

CHINAS MEGAPROJECT – GLOBAL SECURITY ANALYSIS

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Abstract: The People’s Republic of China (China) is taking serious steps in accordance with its global development strategy of the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative. This geopolitical and geo-economic megaproject meets the positive and the negative connotation on the road that passes through over 60 countries of different civilizations, religious, cultural, economic, political and other values and orientation. Only a superficial analysis of the security aspects megaproject points to numerous difficulties and obstacles that must be neutralized in order to realize the common economic interests of all participants along the way. Security analysis of the OBOR initiative has been implemented through a description of the basic factors that determine the security aspect of this megaproject. Only the security situation of the countries along the way, their grouping in the security and defence alliances, crisis points and intertwining interests of the major actors in the international arena provide a clear factual picture that leads to the understanding of security difficulties along the way.

Key words: New Silk Road, Silk Road Economic Belt, the Maritime Silk Road, security, crisis, security and defence alliances, conflicts of interest, Central Asia, Asia and Pacific region.

INTRODUCTION

In 2004, then-President Hu Jintao delivered a speech in which he highlighted China’s ‘overseas interests’ (a) the safety of overseas nationals; (b) institutions, companies and investments; (c) strategic sea lanes and communication channels; (d) overseas energy and resources.² The term primarily centres on China’s economic interests abroad, although these do overlap with overseas political and military interests as well. As China’s 2013

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² Internet: <http://in.chineseembassy.org/eng/zyjh/SPEECHES/t92044.htm>

Defence White Paper stated, these have become an integral component of China's national interests.³ In China's Military Strategy 2015, safeguarding the security of China's overseas interests had been upgraded to one of the strategic tasks of the People's Liberation Army.⁴

The concepts of the "New Silk Road" and the "Maritime Silk Road" were launched in 2013 by President Xi Jinping when he revealed Chinese plans to connect East Asia with Europe with the *Silk Road Economic Belt*⁵ and the *21st Century Maritime Silk Road*.⁶ Despite the fact that OBOR real objectives are not defined as strategic objectives because it is treated as an initiative, however, guidelines can be transposed in following: to enhance diplomatic relations and cooperation; to expand China's geopolitical influence; to improve and expand international trade routes with benefit for involved countries; to develop and stabilize China's western regions by integrating them in trade routes and by opening markets to goods produced in those regions.⁷ The OBOR initiative is supposed to be a new Eurasian Land Bridge, China – Mongolia- Russia, China – Central Asia – West Asia and China – Indochina Peninsula economic corridors, as well as a China – Pakistan Economic Corridor and a Bangladesh – China – India – Myanmar economic Corridor. China's vulnerability to geopolitical and security challenges lead to a need to deal with political risk and insecurity in the Asia-Pacific region, Central Asia, South Asia and the Middle East. Many of the OBOR projects are linked with underdeveloped or conflict-ridden regions, which could generate additional security challenges. To protect its interests and combat

³ Chinese State Council Information Office (note 80), Internet: <http://english.scio.gov.cn/>

⁴ Chinese State Council Information Office, 'China's Military Strategy', May 2015, Internet: <http://english.scio.gov.cn/>

⁵ The Silk Road Economic Belt seeks to connect China, Central Asia, Russia and the Baltic states; linking China with the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea through Central Asia and West Asia; and connecting China with Southeast Asia, South Asia and the Indian Ocean.

⁶ The 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road will connect China's coast to Europe through the South China Sea (SCS) and the Indian Ocean, and China's coast via the SCS to the South Pacific.

⁷ Zlatan Jeremic, Branislav Djordjevic, One Belt, One Road – Security Analysis, Thematical Proceeding from International Scientific Conference: Danube in the Function of the New Silk Road, Belgrade, 2016, p. 468.

these transnational risks, China should negotiate and provide assistance for domestic security organizations in countries along the OBOR networks. Security threats for the OBOR include: (a) great power geopolitics; (b) territorial disputes; (c) organized crime; (d) political instability (including colour revolutions); (e) economic and financial risks; (f) environmental and ecological hazards; (g) quality control; (h) China's border security; (i) social and human security factors; (j) piracy along the Road; and (k) issues related to information security.⁸

