

Question: Examine China's strategic vision behind "The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)" also known as One Belt One Road (OBOR).

One Belt One Road is a super great infrastructure and economic project initiated by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013. The aim of this project is to boost its economy, to present China as a global economic center and to improve its social and economic security. BRI will connect China to central Asia and to Europe for trade and transportation. The partner countries of this project will also be the part of this economic and strategic development.

What is Belt and Road Initiative?

Belt and Road Initiative is the huge Chinese project of building roads, ports, railways and other infrastructural platforms. This is the largest and expensive project ever in the history of the world. It is also called One Belt means connecting China via land to central Asia, Europe and Persian Gulf and One Road refers to Ancient Silk Road which has been the famous trade route for about 2000 years. Seeking from Silk road importance, Now China has decided to initiate such project which will boost its economy, strengthen its economic and strategic security in the region and globe.

## Strategic vision of China behind Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

- 1) Aim of ruling international politics.  
Belt and Road Initiative will lead China to the heights of influence world politics. Its emergence economic leader will shape a new world order.
- 2) To lessen US influence in the region:  
During the last 15 years China and US are strategic and trade rivals. South Asia and Central Asia are major economic zones and China wants to over US influence in this region through this mega project.
- 3) Economic uplift of China and partner countries.  
OBOR project is the making of new markets and chain of goods exchange centers in China and neighbour countries linked through this project. Development of new ports, roads and railway tracks will boost the economic growth. This will attract different economic opportunities due to ease in transportation and security.
- 4) To access major trade routes.  
BRI project will give a diverse access to major economic routes. It includes, Indian sea, Red sea, Arabian sea, Gulf of Persia and South China Sea. These are the famous trade routes and more than 85% of the world trade through these routes.

5) To increase regional cooperation:

BRI will foster the connectivity of Asian, European and African countries. Currently more than 100 countries are the part of this project which is the sum of 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of world's population. This will increase cross-national cooperation among the nations.

In May 2017, President Xi Jinping noted.

"In pursuing the Belt and Road Initiative, we should focus on fundamental issues of development, releases the growth of potential of various countries and achieve economic integration and interconnected development and deliver benefits to all"

6) Development Corridors one Belt and one road project:

In first stage, there are six main corridors in this project. About 60B USD are invested in this mega project in mining, hydropower plants, wind farms and highways.

7) To counter terrorism.

Unemployment, and economic crisis are the root cause of major social evils and terrorism is one of them. The region of South Asia which is the main focus of BRI has been involved in major terrorist activities in the past. Through this project job opportunities will be

increase which will ultimately end terrorism, and crime rates will decrease.

### 8) Improving Energy Security:

Many of Asian, European and South African countries are combating with energy crisis. BRI will allow boosting energy security among the member states. This project will enable collaboration on energy supply areas like exchange of technology, providing best routes for energy transportation and a best road map toward sustainable developmental goals.

### 9) China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

It connects South-west China to Arabian sea via Pakistan. About 60B USD are invested by China in different areas.

"CPEC is an important loop in the larger chain of BRI, and would enable the possibility of a 21st Century Maritime Road

(He Lifeng)

### 9.1) The China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor (CMREC)

The corridor will connect China to Mongolia and Eastern Russia.

### 9.2) The China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor (CCIAAEC)

This is the most important corridor which adjoins China and Turkiye through Central and West Asia.

9.3) The China-Indo-China Peninsula Economic Corridor (CICPEC)

The CICP connects - southern <sup>China</sup> to Indochina region and Singapore.

9.4) The Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIMEC)

This corridor will connect India and China via Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Critical Analysis:

BRI project, one of the largest and most fruitful project in the history of world, aims to develop infrastructure, cooperation among the states and to achieve economic prosperity. China is often blamed of playing geopolitics game under the umbrella of BRI in the region.

According to Chinese officials, the project will only deepen cooperation and extend development space in the region of Asia, Europe, Africa and their adjacent seas.

"BRI is the product of exclusive cooperation, not a tool of geopolitics, and must not be viewed with an outdated cold war mentality."

(Wang Yi - Chinese FM)

It also argued that China is growing its influence and control over the developing nations through BRI. The countries which will be unable to pay Chinese investment loans will be captured in "Debt Trap". For example Sri Lanka was unable to pay the

borrowed money to China. Thus in return China took control of Hambantota Port for 99 years.

Moreover, European concerns over China's market system due to weak competition and product quality of goods is also troubling this worthy project. Large-scale infrastructure projects will surely have an environmental cost which is continuously effecting climate change in the region and across the globe. Although China claims that its working according to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, there are constraints that BRI is causing wildlife disruption, increasing greenhouse gas emission and depleting the sources of fossil fuels.

Conclusion:

In nutshell, BRI is a multibillion dollar infrastructure investment project of Chinese Government.

Behind this project China's strategic vision is to emerge as global leader and prevent US's containment policy. Also, this project to increase regional connectivity, boost Chinese economy and strengthen its trade network.

Many economic and infrastructure projects are being launched by China in member countries to achieve these aims and objectives.