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1. The BRI in EU-China Relations: Geostrategic Stakes

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Trans-Pacific View author Mercy Kuo regularly engages subject-matter experts, policy practitioners and strategic thinkers across the globe for their diverse insights into U.S. Asia policy. This conversation with Dr. Benjamin Barton, assistant professor in the School of Politics, History and International Relations at the University of Nottingham Malaysia, is the 272nd in "The Trans-Pacific View Insight Series."

Explain China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in the context of EU-China security cooperation.

EU-China security cooperation has largely remained rhetorical in form, despite sporadic instances of actual practical cooperation/coordination. The BRI could potentially unlock further avenues for bilateral security cooperation given the high stakes of security risks which could derail its progress and also the fact that its land and maritime routes traverse regions where the EU shares overlapping security concerns with China. There is a sense that even if the EU is not a signatory to the BRI, the latter could nonetheless drive Brussels and Beijing to explore the possibility of further security cooperation in and around the Silk Roads, especially since China is already looking to mutualize the protection of BRI projects with the signatory states. All of this, however, remains speculative for now as the prospects for their cooperation is rigged by structural disagreements pertaining to the interpretation of what constitutes a security threat, differences over political values – notably state sovereignty in China's case and the promotion of liberal values in the EU's case – the agency of local actors, or even the simple fact that the EU (as a whole) continues to remain an outsider to the BRI.

What is the correlation between this bilateral security cooperation and the BRI in Central Asia?

The stability and security of the Central Asian region is primordial for the successful rollout of the BRI in light of its central geographic role within the Silk Road Economic Belt. Yet, as shown by the 2016 blast at the Chinese Embassy in Bishkek, or the ad hoc attacks on Chinese engineers working on projects in the wider region, the BRI does not exist in a security vacuum. Although the EU has historically been a bit-part player on security matters in Central Asia, its credibility was boosted by the implementation across the region of a couple of relatively large-scale border management and anti-trafficking (narcotics) capacity-building programs. Beijing and Brussels actually have overlapping security interests in the region and have jointly produced policy documents officially declaring an interest to work more closely together on some of these issues. One would imagine that the backdrop of the region's importance to the BRI would only further emphasize the need for greater bilateral activism in this regard.

Identify the BRI geostrategic stakes for Beijing, Brussels, and Berlin in EU–China security cooperation along BRI trade corridors.

For the EU, its member states, and China, the hottest topic of a geostrategic nature located along an identified BRI trade corridor obviously concerns developments in the South China Sea (SCS) where the naval forces of certain EU member states, such as Germany and the Netherlands, are now being deployed, as a means of sending a clear signal to Beijing regarding its claims over the SCS. To a lesser extent, the potential for a growing Chinese naval presence in the Indian Ocean via the upgrades to the PRC’s so-called “logistics facility” in Djibouti, or the potential exploitation of BRI port investments for military purposes, could spill over into some form of geostrategic jostling.

This prospect, however, remains more fiction than truth for now, when gauged against the tone characteristic of the EU’s recent Indo–Pacific strategy paper, in addition to the generally cooperative nature of their bilateral engagement in the fight against Somali piracy. On land, geostrategic contentions do exist in relation to BRI trade corridors running through the wider Middle East but here, too, the contentions are not clear-cut, as a result of shared security concerns and past efforts to coordinate their respective stances, notably on Iran’s nuclear program.

Describe the U.K.’s post–Brexit approach to China and London’s BRI strategy.

Against the tumultuous backdrop of Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s rise to power in July 2019, with Brexit talks stalling and the promise of “Global Britain” ringing hollow at the time, the Conservative government continued with its recent tradition of attributing special praise to its relations with China. Consequently, devising a role for the U.K. within the spectrum of the BRI was to serve as a key linchpin to the Conservative government’s attempted post–Brexit revival. However, the deleterious impact of the COVID–19 pandemic, coupled with rising anti–China sentiment amongst the British public, similar to patterns observed in other Western countries, brought a temporary reprieve to the government’s infatuation with the BRI. Instead, the message coming out of Whitehall would suggest that the U.K. is looking to play a part in the anticipated counter–strategy on infrastructure financing/construction designed to rival the BRI. I find it nonetheless difficult to believe that we’ve seen the end of the U.K.’s flirtation with the BRI in its new post–Brexit reality.

