

# The Challenges of Economic Cold-War Thinking for the Belt and Road and Counter Strategies



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## ABSTRACT

Since its inception, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has achieved fruitful results, but it has also been challenged by economic cold war thinking. The mutually beneficial purpose and participatory content of the BRI have been misinterpreted by the economic Cold-War thinking. This challenge has its roots in the economic interests of international monopoly capital, as well as in biases caused by cultural and ideological differences, and in the systemic gaps caused by the vastly different paths of development. To promote the construction of the BRI in response to the challenges of economic Cold-War thinking, one should strengthen the influence of international communication, make the “cake” of common interests bigger and better, and accelerate the BRI construction. Equally important is to improve the mutual benefit mechanism of the BRI. However, with regard to all the deliberate misinterpretations and provocations of the economic Cold-War mentality, it is also necessary to be bold enough to fight and good enough to engage in dialogue, so as to meet challenges and resolve conflicts.

**Keywords:** Belt and Road, Cold War thinking, Economic Challenges, China’s Counter Strategies, globalization.

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## Introduction

AS AN INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED flagship cooperation initiative, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), encompassing both the “Silk Road Economic Belt” and the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road,” has garnered enthusiastic responses from numerous countries and garnered high praise from the global community since its inception in 2013. By June 2023, China had entered into over 230 cooperation agreements pertaining to BRI construction with more than 150 countries and 30 international organizations. These agreements have fostered

comprehensive and cross-disciplinary connectivity among participating nations, furthering the BRI’s objectives. The BRI has become the most popular international public goods project and the largest international cooperation platform in the world, and has been hailed as a “development belt” for the benefit of the world and “a road to happiness” for the people of all countries. However, in the process of promoting the BRI, it has also been challenged by a Cold-War mentality, which has made China a target of suspicion for “setting up a new cooker” and “seeking hegemony”, allegedly provoking economic and ideological confrontation.



November 2022, during inspection work on the China-Russia eastern route natural gas pipeline in Qinhuangdao, northern China's Hebei Province (Photo: CGTN, 2022).

President Xi Jinping once pointed out that “the world is in the midst of a century of changes with accelerated evolution” and the international environment for jointly building the BRI is becoming increasingly complex. “We have to maintain strategic determination and actively respond to challenges” (Xi, 2022, p.496). At the third Belt and Road International Cooperation Summit Forum in 2023, Xi Jinping once again clarified his position and views to the world: “We do not engage in ideological rivalry, geopolitical games, or bloc political confrontation, and we oppose unilateral sanctions, economic coercion or ‘decoupling and breaking the chain’” (FMPRC, 2023). Effectively responding to the challenge of economic Cold War thinking is

important for the smooth progress of the “BRI” construction and the healthy development of the world economy.

### **Economic Cold-War thinking and its manifestations**

Economic Cold-War thinking originated from the stereotypes formed during the confrontation between the two camps of capitalism and socialism, that is, during the Cold War era. At a time when economic globalization and scientific and technological change are rapidly developing and when countries have become closely linked in various fields such as economic trade, investment, and finance, some people in Western countries

are still using the antagonistic concepts of the Cold War era to make ill-intentioned speculations about the development of emerging countries such as China and even to obstruct it, with an extremely negative impact on the economic exchanges and cooperation among countries all over the world.

### **Cold-War Mentality and its Economic Incarnations**

The Cold War was a period from the mid-1940s to the early 1990s in which countries with different ideologies and social systems, namely capitalism and socialism, formed opposing camps that confronted each other politically, economically, militarily, scientifically, technologically, and ideologically without breaking into a world war. The manifestation of the Cold War was that the two camps assisted and co-operated internally in the economic, scientific, technological, and military fields and competed fiercely externally.

**The origin and essence of the Cold War was that the Western capitalist camp, based on ideological bias and competing geopolitical interests, joined forces to combat the development of the socialist camp using economic blockades and embargoes, political isolation, and ideological and cultural penetration.**

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of the socialist camp using economic blockades and embargoes, political isolation, and ideological and cultural penetration.

With the détente between the United States and the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and the subsequent dramatic changes in the Soviet Union, it was widely believed in the academic community that the Cold War era had ended. However, in recent years, with the anti-globalization measures of the Western countries, as well as the economic and trade friction between China and the United States and the emergence of the United States of America's full-scale suppression of China, some scholars believe that the Cold War is not over and even tends to warm up. For example, Professor Cheng Enfu believes that the current state of "cool war" between China and the United States (or even "warm war" tendency), as new form of international relations, is a continuation of the Cold War, with military confrontation as the form of struggle, ideological differences as an important cause, and self-control as a way to avoid a hot war. The difference between the two is that the "cool war" did not involve the emergence of two opposing blocs, a large-scale arms race, or a global struggle for hegemony (Cheng & Yang, 2021).

Whether or not the Cold War still exists, the Cold War mentality does. After the dramatic changes in the Soviet Union, some Western politicians and strategists have continued their habitual strategic thinking of manipulating the world to maintain their hegemony, which has negatively impacted the peaceful development of the world economy. The term "Cold-War thinking" was first used by Japanese-American linguist and politician Samuel Hayakawa (S.I. Hayakawa) in 1964 in *General Semantics And The Cold War Mentality*.



“In recent years, inspired by the ‘clash of civilizations theory’, ‘China threat theory’, ‘comprehensive containment of China theory’, etc., the Cold War mentality and inter-camp conflict have been revived”  
(Figure: Cai Meng/China Daily, 2022).

According to some scholars, the Cold War mentality has the basic features of “hostility to others, zero-sum logic, highlighting ideological contradictions, relying on military deterrence and stressing geopolitical alliance.” In the author’s view, Cold-War thinking refers to the thinking mode that is contrary to the concept of the community of human destiny, which is characterized by the thinking mode of un-

derstanding the world situation and dealing with international relations that have been carried forward from the Cold-War period and overly emphasizes the differences between the two sides of interests and downplays their homogeneity. It specifically refers to the mindset of some government officials, elites, and media in Western countries, who adhere to dichotomous thinking and hold a distrust-

ful attitude towards the development of emerging countries, especially socialist countries, and even advocate active suppression of such thinking. In recent years, as China's economy, science and technology, military power, and international influence have rapidly increased, the Cold-War mentality and confrontation between camps have resurged based on justifications inspired by "the theory of the clash of civilizations", "the theory of the threat of China", "the theory of comprehensive containment of China", etc.

**President Xi Jinping stated at the the 3rd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation that "treating the development of others as a threat and economic interdependence as a risk will not make one's life better or development faster"**

Economic Cold-War thinking is the manifestation of Cold War thinking in international economic relations. It manifests itself in the way that conservative countries treat developing countries, especially emerging market countries, by using ideological command and attacks on political and economic systems as a means of severing the intricate and interdependent economic ties among countries and attempting to impede each other's economic development. President Xi Jinping stated at the the 3rd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation that "treating the development of others as a threat and economic

interdependence as a risk will not make one's life better or development faster" (FMPRC, 2023). Economic globalization is the inevitable result of the expansion of the scope of human interactions and the refinement of the division of labor in society. In turn, economic Cold-War thinking is bound to fail in practice, because it runs counter to the objective laws of economic globalization, artificially restricts the voluntary economic and trade exchanges between peoples, and impedes the natural formation of the international division of labor.

