

# **Power and Motivation in China's Foreign Policy**

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## Power and Motivation in China's Foreign Policy

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### Introduction

Over the past few decades, China has experienced remarkable economic growth in a larger effort to transition into a market economy by pressing forward its reform and opening-up policy. Since the Nixon administration and particularly following China's opening-up, Western-aligned developed nations such as the United States and Japan have pursued engagement with China. The underlying hope was that China would eventually transform into a democratic state that values freedom and the rule of law in the process of being incorporated into the existing West-led liberal international order.

China's presence on the international stage has dramatically expanded along with its rapid economic growth. The Xi Jinping administration's motto is "achieving the great revival of the Chinese nation," and its stated goal is for China to become a "modern socialist superpower" whose political system differs from that of Western-aligned nations. President Xi Jinping has promoted the Belt and Road Initiative as his signature foreign policy initiative, established various international organizations under China's leadership such as AIIB, and retained a hardline stance on maritime issues.

However, the international environment surrounding China continues to change. Within the last few years, several Western-aligned developed nations have begun to reconsider their policies of engagement with China, and the growing consensus in Washington seems to be that the engagement strategy has failed. For instance, the 2013 *Foreign Affairs* article, "The China Reckoning" by Kurt Campbell and Ely Ratner sparked debates on the existing US-China policy by suggesting the engagement policy's failure to secure the liberal democratic order and calling for a new approach to China.<sup>1</sup>

In this paper, the author seeks to ascertain the characteristics of China's foreign policy, and to clarify developments in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) promoted by the Xi Jinping administration as well as changes in China's foreign policy, on the basis of China's execution of its foreign policy since the end of the Cold War.

### International Political Theory and China's Foreign Policy<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kurt Campbell served as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs during the Obama administration.

<sup>2</sup> This section is based on the author's paper in Tse-kang Leng, Rumi Aoyama eds. *Decoding the Rise of China: Taiwanese and Japanese Perspectives* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

In China, studies by academics have a strong tendency to follow trends in state policy. With China's increasing power, there have been many studies since the 2000s in China pertaining to foreign policy strategies that should be taken by a rising China.

Amid such discussions, almost all the distinguished scholars who were also serving as the advisers to top leaders in China had conducted studies on the relationship between hegemony and the international regime, and international public goods supplied by hegemony. Discussions of prominent scholars in international politics, such as Yizhou Wang, Jisi Wang, Xuetong Yan, were heavily influenced by "western" international politics theories such as the hegemonic stability theory. In debates, structural power are emphasized, and the notion that hegemony having structural power "create systems based on their own interests and system of values, and also have the power to use such systems according to their own interests" (Inouch and Osawa 2000) has general acceptance.

Through discussions among these famous international politics scholars, the understanding that hegemony includes four elements—institutional hegemony, economic hegemony, political/ideological hegemony, and military hegemony—has mainstream acceptance in international political theory in China today.

Arguments that emphasize the creation of international institutions as well as international public goods have appeared in policy papers by the Chinese government shortly after academics argued the same. The concept of institutional discourse power was first officially proposed at the governmental level at the 5th Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China held in October 2015.

The 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020) introduced at the Plenary Session also explicitly states "active contribution to global governance and the supply of international public goods, and increasing structural power in global economic governance" as an important goal. Here, the phrase "structural power in the international discourse space" appeared for the first time in China's Five-Year Plan.

Specific policies under discussion include increasing China's voting and decision-making power in existing international institutions such as the IMF, increasing China's agenda-setting abilities in the creation of international rules being discussed for areas such as cyberspace, the Arctic, and the internet, and actively using platforms such as the G20 and BRICS in order to promote reform in international institutions led by Western nations (Gao 2016). Additionally, since then, Belt and Road Initiative has been officially named as an "important international public good" provided by China.

In short, discussions by international relations scholars pertaining to hegemony have a strong influence on China's foreign policy. China's foreign policy strategy as a revisionist state can be understood to emphasize the four elements of "institutional hegemony, economic hegemony, political/ideological hegemony, and military hegemony."

