

Abstract of Doctoral Dissertation

The Changes in China's Foreign Assistance under the Belt and Road Initiative: Keeping Economic Purpose, Strengthening Diplomatic Purpose and Enhancement of National Image

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The purpose of this research is to elucidate the changes in China's foreign assistance since the Belt and Road Initiative was proposed, and the causes of those changes, through the changes in China's foreign assistance policy and the case of assistance to Cambodia. Previous studies have not clarified the changes in China's foreign assistance and the status of country-specific assistance after the Belt and Road initiative. Although this research is based on the theory of national interest, it analyzes and discusses the concept of national interest in a relatively wide range, that is the concept of national interest in three categories: economy, diplomacy and society. This research clarified the following matters.

Regarding China's foreign assistance, before the Reform and Opening-up, the Chinese government regarded foreign assistance as a solemn political mission and used it for the political purpose of strengthening the socialist camp's power, especially to gain representation in the United Nations. However, since the Reform and Opening-up, China's policy emphasis has shifted to economic development, the national interests that China attaches importance to in diplomacy have become more concerned with economic interests. With the introduction of the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013, the focus of China's foreign relations has changed, and the nature of its foreign assistance has also changed significantly. Since the Belt and Road Initiative, China's foreign assistance continues to be an

important pillar for economic purposes such as infrastructure development. But, in order to realize the Belt and Road Initiative, security issues such as the South China Sea, which is the route for the Belt and Road initiative, have become a major issue. Strengthening diplomatic relations with the neighboring countries and the countries along the Belt and Road is becoming an urgent issue for the smooth promotion of the Belt and Road construction. It is clear that diplomatic objectives, which used to be somewhat in the background from the reform and Opening-up due to the Belt and Road Initiative, have once again become the foreground. In addition, since the Belt and Road Initiative, China's great power consciousness and international responsibility have been emphasized. As a result of the strong awareness of improving international credibility of the countries along the Belt and Road and the participating countries of the Belt and Road, the ratio of grant assistance has also increased considerably, and social policy areas such as the improvement of people's livelihoods (improvement of national welfare), which was not emphasized before the Belt and Road Initiative, has come to be emphasized. Assistance in areas such as Health care, Poverty reduction and sustainable development has also been expanded.

Regarding assistance to Cambodia, China's assistance to Cambodia has expanded significantly under the Belt and Road initiative, but the ratio of assistance for economic purposes such as infrastructure development has consistently been large. Infrastructure development has not only contributed to Cambodia's economic development, For China, it has the meaning of direct trades, foreign direct investment, and infrastructure development for exports, and it also brings economic benefits to China. Foreign assistance plays a role in laying the foundation for win-win economic development between China and Cambodia due to the needs of Cambodia's domestic development and the Belt and Road cooperation.

However, China's assistance policy to Cambodia focused on economic infrastructure until 2016, but since 2016, a policy of emphasizing people's livelihoods was launched, and looking at the situation by

sector, the ratio of China's social sector is also rising. Improving the international credibility in countries along the Belt and Road has become a major issue for China, and even in Cambodia, where its social development has lagged behind, the field of social policy has been expanded. This was not simply a response to a request from the Cambodian government, but was directly related to the lives of the people as a civilian sector, and is believed to have contributed to improve China's image in Cambodia, which had dramatically improved during the same period.

Furthermore, in terms of politics and diplomacy, Cambodia is not only important to China economically, but also it is important to create more friendly countries among ASEAN countries for promoting the construction of the Belt and Road and creating a safe surrounding environment. In order to resolve the dispute in the South China Sea, foreign assistance is used as a means to attract Cambodia and other countries to prevent ASEAN from hardening its stance toward China. It is clear by looking at the timing of the provision of foreign assistance, and we can see that it has great diplomatic significance in terms of foreign assistance and the South China Sea issue.

China's foreign assistance clarified the changes since the Belt and Road Initiative, including keeping economic purpose, strengthening diplomatic purpose, and the improvement of the national image through the increase in input into the social policy field. This can be seen in a more concrete through the case study of Cambodia.