

China's Belt and Road Initiative: its role in global peace, development, and implications

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Abstract

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is the grand strategy that interlinks the regions in the common chain of trade and economy. The paper investigates whether China's rise through this initiative is peaceful or whether the claims and worries of the U.S., India and Japan are true that it is rising as a hegemonic and aggressive country. The descriptive-analytical method is being used in this research work. China is growing, particularly through this global interconnectivity initiative. Its economic and political influence is greatly increasing. It connects the countries in an initiative that boosts their economic and social development and peace. It is an initiative of equal benefits and considerably growing interdependence among the states and non-state actors. It constructs a world that has common interests and common security. The new trend growing between China, U.S., India, and Japan consists of competition and friendly cooperative relations. China's main priority is bringing peace, development, and a better standard of life to its people first. It does not want to repeat the history when its people were smashed badly during the opium war of 1840 and Japan's occupation in World War II. It does learn the value of peace from its past.

Keywords: BRI, China's grand strategy, China's peaceful ambitions, China's hegemonic designs, Chinese global role, global interdependence.

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1. Introduction

China's growing rise on Belt Road Initiative (BRI) bring two global implications; first, it is equally transferring similar economic and social benefits to all states that it connects directly or indirectly on this initiative. It is empowering decades old backward and developing countries with economic and social advancement. Second, its rapid growth poses a security and interests threat to growing regional and global powers includes particularly to U.S., India, and Japan. These countries claim that China is getting power speedily and soon it will be the world great power with its hegemonic and aggressive policies. In future, it will be a great threat for the world peace. These countries are in strategic partnership and alliance to combat China's rise. Along this, these have close economic and political relations with the Beijing.

The BRI comes under the China's Grand Strategy which globally interconnects the states through seaports, roads, railways, and corridors etc. Each state is gaining equal benefits. China's economic and political influence is increasing. It is creating new jobs, investment, and development opportunities. It is even engaging the conflict-prone states. It is not developing alliances and military partnerships. The research has been analyzed in context of neoliberalism theory that is based on four components like commercial liberalism, republican liberalism, sociological liberalism, and liberal institutionalism. The theory better explains the ambitions of China's policy on BRI as it believes on cooperation, development, and interdependence of state and non-state actors. China promotes same values on the initiative.

By studying and critically analyzing the facts, the paper investigates the nature and ambitions of China's rise whether it is peaceful or unpeaceful by its current role on BRI, its growing cooperation with the countries particularly with eye-centred states like Russia, Iran, the Central-Asia, and Africa etc., and by growing competition and cooperation with U.S., India and Japan. The paper has been identified critically the threats and challenges that are being supposed by the two sides towards each other. The role of the China has been evaluated by all perspectives by analyzing the facts. China is creating the new world order of neoliberalism of cooperation, interdependence, and development. It is promoting peace and welfare to other countries without keeping religious and racial differences. In paper descriptive-analytical approach is used to analyse grand strategy of China and its aims and ambitions on the initiative. Most of the research is relied on secondary data especially while discussing China's Grand Strategy. The primary data is being consulted when talked about the current BRI policy of China. Speeches and statements of Chinese officials were being used where be needed in research. Books, newspapers, Journals, electronic sources, govt. publications, organizational reports, and interviews were also consulted to analyse the situation accurately.

2. Literature review

Scobell *et al.* (2020) elaborated China's main goal behind BRI; to make stable its country socially and politically first. The Grand Strategy of China and its growing competition and challenges with U.S. has been discussed. The report lacks to analyze peaceful and unpeaceful role of China by different perspectives which are being claimed by U.S. and its ally states. Manzoor (2021) is mainly focused on China's Grand Strategy in Asia Pacific region only. The paper does not mention the China's global role and development in other regions which is necessary to be analyzed whether the western claims about its rise are true or not.

Mackerras (2001) described China's history since 1949 to onwards. The keen analysis of the history helps in understanding the current rising phase of China and it defines its objectives to become a sea-power. The paper did not talk on its growing global role and challenges which were given by U.S. and its allies. Doshi (2021) analyzed the U.S. and China relations, challenges, and competition. The paper lacks to write whether China's role on the initiative is peaceful or not.

Saeed (2011) analyzed and discussed China's efforts and opening-up for getting more and more energy, its (China) political, economic and strategic relations with states includes India, Afghanistan, the Central Asian states, Iran etc., and the energy security threats to China. The writer added more valuable knowledge and information about China's struggle for becoming global energy power and evaluating the China's strategy with positive and negative aspects. The paper does not focus specifically on whether China's role is peaceful or unpeaceful on the initiative.

The existing literature ignores China's role on BRI specifically whether it is peaceful or unpeaceful. It does mention the significance of the initiative but do not write on common economic significance of the initiative which connects regions through seaports and land-routes etc. This study is an attempt to address these shortcomings in the literature and provides an in-depth analysis of the China's policy aims and ambitions on the initiative and through its grand strategy.

