

China's Strategic Vision behind BRI

Introduction: Described as 'a bid to enhance regional connectivity and embrace a bright future' by the Chinese government, Belt and Road Initiative BRI is fundamentally an amalgamation of infrastructure developments and worldwide investments. BRI, along with maintaining its economic promises, aims to forward Chinese strategic interests in terms of political dominance in the global affairs. BRI very much focuses on the replacement of US influence with Chinese control. It is more than something economic venture.

What is BRI or OBOR?

Formerly known as Belt and Road Initiative or One Belt One Road (OBOR), it is a Chinese state-engineered mega project envisioned in 2013 by the serving President Xi Jinping. The program aims at spending and investing billions of dollars in regions of Asia, Europe and Africa and even Americas. Investment will be made for developing infrastructure including roads, rail, ports and energy set ups. China will tend to establish both, land roads and sea routes for its products to be carried to every part of the world thus, making the country sole economic master of the world.

Strategic Visions behind OBOR.

If analyzed carefully, China maintains multiple strategic benefits behind OBOR. This is one of the reasons that US finds OBOR as Chinese effort to overthrow the former as the world's hegemon. Some of the strategic aims behind Chinese OBOR are as follows:-

1) **Economic Dominance:** - US is the current economic master of the world. Maintaining a hold on the world markets, it decides the global trade policies, economic sanctions and worldwide aid programs through IMF and World Bank. Unless, China beats US as economic hegemon, it cannot take control of the political world. Thus, the primary vision behind OBOR is surely to establish economic dominance of China by allowing every road and route to carry its products across the world.

2) Enhanced and Powerful Diplomatic Role in Regional Affairs:

US has maintained vital control over the regions of South Asia, South East Asia and the Middle East since after the 9/11. US physical presence in Afghanistan has proved a major help in maintaining this control. On the other hand, China finds all these regions mentioned as its essential and undeniable future partners. Without these regions, China cannot replace US hegemony. So, through OBOR China is targetting the regional countries with aid, loans and investment packages like CPEC in Pakistan. This gradual development will bring the regional countries in debt traps of China thus, making its diplomatic role enhanced and powerful.

3) World Political Dominance:

After the collapse of Soviet Union in 1990s, US emerged as the sole superpower and took control of the entire political scenario. Now, with China as emerging power, it will sooner or later replace the US. For that, OBOR is quite helpful. Through OBOR, China is allying nations not only in Asia but also Africa, Europe and South America. With power of the allies, China will move for becoming the world's dominant political power.

4) Geopolitical Realignment:

With OBOR, China is making geopolitical realignment. China is bringing the regional powers like Russia into its fold. Further, countries which were previously under US influence are gradually joining Chinese ambitions. Pakistan is surely one amongst them. India too is maintaining a considerable level of inclination towards Chinese OBOR despite being strategic partner of the US. Further, China is enhancing its relations with US' friends like Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other regional economies.

5) Energy Security:

China has to depend on the Malacca Strait for getting its fuel deliveries. The Strait has considerable hold of the US and its South East Asian allies. China wants to end this insecurity regarding its energy needs. For that, OBOR will be used. CPEC, being a part of OBOR, is clearly one manifestation and one step in ensuring energy security for China. It will enable China to import fuel from Middle East through its newly developed route to Gwadar Port under CPEC.

b) Response to 'Asia Pivot Policy': US has long cashed Asia Pivot Policy. It has enjoyed considerable control over Asia along with directing the regional nations to support its dominance. OBOR, is in fact a befitting response to the Asia Pivot. It is something that will make Asia Pivot relic of the past thus, giving China more leverage over Asia to use the region in its own interests.

Conclusion: One Belt One Road (OBOR) is more than an economic venture. It is surely bringing investments and infrastructure development for many but, China is surely pursuing its strategic interests of controlling the entire world through this project.