

Reflections on the High-quality Development of the Belt and Road Initiative

-- Based on the Current International Situation

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Abstract: Ten years have passed since the Belt and Road Initiative was put forward. In the past ten years, Qi Li, a "Belt and Road" country, has made great progress, achieved win-win cooperation and achieved rich results from scratch, from decentralization to cooperation. Looking back on the decade of development of the Belt and Road Initiative, it is a glorious decade, a decade of cooperation and a decade of sharing. The Belt and Road Initiative has made great contributions to promoting the building of a community of human destiny and promoting world peace. However, the current international situation is turbulent, and events such as local wars, ethnic hatred, big country games and nuclear wastewater discharge into the sea have made the international situation even more tense, which undoubtedly adds a test to the high-quality development of the "Belt and Road". Based on the current international situation, this paper expounds the thinking on the high-quality development of the "Belt and Road" from four aspects: energy, green, science and technology and benefiting the people. Based on this, this paper finally proposes to vigorously develop clean energy, oppose war and support peace, strengthen international cooperation, attach importance to environmental protection and the application of new technologies, and pay attention to people's livelihood and well-being.

Keywords: "Belt and Road"; High quality; International situation; Energy; benefit the people.

1. Introduction

On the morning of October 18th, 2023, president Xi attended the opening ceremony of the third Belt and Road International Cooperation Summit Forum in the Great Hall of the People and delivered a keynote speech entitled "Building an Open, Inclusive, Interconnected and Common Development World". President Xi announced that China supported eight actions to jointly build the Belt and Road with high quality^[1]. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative. In the past decade, the Belt and Road Initiative has provided the world with China's solutions and contributed China's wisdom. The development of China cannot be separated from the world, and the development of the world also needs China. China's good world will be better^[2]. The "Belt and Road Initiative" is conducive to strengthening international cooperation, promoting the mode of joint construction, sharing and cooperation to take root, establishing a new international order and breaking trade barriers. As long as all countries have the desire for cooperation and coordinated actions, the natural barrier can be turned into a thoroughfare, a "land lock country" can be turned into a "land link country", and a developing depression can be turned into a prosperous highland^[1]. Under the current situation, building the Belt and Road Initiative has entered a new stage of high-quality development^[3]. The cooperation and co-construction of countries along the Belt and Road Initiative has also entered a new stage of development.

Looking back on the glorious decade of the Belt and Road Initiative and focusing on the sustainable and high-quality development in the future, people of all countries need to work together with Qi Xin to cope with the complicated international situation today. The world today is not peaceful, the downward pressure on the world economy is increasing, and global development is facing many challenges. The

changes of the world, the times and the history are unfolding in an unprecedented way^[4]. Nowadays, the international situation is complicated, from the Russian-Ukrainian conflict to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which further aggravates the international tension, which poses no small test for the high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative and also challenges the countries along the Belt and Road Initiative. We need to raise our awareness of risk prevention, establish the security concept of big countries, oppose separatism and support unity, oppose war and support peace, oppose exclusive support for sharing, oppose closed support for opening up, oppose silence and support dialogue and discussion, and establish an interconnected "Belt and Road" development system. In the current context, we need to adhere to the "One Belt, One Road" initiative across countries, nations and regions, build an equal and fair international exchange system and build a new platform for international dialogue. In the uncertain future and turbulent international situation, we will adhere to the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, promote cooperation among countries, develop in all directions and in many fields, and benefit all mankind.

2. Ten-year Journey of "Belt and Road" Development

Since the "Belt and Road" was put forward, it has experienced a development process from scratch, and now it has attracted more and more attention all over the world. By October 2023, China had signed more than 200 cooperation documents with 152 countries and 32 international organizations to jointly build the Belt and Road Initiative^[5]. From East Asia to South Asia, from West Asia to Europe, and from China to the whole world, it spans a wide area, has a large number of participants, covers a large area, and its "circle of friends" is constantly expanding, with a vast

radiation area. The "Belt and Road Initiative" has provided new methods and models for world cooperation and contributed China's strength to promoting world peace.