## **Perception of Security Threat**

China has consistently worked towards eliminating the military presence of major nations in areas surrounding China as well as increasing its own military might. In 1993, China announced a "new strategic guideline" in which the scope of defense of the Chinese military was revised from the "homeland" to "air, ground, sea, and outer space," emphasizing its priority in developing sea and air power. In recent years, achievement of a comprehensive operational capability enabling the Chinese military to launch strikes in remote seas has emerged

as a goal for China's military modernization policy, and since the start of the Xi Jinping administration, China has abandoned the Soviet-style ground force model and has started to emphasize joint operation capabilities in areas including "land, sea, air, defensive missiles, and cyber defense." China has reduced its forces by 300,000 people, reorganized the previous seven military regions into five theater commands, and is modernizing its military by strengthening its navy and air force as well as its outer space and cyber capabilities. With the realization of the Belt and Road Initiative, the importance of maritime, outer space, and Arctic issues has increased, and joint military-civilian technological development is being promoted in those three areas. Through such policy transitions, it can be found that China's perception of security threats has also been shifted.

### **Suspicion towards US-NATO Collusion**

Since the end of the Cold War, China has linked strengthening of the US-Japan alliance with the eastern expansion of NATO, and has become greatly concerned about being contained by the United States. There is a strong perception that China's security issues are tied with the US-Japan alliance and NATO.

Since the end of the Cold War, Eastern European nations successively joined NATO. NATO's eastern expansion not only eroded Russia's sphere of influence, but also posed a security threat to China. Russia and NATO approaching each other since 9/11 made China even more nervous. In May 2002, NATO and Russia formed the NATO-Russia Council (which replaced the Permanent Joint Council). While admitting that the cooperative relationship between Russia and NATO was weak, Russia adopted a strategy of "coordinating with Western European nations in order to counter the United States" (Zhang 2003), and thus, China was increasingly concerned that the cooperative relationship between Russia and NATO could continue (Tan and Ye 2010).

With NATO and Russia having closer ties, China, which had up to then been harshly criticizing NATO over the Kosovo War, began a policy of appeasement towards NATO. In 2003, China set forth its first policy paper pertaining to the EU, and began actively promoting periodic exchanges with NATO (Gao, Dapo and Kaitong 2003).

In April 2008, the admission of Ukraine and Georgia to NATO was specified in the declaration of the Bucharest Summit, but approximately four months later in August, Russia launched a military invasion of Georgia. As a result, China's fear of NATO slowly subsided. In June 2017, Montenegro, a former constituent of Yugoslavia, became the 29th nation to officially join NATO. After Montenegro was admitted to NATO, it became a commonly held view in China that "the conflict between NATO and Russia would be a long-term issue for European security arrangements, and that the balance of power between NATO and Russia would enter an equilibrium" (Xu & Zeng 2017).

Of course, the fact that the NATO-led ISAF completed its mission at the end of 2014 helped in further reducing China's fear of a US-NATO collusion. In August 2003, NATO took control of ISAF according to UN Security Council resolutions. Although China viewed the expansion of NATO's duties beyond its region as well as the subsequent expansion of NATO itself with caution, it mostly took a stance of welcoming NATO's actions. The situation in Afghanistan was directly linked to security issues in the western part of China, and in particular, the independence movement in Xinjiang, and China recognized that security and reconstruction efforts by NATO in Afghanistan played an important role in stabilizing the environment surrounding China.

As the ISAF mission neared its end, Chinese diplomacy towards Afghanistan was invigorated. In June 2012, a strategic partnership was forged between China and Afghanistan,<sup>3</sup> and since the NATO forces left Afghanistan

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<sup>3</sup> For full context, refer to [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/gjhdq\\_676201/gj\\_676203/yz\\_676205/1206\\_676207/1207\\_676219/t939513.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/web/gjhdq_676201/gj_676203/yz_676205/1206_676207/1207_676219/t939513.shtml).

at the end of 2014, China was said to have promised to take on more international responsibility regarding Afghanistan (Gao 2013). At the end of 2012, a trilateral dialogue between China, Afghanistan, and Pakistan was started. As China began to move forward with the BRI in 2013, Afghanistan came to be seen as an important area linking South Asia, Central Asia, and Europe, and its importance in China's foreign policy has been increased. When President Xi Jinping visited Afghanistan in September 2013, China and Afghanistan agreed to deepen political and economic ties between the two countries, as well as to strengthen the role of the UN and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in regards to issues faced by Afghanistan (*Xinhuanet* Sept. 27, 2013).

