

Beehive Bonanza PF Clinic

Neg Case 2019

Resolved: The European Union should join the Belt and Road Initiative



# NEG CASE

My partner and I proudly negate that Resolved: The European Union should join the Belt and Road Initiative.

The European Union, as defined by

Gabel, M. J. (n.d.). European Union. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/European-Union/-AV>

As an [international organization](https://www.britannica.com/topic/international-organization) [comprising](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/comprising) 28 European countries and governing common economic, social, and security policies. Originally confined to western [Europe](https://www.britannica.com/place/Europe), the EU undertook a [robust](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/robust) expansion into central and eastern Europe in the early 21st century. The EU’s members are [Austria](https://www.britannica.com/place/Austria), [Belgium](https://www.britannica.com/place/Belgium), [Bulgaria](https://www.britannica.com/place/Bulgaria), [Croatia](https://www.britannica.com/place/Croatia), [Cyprus](https://www.britannica.com/place/Cyprus), the [Czech Republic](https://www.britannica.com/place/Czech-Republic), [Denmark](https://www.britannica.com/place/Denmark), [Estonia](https://www.britannica.com/place/Estonia), [Finland](https://www.britannica.com/place/Finland), [France](https://www.britannica.com/place/France), [Germany](https://www.britannica.com/place/Germany), [Greece](https://www.britannica.com/place/Greece), [Hungary](https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary), [Ireland](https://www.britannica.com/place/Ireland), [Italy](https://www.britannica.com/place/Italy), [Latvia](https://www.britannica.com/place/Latvia), [Lithuania](https://www.britannica.com/place/Lithuania), [Luxembourg](https://www.britannica.com/place/Luxembourg), [Malta](https://www.britannica.com/place/Malta), [the Netherlands](https://www.britannica.com/place/Netherlands), [Poland](https://www.britannica.com/place/Poland), [Portugal](https://www.britannica.com/place/Portugal), [Romania](https://www.britannica.com/place/Romania), [Slovakia](https://www.britannica.com/place/Slovakia), [Slovenia](https://www.britannica.com/place/Slovenia), [Spain](https://www.britannica.com/place/Spain), [Sweden](https://www.britannica.com/place/Sweden), and the [United Kingdom](https://www.britannica.com/place/United-Kingdom).

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI or OBOR) is defined by

Seth, S. (2019, September 2). Understanding One Belt One Road (OBOR). Retrieved from https://www.investopedia.com/terms/o/one-belt-one-road-obor.asp/-AV

The One Belt One Road (OBOR), the brainchild of Chinese President Xi Jinping, is an ambitious project that focuses on improving connectivity and cooperation among multiple countries spread across the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Dubbed as the “Project of the Century” by the Chinese authorities, OBOR spans about 78 countries.

We believe the framing for today’s round ought to be net-benefits. Meaning that if the negative team can prove joining the BRI would do more harm than good, we ought to win today’s round. We would also stress that because the resolution is a question of EU membership and not whether or not the BRI is good, we must look to how impacts in the debate would be influenced by EU membership. Additionally, we ought to prioritize impacts to the EU directly.

### Contention One: Telecommunications

#### Subpoint A: The Balance of Trade does not help the EU

Pelagidis, T. (2019, April 23). China's backdoor to Europe. Retrieved from https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2019/04/15/chinas-backdoor-to-europe/-AV