SECURITY REVIEW IN DIFFERENT REGIONS

The rivalry between the bloc led by the US and the collaborative Allied-Moscow-Beijing axis increases the possibility of destabilizing the regions: 1) Asia-Pacific Region, which moves the focus of economic and political power; 2) the Middle East, whose economic importance and the energy accumulated internal contradictions continue to have a destabilizing potential; 3) the area of Central Asia, where the interests of the West intersect and 4) the European periphery, especially in the east and south. The OBOR initiative covers regions from Asia to Europe via Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, West Asia and the Middle East.⁹

Southeast Asia consists of Mainland Southeast Asia¹⁰ and Maritime Southeast Asia¹¹. The likelihood of inter-state wars in this region is greatly diminished, although territorial disputes and conflicting claims in maritime areas still exist. The region is increasingly confronted with non-conventional

⁸ Wang, Y., and Zheng, D., Non-traditional security challenges One Belt, One Road faces, *China Opening Journal*, Aug. 2015; and Liu, H., Security challenges to the One Belt, One Road strategy and China's choices, *Pacific Journal*, no. 2 (2015).

⁹ In this paper is used The United Nations geoscheme as a system which divides the countries of the world into regional and subregional groups. It was devised by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) based on the M49 coding classification. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_geoscheme.

¹⁰ Mainland Southeast Asia, also known historically as Indochina, comprising Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar (Burma), and (West) Malaysia.

¹¹ Maritime Southeast Asia comprising Indonesia, (East) Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, East Timor, Brunei, Christmas Island, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

security threats such as international terrorism, organized crime, separatism, piracy, irregular migration, environmental issues, energy shortages, economic crises and epidemics. The most contested issue is the demarcation of maritime borders in the South China Sea where at least six claimants¹² have occupied atolls and islets in the Spratly archipelago and erected military installations. Other hot spots which may trigger inter-state wars are located outside the region¹³. Even if they explode into armed conflicts, their effects on Southeast Asia will be more of an indirect nature. They may increase the presence of external powers and militarize the region, but it is unlikely that they will draw the region into hostilities. International terrorism has the highest priority on the security agenda of Southeast Asia. The challenge of terrorism is its increasingly transnational organization and the fact that it is often directed against soft targets and civilians. Separatism still exists, but seems to be on the decline. There was an upsurge of separatism and ethno-religious violence in Southeast Asia in the 1990s. Even more speculative are suspected links between international terrorism, separatism and piracy. Although piracy is rapidly on the rise in Southeast Asian waters, there is so far only weak evidence for links between separatist groups, piracy and terrorism. Separatist forces, as well as the government troops fighting them, are engaged in arms smuggling, drug trafficking, illegal logging, protection rackets and money laundering.¹⁴ That makes security problems related to international migration and caused a dramatical increase of the migratory problems in Southeast Asia. Today, Southeast Asia is a sending region and a destination for migrants at the same time.¹⁵ A region connected with Southeast Asia which over helm countries from other regions is:

The Asia-Pacific region which has an important strategic position in the world.¹⁶ Currently, the situation in this region is stable on the whole. Political

¹² China, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei.

¹³ Taiwan, the Korean peninsula and Kashmir.

¹⁴ Most Southeast Asian states are thus still on the negative list of the OECD's Finance Action Task Force (FATF).

¹⁵ While Indonesia, Philippines and Burma are still sending nations, Malaysia and Thailand have become sending as well as receiving countries. Indonesia also has become a transit country for migrants from the Middle East en route to Australia.

¹⁶ The region typically includes much of East Asia (China, Hong Kong, Macau, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan), South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania.

mutual trust among countries has been strengthened, and major countries have interacted and cooperated with one another. Regional hotspot issues and disputes are basically under control but still face multiple destabilizing and uncertain factors. The nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula is complex and sensitive; the reconciliation process in Afghanistan remains slow; and disputes over territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests continue to unfold. Some countries are increasing their military deployment in the region, certain countries seek to shake off military constraints, and some countries are undergoing complex political and social transformations. Non-traditional security threats such as terrorism, natural disasters and transnational crimes have become more prominent.¹⁷ A consistent security framework in this region is not foreseeable in the near future, and it will be normal to see multiple mechanisms advancing together in the evolution of a regional security framework. All the countries involved should play their roles in safeguarding the regional peace and stability in parallel with the development of a regional economic framework. Security and development are closely linked and mutually complementary. Equal consideration should be given to both a security framework and an economic framework – the main components of the entire regional structure – to ensure their parallel development. The current territories of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka form *the South Asia region*. The sub-continent's history, India's strategic culture and the cycle of mistrust between the countries in the region make continuing tension and a low-level conflict likely for the foreseeable future. The India-Pakistan dispute is the dominant strategic issue in the region. All-out war between the two countries seems unlikely at present, but tensions remain very high and have been exacerbated by terrorist attacks. The impact of any armed conflict between India and China over their disputed border region would be catastrophic, but there is little likelihood of this occurring. The relationship

