

ABSTRACTS

Great Powers in A New Era: Perceptions, Positions, and Interactions

YANG Jiemian

ABSTRACT: At a time of great changes of epic proportions in international relations, great powers are redefining their positions in the international hierarchy on the basis of their comprehensive national strength and recalibrating their strategic goals for the decades to come. For the first time since the Age of Exploration, the West is no longer the only dominant force in the global geopolitical and geoeconomic landscape as the inevitable rise of the developing nations has increasingly tilted the global balance of power in favor of the non-Western world. The mega-trend toward general peace, development, and win-win cooperation is unstoppable. However, the enlargement of the leading powers' club or the replacing of old powers by new ones will still be a long and twisted process. Established powers are reluctant to share power and will do everything they can to delay and thwart the rise of emerging powers. The construction of a more just and equitable international order and global governance architecture is certain to involve a great deal of competition, compromise, friction, and accommodation. China will be a leading actor on the world stage by the mid-21st century. China's mission in the lead-up to that point will be to have a better understanding of itself and the outside world, increase its overall national strength, advance its relations with other great powers and neighboring countries, contribute to world economic growth by promoting science and technology innovation, and strengthen its capabilities in global governance. As China moves closer to great power status, it should update its foreign policy philosophy and contribute more Chinese thoughts to the advancement of the welfare of developing nations.

KEYWORDS: new era, great powers, perception, interaction, Chinese diplomacy

Data Nationalism: Rationale and Policy Influence

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ABSTRACT: In international cyberspace governance and digital economy, data localization and data protectionism have become significant issues. As data are now regarded as a strategic resource, certain countries are competing for the data ownership through relevant policies, in which the data-relevant issues are gradually incorporated into nationalist discourses, giving birth to data nationalism. As a complex phenomenon driven by market, society, and state-related dynamics, data nationalism pursues the exclusive ownership of data resources, and exhibits the characteristics such as significant political responsiveness, state-centrism, and issues-domain extensibility, etc. It can be considered as a response to data globalization and great-power struggle for data. It exerts considerable influence on global digital trade institution, the agency of state actor, international cyberspace governance, and great-power interactions. China and the international community should recognize the inevitability of data nationalism, prevent its potential risks, accommodate its reasonable demands, protect the state autonomy of data governance, and restrain the possible tendency of isolation and politicization. They should also advocate responsible data nationalism, which endeavors to balance diverse goals including sovereignty, capacity, security, and interest, and promote global cooperation in data governance.

KEYWORDS: data nationalism, data governance, data localization, international order, cyberspace

WTO E-Commerce Negotiations and Global Digital Trade Rules

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ABSTRACT: The increasing digitalization of economic activity has not only helped usher in new models of e-commerce but also given rise to new trade frictions and regulatory conflicts, making it imperative to address these contentious issues within a multilateral governance framework. E-commerce negotiations within the WTO framework that has been launched are beset by long-running disagreements of economic, security, and cultural dimensions, and renewed geopolitical competitions among great powers. Results of the

negotiations depend on whether the various parties can realize that the purpose of WTO reform has gone beyond trade facilitation to include addressing concerns over the global digital divide. Gridlocks can only be overcome when the lines between domestic policies and transnational policy coordination are delineated. Regulatory conflicts will only grow as long as there is not a sound multilateral framework to address the proliferating yet fragmented regional rules of digital trade. To advance China's interests, Beijing needs to shelf its disagreements with other developing nations and stand with them in resistance to the unfair demands of developed nations. Besides, China should also strike a proper balance between national security concerns and cross-border data flows, and work with all stakeholders toward a unitary and equitable multilateral framework that will play to China's advantage. To reduce the risks associated with regulatory conflicts, Beijing must also strengthen policy coordination with other countries.

KEYWORDS: digital trade rules, cross-border data flow, national security, WTO

Chain of Islands, Space Control, and Hegemony: Western Pacific in U.S. Geopolitical Imagination

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ABSTRACT: Geopolitical imagination, conducted by specific ethnic groups and countries, is the overall judgment of the political and strategic importance of different geographical regions, which plays a key role in the formulation and implementation of specific countries' foreign policies. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the U.S. geopolitical imagination of the Western Pacific Region has been based on the description of multiple geopoliticians, and become pivotal to the U.S. Asia-Pacific policy. Since the end of World War II, this geopolitical imagination has gone through different stages, yet the rationale behind the imagination remain consistent, including "The United States is a Pacific country" and naturally has "critical" national interests in the Western Pacific; the marginal seas of the Western Pacific, especially offshore islands (island chains), have irreplaceable strategic value and are essential for the United States to control the Western Pacific; U.S. leadership in the regional security order is an integral part of its global hegemony, which should never be allowed to be challenged by land powers of Asia, but intervention in the Asian continent, especially military

intervention, requires careful consideration according to different circumstances. Nowadays, with the introduction of Indo-Pacific strategy, the U.S. geopolitical imagination of the Western Pacific is at a critical stage of continuation and transformation, which has become increasingly prominent in the formulation and implementation of U.S. regional policies and global strategies.