On the other hand, while China's concern towards NATO's eastward expansion was reduced as a result of Russia's invasion of Georgia, China's concern towards the EU's security arrangements increased again as the EU officially started PESCO in December 2017 to strengthen military cooperation among member states.

In terms of security, China's biggest interest regarding PESCO was the relationship between PESCO and NATO, on which the United States has outsized influence, or in other words, the manner of security cooperation between the United States and Europe. China has recognized that there has been increased criticism by the EU towards China's hard-line stance in the East China Sea and the South China Sea, as well as towards Russia's invasion of Georgia (Zhang and Xu 2017), and whereas there is dissatisfaction with the Trump administration, most scholars believe this would be unlikely to cause major changes in the relationship between Europe and the United States.<sup>4</sup> In 2016, a policy paper entitled "Elements for a new Strategy on China"<sup>5</sup> was released, and the paper called for competition, a "win-win" relationship in terms of the economy, trade, and investment, as well as emphasizing reciprocity. Amid this, Chinese scholars believe that in the pursuit of strategic autonomy, the EU's stance towards China would worsen.<sup>6</sup> Thus, while the success of PESCO is not necessarily the most desirable outcome for China's security environment (Harold 2018), the general view is that NATO would continue to take a leadership role.

China's concern towards US-NATO collusion has not disappeared, and China's ability to undertake maritime advancement and the new policy emphasis towards the Arctic region have emerged as new causes for concern towards collusion between the US and NATO.

China's geopolitical feature is that it is surrounded on three sides by land with one side facing the sea, and there has been a difference in opinion as to whether China is a continental nation or a maritime nation, but in recent years, the recognition that China is both a maritime and continental nation has quickly spread within China. Amid a political atmosphere where China's maritime advancement is legitimized by the government, the People's Liberation Army, and domestic public opinion, NATO's position on maritime issues has garnered attention.

Regarding the maritime issue, many argue that there is a possibility of conflict with NATO in the long term (He 2014). It is true that the passage of Chinese military vessels through the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal has caused concern for some NATO members. Also, in April 2013, Japanese Prime Minister Abe and then NATO Secretary General Rasmussen issued the "Joint Political Declaration between Japan and NATO," and in May 2014,

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<sup>4</sup> In line with these arguments, see Jian Zhang "Kua Daxiyang Guanxi de Bianhua ji Qianjing (Change and Prospect of Trans-atlantic Relations)," (*Contemporary International Relations* 2018, Vol.2).

<sup>5</sup> For the full context of "Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: Elements for a new Strategy on China", refer to [http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/china/docs/joint\\_communication\\_to\\_the\\_european\\_parliament\\_and\\_the\\_council\\_-\\_elements\\_for\\_a\\_new\\_eu\\_strategy\\_on\\_china.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/china/docs/joint_communication_to_the_european_parliament_and_the_council_-_elements_for_a_new_eu_strategy_on_china.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> In line with these arguments, see Mingjin Wang "Duochong Weiji xia Oumeng Duiwai Zhengce de Tiaozheng (Adjustment of EU Foreign Policy amid Multiple Risks.)"

a Japan/NATO IPCP was agreed. The strengthening of relations between NATO and Japan, as well as the involvement of NATO in the nine choke points of the Indian Ocean<sup>7</sup> have raised new concerns for China.

Since the 2010s, China's interest in the Arctic region has increased, and NATO's positions have been studied. In November 2008, the EU put out a policy paper entitled "The European Union and the Arctic Region"; in January 2009, then NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer pointed out the importance of the Arctic region, and in April of the same year, the joint declaration from the NATO summit held in Strasbourg, France also mentioned the Arctic. The general view in China is that while caution is warranted towards NATO's increasing emphasis on the Arctic, at the current stage, entry by NATO into the Arctic is limited (Li 2014).

