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Master Thesis

The Sino-Indian relation under the Belt and Road Initiative



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Abstract

Since 2013, Chinese president Xi Jinping proposed the initiative of “Silk Road Economic Belt” during a visit to Kazakhstan, and then proposed the initiative of the “twenty-first Century Maritime Silk Road” in a speech in Indonesia Congress. Together the ideas are called the “The Belt and Road Initiative”. The proposal of the BRI was under a complex background, both domestically and internationally. The BRI has five key areas, that are Policy Coordination, Facility Connectivity, Unimpeded Trade, Financial Integration, and People-to-People Bond. 65 countries and 4.4 billion people are involved in this initiative. (Du 2016) While receiving supports from lots of states, India is one of the few Asian states that clearly shows its negative attitude toward the BRI.

According to the classical realism, national interest is defined as power which is the ultimate goal of a state. In the geopolitics, sea power from Mahan is regarded as crucial for a state in the pursuit of power. The conflict of national interest is the reason for the confrontation between realist states. This thesis seeks to find out the different national interests for the two states toward the BRI. Thus, find out the reasons of Indian’s cautious.

This thesis is first going to introduce the content and context of the BRI. A literature review will briefly demonstrate scholars’ opinions on the BRI itself and India’s skeptical attitude for different positions. Then the thesis will use the theory of classical realism and geopolitics to analyze the different perceptions of China and India. Their national interest and their struggle of power. Finally, there will be a discussion of the Sino-Indian relations under the BRI.

Keywords

Belt and Road Initiative, India, national interest, geopolitics, the Indian ocean, Sino-Indian relations

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Abbreviation List

BRI - Belt and Road Initiative

OBOR – One Belt, One Road

SREB - Silk Road Economic Belt

MSR - Maritime Silk Road

BCIM - Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Forum for Regional Cooperation

CPEC - Chinese-Pakistan Economic Corridor

GDP – Gross Domestic Products

SAARC - South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

1. Introduction

This first chapter contains three sections. It is first going to explain the Belt and Road Initiative, including its historical origin, contents, and context. Then the second section will demonstrate the world's response toward the BRI, and especially India's response. Finally, the problem formulation will be introduced in the last part of this chapter.

1.1 The Belt and Road Initiative

1.1.1 The ancient “Silk Road”

The name of the “Belt and Road Initiative” is inspired from the ancient “Silk Road”. The ancient “Silk Road” usually refers to the “overland silk road”. The overland silk road originated in the Western Han Dynasty, which is about two thousand years ago. When the Emperor Wu of Han Dynasty dispatched Zhang Qian as a messenger to the western area, they opened up this route as an overland transport corridor for the producing of silk. This overland silk road started from the capital Chang'an at that time (now Xi'an), to central Asia and western Asia, along with the Mediterranean countries. In 1877, the German geologist Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen published a book named “China”. In his book, he described “between 114BC and 127AD, this transport route run through the western region between China and central Asia, China and India, with silk trade as the intermedia”. And then named it as the “Silk Road”. Soon after, this term was quickly accepted by academics and the general public and started to be formally used. (people.cn 2014)

More broadly, there is another “maritime silk road” in the ancient “Silk Road”. It was the sea lanes for ancient China for trade and cultural exchanges with foreign countries. The ancient maritime silk road was formed during the Qin and Han Dynasty. Through the development of the shipbuilding and navigation technology, the maritime silk road extended to the Southeast Asia, Malacca Strait, Indian Ocean, Red Sea, and Africa. (Maritime Silk Road 2015) (see figure 1)

1.1.2 The new “Silk Road”

The new “Silk Road” is now commonly known as the Belt and Road Initiative. This economic interconnectivity initiative known in Chinese “一带一路[yi dai yi lu]” was firstly translated into “One Belt and One Road” in English. This literal translation has caused misunderstanding and confusions to the world. The number “one” mislead people that there is only one overland road and one sea lane in the initiative. However, there are several economic corridors under the initiative. Thus, the official translation was revised to “the Belt and Road Initiative” with “BRI” as its acronym according to the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau of the Peoples’ Republic of China, as well as the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. (Bērziņa-Čerenkova 2016)