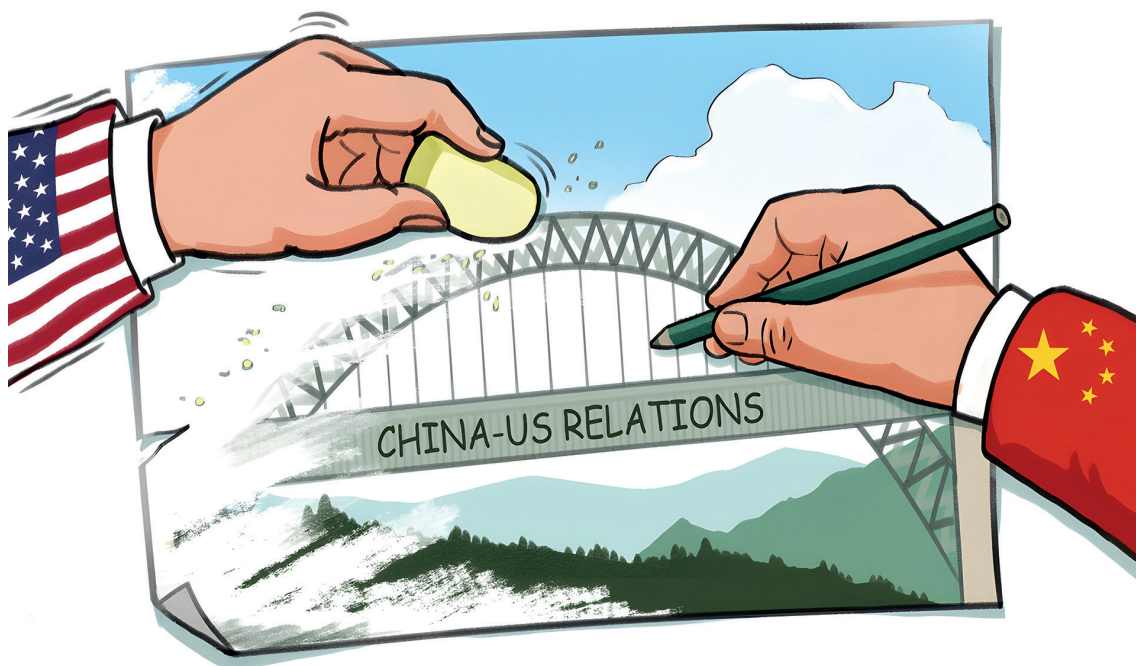
The Chinese government and academics have responded to and criticized the Cold-War mentality. As early as December 1995, Qian Qichen, then Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister of the State Council, pointed out when discussing the characteristics of the international situation that "in international relations, the tendency to adhere to the 'Cold-War mentality' and to promote hegemony and power politics has developed". Nowadays, Foreign Ministry spokespersons have also repeatedly urged the United States and others to abandon the outdated Cold-War zero-sum mentality and ideological prejudices. In the meantime, there is a view that the BRI is a way to break the Cold War mentality. Foreign Ministry spokespersons have highlighted that the Cold War mentality and zero-sum game are no longer in line with the trend of the world's development in the new era. Research on the BRI and the Cold War mentality in the existing literature has shown a clear separation, reflecting the way and attitude of the post-Cold War capitalist camps towards China's role in the transformation of the global order (Niu & Sun, 2019).

### Manifestations of Economic Cold-War Thinking

Before the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, some commentators pointed out that the Cold War between the East and the West was over, but the “economic Cold War” between the United States, Japan, and Europe would begin, and that economic competition among the three parties would become more and more intense, and that the contradictions and struggles in the economic relationship would be even more acute than those during the Cold War. Whilst the United States, Japan, and Europe are all capitalist economies, there is no fundamental difference in ideology. The United States and its allies, namely Japan and Europe, have a wide range of common interests. However, when the U.S. government believes its economic interests

are damaged, it will still use tariffs, forcing the other side to “voluntarily restrict exports” and other means to reverse the trade deficit, maintain its dominant position, and safeguard its monopoly interests. For example, the trade friction between the United States and Japan in the twentieth century, which lasted from the 1950s to the 1990s, involved textiles, steel, semiconductors, television, automobiles, and other industries and ended with Japan’s compromise and retreat, plunging its economy into a prolonged slump.

From the historical manifestations of economic Cold-War thinking, such as the exchange rate trap of the Plaza Accord between the United States and Europe in 1985 and the transfer of European debt from the 2008 US subprime mortgage crisis, it can be seen that Western countries are still engaged in internal conflicts,



There is a clear distinction reflecting the attitudes and approaches of the post-Cold War capitalist camps towards China's constructive role in transforming the global order (Figure: Liu Rui/GT, 2020).

and their treatment of countries fundamentally different in ideology and social systems has become even more severe.

**After the dramatic changes in the Soviet Union, China has become the world's largest socialist country. However, China has always advocated "non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries" and "respect for the development path and social system independently chosen by the people of all countries."**

After the dramatic changes in the Soviet Union, China has become the world's largest socialist country. However, China has always advocated "non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries" and "respect for the development path and social system independently chosen by the people of all countries." However, the academic and strategic circles of some capitalist countries, namely academics, strategists, and politicians, regard China's pursuit of a socialist market economy as a threat and try to curb China's economic development by importing the neoliberal paradigm and launching an "economic war". The blockades, embargoes, tax increases, sanctions, and repressive measures against China and other socialist countries, and even the former socialist countries, are prominent manifestations of the economic Cold-War mentality in today's world.

First, the policy of high-tech blockade against China is maintained. In April 1994, the "Paris

Coordinating Committee" (the Coordinating Committee on Export Controls against Communist Countries, set up by the United States in conjunction with a group of capitalist countries in November 1949) was disbanded. However, in July 1996, 33 countries, mainly Western countries, signed the Wassenaar Agreement in Vienna, Austria, and decided to implement the new control lists and information exchange rules. Moreover, China is still excluded from the existing 42 member countries in order to prevent China from obtaining its existing high-precision and cutting-edge technology through normal economic and trade exchanges and scientific and technological exchanges, and to create obstacles for China's scientific and technological progress in high-tech areas. For example, Germany and Japan have imposed a technology embargo on China for high-end CNC machine tools, and the United States and the Netherlands have prevented China from mastering photolithography technology. In December 2021, the Biden administration blocked eight Chinese companies, including Chinese drone maker DJI Innovations. It imposed export controls on 25 entities, including China's Academy of Military Medical Sciences and 12 other scientific research organizations. It also imposed export controls on 25 entities, including 12 research institutes, including the Chinese Academy of Military Medical Sciences (CAMS). It considered tougher sanctions on China's largest chip maker, Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corporation (SMIC), to limit what it termed "China's access to advanced technology". Subsequently, the United States passed the Chip and Science Act. It brought together Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan to form the "Chip Quadrilateral Alliance" to restrain mainland China and build a "small yard and high wall" in high technology.