As mentioned above, in regards to the security threat towards China, China's suspicion towards collusion between the US and NATO is especially great. While Russia is a strategic buffer for China, collusion between the US, Japan, and NATO regarding the maritime issue has recently become of increased concern for China.

### **Transformation of US-Led Security Network in Asia and Closer China-Russia Relations**

The US military alliance in Asia as well as the "Freedom of Navigation" program by US ships in the South China Sea and the like have been strongly criticized by China. The deployment of THAAD in South Korea has also resulted in severe backlash by China.

Meanwhile, relations with Russia, which has great significance towards the security of the northern part of China, have been an important issue for China's overall security. Since the end of the Cold War, China-Russia relations have dramatically improved. Through the SCO, China's influence has even reached Central Asia, and thus, strategic discord and tension between China and Russia have started to be discussed. The relationship between China and Russia has even been dismissed as an "Axis of Convenience" (Lo 2008).

This relationship between China and Russia has changed since 2011. Out of concern towards the pivot to Asia by the United States, China and Russia strengthened ties immediately after the United States announced the pivot to Asia. China-Russia relations progressed significantly since 2009 through economic development surrounding the Tumen River, the oil pipeline project, and the like, but Russia's deep-rooted suspicion towards China, the issue regarding the sale of military technology, the Chinese migrant issue in the Far East region, which have been a source of friction between China and Russia, remained unsolved. However, since the pivot to Asia by the United States, the opinion of the Chinese government and intellectuals towards China-Russia relations has clearly changed. Many intellectuals have given high praise to China-Russia relations, stating that they are at their most stable, and are more substantive. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs also opined that "Russia is a powerful nation that has given the strongest, clearest, and most unwavering support to China's core interests."

As relationships with surrounding nations and the United States have worsened due to the maritime issue, China has started working towards strengthening its relationship with Russia. Meanwhile, Russia, which was finding itself increasingly isolated due to the crisis in Ukraine, has also worked towards closer ties with China, and thus, the China-Russia relationship has gotten closer over the years. Links between the Eurasian Economic Union led by Russia and China's BRI were forged in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization declaration, and joint military exercises and exports of the latest weaponry to China have been promoted (Chase et al. 2017; Gabuev 2017).

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<sup>7</sup> The nine choke points in discussion are: Strait of Hormuz, Suez Canal, Bab el Mandeb, Malacca Straits, Sunda Strait, Selat Lombok, Six Degree Channel, Nine Degree Channel and Cape of Good Hope.

China's foreign policy developed after the Cold War had been based on tacit acceptance of the presence of US military alliances in Asia. Needless to say, China came to be greatly suspicious of a series of moves made by the United States since the autumn of 2011 to strengthen military ties in the Asia region. Meanwhile, the United States' strengthened military and economic commitment in the Asia-Pacific region brought about strong concerns by Russia, since they threatened to break the previous power equilibrium between the United States and Russia. The deployment of THAAD resulted in a strong backlash not only from China but also from Russia, similar to when NATO deployed a missile defense system in Europe. Russia's moves can be understood through this logic.

Cooperation between China and Russia regarding space and cyber security has also been quickly developing in recent years (Sutter 2018). In October 2018, at a meeting with Russian Minister of Defense Sergey Kuzhugetovich Shoygu, President Xi Jinping stated that "both nations are of utmost importance to each other, and are strategic cooperative partners to prioritize in foreign policy," (*Xinhuanet* Oct. 19, 2018) giving greater praise to the nations' relationship than ever before.

Closer ties between China and Russia have also affected China's view of the Russia-led CSTO in Central Asia. CSTO is a small collective security organization and China's view is that Russia has outsized influence in the organization (Wang 2007). Since the SCO and the CSTO agreed to build a cooperative relationship in 2007,<sup>8</sup> security cooperation between the Russia-led CSTO and China-led SCO and BRICS has been discussed (Russian Security Council Develops New Formats of Cooperation within CIS, BRICS, CSTO, SCO 2017). Of course, this cooperative relationship is far from being promoted to a "new Warsaw Pact" covering the Eurasian continent, let alone the world. The CSTO is an "indispensable presence" in Central Asia (Li and Niu 2016), and thus, in promoting BRI, China will likely put effort into strengthening its cooperative relationship with CSTO while its relationships with the United States and NATO were being taken into consideration.