3. China's strategy on the initiative

Grand Strategies are made at broader level when a country desires to expand its power and influence on other regions of the world. The use of term Grand-Strategy is decades old. But the countries don't use the term openly while formulating policy. These do never reveal their plans. The objectives of Grand strategy are long and profound, and these are kept as secret by each country (Hill, 2015; Blackwill & Tellis, 2015; Cordesman, 2015). In cold war or in era before that, the ways which countries being used to obtain their Grand Strategies were wars and use of excessive military power. At present, the country's goals, and ways to obtain grand strategies are completely changed than the past. There goals priority is now economic and social security through ways of cooperation, peace, and interdependence. Currently, in international politics, there are few great powers who follows the old trend of wars, aggression, and hegemony and few believe to promote mutual peace, cooperation, and interdependence (Barkarwi, 2013; Chen, 2014). China is among those few who is promoting mutual peace, cooperation, and interdependence among the countries through seaports and roads connectivity on the BRI (Ministry of Foreign Affairs China, 2015). It (China) believes the use of wars and aggressiveness for availing grand strategies could only bring failure, devastation, diseases, hunger, and backwardness to the countries (Barkarwi, 2013; Chen, 2014). Its president Xi Jinping has said regarding this "History is the best teacher. In the 100 years from the opium war in 1840 to the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, China was ravaged by wars, turmoil, and foreign aggression. To the average Chinese, it was a period of ordeal too bitter to recall. China needs peace as much as human beings need air and plants need sunshine (Jinping, 2014a; Khatoon et al., 2018).

China's President Xi Jinping has proposed global interconnectivity initiative of Belt Road in 2013 that connects different world regions with each other such as Asia, the Central-Asia,

Middle East, Africa, and Europe. This initiative is being considered as a significant part of China's Global Grand Strategy due to its vast global connectivity design and ambitions (Jisi, 2011; Siraj et al., 2019). This initiative is consisted of two parts known as Maritime Silk Road (MSR) and economic belt road. The road is a sea route, and the belt are a land route. The Road begins from South-China seaports of Fujian, Hong-Kong, and Ningbo etc. It connects China through these seaports with seaports located at the Strait of Malacca, Cambodia, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri-Lanka, Maldives, India, Pakistan, and Sudan. Belt Initiative connects China's Kashghar province with the Central-Asia, Africa, Russia, and Europe through roads, railways, pipeline projects etc. The Road and Belt merges with each other at Venice, Italy (RT, 2014b; Mehmood et al., 2020).

4. China's growing energy needs, cooperation and influence causing threat

U.S., India, and Japan who heavily dependent on Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa for oil and gas, consider China's growing oil and gas energy consumption needs as a great threat to their own energy needs. They claim that China is building dependency and close cooperation relations with oil rich countries through BRI to avail energy resources and oil (Qinhua, 2007; China Daily, 2015, November 17). The initiative has been increased the economic growth and influence of Beijing in these regions which secures its increasing demand for energy needs that is also a prime goal of its global grand strategy (Hurst, 2007; Yani, 2015; South China Morning Post, 2015). China is not a self-sufficient in production of oil and gas reserves. It has been started import of crude oil and gas in 1993. Now it being as a growing developing country is the world largest oil buyer and consumer. In 2015, according to Economic and technology Research Institute of China National Petroleum Corporation, it has imported 328 million tons of oil that constitutes 6.4 percent. In the same year, the total oil consumption of China has been increased to 4.4 percent to 534 million tons.

The total oil consumption of China is 60.6 percent (Chang, 2016) which was 44 percent of total crude oil imports of the world. In 2020, its oil imports reached to 512.98 million tons which was 10.26 billion barrels per day that approximately 65 percent (Calabrese, 2022). It is an estimate that China's oil consumption will be 16 million barrels per day in 2026 (Reuters, 2021). Since 2013, China has been the largest net importer of oil, petroleum, and other liquid fuels etc. It has exceeded U.S. in imports of crude oil in 2017 that reached to 8.4 million barrels per day comparatively to 7.9 barrel per day of U.S (EIA, 2017). Its crude oil imports were equal to 10.26 million barrels per day in 2020 (Aljazeera, 2022) and U.S.'s imports were 4,32,000 million barrels per day in same year which is promptly a growing gap (EIA, 2021). According to International Energy Agency, China will become the world largest oil consumer by 2035 (World Energy Outlook, 2015).

4.1. China and Russia

Russia is among one of the largest oils and gas rich country. China is getting heavily dependent on supply of gas and oil reserves of Moscow. In 2001, China has established cooperative strategic relations with Russia after the break-up of relations in 1990s. In the same year, it has initiated talks with Russia to build a major oil pipeline from western Siberia to Daqing. Japan has expressed its interest to connect this pipeline at its own part Nakhodka. A ferocious struggle has been started between China and Japan. In 2005, Russia has announced that pipeline will go first to China's city Daqing and then it will enter the pacific coast. China and Russia have

signed agreement on this. In result, China has solved its forty years old dispute with Russia due to its growing energy demands (Hurst, 2007). China is going to become a biggest consumer of gas of Moscow. In 2015, China and Russia have signed thirty agreements that covers energy and other sectors. Both countries have pledged to build a gas pipeline that will supply gas from Russia's eastern Siberia to China. Other gas and oil development projects will be initiated. Both has pledged to cooperate with each other in connecting on BRI.

At present, Russia supplies \$ 400 billion gas to China. It is an estimate that annual delivery of gas from Russia to China will be increased to 38 billion cubic meters. The Eastern and Western gas pipeline project is under-construction that will be completed in 2018. China is supplying 20 percent gas from Novetek which is the largest independent natural gas producer of Russia. In 2015, China has imported 33 million metric tons of crude oil from Russia that was an increase of 36 percent from the previous year (China Daily, 2015, December 18). In next 25 years, Russia will export more than 700 million tons of oil to China as part of the \$270 billion deal between Rosneft Russia states owned Oil Company and China's National Petroleum Company. Russia's top natural gas producing project Gazprom will start supply to China with 38 billion cubic meter of gas per year by 2018 that is around quarter of Russia supply to Europe (RT, 2014a). Still Gazprom project is under construction process and it will supply gas to China till 2025 of 38 billion cubic meter (Voice of America, 2022).