The BRI contains two routes: the “Silk Road Economic Belt”(SREB) and the “Maritime Silk Road of the 21st Century”(MSR), which are first introduced by Chinese President Xi Jinping in the fall of 2013 during his visits to Kazakhstan and Indonesia, respectively. (Du 2016) In March 2015, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Commerce of China jointly released the “VISION AND ACTIONS ON JOINTLY BUILDING SILK ROAD ECONOMIC BELT AND 21ST-CENTURY MARITIME SILK ROAD” which is the first official document clearly explains the key points in the BRI. As stated in the Action Plan, *“the BRI run through the continents of Asia, Europe and Africa. The Silk Road Economic Belt focuses on bringing together China, Central Asia, Russia and Europe (the Baltic); linking China with the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea through Central Asia and West Asia; and connecting China with Southeast Asia, South Asia and the Indian Ocean. The 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road is designed to go from China's coast to Europe through the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean in one route, and from China's coast through the South China Sea to the South Pacific in the other.”* (National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Commerce 2015)

As can be seen in figure 3, there are six economic corridors under the BRI. *“On land, the Initiative will focus on jointly building a new Eurasian Land Bridge and developing China-Mongolia-Russia, China-Central Asia-West Asia and China-Indochina Peninsula economic corridors by taking advantage of international*

transport routes, relying on core cities along the Belt and Road and using key economic industrial parks as cooperation platforms. At sea, the Initiative will focus on jointly building smooth, secure and efficient transport routes connecting major sea ports along the Belt and Road. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor are closely related to the Belt and Road Initiative, and therefore require closer cooperation and greater progress.” (National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Commerce 2015)

According to the roadmap of the BRI, 65 countries and 4.4 billion people will be involved. (Du 2016) As stated in the Action Plan, the initiative wants to promote cooperation among the participants in five major aspects, that are: (1) Policy Coordination, (2) Facility Connectivity, (3) Unimpeded Trade, (4) Financial Integration, and (5) People-to-People Bond. (National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Commerce 2015)

1.1.3 The background of the BRI

The BRI should be understood in both Chinese domestic situation and the grand international background.

Domestically, China's economic development is undergoing a vital transition. Since the opening-up policy in 1978, China's economic growth was quite rapid for almost 35 years. But from the global economic crisis in 2008, China's annual GDP growth rate went down evidently. This downturn is accompanied by some other problems. For example, the overcapacity issue, the massive debt, and the high leverage problems, etc. The Chinese economy used to be highly dependent on foreign investment, real estate sector, low-end manufacture, exports, and so on. With the changing global environment and the declining economic growth, China has stepped into an economic transition period, the “New Normal”. This “New Normal” has a rather lower goal of around 6.5% average GDP growth rate while looking for new economic driving forces and more proper economic structure. (Du 2016)

As can be seen in the line graph (figure 4), China's economy has witnessed a

continuously downward trend from 2010. In 2010, recovered from the global financial crisis, China's annual GDP growth reached a peak of above 10%. But afterwards, there is an obvious declining until 6.5% in 2016. Under this circumstance, China is in need of a new economic strategy to boost its economy growth.

Internationally, as can be seen in the line graph (figure 5), after the recovery from global financial crisis in 2008, the world economy growth has a rather flat curve. Moreover, the unusual number of “black swan” events¹ - the refugee crisis in Europe, the Brexit divorce, the turbulent American presidential election, the civil war in Syria, the religious extremism in Indonesia, the economic depression in Latin America – disturbing the world order. Thus, seeking for new economic driving forces and development strategy are of great importance for a sustainable recovery of the world economy and long-term peace. As the second largest economy in the world, China is considered as an important actor in the global arena. China has become the world's largest exporter and second-largest importer. *“It is not surprising that any big domestic economic project in China could generate influence throughout the global economy directly or indirectly, as other nations' links with China through trade and FDI have intensified more than ever before.” ... “And With this rising influence, international responsibility to share the leadership in world affairs is imposed on China. China has no option but to engage in the shaping of a global governance system, and to collaborate with its main partners internationally, despite their differences.”* (Li 2017)

1.2 the world's response and India's response

It has been five years since the first statement of the BRI. So far, the relevant resolutions or documents of the UN agencies including the Security Council have incorporated or embodied the contents of the BRI for more than once.

During January and February of 2018, the International Finance Forum together with the British magazine *“Central Bank”* conducted an investigation on 26 central banks from the BRI participating countries and regions to understand their attitude and

¹ “black swan” event refers to very unpredictable and unusual events that often cause negative reactions and even disruptions in the market. In general, the “black swan” incident has three characteristics: it is unexpected. It has significant impact. Although it is unexpected, the human nature prompts us to make up reasons for its occurrence after the fact. And more or less think it is interpretable and predictable.