In addition, Western countries have also adopted long-term embargoes and blockade measures against socialist countries such as Cuba. Since the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, the Government of the United States has continued to implement a hostile policy against Cuba and has not lifted the embargo against Cuba in its entirety yet.

Secondly, safeguarding unilateral interests in international trade. Statistics released by the Ministry of Commerce’s “China Trade Remedy Information Network” show that from 2001 to 2023, the United States initiated 168 anti-dumping and 111 anti-subsidy trade remedy cases against China, while the European Union initiated 118 anti-dumping and 18 anti-subsidy trade remedy cases against China. As the United States and the European Union refused to recognize China’s market economy status and imposed high tariffs on China by applying the

“substitute country” system in anti-dumping determinations, Chinese enterprises lost billions of dollars in commodity exports. This shows that Western countries unfairly treat China with double standards in the economic and trade fields. During its tenure, the Trump administration of the United States has bypassed the WTO dispute settlement mechanism, launched investigations, and imposed tariffs on Chinese products based on domestic law, provoking and escalating economic and trade friction between China and the United States. In addition, in October and December 2020, the US launched “301 investigations” into Vietnam’s timber, textile and garment, footwear, and exchange rate policies, listed the Vietnamese side as an “exchange rate manipulator” and imposed punitive and high tariffs on Vietnam’s exports to the US. Under the guise of “fair trade”, developed capitalist countries, represented



“The advanced capitalist countries, led by the US, have resorted to trade protectionism and trade bullying, unilaterally creating trade frictions” (Figure: Ma Xuejing/China Daily, 2024).

by the United States, have resorted to trade protectionism and trade bullying, unilaterally creating trade frictions to safeguard their vested interests, thus posing a serious challenge to the actual fairness of international trade.

### Enterprises from socialist and transition countries are targeted on the grounds of generalized national security.

Thirdly, enterprises from socialist and transition countries are targeted on the grounds of generalized national security. In recent years, the United States has generalized the concept of “national security” and abused its national power to suppress Chinese enterprises based on such trumped-up charges as “stealing user information” and “endangering national security”. This has seriously hindered the normal development of their overseas business. The U.S. Department of Commerce has successively put two Chinese communications companies, ZTE and Huawei, on the “Entity List” for export control, interrupted the supply of core components such as chips, banned equipment produced by Chinese companies in the construction of 5G networks, and forced ZTE to pay huge fines and reorganize its board of directors. In 2021, the Trump administration issued an executive order banning U.S. investors from buying from China. In January 2021, the Trump administration issued another executive order banning U.S. investors from investing in dozens of so-called “Chinese military-owned or controlled” companies, including China Mobile, China Unicom, and China

Telecom, and prohibiting Americans from dealing with the developers or controllers of eight Chinese software products, including Alipay, Tencent QQ, and WPS. At the end of 2020, the U.S. Department of Commerce placed 58 Chinese companies on its “Entity List” to restrict exports to them while also placing 45 Russian companies on its “Black List” to suppress them. According to U.S. Commerce Secretary Raymond, more than 700 Chinese companies are now on the U.S. government’s export control list, more than a third of which have been added since the Biden administration took office.

These arbitrary and unreasonable practices are the very embodiment of the economic Cold-War mentality, which has given rise to pessimistic expectations of “decoupling”, “breaking the chain” and even the outbreak of a “new Cold War” between China and the United States. In this regard, China has made it clear that it rejects decoupling and firmly opposes the so-called “new Cold War” artificially created by individual Western government officials, as President Xi Jinping pointed out in a special message at the World Economic Forum’s “Davos Agenda” dialogue: “To engage in a ‘small circle’ and a ‘new cold war’ in the international arena, to exclude, threaten and intimidate others, and to engage in decoupling, cutting off supplies and imposing sanctions at the drop of a hat, and to artificially isolate and even isolate each other, will only push the world towards division and even confrontation.” “In today’s world, if we go down the wrong path of confrontation and antagonism, whether by engaging in a cold war, a hot war, a trade war or a science and technology war, we will ultimately harm the interests of all countries and sacrifice the well-being of our people” (FMPRC, 2021).

## Challenges to the economic Cold-War mentality of the BRI

The challenges to the economic Cold-War thinking encountered by the BRI are mainly reflected in the following: first, various misinterpretations of the purpose and content of the BRI; second, attempts to set up a corresponding mechanism to obstruct the BRI process on the basis of economic Cold-War thinking.

### Intentional misinterpretation of the purpose of the BRI

The BRI has attracted widespread attention and multiple interpretations by foreign academics. Among the various misinterpretations of the BRI, there are two representative views: the BRI is “China’s version of the Marshall Plan” and the BRI is a response to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

The Marshall Plan was a post-World War II plan for the United States to reconstruct Western European countries and provide economic assistance. The

United States became the biggest beneficiary of the plan, through the implementation of which it strengthened its control over Western European countries. The Peterson Institute for Economic Research, the RAND Corporation, and other think tanks have compared the BRI with the Marshall Plan, arguing that China intends to follow the example of the United States in the past, attempting to transform economic power into geopolitical influence, in order to achieve its own will “to be the most influential” in the world. They believe that China intends to follow the example of the United States, attempting to transform its economic power into geopolitical influence to “reshape the international order” according to its wishes (Milton, 2018). According to an article in *The Diplomat*, China’s New Silk Road and the US Marshall Plan are “attempts by a rising global power to use economic power to achieve its foreign policy goals” (Tiezzi, 2014). The promotion of the BRI as China’s version of the Marshall Plan, or “geo-expansionism” is “designed to build momentum to bring in allies against China. It aims to create momentum to draw in allies against China



A China-Europe freight train bound for Budapest, Hungary, leaves a logistics base in Hefei, east China's Anhui Province, on July 29, 2022 (Photo: Xi Jingyu/Xinhua, 2022).