The China-EU trade balance is the first reason cited by European BRI doubters. They fear a deteriorating trade deficit that could emerge if China keeps its market substantially protected. In 2018, the EU’s trade deficit with China was 185 billion euros. The 28 countries of the EU exported 210 billion euros’ worth of goods and services to the Chinese market while imports from China totaled 395 billion euros. On the one hand, China is the EU’s top trading partner, accounting for 20 percent of EU imports. On the other, China absorbs 11 percent of the EU’s exports, ranking the country second in terms of the top destinations for European products. The U.S. is number one, absorbing 21 percent of the EU’s exports. A second reason cited by skeptics relates to the composition of trade (Figure 3). Telecommunications equipment from China is a big share of that (around 60 billion euros’ worth). One contested aspect within Europe’s telecom sector relates to Huawei competing for 5G networks in Europe. The EU wants to protect 5G networks from potential security risks and Huawei is clearly a suspect. The EU also imports Chinese consumer electronics worth almost 20 billion euros, furniture worth 10 billion euros, and other household equipment worth 10 billion euros. Thus, entry points to the EU are of vital importance to China, which explains the country’s keen interest in the port of Piraeus. It also explains China’s rapprochement last month with Italy regarding its ports. Italy’s government signed a Belt and Road memorandum of understanding (MOU) with China on April 3, making it an official BRI participant (see [piece in The Diplomat](https://thediplomat.com/2019/04/italy-signs-on-to-belt-and-road-initiative-eu-china-relations-at-crossroads/)).

#### Subpoint B: Cyber security

Fernandez, Borja. “China and 5G: the Future of Technology.” Global Risk Insights, 3 Mar. 2019, globalriskinsights.com/2019/03/china-america-5g-technology/-BFI

To understand China’s investment in this field, the importance of 5G should be considered. It will bring several new features, unlike previous generations of mobile technology that incorporated one main evolution alone. This would bring an increase in speed and broadband of wireless networks up to [100 times](https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/07/180705110036.htm) faster than 4G. Additionally, it will also allow massive device connectivity, providing immediate and uninterrupted ultra-low latency communication. 5G is about both enhanced capacity and its revolutionary applications in the short and medium term. It will grease the wheels of many [Fourth Industrial Revolution key technologies](http://freedomlab.org/the-coming-geopolitics-of-5g/) such as the Internet of Things (IoT), smart cities and smart farming, telesurgery, and virtual reality. Therefore, it will have implications far beyond the technological dimension. On the economic front, for instance, 5G could trigger significant competitive advantages in the short and medium term. Globally, it will [generate](https://cdn.ihs.com/www/pdf/IHS-Technology-5G-Economic-Impact-Study.pdf) $12.3 trillion in economic outputs and support 22 million jobs by 2035. However, 5G will also lead to security and privacy concerns. As sensitive industries such as autonomous vehicles, health or industrial processes become more reliant on wireless connectivity, they will also become more exposed to cyber-threats. Risks such as remote sabotage of medical devices or automotive cyber-attacks could turn into a reality. This creates a higher than ever need for strong security measures. Additionally, researchers found that 5G protocol known as Authentication and Key Agreement (AKA) still presents security insufficiencies. This can translate into challenges for national security in the form of more sensitive data theft or sabotage. China has been trying to get ahead in its quest for 5G dominion, aiming for its commercial launch in 2020. In 2018, it built a trial network of 350,000 cell sites, which will continue expanding in 2019. By 2025, after an investment of $400 billion, the country will be the largest 5G market with [430 million](https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Business-Trends/China-races-ahead-of-West-in-pursuit-of-5G) users. The Chinese firm Huawei has been Beijing´s spearhead on this matter. The company is already a leader and a symbol of the Chinese advancements in innovation and ICT. In 2018, it surpassed Apple as the second largest seller of smartphones, and it’s set to overtake Samsung´s market share [by 2020](https://www.cnbc.com/2018/11/16/huawei-aims-to-overtake-samsung-as-no-1-smartphone-player-by-2020.html). Huawei seems to have a central role in China’s bid to outline the future of 5G. The company already provides technology for the 5G wireless infrastructure across the world. Huawei is not state-driven. However, like any other Chinese company, it is expected to cooperate with the state intelligence work in accordance with Article 7 of the National Intelligence [Law](http://www.npc.gov.cn/npc/xinwen/2017-06/27/content_2024529.htm). In recent years, Huawei has heavily [invested](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/07/technology/china-huawei-5g-standards.html) in 5G, patented technologies, hired international experts, and lobbied in the industry groups for the definition of new standards for performance and interoperability. These standards will delineate the money flow coming from royalty payments. Concerns over technology 5G and China’s dominance in the field has raised the concerns of Western counterparts. They have brought this issue to the political and judicial arena under fears of intellectual and technology transfers, and loss of influence over the definition of standards. Last January, the US [disclosed](https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-u-s-case-against-huawei-11548770785) two indictments that placed 23 criminal charges for conspiracy against Huawei and its CFO Meng Wanzhou, who was arrested in Canada in December. The indictments claimed that Huawei violated sanctions and stole intellectual property. August, Australia banned Huawei and ZTE from providing 5G technology, citing security concerns. New Zealand followed suit last November. In Europe, the UK, France, Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic have also [voiced](https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/2185085/eu-ban-chinese-technology-5g-revolution-would-hit-trade) their concerns and said that they are considering banning Huawei. They all quoted the risk of extrajudicial state interventions. However, Huawei insists the Chinese Government or intelligence officials never gave instructions or data requests. Troubles ahead of a new digital era China perceives these bans as an attack on its national strategic interest, as the exclusion of Chinese network suppliers from key advance markets will affect its commercial interest. In a context of US-China trade dispute, this is likely to result in retaliatory measures from China against countries that ban its technology in the short and medium term, as [expressed](https://www.france24.com/en/20190118-canada-counters-china-threat-repercussions-huawei-banned) by China’s ambassador to Canada, Lu Shaye.For example, China could cancel current EU-China scientific cooperation or stop future initiatives in this area. It could also establish new trade barriers, like the [recent](http://fortune.com/2019/02/21/china-australia-coal-imports/)restrictions on Australian Coal. It is also likely that Beijing slows down its current introduction of measures to facilitate foreign investment, or places new obstacles for foreign tech companies operating in China, as it did with the [ban](https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-46516662) on older iPhone models as part of a patent lawsuit between Apple and Qualcomm. The ban on Chinese technology could also lead to higher costs from alternative vendors or lower performance of networks. Moreover, if political competition results in a divided 5G infrastructure system, users and operators could face problems of interoperability and higher costs derived from transactions and lack of economies of scale. Conclusion In conclusion, while Huawei has achieved significant advancements in 5G tech, it is not a monopolist. The company still competes with international companies such as Intel, Nokia, Eriksson, and SK Telecom. They are also contributing to defining the current ICT landscape. Besides, Western governments will take further steps to avoid information breaches. On the other hand, China will surely seek more influence in this arena. However, due to the highly competitive scenario and obstacles to Chinese technology, it is unlikely to view China transformed into a technological hegemon empowered by 5G.

