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Abstracts

US Middle East Security Policy during Trump's Second Term: Characteristics, Objectives and Impacts

Li Yanan

Abstract: The Middle East is currently in a period of profound geopolitical restructuring. It is characterized by a complex security landscape where the trend of multipolar checks-and-balances coexists with bloc confrontations, and reconciliation efforts interweaves with localized conflicts. While the development needs of regional states have somewhat contained the outbreak of large-scale wars, their negative expectations regarding security prospects have heightened the risks of a regional arms race. Regional security is increasingly vulnerable and uncertain, now standing at a strategic crossroads between the collapse of order and institutional reconstruction. At this critical juncture, Trump's second term as President of the United States will trigger fluctuations and adjustments in the US Middle East security policy, which is the most significant external variable affecting the trajectory of the regional security developments. In terms of policy priorities, Trump's second term approach to Middle East security will focus on pivotal goals such as integrating allies, suppressing rivals, and preventing wars. The key objectives include building a new balance of regional power centered around Israel, using maximum pressure as a mean to catalyze a turning point in US-Iran relations, relying on absolute strength to reestablish effective military deterrence, and adjusting strategic positioning towards the Middle East guided by great power competition. Regarding policy outcomes, Trump's highly uncertain "transactional unilateralism" and extremely self-interested "America First" orientation will significantly amplify regional security risks, accelerate the imbalance of the regional power structure, weaken the stability of regional cooperation, and further enhance the strategic autonomy of regional countries. This will lead to an even more intense struggle between chaos and order in the Middle East.

Key words: US Middle East security policy; Trump; Middle East security; Middle East regional order; great power competition

The Real Landscapes and Multiple Challenges of Artificial Intelligence in Africa

Zhang Chunyu

Abstract: Artificial intelligence (AI) is booming at an unprecedented speed, profoundly changing the production and life patterns of humanity and becoming a key variable in global development. Driven by multiple stakeholders, the development, application and governance of AI in Africa have achieved phased results. The African Union has timely introduced the "African Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy", aiming to provide a strategic guide and action framework for the development of AI, mobilize the strength of the entire African continent and cooperative partners, and accelerate sustainable development. However, whether the expected goals can be achieved depends on whether multiple challenges such as the data divide and digital security can be overcome. These dilemmas are not unique to Africa but are common problems faced by the Global South. The digital revolution has not only failed to narrow the development gap between the North and the South but has instead made the Southern countries more marginalized in the global digital landscape. Only by uniting as one and taking coordinated actions can the Southern countries break through the dilemmas. The high-quality construction of the "Digital Silk Road" proposed by China has built a platform for the collective actions of the Global South. Under this framework, China and Africa, guided by the concept of new-quality productive forces, deepen cooperation in AI and are expected to become a model of digital cooperation in the Global South.

Key words: Artificial Intelligence; Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy; data divide; Global South; China-Africa cooperation

Saudi Arabia's National Strategy on Artificial Intelligence: Connotation, Practice and Challenges

Ma Wenbing & Liu Bin

Abstract: The development of a strong technological nation is of profound significance for Saudi Arabia to achieve its "Vision 2030" and realize its economic transformation. Among others, artificial intelligence (AI) is the top priority for Saudi Arabia to build global technological competitiveness. The introduction of the

national AI strategy by the Saudi government is the result of the combined effects of the global economic restructuring, regional homogenization competition, and the country's deep transformation. Centering on the core goal of becoming a global leader in AI, and relying on the government – led organizational operation mechanism, Saudi Arabia is gradually advancing its national AI strategy in five priority areas: talent cultivation, government functions, healthcare, energy industry, and transportation and logistics in a phased manner. Under the collaborative participation of the government, academia, and industry, Saudi Arabia, with its strong national capital support, has focused on strategic practices in AI through early layout in advantageous fields, strengthening domestic and international talent supply, and increasing international cooperation, achieving remarkable results in related fields. However, factors such as an incomplete legal system, insufficient talent supply, and insufficient attractiveness of the industrial environment have also affected the construction of Saudi Arabia's AI ecosystem. At the same time, the digital power structure brings risks to national governance, and the technological competition among major countries increases uncertainties, which also pose challenges to Saudi Arabia's AI strategy. In the future, Saudi Arabia should explore a differentiated development path that suits its own conditions when implementing its AI strategy.

Key words: Artificial Intelligence; Saudi Arabia; Vision 2030; National Strategy for Data and Artificial Intelligence

Development or Security: A Comparative Study of China and US Science and Technology Diplomacy in the Middle East

Sun Degang & Zhong Ling

Abstract: Under the great changes unseen in a century, scientific and technological (S&T) competition has become a new frontier for the strategic competition between major powers, and the Middle East has become a new stage for China – US scientific and technological competition. The US and China science and technology diplomacy towards Middle Eastern countries is part of their respective overall diplomacy, highlighting the differences between technological and political logic. China regards S&T cooperation as a development issue, seeks to form a new