During the ten years of development, the Belt and Road Initiative has been strongly supported by China and other participating countries. The policies signed this year, such as the Agreement between the Government of People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Mutual Visa Waiver, the Joint Initiative of Silk Road and Heart Connection, and the Beijing Initiative for Deepening Interconnection and Cooperation, have provided policy support for the high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative. From bilateral to multilateral, more and more countries have issued statements to support the construction of the "Belt and Road". Jointly promote all-round development and cooperation in energy, economy, finance, people's livelihood and other fields, and the mode of win-win cooperation and unity has gradually become the mainstream of international exchanges. In the past ten years, the "Belt and Road Initiative" has changed from an idea to an action plan, from the beautiful expectations of people of all countries to a beautiful reality, which is a new paradigm and a new platform for international exchanges and cooperation. Today, the "Belt and Road Initiative" has been widely accepted by all countries in the world and has become a "public welfare and mutual benefit" product.

In 2013, when president Xi visited Kazakhstan and Indonesia, he successively proposed the joint construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road^[5]. This is the inheritance and re-innovation of the traditional Silk Road, and it has taken a new journey in the 21st century. The "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" initiative proposes a new form of maritime trade cooperation. The maritime trade between countries along the Belt and Road is frequent and the trade scale is growing. According to the statistics of China Customs, from 2013 to 2022, the trade volume of goods between China and the countries jointly built by the Belt and Road Initiative increased from 1.04 trillion US dollars to 2.07 trillion US dollars, with a compound annual growth rate of 7.9%. In the past ten years, the cumulative two-way investment between China and the countries jointly built by the Belt and Road Initiative exceeded 380 billion US dollars^[5]. The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road has developed and prospered, and the land trade has become closer. With the opening of China-Europe trains, the trade between China and the European continent has become increasingly close, from 815 trips in 2015 to 16,562 trips in 2022. In recent years, the number of China-Europe trains has increased by 195%, and the trade, culture and economic exchanges between China and European countries have become closer. The China-Europe train is a landmark achievement of the "Belt and Road" strategy, a key node connecting the Asia-Europe economic circle and the "Belt and Road" initiative, and an important achievement of cooperation among people from all countries, strengthening exchanges and contacts between Asia and Europe.

3. Current Situation of International Development

(1) Local conflict

In recent years, local conflicts around the world have continued, further aggravating the complexity and instability

of the international situation. Both Russia and Ukraine are co-construction countries of the Belt and Road Initiative, while the constant conflicts between Russia and Ukraine and the unstable regional situation have had a certain impact on the sustainable development of the Belt and Road Initiative in Europe. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine is actually a planned war promoted by the United States in order to achieve its own political and economic strategic goals, which is the product of the political and economic game between big countries. Following the Russian-Ukrainian war, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the Middle East followed. There are historical roots behind the conflict, including religious, cultural and ethnic factors, and more importantly, external factors such as the intervention of big powers. All these factors influence and intensify each other, making the complexity of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict extraordinary. The Middle East is a major importer of energy in the world and China, and China's energy is highly dependent on foreign countries. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict poses a big challenge to China's energy security, and it also challenges the improvement of the "Belt and Road" international cooperation mechanism and the cooperation in energy, finance and culture among countries. Recently, the outbreak of civil war in Myanmar has seriously threatened China's border areas, causing some schools in Yunnan to suspend classes, and stray bullets have threatened the lives of people in the border areas, which has also hindered the development of the "Belt and Road" in Southeast Asia.

Local conflicts are the main obstacles affecting world peace and national economy. The continuous deterioration of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has caused massive casualties. According to the health department in Gaza, as of October 2023, more than 8,306 people have been killed in Gaza, including 3,457 children and 2,136 women, and 21,048 others have been injured. These data show the heavy damage caused by the conflict to the residents of the Gaza Strip. In the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, according to Russian Defense Minister Shoigu, from February 2022 to May 2023, 5,937 Russian troops were killed, 61,207 Ukrainian troops were killed and 49,368 were injured. In the war, children and women are the most vulnerable groups. They can't really escape from the conflict area and suffer serious casualties. The international community cannot sit idly by while the war has caused a lot of loss of life. Under the influence of conflicts on such a scale, in order to continue to promote the development of the Belt and Road Initiative, the international community should provide more help, strengthen diplomatic efforts, facilitate dialogue and peaceful settlement among relevant parties, and resolve disputes in the form of peace and dialogue.