KEYWORDS: United States, Western Pacific, geopolitical imagination, chain of islands, hegemony

BRI Projects' Geopolitical Risks: Concepts and Theorization

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ABSTRACT: Geopolitical risks refer to the international political risks triggered by “geo” factors. More specifically, they are the risks created by state or non-state actors as they explore, shape, and compete for geographic spaces. The specific triggers of geopolitical risks include great power strategic competition, competition between sea and land powers, the struggle for control over geographically sensitive zones, and geoeconomic competition. These competitions are driven by differing strategic visions, ideological orientations, economic models, and so on. In an age of growing great power competition, geopolitical risks are increasingly posing formidable obstacles to the progress of China’s Belt and Road Initiative. Not only must Chinese enterprises make economic calculations, but increasingly they have to be more politically attuned in host nations. The Chinese government, on the other hand, in facilitating its enterprises’ forays into foreign lands, should also better assess the political, economic, and cultural aspects of potential geopolitical risks the Chinese enterprises may encounter and come up with more country-specific prevention and control strategies.

KEYWORDS: Belt and Road Initiative, major overseas projects, geopolitical risks, inter-connectivity

Regime Change in Countries along the Belt and Road Routes: Patterns and Ramifications

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ABSTRACT: Internal regime change has become a key factor in affecting the smooth implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative. The countries along the BRI routes have two types of regime change: the extraordinary regime change and ordinary regime change. The extraordinary regime changes are rare but have profound implications, while the ordinary regime change are more frequent, predictable, and manageable. Regime changes among BRI countries are cyclical, recurrent, and unexpected. This pattern is likely to repeat in the near future and certain to have profound implications for BRI's sustainability. In the short term, regime changes will create considerable negative effects on BRI projects. In the medium and long term, the effects of regime changes on BRI projects depend on local political and social stability and the economic and political relevance of BRI projects to domestic political struggles of host nations. If the country after regime change can still maintain stability and continue to welcome China's investment on BRI, the regime change may not affect China's economic cooperation with BRI countries.

KEYWORDS: Belt and Road Initiative, regime change, pattern, ramification

U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy: The ASEAN Perspective

LIU Zhi and AN Dongcheng

ABSTRACT: The Trump administration's Indo-Pacific strategy is the latest U.S. attempt to integrate the Indian and Pacific Oceans as a new geostrategic area where growing competition with China will play out in the decades to come. ASEAN, the key link that connects the two oceans, will be a major factor in the progress of the strategy. There are considerable consensus and significant disagreements among ASEAN members over the nature, objective, and implications of Washington's Indo-Pacific strategy. Some have chosen to strengthen their bilateral and multilateral security relations with Washington while others prefer to keep a distance. Some have welcome deeper U.S. involvement in regional security issues while others remain doubtful. Some have embraced an open and reciprocal economic model and such Western values as democracy, human rights, and rule of law, that has long been promoted by Washington while others favor a more independent and autonomous path. This

article proceeds from the intersection of international structural pressure and national imperatives to present an ASEAN perspective on Trump's Indo-Pacific strategy. It argues that member states' perceptions of the strategy can be classified into five categories, ranging from complete opportunity to outright risk. Differing views will make internal consensus impossible, further complicate the bloc's relationship with the United States in general and its member states' interactions with Washington in particular, and present new opportunities for Beijing to intensify its engagement with individual nations.

KEYWORDS: ASEAN, Indo-Pacific strategy, perception, typology

Russia-ASEAN Cooperation: Progress and Prospects

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ABSTRACT: As great power competitions intensify, Russia is adjusting its grand strategic design in a shifting geopolitical landscape by accelerating the implementation of its "Look East" strategy. In proposing a Greater Eurasian Partnership, Moscow is seeking to extend its geopolitical influence into the Indian and Pacific Oceans. ASEAN will serve as a pivot regional bloc in this new partnership and Moscow is stepping up its political and security engagement with ASEAN members to counter the effects of Washington's containment strategy. For Russia, closer economic and trade ties with ASEAN, in the form of a strengthened Eurasian Economic Union under the Greater Eurasian Partnership and a Russia-ASEAN free trade area, is top on its economic agenda. For ASEAN members, closer relations with Russia help the bloc maintain its centrality in a region where growing competition has fueled geopolitical and geoeconomic tensions. Even as both seek more extensive political and security relations, low levels of economic interdependence remain the biggest obstacle to closer coordination on regional issues. Besides, as ASEAN's interests become increasingly global and Russia resumes its position as a great power wielding growing influence around the world, factors beyond bilateral ties, such as South China Sea disputes, may also pose significant challenges for closer Russia-ASEAN cooperation.

KEYWORDS: Russia, ASEAN, Greater Eurasian Partnership, Eurasian Economical Union, prospects