Chapter 9

Understanding China’s One-Belt-One-Road Initiative—A New Link Pattern for Deepened Interaction between China and the World

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Abstract

The One-Belt-One-Road Initiative is a complete development strategy and framework of linkages for deepened interaction between China and the world. The Silk Road economic belt, or land-based Silk Road, focuses on large-scale regional economic cooperation between China and the countries and regions of Eurasia. The 21st century maritime Silk Road mainly involves economic cooperation between China and the countries and regions along the coast of Eurasia. The China-Pakistan economic corridor and Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar economic corridor will connect the above-mentioned land-based and maritime Silk Roads. The modern Silk Road¹ not only will provide a link but also a passage for intercontinental economic cooperation on land and sea across Eurasia. Building the modern Silk Road cannot be accomplished at one stroke, and several countries must first make certain accommodations for the strategy to be implemented. The One-Belt-One-Road Initiative allows China to become more active in the global arena and provides passage for the international community to enter its borders. China has chosen to cooperate and share the benefits of peaceful development with the international community, which is a new path for its development as a rising world power. While it may be new, this path reflects Oriental wisdom. It also demonstrates China’s sense of responsibility for and commitment to the future of mankind.

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¹ The One-Belt-One-Road Initiative may be explained in two parts: “The Silk Road economic belt” and “the 21st century maritime Silk Road.” In this meaning, “modern Silk Road” is specifically short for “the Silk Road economic belt.”
Keywords

the One-Belt-One-Road Initiative – the Silk Road economic belt – the 21st century maritime Silk Road – connectivity – community of shared interests

1 Introduction

China’s fast and sustained development has a huge impact on the whole world; that development, to a certain extent, has fundamentally changed international geopolitics and the trend of global economic development. What does the rapid rise of China mean for the world? What kind of relationship will China develop with the international community after its rise? Will China be able to explore a new path of peaceful development that breaks with the idea that a strong country must be hegemonic and expansive? China needs to clearly answer all of these questions.

In fact, China has been trying to answer these strategic questions since it began implementing policies of reform and opening up to the outside world. The Chinese government has repeatedly made it clear that, although the nation is developing, it will not seek hegemony and global expansion. Instead, China will pursue a path of peaceful development and follow a good-neighbor policy. The Chinese government has long upheld the ideals of reform, openness, and peaceful development as its strategic goals for domestic and international affairs.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, China has adjusted its foreign policy in six ways. First, the Chinese government has attached more importance to relations with major powers. It strives to establish a new type of major-power relationship with the United States, to promote a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination with Russia, and to develop a comprehensive strategic partnership with the European Union (EU). Second, building friendships and partnerships with neighboring countries that advance the ideas of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit, and inclusiveness is a central facet of its foreign policy. This makes neighborhood diplomacy a top priority. Third, China plans to develop its navy to make the country a maritime power and to strengthen maritime awareness. Fourth, China plans to build what the Chinese government defines as a community of shared interests and common destiny, in which nations are bound together for mutual collaboration and toward common goals. Fifth, it focuses on founding a new international political and economic order that is just, equal, and