**Figure 1. Foreign programs similar to or intended to compete with BRI in recent years**

<b>Times</b>	<b>Organizer</b>	<b>Element</b>
2015	Japanese	High Quality Infrastructure Partnership Program
2017	United States of America	Indo-Pacific Strategy (Indo-Pacific Economic Framework 2022)
2017	India	Asian Growth Corridor Program
2019	United States of America	Blue Dot Network Project
2021	EU	“Global Gateway” program
2022	G7, the Group of Seven (G7)	Global Infrastructure and Investment Partnership
2023	Selected G20 countries	The “India-Middle East-Europe” economic corridor program

Programs that are similar to or compete with the Belt and Road Initiative, including the year of inception, organizing country and name table (Figure: Shu, 2024).

and incite countries and regions along the route to boycott the BRI”.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a multilateral free trade agreement negotiated under the auspices of the United States with Japan, Canada, and 12 other countries. In January 2015, then-US President Obama said in his State of the Union address that the TPP was designed to prevent “China from setting international economic rules in the most dynamic region of the global economy (Asia).” The U.S. has demonstrated its absolute leadership in the Asia-Pacific region by setting high standards for new international trade rules, with a more pronounced coloring of containment of China (Cui, et al., 2018). In October of the same year, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun published an article entitled “China’s BRI counter the TPP” arguing that “China

and the U.S. around the Asian economic circle of the dominance of the fight has been in full swing”. The above views all regard the relationship between TPP and BRI as antagonistic, competitive, and rival, especially regarding “Belt and Road” as “another stove” in order to fight against the TPP, which “excludes China”. After Trump became president of the United States in 2017, he immediately announced his withdrawal from the TPP, changing from “competing with China for the right to make international economic rules” during the Obama era to more directly creating economic and trade friction between China and the United States, which is a result of the further strengthening of the economic Cold-War mentality. This is the result of the further intensification of economic Cold War thinking.

In addition, some conservative think tanks in the United States consider the BRI as a tool for China to pursue an expansionary foreign policy and stimulate its domestic economic development, stressing and even exaggerating the damage that the BRI may cause to the interests of the United States. They predict that the construction of the BRI will face many difficulties and uncertainties and emphasize and even exaggerate the damage that the BRI may cause to US interests. The above views of these think tanks have a greater influence on the decision-making of the United States Government, prompting the United States Government to respond to the BRI in a “cold-shoulder,” boycott or even obstructionist manner.

### **Obstruction of the BRI construction process**

Since China put forward the BRI, the Governments of the United States, Japan, India, and other countries have put forward programs highly similar to the BRI regarding infrastructure construction and

connectivity in the Asia-Pacific region. However, these so-called reconstruction assistance programs are not based on fair competition and benefitting developing countries but rather deliberately obstruct and target the promotion of the BRI. In particular, the “China-Indian Ocean-Africa-Mediterranean Blue Economic Corridor”, which is part of the maritime cooperation under the BRI is facing fierce strategic competition between China, the United States, and other major powers in the region. China, the United States, and other regional big powers are facing the serious challenge of fierce strategic games.

In May 2015, the Japanese government proposed the “Partnership for High-Quality Infrastructure” program, announcing that it would provide \$110 billion in aid to Asian countries over the next five years for the construction of “high quality” infrastructure and increasing its efforts to promote healthcare, Japan’s emphasis on “high quality” has been a major factor in the promotion of exports of healthcare, digital, green and low-carbon infrastructure. Japan’s emphasis on “high quality” refers to the “low quality”



Photo taken on July 29, 2021 shows the Peljesac Bridge being built by China as part of the Belt and Road Initiative in Mali Ston Bay near Komarna in southern Croatia. The 2.4 km bridge over Mali Ston Bay in the Adriatic Sea connects mainland Croatia and the Peljesac Peninsula of the southernmost Dubrovnik-Neretva County, bypassing a short strip of Bosnia and Herzegovina territory (Photo: Xinhua/Gao Lei, 2021).

of China's aid infrastructure. At the same time, the program's construction content, coverage, strategic objectives, and use of funds are all highly similar to the BRI program. "At the same time, the program's construction content, coverage, strategic objectives, and use of funds are all highly similar to those of the BRI, and its real purpose is to compete with the BRI in a tit-for-tat manner (Mei, 2018).

### **China's foreign ministry refuted this with solid data "The so-called 'One Belt, One Road' creates a debt trap, which is a completely false proposition"**

The Government of India proposed the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) program in May 2017, which "focuses on promoting connectivity between Southeast Asia, South Asia and the African continent, with an emphasis on building maritime corridors linking the continents." Emphasis is placed on the program's environmental friendliness and low cost, as well as its "comparative advantage," which is "based on widely recognized international norms, good governance, the rule of law, openness, transparency and equality" (Chaudry, 2017). The "Asia-Africa Growth Corridor" has a high degree of overlap with the BRI in terms of geographic scope and areas of cooperation, which shows the intention of some political forces in India and Japan to join forces to counterbalance China and weaken the influence of the BRI. Some political forces in India and Japan intend to jointly counterbalance China and reduce the influence of the BRI.

The US Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) proposed the "Blue Dot Network" program in November 2019, which it claims is designed to promote "market-driven, transparent, and

financially sustainable" infrastructure development in the Indo-Pacific region and worldwide. The Blue Dot Network will evaluate and certify construction projects. The program is supported by US government officials, with former Commerce Secretary Ross making it clear that the US was launching a program to support "sustainable" projects in Asia as a counterweight to China's BRI, and former Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, John O'Brien, stating that the "Blue Dot Network" was a "market-driven, transparent and financially sustainable" infrastructure development program in the Indo-Pacific region and around the world. O'Brien, former assistant to the president for national security affairs, said that the "Blue Dot Network" would fight against "low-quality projects that put countries in a debt trap" implying that China's BRI has a so-called "debt trap". China's foreign ministry refuted this with solid data "The so-called 'One Belt, One Road' creates a debt trap, which is a completely false proposition" (Xinhua, 2022).

At the strategic level, the Trump administration proposed the "Indo-Pacific Strategy" in 2017 to form a geopolitical containment posture against the BRI, especially the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road", posing a potential threat militarily and creating an economic hedge. The "Indo-Pacific Strategy" is intended to form a geopolitical containment posture, pose a potential military threat, and create an economic hedge. As it advances in infrastructure, it will compete head-on with the BRI, and the U.S. will use this strategy to join forces with relevant countries to block the BRI. These two geopolitical cooperation agendas mean that the US-China competition is shifting from the level of interest and influence on a higher level of rules and order, and the friction between the two will be long-term and intense (Wang & Zhang, 2021).

In May 2022, US President Biden announced the launch of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), which will provide economic support for the Indo-Pacific strategy and promised to provide more than \$50 billion in funding for the Indo-Pacific infrastructure development. Biden announced the launch of the IPEF in May 2022 to provide economic underpinning for the Indo-Pacific Strategy and pledged more than \$50bn for Indo-Pacific infrastructure.

In June 2022, the leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) announced the launch of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) program, the PGII program promises to raise \$600 billion over five years to build infrastructure in developing countries and “rebuild a better world” with a “values-driven, high-standard and transparent” global infrastructure initiative “led by leading democracies” to compete with the BRI. European Commission President Von der Leyen declared that the infrastructure plan was designed to “counter China’s ‘Belt and Road’ projects” and to “replace Chinese investment there” (Reuters, 2022). September 2023 On 9 September, the United States, India, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and the European Union signed a memorandum of understanding on the sidelines of the G20 summit announcing the construction of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). This ambitious “Modern Spice Route” is one of the key US initiatives to counter China’s growing influence and replace the BRI infrastructure.

