

Research on the Construction of China's Strategic Communication System in Global Security Governance

Lina Jing¹, Nana Jing²

¹Baize Institute for Strategic Studies, Southwest University of Political Science and Law, Chongqing, China

²School of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Chongqing Normal University, Chongqing, China

Email: 435339249@qq.com

How to cite this paper: Jing, L. N., & Jing, N. N. (2023). Research on the Construction of China's Strategic Communication System in Global Security Governance. *Open Journal of Political Science*, 13, 271-281. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojps.2023.133017>

Received: March 31, 2023

Accepted: June 9, 2023

Published: June 12, 2023

Copyright © 2023 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

In response to the frequent occurrence of global traditional and non-traditional security issues, as well as the growing complexity and interconnectedness of global security issues, China has proposed the “Global Security Initiative” to address the global security deficit. Strategic communication, as an essential national strategic tool, has the primary mission of explaining national strategies and policies, disseminating national values and concept, and shaping national image and discourse. To build a strategic communication system with Chinese characteristics in global security governance cooperation, we should strive to increase China's voice and influence in global security governance by focusing on the overall goal, advocating the Chinese concept with the value base as the core, promoting the Chinese plan with dissemination efficiency as the focus, and disseminating Chinese wisdom with the discourse space as the field.

Keywords

Global Security Governance, Strategic Communication, The Global Security Initiative, A Community with a Shared Future

1. Introduction

At various levels, changes in the world, times, and events are occurring in unprecedented ways, the evolution of the international landscape, the risk of war outbreak, the strategic game of major powers, the trend of globalization, and changes in science and technology are all factors that influence international security. The global risk society defined by “VUCA” (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) has once again put the world at a historical crossroads.

To address today's security dilemma and the global security governance deficit, Xi Jinping first proposed the Global Security Initiative at the annual meeting of the Boao Forum for Asia on April 21, 2022, providing ideas and solutions to eliminate the root causes of international conflicts and promote global security governance. In his report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China on October 16, 2022, Xi Jinping stated that "national security is the foundation of national rejuvenation" and that it is necessary to "guarantee a new development pattern with a new security pattern" and "improve the mechanism for participating in global security governance and build a higher level of peace in China". On February 21, 2023, China officially released *the Global Security Initiative Concept Paper*, which is an essential step for China to promote the Global Security Initiative and Demonstrate China's commitment and determination to maintain global security and stability. Building a strategic communication system with Chinese characteristics in global security governance is not only an organic part of promoting the modernization of China's national security system, but it is also a proper way to enhance national security and an effective means of promoting the process of global security governance. Based on this, we should do everything we can to strengthen China's voice, support Chinese ideas, promote Chinese solutions, and demonstrate Chinese wisdom on global security governance to the rest of the world.

2. Literature Review

"Strategic communication" is a tool that comprehensively employs images, words, and actions to influence target audiences' perceptions, change their behavior, and accomplish national strategic interests (Farwell, 2012). Strategic communication stresses coordination among national authority departments as well as consistency between information issues and practical actions (Bi & Wang, 2011: p. 47). It can assist governments in addressing and responding to current and future security challenges, and it should be regarded as critical to national development and strategy implementation (Cornish et al., 2011: p. ix). Effective strategic communication can also help to minimize threats to national security and aid in policy planning and execution (Dairo, 2017).

Strategic communication should not only serve "realpolitik", but should also be the centralized manifestation of "conceptualpolitik", conceptualpolitik is used to describe how to adapt to changes in global communication, it employs non-traditional forces and virtual communities as "nodes", with cyberspace as the primary platform, and emphasizes common well-being and responsibility in order to achieve long-term harmonious coexistence, and doing a good job of "great foreign propaganda" is an essential move toward putting General Secretary Xi Jinping's policy of "improving moral appeal" into action (Shi & Wang, 2014). According to Zhao Liangying and Xu Xiaolin (2016), China should carry out overall design and layout from a strategic height, and it is of great practical importance to establish a comprehensive and three-dimensional national stra-

tegic public communication system. According to Li Zhi (2022b), the concept of “community of human destiny” is a value that reflects the common interests of all mankind, and we should construct the strategic communication system on “the focus, precision, and integration of strategic communication”. At the same time, the construction of a strategic communication system must address challenges such as “Western ideological bias dominates international public opinion”, “the post-epidemic era has given rise to new variables in the public opinion environment”, and “international communication actors face difficulties in overseas siege” (Qu, 2022).

