

## The approach of the United States of America towards the Belt and Road Initiative in the light of the US Grand Strategy towards China (2013-2020)

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Original Article                      Main Object: International Relations                      Scope: China and USA                      Received: 13 February 2023                      Revised: 15 March 2023                      Accepted: 16 March 2023                      Published online: 11 April 2023</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b>                      balance of power,                      China's BRI,                      national security,                      offensive realism,                      The United States of America.</p>	<p>The Belt and Road Initiative was launched in 2013 by Chinese President, Xi Jinping. This initiative is one of the important aspects of China's foreign policy. On the other hand, due to the geographical extent, extensive infrastructural dimensions and subsequent developments of this project, different countries have studied and paid special attention to it at both academic and executive levels. The study of relations between the United States of America and China has always been of interest to international relations experts. In this light, the United States of America has also considered the Belt and Road Initiative and has followed a certain pattern of behavior towards it. Therefore, knowing the American behavior pattern and approach towards the Belt and Road Initiative will reveal important axes of the dynamics of mutual relations between these two countries. The current study examines and evaluates the approach of the United States towards China's Belt and Road Initiative in the light of the US grand strategy towards China in the period of 2013-2020. Therefore, the current research seeks to answer the main question, "How can the behavioral pattern of the United States of America be explained towards China's Belt and Road Initiative in the mentioned time frame?" The findings of the article show that the United States considers the Belt-Road as a project aimed at increasing China's geopolitical influence at both the international level and the Indo-Pacific region, which has followed the pattern of competition and confrontation towards this project due to the level of conflict between the interests of the project and those of the United States. The method of analysis used in the current research is qualitative content analysis and available data, sources and documents.</p>

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**Extended Abstract**

The Belt and Road Initiative was launched in 2013 by Chinese President, Xi Jinping. This initiative is one of the important aspects of China's foreign policy. On the other hand, due to the geographical extent, extensive infrastructural dimensions and subsequent developments of this project, different countries have studied and paid special attention to it at both academic and executive levels. The study of relations between the United States of America and China has always been of interest to international relations experts. In this light, the United States of America has also considered the Belt and Road Initiative and has followed a certain pattern of behavior towards it. Therefore, knowing the American behavior pattern and approach towards the Belt and Road Initiative will reveal important axes of the dynamics of mutual relations between these two countries. The current study examines and evaluates the approach of the United States towards China's Belt and Road Initiative in the light of the US grand strategy towards China in the period of 2013-2020. Therefore, the current research seeks to answer the main question, "How can the behavioral pattern of the United States of America be explained towards China's Belt and Road Initiative in the mentioned time frame?"

The U.S. in its grand strategy towards China, seeks to prevent this country from trying to achieve hegemony in the Indo-Pacific region and maintain its power balance and superior position in this region and the international system. In this regard, as explained in the previous chapters of this research, if the Belt-Road Initiative is successful in the international arena, it will lead to the promotion of China's position and role in the region surrounding this country and the international system.

Surveys show that the United States had a general, ambiguous and non-confrontational approach to the Belt and Road Initiative between the Obama administration and the Trump administration until mid-2017. The reason for this approach is that the Obama administration was focused on other areas of US-China relations, including climate change, Iran's nuclear program, and North Korea's nuclear threat, and was unwilling to take an official position and reaction against the Belt and Road Initiative. It will have an adverse effect on other areas of cooperation between the two countries. Until the middle of 2017, Trump was willing to establish a personal friendly relationship with Xi Jinping and get his favorable opinion, to deal with his priorities in the field of the nuclear threat of North Korea and solving the problem of the US trade deficit with China. For this reason, he refrained from confronting and reacting seriously against the Belt-Road Initiative during this time period, and sometimes he made general positive comments regarding the Belt-Road Initiative. But from the middle of 2017 to the end of 2020, the US government's

approach to the Belt and Road Initiative changed and the model of confrontation and competition replaced the previous approach. In response to the reason for this change in America's behavior towards the Belt and Road Initiative, it can be said that America's macro strategy towards China changed from a strategy based on cooperation and competition to a strategic competition. In this regard, among the issues that affected the various aspects of US-China relations, including the US approach to the Belt and Road Initiative, the trade war between the two countries and Trump's failure to advance other issues with China's help, which caused a change in the government's approach Trump and taking clear and confrontational positions towards the Belt and Road Initiative, while the United States was also trying to compete with China in some areas.

China's Belt and Road initiative, from the point of view of the United States of America, includes a combination of components that the United States should compete with China due to its lack of fundamental conflict with its interests, and on the other hand, components that pose fundamental threats to the interests of the United States and as a result, America should confront it.

The findings of the article show that the United States considers the Belt-Road as a project aimed at increasing China's geopolitical influence at both the international level and the Indo-Pacific region, which has followed the pattern of competition and confrontation towards this project due to the level of conflict between the interests of the project and those of the United States. The method of analysis used in the current research is qualitative content analysis and available data, sources and documents.

### **Conflict of interest**

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

### **Authors' contributions**

All authors contributed to the original idea, study design.

### **Ethical considerations**

The author has completely considered ethical issues, including informed consent, plagiarism, data fabrication, misconduct, and/or falsification, double publication and/or redundancy, submission, etc.

### **Data availability**

The dataset generated and analyzed during the current study is available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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