S&T cooperation pattern with all Middle Eastern countries, builds an inclusive S&T community, forms a development partnership in the form of "finding friends", and explores a South – South S&T cooperation paradigm based on equal consultation. The US regards scientific and technological cooperation as a security issue, and it has formed an exclusive "small yard and high fence" mode, built a "security – S&T" composite alliance in the way of "combating enemies", aiming to consolidate the "central – periphery" industrial and supply chains. By relying on the China – Arab States Cooperation Forum, the China – GCC Strategic Dialogue, and the BRICS, China has helped Middle Eastern countries overcome the "Medium Technology Trap" through technological transfer. The US has promoted scientific and technological cooperation through informal mechanisms such as the US – Arab Summit (1 + 9), the Negev Forum, the West Asia Quad (I2U2), and the Indo – European Economic Corridor (IMEC), embodying the "Monroe Doctrine of Science and Technology". China and the US are both scientific and technological powers, and only by transcending geopolitical differences can the two giants prevent politicization and securitization of S&T cooperation, so that the fruits of technological advancement can benefit all peoples in the Middle East.

Key words: China – US relations; science and technology diplomacy; science and technology Monroe Doctrine; Medium Technology Trap; science and technology development in the Middle East

An Analysis of the United States of America's Chip Coercive Diplomacy towards Saudi Arabia

Niu Song & Sun Yuan

Abstract: Since the Biden administration introduced the "CHIPS and Science Act" in 2022 to strengthen the dominant position in the global chip industry chain, the United States has coerced its allies to decouple from China's science technology, and Saudi Arabia as well as other Middle Eastern countries have also become the objects of coercion. The Biden administration has repeatedly used chips export to threaten Saudi Arabia, weaponizing asymmetric interdependence to coerce Saudi Arabia to decouple its technology from China. From the perspective of network power, the United States used its position as a key node in the network and the

number of edges it has mastered to carry out chip coercive diplomacy against Saudi Arabia. The underlying aim is to disrupt Saudi – China technological cooperation, hinder the advancement of science diplomacy between the two nations, and ultimately reinforce its own global technological hegemony and maintain its comprehensive influence in the Middle East. To achieve the goal, the United States first securitized the chip export to build the legitimacy of the negative use of network power against Saudi Arabia. Then, with the threat of cutting off the supply of chips, the United States coerced Saudi Arabia to decouple from Chinese technology. Finally, the United States provided Saudi Arabia with a coercive compensation scheme to complete the chip coercive diplomacy. In response, Saudi Arabia has made a threefold choice in the network. At the level of network structure, Saudi Arabia has adopted a hedging strategy to balance technical cooperation links with the United States and China to obtain maximum benefits. At the edge level, to prevent the United States from cutting off the chip supply, Saudi Arabia partially bowed to the coercion of the United States and showed its will to interrupt some technical cooperation with China. At the node level, Saudi Arabia has adopted a chip independent research and development strategy to try to reduce the technical dependence on key nodes in the network. Although the chip coercive diplomacy of the United States against Saudi Arabia has achieved some results, it still has certain limits, and has caused major obstacles to the technological development of Saudi Arabia and the Middle East region, intensified the geo – technological competition in the Middle East, undermined the US – Saudi Arabia alliance, and brought severe challenge to the scientific and technological diplomacy of China with Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries.

Key words: science and technology diplomacy; chip; CHIPS and Science Act; coercive diplomacy; Saudi Arabia – United States relations; Sino – US game

The Logical Approach of EU – Africa Science and Technology Cooperation from the Perspective of Great Power Technology Competition

Zhao Yating

Abstract: The development of emerging technologies will reshape the international power structure and geopolitical objectives, and the competition for dominance in

emerging technologies has become the core of international rivalry. International technology competition can be categorized into three interconnected and mutually reinforcing dimensions: competition in technological capabilities, technology markets, and technological norms. Against the backdrop of geopolitical transformations in global strategies, the European Union (EU), aligning with its strengths and needs, has gradually adjusted its science and technology cooperation policies toward Africa across these three dimensions to secure competitive advantages and safeguard its interests. In technological capability competition, the EU views Africa as a strategic priority region for optimizing its external science and technology cooperation, aiming to consolidate traditional advantages while expanding the depth and breadth of collaboration with Africa in emerging technologies. In technology market competition, the EU adopts a Geo-tech Politics logic, prioritizing the integrity of critical mineral, technology, and infrastructure supply chains, and shifts toward exclusive pan-securitized cooperation to seize Africa's technology market share. In technological norms competition, the EU amplifies its normative influence by striving to secure the right to set standards for emerging technologies, exporting technology standards that reflect European values, and engaging comprehensively in African technological governance. The EU's policy choices for Africa also reflect a broader logic: major powers tailor their foreign science and technology cooperation policies by leveraging strengths and circumventing weaknesses, based on their own capacities and the needs of partner countries, to gain competitive advantages. While these policies align with the EU's strategic goals, their implementation and effectiveness face growing uncertainties amid Africa's pursuit of autonomous development. Introducing trilateral cooperation to jointly promote African development may be a future direction.

Key words: international technology competition; EU; EU-Africa relations; science and technology cooperation; technological capability; technology market; technological norms

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