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Li Xue

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# **China's Foreign Policy Decision-Making Mechanism and "One Belt One Road" Strategy**

*Li XUE*

## **Abstract**

China's foreign policy agenda will change significantly from "keeping a low profile" to "proactively and enterprisingly striving for achievements" as it implements the One Belt One Road (OBOR) strategy. It requires the foreign policy apparatus to make a response accordingly. However, the current policymaking mechanism has three flaws that include the collection and analysis of information, the selection and summary of policy suggestions, and the final decision making, of which the second process is particularly obvious. Hence, China needs to reform the conceptual framework, bureaucratic systems and talent selection of the foreign policy bureaucracy. Firstly, it should change the view of "no preferential diplomacy for weak country" and form wide-ranging political vision and long-term perspective in the relationship with surrounding countries. Secondly, China should strengthen the National Security Council (NSC)'s control over external affairs and appoint a standing member of the Politburo as deputy NSC chairman and deputy leader of the Central Foreign Affairs Leading Group. This official would then be responsible for foreign affairs. In addition, the post of foreign minister should be held by a vice premier who is also a member of the Politburo. Thirdly, it needs to separate political appointees and civil servants, to strengthen off-the-job training and to appoint experienced specialists and scholars to its decision-making agency.

## **Keywords**

One Belt One Road (OBOR), National Security Council (NSC), China's foreign policy making, mechanism reform

## Introduction

The two conferences held at Beijing in March 2015 gave rise to an unprecedented phenomenon. The world heeded attention to Beijing, where 31 provincial level meetings converged to discuss the “One Belt One Road” (OBOR) strategy. At a press conference on March 8, the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated that the strategy will be China’s focal point of its foreign policy in 2015. In 2002, Zhang Baijia, a historian, wrote an influential essay, arguing that China can wield its influence by first transforming itself.<sup>1</sup> China has experienced further significant economic growth since the paper was released. The western countries have been negatively influenced by the 2008 Global financial crisis, and their economies are still not back on feet. In contrast, China successfully held its 2008 Olympic Games. Its economy continued to grow, with its GDP surpassing that of the Japanese in 2010. The size has already doubled that of Japan in 2014, amounting to approximately 70% of the U.S GDP. As such, it seems that China’s influence to the world has entered a new phase in the past 13 years.

More significantly, China’s influence to the world is only likely to increase as the country implements its OBOR strategy. The strategy would not only bring large amount of investment both domestically and overseas. It also transforms China’s millennia-long governance style, casting multiple waves of repercussion via peaceful means. As the strategy gradually gets implemented in 2015, the *taoguang yanghui* (keep a low profile and bide your time) foreign policy line must undergo drastic changes, in order for the country to pursue a new policy orientation such as *yousuo zuowei* (do something) and even *fengfayouwei* (striving for achievement). The question is, how can the current Chinese foreign policy decision making institutions respond to this new attempt?

In the process to implement the OBOR, there will be a variety of changes in the country’s foreign affairs. Not only would government departments concerned and issues increase, the number of tasks that require active planning will also grow dramatically. However, foreign policy decision is often based on incomplete information. This means that the probability of errors would also increase accordingly in the process of decision-making.

Although it is not possible to entirely eliminate errors in foreign policy making, decision makers can still make efforts to decrease them. Some crucial steps toward such endeavor are to collect and analyze relevant information, strengthen the

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<sup>1</sup> Zhang, Baijia, “Gaibianzijiyingxiang shijie — 20 shiji zhongguo waijiao jiben xiansuo chuyi” [Transforming the self, influencing the world — Discussions on China’s underlying foreign policy line in the 20th century], *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue* [Social Sciences in China] No.1, 2002: 4 - 19.

screening and coordination mechanism of policy initiations, thereby qualitatively improving policy making. Obviously, these are easier said than done.

It is mainly the tasks of researchers, diplomats and intelligence staffs to collect and analyze foreign policy related information. The preliminary screening and integration of collected information is often carried out by high level diplomats and high ranking officials. Needless to say, foreign policy decision usually depends on the highest level of the decision making hierarchy, particularly for crucial decisions. Information resource, however, is usually concentrated at foreign policy related departments and their affiliated research institutes. However, officials and experts in these organizations tend to be constrained by parochial interest of their respective sectors. Sometimes bogged down at their day-to-day duties, it is difficult for them to take a holistic view of the questions at hand, thereby failing to come out with ideas that take the grand picture into account. Some of the advantages of think tanks lie at their ability to go beyond each of their bureaucratic interests. They also benefit from the scholarly community, including utilizing novel theories, methodologies and data and information. Their downside, however, is that they lack information owned by government. Their research and analysis, thus, is confined to knowledge that is either open to the public or based on their individually conducted surveys and analyses. This of course is not the case with contract projects assigned by the government.