¹⁷ Pushing forward the building of regional security mechanisms, China initiated the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Six-Party Talks, Xiangshan Forum, China-ASEAN Ministerial Dialogue on Law Enforcement and Security Cooperation, and Center for Comprehensive Law Enforcement and Security Cooperation in the Lancang-Mekong Sub-Region. China has actively supported the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in its capacity and institution building, and participated in the ASEAN-led multilateral security dialogues and cooperation mechanisms.

with India barely registers in China as a strategic issue. Multilateralism and security cooperation are distant aspirations. India sees any concession as a weakness that will lead its neighbours to take yet more from India. Transnational terrorism, with its roots in the India-Pakistan conflict, is a particular threat faced by India. India and Bangladesh face threats from insurgent campaigns. Although the violence can be brutal, the insurgencies are localised and unlikely to represent a serious threat to the stability of the states, even as inequality grows as a result of economic development.

Central Asia stretches from the Caspian Sea in the west to China in the east and from Afghanistan in the south to Russia in the north.¹⁸ Central Asia was the scene of wars and colour revolutions. An active conflict still rages in Afghanistan and spreads on Pakistan. Instability in Kyrgyzstan threatens to spill over into neighbouring countries, and any future conflict in which are included Iran, Syria and Lebanon, may be reflected in Central Asia. Control of Central Asia would upset the project OBOR and because of this the US strategy in Central Asia seeks to prevent the emergence of China as a global superpower, and China on the way to disable access to energy resources. Afghanistan's continuing struggle with the Taliban insurgency and activity of Islamic State has caused concerns for neighbouring states Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Fighting on the borders could spread into these states, possibly posing a threat to their ruling regimes. The flow of narcotics from Afghanistan, especially through Tajikistan, also generates security risks and cause high levels of corruption. Among the regional states, these challenges are aggravated by border tensions, ethnic-minority disputes and problems of water security. Collectively, these challenges have led the defence policies and capabilities of all five Central Asian countries to focus almost exclusively on the internal stability and security at the expense of defence against the extra-regional states. A significant development in recent years has been the expansion in support, training and capability development of the internal-security forces that combat the region's non-state armed actors. Beijing, which is increasingly concerned with a potential effect on the Muslim Uighur population in China, has expanded its assistance to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. This assistance ranges from economic projects to military assistance in the form of small-arms

¹⁸ Central Asia region comprising Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.

deliveries and the provision of anti-terrorism. Despite the US military support, emerging Chinese military equipment and training programmes in the region, Russia remains the ultimate guarantor of stability.

Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Palestinian territories, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, UAE, and Yemen are considered as *West Asian countries*.¹⁹ This region as a strategic place where two major overland and maritime routes will eventually meet, as the China – Central Asia – West Asia Economic corridor reaches Iran and Turkey and the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea and the Suez Canal, is of crucial importance for the success of OBOR initiative. The Middle East, because of its internal conflicts, reflects instability in a broader sense and thus making the Middle East dimension of OBOR route more complicated. An unstable security situation in the MENA region is characterized by: (1) spill over of the conflict in Syria and Iraq to the territories of other countries – Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, Niger, Algeria, Mali; (2) a large number of foreign fighters from Western countries in the MENA region and (3) humanitarian crisis caused by the large number of internally displaced persons and refugees.²⁰ While regional states are concerned about the rise of extremism, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries have long-standing concerns about Tehran's growing influence, the actions of its proxies and its military capabilities. The nuclear agreement with the P5+1 and the EU also begins to open the way for Iran to revamp its equipment inventory, with China and Russia potentially major suppliers, though sales of conventional systems remain embargoed for five years. The region itself contains contentious underlying security liabilities such as religious radicalism, an ethnic mosaic, a strained resource base (water, arable land), highly attractive natural resources (oil, gas), widespread terrorism, unfinished

¹⁹ West Asia is a term that refers to the western most part of Asia. The term is partly coterminous with the Middle East, which describes the geographical position in relation to Western Europe rather than the location within Asia. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is a transcontinental region centered on Western Asia and Egypt in North Africa. Due to the perceived Eurocentrism, international organizations such as the United Nations, have replaced Middle East with West Asia.