4.2. China and the Central-Asia

The Central-Asia is a rich region in gas and oil reserves. Kazakhstan is a major country that is the largest one in having rich resources of oil. It constitutes two-third percent oil of entire region. China and Kazakhstan have begun energy cooperation in 1997. Before 2011, Kazakhstan was importing oil to China through railway service. Later the oil pipeline was established that delivers oil from western Kazakhstan to Alashankou port of China (Hurst, 2007). According to China's National Petroleum Corporation, China has imported 53 billion cubic meters of natural gas in 2013 from the Central-Asian countries. Its need for the natural gas is increasing 25 percent year by year. At present, it is importing 85 billion cubic meters' gas annually from the Central-Asian countries. China is heavily dependent on imports of oil and gas energy reserves from the Central-Asia. China has three gas-pipeline projects with the Central-Asia. These pipelines projects are known as A-Line, B-Line, C-Line and D-Line. The first three lines are functioning, and the D-Line is under-construction. It is 1000 km long. It begins from Turkmenistan and passes through Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. It delivers 30 billion cubic meter gas from Turkmenistan to China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region (Jiavo, 2014).

China has a lot of other economic advantages in the Central-Asia. This is the reason due to which it is much conscious about the security of the region. It is strengthening the security of the region by Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) platform that members are Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Pakistan. It is commonly fighting against three evil forces includes terrorism, extremism, and separatism in the region. Its main interest is to maintain peace and stability in the region to secure its own energy interests (China Daily Europe, 2015, March 30). China by connecting the Central-Asia countries through the Belt is providing a remarkable boost to these developing economies (Zhao, 2015a). It secures its energy needs through promoting economic cooperation, peace and interdependence on the initiative that exceeds its cooperation and interdependence with this region comparatively to

other stakeholders like U.S., India, and Japan. This initiative is developing competition among the great power for availing more energy consumption resources (Hurst, 2007; Yani, 2015; South China Morning Post, 2015).

4.3. China and Iran

China is a major oil consumer of crude oil from Iran. Being as an economic country, it has always tried to maintain friendly and cooperative relations with Tehran to fulfil its energy needs and for smooth relations ahead for getting more benefits. Beijing, for a long time, has opposed the sanctions against Iran that were imposed by U.S. and Europe. Though it has supported the sanctions that were implemented by UN. It has always denounced the use of force against Iran. When Iran was under the international sanctions, it has kept continue the purchase of oil and it has continued the development of many energy projects there. By keeping friendly cooperative relations, it (China) has made ease the impacts of sanctions over Iran to establish cooperative trade relation and to keep ways open for future cooperation (Daily Messenger, 2016). During this period, it (Beijing) did never supply nuclear weapons and nuclear development assistance to Iran. It did never use Iran for promoting political interests in the Middle East (Hsu, 2016). In 2015, it has played a central role in proceeding the nuclear talks and agreement between Iran and U.S. Beijing has made these efforts to establish a peaceful and cooperative world and for making ways for smooth transaction of BRI (Tribune, 2015).

In January 2016, China's president Xi Jinping has paid visit to Iran after fourteen years. Various agreements are signed by both the countries to enhance and strengthen energy, trade, and strategic relations. Both countries have pledged to cooperate closely on Belt Road interconnectivity. The two countries have got agreed to work jointly to maintain peace, stability, progress, and development (Xinhuanet, 2016). China has signed 17 cooperative agreements with Iran in field of economy, trade, energy, finance, communication etc. It has signed high speed railway project with Iran. On BRI, mutual trade interdependence between both the countries will be increased. China will play a significant role in boosting the economic, military, social and strategic progress of Iran. It will increase the economic power of Iran. In result of this connectivity, China's economic and political influence over Iran will be increased (Yi, 2016). On March 27, 2021, both has signed an agreement of Strategic Partnership for 25 years. In this agreement, both will cooperate under BRI in fields of oil export, safety and manufacture, security, military, and information technology. China will construct railway lines, roads, and ports in Iran. Both will do trade in their national currencies rather than dollar. Under this agreement, China will spend \$ 400 billion in development and trade of Iran's energy and infrastructure sector. This agreement made U.S. worry who sees China as rising aggressive power (Uzun, 2021).

The west particularly U.S. is worry on growing influence of China in Iran. Tehran has a significance for U.S. due to its dominant political role in regional politics of Middle East and as a second largest oil producing country of the world. The Washington considers China's increasing influence as a threat to its global power status as the most powerful country of the world. It is also worry on China moves to establish a multi-polar world with new emerging world order of mutual peace, cooperation, and interdependence (Shabaneh, 2015). After belt road connectivity, China's oil dependency on Iran will be increased. According to commerce department of China, in 2015 Beijing has imported 24.36 million tons' crude oil from Iran. The supply amount of crude oil will be increased after full function of Belt Road. The Belt Road

will make the region more peaceful by increasing dependency among the regional countries. China is connecting the Belt Road with Saudi-Arabia, Egypt, and other Middle East countries as well. Here China promotes the neoliberalism as by connecting these countries, it is establishing a new zone of economic influence. The economic development is gaining international priority now. In long-run, Iran, and Saudi-Arabia in sake for smooth function of the Belt to get mutual economic advantages, must establish friendly cooperative relations with each other (China Daily, 2016). China adversely to U.S., it is moving to develop the Middle East, a Muslim region. It is the first non-Muslim country that comes forward to develop, integrate, and empower the Muslim region (Yi, 2016).