(2) Energy crisis

Today, the world is facing unprecedented turmoil since the end of the Cold War. The ongoing political and military crisis in Europe has accelerated the transformation of the world geopolitical map and profoundly affected the global supply and demand of energy resources and the trade pattern^[7]. In particular, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has brought extensive and profound impact on the world's political, economic and social development, especially on the global energy market and energy security. As the conflict continues, the energy crisis will further ferment, the global energy pattern and financial order will face new adjustments, and the recovery of the world economy will be dragged down^[6]. In the last century, there were three energy crises in

the world, which will lead to the rise of energy prices. This is one aspect that needs to be guarded against in view of the high dependence of China's energy on foreign countries. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine further affected the supply of energy, leading to an increase in oil and gas prices. Some scholars predict that the international energy supply and demand will maintain a tight balance, and it is unlikely that oil and gas prices will fall sharply[6].

Russia is one of the largest oil producers in the world. In 2022, Russia's total oil output was 535 million tons (10.7 million barrels per day), second only to Saudi Arabia and the United States, and it was the largest crude oil exporter in the world, mainly sold to Europe and China. Since the outbreak of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, the national oil and gas prices have been rising day by day. In March 2022, Brent crude oil futures once rose to nearly \$140/barrel, the highest level since 2008, while Dutch natural gas futures hit a record high of 339.2 Euro MWh in late August of that year. In 2017, China's apparent oil consumption was 590 million tons, its net import reached 396 million tons, and its dependence on foreign countries reached 67.4%[12]. The continuous rise in energy prices has brought serious challenges to China's energy imports and people's daily use. With the increasing diversification of China's energy import channels, in this context, how to continuously promote the prosperity and stability of the "Belt and Road" energy trade, how to ensure China's energy safety, and strengthen energy trade cooperation with countries along the "Belt and Road" has become a major problem under the conflict.

(3) Environmental pollution

According to the data of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), human beings discharge 23 billion tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every year, which is 25% higher than that in the early 20th century. By 2050, the global average sea level will rise by 20cm due to the greenhouse effect. It will rise by 65cm by 2100. The destruction of the ecological environment will not only affect human health, but also have an important impact on the development of the national economy. The loss caused by pollution is as high as 4.6 trillion US dollars every year, exceeding 6% of the global gross domestic product (GDP). The high-quality development of the "Belt and Road" emphasizes green development, and further builds a green Silk Road through green development^[13]. In the context of increasingly serious environmental pollution, green development is the only way for the "Belt and Road" and the basic goal of cooperative development among countries along the route. The proposal of China's "double carbon" strategic goal shows China's responsibility as a big country to cope with global climate change, and also provides a blueprint for the green development of the "Belt and Road Initiative".

In recent years, the most serious environmental pollution incident is the Japanese nuclear wastewater discharge into the sea. Despite the strong opposition of international public opinion, Japan openly discharged nuclear waste water into the sea, which seriously polluted the ocean, destroyed the ecological environment of the ocean and caused serious pollution to the natural environment. There is a more serious problem. According to Japan's official plan to treat nuclear wastewater, the Fukushima nuclear reactor will not be completely cleaned until at least 2051. This means that in the middle of nearly 30 years, Japan will continuously discharge nuclear wastewater into the ocean. By February, 2024, 23,351 tons of nuclear waste water from Japan had been discharged

from the sea, which seriously polluted the marine environment. This behavior of Japan is undoubtedly putting the entire marine ecological environment and human life and health at risk. It is imperative to build the "Belt and Road" with high quality and promote green development, oppose environmental pollution and strengthen environmental protection.