In contrast, America's foreign policy research and decision making mechanism appears more sophisticated. Different government departments are capable of taking advantage of their bureaucratic resource to collect and analyze information. Some of these activities might be outsourced to experts. Non-governmental research institutes, specifically major think tanks, also utilize their advantages in providing policy recommendations based on their own information and analyses. Policy recommendations from these two categories of policy advisory routes would be further screened and streamlined by advisors for high level decision makers. At this level, policy recommendations are boiled down to a few plans with specific pros and cons, and even priority preferences, for president's references. The United States government employs a large number of research experts as mid and high level officials in foreign policy divisions, in order to strengthen the screening and integration functions. This revolving door phenomenon has shed light for many countries.

## **1. Problems in China's Foreign Policy Decision Mechanism**

There are some characteristics and advantages in China's foreign policy

decision making mechanism. However this paper focuses on the problems in the mechanism per se. Such problems lie at three phases of the decision making process, from information collection and analysis, screening and integration for policy recommendations, to final policy making. I will argue that the gap between the U.S's foreign policy making and that of the Chinese perhaps exists at the screening and integration phase. The second largest gap is at the policy decision phase. In addition, the differences in information collection and integration are mostly a result of personnel quality of researchers, rather than a problem of information sharing among different government departments.

At the information collection and analysis phase, government departments in China and their affiliated research institutes often remain much closed. The military is no exception here. To be fair, the United States also has this problem. These departments provide policy suggestions often to expand the parochial interests of their own organizations. At times, especially in China, the department heads wield significant influence. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the International Department at the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (IDCPC) only have a few competent researchers and analysts and failed to make good use of them.

The IDCPC used to have strong research institutions. These institutions, however, have become competent of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), Peking University and so on. As IDCPC reaches out for larger scale inter-party interactions, its research capacity is unable to meet the demand.

Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs does have some of its own research institutes, it also finds these institutes unable to conduct research and yield results in response to the changing foreign relations reality. The Policy Planning Department, the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), and the China Foreign Affairs University (CFAU) are the three major research institutions under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Among them, the Policy Planning Department's major tasks include: analyzing the grand picture and strategic issues of the world trend and international relations; formulating foreign policy plans; planning and reporting important foreign affairs documents; announcing foreign policies; coordinating investigation and research activities; and conducting research on the People's Republic of China's foreign policy history. However, the Policy Planning Department only plays limited roles in research. This is largely due to the tradition that "no foreign affairs are small affairs"(Zhou Enlai's word). Also, its relatively few staff members have to deal with assigned duties as their major routines. Thus, it only takes up issues left by other departments within the Ministry. Needless to say, the Policy Planning Department also clearly shows its lack of depth and sustainability in its research.

The China Institute of International Studies and the China Foreign Affairs Uni-

versity enjoy relatively stronger research capabilities. CIIS and CFAU conduct more research than IDCPC. Both of them frequently take part in investigation and research activities. In the past decade, CFAU has grown up one of best research institutes with respect to IR theory and IR methodology studies, in addition to its original strength in policy analysis. On the other hand, CIIS emphasizes more on analyzing policy issues and providing internal reports. Its research capacity, however, is only equivalent to a large research institute under CASS. Many of its senior researchers are former diplomats, who are keen to understand concrete diplomatic practice. Their downside, though, is lack of academic trainings for writing research papers. As a result, their works tend to miss logical coherence, methodology legitimacy, and in depth analysis of policies. With insufficient theoretical and methodological backup, their policy suggestions tend to lack persuasiveness. Overall, in terms of its staff member size and policy influence, CIIS seems to be slightly inferior to its long-time rival — the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR).

However, these institutes also meet some problems. The fact that they are subject to MOFA prevents them from formulating holistic policy recommendations beyond department interests. This is especially true when such recommendations might hurt the interest of MOFA. Outsourcing is an effective way to solve the problem, according to experience from some countries.