#### Subpoint C: Distrust

European Law Blog, June 25, 2019 , The Road that divided the EU: Italy joins China’s Belt and Road Initiative, https://europeanlawblog.eu/2019/06/25/the-road-that-divided-the-eu-italy-joins-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative/-BFI

Italy joining the BRI has caused discontent within the EU. There are widespread concerns that an influx of Chinese investment can have an adverse effect on the national security of EU Member States. A number of officials voiced concerns that through developing telecommunications networks [China could spy and disrupt European communications](https://www.cfr.org/article/chinas-belt-and-road-gets-win-italy). These concerns are especially pertinent in the light of the ongoing cybersecurity controversy surrounding Chinese [tech giant Huawei](https://www.forbes.com/sites/kateoflahertyuk/2019/02/26/huawei-security-scandal-everything-you-need-to-know/). In order to avoid such adverse effects, “[s]ome EU officials advocate the bloc’s [right to veto Chinese investments across the region](https://www.cfr.org/article/chinas-belt-and-road-gets-win-italy)”, pointing out, moreover, that China has a poor reputation regarding transparency and that unfair trade practices will only favour Chinese firms. These concerns are also reflected in the European Commission Report titled “[EU-China – A strategic outlook.](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf)” The European Commission criticizes China for preserving domestic markets from the competition by deploying “[selective market openings](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf)” as well as providing “[heavy subsidies to both state-owned and private sector companies etc.](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf)” Furthermore, the Commission clearly objects to the fact that the “[EU operators have to submit to onerous requirements](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf)” to access the Chinese market. The Commission also emphasizes the lack of reciprocal market access. For instance, while Chinese financial services are rapidly expanding into the EU market, European companies are still denied access to the Chinese market. In this light, the Commission calls for developing “[a more balanced and reciprocal economic relationship](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf)”. In his recent book The Silk Road Trap: How China’s Trade Ambitions Challenge Europe, Jonathan Holslag, a leading expert on Asian affairs, argues that in order to achieve such a relationship “[the EU must reduce its reliance on China and work on building a stronger and more sustainable European economic model](https://www.wiley.com/en-us/The+Silk+Road+Trap%3A+How+China%27s+Trade+Ambitions+Challenge+Europe-p-9781509534685)”.

