

Chapter 7

China's Search for Convergence of Economic and Security Outcomes: Functional Security Cooperation in Eurasia

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Introduction

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has been geared towards encouraging greater economic connectivity between China and neighboring regions. China's trade relations with Southeast Asian countries, especially Indonesia and Vietnam, have deepened rapidly in recent years. In 2017, the growth rate of trade between Central Asian countries and China increased by 19.8 percent year on year.¹ Underpinning this surge was the commissioning of the oil and natural gas pipelines from Central Asia to China and its rising energy trade with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. The development of highways and railways and the expansion of distribution networks also contributed to increasing commodity trade between China and the region.

With this improving connectivity, China has come to perceive protecting critical infrastructure as a major security issue, namely, infrastructure of the energy, transport and logistics, and communication sectors which are the bedrock of connectivity improvement. Chinese President Xi Jinping has referred to "key issues," such as risk management and safety relating to the BRI project, emphasizing that "high attention must be paid to forestalling risks overseas," not only those in China, and that "every effort must be made to comprehensively improve capacity to respond to overseas safety and risks."²

However, China cannot tackle overseas risks alone. Risks cannot be addressed

¹ 程晓波 [Chen Xiaobo], ed., "一带一路" 贸易合作大数据报告2018 [*Big Data Report on Trade Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative 2018*] (国家信息中心 "一带一路" 大数据 [Belt and Road Big Data Center of the State Information Center] and 大连瀚闻资讯有限公司 [Sinoimex], May 2018), p. 68.

² 赵超 [Zhao Chao] and 安蓓 [An Bei], "坚持对话协商共建共享合作共赢交流互鉴 推动共建'一带一路'走深走实造福人民 [Efforts to Uphold Dialogue and Consultation, Joint Contribution, Shared Benefits, Win-win Cooperation, Exchanges and Mutual Learning, and to Promote the 'Belt and Road' Bringing More Happiness to the People]," 人民日报 [*People's Daily*], August 28, 2018.

without coordination and cooperation with other countries and regions. At the Fourth Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) held in Shanghai in May 2014, Xi Jinping called for efforts to “foster sound interactions and synchronized progress of regional economic cooperation and security cooperation,” noting that, “China is ready to discuss with regional countries the creation of an Asian forum for security cooperation in law enforcement and an Asian security emergency response center.”³

Security cooperation in this context may be considered functional cooperation. Functional cooperation is established as necessary among actors sharing interests in order to tackle common security issues and is characterized by highly practical cooperation in the security field. Moreover, it can be construed that China, which had viewed security cooperation as an “alliance cooperation versus regional cooperation” or “bilateral versus multilateral” dichotomy, is pursuing functional cooperation in this sector as a new approach to international security.

This chapter sheds light on the situation of China’s new initiatives for security cooperation from the perspective of functional cooperation. In doing so, it aims to obtain hints regarding the future outlook of Chinese security cooperation.

Can Military Muscle Serve as an Effective Means?

China’s increasing “overseas interests” accompanying the expansion of the BRI project has been emphasized domestically, and the Chinese government was required to engage in new initiatives. As Premier Li Keqiang noted, the Chinese government would “move faster to strengthen our capacity for safeguarding China’s overseas interests.”⁴ As was noted at the beginning, Xi Jinping, too, referred to “key issues” such as risk management and safety relating to the BRI project, noting that “high attention must be paid to forestalling risks overseas” and that “every effort must be made to comprehensively improve capacity

³ 习近平 [Xi Jinping], “坚持合作创新法治共赢 携手开展全球安全治理 [Adhering to Cooperation, Innovation, the Rule of Law and Win-win Results and Promoting Global Security Governance]” (September 26, 2017), 习近平 [Xi Jinping], 论坚持推动构建人类命运共同体 [On Building a Human Community with a Shared Future] (Beijing: 中央文献出版社 [Central Party Literature Press], 2018), p. 488.