3. China’s Challenges in Building a Strategic Communication System in Global Security Governance

3.1. Global Security Situation Is Complex and Volatile, Making Strategic Communication Unfocused

The international security situation is changing dramatically and rapidly. At this stage, the global security scenario is deteriorating. The convergence of the world’s unprecedented changes and the Ukraine crisis has accelerated the evolution of the global security landscape; traditional and non-traditional security threats are intertwined, resulting in the emergence of regional security hotspots one after the other; the escalation of strategic games and bloc politics among major powers has resulted in the accumulation of global sources of unrest and risk points, threatening global peace and tranquility and impacting global security. While the global security pattern and security order are changing, the global international public opinion struggle has also changed, and the public opinion struggle among major powers around security governance-related issues has intensified. As a consequence, the state as a governance subject has been hampered in strengthening and manifesting the public opinion guiding power of strategic communication in global security governance. For example, in its participation in global security governance, China has proposed the “Global Security Initiative” based on new changes in the global security situation and new characteristics of the national security situation, “advocating a spirit of solidarity to adapt to the profoundly adjusted international landscape and a win-win mindset to deal with complex and intertwined security challenges” (Xi, 2023), while the US views this as a challenge and confrontation by China to the US-led international order, and overly speculates and interprets China’s solutions based on global security governance reality.

Building an effective communication system is a complex project. Strategic thinking is now the guiding ideology of international communication, and strategic communication is a necessary means of shaping the main body’s consensus in the digital age. In the process of participating in global governance, China has disseminated China’s global security governance concept, global governance solutions, and participation in the governance process through the trinity of government, media, and society as the main body of international communication,

with the help of mainstream media, online platforms, and other channels, but there is still a certain gap between this and accurate communication for different issues, different countries, different audiences, and different ways. Furthermore, in the face of a complex and ever-changing global security situation and the advancement of global security governance in multiple fields, the construction of China's strategic communication system in global security governance is still characterized by a lack of rich communication content, a relatively loose layout of foreign communication, and a strategic communication mechanism that needs to be improved, compounding the problem of unfocused strategic communication, which in turn leads to the obstruction of China's ideas and solutions in key problem areas and makes it difficult to influence the attitudes and behaviors of governance subjects around global security governance in various fields through active communication strategies.

3.2. The Global Security Governance Deficit Is Accentuated, Making Strategic Communication Ineffective

The lack of consensus on global security governance exacerbates the governance deficit. In global security governance, the absence of security governance consensus among governance subjects based on differences in security views is the cause of global security governance deficit and an important manifestation. At the moment, the global security governance system is highly problematic in terms of subject representation, rule fairness, and operational effectiveness (Xu, 2022), because the existing governance system fails to fully take into account the different governance demands of governance subjects, and the binding nature of the mechanism cannot strongly guide the governance behavior of governance subjects, resulting in the global security governance process facing operational dilemmas and challenges. China has sought to form a broad consensus among governance subjects and improve their existing dilemmas in cooperative action in its participation in global security governance, but the formation and consolidation of consensus among subjects cannot be solved overnight, and the confrontation that continues to emerge in security governance is still impacting the existing consensus base.

Lack of synergy in strategic communication limits communication effectiveness. Communication efficacy is a comprehensive evaluation of national strategic communication in terms of capacity, effectiveness, and feedback. The lack of consensus among governance subjects, the lack of access to influential communication channels, the difficulty in prioritizing public governance issues, and the difficulty in promoting innovative governance solutions make it difficult for communication subjects to make a fundamental breakthrough in their appeal and credibility in governance participation. China's strategic communication in global security governance continues to suffer from a lack of synergy, i.e., the mechanism for coordinating multiple layers of resources, contacts, and channels related to strategic communication is insufficient. At present, the country still

needs to build a strategic communication system around global security governance from the changing situation of global security governance, focus on the strategic goals and development of national security, enhance the planning and effectiveness of strategic communication; pay attention to the construction of strategic communication culture, and promote the synergy and integrity of the strategic communication system, so as to make the country's effectiveness in strategic communication as expected.

3.3. Discourse Power Inequalities Restrict Strategic Communication Space

In the global security governance discourse, the “west is strong, and we are weak” dichotomy persists. The global discursive power of Western nations is an essential resource for strategic communication. For example, in global security governance, Western countries use public opinion warfare to avoid responsibility and pursue strategic interests, putting China's strategic communication in global security governance at risk due to the stigmatization of strong international discourse from the outside and Western countries' hybrid warfare in gray areas. For example, since the COVID-19 outbreak, Western nations have made unfounded accusations against China, even criticizing China's epidemic prevention and control policies and stigmatizing China's image in the international community. Some American lawmakers and media even made up the ridiculous claim that the Coronavirus was a “laboratory leak” in China, coining insulting terms like “Chinese virus” and “Wuhan virus”, and describing the Coronavirus as an epidemic in China. They even called the COVID-19 China's “Chernobyl moment”. Furthermore, as the strategic game of major powers evolves during China's rise, international public opinion is flooded with arguments like “two Chinas” and “China decoupling theory”, making the strategic communication environment for China's participation in global security governance more severe and complex.