As aforementioned, in considering security concerns towards the United States, China always considers its security policy in terms of the US-China-Russia triangle. As the US-led security network in Asia is strengthened, ties between Russia and China are becoming closer.

## **Belt and Road Initiative and Foreign Policy Strategies of China**

Xi Jinping's signature foreign policy initiative, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is also centered on the four elements of "institutional hegemony, economic hegemony, political/ideological hegemony, and military hegemony."

Although the BRI was initiated under the Xi Jinping administration, it serves as the foundation for China's post-Cold War foreign policy, and thus, the execution of the Belt and Road Initiative will be analyzed here with consideration for China's efforts up to now.

### **The Belt and Road Initiative**

The Belt and Road Initiative is a foreign policy launched by the Xi Jinping administration, and is a strategy in which a wide-ranging region including Asia, Europe, Africa, the Arab world, and Pacific Island nations is tied

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<sup>8</sup> For the full context of "Joint Communique of Meeting of Council of Heads of SCO Members," refer to [http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/wjdt\\_665385/2649\\_665393/t355665.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/2649_665393/t355665.shtml).



together by a land route and a sea route starting in China. In September 2013, President Xi Jinping announced in Kazakhstan the idea of a “Silk Road Economic Belt,” which is the land-based Silk Road, and in October, he announced in Indonesia the idea of a “21st-Century Maritime Silk Road,” which is the sea-based Silk Road.

Although the BRI is a grand plan, there were initially almost no specific policy ideas; various concrete policies were announced afterwards, and a direction for this policy is starting to emerge. The Chinese government announced the establishment of a new Silk Road Fund (\$40 billion) at the APEC meeting held in Beijing in November 2014, and for the first time in March 2015, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Commerce jointly announced the Belt and Road Initiative. At that time, regarding the Maritime Silk Road, the published concept for the Belt and Road Initiative only described a foray into the Indian and Pacific Oceans, but regarding the land-based Silk Road, the concept explicitly stated the creation of six economic corridors tying China to Central Asia and Europe.

At the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation held in May 2017 in Beijing, the direction of the Maritime Silk Road began to gain clarity. Immediately after the Forum, the National Development and Reform Commission and the State Oceanic Administration jointly released a specific policy concept regarding the Maritime Silk Road. The concept was to create three economic routes including a China-Indian Ocean-Africa-Mediterranean route, a China-Oceania-South Pacific route, and an Arctic-Europe route, with China deepening cooperation with the relevant nations regarding ecological protection of the oceans, maritime economy, maritime security, maritime research and information sharing, and governance.

Additionally, in January 2018, the Chinese government released a white paper entitled “China’s Arctic Policy,” and referred to the sea route through the Arctic Ocean as the “Polar Silk Road.”

Thus, the Belt and Road Initiative is a global strategy for China aiming to become a superpower. Through the Belt and Road Initiative, China also aims to expand its influence in the international community through cooperation with other nations involved in this Initiative in various areas such as logistics, trade, finance, politics, and think tanks. Additionally, the Maritime Silk Road emphasizes the creation of ports. Construction of ports on the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf can allow China’s navy to secure areas for overseas cooperation.

### **Pursuit of Structural Power in International Order**

It is possible for an influencing nation to set the policy agenda regarding the systems and norms of an international organization and establish the rules of the game in order to influence another nations’ preferences so as to satisfy the policy objectives of the influencing nation. As previously mentioned, China is attempting to increase its presence and influence through such structural power. In pursuing structural power, China is working to have an increased say in the existing international order, while also creating new organizations such as AIIB, and creating cooperative frameworks with BRICS and various regional institutions.

