

CONFERENCE REVIEW

THE THIRD “DIALOGUES ON CHINA” INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC CONFERENCE: NEW CHINESE INITIATIVES FOR A CHANGING GLOBAL SECURITY

In 2023, the Belt and Road Initiative marked its decade of existence. In the meantime, President Xi Jinping announced several other important initiatives, the implementation of which was put at the service of creating a Global Community of Shared Future. In a world faced with numerous instabilities and challenges—the rise of protectionism, unilateralism, geopolitical tensions, and climate change China shows its position on the necessity of strengthening multilateralism, dialogue between states, inclusiveness, mutual respect, and equal rights for all countries. The proposed Global Community illustrates China’s perspective on global governance, emphasizing the nations’ interconnectedness and shared interests in overcoming the various crises the world is facing (Zhao 2023). By actively participating in international organizations and promoting its ideas, primarily in the United Nations, China works towards achieving the vision of creating a better future for humanity. When examining the established goals, the suggested global initiatives align well with the objectives outlined in the UN Charter and successfully realize the 2030 Agenda. The actions taken by China, based on previous proposals, can be understood as effective and efficient instruments for fulfilling the principles stated in the UN Charter (Ciborek 2023, 103-104). In order to understand China’s activities, initiatives, and views on contemporary international relations, it is necessary to investigate China’s positions and role in facing security challenges and the dynamics of the global security architecture itself.

Bearing in mind the paramount importance of China and its global agenda for understanding the world we live in and the necessity of deepening scientific knowledge in this area, the Dialogues on China format was launched in 2021 at the Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade (IIPE), with the idea of creating a unique platform for addressing and discussing the challenges in international relations and potential solutions and strategies for overcoming them, viewed from the Chinese perspective. Conferences within this format enable the gathering of professionals in the fields of China studies, international relations,

security studies, and economics to exchange their expertise and research on the political, economic, and security dimensions of China's global activities.

The third "Dialogues on China" international academic conference, titled "New Chinese Initiatives for a Changing Global Security", was designed to gather experts around the world who would contribute to the understanding of all points previously discussed, with a specific focus on the Chinese perspective on changing global security. The conference was jointly organised by the Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade, the Institute of European Studies, CASS, Beijing, and the China-CEE Institute, Budapest, with the support of the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia. Thirty-six experts from 15 countries gathered at the conference held at the premises of the Institute of International Politics and Economics, Belgrade, on November 9–10, 2023. During the event, 24 papers were presented, divided into the following five plenary sessions: the Keynote Speech, China in the New World Order, New Chinese Initiatives and Global Security, The BRI—A Decade of China's Assertiveness, and Global Impact of China's Policies: Case Studies.

At the official opening, more than 70 attendees were addressed by Prof. Dr. Branislav Đorđević, Director of the Institute of International Politics and Economics; Ambassador Irena Šarac, Assistant Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia; H. E. Li Ming, Ambassador Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary of the People's Republic of China to the Republic of Serbia; and Prof. Dr. Feng Zhongping, from the Institute of European Studies, CASS. The ceremony was moderated by Dr. Katarina Zakić, Head of the Regional Centre "Belt and Road" at the IIPE. The speakers emphasised the contribution of the "Dialogues on China" conference to a better understanding of contemporary political, economic, and security relations and the importance of Chinese initiatives in all the aforementioned aspects. The existence of strong bilateral relations between Serbia and China was also underlined, as was the importance of scientific cooperation between the institutions of these two countries.

The keynote speech on *China's responses to the new world order* was delivered by Dr. Ivona Lađevac, Deputy Director of the IIPE, who introduced the audience to new Chinese initiatives—the Global Security Initiative (GSI), Global Development Initiative (GDI), and Global Civilisation Initiative (GCI), their core concepts, and guiding principles, particularly stressing that they follow China's vision of a Global Community of Shared Future.

During the initial panel, dedicated to the topic of China and the new world order, the speakers addressed the differences between Western and Eastern visions of the international system, the European security framework, the issue of revisionism, the connection between Chinese initiatives and international

law, and the place of Eurasia within the current global context. Throughout the discussion, the question of the Russian vision of the emerging world order was opened, as were considerations regarding the war in Ukraine and the extent of the United States' commitment to defend the interests of its European allies. The second panel focused on the position and potential of Chinese initiatives in the process of transforming global security dynamics. Scholars delivered presentations on the Global Security Initiative from the perspectives of mediation diplomacy, strategic communication, and discursive power. Participants also discussed the Global Development Initiative within the context of the new multilateral paradigms and the promotion of these global initiatives in the UN system. Following the presentation of papers, a discussion arose regarding the challenges encountered by the current international system led by Western countries in light of the increasing presence and influence of China on the global stage. China's assertiveness over the past decade was the topic of the third panel, with presenters delving into the issues of the Belt and Road Initiative, its foreign and security policy, and the involvement of China and the US in Southeast Asia. The last panel in the conference focused on case studies on the impact of China's policies worldwide. The presentations in this panel covered economic issues, including Chinese trade and investments, particularly in renewable energy projects within the Belt and Road Initiative. The discussion also touched on the issue of China's relationships with Europe, the Balkans, and specifically with Serbia and Croatia.

The Conference Proceedings, edited by Dr. Nenad Stekić and Dr. Aleksandar Mitić and published by the Institute of International Politics and Economics, were issued in the weeks following the event. Twenty-four papers were published in the Proceedings, within the following thematic units: Rising China in the New International Context, the Belt and Road Initiative: New Impetus for China's Global Presence, China Goes Assertive?, and Beijing Shares its Vision of Global Security, Soft Power, and Discourses: China's New-Old Image.

As highlighted during the event, the conference "New Chinese Initiative for a Changing Global Security" made its contribution to enhancing the international scientific dialogue on contemporary developments in China's economic, political, and security policies. Experts had the opportunity to share their academic perspectives on the latest Chinese initiatives, participate in fruitful discussions regarding their global implications, and offer recommendations for future research.

References

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