understanding of the BRI. Over half of the surveyed central banks are positive and over 90% believe that it contributes to economic growth. More than half of the interviewees were from Europe, and Asian interviewees accounted for less than a quarter. Central banks in the Middle East and Oceania also occupy important positions. The transitional economies played an important role in this survey, contributing 46% of the responses. Emerging markets and developing economies accounted for 19% of the total, while 15% of central banks come from industrial economies. (Cao, Liu and Zhang 2018)

The survey shows that the BRI has received positive responses from countries along the route. Over sixty percent of the interviewed central banks stated that the Initiative is very important, and 44 percent believed that the initiative provides a "golden opportunity" for the development of all countries. Thirty five percent of the central banks believed that the BRI is developing from an initiative to a regional/international cooperation mechanism. 92% of the central banks estimated that the initiative will promote domestic economic growth in the next five years. Among them, 67% believed that their economic growth will increase by 0 to 1.5%. interviewee of a Middle East Bank expect that the BRI can provide net income: *"The initiative is expected to strengthen economic and trade relations with our existing trading partners and create new opportunities and new economic partners."* In addition, more than 60% of the interviewed central banks stated that they "actively support" or "support" the use of reserve currencies to increase investment in Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and New Development Bank. While 60% supported the use of local currency to increase capital. However, the central banks unanimously refused to use foreign exchange reserves and sovereign wealth funds for the BRI projects. (Cao, Liu and Zhang 2018)

However, apart from those supportive voices since the BRI, the Indian government has always been quite skeptical toward the BRI.

After President Xi put forward the initiatives of SREB and MSR successively in September and October in 2013, the Indian government didn't show its attitude at that time. But some Indian think-tanks and media made introductions of and comments on these initiatives in succession. Comments like "The Chinese are coming, where is India?" and "China is entering India's backyard" showed up one after another on

news websites, online forums, and other new media. (media reviews 2015)

In February 2014, on the 17th round of Sino-Indian border dispute talk, the special representative and Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi formally made an invitation to the Indian government of jointly build the MSR. The Indian National Security Advisor Shivshankar Menon gave lip service to the invitation but the Indian government has shown great contradictions. When Indian president Narendra Modi met with Chinese leadership, he showed willingness of the participation to BRI but never made any comments in the joint statements. On the contrary, Modi expressed his willingness to actively participated in the similar plan with the United States. (The Observant 2017)

In June 2014, the Modi government launched the “Project Mausam” to try to deepen the mutually beneficial cooperation in the Indian Ocean region. According to the Indian government, "Project Mausam" plans a "sea world dominated by India". The plan covers from East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, the Indian subcontinent, Sri Lanka to the Southeast Asian archipelago. Through the implementation of the "Project Mausam", India seeks for sustainable regional strategic interests as well as more solid regional leadership. (Project Mausam n.d.) (figure 6)

On the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in 2017, India was the only country that didn't send any representative. Gopal Baglay, the spokesman of Indian Foreign Ministry, said that no state can accept a project that ignores the core interests of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. In December, on the annual meeting of the Sino-Indian boundary issues in New Deli, Indian spokesman Raveesh Kumar reiterated refusal attitude toward China's invitation on BRI. (The Observant 2017)

According to an Indian media the “*Economic Times*”, India together with Japan propose to build a “Freedom Corridor” from the Asian-Pacific region to Africa. This corridor aims to invest in infrastructure in Africa, Iran and southeast Asia. Obviously, these areas have already been included in the Chinese BRI, which shows the intention of the corridor to counterbalance China's influence in certain area. Furthermore, Japan and India are expected to develop the Trincomalee port in Sri Lanka, and Datweideep seaport on the border of Burma and Thailand. (Economic Times 2017)

1.3 Problem Formulation

On the basis of the above introduction, the problem formulation is stated as follow:

“Why does India hold reservations toward the Belt and Road Initiative of China?”

There are three sub-questions in order to substantiate the problem formulation:

- What are the national interests involved in the BRI, for both China and India?
- Why does India hold a skeptical attitude toward the BRI?
- How is the Sino-India relation under the BRI?

This thesis seeks to find out why, among the majority supportive states, the Indian government hold reservations toward the Belt and Road Initiatives. With the theory of Realism and Geopolitics used as the guiding theories in this paper, this thesis tries to figure out the national interests involved in the BRI between China and India. Through these national interests, along with a geopolitical point of view, the thesis seeks to analyze the role of India to China and the reasons for India’s skeptical attitude. Finally try to evaluate the Sino-India relation under the BRI.

2 literature review

It has been five years since the first appearance of SREB and MSR. Many scholars have made comments on the BRI itself and India's response to the BRI. Some hold definitely supportive attitudes toward the BRI while some others are rather cautious. Moreover, there are other scholars are quite negative toward the BRI. In this chapter, various kinds of opinions from different positions will be stated.

