

# The Creative Development of Chinese Diplomatic Theory for the New Era

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Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era. Xi Jinping, as General Secretary of the CPC who stands at a new historical starting point and keeping the “two centenary goals”<sup>1</sup> in mind, has formulated a series of new concepts, new proposals and new initiatives, which constitute the Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy.<sup>2</sup> The Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy reflects dialectical and historical materialism and contains the philosophical thought of the finest traditional Chinese culture. Based on the scientific judgement of China’s historical orientation and the prevailing trend of world development, the Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy advocates a group of ideas such as “profound changes unseen in a century,” “a community with a shared future for mankind,” “global network of partnerships,” and “jointly building the Belt and Road.” The Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy thus meets the requirements dictated by the nature and direction of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics and has greatly enriched the theories of Chinese diplomacy and of international relations.

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1 The “two centenary goals” are to finish building a moderately prosperous society in all respects by the time the Communist Party of China marks its centenary and to build China into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, and harmonious by the time the People’s Republic of China celebrates its centenary.

2 Yang Jiechi, “Promote Major-Country Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics under the Guidance of the Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy,” *Qiushi*, No.17, 2019. p.28.

## Profound Changes Unseen in a Century: New Judgement on International Situation and its Future Development

In his speech at the Central Conference on Work Relating to Foreign Affairs held in June 2018, General Secretary Xi Jinping stated: “At present, China is in its best developing period since the beginning of modern times. Meanwhile, the world is experiencing profound changes unseen in a century. The former and the latter are interwoven and confronting each other.”<sup>3</sup> The idea of “profound changes unseen in a century” is a scientific judgement and accurate understanding of the international situation and its future development<sup>4</sup> and gives a clear answer to the question of the times, namely how to view the world today. It helps us grasp the historical trends and points out the direction of how to seize this important period of strategic opportunity.<sup>5</sup>

The scientific judgement and accurate understanding of the international situation and its future development has always been a major foundation on which Chinese leaders developed the medium- and long-term strategic goals for the country. After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the first generation of Chinese leaders, in the context of the Cold War and suffering the blockade imposed by Western countries, established an independent foreign policy of peace, advocated basic norms of international relations centered on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, firmly opposed colonialism, hegemonism and power politics, and forged strong ties with Third World countries, thus laying the foundation for New China’s diplomacy. On the other hand, the newly-born People’s Republic of China had also lost the strategic opportunity of development in this period

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3 “Following the Guidance of the Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy to Advance China’s Major-Country Diplomacy in the New Era,” *People’s Daily*, June 24, 2018.

4 Gao Fei, “China’s Diplomatic Options in the Face of Profound Global Changes,” *China International Studies*, No.6, 2019, p.26.

5 Ruan Zongze, “Thorough Grasp of Theoretical and Practical Significance of the Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy,” *China International Studies*, No.1, 2020, p.16.

due to its false judgement of domestic and foreign situations, which was a profound lesson.<sup>6</sup> At the end of the 1970s, in the midst of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, Deng Xiaoping made the important strategic judgement that peace and development are two major prominent issues of global strategic significance. China subsequently made a comprehensive adjustment to its domestic and foreign policies and made full use of the external environment to further promote its reform and opening-up. In this way China has made remarkable achievements. The identification of peace and development as the two overarching themes of the times has been consistent since it was first coined in the report delivered at the 13th CPC National Congress, with little change made so far. The report at the 19th CPC National Congress stated that “The world today is undergoing tremendous changes and adjustments. Peace and development remain the main themes of the present era.”

Since the 16th CPC National Congress, when assessing the external environment for its development, the Chinese government has used “period of strategic opportunity,” a concept imbued with a sense of history. The report of the 18th CPC National Congress reaffirmed that “an examination of both the current international and domestic environments shows that China remains in an important period of strategic opportunity for its development, a period in which much can be achieved.”<sup>7</sup> In the new era, although the connotations and conditions of the period of strategic opportunity have changed significantly, China still adheres to this conclusion. The report of the 19th CPC National Congress reaffirmed that “both China and the world are in the midst of profound and complex changes. China is still in an important period of strategic opportunity for development; the prospects are bright but the challenges are severe.” The proposal and development of the concept of “period of strategic opportunity”

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6 Zhu Feng, “China’s Period of Strategic Opportunity in the Next Decade: Do We Have to Make New Choices?” *China International Studies*, No.2, 2014, pp.10-11.