With its capacity as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China seeks to increase its influence and political presence in setting an agenda and creating rules for international issues by being actively involved in the existing international order. Currently, China has dispatched the greatest number of personnel to PKOs among permanent members of the Security Council, and its contributing portion to the current budget also greatly increased to 15.2%. The Chinese government sees its active contribution to the UN and PKOs as an “expression of China’s increasing international influence” (*Record China* 2018). On December 22, 2018, a resolution determining the apportionment of each nation in the 2019-2021 UN budget was adopted, and China’s percentage

of the regular budget at 12.005% overtook that of Japan (8.564%) to reach the second place after the United States (22.00%).

China's influence in the existing international financial system has significantly increased. In the IMF, which was created under the Bretton Woods system, the voting share held by a member state depends on the amount of contribution by the member state. As a result of the reform to the IMF voting shares agreed in 2010, China's contribution proportion rose to the third place after the United States and Japan.

As well as seeking to increase its influence in the existing international financial institutions, China has put effort into creating financial institutions led by China. The AIIB is an idea that was unveiled in October 2013 together with the Belt and Road Initiative when President Xi Jinping visited Indonesia. In addition to the establishment of the BRICS New Development Bank and the AIIB, there are also discussions regarding the establishment of a Shanghai Cooperation Organization Development Bank.

China has been actively involved in regional organizations throughout the world since the latter half of the 1990s, and has established cooperative relationships with them. The Xi Jinping administration has consolidated into one framework China's efforts in Asia, Africa, Europe, the Arab world, and Pacific Island nations, has increased its cooperation with Latin America, and its involvement in Arctic Council (AC).

China's policy of engagement is at the center of its global strategy surrounding the Belt and Road Initiative, by which China seeks to create an economic and political sphere of influence in five areas: policy, finance, trade, infrastructure, and people-to-people exchanges (Five Connectivities: 五通).

### **Economic Hegemony — Promotion of FTAs, RCEP, and FTAAP**

Through the BRI, China seeks to promote multilateral economic cooperation such as bilateral FTAs, the RCEP, and the FTAAP.

China has already signed FTAs with fifteen nations and regions including ASEAN, South Korea, and Australia. There are ten FTAs with nations and regions such as Maldives, Israel, Norway, are now under consideration. An Investment Agreement and a FTA with the EU has also been incorporated into the declaration of the China-EU summit.

At the RCEP Ministerial Meeting held in Singapore in August 2018, a joint statement calling for substantive compromise within 2018 was issued. The RCEP is a broad economic partnership where sixteen nations—ten ASEAN member states and Japan, China, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and India—are participated; these sixteen nations alone constitute 50% of the world population and 32% of the world GDP. As the Japan-led TPP11 in which the United States is not a participatory member has come into effect in January 2019, China, which fears increased friction in its trade relations with the United States, will be likely to play an active role in coordinating the final stage of the RCEP.

The success of FTAs, RCEP, FTAAP, and the Belt and Road Initiative will bring about a “G2+” (the two superpowers of China and the United States and other political powers) world order, to quote Yafei He of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council (He 2015).

### **Ideological Hegemony — China's Governance Model**

China is further accelerating its moves to widen the “Chinese experience” through the BRI. Unlike in the past, under the Xi Jinping administration, which seeks to strengthen the leadership role of the party, the International

Liaison Department of the Communist Party of China has begun to play a central role. In April 2015, the International Liaison Department brought think tanks and universities such as the Development Research Center of the State Council, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and Fudan University together to establish the Silk Road Think Tank Association. The Association aims for domestic and international research institutions to get involved in studies for the BRI to share information, resources, and achievements, and its goal is to widen the international “social circle of think tanks participating in the Belt and Road Initiative” (*Xinhuanet* May 11, 2017). As of September 2018, 138 Chinese research institutions and 113 overseas think tanks became members of the association (*Renmin Network* Sept 21, 2018), according to the Chinese official statistics.

In exchanges between China and other countries through the Silk Road Think Tank Association, China’s rapid economic development and governance models seem to be the main focus (*Beijing Daily* May 22, 2017). For example, exchanges of experience in governance are included in a seminar course for Arab economic officials established by China for government officials of Arab nations (*Xinhuanet* May 11, 2017).

