

ABSTRACTS

Changing Global Middle Class: Dynamic and Impact

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ABSTRACT: Since the start of the 21st century, the global middle class has experienced significant changes that have had widespread and profound effects. In developed countries, the middle class has been steadily shrinking amid worsening economic and social conditions. This decline has led to a shift toward protectionism and xenophobia, intensifying a trend toward right-wing politics and complicating the geopolitical landscape. Conversely, the middle class in developing countries continues to grow, contributing more to the global economy and displaying considerable confidence. However, the rapid pace of modernization brings both diversity and complexity, making this segment vulnerable. These shifts have fostered globalization, marketization, and a diversification of cultural values. Based on relatively recent historical trends, the external influence of an expanding global middle class is likely to follow three major trends. First, there will be an increasing overlap between the middle classes of developed and developing countries, presenting both opportunities for cooperation and challenges for conflict. Second, nationalism is emerging as the dominant ideology among the middle class, driving national strategies and policy-making, with both positive and negative consequences. Third, there is a growing divergence in how the global middle class envisions the future. Domestic and international perspectives vary significantly across countries, making it difficult to reach a consensus in the short term. Long-term dialogue, communication, and cooperation will be essential for finding common ground and avoiding conflicts and risks of war.

KEYWORDS: middle class, developed countries, developing nations, geopolitics

Trump 2.0: China Policy and Ramifications

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ABSTRACT: The return of Donald Trump has sparked intense debate about its

potential impact on U.S.-China relations. Trump and his foreign policy team—dominated by staunch China hawks—continue to prioritize strategic competition with Beijing. However, nuanced differences emerge in their approaches to various issues, including trade, technology, military security, Taiwan, human rights, climate change, and drug trafficking. Trump himself tends to frame China as a “competitor,” focusing primarily on trade. His approach emphasizes measures like tariffs to address economic challenges and aligns with his broader “Make America Great Again” agenda. This positions him within the “transactional” or “alternative hawk” faction. By contrast, his foreign policy team largely views China as an “adversary,” advocating for a broader, multi-pronged strategy to contain Beijing. This “super-hawk” faction envisions a “new Cold War” with the aim of achieving a swift and decisive advantage. These differences likely stem from the distinct personal backgrounds and political experiences of Trump and his advisors. They are poised to influence the decision-making dynamics within the so-called “assistant team” that Trump has assembled. As a result, while trade may remain the central focus of Trump’s China agenda, other issues could become instrumental in advancing this priority. At the same time, there is a real risk that these secondary issues could escalate independently, overshadowing the trade agenda and leading to a more adversarial scenario in which economic cooperation loses its strategic importance.

KEYWORDS: Trump 2.0, China policy, Team Trump, trade, U.S.-China relations

American Social-Cultural Crisis and Its Domestic and International Political Effects

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ABSTRACT: The relative decline of American hegemony has deep roots in social and cultural crises, which are primarily reflected in racial conflicts arising from demographic shifts, class conflicts triggered by economic transition, and inter-generational conflicts exacerbated by technological revolution. These social-cultural crises are transmitted through both domestic and international politics, reinforcing and being reinforced by the security, economic, and institutional crises the United States has faced since the early 21st century. Domestically, the American social-cultural crisis has three main political effects:

the reshaping of electoral geography through economic, racial, and identity-based (re)settlement patterns; the intensification of confrontational politics due to multi-level polarization across federal, state, and party lines; and the erosion of national identity through the reconfiguration of (anti-)establishment narratives, national discourse, and the concept of American exceptionalism. Internationally, the social-cultural crisis impacts global politics through four channels: diplomatic dissemination, focused on anti-diplomacy; market transmission, emphasizing anti-globalization; humanistic transmission, centered on migration to the United States; and ideological transmission, propelled by virtual communities. During his second term, President Donald Trump attempted a top-down solution to the social-cultural crisis, but this is likely to exacerbate “confrontational politics” rather than achieve the goal of “Making America Great Again.”

KEYWORDS: United States, social culture, political polarization, hegemonic decline

From Cold War to Great Power Competition: The U.S. Nuclear Strategy and Nuclear Deterrence

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ABSTRACT: Since their advent, nuclear weapons have played a pivotal role in the evolution of international politics. As one of the world’s foremost nuclear powers, the United States has long relied on the threat of nuclear use as a key instrument of its foreign policy. During the Cold War, U.S. nuclear strategy shifted from an emphasis on “preemptive” nuclear strikes to a policy centered on nuclear deterrence. Following the Cold War’s conclusion and the absence of a clear adversary, the United States continued to prioritize nuclear superiority as the core of its strategic policy, maintaining the centrality of nuclear deterrence in its national security framework. Entering the second decade of the 21st century, driven by “hegemonic anxiety” amid intensifying great power competition, the United States has elevated the strategic significance of nuclear weapons. It has introduced the concept of “integrated deterrence,” particularly the notion of “conventional-nuclear integration,” which deliberately blurs the line between nuclear and conventional forces, lowering the threshold for nuclear use. This approach seeks to “deter” both potential and actual challengers while securing an

upper hand in the ongoing competition among great powers. For the foreseeable future, the United States is unlikely to abandon its policy of maintaining nuclear superiority and leveraging it as a central tool of national strategy. This trajectory poses significant challenges to global strategic stability and regional security. Historical experience suggests that countering U.S. nuclear deterrence requires constructing “assured destruction” capabilities to alter its policy calculations. Only through such measures can the risks of nuclear conflict be effectively mitigated, ultimately fostering “assured cooperation” among nuclear-armed states. **KEYWORDS:** United States, strategy, nuclear strategy, deterrence, great power competition