7 Hu Jintao, *Firmly March on the Path of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive to Complete the Building of a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects — Report Delivered at the 18th CPC National Congress*, People’s Publishing House, 2012, p.11.

reflects the strategic judgement made by past generations of Chinese leaders, who have reviewed the historical progress from the past to the present and the future, grasped the essence and overall picture of various international phenomena, and calmly analyzed China's position and role in the evolution of the world structure. It mirrors not only China's views on the situation at home and abroad, but also the strategic confidence of the CPC and the Chinese government to better balance internal and international imperatives and seize development opportunities.

However, world development has always been a comprehensive result of interweaving and interaction of various contradictions.<sup>8</sup> Past declaration that China was in a “period of strategic opportunity” was based on the international situation at that time, and particularly on the perspective of China's own development, which did not fully reflect the new changes in the international situation and the new challenges facing mankind. Nowadays, world multi-polarization and economic globalization are deepening, cultural diversity is increasing, and an information society is emerging. The Fourth Industrial Revolution is making robust progress. While enjoying a highly developed material civilization, human beings are also facing the threat of global problems such as climate change, environmental deterioration, and terrorism. The collective rise of developing countries, especially the emerging economies represented by China, has led to the transformation of international power configuration and world order. At the same time, with the increasingly fierce competition among major powers, the world faces the return of geopolitical competition, and the growing trends of nationalism, populism, and protectionism. There are still uncertainties in the future world order, and the coalition against hegemony is also confronting new challenges.<sup>9</sup> While China has become an important force influencing the trend of great changes in the world, it has also become the main target in the eyes of the United States and some other Western countries, which has

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8 Xi Jinping, “Strive to Make New Advances in Major-Country Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics,” *Xinhua*, June 23, 2018.

9 Richard Sakwa, “Beyond the Clash of World Orders,” *Russian Studies*, No.5, 2019, p.3.

led some people to question whether China is still in the period of strategic opportunity. In this context, General Secretary Xi Jinping stated: “The world is experiencing profound changes unseen in a century and no country can be immune to it,” “We are faced with rare historic opportunities and also the test of a series of major risks.”<sup>10</sup> It can be seen that in the face of once-in-a-century changes, Chinese leaders have a very clear understanding and judgment of the historical opportunities and risks by concluding that “the world is experiencing profound changes unseen in a century.” This conclusion provides a new theoretical perspective for us to observe the world and grasp the theme of the times more accurately and fully. At the same time, it also develops and complements the judgement that China is still in the “important period of strategic opportunity.” According to the views of General Secretary Xi on the international situation, in the foreseeable future, China will still be in an important period of strategic opportunity. The difference is that in the past, our opportunities “mainly came from a more favorable international environment,” while in the future, there will be more risks and challenges. Whether this period of strategic opportunity can be well maintained “depends on China’s ability to transform external pressure into a driving force for accelerating development, reform and opening-up, and the ability to actively shape the international economic environment.”<sup>11</sup>

“The world is experiencing profound changes unseen in a century” refers to the “changes” in the trend of the world’s structural evolution caused by the development of politics, economy, and science and technology. In other words, the power shift from developed countries to emerging countries have caused “profound changes” in the international balance of power; the scientific and technological revolution has led to “profound changes” in the form of competition among countries; growing populism contributes to “profound changes” in the adjustment of the global order; deglobalization

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10 “Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech at the Opening Ceremony of Training for Young and Middle-Aged Cadres at the Central Party School (Chinese Academy of Governance),” *Xinhua*, September 3, 2019.