Fortunately, more and more non-MOFA research institutions are stepping into the foreign policy research. They publish their research results and do outsourcing research. However, only some famous scholars take part in them. Problem with those famous scholars is they don't have much time to do research. Their policy recommendations are often based on their experiences, rather than real research. There are two shortcomings in outsourcings. First, the time frame for research report is too short. This makes it very difficult for researchers to engage in in-depth examination and analysis. Sometimes, they can only provide tentative answers. This tendency is especially strong in political issues. Second, contractors are sometimes very biased, and they do nothing more than just endorsing views of some academic organizations and scholars. This is particularly true in the economics area and projects conducted by the local governments.

There are also problems at the decision making level. When it comes to high level decision making, there are no clear cut alternatives with distinct features and priorities. Rather, decision makers either recognize certain issues' importance or delegate research tasks downstream. Or, they have to face many partial policy recommendations. Sometimes, policy makers buy certain biased recommendations from some departments. Thus, outsourced research ends up being biased, making it difficult for policy makers to choose the right policy options from the many recommended ones. Even if policy makers are persuaded to take certain recom-

mentations, there is no guarantee that they are picking the ones that best serve for the country's pragmatic interest. As a result, generally speaking, Chinese foreign policy remains incoherent.

The critical factors for such problems, however, are not hard to see. In short, China still does not have an institute that can judge, screen and incorporate all foreign policy recommendations. I shall call such organization the "policy screening agency". Obviously, some policies emerge as a result of judgment, screening and incorporation of an array of recommendations. PLA navy's patrol at the Gulf of Aden is one such example. The decision to patrol around the Gulf was made as a result of discussions among different departments and institutes. Many other important documents are also born out of widely held discussions. However, from the institutional efficiency point of view, the lack of a foreign policy screening agency is the critical point.

Theoretically, the Office of Foreign Affairs of the CPC Central Committee should play this role. However, due to its rather low hierarchical position, in reality, it can only implement policies. The Foreign Affairs Leading Group ranks higher, and is capable to represent wider interests. However, since it is not a permanent organization, the Group cannot effectively screen and incorporate policies as described above. Although the Central Policy Research Office sometimes played this role, originally it was not designed to completely function as such. After all, its major task is to design policies and conduct relevant theoretical research as instructed by superior organizations. In other words, it is not supposed to specialize in policy recommendations and prioritization. The National Security Commission of the CPC was originally expected to play this role. However, since its establishment, conventional scholarly views hold that the Commission tends to focus on domestic affairs, and this trend is accelerating.

As for MOFA, its policy recommendations have little weight in actual decision making, due to their relatively low ranking. When many scholars in the IR discipline provide recommendations to leaders in the Ministry, they often hear replies such as "I will report this to the central government". In China's foreign policy decision making system, the party makes all the decisions. State councilors in charge of foreign affairs might be the highest personnel ranking in charge of the duty. However, none of them after Qian Qichen were members of the Politburo (currently 25 members) or Deputy Premier (currently 4 members). They are situated below the Vice Chairman of the National People's Congress, but above leaders at the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate, and the Vice Chairpersons of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). Even State Councilors do not reach the top thirty rankings when it comes to important decision makings, let alone Foreign Ministers. As for foreign policy mak-

ing, there are 12 politburo members above the State Councilors in charge of foreign affairs, and there are more than 30 persons about Foreign Minister. As such, when the Minister and Deputy Ministers hear certain policy recommendations, dozens of people come to his mind. Hence, it is quite natural for them to say "I will report to central government".

The policy making process has yet been institutionalized in the Chinese government. Many factors could gravely influence policy outcomes. Department leaders' ranking and their personal relations with the supreme leader really matters. Thus, it is understandable that MOFA and IDCPC actually only implement policies instead of deciding them. We witnessed the outcomes of flaws in the past few years. Some foreign behaviors were too tough and some operations happened without notice of MOFA.

Currently, China is trying to establish a mechanism that functions at both the regional and the global levels. Such endeavor necessitates cooperation from relevant countries. Cooperation among nations during peaceful period depends on exchange of interest and mutual compromise. MOFA and the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) is good at such tasks. However, due to their lower rankings, they are incapable of striking out exchangeable interest and extending compromises to foreign counterparts. Their incompetence in providing policy inputs for supreme leaders resulted in the slow development of China's providing regional and global public goods.