In the Silk Road Think Tank Association, a unified collaborative framework has been created. For each topic such as the previously mentioned six economic corridors and the Maritime Silk Road, research institutions including Chinese universities that are members are given specific responsibilities. For example, research on China - Central Asia - West Asia Economic Corridor is assigned to Lanzhou University while research on China – Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor is assigned to China-ASEAN Research Institute of Guangxi University (Shen 2018).

Of course, because the BRI is the Xi Jinping administration’s signature foreign policy initiative, participating universities and research institutions also use their own funds and actively promote research for the BRI and exchanges with foreign research institutions. Among these, the “Silk Road International Think Tank Network” run by the Development Research Center of the State Council, the “International Forum on the Belt and Road Initiative” run by the National Institute of International Strategy of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the “16+1 Think Tanks Network” run by the Institute of European Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and the “RUC-WUN Think Tank Conference” run by the Renmin University of China, among others, have been very active and increasing their ability to convey their message throughout the world.

Considering various discussions within China since 1990, China’s political values today include the three ideologies of universal values, Marxism-Leninism, and Chinese traditional thought, and as a nation that is seeking to increase its soft power, China cannot depend completely on any one of the three ideologies in its foreign policy philosophy, and therefore vacillates between all three (Aoyama and Amako 2015). In this situation, the Chinese government is attempting to spread state capitalism as the Chinese governance model throughout the international community under the BRI. This Chinese governance model seeks a foundation for economic growth and stability in China, and thus, whether China can overcome economic friction with the United States as well as manage its economy in a sustained and stable manner is crucial in determining the outlook of Chinese soft power.

### **Military Hegemony with focus on Cyber/Space Power**

From the beginning of the Xi Jinping administration, the Chinese government announced its explicit goal of modernizing national defense and the People’s Liberation Army by 2035, as well as attaining a world-class military by the middle of the 21st century. Accordingly, in 2015 President Xi Jinping enacted the largest scale of military reform since the founding of the nation. He abolished the seven military regions and established five theater

commands instead, established a joint operation command structure, and reduced the size of the PLA by 300,000. Also, President Xi Jinping established the Army Leading Organ, newly created a Rocket Force, and established the Strategic Support Force, which deals with space, cyber, and electronic warfare (*Xinhuanet* Sept 27, 2013).

Under the Xi Jinping administration, the importance of space and cyber warfare forces in addition to ground, naval, and air forces has rapidly increased in China's military strategy (Wang 2016). In August 2018, the United States Department of Defense released its Annual Report to Congress pertaining to military and security developments in China,<sup>9</sup> and this Report points out that China's efforts in space technology are a major concern for the United States. The 2018 Defense of Japan white paper also states that China sees information operations for definitively gaining information superiority as one form of its asymmetrical military capabilities, and argues that China's capabilities in electronic and cyber warfare, which aim to confuse the enemy's chain of command during a conflict, are rapidly increasing (Defense of Japan 2018).

The white paper "China's Military Strategy" published by the Chinese government in 2015 states that China's military strategy is active defense and that China's future strategy is informationized local wars (China's Military Strategy 2015). The paper additionally states that the Chinese military's eight duties include safeguarding the security and interests of new areas such as outer space and cyberspace in addition to territorial integrity, national unification, maintenance of world peace, stabilization of the domestic political society, and the like.

Thus, in recent years, with an increased dependence on satellites and computer networks in the military, the Xi Jinping administration has put particular effort into outer space and cyberspace in order to create a world-class military. International cooperation on the projects of outer space and cyberspace has been emphasized under the BRI as an important policy.

### ***China's Efforts to Become a Space Power***

The Belt and Road Space Information Corridor is also referred to as the "Space Silk Road," and is promoted as one aspect of the BRI-. China views this space information corridor as a means to enhance national prestige through the provision of an international public good, to strengthen China's position in global space governance, to increase China's military strength, to expand satellite-related businesses, and the like.

In 2016, the Chinese government issued the "Leadership Opinion Relating to Promotion and Acceleration of the Establishment and Application of a Space Information Corridor," which stated that the establishment of a space information corridor is an important duty of the BRI. According to this opinion, this space information corridor would be managed by the State Administration for Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense, with decisions being made by a steering group for the BRI. Thus, using the six economic corridors of BRI, China would make national efforts to create a space information corridor that covers regions from Oceania, Central and Eastern Europe, and Africa to Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Western Asia, and North Africa as focal areas.