11 Wang Yiming, “The Trade War Launched by the US Cannot Halt China’s Historical Period of Opportunity,” *Qiushi*, No.19, 2018, p.59.

triggers the “profound changes” in the structure of global governance.<sup>12</sup> The “profound changes” also include the chaos caused by the rise of instability and uncertainty. When the whole world goes around in a confused state in the face of “profound changes” and “chaos,” General Secretary Xi Jinping’s important thesis provides a new theoretical perspective for the international community to observe the changes in the world situation and accurately grasp the theme of the times. The important assertion also points out the direction for us in deepening our understanding and grasping the “important period of strategic opportunity.”<sup>13</sup>

### **Community with a Shared Future for Mankind: New Conceptual Construction of Global Governance and Common Development**

Since the idea of building a community with a shared future for mankind was clearly stated at the 18th CPC National Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping has highlighted the concept on many occasions: as members of the same global village, we all have a stake in each other’s future; as no country alone can address the many challenges facing mankind, the world calls for global cooperation to build a community with a shared future for mankind. The idea, proposed by Xi from an elevated historical point of view, is an important component of the Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and serves as a significant theoretical contribution to the world from contemporary China and a distinctive banner under which China is leading the trend of the times and the progress of human civilization.<sup>14</sup>

The idea of building a community with a shared future for mankind transcends the traditional Western global governance concept and political

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12 Zhu Feng, “A Review of Recent Academic Studies on ‘Great Changes Not Seen in a Century’,” *Frontiers*, No.7, 2019.

13 Yang Jiechi, “Promote Major-Country Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics under the Guidance of the Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy.”

14 Yang Jiechi, “Working to Build a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind,” *People’s Daily*, November 19, 2017.

and economic systems. Globalization is essentially a worldwide interactive system, and its most important driving force is capital's pursuit of profits and market. However, the latest wave of globalization has witnessed two major changes: the transformation of industrial capitalism into financial capitalism, and the development from a manufacturing-based industry into post-industrial capitalism, which has resulted in structural, economic, and political imbalances and led to a serious loss of national economic sovereignty. It is difficult even for the United States to restrain the outflow of capital, technology, and talent, which in turn has caused various problems such as capital flight, underemployment, social injustice, and the weakening of government, leading to a crisis of state power.<sup>15</sup> At the international level, policy coordination among countries is far behind the process of globalization, resulting in the Asian financial crisis in 1997-1998 and the global financial crisis of 2008. Western governance concepts, systems and models have revealed various flaws. The motivation and willingness of Western countries such as the United States and EU members to provide public goods for global governance have obviously been insufficient. The international order and international system on which countries depend for survival and development are facing the risk of collapse.

On the contrary, China's comprehensive national strength has increased rapidly since the reform and opening-up, and the socialist system has become increasingly prominent. On our one globe, all the countries face the same problems. Amid the crisis of global governance, the Chinese people believe that China will do well only when the world does well, and vice versa. For this reason, China actively promotes the construction of a community with a shared future for all mankind and takes the initiative to guide the healthy development of economic globalization. Building a community with a shared future for mankind is a well-rounded and systematic proposal which is shown in the five following aspects. Politically, it advocates mutual respect and consultation on an equal footing, opposes the Cold

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15 Zheng Yongnian, *China's Model: Experience and Challenges*, CITIC Press, 2016, pp.3-20.



War mentality and power politics, and embraces a new approach to state-to-state relations, one that features dialogue rather than confrontation and seeks partnerships rather than alliances. In terms of security, the proposal calls for settling disputes through dialogue and resolving differences through consultation, coordinating responses to traditional and nontraditional threats, and opposing terrorism in all its forms. In the economic sphere, the proposal calls for a spirit of partnership in liberalizing and facilitating trade and investment, and making economic globalization more open, inclusive, balanced, and beneficial to all. The proposal respects cultural diversity and approaches cross-cultural communication by replacing estrangement with exchange, clashes with mutual learning, and a sense of superiority with mutual coexistence. The proposal emphasizes eco-friendliness, cooperation in tackling climate change, and the protection of our planet, a home for all humanity.<sup>16</sup> Based on the common interests and long-term development of human beings, the above-mentioned thoughts represent a comprehensive solution to address both the symptoms and root causes of the problems facing globalization and global governance.