4.4. China and Africa

At present, China's oil import from Africa are more than 21 percent of its total oil imports that are more than 80 percent (World Energy Outlook, 2015). In African countries, its's largest oil importers are Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria, the Republic of Congo, and Sudan. Its small suppliers are Africa, Algeria, Chad, Gabon, Kenya, Liberia, and Libya (Alessi & Beina, 2015). China is deeply interested in Africa region due to having many economic and energy interests. It desires to expand its trade by selling more exports there, by spending on development of infrastructure and energy exploration projects etc. On top of this, China is interested to import natural resources includes oil, gas, and other minerals to fulfil its own energy needs (Lewis, 2014). Africa is a rich region in gas and oil reserves. It has 10 percent of total global oil reserves and it has 7.5 percent of total global natural gas reserves (World Energy Outlook, 2015). China's dependence on imports of oil and gas reserves of Africa is increasing. On Belt Road connectivity, Beijing is balancing its growing dependence on oil and gas by increasing the African countries dependence on trade and development to secure its growing energy needs. Besides China, U.S. and other western countries are deeply interested in Africa due to its oil and gas reserves. Africa is a region of global energy contest (Lewis, 2014). China's growing economic and security influence in Africa is perceived as a great security challenge by U.S. The Washington naval forces are very earlier deployed in the region. The developing African countries has said welcome to China's rise and to its growing regional involvement and initiative because they dislike U.S.'s hegemonic and militarizing policy. They have a great appreciation to China's non-interference and win-win cooperation policy.

Beijing has no political and military ambitions in the region. It is not establishing military bases and military alliance in the region like U.S. is forming to create its hegemonic influence and power. It has sent 700 combat forces to Sudan to maintain peace there and to secure its energy interests there. It has not the policy to get involved in domestic problems of other countries i.e. Sudan and Syria etc. It is interested to promote economic interests (Javad, 2015; Rahim et al., 2019). China is passing BRI throughout the African region. All African countries did welcome this initiative as it's a major economic development towards these poor, developing, and civil war-torn countries. It (China) connects these countries on Road with the regions of Asia, Arabian Peninsula on Djibouti, and Sudan seaport and on belt connects these with the Middle East and the Central-Asia. In 2015, it has signed an agreement on the establishment of a naval base in Djibouti Egypt. This naval base will be established on Bab-el-Mandab strait that is located at Arabian Peninsula and the interior of East Africa (Ahmad et al., 2019).

It is not happening first time that China is deploying its naval forces in Africa. Since 2008, it has deployed 60 vessels in the Gulf of Aden and waters of Somalia Coast in 21 escort mission

to combat piracy threats to their supply. Djibouti seaport is strategically significant because it is located at a place which covers the crucial trade routes and that is the place where Asia, the Central-Asia and the Middle East is intersecting Africa. It (Djibouti) is the largest seaport of Africa's east coast. It is the part of China's Maritime Silk Road that will give a remarkable boost to Africa's trade development by connecting the region with Asia and its surrounding other regions (Aronson, 2015). At present, due to rapid increase in population growth, 63 million people live in extreme poverty in Africa. The people are facing the severe issues of poor education and health. There is no infrastructure development. In this wake, China plays a significant productive role in development of infrastructure and energy projects that gives a remarkable development to economic and social sectors of the region (World Bank, 2015). In result under the neoliberalism ideology, it is promoting cooperation, peace, integration, and interdependence in the region. It is boosting trade and economy of the region. Moreover, Beijing desires to expand its economic influence in the region to secure its energy interests in the region (Aronson, 2015). By introducing new concept of mutual peace, development, and interdependence, it is making a multipolar world and replacing the existing world order of hegemony and anarchy with new world order of peace and cooperation (Yani, 2015; South China Morning Post, 2015).

5. U.S., Japan and India's claims and fears

The scholars, academicians and policymakers of U.S., India and Japan says that China's after global rise and development through BRI could become a threat to their sovereignty and to the world peace. These countries are frightened from growing China's rise. They are perceiving it as an impeding source for their regional and global interests and influence. These countries are commonly using the term "String of pearls strategy" or "Sea of lanes strategy" to express that China is deploying navy and military forces on the seaports under the Initiative that shows its aggressive ambitions towards others. China could pose a threat to the sovereignty of these countries (Kaneda, 2005; Qingyun, 2015; Batchelor, 2014; China Daily, 2015, November 17; Usma et al., 2021). Hu Shi Sheng, a South Asian scholar who is serving as Director at a research institute of Contemporary International Relations" in Beijing, has expressed his views on term of String of Pearls strategy that, the term "Strategy" and "String of Pearls" is only used by the foreigners and by the westerns. The term "Strategy" with China's Seaports is first time used by Pentagon (U.S.) in 1996. There is no connectivity among the ports, roads, guiding principles, all are working independently then how can say 'String of Pearls'. In future, the maritime Silk Road connects with each other. But not possible for hegemony rather it will integrate and benefit all (Hu Shi Sheng interview with the author, 27 May 2014).

U.S., Japan, and India take China's growing rise as a major rising threat to their sovereignty, regional and global power influence, and global hegemonic status (China Daily, 2015, December 18). The World Bank Report of 2013 predicts that in next 15 to 20 years, China would be ranked as a World's high-income country. By 2030, China will become the world largest economic power if its economic growth remains continue with same pace of 7 percent. China is the world largest economic exporter and manufacturer. Since recent decades, its Gross Domestic product (GDP) has reached to 10 percent annual growth rate that drew-out 50 million people from poverty (World Bank, 2013). According to the International Monetary Fund, in 2014, China as a major economic contributor spent 27.8 percent in the World's economic growth. It is predicted China would be the biggest trade booster for the world in coming nearby future (China Daily, 2015, January 1). According to the World Bank economic progress report

in 2015, China is speedily developing its economy by having 32 independent economic cities, ten banks ranked first in the world, 261 Chinese companies actively world in world trade, second-largest high-way network of the world, ranked as third for longest sea bridges, ranked as 10th for having largest container ports (World Bank, 2015).