There is a certain amount of scholars like Pop hold the opinion that the BRI is not simply a new "Silk Road" project, but rather a consistent and ambitious Eurasian strategy. (Pop 2016)

Mohan (2014) considers that China's national interest in the Indian Ocean comes from the ever-increasing import of energy and mineral resources from the Middle East and Africa. The Indian Ocean as an unavoidable area on these SLOC (Sea Lines of Communication) is of great importance. Thus, China regard the Indian Ocean more and more seriously with more naval activities. (Pop 2016)

Many Indian scholars and news media hold negative or skeptical attitude toward the BRI.

An article with the title *"India shouldn't join China's BRI until its reasonable demands are met"* is from the *Times of India's Edit Page and TOI-Online*. The title shows a clear standpoint. The author urges that in BRI, "development connectivity must be transparent, fair and equal". In another word, he worries that small countries in south Asia who join the projects of BRI will indebt to China, both economically and politically. Also, the author considers the border dispute is a serious issue that has long-lasting conflict between the two states. Thus, India must push China to resolve it. Furthermore, the war with Pakistan in Kashmir is another problem. The author urges that China must use its interrelation with Pakistan to end the war. *"India shouldn't join China's BRI until its reasonable demands are met"*. (Times of India's Edit Page and TOI-Online 2018)

Akhilesh Pillalamarri, a columnist from India, previously wrote an article *"Project Mausam: India's Response to China's Maritime Silk Road Initiative"*. The article said: India wants to use its historical, cultural and geographical advantages to compete with China's "Maritime Silk Road" program. At the same time, In terms of security and

trade in Indian Ocean, India has a unique status and role. India's position and power have made it the organizer of the order in the Indian Ocean region. Understanding this point, we can see why the Modi government is currently proposing a "Project Mausam". This is the most important point in the foreign policy of the Modi government. The purpose is to counterbalance China. The "New India Express" once again admitted in the report that the plan is to contend for China's growing influence in the Indian Ocean region. (Sharma 2017)

Indian representative Rajiv Kumar said that the BRI compromises India's sovereignty as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor passes through Pakistan occupied Kashmir. (Sharma 2017)

Prasenjit Duara, a professor from history department at Duke University, believes that India's vigilance against China, including its absence in the BRI, is largely out of political concern. China's investment in the disputed area of Kashmir has led the Indian government to resent China. Since the beginning of 2017, public opinion in India has almost always been opposed to China. The Indian government certainly hopes that China's performance will be "more fair", otherwise it will be difficult for China and India to have substantial cooperation. (The Observant 2017)

With regard to the importance of India in the BRI, Chinese scholars have two different kinds of views. A more general view is to attach importance to India's role in the construction of the BRI. Among them, Ma Jiali (Jiali 2015) believed that India is a "big" country that cannot be bypassed by the south line of the SREB and MSR. Lou Chunhao (Chunhao 2015) advocated India's support and participation in the BRI. Because after all, India is not only one of the important neighboring countries of China, but also the leading country in the subcontinent of South Asia. Furthermore, the most powerful country in the Indian Ocean. So it is important to properly handle the relationship with India and strive for India's understanding and support of China's regional cooperation initiatives. It is undeniable that India occupies a crucial position in the MSR. Its strategic awareness and policy position are directly related to the construction process of the BRI. At present, India has doubts about the strategic intent, content, and prospects of China's BRI and its impact on India. This suspicion is caused by its traditional geopolitical thinking and its lack of trust in China's strategy. (Guangqiang 2015) Many scholars believe that China should show its sincerity for India's understanding and cooperation because of the importance of India's role.

However, some scholars believe that although India itself is very important to the BRI, it is not possible to achieve a breakthrough in the short term because of the structural contradictions between China and India. (Cuiping 2017)

Another view is that China does not need to fight for India's support. Ye Hailin (Hailin 2015) believes that China does not have to fight for India's participation in the MSR. Because if MSR gains a firm foothold in the Indian Ocean, it does not matter if India does participate in the BRI or not. India's recognition and response to the BRI is determined by its national ideals, diplomatic traditions, and the relative status and absolute status of the three countries of China, the United States, and India. It is not China's actions that can completely transform its impression of China and the BRI. Therefore, China should not place too much emphasis on the position of the Indian side but can proceed from the detailed and specific projects. (Cuiping 2017, Cuiping 2017)

3. Methodology

This chapter contains four sections and demonstrate the main logic of the paper. The first section is the theoretical consideration which briefly introduce the applying theory and how it matches the research. The second section is about the sources of this thesis and its objectivity. The third section will outline the research design of the paper, which shows how this study was conducted. The fourth section is the limitations of this thesis. This is not an all-encompassing research but with certain conditions.