Assess the impact of EU–China security relations on transatlantic relations as well as U.S., EU, and Japanese attempts to offer an alternative to BRI.

Washington’s feelings with regard to the prospects of EU–China security do tend to weigh heavily on the minds of EU decision–makers whenever the prospect of such cooperation is brought up with China. I would go so far as to posit that in the few instances where the EU and China have either cooperated in practice (e.g. in the fight against piracy) or coordinated their positions (e.g. on Iran’s nuclear program), EU leaders have acted knowing that they had Washington’s implicit avail. This largely explains why EU–China security cooperation has not really left any chinks on the armor of the transatlantic alliance. As for developing a viable alternative to the BRI, I’m not certain that the dynamics of EU–China relations are a real impediment here. The challenge, rather, will be for the U.S., the EU, Japan and others to develop an efficient and competitive package which is tailored to the demands of emerging/least developed economies, satisfies the profit margins of private sector actors involved, and finds traction amongst domestic constituencies. That is enough of a tall order in itself.

2. 美智库：美不应妖魔化“一带一路”倡议

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美国昆西负责任治国研究会网站5月13日发表题为《美国国会对中国“一带一路”倡议的看法存在哪些谬误》的文章，文章认为，美国领导人不应将“一带一路”倡议妖魔化，而应该认识到它在世界各地取得如此热烈反响的原因。全文摘编如下：

反华综合议案《战略竞争法案》将中国“一带一路”倡议定性为中国政府要在全球“借助经济依赖获得政治遵从”的计划，目前该议案在几乎没有公开辩论的情况下，正在美国参议院迅速获得通过。“一带一路”对全球发展做出重大贡献，为南半球国家带去资金与基础设施，同时极大拓展了加强商业、金融和文化联通性的全球公共产品。但拟议中的《战略竞争法案》否定了这一贡献，将“一带一路”称为中国对美国的国家利益和价值观以及“国际社会未来的和平、繁荣与自由”发起的多维度攻击的一个重要方面。

美国会不应对华持零和观点

《战略竞争法案》会批准另外3项拨款，每年总额达5.7亿美元，用来支持媒体开展破坏中国海外倡议声誉的报道。它会要求拜登与联合国的盟友合作，防止联合国承认“一带一路”为全球公共产品。议案中还包含一些条款，旨在迫使发展中国家要么选择所谓中国的“有害影响”和“掠夺性经济行为”，要么选择美国提供的所谓“民主、法治和市场驱动的经济增长”。

该法案暴露了美国国会内部对中国的动机和意图存在的极为粗鲁、片面与零和观点。莫名地认为美国外交政策要取得成功，就需要中国政府和中国人民的失败。在这种框架下，谈判或共同获利的可能性被排除在外。

《战略竞争法案》将这一观点写入政策，会加快两国走上爆发冲突之路。在此过程中，它还会打碎世界迎来截然不同未来的可能。另一选项——美中为促进全球发展相互合作——不仅有助于消除南半球的极端贫困，还会让所有人面临公平的全球气候转型。它还会为中美两国的企业与工人创造广泛的新机遇，结束目前迫使两国陷入冲突的零和增长之争。

“一带一路”涵盖很多内容，西方学者当前经过广泛研究做出的阐释与美国目前流传的普遍观点大相径庭。

可以更好地将“一带一路”理解为一种开放式规则。“一带一路”倡议下的项目囊括方方面面，从具有重大外交意义的方案，到偶然附属于该计划的小规模纯商业投资。在促进国内产业发展方面，中国与美国没有多大分别。

美国应转变思维和做法

“一带一路”倡议从某种程度上讲是复杂且碎片化的，而在美国政府的讨论中通常听不到这样的内容。

美国决策者感知到来自中国决策者的挑战，但是与邪恶的外国人阴谋破坏美国就业与自由这种常见说法相比，中国构成的所谓“威胁”要平淡无奇得多。《战略竞争法案》会危险地加剧零和紧张局势，而不是解决造成这种紧张局面的结构性原因。