4. High-quality Development of "Belt and Road"

(1) High-quality development of "Belt and Road" energy

Promote the green development of energy. With the help of platforms such as "One Belt and One Road", energy partnership and Qingdao Declaration on "One Belt and One Road" energy green cooperation, and guided by the development trend of the international energy market, the "One Belt and One Road" green energy market will be integrated, and a close green energy supply chain alliance and green innovation cooperation system will be formed^[8]. The development of oil and gas coal mines will inevitably cause damage to the ecological environment. Under the premise of protecting the ecology, we will promote the green development of energy and reduce the impact of mineral resources development on the environment. The "Belt and Road Initiative" provides a good platform for the realization of green energy development. Guided by the international market, the "Belt and Road Initiative" can achieve green energy development and promote sustainable energy development. Green energy development conforms to the concept of harmony and republicanism between man and nature. We should adhere to mutual benefit and win-win, vigorously promote mutually beneficial cooperation with major energy-producing countries, deepen green and low-carbon cooperation with developing countries, continue to expand China's cooperation in the energy field, optimize the layout of overseas cooperation, and strengthen cooperation in investment and development, engineering construction, equipment manufacturing, consulting and design, financial services and other fields.

Promote the sustainable development of energy. In order to realize the sustainable development of energy, it is necessary to change the way of energy production and consumption. On the one hand, it advocates reducing dependence on fossil fuels and increasing the utilization of renewable energy. Increase the development and utilization of renewable energy sources, such as solar energy, wind energy, hydropower and geothermal energy. In addition, through technological innovation, we can improve the efficiency and economy of renewable energy and make it more competitive in the energy market. On the other hand, encourage the improvement of energy conservation and energy efficiency. By adopting energy-saving technology and changing lifestyle, the waste and unnecessary consumption of energy can be reduced. In addition, strengthening energy management and monitoring, and realizing the monitoring and regulation of energy use through smart grid and other technical means are also important ways to achieve sustainable energy development. In short, to achieve sustainable energy development, we need to expand new energy industry, reduce the use of fossil energy and improve energy utilization efficiency.

(2) High-quality development of "Belt and Road" technology

Strengthen international scientific and technological

cooperation and exchanges. At present, China has signed intergovernmental scientific and technological cooperation agreements with more than 80 co-construction countries to jointly build an all-round, multi-level and wide-ranging pattern of scientific and technological cooperation^[9]. Work together to promote scientific and technological innovation, strengthen high-tech research, and actively establish cooperative relations with universities, research institutes and technology enterprises in the "Belt and Road" countries to tackle key problems together. Practice is the only criterion to test the truth. We have reason to believe that the future scientific and technological innovation will become the mainstream, tackle technical problems, solve problems when encountering problems, and gather together with the power of scientific and technological innovation to become a force of cooperation. Through scientific and technological innovation, it complements the development of the Belt and Road, promotes the sustainable and high-quality development of the Belt and Road, and gives full play to the leading role of technological innovation in the Belt and Road.

Establish a science and technology industrial park with science and technology as the medium. Science and technology need innovation, and innovation is also an inexhaustible motive force for scientific and technological research. By establishing science and technology industrial parks, integrating industrial chains, and concentrating on tackling key technical problems, we can avoid the influence brought by the gap between regions and time. In addition, by gathering high-tech industries, it is conducive to increasing the added value of products, enhancing the competitiveness of products, strengthening the exchange of talents in different fields, and interdisciplinary cooperation. Science and technology are the primary productive forces, and the "Belt and Road" platform, based on the science and technology industrial park, will only develop better and better, and its global influence will increase.

(3) High-quality development of "Belt and Road" green

Develop the digital economy and boost the green and high-quality development of the "Belt and Road". On a global scale, the process of digitalization and greening is gradually converging, and green sustainable development will become an important topic in the development of digital economy, which will help the green transformation and development of economy and society in many fields^[10]. Green and sustainable development is the basic demand of the "Belt and Road" countries, and promoting green and sustainable development through digital economic means is conducive to promoting the green and high-quality development of the "Belt and Road". All participants should actively build the digital economy, give full play to the pillar role of the digital economy in the development of the "Belt and Road", increase the fields of international cooperation, expand the business space for cooperation, enrich the connotation of the "Belt and Road" cooperation, and contribute to the global realization of green and sustainable development. In addition, it is in the interest of all countries to bring impact to traditional industries through the development of digital economy, continuously promote industrial upgrading and improve international competitiveness, and it is also in line with the basic starting point of the "Belt and Road". Under the background of global industrial transformation, the digital economy has a good market prospect and great potential in communications, medical care, education and energy industries. Therefore, it is necessary to promote the digital

transformation of the "Belt and Road" and jointly build and share the development achievements of the "Belt and Road".