Strategic communication has been suppressed by the siege, which has continuously reduced the space for communication. In recent years, China, as an active participant in global security governance, has been active and vocal in important issues such as combating transnational crime, maintaining cyber security, and combating international terrorism, fulfilling its role as an advocate, practitioner, and contributor to security norms with the original intention of alleviating global security dilemmas and maintaining peaceful development. However, in the face of hegemony and power politics' threats to global security and governance, China's strategic communication in governance practice must still deal with various types of containment, pressure, and siege from outside, seek sufficient communication space for the construction of a strategic communication system, and strategically convey China's governance solutions and ideas to the international community. In other words, the development of China's strategic communication system in global security governance must continue to take into account the overall situation and dynamics, build a strategic communica-

tion system that is both offensive and defensive, respond timely to the Western countries' discourse regulation locks, and develop strategic communication as an effective means of breaking through the Western countries' narrow self-interest in containing and suppressing.

4. The Path of Strategic Communication System Building with Chinese Characteristics in Global Security Governance

4.1. Develop the Overall Objective of the Strategic Communication System and Issue a Powerful Chinese Voice

Strategic communication is not the communication of a strategy, but rather strategic communication. Strategic communication is distinguished by clear goals, precise targets, and coordination among subjects. At present, the global development's peace deficit, security deficit, trust deficit, and governance deficit make global security governance difficult; the change of the global security governance system and international security order is accelerating; and a slew of new changes and new features appear in the global security situation. Based on this, the construction of a strategic communication system with Chinese characteristics in global security governance should be based on the security situation at home and abroad, and the overall goal should be formulated taking into account the real situation of global security governance, and a strong voice of China about global governance should be issued. That is, to create an external environment of peace and security, as well as stable development; to shape a credible, lovable, responsible, and respectable image of China; and to build a security pattern of fairness and justice, as well as common building and sharing.

Based on the current security situation, President Xi Jinping proposed the Global Security Initiative in his keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the annual meeting of the Boao Forum for Asia on April 21, 2022, which clearly answered the question of the times: "What kind of security concept does the world need, and how can countries achieve common security?" (Xi, 2022a). Humanity as a whole is an indivisible security community, and global security governance is the duty and obligation of all people on the planet. To this end, we must respect each other's legitimate concerns, work together to create a balanced, effective, and sustainable security architecture, and improve the global security governance system and mechanisms. Some anti-China activists in the United States have criticized the initiative, calling it "China's latest publicity stunt to achieve its 100-year strategy" and "a new tool for China to seek to undermine the international security order" (Li, 2022a).

4.2. Clarify the Strategic Communication System's Value Basis and Promote the Chinese Concept

Ideas inspire actions, and directions decide how to proceed. The top goal of glob-

al security governance should be to establish an innovative concept that is in accordance with the security situation and security development, as well as to coalesce the security consensus of cooperative subjects in the security governance strategic communication story. To build a strategic communication system with Chinese characteristics in global security governance, we must first explain the strategic communication system's value foundation and advocate for a "global security concept" to the rest of the world. In his keynote speech at the opening of the 86th Interpol General Assembly on September 26, 2017, President Xi Jinping stated that all countries have the responsibility to maintain international and regional security, and that we should adhere to the "common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable concept of global security" and work together to create a lasting secure and stable environment for all peoples (Xi, 2017). Based on historical experience, the global security concept focuses on the world's long-term security and gives global security governance a new and rich connotation, which is conducive to coordinated actions of governance subjects based on conceptual consensus.

We will lead countries in global security governance to follow the trend of times of peace, development, cooperation, and win-win situations in order to join hands to meet challenges, solve global governance problems rationally, and build the community of human destiny with universal security. Xi Jinping sincerely called on "all countries in the world to promote the common values of peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy, and freedom for all mankind, and to promote mutual understanding among peoples" in his report to the 20th Party Congress in order to jointly address global challenges and create a better future for all mankind (Xi, 2022b). The existence of global security problems and challenges is the logical beginning place for global security governance. According to Xi Jinping, "only moral and philosophical security is solidly based and truly lasting security" (Xi, 2014), and we must adhere to common security, comprehensive security, cooperative security, and sustainable security in the dissemination and practice of global security governance strategies in order to promote the common efforts of all countries to maintain world security and stability and solidify the value base of cooperative governance among countries.

