

China's Economic Corridors

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China for long has been advancing its own propaganda through every possible way, so why would roadways be any different. One of President Xi Jinping's key policies is the "One Belt, One Road", (OBOR) the project aims to connect China with 60 countries, helping them with trade worth 2.5 trillions of dollars over next 10 years. Since, China's economy has been struggling for a while now, this road will help boost China's GDP by 25 %.

The "Belt" is a network of overland road and rail routes, oil and natural gas pipelines that will stretch from Xi'an in central China through Central Asia and ultimately reach as far as Moscow, Rotterdam, and Venice.

There are 6 corridors which run between: China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor (CMREC); New Eurasian Land Bridge (NELB); China-Central and West Asia Economic Corridor (CCWAEC); China-Indo-China Peninsula Economic Corridor (CICPEC); China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC); and Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIMEC).

India as always is wary of China's plan, despite China's claim of only being a trade route it looks a lot like China positioning itself strategically across Asia. Especially the proposed China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has left New Delhi worried.

China and Pakistan call themselves fair weathered friends and both have territorial disputes with India. Pakistan 'gifted' a part of Pakistan occupied Kashmir to China, where the military is positioned but call themselves 'Chinese construction workers'. So when China is investing billions of dollars for such a strategic move, they will try to protect their six corridors with heavy military cover, which in turn gives easy access to these 60 countries.

China of course claims that this is a big move towards building a strong Eurasia but it actually seems to be about establishing a strong Chinese presence all across Asia. Already there are more than 5000 troops across the Middle East and Asia, according to some reports the breakdown of the number of troops as follows

China – Mongolia – Russia Corridor 750 soldiers

New Eurasian Land Bridge 250 soldiers

China – Central Asia – West Asia Corridor 1500 soldiers

China – Pakistan Corridor 1800 soldiers

Bangladesh – China – India – Myanmar 1200 soldiers Corridor

India china Peninsula Corridor 750 soldiers

As we can see from the numbers above, the China Pakistan corridor has the most number of soldiers. China is encircling India, with more than a thousand troops; in case of a war, China could use its troops to launch surprise attacks on India which goes on to show the scary level of preparedness from China's side and taking it one step further. China is now expanding its army by hiring locals, recruiting them in the PLA and supplying them with the weapons. This would come in handy for China to wage proxy wars, as they won't be held accountable for the attacks because in reality the face of the attacks won't be China but the local armies who are trained and supported by China.

Due to the endless supply of funds readily available to China, even buying existing army setups is no problem at all for them. While India has to warily approach China's bid to connect and boost trade, it can take a lesson or two from China and develop its own strong relationships across Asia.

By donating weapons and investing in infrastructure like development of ports and airports for neighboring nations, India should cement its ties and build a strong base to fend off any attacks.

It is in the best interest of India to proceed with caution with China's ambitious corridor project but one cannot negate the possible trade benefits of this project for India's and the world's struggling economy.

China is the world's largest trading nation in the world; a flourishing Chinese economy is beneficial to the whole world. According to the statistics released by the World Bank, since China's inclusion in the WTO in 2001 have made the largest contribution to the growth rate worldwide, over 13 percent.

So despite our many misgivings on the project, points have to be given to China for taking the initiative and launching this gargantuan project that aims to bolster trade ties and help other Asian countries than any other country.

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