

Q. No. 1. In what ways has China's foreign policy, particularly the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) influenced global power structures and its relations with countries in Africa, Asia, and Europe?

Answer.

1. Introduction

China's phenomenal rise over the last four decades has altered the geopolitical and geo-economic landscape of the world. Deng Xiaoping's reforms enabled rapid industrialization, making China the world's largest trading nation and the producer of nearly 30% of global manufactured goods. Under Xi Jinping, Beijing has institutionalized its rise through initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative (2013), Global Development Initiative (2021), and Global Security Initiative (2022). The BRI, with 140 participating countries, serves as the centerpiece of China's foreign policy - shaping new alignments, redrawing economic maps, and challenging the U.S. led liberal world order.

2. The Changing World Order: A Shift towards Multipolarity

Shifting towards multipolarity

US hegemony
is waning while
multiple powers (China, Russia, EU, India) Rise

multi
Creating "bumpy polarity"
of interdependence



Economic diplomacy and soft power

Beijing's expansion of economic reach through infrastructure financing, port building, and technological advancements.

Winning diplomatic support in multilateral forums.

U-S China Rivalry (Thucydides Trap)

Washington fears displacement as China demands a greater voice.

Fueling tensions reminiscent of Athens-Sparta rivalry.

3. China's Foreign Policy and BRI are Reshaping the International Order

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is more than a connectivity project — it is a cornerstone of China's foreign policy, reflecting Beijing's ambition to reshape the global order along Sino-centric lines. China's foreign policy emphasizes peaceful rise, economic interdependence, multilateralism, and non-interference, but in practice it increasingly projects influence through strategic investments and diplomacy.

Beijing secures access to critical sea of lines, energy resources, and markets. It complements this with institutional statecraft, creating parallel organizations such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and expanding platforms like BRICS to offer an alternative to Western-led institutions (IMF, World Bank and WTO). Through this dual strategy of economic diplomacy and institutional innovation, China's foreign policy and the BRI together challenge U-S led hegemony and promote Beijing's vision of a multipolar and interdependent international order.

4. Rise of China and its Regional Relations

4.1. Beijing is expanding its influence in Africa through infrastructure and political engagement

China has invested heavily in African railway, ports, and energy grids, while also gaining access to vital natural resources. It grows ties with African Union and voting influence in the UN showcase how Beijing converts economic presence into political leverage.

4.2. China is strengthening its footprints in Asia through CPEC and regional engagement.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)



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Serves as the flagship BRI project, providing Beijing swift access to the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf. At the same time, China faces opposition from India and the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy, while also expanding influence in Central Asia through the SCO and pipelines. In South East Asia, despite maritime disputes, investment flows demonstrate Beijing's regional pull.

4.3. Beijing is deepening its cooperation with Eastern Europe

Through the "17+1" framework, China has pursued infrastructure and trade projects with Eastern and Central European states. However, growing EU concerns about transparency, security, and overdependence have created tensions. Europe continues to balance economic ties with China against political alignment with the U.S. on strategic issues.

5. Conclusion

China's rise and its foreign policy centered on the Belt and Road Initiative, are reshaping the global order by challenging U.S. hegemony and promoting multipolarity. Through infrastructure, trade, and new institutions like AIIB and BRICS, Beijing extends influence in Africa, Asia,

and Europe - gaining access to resources, markets, and political leverage. While hailed as a vision of shared prosperity, BRI also raises concerns of debt and dependency, but it embodies China's strategic push to reshape global power dynamics and contest U.S. dominance in the 21st century, leading to the world into a modern Thucydides trap, where fear of displacement fuels confrontation between the U.S. and China.