### **Reasons behind the economic Cold War mentality that have challenged the BRI**

The challenge to the BRI posed by the economic Cold War mentality is rooted in the maintenance of vested economic interests by international monopoly capital, as well as in the bias in understanding caused by

cultural and ideological differences and the systemic gap caused by the vastly different paths of development. In recent years, the United States Government has unjustifiably adopted a series of containment policies towards China, which is essentially a “dispute over roads and values” based on the Cold-War mentality of the United States side (Cheng & Li, 2021).

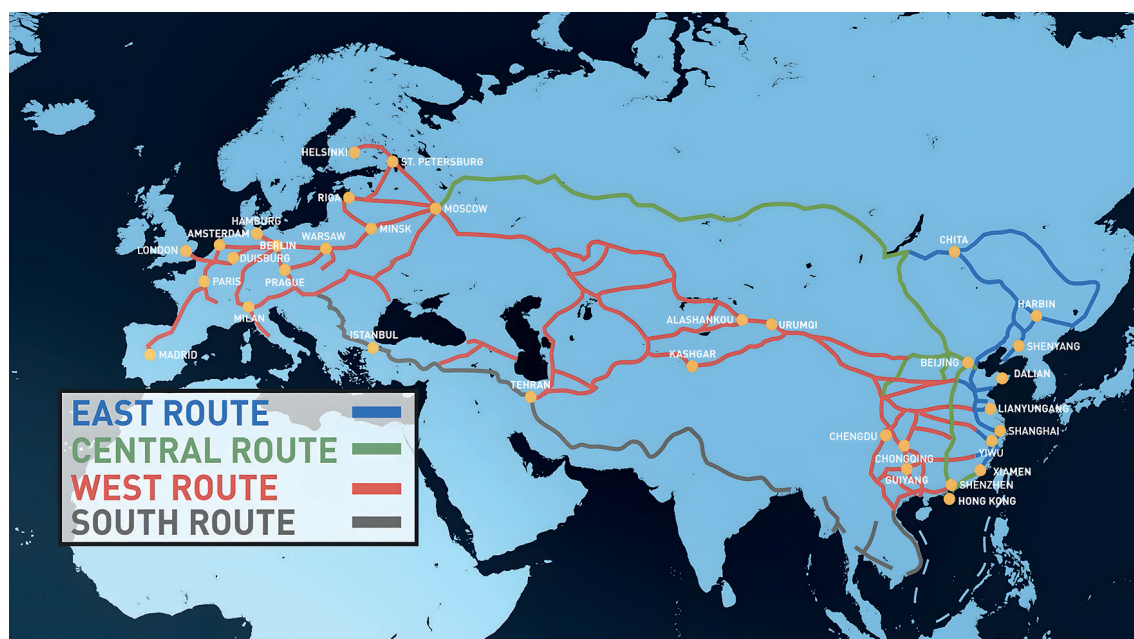
### **Understanding bias due to cultural and ideological differences**

The reason for the challenge of economic Cold-War thinking in the BRI process lies first and foremost in the cultural differences between China and the West. Due to the differences in natural conditions and historical traditions, China and the West have formed different cultural backgrounds. For example, Chinese culture advocates “harmony among nations” and “world unity”, while Western culture firmly believes in the “Thucydides trap” of “the struggle for supremacy”; Chinese culture emphasizes mutual assistance and cooperation, “help the world”, while Western culture advocates competition and “the law of the jungle”. According to German sociologist Max Weber, Chinese culture, dominated by Confucianism, is “pacifist in character”, very different from the expansionist character of Western Protestantism. China was historically ahead of the West for a long time and made important contributions to human civilization. People in the West were once full of yearning for profound Chinese culture. However, in modern times, China suffered from the invasion and bullying of the Western imperialist powers, and the Chinese culture was regarded as backward and inferior. Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the Chinese nation has re-established itself confidently as one of the peoples of the world, and the combination of the basic principles of Marxism

with the excellent traditional Chinese culture has made Chinese culture shine once again. However, some Western bourgeois elites are unwilling to see the revival of Chinese culture under the socialist system and refuse to engage in multicultural exchanges. Skinner, former director of the Office of Policy Planning at the U.S. Department of State, believes the U.S.-Soviet Cold War was a “struggle within the Western family”. At the same time, the Sino-American conflict was a “battle of civilizations and races” between two types of “civilizations and races” and the first time in U.S. history that the U.S. had to “battle a genuinely different civilization”. It is the first time in the history of the United States that it is “fighting against a truly different civilization” (Micheal, 2019). Gingrich, the former Speaker of the US House of Representatives, also claimed that the conflict between the US and China is a long-term “clash of civili-

zations”. From this cultural perspective of a “zero-sum game, you lose, I win,” the West will not understand the Chinese wisdom of “tolerance and mutual understanding, harmony and difference”.

The culture of a certain society is reflected in political and economic thought, i.e. ideology. The cultural roots of economic Cold War thinking lie in ideological differences. The difference between ideologies reflecting the interests of different classes creates an obstacle to cultural exchanges and mutual understanding between China and the West. China insists on the guiding position of Marxism in the field of ideology, representing the fundamental interests of the proletariat and the masses of the working people. In contrast, bourgeois ideology justifies the exploitation of the workers by the capitalists and promotes the narrow-minded belief that “the individual is supreme, and self-interest comes first”.



Countries on the BRI route are located in regions such as Central Asia, West Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa (Figure: CGTN, 2022).



Therefore, the bourgeois ideology has been fighting with Marxism for the right to speak and dominate in various ways, thus hindering the spread of Marxism. For example, by their “hegemony of public opinion”, certain Western media use “double standards” to make selective reports, and even distort the facts, fabricate lies, vilify the image of China’s Party and government, and ban accounts that express pro-Chinese views, which are still provoking ideological confrontation to this day. They are still stirring up ideological confrontation. For example, Ratcliffe, the former director of the United States national intelligence, published an article in the Wall Street Journal in which he falsely claimed that China was “the greatest threat to democracy and freedom around the world since World War II”. Pompeo, the former secretary of state, made anti-communist and anti-Chinese remarks on occasions such as the Nixon Library, attacking the actions of the Communist Party of China as “the greatest challenge to the free world” and instigating a campaign against the Chinese Communist Party and government. Former Secretary of State Pompeo made anti-communist and anti-China remarks at the Nixon Library and other occasions, attacking “the actions of the Communist Party of China as the greatest challenge to the free world” and instigating “the need for free nations to form a new democratic alliance to deal with the Chinese Communist Party”. After the Biden administration came to power, it cobbled together the so-called “Democracy Summit”, peddling the narrative of “democracy against authoritarianism”, engaged in bloc politics, forced people to choose sides, and instigated division and confrontation to serve its hegemonic designs.