美国领导人不应将“一带一路”倡议妖魔化，而应该认识到它在世界各地取得如此热烈反响的原因。由于自由市场全球化的不平衡让投资集中在最富裕的国家，生活在南半球的数十亿人几十年来一直陷入缺乏资金的窘境。在自由国际秩序内忍受的匮乏和苦难不仅极不公平，还破坏着稳定——通过制约全球经济增长的可能，它们严重抑制了美中两国人民取得成功的空间。

如果美国转变做法，在与“一带一路”倡议进行合作性接触的基础上施加改革压力，同时大幅增加自己为全球发展项目所做贡献，那么所有人可能会拥有一个远比现在更充满希望、更加繁荣的未来。

3. 国家发展改革委与联合国开发计划署联合举办促进“一带一路”建设与可持续发展协同增效能力建设培训班

国家发展改革委 20210519

https://www.ndrc.gov.cn/fzggw/jgsj/gjs/sjdt/202105/t20210519_1280214.html

4月7日上午，“新冠肺炎疫情下加强知识分享和能力建设，促进‘一带一路’建设与可持续发展协同增效”能力建设培训班在广东省深圳市正式开班。本次培训班由国家发展改革委与联合国开发计划署（UNDP）联合举办，国家发展改革委国际合作中心承办。国家发展改革委国际司一级巡视员李斌、UNDP驻华代表白雅婷（Beate Trankmann）、国家发展改革委国际合作中心副主任刘建兴、陈江和基金会理事赵勇、深圳市发展改革委党组成员、二级巡视员秦世杰出席开班式并致辞。

国家发展改革委国际司一级巡视员李斌在开班式致辞中表示，“新冠肺炎疫情以来，‘一带一路’合作不仅没有止步，反而逆势前行，展现出强劲韧性，此次培训班就是双方落实《行动计划》的重要成果。”UNDP驻华代表白雅婷表示，“此次活动体现了国家发展改革委和UNDP联合促进后疫情时代可持续发展，携手应对气候变化，助力实现碳中和的共同努力和愿景。”

此次培训班的授课师资由UNDP的国别专家、“一带一路”沿线国家的政府官员、世界著名高校和智库学者、多边金融机构以及中央党校、北京大学、国际经济交流中心、宏观经济研究院等单位的专家组成。培训班授课内容聚焦五大专题，分别为：清洁能源技术和数字经济的创新、转

让与发展，可持续投融资，UNDP国际项目管理经验，治国理政与国际合作、新冠疫情的影响及疫后恢复等。除了系统的课程培训，还将安排赴深圳改革开放展览馆与深圳盐田能源生态园开展实地调研。

此次培训班采取线上线下相结合的方式举办。国家发展改革委委内相关司局、外交部、地方发改委与国家发展改革委委属单位共30余位干部参加培训。

4. “一带一路”为疫后复苏提供绿色创新动能

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在新冠肺炎疫情继续肆虐全球的情况下，“一带一路”依旧稳步推进。前不久，习近平主席在博鳌亚洲论坛2021年年会开幕式上的主旨演讲中强调，“一带一路”是大家携手前进的阳光大道，不是某一方的私家小路。所有感兴趣的国家都可以加入进来，共同参与、共同合作、共同受益。共建“一带一路”追求的是发展，崇尚的是共赢，传递的是希望。这为新形势下推进高质量共建“一带一路”，引领世界经济走出阴霾，实现互利共赢发展指明了方向。

全球发展不平衡不充分由来已久，新冠肺炎疫情进一步加剧了这种失衡状况。根据联合国近期发布的报告，全球最贫穷国家实现联合国可持续发展目标的时间期限可能再度推迟10年。国际发展领域的不稳定、不确定性因素上升引发国际冲突的可能性增加。“一带一路”倡议提出至今，共建“一带一路”注重增信释疑、互学互鉴，在与共建国家沟通交流的基础上确定合作项目，切实回应有关国家经济社会发展的优先需求，不做超越合作伙伴发展阶段、不符合合作伙伴实际需要的事。在具体合作中，共建“一带一路”把增进各国民生福祉作为发展合作的出发点，加大对教育、卫生、应对气候变化等领域的投入，让发展成果惠及普通民众。