⁴ 李克强 [Li Keqiang], “政府工作报告 [Report on the Work of the Government]” (March 5, 2016), 中共中央党史和文献研究院 [Party History and Documents Research Office of the CPC Central Committee], ed., 十八大以来重要文献选编 (下) [Selected Important Documents Since the 18th Party Congress, Vol. III] (Beijing: 中央文献出版社 [Central Party Literature Press], 2018), p. 283.

to respond to overseas safety and risks.”⁵

In the international community, China's expanding military presence is often discussed as one of its response measures. For example, in the *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2018* released by the U.S. Department of Defense, the BRI is mentioned together with the following observation. “The growth of China's global economic footprint makes its interests increasingly vulnerable to international and regional turmoil, terrorism, piracy, serious natural disasters and epidemics.” The result of this vulnerability is the need for the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to respond to such threats, and there is a possibility that China could access infrastructure that would “allow it to project and sustain military power at greater distances.”⁶

However, many experts in China understand that the role of the military will remain limited in regard to responding to security risks relating to safeguarding overseas interests — the BRI project in particular. They give the following reasons: (1) the PLA's power projection capability is limited and it lacks overseas outposts (in addition, it is difficult to resolve this issue quickly); (2) military power and the military are not necessarily suitable means for safeguarding overseas interests; and (3) the international community has suspicions over the PLA's overseas deployment. Furthermore, it is difficult to unilaterally deploy the military if most of the critical infrastructure exist on land and are not located in China.

Law Enforcement Cooperation: The Case of the Lianyungang Forum

Risk response has urgency, leading China to strengthen its initiatives for functional cooperation. Something that is gaining particular attention is China's moves to engage in functional cooperation in the field of law enforcement on the Eurasian continent. In September 2015, representatives of law enforcement agencies of 12 countries, including China, together with representatives of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), met in the port city of Lianyungang in China's Jiangsu Province to hold the “International Law Enforcement Cooperation

⁵ Zhao and An, “Efforts to Uphold Dialogue and Consultation.”

⁶ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2018* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 2018), pp. 111-112.

Forum on Secure Corridor of the New Eurasian Land Bridge” (Lianyungang Forum). The participating countries and organizations confirmed their shared goals as being to move to institutionalize the forum, responding to cross-border crime and terrorism, and reasserted a common vision to seek to construct a practical cooperation mechanism and improve response capacity.

Thereafter the Lianyungang Forum moved quickly towards being institutionalized. The annual meeting became a regular event and when the second annual meeting was held in September 2016 it was attended by 31 countries and three international organizations, with the level of participation also being raised to the vice-ministerial level. The third annual meeting in December 2017 was attended by 33 countries and three international organizations and the September 2018 fourth meeting saw representatives of 30 countries and four international organizations gather in Lianyungang.

From the third meeting onwards the forum members started to discuss the modalities for cooperation on more specific issues. During the third meeting, eight countries — China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Myanmar — held the First International Cooperation Conference on Transnational Oil and Gas Pipelines Security and issued a joint statement. The statement confirmed that the participants had reached consensus on: (1) establishing an international cooperation platform for transnational oil and gas pipeline security as a mechanism of the Lianyungang Forum and holding annual meetings; (2) building mechanisms for regular consultations, information exchanges, risk assessment and emergency response, and mechanisms to facilitate cooperation between law enforcement agencies and companies; (3) conducting bilateral and multilateral joint enforcement actions as well as joint exercises as appropriate and establishing offices to enable cooperation between police forces and companies in critical areas for pipeline flow; and (4) strengthening the security capacity building and cooperation for transnational oil and gas pipeline protection.

China expressed its willingness to provide assistance for capacity building.⁷ At the fourth meeting in 2018 a Ministerial-level Round-table on Building Law Enforcement Capacity towards the Future was held, resulting in the formation of consensus at a high level. At the fourth meeting a sub-forum at the director-general-level on international

⁷ “连云港论坛：暨首届跨国油气管道国际安保合作会议共同声明 [Lianyungang Forum: Joint Statement of the First International Cooperation Conference on Transnational Oil and Gas Pipelines Security],” December 11, 2017.

cooperation among law enforcement agencies was held, which agreed to establish a director-general-level liaison mechanism relating to international cooperation.⁸ It was also agreed to establish a governing board and executive committee for the forum, thus further advancing its institutionalization. An exhibition was also held in tandem with the forum, which provided an opportunity for business talks on police equipment, including for use in counter-terrorism activities, as well as safety equipment.⁹

In May 2017 the Chinese police authority provided training under the Lianyungang Forum to police officers from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Belarus.¹⁰ From the end of June to July 2018 specialized training on safety for pipelines was conducted at the Lianyungang City Police Training School for specialists from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and China.¹¹ Up until September 2018 more than 30 training courses for overseas police officers had been conducted, with a total of more than 400 participants.¹²

Implication of China's Functional Security Cooperation ***Security Cooperation Regulated by Economic Relations***

At the Fourth Summit of CICA held in Shanghai in May 2014, President Xi Jinping called for efforts to “foster sound interactions and synchronized progress of regional

⁸ 陶莎 [Tao Sha] and 莲宫轩 [Lian Gongxuan], “第四届连云港论坛昨闭幕 [The Fourth Lianyungang Forum Closes Yesterday],” 连云港日报 [*Lianyungang Daily*], September 14, 2018.