²⁰ Since the beginning of Arab Spring, on december 2010 in Tunisia, there were 3 revolutions (Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen), 2 civil wars (Libya, Syria), one Cou d'état (Egypt), 2 foreign interventions (Bahrain, Libya) and few dramatically political reforms (Morocco, Algeria, Jordan etc.).

state-building projects, democratic deficits (or worse), major power patrons, and growing poverty problems, which all accompany the traditional security problems as typically seen being between states and acted out through diplomacy or violence. In combination, this creates a highly complex and fragile system, where several of the above-mentioned security issues are inter-related and has system-wide, regional, implications. Nowadays, the highest security risk and threat are those that come from the security interdependence of the area.²¹ The region's interaction with neighbouring countries is quite limited, as the interaction internally defines the complex. Even so, the Middle East has some adjacent regional security sub-complexes encompassed in it: the Gulf (Iran, Iraq, Gulf Arab states led by Saudi Arabia), the Maghreb, and the Levant. This sub-complex is principally Israel and its immediate neighbours, and it is a mixture of states (Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan) and non-state actors (PLO, Hamas, Hezbollah). Several countries have been directly engaged against Israel in significant ways (Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, and Tunisia), giving rhetorical, financial, and sometimes military support. The Middle East could also be seen as a regional security complex full of other sets of security complexes, or sub-complexes, which all have their own security issues that connect the states together in inextricably entangled relations. For instance, the Palestinian issue is a security concern for many states in the region, particularly within the Mashrek, and forms the Palestinian-Israeli security complex. The Israeli-Palestinian security complex can be defined as including the Palestinians, Israel and the countries that have been at war with Israel and that had, or still have, parts of their territory under Israeli occupation (Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon). Similarly, the rivers Euphrates and Tigris form the security issue for the three user states, Turkey, Syria and Iraq, and form a security complex. Being an area where major international political and economic challenges are being played out, the instability sometimes comes from outside of the Middle East, creating tensions that are shaping the global environment in which other state actors operate.²²

²¹ Iranian nuclear threat, the conflicts between Israel and its neighbors and terrorists that are spread cross borders (Hezbollah is present in Syria and Lebanon) and the Palestine-Israel conflict (Jerusalem, West Bank, Gaza strip), ISIL spreading furthermore (already in Egypt, Gaza, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Syria).

²² The global powers have a history of involving in the Middle East for economic, political and security purposes. The US has been involved military, political and economically

RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINA AND POWERFUL COUNTRIES IN DIFFERENT REGIONS

In current global political and security environment, besides the US, China is the only power capable to practice its maritime and continental dimensions of power. Other great powers with their geopolitical, geo-economics and geostrategic projects for Eurasia consider the OBOR initiative as a security threat. Russia, the US, India, and Japan are all important players in the OBOR countries and could use their power to block China's plans. Since 2015 the overall relationship between *China and the US* has remained stable and even made new progress. The two countries have made steady progress in the practical cooperation in various fields, and maintained close communication and coordination on major regional and global issues like climate change, the Korean and Iranian nuclear issues, Syria, and Afghanistan. Despite developed economic relations, China and the US deepened the relationship rivalry and a different view of the situation in the Asia Pacific region. China insists on establishing a model of relations between big powers, which means avoiding confrontation, mutual respect and cooperation on the win-win basis. China does not observe in good faith the US alliances with Japan, South Korea and the Philippines, as well as friendly relations with Thailand, Taiwan and Australia. In this sense, it is making efforts to, as a factor of reduction of the US influence in the region, which forms a homogeneous and sealed *Economic Community of Southeast Asia*, expand economic impact on the state Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), establishing transport routes directly from the US west coast and enhance impact on both Korea. It is possible that China will try to create a military-political alliance of Southeast Asian nations relying on the ASEAN countries. China-US military relations have generally maintained a momentum of steady progress.²³ Since 2015, the two militaries have

in the region. Other countries are involved only military and economically – Russia, UK, Germany, France; while China and India benefit from the economy of the region.

