriental mindset, and with a more harmonious and inclusive attitude, to play the role China should play in the international community" [3]. The U.S. side should understand that China is still in the primary stage of socialism, and there are still many domestic problems that need to be solved urgently.

## **3. Analysis of the interests of China and the United States in the context of the "Belt and Road" initiative**

### ***3.1 Conducive to promoting the economic development of the two countries***

From the perspective of China's economic development, China can solve the problems of lack of

energy and limited space in its own development through exchanges and cooperation with countries along the route, and it can also expand the overseas commodity sales market, and also help China to carry out border trade. From the perspective of U.S. economic development, the "Belt and Road" initiative of China involves a very broad scope. There are many U.S. allies and partners in South Asia, Central Asia and Southeast Asia in the countries along the route. Profits in the process of construction and economic and trade exchanges, and share the achievements of the "Belt and Road" initiative with China. Moreover, the "Belt and Road" initiative of China has many similarities with the "New Silk Road" strategic plan proposed by the United States. If the two can be combined, a better chemical reaction will be produced [4].

### ***3.2 Conducive to shaping a new image of the United States***

In the international community, the United States has always given the impression of a domineering leader and order maker. The United States has always upheld power politics and hegemonism, and has acted recklessly for its own interests, even in disregard of the constraints of international norms. Especially since Trump came to power, his government has always adhered to the principle of "America First" and firmly believes that only with strength can the goal of "America Great Again" and world peace be achieved. In the perception of the "Belt and Road" initiative, the Biden administration is different from the "negative attitude" that its predecessors have always upheld, and there have been changes in "respectful". The capricious practices and attitudes of the United States have caused countries around the world to be at a loss, and the image of a responsible leader it has spent decades building has plummeted into an "untrustworthy" country, which largely offset the United States' implementation of the "New Silk Road" "Strategic Plan Efforts. The ultimate goal of China's huge investment in promoting the construction of the "Belt and Road" is to maintain the stability of China's surrounding environment and lay a good surrounding environment for China's rise. At the same time, the peace, stability and development of the countries along the "Belt and Road" initiative can also create favorable conditions for the realization of the United States' international interests. If the United States can participate in the "Belt and Road" initiative construction based on the principles of "non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual respect, and win-win cooperation", it will surely promote better development of the countries along the route and itself.

### ***3.3 Conducive to building a new type of major-country relationship***

Regarding the relationship between China and the United States, some scholars describe it as a "lover relationship", and some scholars describe it as a "couple without feelings", which shows the complexity and contradictions of the relationship between China and the United States. For a long time, Sino-US relations have been characterized by the coexistence of competition and cooperation, with equal emphasis on prevention and checks and balances, opportunities and challenges facing major power relations. If the United States can take a positive attitude or participate in the "Belt and Road" initiative of China, it will not only help the advancement of the "Belt and Road" initiative construction, but also help China and the United States to discuss, build, and share together. Achieving a win-win situation and a win-win situation for all parties will not only seek benefits and happiness for China and the United States, but also provide better development opportunities for other relevant countries, thus laying a solid foundation for building a new type of major-country relationship.

## **4. Strategies for promoting friendly cooperation between China and the United States under the historical background of the "Belt and Road" initiative**

### ***4.1 Adhere to the dominance of the market mechanism***

The "Belt and Road" initiative mainly involves economic cooperation with a wide range, complex content and large span. Therefore, in the process of construction and implementation, not only should we carefully formulate relevant rules and policies, but also always pay attention to the resource allocation function of the market. In the process of the "Belt and Road" initiative construction, government guidance and enterprise implementation can be adopted to give full play to the power of the market. In the context of economic globalization, it is impossible to solve problems by relying on our own development. Only when everyone really unites together can we fully meet the challenges brought about by economic globalization. Therefore, in the investment and construction of the "Belt and Road" initiative related projects, the Chinese government should not only actively guide domestic

investors and builders to participate, but also provide equal and open participation opportunities for countries around the world, including the United States, to form a pattern of natural competition and survival of the fittest, to promote the optimal allocation of various resources, and to form an efficient industrial chain division of labor pattern [5]. Since a major feature of the US political philosophy is that interests come first, if US companies participate in the construction of the "Belt and Road" initiative related projects and obtain tangible benefits, the US government's recognition of the "Belt and Road" will inevitably follow the improvement.

#### ***4.2 Adhere to the cooperative attitude of mutual benefit and win-win***

The number of projects involved in the "Belt and Road" initiative is huge, and some projects are difficult to implement in practice. Therefore, in the process of implementation, it is necessary to adhere to a cooperative attitude of mutual benefit and win-win, rationally arrange project implementation, clarify the priorities of development, and follow the steps of "easy first and then difficult" to start with low-risk, high-yield and projects that can provide benefits to countries along the route engineering projects that bring tangible benefits. If China can take the lead in carefully building a number of high-quality projects with exemplary significance along the "Belt and Road" initiative, so that the United States and other countries can feel the enthusiasm and rationality of the "Belt and Road" initiative, their attitudes and practices will inevitably change positively. If the negative resistance of the United States can be successfully resolved and the United States can actively participate in the construction of the "Belt and Road" initiative, other pro-American countries who are holding a wait-and-see and skeptical attitude may also change their views, which is of great significance to the overall promotion of the "Belt and Road" initiative great benefit. At the same time, adhering to a mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation attitude at the intersection of interests between China and the United States can also avoid the vicious competition between China and the United States, which will cause unnecessary losses to both countries.

#### ***4.3 Reversing inherent conception of the United States of the "Belt and Road" initiative***

Judging from what we know so far, the United States society generally has misunderstandings about the "Belt and Road" initiative. These misunderstandings are not only related to the United States habitual hegemonic thinking, but also to the United States society poor understanding of the development of China process and philosophy. China should strengthen its active public diplomacy towards the United States, publicize and popularize Chinese concepts, so that the United States society can more accurately and positively understand the core concept of the common peaceful development of the "Belt and Road" initiative. At the same time, in the process of popularization and publicity, China must carefully use appropriate descriptions and wordings, always insist on seeking truth from facts, and not rashly exaggerate advantages and conceal defects. Furthermore, reasonable suggestions from people from all walks of life in the United States should be accepted humbly and carefully considered, so that we can be more targeted when we carry out our propaganda work in the United States, so as to achieve the effect of increasing trust and dispelling doubts, so that they can truly understand that the "Belt and Road" initiative is not foreign cause is a cause that every country in the world can participate in. Every country can enjoy the fruits of development, and every country is striving for a goal [6].

### **5. Conclusion**

With the changes in the world landscape, the relationship between China and the United States has stood at another critical historical juncture. The "Belt and Road" initiative has forced the United States to adjust its strategy towards China, trying to control China's development space within a limited range through containment and partial power exchanges. Facing the challenge initiated by the United States, China should also adjust its relationship with the United States through the "Belt and Road" initiative development strategy. What China needs to do is to take a long-term perspective, focus on strategic ideas, maintain strategic focus, develop a fighting spirit, accumulate gaming experience, and make efforts at bilateral, regional and global levels with greater initiative, flexibility and breadth to actively enrich , comprehensive deployment of politics, economic and trade, science and technology, military, cultural and other aspects, as well as policy tools under the multilateral framework, as far as possible to steadily promote the peaceful adjustment of the relationship between China and the United States, and strive to coordinate and interact with the US side to create a new and reasonable relationship paradigm

in the competitive game.

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