

Prologue^{*}

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Since *China International Strategy Review* was launched in 2008, it has been running after, analyzing and commenting on major changes in the international strategic situation in the form of collection of annual reports. Now to be presented to the readership is the seventh collection. What differs this issue from the previous six ones is that the Center for International and Strategic Studies of Peking University, the original sponsor of the publication, was officially renamed as the Institute of International and Strategic Studies of Peking University (website: www.iiss.pku.edu.cn) in October 2013, thus becoming a research entity affiliated with the University's School of International Studies. My colleagues and I hope that the Institute will become a think tank based in Peking University focusing on international strategic issues, to serve the needs of teaching and research in world politics, international economy, plus relative social and cultural issues, and to provide objective analysis in relevant areas to different sectors of society. We also hope that our observations and reflections can offer consultations for China's global strategy formulation. With the support of China Foreign Languages Publishing Administration and Foreign Languages Press Co. Ltd, the English edition of *China International Strategy Review* has been published since 2012, which opens up a window for overseas readers to learn about Chinese scholars' ideas and the *status quo* of our research. To our delight, both the Chinese and English editions of the *Review* have been well

* This is originally written in Chinese.

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appreciated by our reader, which boosts our confidence to make this annual publication even better in the future.

Since 2013, changes of great significance have taken place in the international strategic situation and China's foreign relations and various uncertainties have obviously increased. The recovery of the world economy relies mainly on the motivation of the newly emerging economies like China. Yet, not much progress has been seen in the transformation of the development modes of these newly emerging economies, which are all most inevitably made to pay higher costs due to restrictions in energy, resources and eco-environment, growth in labor costs, and excessive economic stimulus in the developed countries. Long-term low-rate growth seems to have become the "new normal" of the world economy. The economies of various countries will also encounter tough challenges brought about by population aging in Europe, Japan, Russia and China, risks in international monetary and financial systems and rising economic nationalism.

In comparison to global economic order, the changes in the world political order appear to be more drastic. The domestic crisis in Ukraine has triggered a geopolitical conflict between Europe and the United States on the one side and Russia on the other. Russia took the chance of the crisis to annex Crimea, while the eastern parts of Ukraine are also under the threat of separatism. What puzzles the observers is that, although the United States has joined the EU to condemn and sanction Russia, it has neither seemed to alter its original plans nor intended to impose obvious military pressure on Russia. Rather, it has pressed on with the Obama administration's strategic "rebalancing" toward the Asia-Pacific.

The security situation in the Asia-Pacific has turned tenser as compared with the previous few years. Chinese observers generally attribute the complex security situation in the region to the "rebalancing" strategy of the United States. According to Chinese observers, it is the Japanese Right-wing conservatives who, represented by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, deny the crimes of Japanese aggression during World War II, join the United States to contain China and attempt to break free from Japan's Peace Constitution, causing the tensions in the East China Sea. And

it is the Philippines and Vietnam who, instigated by the United States, challenge China's legitimate maritime rights and interests, making the situation in South China Sea unstable. However, the governments and media of the United States, Japan and some other countries blame the threats to security in Asia-Pacific region on China's "assertive rise," and question China's stated intention of upholding the path of peaceful development. What is profound is that China, the US and other members of the international community have all along unanimously upheld the principle of the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, worrying that North Korea could take the risk to conduct a fourth round of nuclear tests, more long-range missile tests or provoke military conflicts, fearing that a sudden change of situation in North Korea could lead to a "spillover effect" to affect the security status quo in the peninsula.

It is not the responsibility of editors of this collection to judge the rights and wrongs of the above-mentioned changes. What we are more concerned about is whether the tensions between Russia and the United States along with its European allies over the Ukraine crisis, and the confrontation between China and the United States together with a small number of its allies in West Pacific mark the starting point of an epochal post-Cold War era. If the answer is "yes," then this new era would represent a return of traditional geopolitics, meaning that the attention paid to traditional security issues (especially territorial sovereignty and military security) will again overwhelm that diverted to non-traditional security issues (ecological environment, climate change, food security, illegal immigration, smuggling and drug trafficking, etc.). In this case, the scene of World War I exactly 100 years ago would no longer remain merely a memory of history, but rather a Sword of Damocles hanging over our heads.

At the moment, a China-Russia military alliance is not in sight. Yet, what is not to be denied is that the logic of traditional major power relations is bringing these two countries closer. When both countries are put under external security pressure and exposed to the danger of Western political infiltration, it would be a rational choice for them to strengthen strategic coordination and cooperation. The emerging pattern of world politics is neither

unipolar nor multipolar; it might be shifting into a “bipolar world,” in which China and Russia form one power center, while the United States and its allies form the other.

China’s traditional political system and concept of governance, the social environment and mentality in the country, pressure caused by slowing down of economic growth and increasing terrorist violence have made the Chinese people yearn for “strongman politics” and hard-line diplomacy. Internationally, China has grown into the second largest economy in the world, and its military strength has also grown. In some aspects, it could turn up its nose at its neighbors, even the United States. It doesn’t make sense for China to continue the strategy of “keeping a low profile.” In this light, it seems imperative that China make a major adjustment in its diplomatic strategies. The direction of such an adjustment is: not to yield to and not comprise or make concession in front of external pressure, but to show its “muscles” when necessary.

Yet, China needs a stable international environment and cooperation with major countries the world over for its rapidly expanding overseas trade, investment and financial markets, its acquisition of foreign energy and resources, and its obtainment and digestion of new technology. The “bipolar world” scenario is not only against the trend of economic globalization, but also incompatible with the current international economic order. After all, the Russian economy is inseparable from Europe, and China does neither wish to see that its trade with Japan to falter. Strengthened Sino-Russian strategic cooperation can in no way take the place of either China’s or Russia’s interdependence they have established with the developed countries.

In addition, though Western representative democracies have suffered setbacks and drawn criticism in many countries and areas, even the American democratic system is plagued by deficiencies, the overwhelming majority of the countries around the world, including China’s neighbors such as Indonesia, Myanmar, Afghanistan and Mongolia, have accepted, at least in form, the system of multiparty democracy. It would be impossible for the “bipolar” pattern of ideological, and social and economic systems during the period of the Cold War to appear again in our

contemporary world. Diversified forms of democracy have been developed in the political system of various countries around the world, and thus has become a trend that will last for a long time. At the same time, ethnic and religious problems will haunt some countries and the international community for a long time to come, making it difficult for the geopolitical tectonics to solidify. Thus, it is still too early to conclude that the world will return to a post-Cold War new era of geopolitical conflicts.

It is necessary for us to make studies of the international strategy to have a broader vision and a more profound understanding of different societies and global trends. Only in this way can we make clear, cold-headed and overall judgments and policy suggestions. History has taught us that emerging powers are more likely to commit calamitous mistakes than other countries. China is offered many important strategic opportunities. Still, however, it is imperative for it to do everything possible to avoid plunging into the traps on its way of progress. This annual collection is compiled in the hope of encouraging new ideas in strategic studies, thereby offering better international strategic options.

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