²³ In 2015 they held their Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster-Relief Field Exercise and Disaster Management Exchanges in China and the US and participated in Khaan Quest 2015 multinational peacekeeping military exercise and Exercise Kowari, a China-US-Australia trilateral military exercise. In January 2016 a working meeting of officials from the two ministries of defence was held in Beijing, and in May a video conference was held between the Chinese Chief of the Department of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Central Military Commission and the US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. From

continued to improve their two mutual-confidence-building mechanisms: the Mutual Notification of Major Military Activities²⁴ and the Rules of Behaviour for the Safety of Air and Maritime Encounters²⁵.

Over the years, *China-Russia* relations have gained healthy, stable and fast development, made new achievements through joint efforts and can be defined as a rival-partner.²⁶ With the battle for dominance in the region of Eurasia, Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, two countries are developing partnerships to strengthen counterbalance pressure from the West. China and Russia are found in all major integration processes, above all in the format of BRICS, the SCO and the Forum “Peace ocean-Asia economic cooperation”. The two sides continue to strengthen their cooperation within regional multilateral frameworks, safeguard the purposes and principles of the Charter of the UN and universally recognized norms governing international relations, uphold the achievements of WW II and international justice, advance the process of a political solution to regional hotspot issues, and contribute more positive energy to the regional peace, stability, development and prosperity. Since 2015, the *China-India* strategic partnership for peace and prosperity has been further deepened in various areas and stayed in close communication and coordination on regional and international issues. They have cooperated on climate change, energy and food security, reform of international financial and monetary institutions and global governance. The relations between the Chinese and Indian militaries remain healthy and stable in general, with increasingly close communication and pragmatic cooperation in greater breadth and depth.²⁷ Cooperation in

late June to early August 2016, Chinese Navy Fleet 153 participated in RIMPAC 2016, a joint military exercise in Hawaii. In July and August the same year, the US Chief of Naval Operations and Chief of Staff of the Army each made a visit to China.

²⁴ For the whole document see Internet: https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/141112_MemorandumOfUnderstandingOnNotification.pdf

²⁵ For the whole document see Internet: https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/141112_MemorandumOfUnderstandingRegardingRules.pdf

²⁶ In 2001 the two countries signed the Good-Neighborly Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, which established the idea of a lasting friendship in legal form. In 2011 the bilateral relationship was upgraded to a comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination based on equality, mutual trust, mutual support, common prosperity and lasting friendship. In 2014 the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination entered a new stage.

personnel training, professional exchanges and other fields is being carried out. The two sides have also conducted border defence cooperation, which plays a positive role in maintaining peace and tranquillity in the border areas between China and India.²⁸ *China-Japan* relations have maintained a considerable economic cooperation, despite complex and sensitive factors in bilateral relations have been disrupted following a dispute over islands in the South China Sea. The difficulties in bilateral relations are the result of Japan's unilateral resolution of the status Diaoyu Islands (Senkaku). Japan has a series of actions (appointment of the islands in the archipelago, landing in the land of the island, their purchase from the Kurihara family, etc.) threatening bilateral relations. It is estimated that the islands possess the great natural resources of oil and gas, although neither side had conducted research. China is determined to be no compromise on this point, but for stability and peace in the region is ready for joint exploitation of resources.

CHINA'S POSITION ON DIFFERENT HOT SPOTS

The Korean Peninsula nuclear issue is important for China which considers that the denuclearization of the peninsula, its peace and stability, should be settled through dialogue and consultation. It has made tremendous efforts to facilitate the process of denuclearization of the peninsula, safeguard the overall peace and stability there, and realize an early resumption of the Six-Party Talks.²⁹ Concerning nuclear tests and launched missiles of various types made by South Korea, China has made clear its opposition to such actions and supported the relevant Security Council resolutions to prevent the further pursuit of nuclear weapons. Despite clear opposition from relevant countries including China, the US and the South Korea announced the decision to start

²⁷ Eight rounds of defence and security consultation and six joint military anti-terrorism training exercises have been held so far.

²⁸ Military leaders of the two sides visited each other in 2015 and 2016, and reached an important consensus on strengthening pragmatic cooperation between the two militaries and working together to maintain peace and stability in the border areas.

