

## Explaining China's Hedging to the United States' Indo-Pacific Strategy\*

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### Abstract

How China responds to the United States' Indo-Pacific strategy has become a crucial question for both policymakers and academics. The existing literature primarily focuses on how and why the United States, Japan, Australia, and India have promoted the Indo-Pacific concept and how this concept has imposed strategic pressure on China's national security. However, China's changing and complex attitudes and strategic responses to the Indo-Pacific concept have largely been overlooked. This article analyzes China's response from the perspective of a *hedging strategy*. It argues that while confronting the expanding range of containment, which is the crux of the Indo-Pacific strategy, China has applied a hedging strategy from two interrelated perspectives. In responding to the United States, the Chinese government adheres to the *nonalliance principle* and upgrades its China-Russia strategic partnership to resist the security pressure produced by the Indo-Pacific strategy. In responding to peripheral countries, China has adopted a *reassurance approach* to create a cooperative incentive for peripheral countries, particularly those that have security relations with the United States.

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\* This project is sponsored by the research grant from Guangdong University of Foreign Studies (no. X5219247).