Moreover, U.S., Japan, and India claim that China is seeking hegemony and power by promoting economic interdependence through BRI (Zhao, 2015). Regarding China's hegemony, one of the founding great leader of China, Deng Xiaoping has said during the 12th national Congress of the Communist party of China on September 1st, 1982 that China value friendship and cooperation. It is against the hegemony and it would work to safeguard the world peace (China Daily, 1982). It is a country that peaceful doctrine is centuries old. It has an old civilization that is based on peace. It did never remain an expansionist or aggressive country though during the dynastic rule it has a power to conquer others. It did always fight a war to secure its own security and peace (Bingguo, 2010). The history tells that a hegemonic country does never develop other countries and its main priority always remain to make military alliance, military bases, and weapons (Leng, 2016a).

U.S., Japan and India's claims and fears about China's peaceful development and rise is seemed as a part of these countries propaganda policy that they have initiated to secure their own energy and power influential interests (Tokyo Foundation, 2015; Leng, 2016b; Heydarian, 2015). At present, China is peaceful on border disputes with India (China Daily Europe, 2016) and it has a dispute on issue of South-China Sea (Baijie & Yunbi, 2016). It wants to establish peaceful relations with India. It considers necessary to develop cooperative and trustful relations with India to build a peaceful developed world. In 2016, the two countries have hold 19th round of talks on boundary issue (China Daily Europe, 2016). It is not militarizing the regions. It is not making military alliances and military bases in response against U.S.'s pivot policy in Asia and Pacific or rebalancing the Asia policy' against its rise (Aljazeera News, 2016). It did not take any political and military action against U.S. military alliance with Japan and with other Pacific and Asian countries against it (Zhao, 2015b). He Bin a Chinese Journalist in Pakistan at China Guangming daily has said: Trace back to history, Great Britain, first superpower of modern history, brought colonist to the rest of world. U.S. and USSR, two superpowers of contemporary history, brought wars to the world. China, carrying out diplomatic policy and guided by "Five Principles of peaceful coexistence", will bring out more elements of peace and development to the world. Because we trust the main theme of the world now is peace and development (He Bin, interview with author, January 30, 2015).

It is said by different Asian and Western scholars and policy makers that China's growing defence budget could pose a security threat for Japan and on South-China Sea dispute, it could be a threat to the countries includes Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei etc., (Dunya News, 2014). China's defence budget is increasingly growing. In 2015, its defence budget was \$145 billion that was a 10 percent increase of 2014 budget. It has a largest defence budget than combined budget of Japan, South-Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam. Certain western and Asian scholars and experts view, China's strategic thinking is based on Sun Tzu writings and it is following what Sun Tzu has said in his book "Art of War" that all wars are based on deception and supreme excellence of a country consists in breaking the enemy resistance without fighting (Hill, 2015). On China's ambition on its growing economic rise, Xi Jinping has said by delivering a speech on first meeting of National Security Commission in April 2014 that China desires to promote development, stability, peace and prosperity within its own country first that

would possibly push it to promote peace and economic development internationally. The strong army is essential to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. China is working to promote the common security of the world (Jinping, 2014b).

‘India says that China through seaports connectivity, seaports construction and by deploying military and naval forces in India Ocean is encircling its ability of resistance against attack. U.S. and Japan say the same view that China through Belt Road is developing a deep cooperation inside other countries that also like as holding other’s resistance capability. In spite these fears and claims, U.S., India, and Japan have a close economic, military, social and strategic relations with China. India is getting connectivity on Calcutta Seaport with China on Maritime Silk Road by linking through Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar economic corridor (BCIM) to Kunming city of China (Hill, 2015). Hu She Sheng, Director at a research institute of Contemporary International Relations” in Beijing, has expressed his views on peaceful ambitions that ‘It is also propagated China is building seaport to curtail India. But these Seaports are for commercial purposes. China has a non-alignment policy. China will bring more stability, development, and interdependence to herself and to the world (Hu Shi Sheng, interview with the author, 27 May 2014). China is building its military capabilities, but it is far behind in military power than U.S. It is growing economic and military power that could possibly surpass U.S. in the economic development in the same century but not in military power. In 2014, China has increased its defence budget to 12.1 percent to \$ 131.57 billion dollars (BBC News, 2015). In the same year, U.S. defence budget was \$ 526.8 billion dollars (Aljazeera News, 2014). In 2016, China will raise its defence budget to 7.6 percent to 954 billion yuan (\$146 billion dollars). While U.S. defence budget will be of \$ 534 billion dollars that will be 3.6 times larger to China’s budget (China Daily Asia, 2016).

China’s scholar says that its increase in military budget is 6 to 7 percent that is not enough to endanger the world peace. Its military is developing a range of capabilities and strategies to strengthen its security. These capabilities are water-mines, air-capabilities, naval-bases, and sea-lanes etc. It is developing its military modernization to ensure its peaceful development secure and successful. It is securing its peace, development, sovereignty, independence, and national interests that it promotes through BRI. The protection of its security is necessary to develop the smooth and secure function of the initiative (Leng, 2016c; Yin, 2016; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 2015). It is also building military, military weapons, and navy to secure its sovereignty from those that believe on use of power and have aggressive policy towards others (Leng, 2016d). As China President Xi Jinping has said while delivering a speech to the 12th National people’s Congress in March 2013 that China is developing its economy, military and defensive capabilities as it is necessary for the prosperous and secured country (Jinping, 2014c). It is basically a country which focus is economic development, not a military or expansionist aggressive country. It doesn’t have a military alliance like a NATO is. It doesn’t have military bases like US has (Jianmin, 2015).