## **2. The Rationale of Improving the Foreign Policy Decision Making Mechanism**

In China's context, army under party is better than army under administration. Therefore, all important issues must go through discussions at the Politburo. Generally speaking, China is also a country where the civilians control the army. However, policy making process is a dynamic game. Powerful organizations usually want to create a winner-take-all situation by showing their hard power. In contrast, MOFA and MOFCOM have preference to negotiation and mutual compromise in order to create a win-win situation (or at least to avoid a lose-lose scenario). As for foreign affairs, a State Councilor in charge of foreign relations might have similar weight with the Minister of Public Security, who is also a State Councilor. However, his/her position is by far inferior to that of the two Vice Chairmen of the Central Military Commission, the Secretary of committee of the Central Political and Legal Affairs, or any members of the Politburo. Such



an arrangement makes hardliners get the upper hand in foreign policy decision making. In addition, some powerful departments do not have to notify their moves to MOFA. This explains why China took a series of hardline foreign policies in the past few years. Although MOFA is often called the Ministry of Compromise, or the Ministry of Surrender, in reality, it is incapable for them to do so.

As a large rising power, China is not only free from any concerns of foreign invasion, it is also quickly expanding its power outward. Thus, it is natural for small and medium sized neighboring states to worry or even fear China's recent development, unless they think that China's political, economic and military power would not hurt them, or might even benefit them. If they cannot become allies with China, the only way left for them is to nurture mutual trust. However, mutual trust is not an easy issue, especially for those who have territorial disputes with China. It was against this backdrop that China's new administration proposed to establish a "community with a shared future" with ASEAN and other neighboring states, based on its principle of non-aligned diplomacy. This move would certainly help these countries to resolve doubts and increase trust. In order to achieve this goal, China needs to show that it is a trustworthy country. Through soft engagement, instead of highhanded leadership and force, Beijing has to convince other countries that they do not have to fear China. Furthermore, China also has to make its moves more predictable, and even institutionally constrain its behavior to certain extent. Indeed, a powerful neighbor without institutional constraint would inevitably create concerns among the neighbors. Governance of the world through institutions is a major experience that the United States acquired after the Second World War. China should learn from this experience, starting from the more functional issue with neighboring states.

Human beings tend to harbor self-centered ideas. Therefore, it is imperative for us to take transposition thinking. Imagine there is an emerging country right next to China, with 10 billion populations and a territory ten times of that of China. Let us call this the Ten Billion countries for convenience. Facing the quickly rising Ten Billion countries, China will also feel concerns and fears, hoping it does no harm, and self-regulates its own behavior through some institutional arrangements. Suppose the Ten Billion countries draws a Eleven-dotted Line within China's exclusive economic zones, but refuse to tell China what this line represents. The Ten Billion country also announces that international disputes cannot be solved via international laws, but should take account the millennia history of the islets and waters within the zones. It strongly asserts to bilaterally negotiate and resolve disputes, based not solely on international laws, but also historically related interests. Under this situation, China would seek to unite with other neighboring countries, seek for resolution via international laws, and secure

support from the global hegemon who is stronger than the “Ten Billion country”. None of the smaller states would think that they were forming an alliance with the hegemon in order to contain the rising Ten Billion country.

China’s identity has transformed from an East Asian country, to a Eurasian country and a central country in Asia. This is only a geopolitical return to Hua Yi order in which China is the Central Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> A real return to Hua Yi order with hierarchical level, however, is totally wrong and impossible at all. This does not mean that China can never become one of the leading countries in the contemporary international society. Although still far from perfect, equality among nations regardless of their sizes has already become a basic characteristic of the world system today. In addition, with the advent of nuclear weapons and a prevalent hope for world peace, it is impossible for rising states to gain strength and power through brute force, as some used to do in the past. Peaceful rise is now the only feasible way. Hua Yi order/The tribute system which China adopted in its ancient past may have its shortcomings, such as inequality. However, the system must have its own mechanism to sustain, because it did last for a few millennia as a type of international order. For example, the system values persuasion and moral protocols, not large-scale expansion of the territory. The “give more get less” (*baolaihouwang*) principle is precisely one example of such moral protocol. Ancient China divided the world under heaven into five zones (*wufu*).<sup>3</sup> The principle in dealing with the barbarians is: “if barbarians living far away do not admire us submit, then we need to improve our culture and morality to attract them. Once they come to close zone, we should make them a peaceful life.” In other words, ancient China aimed to attract foreign countries by improving its own moral and cultural standards, thereby making it easier for them to admire and accept China. Once they accept China’s indoctrination, foreign countries were elevated to the first three zones. In order to prevent *rong* and *di* from invading the heartland, Chinese dynasties also built defense lines such as the Great Walls. These are all examples that China, as an agrarian empire, does not pursue territorial expansion. This is a major difference from nomadic cultures, and other types of commercial empires in Europe.