Building a community with a shared future for mankind is a new development of China's diplomatic practice and international relations theory. In today's world, emerging market countries represented by China are rising rapidly, constantly changing the balance of international forces, and increasingly reshaping the theory of international relations. The Western-centric view which takes Western values as its main orientation is unable to solve many of the problems facing the world today. For example, the "clash of civilizations" theory even intensifies the division and schism in the world. The international community urgently needs a new concept of global governance and a more just and reasonable international system and world order.<sup>17</sup> The People's Republic of China, since its founding, has actively promoted the construction of peaceful and stable international relations and a just and reasonable international order. China has

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16 Yang Jiechi, "Working to Build a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind."

17 *Ibid.*



successfully put forward the important diplomatic ideas such as the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, “the road of peaceful development,” and “building a harmonious world.” Nowadays, faced with the profound shifts unseen in a century, Xi Jinping has conformed to the trend of the times and has put forward the new idea of building a community with a shared future for mankind, which is a new development based on the important diplomatic thoughts of New China in all its periods, and the lessons from the achievements of international relations theory and practice (such as the European Union and ASEAN regional communities). This idea charts a direction and realistic path of common development, common progress, common security, and common prosperity for the confused international relations and the countries in the world.<sup>18</sup> As the name suggests, a community with a shared future for mankind is a community of shared future based on a sense of solidarity. In essence, human civilizations are related and complement one another. The future and destiny of every nation and country are closely linked. We should meet challenges together and share weal and woe, and we should strive to build the planet where we were born and grew up into a harmonious family, and turn the yearning of people all over the world for a better life into reality. For this reason, Xi Jinping has introduced a new security concept that emphasizes joint and comprehensive measures and cooperation in ensuring sustainable security. He has proposed to create a security environment of fairness and justice built and shared by all. He has also advocated building a world of universal security free from fear; advancing economic globalization and making it more open, inclusive, balanced, and beneficial based on the idea of common interest, and striving to build a world of common prosperity void of poverty; promoting exchanges among different civilizations that seek common grounds while shelving differences and uphold mutual learning, and initiating joint efforts to build an open and inclusive world

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18 “Ideological Innovation and Theoretical Contribution of the Community with a Shared Future for Mankind: Interview with Yu Hongjun, former Vice Minister of the International Department of CPC Central Committee,” *Globe Biweekly*, No.10, 2018, p.76.

void of reclusiveness; and realizing the harmonious coexistence between human beings and nature, and building a clean and beautiful world with picturesque landscape and clear water.<sup>19</sup>

The concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind is advocated in the Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy in view of the ever close ties between China and the world. With a sense of global responsibility, the concept demonstrates the vision of China as a major country to synergize its own development with the common development of the world. Based on the notion of *tianxia* (all under Heaven) in traditional Chinese culture, the concept interconnects the practice of community consciousness in Marxism and in international relations, inherits the essence of the diplomatic practice of New China, and provides important public goods for the international community. China has worked to build a community with a shared future with specific countries such as Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar, and within specific regions or organizations such as Asia, Latin America, Africa, the Arab states, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. With the active practice of bilateral and multilateral diplomacy mentioned above, China's idea of building a community with a shared future for mankind has been recognized and affirmed by the international community, including the United Nations. It has gradually developed into a basic principle for international relations and exchanges. It is generally regarded as a new concept of order and values proposed by the non-Western world.

As the initiator of a community with a shared future for mankind, China is steadily playing a leading role in putting the idea into practice. Through the innovation of international cooperation mechanisms, China and the international community are working together to promote the development of global governance system in a more just and reasonable direction, and to transform the concept of a community with a shared future into the common value or belief of mankind.