5.1. China’s response to U.S.

In U.S. view, China’s rising economic power and influence poses a great security threat to its global super-power status and global economic influence (Jisi, 2010). It has perceived China is an aggressive country that is not following the law at sea, cyberspace, and violating humanitarian laws etc. It is not accepting the authority of China in South China Sea. It says that the South-China Sea is a commercial area, and all countries has equal right to access there.

It claims that China threatens its global power status as it (China) has stopped the oil exploration of Vietnam in South-China Sea, it has harassed the naval ship of U.S. in international water, and it has claimed an air-defence zone in Japan's Island Senkaku, which all is so unreasonable and wrong (Sherazi et al., 2020). Moreover, it fears from China's growing power and technology as it claims it is developing the talents of Cyberwarfare to create its influence. It could freeze the electricity and air-traffic control system. It is restricting the resistance power of others by building BRI. It is enhancing its economic influence in Asia, Pacific, the Central-Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. It is changing the world order by its growing economic rise and promoting interdependence among the countries through the initiative. It wants to become a hegemonic and the most powerful country of the world (Browne, 2015; Page, 2014). Additionally, its 's growing economic power, military strength, its strong stickiness with its cultural norms and with old civilizational legacy, it is strengthening nationalism which poses a threat to its global status of cultural power (Link, 2015; Glaser, 2015).

U.S. follows various policies to prevent China's growing economic influence and interconnectivity particularly in Asian region which is significant for the Washington due to rich energy resources and large economic market for the sale of its trade items. Under its "Asia pivot policy" or "rebalancing in Asia-pacific policy, 'It is increasingly militarizing the Asian and pacific region which includes the states like Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Japan etc. It is establishing military bases and military alliances in these regions to maintain its own presence and influence dominant in the area and to create power influence of threat over China and to build pressure over it on South China Sea issue (Pizzi, 2015; Mansour, 2015). It has a major military base in mid of Indian Ocean near Degogarcia (Leng, 2016c; Naomi et al., 2021). Masters Dan, a professor at University of North Carolina Wilmington, U.S., has said on China's peaceful rise that "Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia are not exclusive to one country. This is a China's sphere of influence exclusively that U.S. has an interested in the area that more want to pursue the interests and more want to reposition their interests (Masters Dan, interview with the author, March 14, 2015).

US is actively exerting its military influence in the region. It is provoking the disputed countries of South China Sea against China as on provocation of U.S. and Japan, Philippines has taken the issue to the International Court of Justice (Turkish Weekly, 2016). It has built a close military alliance with Japan (Hong, 2016). Currently the going global political trend between China and U.S. is based on competition and cooperation. Both countries have a fruitful economic cooperation and have a cooperation on various security, regional and development issues that includes counterterrorism, non-proliferation, anti-piracy, international waterway security, combat against transnational crimes and transnational epidemics, environmental protection, and climate change etc. Both countries have worked in cooperation on many issues includes Afghanistan, the Aden Gulf, the Iranian nuclear issue, and Ebola in Africa etc. (Fact Sheet, 2015).

The mutual trade of both was \$ 562 billion in goods in 2013 that has reached in 2015 to \$ 598.1 billion in goods and services. China became the largest trading partner of U.S. that has replaced Canada (Tribune, 2016; Fact Sheet, 2015). About 270,000 Chinese students are studying in U.S. colleges and universities. In spite that U.S. considers China a major challenge to its global hegemonic power (Rudd, 2015). Beijing wants to develop a peaceful world for its development particularly through BRI. In this regard, it wants to establish peaceful cooperative relations

with U.S. It wants equal relationship with respect to each other core interests by not interfering in each other matters. In 2010, China's president Hu Jintao has said to Barak Obama that both countries should respect each other core interests and of major concerns. It is essential for a healthy and stable development (Ministry of Foreign Affairs China, 2015). Xi Jinping has followed also a peaceful and cooperative policy towards U.S. and for that he has used the term "new type of great-power relation 'that means that the mutual relations of both countries will be preferred to base on mutual cooperation and mutual non-interference. With having many differences, China and U.S. has extensive economic and social relations (Rudd, 2015).

5.2. China's response to India

India, being as third largest economic power of Asia considers China as a threat to its political and economic influence and interests in the region. India's policy makers and scholars often expressing their fears that China is in-circling India by passing Maritime Silk Road through Indian Ocean and by this passage it is also curtailing the second-strike capability of India that it could make in case of any foreign attack over its sovereignty. India's fears could be based on solid reasons as in past it has fought a war with China in 1962 on border dispute on Arunachala Pradesh and still this dispute is existed that often get escalated. Though, India's fears could be propaganda against China's growing regional economic influence that it considers as a threat to its regional influence over the periphery countries of Asian Region. China's growing economic cooperation in the region is liberating and empowering the developing countries from the exploiting influence of India. Beijing is decreasing these countries economic dependence on Mumbai (Zhao, 2015b).