²⁹ The six-party talks aim to find a peaceful resolution to the security concerns as a result of the North Korean nuclear weapons program and its withdrawing from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2003. There has been a series of meetings with six participating states in Beijing: South Korea, North Korea, United States of America, China, Japan, Russia.

and accelerate the deployment of the THAAD anti-ballistic missile system in the South Korea. Such an act would seriously damage the regional strategic balance and the strategic security interests of China and other countries in the region, and run counter to the efforts for maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. China opposes the US and South Korea deployment of the THAAD anti-ballistic missile system in the South Korea, and strongly both sides to stop this process. At present, the counter-terrorism situation is undergoing complex changes. Several regions face severe security challenges posed by violent and extremist ideologies spreading at an ever-faster pace, more active terrorist and extremist forces, rising threats from cyber terrorism, and frequent violent terrorist activities, in particular, the infiltration of international terrorist organizations and the inflow of foreign fighters. The Chinese government opposes terrorism in all forms and calls on the international community to cooperate in fighting terrorism on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the UN and other universally recognized norms governing international relations. Additionally, there should be no double standard in fighting terrorism, which should not be associated with any particular country, ethnicity or religion. Since 2015, China has cooperated with a number of neighbouring countries in combating terrorism-related human smuggling. These efforts inflicted a heavy blow to the illegal human smuggling networks of the “Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement”³⁰ and other terrorist organizations, and effectively countered and prevented the infiltration efforts of the ETIM and other terrorist organizations. China has held bilateral anti-terrorism consultations with the US, Russia, Canada, the United Kingdom, India, Pakistan, the South Korea and Indonesia, hosted the *13th ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-terrorism and Transnational Crimes*, and promoted cooperation on combating Internet-spread violent and terrorist audios/videos and cross-border terrorist activities. In addition, by taking an active part in the *APEC Counter-terrorism Working Group*, the *Global Counter-terrorism Forum* and the *ASEAN plus China Meeting on Transnational Crime* at ministerial level, China has strengthened exchanges in anti-terrorism cooperation. China, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan have established a coordination mechanism on counter-terrorism cooperation among the military

³⁰ The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) is a Muslim separatist group founded by militant Uighurs, members of the Turkic-speaking ethnic majority in northwest China’s Xinjiang province.

forces of the four countries, aimed at conducting coordination on situation analysis, verification of clues, sharing of intelligence, capacity building, joint training and personnel training, and providing mutual assistance. Maritime cooperation is a key part of building the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. China and the ASEAN countries conducted a series of cooperative events on maritime security, scientific research and environmental protection.³¹ The overall maritime situation is characterized by frequent cases of piracy, smuggling and drug trafficking. Misunderstandings and lack of mutual trust among some countries about traditional security issues also pose risks to maritime security. Maintaining maritime security is the shared responsibility of all countries in different regions, and serves the common interests of all parties. Strengthening cooperation and jointly tackling challenges with all relevant parties to maintain maritime stability is a proper way to reach maritime security. China is actively involved in international cooperation in combating transnational organized crimes and maintains sound cooperation with the UN and other international and regional organizations. It has facilitated law-enforcement and security cooperation along the Mekong River and conducted multiple joint actions with the Southeast Asian countries in combating transnational crimes, and effectively fought against human trafficking, telecom fraud, economic crimes and drug-related crimes that are prevalent in the region. China is a supporter and an active participant in international efforts to ensure cyber security as an issue that should be used to promote economic and social development and maintain international stability. China has continued to promote cyber security within the UN framework, been deeply involved in the process and has continuously strengthened bilateral dialogues and practical cooperation on cyber security with all countries.

CONCLUSION

China is more frequently presented as a great power, with a historical role in the international arena, given by its size, culture and economy. China's

³¹ China and Thailand conducted a scientific expedition in the Andaman Sea, and held the Fourth Joint Committee Meeting on Maritime Cooperation. China and Malaysia signed the Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the China-Malaysia Joint Oceanographic Research Center.

foreign policy could be described as a sum between the “neighbourhood diplomacy” and “great powers diplomacy”. In this context, the OBOR initiative seems appropriate for the present political and economic development of China, together with its considerations regarding the international relations. However, this strategy is exposed to several risks that exist in regions along OBOR. Until now, the OBOR initiative seems better articulated than other similar projects if we consider its soft power and other diplomatic activities, its strategic and planning and the financial resources. The Chinese investment in countries along OBOR may be exposed to regional turmoil and conflicts, terrorism and religious conflicts. It is worth noting that the Chinese enterprises investing overseas have yet to devise a comprehensive security strategy for dealing with such risks. They currently rely mainly on Chinese consular and diplomatic protection, which are certainly inadequate safeguards against major threats such as terrorism and ethnic and sectarian religious violence.

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