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19 Xi Jinping, "Working Together to Build a Better World—Keynote Address by H.E. Xi Jinping At the CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-Level Meeting in Beijing on December 1, 2017," *Xinhua Daily*, December 2, 2017.

## Global Network of Partnerships: Advancing China's Diplomatic Agenda in a Comprehensive Way

Partnership is a cooperative relationship established between countries to seek common interests. It is a beneficial state of mutual respect, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, seeking common political and economic interests, and maintaining and promoting the development of bilateral relations.<sup>20</sup> A partnership is not as strong as an alliance or league, but it represents closer ties than the normal relationship between countries. For the parties involved, it is a question of building a long-term, complementary, and equal cooperative relationship. Partnership has been a trend in the development of interstate relations since the end of the Cold War. Since China and Brazil established the first strategic partnership in 1993, the concept of partnership has been used by China to define bilateral relations. With China improving its diplomacy, building partnerships across the globe has become a key task of China's all-round international cooperation and serves as a political basis for building a community with a shared future for mankind. It also provides a new means of communication between countries and serves as a useful supplement to the theory of international cooperation and integration.

The partnership ranking established by China includes cooperative partners, constructive partners, comprehensive partners, strategic partners, strategic cooperative partners, comprehensive strategic cooperative partners, etc. The variety of partnerships involves different levels, features and functions, and defines the closeness of relationships with different countries. In line with its independent foreign policy of peace, China's diplomacy has embarked on a new path of seeking partnerships instead of forming alliances. The principle that partnership "does not target an imagined enemy or any third party" is the historical wisdom summed up by China's diplomatic experience and has its direct predecessor in Deng Xiaoping's strategic

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20 Su Hao, "The 'Partnership' Framework of China's Diplomacy," *World Affairs*, No.5, 2000, p.11.

decision with regard to the Soviet Union in the 1980s. “Comrade Deng Xiaoping summed up the historical lessons of the international communist movement over the past decades,” Qian Qichen, former Vice Premier and Foreign Minister of China, recalled, “Deng Xiaoping stressed that neither alliance nor confrontation was a successful way in maintaining Sino-Soviet Relations. Sino-Soviet relations should be based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. The normalization of China-Soviet relations is not directed against any third country and thus does no harm to the interest of the third party; instead it is a normal type of state-to-state relationship built on the basis of non-alignment, non-confrontation and no targeting any third country.”<sup>21</sup> Later, the diplomatic idea of “non-alignment, non-confrontation, and no targeting any third country” was used to build a new model of major-country relationship.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping has looked to the growing trend of interdependence among all countries in the world and directed all departments of the diplomatic front to promote the construction of a new type of international relations and the well-rounded development of China’s relations with different countries. China is playing a more active role in building a network of partnerships covering all countries and regions of the world. The report delivered at the 19th CPC National Congress gives a top-level design of China’s diplomacy: “China has actively developed global partnerships and expanded the convergence of interests with other countries. China will promote coordination and cooperation with other major countries and work to build a framework for major country relations featuring overall stability and balanced development. China will deepen relations with its neighbors in accordance with the principle of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit, and inclusiveness and the policy of forging friendship and partnership with its neighbors. China will, guided by the principle of upholding justice while pursuing shared interests

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21 Qian Qichen, “Ending the Past and Opening Up the Future: Recall Deng Xiaoping’s Strategic Decision to Realize the Normalization of Sino-Soviet Relations,” *New China’s Diplomacy*, Vol.5, World Affairs Press, 1999, p.12.