It is said that India is working against China as being a part of U.S.'s containment or Asia pivot policy as it has close strategic relations with U.S. The history of India-U.S. strategic partnership started in 2005 when U.S.-India has signed a Civil nuclear agreement to boost nuclear energy sector of India. Though this agreement works more oppositely to Pakistan, but it is also for strengthening India comparatively to China and it is to maintain the balance of power at regional level between U.S. and China (Jiao, 2013). In January 2015, during the visit of Barak Obama to India, U.S. and India has signed a 10-year defence pact to cooperate jointly for the development of maritime security, aircraft carrier, jet engine technology and defence system etc. (Dawn News, 2015, June 2). U.S. has a military partnership with India against China. Under 'rebalance to Asia policy', U.S. is expanding its supportive and cooperative relations with India to raise a competitive regional power against China in Asia region. By building close military and economic relations with India means that the U.S. desires to indulge China in competition and in developing military power for speedy building and maintaining its regional power influence to distract its image as a country for peaceful development and cooperation regionally and globally. It (U.S.) tries to make the environment hard for China's peaceful rise (Dawn News, 2015, January 25).

India and China, despite having a dispute on McMahan border line at Arunachala Pradesh, has cooperative relations to obtain many common growing strategic, economic, social, and environmental interests (Zhao, 2015b). China is the second largest trading partner of India. In 2014, the two-side mutual trade was of \$ 71 billion dollars. In May 2015, both has signed twenty-one agreements that are worth of \$22 billion dollars on development of different sectors includes trade. For both, mutual economic interests and cooperation is getting priority over their disputed border issues. Both are getting more interdependent and closer to each other (The

News, 2015). Moreover, China connects India through a Bangladesh-China- India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM) of Maritime Silk Road to its Kolkata seaport (Hindustan Times, 2014). This connectivity proves wrong the India's claim that China's is rising threat for its sovereignty. In fact, it considers China as a growing threat to its regional political influence (Zhao, 2015a). This corridor connects India's seaport Kolkata to the Kunming city of China by passing through Myanmar and Bangladesh. It is linked with surrounding small areas of these countries through road and railway network. It brings a great economic boost to India as connects it to the outside world which boosts its social and economic prosperity. This connectivity would be helpful in reducing of its social issues of increasing poverty, unemployment, and low standard of life. Though, this connectivity strengthens the relations of India and China (Hindustan Times, 2014). Both mutual relations are prone with cooperation and competition (Zhao, 2015b).

5.3. China's response to Japan

Japan has a military alliance with U.S. that is mainly build up to balance and obstruct the growing rising power of China (Penn, 2015). Japan is feeling a security threat from China on bases of its (Beijing) remembrance of 1939 war brutalities for that Tokyo says China's media outlets telecast official statements which demands apology from Japan on making a great humiliation of Chinese nation. In Japan view, China could attack it as to take revenge of past wars (Mashita, 2016). To protect itself, in 2015 it has changed its constitutional provision of peace to self-defence. It adopted the peace provision after receiving atomic-bomb attacks by U.S. during W.W.II on its territory. The new law of self-defence permits Japan to build military forces and military power for its self-defence and to deploy its military forces outside the region where it feels a threat to its sovereignty or to its ally countries. Though, through this constitutional change Japan protests its security from China but (Khattak, 2015), being as military ally and partner of U.S.'s pivot to Asia policy against China (Aljazeera, 2015), now it could deploy its military forces in conflicting region of South China Sea that could intensify security threat for Beijing (Khattak, 2015). China shares with Japan a long bitter history of wars of 1895, 1905 and 1939 (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2015). Beijing still remembers today a brutal war experience of 1939 when Japan attacked on its sovereignty by annually celebrates 'victory day' of its success over Japan. As China's President Xi Jinping has said about this war that this war took the lives of over 35 million Chinese that realizes the value of peace to China (China Daily CN, 2015).

Though, China never let the history to become hurdle for its future development. In 1978, when China followed opening and reform policy, it preferred to establish economic and military relations with Japan by ignoring all past hostilities and border dispute to make its future peaceful and smooth. At present, with having a border dispute both have economic cooperation along by equally taking each other as a threat to each other sovereignty (Tsuneo, 2015). China is increasing economic cooperation with Japan that resultantly brings the factor of mutual interdependence in their mutual relations. In 2009, it has contributed in development of 2.7 percent in Japan's total Gross domestic product (GDP) that was high then the U.S. contribution (Todo, 2014). In 2013, bilateral trade between both the countries was \$ 312.6 billion U.S. dollar that was with 5.1 percent reduction of each year due to Japan's provocation on Diaoyu Dao border disputing issue (Fmprc, 2015). China through its educational institutions and educational syllabus is delivering anti-Japanese education. Moreover, in July 2005, it has actively persuaded many African and Asian countries by providing them financial assistance

to cast a vote against the resolution ‘to increase the number of permanent members in the U.N. Security Council’ that resolution was submitted by Japan, Germany, India and Brazil (Tsuneo, 2015). The ninety percent population of both countries keeps a hostile feeling against each other (Vogel, 2014).

6. China’s fears and ambitions on initiative

U.S.’s growing military presence is creating security fears and threats for China. China also considers U.S. as a major threat to its sovereignty and development. It is increasing its military presence to sustain the pressure of tense situation towards it (Cornelis, 2013). In China’s view, the Washington could make an attack on China’s trade supply to disrupt the smooth function of BRI. Many China’s scholars and policymakers says that U.S. is applying a cold war strategy upon China by indulging it in conflicts as the same strategy it has followed against USSR to overcome its power by reducing its economic and military power (Jisi, 2011; Malik, 2014; Cornelis, 2013). Moreover, China feels a security threat to its trade transaction through the Indian Ocean and the Strait of Malacca from growing counter measures of U.S., Japan, and India (BBC News, 2015).