4.3. Improve the Strategic Communication System's Communication Efficacy and Promote the Chinese Proposals

Security is a prerequisite for development, and resolving security issues is a subject of global concern. Strategic communication focuses on using discourse and action to influence the perception and behavior of the target audience. Building a new type of mainstream media with strong leadership, communication power, and influence is a significant project in the age of technology-enabled strategic communication changes. In addition to relying on traditional mainstream media, we should also prioritize the use of emerging social media platforms in order to capitalize on technology-enabled communication changes in strategic com-

munication, broaden the scope and depth of public opinion radiation, and thus improve the communication effectiveness of the strategic communication system, in order to better promote China's governance solutions to the outside world. One of the important factors influencing the process of global security governance is the desire of international organizations, regional organizations, and other subjects to participate. China should make full use of the communication advantages of multilateral platforms such as the United Nations in the construction of the strategic communication system, gather the strength of relevant communication subjects, seek the understanding and support of the majority of developing countries, emerging powers, and China's neighboring countries on various occasions, broaden the scope and depth of strategic communication, and promote global security governance.

Most security issues in the globalization era are no longer completely manageable by a single country, but instead necessitate the full collaboration of individual countries in order to meet security challenges. In a speech at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva, General Secretary Xi Jinping once proposed that "the fate of the world should be held by all countries, international rules should be written by all countries, global affairs should be governed by all countries, and the fruits of development should be shared by all countries" (Xi, 2021). In the practice of global security governance, the most effective approach for breaking through the fog and into the light is to work together and in harmony. As a responsible power, China must abandon the traditional route of confrontation and zero-sum games in favor of establishing a more inclusive, flexible, and diverse security cooperation framework. In strategic communication, we should focus on strengthening strategic communication cooperation, borrowing the power of multiple cooperative bodies for secondary communication, improving the communication effectiveness of the strategic communication system, continuously improving the global security governance system and mechanism, and jointly building a universal security community of human destiny.

4.4. Extend the Strategic Communication System's Discourse Space and Disseminate Chinese Wisdom

At present, traditional and non-traditional security issues are overlapping and intertwined, and there is still a long way to go to build a world of lasting peace and universal security. Based on the basic principle of solving practical problems, the Global Security Initiative offers a clear roadmap for countries to accomplish common security from the top. We should always follow the strong guidance of the Global Security Initiative's "six insistences" in the practice of global security governance, and through participation in governance practice, we should better build a strategic communication discourse, and then shape a benign security relationship among governance subjects. By focusing on important issues and spreading China's wisdom overseas, we can alleviate the problems of declining trust, increasing confrontation, and a zero-sum game in the security re-

relationship between major powers. China can begin by practicing what it preaches, focusing on governance issues and practices in traditional and non-traditional security areas, demonstrating China's responsibility and commitment, emphasizing the importance of developing a strategic communication culture, promoting the synergy and integrity of the strategic communication system, and expanding its discourse power and discourse space in security governance.

Because of the increasing pan-politicization of security issues, China's ability to set agendas and engage in normative mechanism reform in global security governance practice and strategic communication is critical. We should pay attention to the role of particular issue practice in disseminating Chinese wisdom, expanding China's discourse space in global security governance, and increasing the persuasive power of Chinese discourse in strategic communication. We can take the path of building a community of human destiny with universal security as the goal, implement the new concept of security governance embodied in the Global Security Initiative, and enrich China's role as a builder of world peace, contributor to global development, keeper of international order, and provider of international public goods. In this process, actively participates in the resolution of hot security issues at the international and regional levels, combats terrorism, health security, cyber security, and peacekeeping operations, spreads Chinese wisdom through practical participation, and expands the discourse space for strategic communication. As a global power, China's self-discipline, self-improvement, and autonomy are unparalleled. By contributing Chinese wisdom to regional and global security governance, it establishes a model for great power governance while also providing a boost and increasing trust in global security governance. As China's involvement in the institutional discourse of global security governance grows, so will China's shaping power in international affairs.