and the principle of sincerity, real results, affinity, and good faith, work to strengthen solidarity and cooperation with other developing countries.” At present, China has established different forms of partnerships with more than 100 countries and applied them to international coalitions and regional cooperation, thus setting up a comprehensive, multilevel, and multifaceted global network of partnerships. As early as 2003, China and the leaders of the 10 ASEAN countries signed a joint declaration in Bali, announcing the establishment of a strategic partnership for peace and prosperity. In the same year, China established a strategic partnership with the EU and a new strategic partnership with the Organization of African Unity in 2006. During the China-Latin America and the Caribbean Countries Leaders’ Meeting in 2014, the two sides agreed to build a comprehensive and cooperative partnership featuring equality, mutual benefit and common development and work together to build a Five-in-One new pattern of China-Latin America relations.<sup>22</sup> In addition, China is committed to building strategic cooperative relations with Arab states and establishing strategic partnership with the Pacific island countries that have established diplomatic relations with the PRC. In the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, China has forged a constructive partnership of non-alignment, non-confrontation and no targeting any third party. These actions are innovations in the theory and practice of international relations, which have created a new model of regional cooperation. Meanwhile, China has expanded areas of common interests to enrich its relations with all other countries. China and Russia, by vigorously deepening their comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination, have set a good example of mutual trust and cooperation between major countries. China reached important consensus with the EU on building a partnership for peace, growth, reform and civilization, and agreed with African countries on the new positioning of China-Africa relations as a comprehensive strategic partnership. From June to October

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22 The Five-in-One new pattern of China-Latin America relations is based on sincere mutual political trust, win-win cooperation in economy and trade, collaboration on international affairs, mutual learning in cultural exchanges, and mutual promotion through comprehensive cooperation and bilateral relations.

2019 alone, there have been five examples of bilateral relations in China's diplomatic discourse: the China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era, the China-Japan bilateral relations that meet the requirements of the new era, the China-Bulgaria strategic partnership, the China-Kazakhstan permanent comprehensive strategic partnership, and the China-Nepal strategic partnership of cooperation featuring ever-lasting friendship for development and prosperity.

In handling international relations and building a global network of partnerships, China has always pursued win-win cooperation. While Western theories of international relations worship the law of the jungle which leaves the weak at the mercy of the strong and regards the zero-sum game and a winner-takes-all mentality as an unalterable tenet, China has rejected the obsolete zero-sum mindset and sought win-win cooperation, trying to expand the areas of common interest of all the parties. "No eternal allies, no perpetual enemies" is the catchphrase of traditional Western international relations, while China's new diplomatic idea has gone beyond the concept and helped forge a new path of state-to-state relations featuring partnership and cooperation instead of alliance and confrontation.

## **The Belt and Road Initiative: New Model of All-Round Opening-Up and New Platform for International Cooperation**

Accurately grasping the new trend of China's opening-up and the new demands of international cooperation, General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road in 2013. The Belt and Road Initiative is not only the general plan for China's opening-up and international cooperation in the long run, but also an important platform for promoting the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind.<sup>23</sup> As for transnational regional cooperation, existing theories and practices basically fall into two major

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23 Yang Jiechi, "Promote Major-Country Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics under the Guidance of the Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy."

categories: the first type emphasizes the dominant or majority decision of great powers, advocates forceful promotion and concerted action, and adopts a model based on the signing of treaties and transfer of national sovereignty; the second type advocates “small horse pulling big cart,” which requires unanimity based on consensus, autonomy and voluntariness, prefers a gradual approach to accommodate different parties’ needs, and tends to adopt the mode of informal consultation and non-institutionalized cooperation.<sup>24</sup> The Belt and Road Initiative, which was creatively put forward by General Secretary Xi, is a new paradigm of regional cooperation and common development of a larger scope, with higher standards and with a more profound impact. Since its inception, the Belt and Road construction has moved from concept to action, and from vision to reality. In 2019 alone, China and 16 countries and international organizations signed a total of 199 documents on Belt and Road cooperation.