⁹ 莲宫轩 [Lian Gongxuan], “连云港论坛：践行弘扬‘上海精神’分享‘平安中国’经验 [Lianyungang Forum: Practicing and Advancing the ‘Shanghai Spirit’ and Sharing the Experience of ‘Peaceful China’],” 江苏法制报 [*Jiangsu Legal Daily*], June 20, 2018; “第四届‘连云港论坛’ 警用装备和公共安全产品博览会 [The Fourth Lianyungang Forum Police Equipment and Public Security Products Expo],” 中国安全防范技术与应用 [*China Security Protection Technology and Application*], No. 3 (2018), p. 4.

¹⁰ 谭晓平 [Tan Xiaoping] and 张弛 [Zhang Chi], “五国外警相聚港城‘连云港论坛’再谱新篇 [Police Officers from Five Countries Gather Together in a Port City, ‘Lianyungang Forum’ Writes a New Chapter],” 大陆桥视野 [*New Silk Road Horizon*], No. 5 (2017), pp. 22-24.

¹¹ 赵恩泽 [Zhao Enze], “2018新亚欧大陆桥安全走廊跨国油气管道安保研修班在连开班 [2018 Secure Corridor of the New Eurasian Land Bridge Transnational Oil and Gas Pipelines Security Training Held in Lianyungang],” 人民网 [*People's Daily Online*], June 28, 2018; 石杨 [Shi Yang] and 赵家新 [Zhao Jiaxin], “驿路祥云：深耕国际执法合作‘朋友圈’ [Cloud of Fortune over the Post Road: Circle of Friends Deepens through International Law Enforcement Cooperation],” 人民公安报 [*China Police Daily*], September 12, 2018.

¹² 张敏娇 [Zhang Minjiao], “30国齐聚连云港论坛：加强国际执法安全合作 共同提升执法能力 [30 Countries Gather at the Lianyungang Forum: Strengthening International Law Enforcement Cooperation and Jointly Improving Law Enforcement Capacity],” 现代世界警察 [*Modern World Police*], No. 10 (2018), p. 12.

economic cooperation and security cooperation,” noting that, “China is ready to discuss with regional countries the creation of an Asian forum for security cooperation in law enforcement and an Asian security emergency response center.”¹³ Quick to respond to these comments was the Lianyungang Municipal Public Security Bureau, from a city that serves as a logistics hub for the BRI. The Lianyungang Municipal Public Security Bureau proposed the establishment of an international forum to higher authorities, given what it perceived as the increasing security-related pressures brought on by advances in the construction of the BRI.¹⁴ This proposal was approved by the Ministry of Public Security and other central authorities, leading to the establishment of the Lianyungang Forum.

The major countries to which China has provided law enforcement cooperation through the Lianyungang Forum to date have been predominantly the countries of Central Asia that are directly linked by oil and natural gas pipelines. Wang Yongsheng, then Deputy Mayor of Lianyungang and Chief of the Lianyungang Municipal Public Security, has stated that in the future in addition to pipeline safety, practical cooperation will be expanded to also include rail logistics and port security as priority areas.¹⁵ If that is the case, there is a high possibility that the countries and regions that receive law enforcement cooperation under the auspices of the Lianyungang Forum will expand in the future as connectivity improves in the areas for cooperation.

China's Perspective on Security Cooperation

Most functional cooperation in the security field have been led by powers with capabilities to respond to the respective issues. For example, in the areas of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), the United States has restructured the Cobra Gold military exercise conducted with Thailand into functional cooperation since 2005. The United States has also expanded counter-terrorism dialogues and trainings with partner countries. Japan, too, has promoted functional cooperation in the areas of disaster relief and disaster risk reduction as well as counter-piracy measures. While such functional

¹³ 习近平 [Xi Jinping], “积极树立亚洲安全观、共创安全合作新局面 [Proactively Build Asian Security Concept and Work Together for a New State of Security Cooperation]” (May 21, 2014), 习近平 [Xi Jinping], *On Building a Human Community with a Shared Future*, p. 114, 116.

¹⁴ “连云港论坛从创意构想到创新实践 [Lianyungang Forum: From Creative Ideas to Innovative Practices],” 连网 [*Lianyungang News*], December 7, 2017, <http://www.lyg01.net/dpt/jj/2017/1207/96858.shtml> (accessed March 12, 2019).