### Contention Two: BRI Creates an EU Political Divide

#### Subpoint A: BRI is causing divide in the EU

The Soufan Group, "The EU's Problematic Approach to China's Belt and Road Initiative", 4/19/19,

<http://www.soufangroup.com/intelbrief-the-eus-problematic-approach-to-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative/>-BFI

China’s increasing involvement in key infrastructure projects on the European continent has spurred concerns about the political strings that are inevitably attached –and potential implications for European security. There is growing concern that infrastructure loans under the BRI umbrella are incurring soaring debts for Western Balkan states that are seeking EU membership, including Serbia and Montenegro. If EU states default on their BRI loans, it becomes a question of whether the EU will bear the responsibility to mitigate broader economic fallout. As the recent example of Pakistan’s financial crisis demonstrates, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) explicitly stated that a bail-out would not be an option if Islamabad continued to accept unsustainable loans from China. EU member states’ warming relationships with China have also created political divisions: in 2017, Greece vetoed a joint EU statement criticizing China based on human rights and a year prior, Greece and Hungary refused to sign a joint EU statement criticizing China’s growing aggression in the South China Sea.

#### Subpoint B: Rich V. Poor

Adriano Bosoni , Stratfor, "Europe's Four Big Challenges in 2019", 1/10/19,

<https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/europes-four-big-challenges-2019>/-BFI

But the European Union is also worried about China's increasing presence on the Continent. Brussels is especially concerned about [Beijing's investment plans in Central and Eastern Europe](https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-five-years), arguing that some of the proposals flout EU rules on public procurement and state aid in addition to lacking a sound cost-benefit analysis. The bloc also fears that Beijing's rising economic clout will ultimately translate into political influence — something that would only exacerbate the union's political fragmentation. To some extent, these fears are already coming true, as rich EU countries, wary of Chinese investment, have begun to clash with poorer ones, which welcome whatever foreign investment they can get. At the same time, the bloc is wary about Chinese investment in sensitive technologies. Germany, France and others have already introduced mechanisms to screen foreign — that is, Chinese — investment on critical technology and infrastructure, although the union has failed to introduce a common mechanism at the Continental level. At the same time, the United States is increasing pressure on its European partners to introduce stronger barriers to Chinese investment, which will affect research and trade in areas including artificial intelligence and the development of 5G networks.

### Contention Three: Human Rights

#### Subpoint A: The BRI increases human rights abuses

Faiz, A. (2019, June 7). Is China's Belt and Road Initiative Undermining Human Rights? Retrieved from <https://thediplomat.com/2019/06/is-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-undermining-human-rights/>. Abbas Faiz lectures on human rights at Essex University’s School of Law in the UK. He was formerly Amnesty International’s Researcher on South Asia./-AV