The "One Belt, One Road" green development initiative focuses on sustainable development and environmental protection, emphasizing the coordination between economic growth and environmental protection; The "One Belt, One Road" green development initiative also advocates the sustainable use of resources, and carries out green development in the fields of energy, transportation and construction through technical cooperation and capital investment. The combination of the two can provide a way to scientifically manage resources and promote green technology innovation and sustainable development. By promoting the development of green industry, improving social security system and promoting environmental education, we can realize the harmonious coexistence between man and nature and enhance people's well-being. By combining their advantages, we can achieve the goal of fairness, sustainability and environmental protection in economic development and make contributions to building a harmonious, prosperous and sustainable society.

(4) High-quality development of "Belt and Road" people's livelihood

Vigorously develop and build livelihood projects and improve infrastructure construction. Huimin is not only the characteristic of China's economic development, but also the basic starting point and foothold of the "Belt and Road", developing and building people's livelihood with high quality. The construction of people's livelihood projects is the basic way to benefit the people, improve infrastructure construction, promote the development of people's livelihood sectors, and expand the development space in communication, transportation, education, entertainment and other fields. With the opportunity of the Belt and Road development, we will actively explore new ways of people's livelihood development, build beautiful people's livelihood projects, enhance people's sense of happiness and pleasure, enhance people's cultural self-confidence, promote the unification of economic and social effects, and feed back the high-quality development of the Belt and Road.

China's co-construction of the "Belt and Road" as a practical platform for building a community of human destiny pays attention to the basic survival and development needs of local people as the primary consideration^[11]. Pay attention to the open level of the "Belt and Road" construction, enhance non-governmental exchanges and strengthen cultural identity. While building the "Belt and Road" with high quality, we should pay attention to local infrastructure suggestions, take into account the impact on local people's living habits and living standards, and pay attention to local customs while promoting local people's employment, based on sustainable development. Adhere to the unity and cooperation with the people of all countries, connect with each other, move towards the road of common prosperity together, and build a better new life in the future.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

(1) Vigorously develop clean energy

Clean energy has the benefits of low carbon and low pollution. Developing new energy industry will help China achieve the goal of double carbon, promote high-quality economic development, ensure energy security and reduce external dependence. The application of clean energy will help the "One Belt, One Road" to build a country towards a

green and sustainable road, help upgrade the industrial structure, and break the traditional high-pollution mode of energy, which is a favorable way for the harmonious coexistence between man and nature.

(2) Oppose war, support peace and strengthen international cooperation

To solve international conflicts, we should avoid the form of violence and advocate solving problems in the form of dialogue. The victims of war are ultimately only the people. Strengthening international cooperation and consultation, maintaining regional peace and stability, avoiding bloody conflicts, opposing war and supporting peace, the "Belt and Road Initiative" is a path of peaceful development. To solve international conflicts, we should avoid the form of violence and advocate solving problems in the form of dialogue. The victims of war are ultimately only the people. Strengthening international cooperation and consultation, maintaining regional peace and stability, avoiding bloody conflicts, opposing war and supporting peace, the "Belt and Road Initiative" is a path of peaceful development.

(3) Attach importance to environmental protection and application of new technologies

Resolutely oppose the pollution of nature by any country. Countries along the "Belt and Road" and countries around the world should attach importance to environmental protection and reduce the damage to the ecological environment. The corresponding environmental protection systems and policies should be introduced by the United Nations, so as to prevent any country from harming nature in any form. At the same time, we should pay attention to technology research and development, strengthen technical cooperation and attach importance to the application of new technologies.

(4) Pay attention to people's livelihood and well-being

People's livelihood interests are the basic starting point of all economic development, and economic development ultimately needs to settle in people's livelihood. The "Belt and Road" is a road of common prosperity, strengthening cooperation and contacts, increasing people-to-people exchanges, enhancing cultural identity, and seeking common ground while reserving differences. Actively build livelihood projects, increase local people's income, increase employment rate, improve infrastructure construction, and pay attention to people's livelihood and welfare.

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