3.1 Theory selection

In order to answer the problem formulation, this thesis will use the school of Realism as the overall framework to analyze the motivation of China and the consideration of India. To be specific, the theory of classical realism with national interest as its focal point and the theory of geopolitics with sea power as its major aspect will be used to analyze the problem formulation.

According to classical realism, national interest is the very concept defined by power. Further, this political power takes the form of economic power, military power, or consensus power. And is based on the state's economy, politics, culture and natural resources, etc. The struggle between states comes from the conflict of national interest. (Bai and Li 2009) Both India and China can be regarded as realist states, which means their perceptions, behaviors and foreign policies are formulated out of realism concerns. While China regards India as a good potential participator in the BRI, India holds a negative attitude toward it. This perception gap of BRI is due to the conflict of interest between the two states. Since national interest and state's pursuit of power will be the key aspects in the relations between China and India, classical realism matches with the problem formulation of this study.

According to geopolitics, geographic factors can influence the power of a state. In Mahan's sea power, the control of ocean is of great importance for a state. Under the BRI, the interactions in the Indian Ocean is an important aspect for the relations between China and India. The conflict of interest on the Indian Ocean is mainly due to

the military and transport lanes. Thus, the application of geopolitics especially the theory of sea power matches the problem. (Siling 2015)

All in all, national interest and sea power will be the focal points used in the theories and will pose as the two dimensions in the analysis. The behaviors of China and India can be seen as the concern of these two dimensions agreed by both classical realism and geopolitics.

3.2 Data sources

In this thesis, qualitative data are the main sources used to demonstrate various opinions and analysis. All the materials are not randomly selected, but with the aim to the serve the main logic of the paper, as well as their objectivity, credibility and representation.

There are several different kinds of sources used in this paper, both primary sources and secondary sources. Such as books, academic articles, official documents, official or formal website, and news reports. The books are mainly used in the theory chapter. These books introduce and explain the theories in very academic way. The authors of the book are either the theories who develop the theory or accomplished scholars who summarize the theories. The academic articles are used in the whole thesis and there is a literature reviews section below. These academic articles are written by accomplished scholars which are carefully selected. The authors of these articles include all Chinese people, Indian people and people from other countries. The official documents and websites include both Chinese ones and Indian ones, which serve as the primary sources to represent the countries intentions respectively. For example, the "VISION AND ACTIONS ON JOINTLY BUILDING SILK ROAD ECONOMIC BELT AND 21ST-CENTURY MARITIME SILK ROAD" from the Chinese government, and the official website of the Indian government. Other sources like news reports and websites are also formal media from different countries. For example, the "*Economic Times*" from India, the "IFeng News" from China, and the "Wall Street" from the United States, etc.

In order to keep the objectivity of the materials, the literatures are carefully selected in two ways. First, all the materials are selected after rigorous consideration. The sources

of the websites and news reports are formal and credible. The authors of the articles and books are accomplished scholars which can be valid and representative.

Second, since the problem formulation of the thesis involve China and India as the targeted actors. All the sources are from not only China and India, but also other states. Chinese materials include official documents and Chinese articles. Indian materials include official websites and articles written by Indian people. Other materials are written by people from the rest of the world. When introducing the BRI, materials from Chinese official documents and websites are cited. The Action Plan of the BRI has both Chinese and English versions. The specific contents and of the BRI are from the Action Plan. Some special dates are from Chinese official websites. When introducing India's response, actions from the Indian government like the "Project Mausam" is cited from the official website of Indian government. News reports from different kinds of Indian media are cited as their responses. Both official comments and nongovernmental opinions are included to be comprehensive. Apart from these official statements, various sources of opinions are covered. In the analysis section, opinions from China, India and other countries are all involved in order to give a comprehensive understanding.

3.3 Research design

This thesis will start with an introduction with the problem formulation. A brief description of the BRI will be first introduced. The historical origin, contents, and context of the BRI, the domestic and international context of the BRI, as well as the role of China are included. Then the second section will demonstrate the world's response toward the BRI, and especially Indian's response. The actions that India has taken after the launch of BRI can clearly show its attitude.

The second chapter of the thesis is a literature review. Many scholars have expressed their opinions toward the BRI itself and also towards India's response to the BRI.

The third chapter is the methodology chapter. There are four sections include the theory selection, the data sources, the research design and the limitations of this thesis.

