

The Future of China-EU Strategic Relationship: a New Geopolitical Perspective

Guo Xuetao
Shanghai University of Political Science and Law
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I. Two Meanings of the Topic

1. The turbulent China-EU relationship itself
 - Unstable: more disputes, less trust
 - Uncertain: difficult to see the policy-orientation
 - Unclear: which direction?
2. The turbulent world order
 - The transformation of great-power structure
 - The shift of world balance
 - The geopolitical considerations of great powers



II. Why a turbulent China-EU relationship?

1. The shortage of mutual strategic trust
 - The European concerns about China's socialist system and worries about China's rise
 - The policy disputes on African, Middle East and other regional security and economic affairs
 - The fears of economic recession in both sides



2. The increasing economic and trade disputes since the financial crisis

- The mutual complementary and interdependent economies meet trouble when the industrial structure matters
 - China: more exports from the Manufacturing Sector
 - The market economy status disputes
 - Trade protectionism

3. The utilitarianism in EU's China policy choices

- The China-US-EU relations



4. The economic crisis push forward regional integration and cohesion in East Asia and Europe

- The EU internal economic integration in dealing with the crisis
- The trend of “speaking with one voice in foreign affairs” among EU members
- China has been focusing on East-Asian regional integration



III. China-EU strategic relationship from a new geopolitical perspective

1. The new geopolitics emphasizes benign competition.
 - Due to the limitation of geographical space and development space, sovereign states attach more and more attention to coexistence while maintaining global balance.
 - Much space for coexistence between China and EU which is the basis for establishing mutual political trust.



2. The new geopolitics emphasizes diversification of entities in global and regional governance.

for example:

- the governmental support and NGO's involvement in African economic development and social progress
- The China-EU cooperation on energy security



3. The new geopolitics emphasizes communications and dialogues between civilizations.

- The debate on rise and fall of Orientalism or Occidentalism: China and India, the US and EU
- The flows of human resource, capital, technology and system in the age of information have been undermining the basis of classic clashes among civilizations.
- The cultural communications and dialogues between China and the EU have been accelerating since 1980s.



IV. The Future of China-EU Strategic Relationship

1. The classic geopolitics will continue to affect the foreign policy-making model: geopolitical space-resources-national power.
2. The transformation of China-EU strategic relationship will take time during the great games among China, the EU, the US, Russia, India, and maybe other regional powers, take shape being satisfied to both sides if we follow the new geopolitical logic.
3. The long process of great-power political game might bring unbalanced benefit or cost, but the game in new geopolitical era will be less violent and moving forward gradually.



4. A bright China-EU relationship depends on:

- If we can learn to work together in dealing with the energy security and and climate change issues
- If we can learn to cooperate in global and regional governance.
- If we can learn to get rid of the classic realpolitik thinking to build independent strategic relationship
- If we learn to allay mutual suspicion or hostility and inspire mutual confidence in regionalism