It will not be so easy for U.S. to conduct a direct or indirect military attack on China. Beijing is a growing second largest world economic power. It is the world largest consumer, producer, and exporter. It is the permanent member of the United Nation Security council. It is promoting interdependence through BRI and now the rest of the world is going to get interdependent on China. The peace and security of China is going international. It is not an ordinary developing country. Its security is now becoming a security of all and a great source of common development. So, on these bases, it will not be easy for U.S. to derail the rising growth of China at expense of the development of all countries (Lin, 2016). Hu She Sheng has expressed his views on peaceful ambitions of China on Maritime Silk Road that China's economy has gone so strong that U.S. has become so frightened as this disrupts the U.S. balance. China holding second growing GDP country and in this wake her number one rival need some time to digest. But gradually U.S. will accept the Western Asian Pacific region and China rise. But it is disturbing China's rise by helping Japan and Korea. After relations became so stable (Hu Shi Sheng, interview with the author, 27 May 2014).

The initiative is a part of China’s dream that to become the largest industrial and modernize country (Jisi, 2011). The main objectives of China’s grand strategy are to attain economic development, social prosperity, middle-income society, equal education opportunities and social peace, liberalization, modernization, and technological advancement. It wants to become middle-income country where people can live with good living standards and prosperity. BRI is the main part of China’s grand strategy and reform policy. It is a global economic interconnectivity initiative. Its main priorities behind this initiative are to develop its economically and socially backward areas to make its society peaceful from ethnic tensions, to balance its imbalanced education and income levels, to fulfil the growing energy needs, to expand its trade and investment and to develop it as one of the most modernize and developed country of the world. It is promoting development and prosperity to the rest of the world. It is strengthening the poor economies of the developing countries. It is strengthening its security by promoting the values of mutual peace, cooperation, development, and interdependence towards the other countries (China Daily CN, 2015).

Beijing lies the bases of its grand strategy on certain core values includes peaceful development, non-interference policy, zero-sum policy, five-principles of peaceful co-existence, mutual peace and cooperation, mutual development, and interdependence (Ministry of Foreign Affairs China, 2015). It is moving to establish a multi-polar world and it is shifting the world order with its emerging new world Order of peace and cooperation (Liu, 2015). Its's grand strategy is the renewal of Chinese nation by establishing their country as a great power of the world like it was so powerful in the past during the dynastic rule. It is a peace-loving country. It places its constitution and policy on peace and development. It believes on peace and lies its policies aims and ambitions on certain interests includes sovereignty, national security, territorial integrity, national reunification, respect to constitution, peace, and sustainability of social and economic development (Bingguo, 2010; China Daily Europe, 2015, December 16). It wants to proceed its grand strategy uninterrupted that it doesn't want to fight a war, it doesn't want to enter any conflict. It wants to economically develop to a country where it can consider itself as prosperous society (China Daily CN, 2015).

This initiative is a broader economic interconnectivity project that connects countries from region to region. It interlinks the region of Asia, the Central-Asia, Middle East, Africa, Europe and Russia through seaports, roads, railways, oil and gas pipelines, industrial and trade zones, corridors, canals, and bridges etc. It is not merely a connectivity project of just seaports and roads. China, under this project, is financing and developing many other development projects includes energy, education, health etc. It is financing the construction of infrastructures of seaports and economic corridors in other countries includes Brunei, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri-Lanka, and Pakistan (Cameron, 2015). It boosts and develops greatly the social and economic development of each country. It is empowering the developing countries that are always kept deprived from prosperity and modern technology because of exploiting policy of west towards east. It is establishing a new zone of economic power (China Daily, 2016).

In addition, China is also gaining many advantages like high boosts in its bilateral trade and strategic relations with other countries, economic and social prosperity that greatly contributes in making its conflict prone Xinjiang province peaceful and developed. It overcomes the social problems of the China includes lack of job opportunities, lack of skilled and high-educated people, increasing gap of wages, lack of food and water resources etc. (Zhao, 2015). Being as a developing country, China is unable to endure alone the construction expenses of the entire initiative that are about US dollar \$ 1.6 billion. In 2015, it has established Asian Infrastructure Investment bank (AIIB) to provide loans and funds to other countries for developing infrastructure and energy projects (Cameron, 2015). It is building alternative economic corridors to secure its trade supply transhipments through the Indian Ocean and the Strait of Malacca that are highly military dominated areas of U.S. and India. These alternative corridors are China-Pakistan economic corridor (South China Morning Post, 2015; Gordon, 2016) and Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) economic corridor (The Hindu, 2015; Gordon, 2016).

7. Conclusion

China's BRI is a significant global economic interconnectivity project that brings changes in the world political trends and system towards peace, cooperation and multipolarity. It sets the new world trends of mutual and common peace, cooperation, and interdependence which was previously dominant with trends of wars and aggressive power struggle. Opposite to U.S., it is

increasingly enhancing cooperation and interdependence among the countries. It doesn't want wars. Being a prudent and visionary nation, it learned value of peace and development from its past when it was occupied by Japan and other western colonial powers. It is a nation that has built its country with great sacrifices, struggle, and hard work. It did never build its development at expense of eroding other's sovereignty. On initiative, its prior goal is to take its country towards more modernization and development. It is difficult for China to go for a war with any country in future because it does never want to disrupt its own country peace. The other regional and international powers will also never go for a war at the expense of development and peace of the rest of the world. U.S. will take a long time to accept it rise but at expense of other countries development, it can't make a direct attack on China's sovereignty.

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