

China's Belt and Road: Geopolitical Analysis of Regional Impediments. Afghanistan, Pakistan, Myanmar, India, Bangladesh

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China's colossal industrial overcapacity needs global markets and it drives the country to explore wide-scale and costly corridors for overland access to the east and west.

China's vision to establish a brand new international currency in lieu of the US dollar under powerful bloc of BRICS nation;

China and Russia's shared efforts to shatter petrodollars and of the highest concern, China's mega "Belt and Road" project is cautioning the US about its future economic hegemony in the region. Remember, the entire global violence of any sort, anywhere has its ultimate roots in economic interests.

China is laboring on its Central Asia economic corridor without a bump, though this robust economy's CPEC [China-Pakistan Economic Corridor] as well as Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar road network could meet a number of obstructions. China has even fixed eyes on the US-occupied Afghanistan as a potential ground for another "Belt and Road" whose foreign policy is entirely at the discretion of the US.

Pakistan went through never-before-seen warnings of Washington under Trump, which were primarily instigated as a result of Pakistan-China's joint economic scheme. The week following Trump's critical comments against Pakistan in the UN Summit in September, the **Secretary of Defense James Mattis** flew to India in an apparently provocative official trip and spoke of India's role in Afghanistan.

Earlier this month, Washington couldn't hold back and unearthed that CPEC is passing through the disputed region [Kashmir]. The US Defense Secretary James Mattis told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Chinese One Belt One Road project is controversial. India objects to CPEC because it may automatically bestow Kashmir to Pakistan once the project comes into practice. At this point, the US and India's strategic interests coincide.

The US's posture towards the project has turned upside down. In July last year, the US ambassador to Pakistan **David Hale** had welcomed the deal and stated:

"The United States welcomes the project and is supportive of any effort that brings about economic growth and development in Pakistan".

China is working to craft an additional economic corridor that commences from China's

southwestern provinces and runs across Myanmar, Bangladesh and ends up in India's Kolkata. Recently, China released a white paper vision for Maritime Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative to join CPEC with Bangladesh-India-Myanmar corridor. China has come to the sense that India's disapproval may keep the project from progress, so the latest scheme seems to have surfaced to appease India.

It is believed that CPEC is a flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative, while China calls the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar corridor also important. India is apathetic to the latest Belt and Road project. Beijing recently said it was willing to wait for New Delhi to join the project. India's green light to the latest Belt and Road project may suggest that it has no issue with CPEC passing through disputed Kashmir claimed by India.

Even though India skipped China's Belt and Road forum in May and made its opposition to CPEC clear, Beijing has continued building the controversial project, saying it has nothing to do with a bilateral dispute between India and Pakistan.

To the south of China's Central Asia Belt and Road corridor, China seeks to build one through its narrow border with Afghanistan's Wakhan corridor to connect to new markets along the route. Besides trading purposes, China's Afghanistan Belt and Road project is intended to establish security in the region as well as undercut the US's military agenda. On the other hand, Afghanistan's conflict is on the upheaval with no imminent end which is barring China from moving ahead. To this end, China's Afghanistan scheme would be blocked as long as US forces are stationed in Afghanistan.

It is not over; China's Myanmar-Bangladesh-India economic corridor with limited progress in place is facing problems in Myanmar's Rakhine state.

Has the Rohingya's crisis been engineered to challenge China's Belt and Road.

The fury that broke out last August in this state imperils China's massive economic interests. As China expands its geo-political influence and opens up economic corridors to its southern neighbors, it needs peace and stability in Rakhine state. China has business interests accounting for billions of dollars in investment in Rakhine where violence hinders the implementation of ongoing Belt and Road project.

China's impulse to back Myanmar is said to include cementing its foothold in Myanmar and proactive efforts to cut short the West's intervention in the countries south of China's borders. Rakhine's violence is no less than Kashmir's dispute to interrupt China's Belt and Road constructions. On August 25, the insurgent group called ARSA conducted a spate of attacks on a number of Myanmar military's outposts and killed enough to prompt military into a sweeping and brutal reaction.

Hired media outlets gave vent to Rakhine's violence and scattering of people to draw global attention into Myanmar's "crisis". Yet, some of the world's major countries including China, Russia and India have refused to specifically condemn the ongoing violence in Rohingya.

In a video message released recently, the front man, **Ata Ullah**, who is believed to have been born to a Rohingya family in the Pakistani city of Karachi and to have lived in Saudi Arabia, strongly rebuked Myanmar's treatment of Rohingya. Myanmar's authorities have asserted that ARSA has links to militants trained by Pakistani Taliban and declared it a "terrorist organization".

To our surprise, analysts even opined that the climax of Rakhine's violence is a favorable opportunity for infiltration by networks with a global terrorist agenda such as the Islamic State group (ISIS).

Is the UN acting and responding on behalf of Western interests against China? In February, the UN accused the Myanmar's military of mass killings and rape of Muslims in Rakhine's villages. The UN held a closed-door briefing on the crisis. Myanmar barred a UN fact-finding mission from visiting Rakhine state.

Last September, reports appeared that Myanmar was negotiating with Russia and China to protect Yangon from any UN Security Council actions. Noteworthy is that China refrained to step into Myanmar's crisis, yet the unfolding chaos and the UN's purposeful attack on Myanmar's government compelled Beijing to protect Mandalay. News emerged that China opposed UN involvement in Myanmar's crisis.

China continues to provide diplomatic protection to Myanmar as some Western nations press the government and military on the Rakhine issue. In March, China along with Russia blocked a brief UNSC statement when the 15-member body met to discuss the situation in Rakhine. It suggests that certain circles within the UN are working against the interests of China and Russia.

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