Then follows the theory chapter, the school of realism will be used as the overall framework, specifically, classical realism and geopolitics. National interest and sea power will be the focal points to be used in this thesis.

In the analysis chapter, there will be two sections. The first section is the Chinese perspective of the BRI which explains the motivations of the initiative. National interest and sea power will be the main reason, especially economic interests. The second section of the analysis is India's concern which will figure out the reasons of India's skeptical attitude. In accordance with the theory, this analysis will conduct through national interest of power and sea power. India's considerations can be seen as the conflict of national interest with China in power.

This thesis is intended to give a discussion chapter to try to evaluate the relations between China and India. Both China and India's behaviors will be taken into consideration to discuss their relations.

Finally, in the conclusion chapter, the paper will answer all the questions in the problem formulation based on the analysis and the discussion.

3.4 Limitations

This research has limitations in various dimensions. Firstly, the discussion of the Sino-Indian relations will be limited under the BRI. China and India have a long history of interrelations, both friendly and conflicting. They have long-lasting territorial disputes as well as close economic cooperation. Numerous elements may affect the relations between the two countries. But in this thesis, their relations will be only be discussed under the BRI framework. Only conflict of national interests that aroused by the BRI will be considered. Thus, this is not an all-encompassing study because some other interests they may share or other conflicts in other aspects beyond the BRI will not be taken into consideration. The focus of this thesis is the influences that BRI brings to China and India.

Secondly, when analyzing the relations between China and India, attitudes of some other countries may have effects on it. For example, the United States, Pakistan, Nepal and so on. In this research, these states are not main actors. Thus, there will be no detailed analysis on their national interests etc. They will be mentioned just in terms of their influence on China or India in the BRI.

Finally, the theory of realism and geopolitics will be used as the guiding theory in this paper, which means the school of liberalism will be excluded from the research. Though many scholars may use liberalism to analyze China's proposal of the BRI, more people believe that India's opposed attitude toward the BRI is out of realism

concern. The use of liberalism would be perfect to analyze the economic cooperation between countries, but this paper focuses more on the conflict of national interests between China and India.

4. Theory

While China regards India as a good potential participator in the BRI, India holds a negative attitude toward it. This perception gap of BRI is due to the conflict of interest between the two states. When analyzing China's invitation and Indian government's skeptical attitude, many scholars believe that realism can perfectly explain their considerations. Actually, both India and China can be regarded as realist states, which means their perceptions, behaviors and foreign policies are formulated out of realism concerns. Thus, in this paper, the school of Realism in international relations will be used as the overall theoretical framework.

More precisely, classical realism and the theory of geopolitics will be used to analyze both China and India's perceptions. Since the BRI has a very broad roadmap with several routes connecting Asia and Europe, many scholars take the geographic factors into account. Literatures analyzing the BRI from geopolitical point of view take a large proportion. Also, since national interest and state's pursuit of power will be the key aspects in the relations between China and India, classical realism matches with the problem formulation of this study.

In this theory chapter, there will be two sections. First, the theory of classical realism will be introduced with the focus of national interest. Second, the theory of geopolitics will be introduced with the focus of sea power.

4.1 Classical Realism

Since the end of the Second World War, the school of realism has always been the leading role in international relations. The intellectual root of Realism can date back to the ancient Greek historian Thucydides era. He considered the growing power of Athens was the "real cause" of the Peloponnesian War. Generally speaking, the realism school in international relations generated in 1930s. Reinhold Niebuhr, E. H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, George Kennan, Henry Kissinger, John Herz, Raymond Aron and so on, are all well-acknowledged classical realists. (Bai and Li 2009)

The classical realism, as an important strand of realism, is built up upon three central assumptions:

The first assumption is about the international structure. Realists regard the nature of the international system is anarchy. That is to say, there is no higher authority exists above nation states with the ability to enforce rules over states and regular their behaviors. In this way, the material power and ability of states determines the outcomes of international relations. (Goodin 2010)

The second proposition is about the actors in international system. Realists assert that the international system is made up of unitary political units, which take the form of nation state in modern society. Nation states are the basic actors in international relations instead of individuals or international organizations. This means that for realists, when they analyze international affairs, interactions between states are the starting point. The nature of nation states is rational. (Goodin 2010)

The third assumption is about the preferences of nation states. All states within the international system naturally tend to pursue fixed and uniformly conflictual goals, or in another word, national interest. (Goodin 2010)

As one of the most important founding father of realism, Hans Morgenthau has an indispensable influence on the development of realism theory. Among his profound thoughts, the most significant thought is the six principles of political realism he proposed.