### **Institutional divides resulting from very different development paths**

The different national conditions of countries worldwide dictate that each country has the right to cho-

ose a path of development consistent with its realities and to establish a social system that meets its development requirements. The socialist system with Chinese characteristics is rooted in Chinese soil, has been explored in practice, reflects the will of the Chinese people, and guarantees the nation’s great rejuvenation. In launching the “Belt and Road” and promoting international cooperation on the BRI, China does not intend to transplant the Chinese system, export the Chinese model, or expand its sphere of influence but to fully respect the independent choices of the people of all countries, so that they can enjoy the wealth created by economic development. It is to fully respect the independent choice of the people of all countries so that they can enjoy the wealth created by economic development. On the other hand, those who adhere to the economic Cold-War mentality sanctify the capitalist economic system and set it as a monolithic one, use hard power as a backing to enforce their system model all over the world, export the neoliberal economic paradigm of “privatization, marketization, and liberalization” everywhere, restrict and suppress the elements of the socialist system, and even stage color revolutions “that lead to drastic changes in the system behind the scenes. They even instigated behind the scenes a “color revolution” that led to drastic changes in the system. Francis Fukuyama, a Japanese-American scholar, once declared that human history would “end” with the capitalist “system of freedom and democracy”, but the fact that the socialist system with Chinese characteristics has persisted, been perfected, and developed has declared “the end of history”. However, the fact that the socialist system with Chinese characteristics has persisted, improved and developed has declared “the end of history”, and Fukuyama himself had to admit that his prediction had been inaccurate. In essence, the exclusivity of economic Cold-War thinking is caused by the capitalist private ownership system, in

which “exclusivity” is stronger than “sharing” in the concept of private ownership and private ownership; the competitiveness of economic Cold-War thinking is the result of the “winner-takes-all” principle under the capitalist market economy system. The competitive nature of economic Cold-War thinking is the result of the “winner-takes-all” mentality under the capitalist market economy system, in which competition is based on the principle of “the defeat and death of some, and the victory and domination of others” (Stalin, 1979, p.195). The expansionist nature of economic Cold-War thinking is precisely rooted in the global expansion of the capitalist mode of production, in which the profit-seeking nature of capital has made it transcend the scope of one country to realize value appreciation. The expansionist nature of economic Cold War thinking stems precisely from the global expansion of the capitalist mode of production, in which the profit-seeking nature of capital causes it to go beyond the boundaries of a single country in order to add value and seek to bring the whole world under its influence.

### **Root causes of the international monopoly capital’s economic interests**

The rejection of the BRI by the economic Cold-War mentality is rooted in the defense of the vested economic interests of international monopoly capital, which is twofold. On the one hand, the BRI may touch on the original economic interests of international monopoly capital in the countries along the routes. The countries along the “Belt and Road” are located in Central Asia, West Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa, etc. The international monopoly capital or the Western developed capitalist countries led by the United States have already controlled some of these regions by their economic, political, cultural, and military

power and even have a substantial influence on the economic lifelines of some countries to ensure the monopoly bourgeoisie’s stable acquisition of surplus value. Suppose China cooperates with the countries along the Belt and Road. In that case, it will inevitably exert economic influence in these regions, which may lead to a profound adjustment of the original pattern of interests, touching the “cheese” of the original beneficiaries, resulting in damage to the vested interests of the international monopoly capital and developed countries, and causing contradictions in the economic interests of the emerging powers and the established powers.

On the other hand, the BRI may create new conflicts of interest with the monopoly capital of Western countries. Through the BRI construction, countries along the route will share the fruits of development, achieve win-win and common prosperity, gradually build a community of interests and a community of destiny, and realize the modernization of “peaceful development, mutually beneficial co-operation and common prosperity”. The moral advantages of the BRI and the fruitful results it has achieved have made it possible for more countries to identify with it, and for countries to strengthen their cooperation with China in areas such as infrastructure construction, trade and investment, so that the commodities, technologies and capital of China and the countries along the route can circulate smoothly along the Belt and Road, and the countries along the route will also have a better understanding of the BRI, and will be able to make better use of it. The smooth flow of commodities, technology, and capital between China and the countries along the BRI, especially the promotion of China’s infrastructure construction projects “going out”, not only lays the foundation for the sustainable development of the host country’s economy and adds strength, but also expands the space for China’s economic development.

In this way, the economic pattern centered on the developed countries, with the developing countries channeling their profit surpluses to the developed countries, which has continued since the colonial era of capitalism, will be completely broken, thus creating a stark contrast between the positive response of the countries along the routes and the passive denigration of the developed countries in the West.

### **Promoting the construction of the BRI in addressing the challenges of economic Cold-War thinking**

To effectively counter the challenge of economic Cold-War thinking and provide theoretical and practical guarantees for the smooth progress of the construction of the BRI, it is necessary to, on the one hand, give a proper name to the BRI in terms of information and increase the degree of symmetry and transparency, to make all countries in the world have a good understanding of the BRI. On the other hand, it is necessary to work with various international cooperation platforms and governments to enlarge and share the “cake” in terms of common interests and to replace vicious competition with benign interaction; it is also necessary to respond to deliberate misinterpretations and provocations with courageous struggles and resolve conflicts and concerns with good dialogue. We should also respond to deliberate misinterpretations and provocations with the courage to fight and resolve conflicts and concerns with good dialogue.

### **Strengthening the influence of international communication and actively giving the BRI a good reputation**

As the developed countries in the West still control the dominant power of international discourse, the situation of China being “scolded” has not yet been fundamentally improved. The publicity work also needs China

to take the initiative to do a good job of “creating a good atmosphere for public opinion, explaining in depth the concept, principles and methods of jointly building the BRI, and telling the story of jointly building the BRI” (Xi, 2022, p.498). Promptly, it is important to show the world what China has done along the BRI, to clarify the facts, and to convey China’s true stance and position. At the same time, we should refute the slander of certain bad media, and politicians in the West take the initiative to expose and actively counter neo-imperialist attacks on the BRI (Cheng & Li, 2021). We should also explore the disclosure of information on the BRI and enhance symmetry and transparency to gradually eliminate the problem of symmetry and transparency in constructing the BRI. It should also explore the disclosure of information on the BRI and enhance symmetry and transparency to gradually eliminate the economic cold war thinking in promoting the construction of the BRI.