China’s BRI has provided more job opportunities in its target countries, with the promises of better roads, hospitals, schools, and other income-generating infrastructure. It has also generated more authoritarianism — further weakening of judicial systems, more repression of dissent, more curbs on freedom of expression under China-inspired cyber security laws — all paving the way for government leaders to show allegiance to the Chinese governance model. The BRI has been a double success for China. It has shifted the global power balance in its favor. It has also given currency to China’s long held and self-serving argument that for development you need a strong authoritarian system undeterred by expectations of civil liberties and political pluralism. Addressing the side impact of China’s BRI on civil liberties outside China’s borders can be misinterpreted as siding with the United States in its trade war with China. This is a false assumption and must not deter genuine studies of the BRI’s impact on human rights. There is no dearth of studies on the United States’ negative impact on human rights around the world. More needs to be said about China’s record, too. For a study on China’s impact, the period 2014-2018 is important as it helped shape the political environment in which the BRI could flourish. This was the case in Pakistan. Even knowing that the BRI was informed by China’s pursuit of access to global markets, job opportunities for its own workforce [with reported tax breaks from Pakistan](https://www.dw.com/en/belt-and-road-forum-is-the-china-pakistan-economic-corridor-failing/a-48473486), and closer global control over cyber activity, the BRI’s development benefits for Pakistan — the pledge of $60 billion in loans, some with a reported low interest rate of 2 percent — are immense. Yet, BRI operations during 2014-2018 coincided with further curbs on civil liberties evident, among other measures, by the [Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act of 2016](https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/pakistan/report-pakistan/) — which Amnesty International has called “draconian” — that curbs peaceful internet use especially when critical of the authorities. Such curbs usually lead to the deepening of the inequality gap and harsher labor conditions. The 60,000 or so BRI-employed Pakistanis are not likely to have fared better than what Human Rights Watch calls [unfair and abusive labor practices in Pakistan](https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/01/23/no-room-bargain/unfair-and-abusive-labor-practices-pakistan). This was the case in other BRI linked countries. Since 2014, the government of Bangladesh has used every opportunity to remove human rights safeguards in law and practice, as I underlined in an Al Jazeera [Head to Head](https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/headtohead/2019/02/gowher-rizvi-bangladesh-party-state-190227124251797.html) program earlier this year. The Maldives government’s defiance of human rights between 2014 and 2018 strikingly coincided with its growing closeness to China. The [government’s attack on human rights](https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2015/04/maldives-human-rights-in-free-fall-as-authorities-step-up-crackdown/) included the politicization of independent state institutions, including the judiciary, leading to sham trials of opposition leaders, curbs on freedom of the media, and an unexplained reluctance to stop attacks against journalists investigating corruption. This paved the way for an amendment to the Maldives Constitution that allowed the then-government to sell islands to China without a bidding process. Ominously, nearly all the governments signing onto the BRI are headed by administrations perceived to be [seriously corrupt](https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018). China’s poor human rights record, including its suppression of labor activism, has been widely documented by [Amnesty International](https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/china/report-china/) and [Human Rights Watch](https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/china-and-tibet); yet a critique of China’s impact on human rights in other countries has been in short supply. The need to develop an independent scrutiny of China’s global expansion is more urgent now that the geopolitical tectonics are shifting. If it is right (and to me it is) to hold the United States and the United Kingdom to account for the sale of arms to Saudi Arabia, it should also be right to criticize China for the sale of arms to Bangladesh to which China is said to be the biggest [supplier](https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/41935-decoding-china-bangladesh-relationship/) Civil society activists have frequently expressed their distrust about China’s creeping influence in their countries. Aspirations for democracy and human rights and distrust of China were at the heart of movements that have influenced the outcome of elections in several South Asian countries in recent years. These include Sri Lanka (2015), Pakistan (2018), and the Maldives (2018 ) where calls to distance the country from China have been unmistakably loud. These newly elected governments have consequently tried to rewrite the open invitation that their predecessors had extended to China only to find it is more airtight than they had expected. This was Sri Lanka’s experience. The government closed China’s operations after the 2015 elections. China demanded the return of its loans. The government could not repay, and allowed China to return. China has already locked itself firmly into the development processes in South Asia during the BRI’s formative years and is not likely to go away. Deeper scrutiny of its impact on civil liberties can undermine the wishes of any South Asian government to import and legitimize China’s style of governance in their country.