Can New Energy Create New Politics? An Analysis of the Geopolitical Impact of Hydrogen

ZHANG Rui

ABSTRACT: Hydrogen is becoming a basic energy source and its geopolitical impact is increasingly remarkable. The mechanism by which energy affects geopolitics from the theoretical perspective, i.e., the energy strength, energy trade and energy transportation of international relations actors respectively derive political power, mutual dependence, and channel politics at the geopolitical level. The geopolitical impacts of hydrogen energy include three aspects. Firstly, major powers are prompted to build power through technological competition. Secondly, hydrogen trade is conducive to promoting regional integration, but it consolidates alliance politics and leads to imbalanced relations in which importing countries dominate. Thirdly, hydrogen transportation will open up new channels, but fierce competition among countries for energy channel will also continue. Compared with fossil fuels, hydrogen energy can create a series of new geopolitical effects. In other words, technological competition among countries will largely replace the competition for resources, the potential for energy cooperation to transcend bloc politics has fallen sharply, and importing countries enjoy more structural advantages than exporting countries. China needs to formulate strategies from the perspectives of industrial economics and geopolitics to consolidate the strength foundation and cooperation network of new energy geopolitics.

KEYWORDS: hydrogen, geopolitics, energy transformation, dependency

The Community of Food Security: A New Exploration for Global Food Security Governance

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ABSTRACT: In the interdependent global food market, the food security situation of countries and the world are closely connected. The global governance of food security requires the cooperation and participation of international actors, breaking through the shackles of food nationalism, and jointly creating a food security cooperation mechanism. The construction of community for food security is one of the effective ways to solve the deficit in food security governance. The core connotation of community for food security is reflected in three aspects, the integration of climate security and food security, the coexistence of food security in the north and south, and the symbiosis of human security and food security. It highlights the characteristics of community for food security in three dimensions, nature, area and human. From the perspective of the system, unit and their interaction, the community of food security is manifested as an innovative mechanism to promote the transformation of the global food system, a practical demand to achieve food justice among countries, and a governance thinking to coordinate global food security and national food security. The three factors constitute the driving force behind building a community of food security. In the global food system, China has transformed from a recipient to a donor, possessing three advantages in theory, size, and role. It is advisable to promote the construction of a community for food security under the development logic from country to region and then to the world so as to contribute Chinese solutions to global food security governance.

KEYWORDS: community of food security, food security governance, food system transformation, agricultural sustainable development

Exploring a New Paradigm for Multilateral Cooperation: Trans-Regional Cooperation in Africa and China's Role

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ABSTRACT: Trans-regional cooperation is a key priority for Africa's development and regional integration. Driven by factors such as intensifying great power competition, increasing regional development and security challenges, and urgent

concerns over energy transitions and supply chain stability, African countries are accelerating efforts to foster trans-regional cooperation. At the same time, external actors are increasingly focusing on engaging with Africa's trans-regional cooperation. For instance, the Lobito Corridor has seen significant investments from the United States and Europe, focusing on pivotal countries, critical resources, and strategic corridors. This shift represents a paradigm change in U.S. and European policy toward Africa, where strategic economic and trade investments now take precedence over traditional development aid. As a result, geopolitical and geoeconomic competition over key development corridors in Africa is intensifying. China plays a central role in Africa's trans-regional cooperation and has made significant contributions. Over time, China's involvement in Africa has evolved from bilateral to multilateral and regional cooperation, from project-focused collaboration to strategic alignment, and from engineering construction to full-chain participation. This evolution calls for the development of a new, more comprehensive paradigm for China-Africa multilateral cooperation. The 2024 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation outlined plans to support Africa's trans-regional development, establishing a China-Africa network with land-sea links and coordinated development, responding directly to this growing demand. To deepen China-Africa relations and ensure the high-quality implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, both China and Africa should leverage this summit as an opportunity to explore China's potential in Africa's trans-regional cooperation, strengthen multilateral coordination and continuously enhance the level, structure, and quality of their cooperation.

KEYWORDS: African trans-regional cooperation, China-Africa cooperation, Belt and Road Initiative, infrastructure connectivity, multilateral cooperation

Collective Memory, Strategic Autonomy, and the Continuation of Hedging of Southeast Asia Countries: A Comparative Analysis of the Philippines, Vietnam, and Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: Hedging is a strategic tool for Southeast Asian countries to balance risks and opportunities in a highly complex and uncertain strategic environment.

With the continued rise of China and the intensifying competition between China and the United States, the hedging space for Southeast Asian countries is gradually shrinking. Contrary to the theoretical presupposition of Structural Realism, Southeast Asian countries did not uniformly abandon or continue hedging in unison in response to systemic pressures. Based on the theoretical perspective of neoclassical realism, the continuation of hedging strategies in Southeast Asian countries depends on the nature of the strategic environment and the characteristics of domestic politics. At the domestic political level, collective memory and strategic autonomy determine the perception of threats and the hedging capacity of Southeast Asian countries. The analysis reveals that the symmetry of Southeast Asian countries' threat perceptions vis-à-vis China and the United States directly determines whether they have incentives to continue their hedging strategies, while the strength of their hedging capacity supports or hinders the continuation of hedging in practice. By tracing the domestic characteristics and trajectory of hedging strategies in three Southeast Asian countries (the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia), the continuation logic of hedging in Southeast Asia is largely validated.

KEYWORDS: Southeast Asia, hedging strategy, neoclassical realism, collective memory, strategic autonomy