First, the BRI is not a Chinese version of the Marshall Plan. BRI is a product of openness and cooperation and a vivid practice of building a community of human destiny, not a geostrategic concept or a geopolitical tool, and it cannot be viewed with outdated Cold War thinking. BRI has enabled China to integrate with the world economy deeply and provided solutions for the world to cope with the current crisis. Ivona Radovac, Director of the Belt and Road Centre for Regional Studies at the Serbian Institute of International Political and Economic Studies, commented on behalf of international objectivity that the BRI is not a new version of the Marshall Plan but has very different goals and methods. BRI is fundamentally different from the Marshall Plan in terms of background, fundamental purpose, participation, and status of the participants. The Marshall Plan was a product of the economic confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union in the Cold War, and its fundamental purpose was to achieve economic control of the United States over Western Europe and to counterbalance the socialist camp. The United States attached



anti-Soviet and anti-Communist political conditions to the economic assistance provided to Western European countries, and the recipient countries were in a passive and subordinate position. BRI, on the other hand, abandons the Cold-War mentality and does not draw boundaries based on ideology. It is an initiative that conforms to the trend of economic globalization and promotes international cooperation with an open and tolerant mindset, with the fundamental aim of seeking common development and prosperity of the countries along the routes and adding a new impetus to the recovery of the world economy. China respects the social systems and development paths independently chosen by the countries along the BRI and assists without any political conditions, with all participants on an equal footing and a common basis. Clearly distinguishing between the BRI and the Marshall Plan will help countries worldwide break through the Cold-War mindset to view China's initiative and thus more clearly understand the mutually beneficial and contemporary nature of the BRI.

Secondly, BRI is not intended to counter the international economic and trade cooperation mechanisms dominated by Western countries. In response to the economic cold war thinking that sees the BRI as China's

counterweight to the TPP and CPTPP, China's proposal of the BRI is certainly a reflection of its strategic thinking with a long-term perspective. However, it is not competitive thinking with a one-sided battle, and China will not exclude all beneficial international cooperation mechanisms. China does not usually reject all kinds of beneficial international cooperation mechanisms. Foreign Minister Wang Yi said at the press conference for the Third Belt and Road Summit on International Cooperation that “China is willing to dovetail with all connectivity initiatives and jointly explore cooperation that is beneficial to develop countries” and hopes that other countries' connectivity initiatives will not “create small circles”. China has indicated that it is open to any international economic and trade cooperation mechanism that is conducive to the development of world trade and a fair and open trading environment and formally applied to join the CPTPP agreement in September 2021, which is an important step in expanding openness to the outside world in the new era. The new high-standard international trade rules have commonality with China's reform initiatives to establish pilot free trade zones and trade harbors, and the BRI and the CPTPP can work together rather than having an either/or relationship.

Through the practice of the BRI, China can provide experience for improving and innovating international economic and trade rules. Making clear to the world China's non-confrontational attitude towards the TPP and CPTPP will help all countries, especially the member countries of these cooperation mechanisms, feel the inclusiveness and openness of the BRI.

### **Exploring the disclosure of information on the BRI is necessary to enhance symmetry and transparency.**

Thirdly, exploring the disclosure of information on the BRI is necessary to enhance symmetry and transparency. In the face of concerns and questions from some foreigners and media about the compliance and standardization of the BRI projects, the source and use of funds, the construction process, and the distribution of proceeds, it is necessary to actively explore the disclosure of information related to the BRI projects under the premise of ensuring the safety of information, projects, and funds. It is necessary to actively explore the disclosure of BRI-related information to ensure the safety of information, projects and funds. Drawing on the useful experience of international organizations such as the WTO, we can regularly release to the world, through authoritative channels and using public announcements, information related to the construction of the BRI, such as data, regulatory bases, and professional evaluations, etc. and adopt digital means to publish information that can be queried, supervised, and verified, to respond to concerns and dispel doubts promptly, and to allow the BRI to be implemented promptly. BRI will pass under the sunlight so that the rumors fabricated by certain ill-intentioned people will not be broken in the face of facts. Proactive and extensive public disclosure of the co-construction

status will help enhance the symmetry and transparency of information on the BRI and improve its credibility.

### **Enlarging the “cake” of common interests and improving the mutually beneficial mechanism of the BRI**

Marx pointed out that “everything that people strive for is related to their interests.” The pursuit of interests is the motivation for all social activities of human beings (Marx & Engels, 1956, p.82). To cope with the challenges posed by the economic Cold-War mentality to the BRI, we should fundamentally rely on expanding the common interests with the relevant international organizations, multilateral mechanisms, and foreign governments and finding the largest “covenant” to make the cooperation platforms and countries achieve mutual benefits and win-win results in the construction of the BRI. Cooperation platforms and countries can achieve mutual benefits and win-win results in constructing the BRI.

First, it should be active in international organizations and multilateral mechanisms. BRI is not in opposition to or in competition with various global and regional international economic organizations and multilateral economic cooperation mechanisms, but rather in coexistence and co-prosperity. In order to open up to the outside world and enhance international economic cooperation, China has joined the World Trade Organization (WTO), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Group of 20 (G20), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the BRICS countries, and signed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). After the BRI was put forward, it also triggered a warm response from these international organizations and multilateral mechanisms and was widely praised. For example, Azevedo, the former Director-General of the WTO, believes that the BRI is exactly what the world needs most today, and it will change how it works. What the world needs most, it will change the world” (Hou,



2017). The concept and proposition of the BRI has been written into the documents of international organizations and mechanisms such as APEC and G20. Strengthening multilateral cooperation is a powerful means to deal with the Cold-War mentality, and the willingness of the world's countries to carry out economic cooperation is inversely related to the Cold-War mentality. In proposing the BRI, China is not setting aside existing international organizations and cooperation mechanisms, nor is it overturning the existing global economic governance system. However, it is compatible with and innovative within the existing framework and adheres to the concept of global governance of “co-discussion, co-construction, and sharing”. Through international cooperation under the BRI, new impetus will be added to common development, contributing to improving and reforming the existing global economic governance system. According to the functions of various international organizations and multilateral mechanisms, the BRI should be dovetailed with them, such as the doveta-

iling of the WTO and the BRI for trade facilitation, the New Development Bank and the BRI for capital financing, and so on. These organizations and mechanisms should be important platforms for the BRI cooperation and implementing the Belt and Road concept.

Secondly, it has strengthened strategic coordination and economic cooperation with the countries concerned; from 2013 to 2022, China's total imports and exports with the countries concerned will reach a cumulative total of 19.1 trillion United States dollars, with an average annual growth rate of 6.4 percent. Its two-way investment with the countries concerned will exceed 380 billion United States dollars, with China's outward direct investment exceeding 240 billion United States dollars.

The BRI has already been joined with Russia's Eurasian Economic Union, Kazakhstan's Bright Road, Turkmenistan's Revival of the Silk Road, Mongolia's Silk Road and the Eurasian Economic Union to form the BRI, and the Eurasian Economic Union.