#### Subpoint B: Europe cannot checkback Chinese abuses

Martin, P., & Crawford, A. (2019, April 3). China’s Influence Digs Deep Into Europe’s Political Landscape. Retrieved from https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-04-03/china-s-influence-digs-deep-into-europe-s-political-landscape?cmpid=BBD040419\_BRUS&utm\_medium=email&utm\_source=newsletter&utm\_term=190404&utm\_campaign=brussels/-AV

Indeed, Parliament has recently moved to tighten up their regulation. However, China’s efforts are on the radar after Xi’s visit to Italy and France last month [failed to alleviate](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-04-01/xi-fails-to-calm-europe-as-juncker-takes-another-swipe-at-china) European concerns over undue Chinese influence. “One country isn’t able to condemn Chinese human rights policy because Chinese investors are involved in one of their ports,” European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said on Monday, adding: “It can’t work like this.” Europe faces a dilemma, with unease spreading as it becomes increasingly reliant on China economically. Europe’s relative openness makes it a [more attractive target](https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2018-china-business-in-europe/?terminal=true)than the U.S. for Chinese investment, with some 45 percent more deals over the decade to end-2017. China is already the most important trading partner for Germany, the region’s biggest economy, with a 6.1 percent growth in total trade volume in 2018, the BGA exporters group said in its annual outlook last week, warning that “there is no basis for the current China phobia.” For China, its European push is also something of an insurance policy.

# Additional Neg Cards

### Biodiversity

Gokkon, B. (2018, July 18). Environmentalists Are Raising Concerns Over China's Belt and Road Initiative. Retrieved from https://psmag.com/environment/environmental-concerns-over-chinese-infrastructure-projects/-AV

The BRI may appear to be an ambitious take on globalization, by covering 68 countries through trade and commerce and linking them to China, but there's more to it than that, says Mason Campbell, a postdoctoral research fellow at the Centre for Tropical Environmental and Sustainability Science at James Cook University in Australia. "It's basically under the guise of internationalizing China, but it's more about resource extraction and attaining materials," Campbell told Mongabay on the sidelines of the 2018 conference of the Association for Tropical Biodiversity Conservation in Kuching, Malaysia, in early July. Campbell, whose work has focused on the Pan Borneo Highway—a project linking the two Malaysian states on the island with the nation of Brunei—said China's way of asserting its influence in most infrastructure projects was typically by pushing for Chinese companies to work abroad or finance a development project in a foreign country that would eventually benefit China. China has pursued minerals, fossil fuels, agricultural commodities, and timber from other nations under this model. As a net importer of coal, China has more than 1,600 plants scheduled to be built by Chinese firms in more than 62 countries, including in Southeast Asia. The country is also [investing $100 billion annually in Africa](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/conl.12076) for extractive mineral industries and the associated transportation and energy infrastructure. The effort to secure these resources has spawned its own infrastructure boom that typically involves building large-scale roads, railways, and other infrastructure to transport commodities from interior areas to coastal ports for export. In an [analysis](http://awsassets.panda.org/downloads/the_belt_and_road_initiative___wwf_recommendations_and_spatial_analysis___may_2017.pdf) that only considers the backbone BRI projects, and not these various side projects, the WWF estimates that the Chinese initiative will directly impact 265 threatened species, including endangered tigers, giant pandas, gorillas, orangutans, and Saiga antelopes. "There is significant potential overlap between the terrestrial BRI corridors and areas that are important for biodiversity conservation and for the provision of social and economic benefits to people," the wildlife non-governmental organization wrote in the report. "These overlaps indicate risk areas for potentially negative impacts of infrastructure development." It said the major BRI corridors would cut through or broadly overlap with 1,739 [Important Bird Areas](https://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas) or [Key Biodiversity Areas](http://www.biodiversitya-z.org/content/key-biodiversity-areas-kba), as well as 46 biodiversity hotspots or [Global 200 Ecoregions](https://www.worldwildlife.org/publications/global-200). "It's huge. It's as big as oil palm," Alex Lechner, a researcher from the School of Environmental and Geographical Sciences at the University of Nottingham–Malaysia Campus, told Mongabay. In a [report published earlier this year](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41559-017-0452-8), Lechner highlighted the rampant biodiversity loss in Asia from the BRI, which crosses several terrestrial and marine biodiversity hotspots, wilderness areas, and other key conservation areas, such as Southeast Asia's Coral Triangle. Road development, the report said, will create direct and indirect impacts, such as habitat loss, fragmentation, and illegal activities such as poaching and logging. In the marine environment, increased sea traffic exacerbates the movement of invasive species and pollution. Poorly planned infrastructure has the risk of locking in undesirable environmental practices for decades to come, it added. "BRI could have disastrous consequences for biodiversity," Lechner wrote in the report.