First of all, the Belt and Road Initiative is an important platform for China to carry out an all-round opening-up under new historical conditions and for all countries to achieve win-win results. The initiative is not only the product of China’s opening to the outside world, but also a new window for further opening-up. Forty years ago, China’s opening to the outside world was an “introductory” type of opening, that is, by introducing capital, advanced technology and management experience from other countries, especially that of developed Western countries, and utilizing its own resources and labor advantages, China fully released the potential of its factors of production and liberated and promoted its productivity. Nowadays, China is the world’s second-largest economy by nominal GDP, the world’s largest trading country, the world’s largest foreign investment destination, and the world’s second largest investor overseas. With the market, resources and energy, and investment advancing in parallel, China has been deeply integrated with the rest of the world. The opening-up represented by the Belt and Road Initiative is more about China’s “going

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24 Zhang Yesui, “Jointly Building the Belt and Road and Striving for Win-Win Cooperation,” *Qiushi*, No.10, 2015, pp.20-21.



global.” It is about expanding win-win practical cooperation with countries and regions along the Belt and Road routes in different fields and at different levels, and realizing common and sustainable development of relevant countries through industrial capacity cooperation, strategic alignment, and complementarity. China is the initiator and promoter of the Belt and Road Initiative, but the initiative is not closed. Instead, it is a systematic project, which should be jointly built through wide consultation and equal participation to meet the interests of all. In this process, the interests of China and other participating countries are integrated, leading to the formation of a community of common interest, common responsibility, and common destiny. The incorporation of the Belt and Road Initiative into the Party Constitution at the 19th CPC National Congress highlights its significance and demonstrates the CPC’s determination, confidence and courage to advance international cooperation under the initiative. The Belt and Road construction is by no means a short-term project, but a “project of the century” that will benefit the people of all countries. Practice has proven that the Belt and Road Initiative is conducive to integrating the production capacity, technology, capital, resources, and market advantages of participating countries, and carrying out mutually beneficial regional cooperation at a deeper level and on a larger scale. It will not only inject new impetus for China’s reform and opening-up as well as its sustainable development, but also provide new drivers for world economic growth.

Second, the Belt and Road Initiative is an important platform to overcome the negative effects of economic globalization and strive for more development space for developing countries. The current economic globalization has been a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it provides a strong driving force for world economic growth; on the other hand, it widens the global gap between the rich and the poor, making many less-developed countries and regions marginalized. The biggest challenge for developing countries is the bottleneck of infrastructure construction, and the Belt and Road Initiative takes the connectivity of infrastructure as the entry point to usher in an era of modernization and prosperity for developing countries.

Therefore, the Belt and Road Initiative has been welcomed by developing countries.<sup>25</sup> According to the division of labor in the existing global industrial chain, value chain and supply chain, labor-intensive industries are mainly concentrated in developing countries, which has also led to an increasing number of unemployed workers in relevant sectors in developed countries such as the United States and European states and made them into one of the main adherents of anti-globalization. In fact, China is closely linked with one-third to two-thirds of the world's countries through trade in intermediate and finished consumer goods, and is at the center of the global commodity circulation system. It connects the economic cooperation between developed and developing economies, and thus contributes to the double-circulation division of labor system of the global value chain.<sup>26</sup> In this context, the Belt and Road Initiative will make the international trade and investment system more just, reasonable and inclusive, promote more effective allocation of resources on a larger platform, advance economic cooperation among developing countries and between developing and developed countries, and strive for more development space for developing countries.

Third, the Belt and Road Initiative is an important platform for building a community with a shared future for mankind, providing the latter with a launch pad, a driving force, and a support mechanism. China's proposals for building a community with a shared future in Central Asia, ASEAN, Africa, and Latin America have won wide recognition and support from developing countries. Based on the lofty ideals of human common interests and the common progress of civilization, the Belt and Road Initiative is trying to bridge the differences in social system and ideology or in the disposition of resources, and is working to overcome natural geographical barriers. It does not attempt to overturn the existing international order and does not upset any existing financial cooperation

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25 Lin Yifu, "The Belt and Road Promotes the Modernization of Developing Countries," *People's Daily*, September 18, 2015.