Thus, for China to reform its foreign policy decision making mechanism under OBOR, it must integrate the splendid traditions and civilizations of both its own

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<sup>2</sup> Western scholars often refer this as the tribute system. Huang, Zhilian. *TianchaoLizhi TixiYanjiu: Vol.1: ZhongguoyuYanzhouGuojiaGuanxiXingtai-lun* [The tribute system vol.1 China’s relations with Asian countries] (Beijing: China Renmin University Press, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> The five submission zones are, *tianfu*, *houfu*, *suifu* (also called *binfu*), *yaofu* and *huangfu*. The four barbarians (*man*, *yi*, *rong* and *di*) lived in the *yaofu* (*man* and *yi*) and *huangfu* (*rong* and *di*). Convicted exiles also lived in the two *fuzones*. For details refer to, *Shang Shu and Yu Gong*, *Guo Yu and Zhou Yu*, and *Xun Tzuand ZhengLun* etc.

and the West, instead of emphasizing only either of the two. Its foreign policy decision making mechanism, in turn, should be reformed in the following three areas: conceptual reform, institutional improvement, and utilization of human resource.

For conceptual reform, China has to abandon the wrong idea that “weak states do not have any foreign relations.” Beijing must realize that the death rate of states after the World War Two has declined dramatically. Weaker and smaller states have secured their basic survival rights in the international community. State governance also changed dramatically. The people will suffer directly from mismanagement of the state, and the government would also be replaced. However, this has nothing to do with collapse of the state. Second, China has to do away with its victim mindset, and further consolidate self confidence. It must realize that *luohouaida* (hit by others due to backwardness) is only a normal historical phenomenon, and it is already in the past. Today, China is no longer a weak state, and no countries would dare to bully it. The proposals to establish big country relations are indeed one of the initial signs of the country’s confidence in interacting with other big countries. This realization, though, is only half of the story. The sheer fact that China proposed to establish the new type of international relations based on mutual interest means that the country understands, as a quickly developing country in Asia, what responsibilities it has to share, and the implications of behaving as such. It is good for China to lead other neighboring states to develop together. However, China must make sure that these countries want China to take the leadership. In other words, understandings from other countries are an imperative condition. If Beijing can earn their trust, of course it would be even better.

To do so, China must have a wide perspective instead of limiting itself to narrow interests. Relations with neighboring states concerns with China’s long-term grand strategic design. This is particularly true with small and medium sized countries. Furthermore, China also has to be flexible in understanding different positions, concerns and expectations that other states might have. Some are worried that neighboring states might make outrageous demands. However, such scenario is very unlikely. Even if they did make such demands, China still reserves all its reasons and capabilities to say no. The Chinese government also has to restrain domestic nationalism, instead of escalating it from time to time. Beijing has to be alert that, when some people criticize that the United States does not treat China as its equal, those people are also nurturing big country chauvinism. Such chauvinism assumes that small and medium sized neighboring states are not important, therefore China can pursue its own national interest at will. Even if those states harbor negative feelings toward China, there is nothing they can do but to eventually accept China’s approach. To those people, all countries aim to increase their interest. Advocates of such chauvinism are usually those who emphasize

relative gains and maximization of national interest at all times. This applies to interactions even with small and medium sized countries. For instance, they assert that China must never back down over the South China Sea issue, which is its core interest of China. Obviously, they fail to see this issue from a larger picture of China's relations with ASEAN countries. As a regional leader, how can China convince other countries of its legitimacy? How should it cope with regional issues, without losing the larger global picture? In other words, these advocates' vision is simply too narrow. Such pursuit of narrow interest without taking China's grand picture into consideration would not contribute to the country's long-term comprehensive interest. Fortunately, this line of thinking has not become the mainstream in China's policy research sphere. Instead, the mainstream most likely thinks that Beijing should: see the South China Sea issue from both the regional and global perspectives; solve South China Sea disputes by taking measures justifiable and acceptable in the contemporary international community; and take an open regionalism approach.

In contrast to America's bilateral military alliances, TPP and other exclusive institutions, China has been promoting open institutions, such as the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. This reflects the openness and inclusiveness of Chinese way in global governance.