### BRI would vastly expand Chinese economic power

China Power Team. "How will the Belt and Road Initiative advance China’s interests?" China Power. May 8, 2017. Updated May 29, 2019. Accessed September 25, 2019. https://chinapower.csis.org/china-belt-and-road-initiative/-AV

If successfully implemented, the BRI could help re-orient a large part of the world economy toward China. Increasing the amount of trade, investment, and connectivity between China and countries throughout Eurasia will also render these countries more dependent on the Chinese economy, increasing China’s economic leverage over them. This may empower China to more readily shape the rules and norms that govern the economic affairs of the region. The BRI may also win China political gains. Beijing may be able to exploit its financial largesse to influence partner country policies to align with its own interests, particularly in certain countries in Central and South Asia that lack good governance and robust rule of law. Some countries that are part of BRI rank unfavorably on [Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index](https://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview), an index running from 0, indicating very high corruption, to 100, indicating very low corruption. BRI recipient countries with particularly poor Corruption Perceptions Index scores include Turkmenistan (22), Pakistan (32), and Sri Lanka (36). Accepting Chinese capital may come with expectations that Chinese companies will then be contracted to manage infrastructure, giving them at the least some influence over critical infrastructure. From China’s perspective, investment into strategic locations like Gwadar will help diversify China’s transport network for critical natural resources like oil and gas, which could help reduce dependency on trade routes, such as the Strait of Malacca, through which China currently receives much of its oil and gas.

### China will use BRI for militaristic and political presence

South China Morning Post. (2018, April 18). Belt and road is no 'win-win' for China's partners: US study. Retrieved from https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2142266/belt-and-roads-aim-promote-chinese-interests-and/-AV

China’s “Belt and Road Initiative” – a massive infrastructure programme that Beijing says is aimed at promoting global trade and economic growth – is actually intended to expand the country’s political influence and military presence, according to a report issued on Tuesday. The report by the US-based research group C4ADS questions China’s portrayal of the trillion-dollar programme as strictly meant to promote economic development. President Xi Jinping’s signature foreign policy programme is working to reinforce China’s links to Southeast Asia, Europe and Africa through networks of roads, ports, railways, power plants and other infrastructure projects. C4ADS, a non-profit research institute that specialises in data analysis and security, examined official Chinese policy documents and unofficial reports by Chinese analysts to analyse the intentions of Beijing’s ambitious economic development programme, which seeks to connect 65 per cent of the world’s population in more than 60 countries. Chinese officials say the initiative, also known as a modern “Silk Road” harkening back to maritime and land-based trade routes of centuries past, is driven by commercial considerations. They have rejected assertions that it is also meant to expand Beijing’s global influence. The report analysed 15 Chinese-funded port projects in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Australia, Oman, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Djibouti and elsewhere in the Indo-Pacific region. It concluded that projects are not driven by “win-win” economic development for the individual host countries, as Beijing claims. “Rather, the investments appear to generate political influence, stealthily expand China’s military presence and create an advantageous strategic environment in the region,” it said. China’s foreign ministry rejected the findings, saying in a statement that the belt and road plan was “essentially an economic cooperation initiative” promoting common development through infrastructure. “China is not playing a geopolitical game,” it said. While there’s no official policy document linking the belt and road strategy to China’s national security interests, Chinese analysts have written that developing the programme and pursuing Chinese security are “intimately linked,” the report said.