5. Conclusion

As an important actor in international affairs, the country can explain its policy propositions, broaden and strengthen its external publicity, deepen its participation in international affairs, improve the effectiveness of public diplomacy, and ultimately achieve the goal of building a good international image, striving for more international voice, and improving its own public opinion environment through an effective strategic communication system. At this stage, Domestic security problems, international security issues, global security issues, and so on are all linked by global security governance. And we are all aware that the primary task in promoting peace and development is to achieve security and stability, and that only in this manner can security and development be integrated. It is difficult to attain peace and development of humanity without security and stability as a guarantee. The "Global Security Initiative" grasps the global security system, security pattern, and security order accurately, comprehensively, and systematically, and points out the direction for the development of global secu-

rity governance, which is not only China's innovative solution to the global security governance deficit, but also a major innovation of China's national security theory. In international affairs, China has always advocated the concept of "dialogue without confrontation and partnership without alliance". The fundamental characteristics of this initiative are symbiosis, co-construction, and sharing, the "Global Security Initiative" considers all countries' interests, emphasizing that all countries, regardless of size or level of development, are equal members of the international community, and in order to create a security pattern of justice, co-construction, and sharing, China advocates adhering to the new security concept of "common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable" in global security governance. By constructing a strategic communication system with Chinese characteristics within the framework of global security governance, advocating Chinese ideas, promoting Chinese solutions, and demonstrating Chinese wisdom, and promoting the formation of a consensus on cooperation among the relevant subjects of global security governance through effective strategic communication, we can set the groundwork for promoting the "Global Security Initiative" and creating a favorable environment for its execution, thereby promoting the building of a community of human destiny with universal security, as well as achieving lasting peace and stable human society development.

Acknowledgements

The research for this article was supported by grants from "Chongqing Social Science Planning Doctoral Project", No. 2022BS009: Research on the Construction of Strategic Communication System with Chinese Characteristics in the Context of National Security.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- Bi, Y. T., & Wang, J. L. (2011). *Strategic Communication Outline*. National Academy of Administration Press. (In Chinese)
- Cornish, P., French, J. L., & Yorke, C. (2011). *Strategic Communications and National Strategy*. The Royal Institute of International Affairs.
<https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/r0911stratcomms.pdf>
- Dairo, M. (2017). The Connection between National Security and Communication. *Specialty Journal of Knowledge Management*, No. 4, 1-11. (In Chinese)
- Farwell, J. P. (2012). *Persuasion and Power: The Art of Strategic Communication*. Georgetown University Press.
- Li, Y. (2022a). Global Security Initiatives in the Eyes of the Other and Implications for China. *National Security Studies*, No. 4, 165. (In Chinese)
- Li, Z. (2022b). Strategic Communication of the Concept of a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity. *External Communication*, No. 6, 18-21. (In Chinese)

- Qu, Y. P. (2022). Thoughts on Building China's Strategic Communication System under the New Situation. *External Communication, No. 6*, 9-13. (In Chinese)
- Shi, A. B., & Wang, X. (2014). From "Realistic Politics" to "Conceptual Politics": On the Moral Inspiration of National Strategic Communication. *People's Forum, Academic Frontier, No. 24*, 16-25. (In Chinese)
- Xi, J. P. (2014). *Speech by Jinping at the Conference on the 60th Anniversary of the Publication of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (Full Text)*. Central Government Portal. http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2014-06/29/content_2709613.htm
- Xi, J. P. (2017). *Xi Jinping Attends the Opening Ceremony of the 86th Interpol Plenary Conference and Delivers a Keynote Speech*. Central Government Portal. http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2017-09/26/content_5227658.htm
- Xi, J. P. (2021). Building a Community of Human Destiny Together. *Seeking Knowledge, No. 1*, 4-8. (In Chinese)
- Xi, J. P. (2022a). *Keynote Speech by Xi Jinping at the Opening Ceremony of the 2022 Annual Conference of Boao Forum for Asia*. China Social Science Website. http://www.cssn.cn/index/index_focus/202204/t20220421_5404584.shtml
- Xi, J. P. (2022b). *Xi Jinping: Holding High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Uniting Struggles for the Comprehensive Construction of a Modern Socialist Country—Report at the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*. Central Government Portal. http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2022-10/25/content_5721685.htm
- Xi, J. P. (2023). *Global Security Initiative Concept Paper (Full Text)*. Central Government Portal. http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2023-02/21/content_5742481.htm
- Xu, B. (2022). Promoting Global Governance System towards a More Just and Reasonable Direction. *People's Daily*. <http://theory.people.com.cn/n1/2022/0325/c40531-32383783.html>
- Zhao, L. Y., Xu, X. L. (2016). Accelerating the Construction of China's National Strategic Public Communication System. *China Administration, No. 9*, 116-121. (In Chinese)