First, states have an internal desire to dominate others, just like human being. Politics is governed by the objective laws derived from human nature, just like the society. Morgenthau believes that insecurity and war are the eternal themes of international relations. These problems are rooted in human nature. It is precisely because Morgenthau emphasizes that the country is dominated by human nature, and that human beings have the innate desire for power. He assumes that the common feature of all nations is to act as a rational actor. The foreign policy of the countries is based on the careful calculation of national interests. (Bai and Li 2009)

Second, international politics is determined by states' national interests which is defined in terms of power. Morgenthau believes that "politicians think and act on the basis of the idea that interest is recognized as power. There are historical examples that can confirm this hypothesis". (Morgenthau 1990) This assumption makes coherence of foreign policy among different nation states at different periods. Morgenthau built the concept of national interest defined by power, which means that

nation states in the international system fight for power. (Bai and Li 2009)

Third, the concept of interest is defined as power is an objective category and it is universally valid. But this does not mean that the meaning of this concept is always immutable. As far as a particular historical period is concerned, political action is determined by the kind of interest. It also depends on the specific political and cultural environment in which the foreign policy is formulated. As for the specific issue of power, the content of power and the way of using power are also determined by the political and cultural environment. The relationship between nation states and interests is a product of history and will therefore disappear with the development of history. (Bai and Li 2009)

Fourth, realists understand the moral implications of political actions. As Morgenthau said, "Universal moral principles cannot be applied to national actions in their abstract, inflexible formulas. They must be filtered through specific conditions such as time and place." Nation states follow different moral principles than individuals follow. The state operates according to the moral principle of national survival. (Bai and Li 2009)

Fifth, political actions of a state are not guided by the moral consideration but by national interest. Since international relations are understood within the framework of the national interests defined by power. This makes it possible to measure different countries and thus respect both the interests of other countries and protect their own interests. (Bai and Li 2009)

Sixth, political realism is an independent school of thought. Realists believe that political actions must be judged by political standards and that other standards are subject to political standards. (Bai and Li 2009)

4.1.1 National interest

National interest is the most core concept in classical realism and it is defined by power. The state pursues power and determines its national interests based on power. The main driving force of international relations is the will power of each state in the international system.

Karl Niebuhr believes that the most important and obvious political expression of human anxiety is the will of power. People's will of survival usually performs as the

desire to pursue power in politics. National power is the extension of this desire and will. Struggle and conflicts are the basic characteristics of international relations. And this struggle and conflict originated from people's selfish motives and the pursuit of national power. Power is a kind of complex, which contains economic power, military strength and other material power. (Bai and Li 2009)

Edward Hallett Carr developed Weber's opinion that power is important and inevitable. He believes that power is always the core element of politics. Politics is power politics in a certain sense. Power is an indispensable tool for the government. The real international government means the internationalization of power. There are three categories of power in international relations, that is military power, economic power and the power of dominating public opinion. These different kinds of power are highly interdependent, but essentially, the power itself is an indivisible whole. (Bai and Li 2009)

According to Morgenthau, "all political phenomena can be attributed to three basic types, that is, maintaining power, expanding power, or showing power." (Morgenthau 1990) Although all states regard power as their immediate goal. In the struggle for power, the policy objectives pursued by various states are different. Either to maintain the status quo or to seek the expansion of imperialism, or to get prestige. The policy of maintaining the status quo is to maintain the existing distribution of power. The imperialist policy aims to break the status quo and fundamentally change the power relations between the two or multiple states. And the prestige policy is to make other states have a deep impression on their actual power or self-considered power. (Bai and Li 2009)

To sum up, national interest defined as the pursuit of power is the basic classical realist premise. National interest is a state's ultimate goal. National power takes the form of economic power, military power, or consensus power. It is based on the state's economy, politics, culture and natural resources, etc. The struggle between states comes from the conflict of national interest. The conflict of national interest can only be solved by the contest of power. Therefore, the core issue of international relations is how to obtain power, expand power, and use power.

4.2 Geopolitics

The Oxford English Dictionary (2nd Edition, 1989) proposes two explanations for geopolitics. The first one is "the influence of geography on the characteristics, history, and structure of international politics, especially international relations between two states and the influence of the study itself. The second one is "a pseudoscience developed in the democratic socialist Germany". (2nd Edition, 1989) The first interpretation is a definition for geopolitics while the second explanation refers specifically to the "geopolitical" that provides a theoretical basis for the external aggression and expansion of the German Fascist. Thus, in this thesis, the theory of geopolitics refers to the first definition.