Institution wise, China has to strengthen the roles that the National Security Commission plays in the international arena, thereby balancing the Commission at both the domestic and international affairs. The General Secretary, also assuming the chairmanship of the Commission, should focus on domestic issues, whereas another Politburo Standing Committee member assuming the vice chairmanship of the Commission and the deputy leader of the Foreign Affairs Leading Group should emphasize foreign affairs. Foreign Affairs should be a vice premier and a Politburo member. The Minister, as a bureaucratic administrator, does not have to be a diplomat. With support from the vice chairman of the Commission, the Minister can also participate in screening, incorporating and prioritizing important foreign policies. If so, the supreme leader will dramatically improve the quality of decision making and accelerate their decision making process, thereby contributing to a more coherent Chinese foreign policy. This would enable China to more effectively provide public goods to the region and the world, and become a leader in shaping regional orders and global institutions.

As a matter of fact, in many large states, foreign ministers with vocational diplomatic background are the minority. The majority of them are politicians, or at times even leaders in private sectors and the academics. Politician ministers are better in actively screening foreign policy choices. In contrast, while bureau-

cratic ones are better endowed with expertise and administrative sophistication, the downside is their lack of macro perspectives, strategic calculation and holistic judgment. This is a universal problem which bothers not just China.

In the U.S. foreign policy decision-making line, the Secretary of the State in the Cabinet is approximately equivalent to the third Standing Committee member in Politburo, or the executive Vice Premier in the Chinese government system. The Secretary of the State, however, is ranked the first within the Cabinet with authority in dealing with foreign affairs. They may have more professional expertise than the Presidents in administrating foreign issues, thereby playing more important roles in making foreign policies.

When it comes to human resource in foreign affairs, the Ministry already has a few expert staffs. Some leaders are from other ministries. Thus, it seems that MOFA is aware of the weak points, and began to address such problems. Unfortunately, the improvement is far from complete. Some of the Ministry's major tasks in thoroughly implementing OBOR should be: opening up its closed system; drastically increasing non vocational diplomats; and accelerating diversification of leaders with different backgrounds.

In the long run, one solution would be separation of political officers and administrative officers. This has to be done by coordination with other ministries and commissions. In the short and midterm, there are at least two solutions. The first is to create more opportunities for diplomats to gain off-the-job trainings. Such training period should be extended so as to improve their professional knowledge and skills. The second is to dramatically increase staff members from the outside. This approach perhaps proves effective more quickly. For example, the Ministry can increase the ratio of non-diplomats in the Foreign Policy Advisory Commission. There are six non-diplomatic members in current commission of 29 members. At the same time, the Commission must also be strengthened, say upgrading its status to become the Foreign Policy Advisory Commission of the National Security Commission. More experienced experts and scholars in related areas should be brought into the foreign policy decision making organizations. These staff members might first begin their career at the Director-General levels, and later get promoted to higher positions.

The Ministry of Science and Technology, and the Ministry of Environmental Protection have already made progress in this regard. The Ministry of Education, the National Health and Family Planning Commission, as well as its predecessor — the Ministry of Health have gone even further. Professor Wang Huning's career path in the international relations area, for example, should not be an exception. Career path as such should be conventionalized after certain transition period.

Also, MOFA should consider the career pathways of its current staff members. As competitions become increasingly fierce at the middle and higher levels, incumbent staff members would face difficulties in their career advancement, especially if the Ministry actively diversifies its human resource. One solution is to overcome sectionalism, while simultaneously promoting diversification. Members with rich experiences in foreign issues can be reassigned to other ministries and commissions for foreign affairs related tasks. One good example is Liu Jianchao, who was transferred from the assistant foreign minister to the deputy head of the National Bureau of Corruption Prevention. In addition to their current professionalization, diplomats should also have their specialties. Their income should increase according to seniority and other factors, in order to avoid a wage system that only takes their positions into consideration. Such diplomats would have the chances to transfer to universities, research institutes, enterprises, or think tanks. They should also be encouraged to work at all sorts of international organizations.

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## **About the Author**

Dr. Li XUE is the director of the international strategic branch from Institute of World Economics and Politics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing. His research interests include Chinese foreign policy, international relations theory and issues on the South China Sea.

Address: Room 1545, No. 5 Jianguomennei Dajie Street, Beijing, China, Postal Code:100732

Email: [xueli@cass.org.cn](mailto:xueli@cass.org.cn)