The most important factors in the establishment of a space information corridor are hardware such as satellites for observation, communication, and positioning and equipment for receiving satellite data, as well as China's export capabilities. The Chinese government has invested \$9 billion in the development of the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (*Bloomberg News* November 11, 2018). On December 27, 2018, the Chinese

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<sup>9</sup> For details, see *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2018*, <https://media.defense.gov/2018/Aug/16/2001955282/-1/-1/1/2018-CHINA-MILITARY-POWER-REPORT.PDF>

government announced that it completed the global positioning system, BeiDou and that it would start operating the system for the entire world. Additionally, the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation and the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation are jointly developing a space plane that is an equivalent to the Space Shuttle, and is actively working towards creating a broadband communication network using low orbit satellites (*Nikkei Shibun* December 30, 2018).

### ***China's Efforts Regarding Cyberspace***

China is putting effort into improving its cyber warfare capabilities for both attack and defense, but is also promoting internet-related international cooperation under the BRI-, known as Internet+, which is also called as the “Internet Silk Road” or “Digital Silk Road.” Through the Internet Silk Road, the Chinese government is promoting e-commerce as well as increasing its influence in internet governance and promoting international cooperation in anti-terrorism efforts and cultural exchanges.

Every year since 2014, China has hosted the World Internet Conference, which aims to promote technological and economic cooperation as well as spread China’s message regarding the internet. In March 2017, the Chinese government published a document entitled “International Strategy of Cooperation on Cyberspace”.<sup>10</sup> The Strategy strongly argues that “the government of each nation has the right and responsibility to manage cyberspace according to its own laws” and promotes “cyber sovereignty.” China’s principles regarding global governance of cyberspace differ from those of the US, and in 2017, China stated that the UN should play a central role in creating an international consensus, and that it does not accept the right of self-defense in cyberspace, taking the same position as Russia.<sup>11</sup>

The US sees China’s spying operations through the internet as a problem, and China is at odds with the US regarding global governance rules for cyberspace. Meanwhile, China is attempting to increase its influence in cyberspace through the BRI.

## **Conclusion**

While having achieved remarkable economic growth, Chinese foreign policy has also undergone significant changes. At the beginning of the 1990s, China had predicted that the post-Cold War world order would constitute one superpower and multiple great powers, but by now, China has put efforts into forming a “G2+” world order (the two superpowers of China and the US as well as other political powers).

China’s strategy for rising in prominence has been strongly influenced by international political theories and concepts such as the hegemonic stability theory and structural power. China has been seeking to increase its standing in the changing international order by increasing structural power, building infrastructure, and providing international public goods such as the RCEP and FTAAP.

The Xi Jinping administration continues moving in this direction and promoting the Belt and Road Initiative so as to be centered on institutional hegemony, economic hegemony, political/ideological hegemony, and military hegemony.

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<sup>10</sup> For details, see [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2017-03/01/c\\_1120552767.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2017-03/01/c_1120552767.htm)

<sup>11</sup> Adam Segal. 2018. “What Will Happen when China Dominates the Internet”, *Foreign Affairs*, September/October: 10-18.

On the other hand, with major reforms in the party and state organization as well as reforms in creation and execution of policies, the unifying ability of the Communist Party as well as coordination between the state administration, local governments, and corporations have been strengthened in order to promote the Belt and Road Initiative. Under the Xi Jinping administration, the Communist Party (the state) now has the power to decide a policy, market mechanisms continue to be incorporated into executing policies, and the state administration, local governments, and corporations are cooperating to execute policies as a whole. In short, the arrangement of the government and market and that of the government and corporations have greatly changed, and there are strong tinges of state capitalism under Xi's leadership.

As distrust towards the West in terms of security escalates and China attempts to respond to the changing international situation, China-Russia ties have become closer. In new security areas such as outer space and cyberspace, China and Russia have shown remarkable unity in terms of global governance and the direction of foreign policy, and have consequently widened the gap with Western nations. Thus, the international situation is becoming increasingly fluid. ■

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