¹⁵ “连云港市副市长王永生谈连云港论坛 [Lianyungang Deputy Mayor Wang Yongsheng Talks about the Lianyungang Forum],” 人民网 [*People's Daily Online*], October 30, 2018.

security cooperation is not necessarily carried out through alliances, many experts and strategists in China have viewed functional cooperation with a critical eye, noting that it no more than expands alliance cooperation or offers limited benefits to the international community.

In recent years, however, Chinese scholars have begun to present the view that functional security cooperation promoted by the United States and Japan is a “flexible and effective method of external cooperation” for providing (some) public goods and expanding influence.¹⁶ A Chinese official has stated as follows. Wang Xiaohong, Vice Minister of Public Security, sought an overall enhancement of practical cooperation in each field through international law enforcement cooperation, noting that China will strengthen provision of trainings for overseas police and “perpetually increase the international influence of Chinese public security operations.”¹⁷ Functional cooperation is practical cooperation tailored to an issue or function and is not an exclusive arrangement. China's commencement of functional cooperation in the security front signifies China's superiority in this field and may infer China's understanding of and development of linkages with functional cooperation led by other powers. In this context, we should give attention to China's functional cooperation in the security field.

¹⁶ See, 贺平 [He Ping], 区域性公共产品与日本的东亚功能性合作 [*Regional Public goods and Japan's Functional Cooperation in East Asia*] (Shanghai: 上海人民出版社 [Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe], 2019).

¹⁷ 田海军 [Tian Haijun] and 石杨 [Shi Yang], “深入学习贯彻习近平外交思想 全面提升新时代公安国际合作工作能力水平 [In-depth Study and Implementation of Xi Jinping Thoughts on Diplomacy: Comprehensively Elevate Capabilities in International Public Security Cooperation in the New Era],” 人民公安报 [*China Police Daily*], March 3, 2019.

Annual Meetings of the Lianyungang Forum: 2015-2018

	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Month & Year	Sep.2015	Sep.2016	Dec.2017	Sep.2018
Participating Countries	12 countries, 2 international organizations China, Russia, Italy, the Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Poland, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan	31 countries, 3 international organizations China, Russia, Italy, the Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Poland, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Angola, Austria, Bulgaria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, France, Fiji, Ghana, Czech Republic, Georgia, Kenya, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, South Africa, Nigeria, Serbia, Slovakia	33 countries, 3 international organizations China, Russia, Italy, the Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Poland, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Fiji, Latvia, Nigeria, Serbia, Argentina, Pakistan, Ecuador, France, Cambodia, Madagascar, Mongolia, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Portugal, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Spain, Iran, Indonesia	30 countries, 4 international organizations (Not announced)
Participating International Organizations	Shanghai Cooperation Organization Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (SCO-RATS) International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)	SCO-RATS INTRPOL European Police Office (EUROPOL)	SCO-RATS INTERPOL Lanchang-Mekong Integrated Law Enforcement and Security Cooperation Center (LMLECC)	SCO-RATS INTERPOL EUROPOL LMLECC
Composition of Annual Meeting (Major components)	(1) Plenary meeting (2) Police Equipment and Public Security Facility Exhibition (3) Observation of Anti-terrorism Emergency Drill	(1) Plenary meeting (2) Police Equipment and Public Security Facility Exhibition	(1) Plenary meeting (2) First International Cooperation Conference on Transnational Oil and Gas Pipelines Security (3) Police Academy Presidents Sub-Forum (4) Think Tank Sub-Forum (5) Police Equipment and Safety Facility Exhibition	(1) Plenary meeting (2) Round-table on Building Law Enforcement Capacity towards the Future (ministerial level) (3) Sub-forum at the director-general-level on international cooperation among law enforcement agencies (4) "Cooperation for Security, Security for Prosperity" Sub-Forum (5) Police Equipment and Safety Facility Exhibition
Major Outcomes	Five-point Joint Vision	Five-Point Action Plan	(1) Joint Statement of the Lianyungang Forum (2) Joint Statement of the First International Cooperation Conference on Transnational Oil and Gas Pipelines Security (eight countries)	
Notes		Raised to vice-ministerial level		Participation of ministerial-level delegates

Source: Masuda Masayuki, "China's Eurasian Diplomacy: Regionalism, Balancing, and Pragmatism," *NIDS China Security Report 2020: China Goes to Eurasia* (Tokyo: National Institute for Defense Studies, 2019), p. 24.