China's neighboring countries are the focus of the BRI construction, taking India and Russia as an example: India, as a big country in South Asia and a neighbor of China, has not only held a resistant attitude to the BRI, but also put forward the "Asia-Africa Growth Corridor" with Japan and the United States. The "Asia-Africa Growth Corridor" and "India-Europe Economic Corridor" have been proposed together with Japan and the United States to counterbalance the BRI. China and India, as ancient civilizations, regional powers, and emerging market countries, should abide by the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, seek common ground while reserving differences, strengthen unity and collaboration, and closely cooperate economically to form a synergy for promoting development in Asia. Taking into account India's economic development needs, China should provide targeted economic assistance, such as infrastructure assistance, so that the other side can realize the benefits of cooperation through practical measures, generate more sense of gain and trust, thus enhancing the sense of identity with the BRI, and voluntarily participate in the BRI construction. Russia is an important country along the BRI, and when China put forward the BRI, Russia and other countries also established the Eurasian Economic Union. The two cooperation mechanisms overlap in terms of the parties involved, so at first, some people predicted that China and Russia would "inevitably erupt into conflict in the region". However, both China and Russia have adhered to the principle of "no conflict, no confrontation". Through the leadership of the head of state, many rounds of negotiations, and multi-level consultations, they have finally achieved the Silk Road. The successful docking of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Eurasian Economic Union provides an example of policy coordination between different countries. It proves that the China-Russia relationship is based on the principles of "permanent good-neighbourly relations, comprehensive strategic cooperation, and mutually beneficial cooperation and win-win situation" (MFA, 2023), is indeed a mo-

del for the relations between major powers today. Only by adhering to the principle of "keeping good relations with one's neighbours and keeping one's neighbours as one's companions", handling relations with neighbouring countries based on the concepts of "proximity, sincerity, beneficence and tolerance", and giving priority to benefiting neighbouring countries from the fruits of China's development can neighbouring countries become more supportive and willing to participate in the BRI. Only by doing so can neighbouring countries become more supportive of the BRI and more willing to integrate into it.

### **Dare to fight and dialogue to address challenges and resolve conflicts**

With China's growing proximity to the center of the world stage, the United States has gradually changed its orientation towards China from "partner" to "competitor". In response to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's "zero-sum game" of "competition, cooperation and confrontation" trichotomy, Foreign Minister Wang Yi made it clear: "Competition should not offset each other, but rather promote each other", "There is no way out of conflict and confrontation, and neither China nor the United States can change anyone". The challenge of economic cold war thinking encountered by the BRI is mainly from the U.S. Some scholars have summarized the "four kinds of worries" of the U.S. mainstream politics and academia about the BRI. Firstly, China is worried that the BRI will counterbalance the U.S. Asia-Pacific strategy and gradually transform the "U.S. Asia-Pacific" into "China's periphery"; secondly, it is worried that China will gradually expand its economic cooperation with the relevant countries into political, economic and social cooperation. Secondly, it is worried that China and the relevant countries will gradually expand from economic cooperation to political and security cooperation, thus forming a "de-Americanised" regional order; thirdly, it is worried that China will draw in U.S. allies and partners



through the BRI, and “poach” U.S. “interests”. Thirdly, China is worried that through the BRI, it will draw in U.S. allies and partners and “poach” the U.S.; fourthly, it is worried that the BRI will impact the existing international rules led by the U.S., and even pose a deep challenge to the development model of the U.S. and other Western countries (Zhao, 2018).

In recent years, the U.S. government’s policy towards China has undergone more complex changes, still viewing China as its “most serious competitor” and more clearly counterbalancing China on values such as “human rights” and bringing in allies to exert pressure on China. In terms of strategic competition, the U.S. Congress passed the 283-page Strategic Competitiveness Act of 2021 in April 2021 and the Innovation and Competitiveness Act in March 2022, rendering the “China Threat” and advocating strategic competition with China to unite with Western allies to check and balance the BRI with a Cold War mindset. “The U.S. response to the BRI uses a multi-layered strategy, with tactics to unite allies, content of the standards dispute, and actions to attack and discredit, but there

is no ‘engagement’ or a hint of ‘co-operation.” In this regard, China should not be afraid of strong opponents, not be afraid of pressure, calm and cool, not only dare to “show the sword”, the courage to fight, but also “reasonable, advantageous, and temperate”, good at dialogue, in order to respond to the challenges and properly resolve the conflict effectively.


First, we will carry forward the spirit of struggle and resolutely counteract acts that undermine China’s interests. In the face of the sanctions against China introduced by the United States Government, the Chinese side has carried out reciprocal countermeasures, such as the imposition of tariffs on United States commodities exported to China, the banning of United States anti-China politicians such as Pompeo and O’Brien and their families from entering the country and the restriction of their affiliated enterprises and institutions from traveling to and from China, the adoption by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress of the Anti-Foreign Sanctions Act, and the imposition of export controls on gallium-germanium-related goods, among other things.



In response to the U.S. strategy of checking and balancing the BRI on the one hand, it has been actively speaking out in the international academic and public opinion circles, revealing the new monopoly of neo-imperialism in the areas of production and circulation, financial capital, the U.S. dollar and intellectual property rights, and international oligarchic alliances, as well as their predatory and transitory economic nature and the general trend, and critiquing the economic coercion and unilateralism of the U.S. and other Western countries (Cheng, et al., 2019). On the other hand, in the actual operation, we can try to transfer our claims against the US to the countries that are co-builders of the BRI, so that the US side may actually provide guarantees for the Belt and Road projects, in order to achieve the goal of “countering the US with the US”.

Secondly, we should insist on dialogue under the premise of good faith to push China-United States relations back on the right track. In dialogue and communication, we should make them aware that the common interests of China and the United States outweigh their differences and that cooperation benefits both sides, while fights are detrimental to both. Strategic dialogue should be carried out to let both sides fully understand each other’s strategic intentions, especially to let the U.S. side understand that the BRI is an opportunity rather than a threat to all countries in the world, including the U.S., and that a revived China has no intention of replacing the U.S., but rather to “continue to transcend itself to become a better China”. President Xi Jinping pointed out in his meeting with Biden that “the wide world can fully accommodate China and the United States in their respective development and common prosperity”, China will not challenge or replace the United States, and the United States should not undermine China’s legitimate rights and interests. The two sides should respect each other

and not mold each other according to their wishes, let alone deprive each other of their rights to development. Stabilizing and improving China-US relations can only be achieved through frank, substantive, and constructive strategic communication, which can effectively avoid conflicts resulting from strategic miscalculations. The same applies to developed economies such as Japan and the EU. At the Third Belt and Road International Cooperation Summit Forum, China made it clear that the BRI can be dovetailed with the EU’s “Global Gateway” program. We will give full play to our respective advantages and make joint efforts to help developing countries speed up infrastructure construction. Only by actively engaging in dialogue on an equal footing while firmly defending the legitimate rights and interests of the country can we effectively address the strategic concerns of developed countries about China.

In short, we should expand the convergence of interests with all countries through active action in multilateral and bilateral relations, highlight the advantages of China’s socialist market economic system in practice, avoid taking the old path of Western capitalism’s profit-mindedness and hegemony, gradually realize the historic transcendence of the capitalist world system, promote globalization in a fairer and more inclusive direction (Shen, 2019). We should replace the geopolitical game of economic cold war thinking with the win-win cooperation of the community of human destiny, “unity instead of division, cooperation instead of confrontation, openness instead of closure, and win-win instead of zero-sum”, inject new impetus into global economic growth and development, open up new space, set up a new framework for international economic cooperation, and contribute more Chinese wisdom and programs to the construction of an open world economy. 

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