当下，世界经济遭受重创。由于自身发展的脆弱性和应对疫情手段的匮乏，发展中国家受创程度更为严重，南北发展差距面临扩大甚至固化风险。据联合国机构公布的数据，此次疫情迄今导致全球损失1.14亿个工作岗位，1.2亿人再次陷入极端贫困，2021年全世界将有创纪录的2.35亿人需要人道主义援助，较去年大幅增加近40%。如何摆脱贫困实现发展一直是困扰全球发展和全球治理的突出难题。

中国积极参与全球贫困治理，支持广大发展中国家根据自身实际探索符合国情的减贫发展之路，共建“一带一路”致力于完善全球发展模式和全球治理，推动更大范围、更高水平、更深层次的区域经济社会发展合作，注重激发相关国家内生发展动力，助其更好实现减贫发展。根据世界银行研究报告，到2030年，共建“一带一路”有望帮助全球760万人摆脱极端贫困、3200万人摆脱中度贫困。中国消除绝对贫困的成功实践和经验，丰富发展了人类反贫困理论，提振了各国特别是广大发展中国家消除绝对贫困的信心，为其他国家选择适合自己的减贫发展道路提供了参考和借鉴，也为开辟人类社会发展更加光明的前景提供了中国方案。

开放是促进疫后经济复苏的关键。“一带一路”将中国对外开放发展与世界联动发展相结合，通过寻找各方利益契合点和发展最大公约数，推动实现更加开放包容的国际发展合作。

在两届“一带一路”国际合作高峰论坛上，习近平主席宣布了一系列国际发展合作重要举措，这些举措已按期落实或正在按照规划有序推进。疫情期间，中国与相关国家签署区域全面经济伙伴关系协定，与欧盟如期完成中欧投资协定谈判，明确表示积极考虑加入全面与进步跨太平洋伙伴关系协定。面对“筑墙”“脱钩”等违背经济规律和市场规则的行为，共建“一带一路”能够推动贸易和投资自由化便利化，深化区域经济一体化，巩固供应链、产业链、数据链、人才链，构建开放型世界经济。

近年来，全球科技创新进入空前密集活跃期，新一轮科技革命和产业变革正在重构全球创新版图。人工智能、云计算、量子信息、移动通信、物联网、区块链等为代表的新技术新应用新业态方兴未艾，全球发展愈益呈现数字化特征。在疫后的世界经济复苏中，如何提高互联网在“一带一路”沿线国家的可及性，提升互联网使用率、移动宽带普及率和宽带速度等领域发力，推动以互联网为平台、信息高速路为骨架、跨境光缆等为载体的信息基础设施建设，是“一带一路”新的合作增长点，将助力世界克服疫情造成的经济社会发展困难。

在疫情挑战面前，我们应该再一次回顾人类工业文明的发展进程。我们在创造巨大物质财富的同时，也加速了对自然资源的攫取，打破了地球生态系统平衡，人与自然深层次矛盾日益显现。气候变化、生物多样性丧失、荒漠化加剧、极端气候事件频发，给人类生存和发展带来严峻挑战。综合国力的“绿色竞争”日渐成为各国比较优势和国际地位变化的显示器。而生态文明领域合作正是共建“一带一路”的重点内容。绿色“一带一路”提出以来，合作国家携手共谋全球生态文明建设，联合打造绿色国际公共产品，通过建立更加紧密的绿色发展伙伴关系，加强绿色基建、绿色能源、绿色交通、绿色金融等一系列举措，完善“一带一路”绿色发展国际联盟、“一带一路”绿色投资原则等多边合作平台，让绿色切实成为共建“一带一路”的底色。面对全球环境治理前所未有的困难，绿色“一带一路”将推动构建公平合理、合作共赢的全球环境治理体系，构建人与自然生命共同体，让良好的生态环境成为全球经济社会可持续发展的支撑。