26 Zhang Hui, "The Belt and Road: A Chinese Proposal in Global Governance," China Social Sciences Network, December 26, 2017, [http://www.cssn.cn/zx/201712/t20171226\\_3793328.shtml](http://www.cssn.cn/zx/201712/t20171226_3793328.shtml).

or industrial capacity transfer mechanisms. Nor does it redraw spheres of influence or re-establish “bloc building.” The Belt and Road Initiative is in line with the historical trend of globalization, and it will guide countries to explore a new path characterized by mutual respect, mutual support, sharing risks, overcoming difficulties, and mutual benefit, so as to form a new system of international relations that is more just and equitable, more widely accepted and more beneficial to people of all countries.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, the Belt and Road Initiative is a major innovation in the theory and practice of international relations. The Belt and Road international cooperation is an important practice initiated and led by China in shaping a new international order and building a new type of global governance which is fair and equitable. It provides China’s ideas and solutions for addressing global threats, global governance failures, world disorder, and development imbalances.<sup>28</sup> It is rooted in China’s fine traditional culture and embodies the concept of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits expressed in China’s diplomacy. It is an important component of China’s global governance concept in the new era and can effectively address several prominent issues in regional cooperation. The first is the issue of equality. China stresses that all participating countries of the Belt and Road Initiative are equal in political and legal status and all are builders and beneficiaries. The second is the issue of openness. The Belt and Road Initiative is based on intergovernmental cooperation, but local governments, financial institutions, multinational corporations, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations can all participate. The third is the issue of compatibility. The Belt and Road Initiative breaks down barriers between continents and sub-regions, and builds bridges between Eastern and Western countries, countries of the Global North and the South, as well as between different civilizations. It is not only the overall blueprint of China’s


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27 Yu Hongjun, “The Time Significance and Historical Value of the Belt and Road Initiative,” *Global Times*, May 4, 2016.

28 Qin Yaqing and Wei Ling, “New Concept of Global Governance and the Practice of Belt and Road Cooperation,” *Foreign Affairs Review*, No.2, 2018, p.2.

well-rounded opening-up and external cooperation, but also the primary transmission belt for the public goods China provides to the international community.<sup>29</sup> By implementing the initiative, China has played its role as a responsible major country and contributed its wisdom and strength to the reform and development of the global governance system.

## Conclusion

As the fundamental guide to China's foreign affairs in the new era, the Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy is the theoretical achievement of China's contemporary diplomatic practice as it enters the critical historical stage of great national renewal. Under the guidance of the Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, China has worked hard to overcome difficulties in its diplomatic work, resolutely safeguarded its sovereignty, security, and development interests, and actively expanded its diplomatic format in an all-round way, thus opening a new chapter in major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. There has been a further rise in China's international influence, in its ability to inspire, and in its power to shape events, and China has made unremitting efforts to safeguard world peace, promote global development, and maintain the stability of the international order.<sup>30</sup> The leaders of China have accurately understood the "profound changes unseen in a century" in the course of national and global development, and have therefore proposed building a community with a shared future for mankind. China's promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative and leading role in the reform of the global governance system reflect the common value of humanity and point the way forward for the international community. It is of great and far-reaching significance for China's peaceful development and for the prosperity and progress of the world. It has also contributed Chinese wisdom to the development of the theory of international relations. 

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29 Zhang Yesui, "Jointly Building the Belt and Road and Striving for Win-Win Cooperation," p.21.

30 Yang Jiechi, "Promote Major-Country Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics under the Guidance of the Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy," p.26.



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## 5 **The Creative Development of Chinese Diplomatic Theory for the New Era**

*Yan Dexue & Hua Guiping*

Based on the scientific judgement of China's historical orientation and the prevailing trend of world development, the Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy, as reflected in a group of ideas it advocates, meets the requirements dictated by the nature and direction of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. It has also contributed Chinese wisdom to the development of the theory of international relations.

### **How COVID-19 is Changing the World Order**

The COVID-19 novel coronavirus, which has developed into a global pandemic, is bound to have a profound and complex impact on the world order. How is the international community going to address the challenge and what will a Chinese approach look like? To provide our readers with more insights, *China International Studies* has invited six prominent Chinese scholars to share their ideas on the influence of COVID-19 on the world structure, international relations, and globalization.

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