

Beijing Forum 2019 The Changing World Order (I)

On the morning of November 2, 2019, the first session of panel “the changing world order” was held in the lecture hall of King Abdulaziz public library-Peking university branch at PKU, more than 80 attendants participated in morning’s discussion.

Professor Wang Zhengyi from school of international studies at PKU and Professor Zhu Feng from Institute of International Relation at Nanjing University moderated the first and second half of the panel discussion respectively.

Professor Tang Shiqi, Dean of School of International Studies at PKU, shared his insights on the interweaving of liberalism, nationalism and populism and the changing world order. Firstly, Tang retrospect to the evolution of liberalism from classic liberalism to New liberalism and Neo-liberalism we see today. He pointed out that when New Liberalism replace Classic Liberalism after WW2, Rawls’s theory of justice put equality to an unquestionable status while in fact liberalism is more of a political ideology and emphasize on equality in political rights but not social welfare. Tang said, inequality is a perpetual fact while equality is ideal concept. Spread of equalitarianism in social domain created serious social economic consequences in western countries, and resulted in political crisis we see nowadays. Nationalism and populism reflect certain communities’ appeal, but they can neither build consensus we need, we are still looking for a way out, and it is a question to be answer for political scientists.

Jorge Heine, Research Professor from Boston University and former Chilean Ambassador to China, delivered his speech on reshaping world order: from delinking to uncoupling. He said, 2015-2017 is a period of historical importance, which was equally important as 1917 and 1945. After global financial crisis, many people though rise of the rest is an illusion because of serious economic slowdown in emerging markets. However, since US turned backward after election of President Trump, the liberal world order was seemingly come to an end. In 2017 in Davos, President Xi Jinping and Premier Minister Modi spoke in favor of free trade while no western leader appears in Davos that years due to their domestic crisis. Since that time, the global south has been playing a much important role. In 1970s, some developing countries delinked from global economy and

turned to autarky and self-reliance. But it was Indonesia, Brazil and other developing countries who actively participated in globalization climbed up the value chain. Nowadays US adopted policy of uncoupling from China and escaped from globalization, this ironic reverse created new problems to be solve.

Su Changhe, Professor from School of International Relations & Public Affairs at Fudan University, gave a speech titled “China and the world in a transforming era”, and discussed what has been changed and the choice of China. He noted that we are experiencing unprecedented change in one hundred years of history, the current turbulence reminds us of Europe in 1914-1919. He deliberated several competing worldviews, namely America first/shared destiny, unilateralism/multilateralism, protectionism/open world economy, cold war style military alliance/collective security, clash of civilizations/dialogue of civilizations, so on and so forth. Su asserted that the western-style confrontational decision-making system and its confrontational logics are not the solution to current global problems. China is learning from history and trying to improve international institutions based on symbiosis. AIIB and other international institutions which are initiated by China are supplementary to, not replacement of, current international institutions. Su added, differences between civilizations is not division between civilization and barbarism, equal exchange between civilizations is strongly needed.

Zhu Feng, professor from Nanking University shared his thought on the changes unseen in a century. He said we are witnessing a paradigm change in liberal world order. The liberal world order since WW2 relies heavily on American leadership and its activism and commitment on sustaining this world order. America is the driving force for constructing international institutions such as WB, IMF, WTO, it projects its domestic institution and values to global arena in one way or another. However, US is the first to blame for the current collapsing of world order, Trump administration revitalize ideology warfare in cold war and labeled China as ideological adversary while it was once enlightening beacon for Chinese development. It retreated from international institutions and commitments it once built and upheld. The second to blame is China, China is overconfidence in the last decade and failed to act cautiously as rising power. The decoupling is happening, in 2014, Chinese investment in US outnumbered that of US in China for the first time in history but now it has been cut off. Trade war harms US and China and rest of the world at the same time, Leading challenge for China, hopefully US will swing back to liberal internationalism.

Wang Zaibang, Senior Researcher from Taihe Institute delivered a speech titled “the logic of globalization and future path of global governance”, argued that globalization is the process of redistributing factors of production in global markets, and spread of factors of market economy. Wang retrospect to history of globalization and concluded that the deindustrialization of developed countries and the success of developing countries are all outcomes of a natural process of value chain’s global relocation. Wang made a few suggestions for development of global economic governance, a. balance and sustainable development, b. being cautious of politicization of economics issues, c. make rules for competition, d. global financial regulatory system, e. effective global decision-making regime on economic issues.

Wang Fan, Professor from Foreign Affairs University of China, analyzed the importance of concept gaps and the impact on cooperation. His speech echo to previous speeches, said concept influence countries’ choice of confrontation and cooperation. In Chinese philosophy, differences and similarities transform all the time. Currently China and other countries need to coexist with differences and manage differences, but most importantly, differences are not necessarily means conflict, countries could benefit from supplementary relations. Therefore, seeking common interests will overcome differences.

Sun Xuefeng, Professor from Institute of International Relations, Tsinghua University, shared interesting findings from his team’s research. He noted that great power partnerships are decided by two independent variables, namely strategic threats and security dilemmas between US and China. Based on that, Sun concluded that a. alliance politics are transforming to partnership politics, b. US unipolarity after cold war played an important role in deciding security relationship between US and other countries, c. China is not engaging with US perse, but US with its alliance network.

Andrey Kortunov, Director General of Russian International Affairs Council spoke on major characteristics of current globalization, he identified several differences and similarities of people’s thought on globalization over the past 20 years. 20 years ago, people believed that globalization means linear progress and now it is proved to be precarious and uncertain. 20 years ago, people believed globalization created prosperity. And now people start to find out there would be winner and losers, and division is not necessarily between countries, it can be within countries. 20 years ago, globalization is more of an economic concept, now it has political consequences and has changed global pattern of culture and education. In 20 years, globalization has change people’s way

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of live, it has rooted deeply into every corner of society, and met setbacks from certain communities. Put globalization in right track needs new global governance, historically transition of governing system occurred after serious global crisis such as great wars. But we can't afford a crisis now, world leaders need to manage a way to new global governance system without major shocks.