Geopolitics is a theory that combines geographic factors with politics of international relations. More specifically, it is a kind of theory which analyzes and predicts the world's or regional strategic situation and the political actions of related states according to several kinds of geographic elements. Geopolitics regard geographic factor as the basic factor that influence, and even decide state's political action. (Wang and Qu 2013) These geographic variables include position, climate, topography, demography, natural resources, and so on. (Evans and Newnham 1998)

The theory of geopolitics is constructed upon three accomplished geopolitical scholars: the American naval historian Alfred Thayer Mahan, the British political geographer Halford John Mackinder and the American political scientist Nicholas John Spykman. *"These three strands of thoughts are homogeneous in nature and complementary in substance, thus can be theoretically treated as an organic entirety."* (Wu 2017) These three strands of theories laid the most significant foundation for further geopolitical analysis and geopolitical theorizing. In the light of theoretical aspect, A.T. Mahan, H.J. Mackinder and N.J. Spykman are regarded as realists since their thoughts share common ideas in the school of realism. Both geopolitics and realism agree with the same propositions in internal relations which are international anarchy, state as the unit of analysis and power politics. Thus, Mahan, Mackinder and Spykman's geopolitics is regarded as a part of realism. Or we can say that geopolitics is certain form of realism which is based on the influence of the natural environments defined by geography and technology. (Wu 2017)

Since geopolitics share the same assumptions with realism, power politics is also a

central character of geopolitics. In particular, there are three major kinds of geopolitical actors that are sea powers, land powers and land–sea hybrid powers. As well as at least five power (technology) variables that are sea power, land power, air power, aerospace power and cyber power. In other words, geopolitics is to search and analyze the political and strategic implications of those five power (technology) variables for the three types of geopolitical actors in international politics. (Wu 2017) Geopolitics points out the importance of geographic factors like territorial waters and territorial land to international politics, such as the pursuit of national interest, the control of maritime transportation lines, and the control of strategic area. (Gogwilt 2016)

According to Wu Zhenyu(2017), *“the geopolitics was built up upon three interrelated propositions: the indivisible connection between maritime supremacy and the continental balance of power; the indispensable importance of the continental commitment for the dominant maritime power; and the dual character of the heartland power in terms of strategic orientation.”* (Wu 2017)

4.2.1 Sea power

The core thought of Alfred Thayer Mahan is sea power. He considered the state power is connected with the ocean in particular two aspects that is commercial use and military strength. He emphasizes the influence of ocean and navy to the national power in international politics. Mahan believes that *“states who control the sea, can be the hegemon.”* He considered that through the control of sea, Britain protected its the foreign trade. And thus, control the other regions beyond the sea. This was the real reason for their hegemony. (Wang and Qu 2013)

Mahan believed that *“the ocean is a vast public land through which people can reach all directions.”* Thus, *“people who controls the ocean, can control the world trade. People who controls the world trade, can control the world's wealth. And then control the world itself.”* It is worth noting that sea power does not necessarily mean the completely ownership of the ocean, its purpose is to control the key strategic waterways on the ocean, and then to the world trade and energy. (Mahan 2012)

The so-called sea power refers to a country that controls navigation and the capacity of the sea activities. The control of naval, maritime trade and maritime transport lines

is the three key elements for the acquisition of sea power. And maintaining strong maritime power has an important impact on the state power and state's world status. (Mahan 2012)

In his book, Mahan put forward the concept of sea power. "Sea power is the ability that makes a state a great nation by virtue of the ocean." This statement of Mahan expands the connotation and extension of sea power to the greatest degree. What he called sea power should include maritime military forces and non-military forces. The former includes state's own fleet, including various facilities such as affiliated bases and ports. And the latter includes overseas related affiliates and their capabilities, which are the sum of the national marine economic forces. In material terms, sea power is actually a country's overall strength in the ocean. The establishment and development of a strong maritime force is of great significance to the promotion of the country's economic prosperity and wealth accumulation, the acquisition of sea power and the victory of war at sea, and the maintenance of the country's international political status. From this point of view, sea power not only marks the overall ability of a country to use the ocean and control the ocean, but also determines whether a country and a nation can become a great nation. (Mahan 2012)

According to A. T. Mahan, there are six key elements that affect a country's sea power and whether it can achieve sea power:

(1) The first element is the geographic location of the country. Whether a country has a advantageous geographical location. The most ideal location is the island in the central location, which is close to the main trade routes with good ports and naval base. (Wang and Qu 2013)

(2) The second factor is about terrain. The length of the country's borders connected with the ocean determines the country's open and closed mindset. At the same time, whether the arable land of the country is rich or poor also determines the national will. Whether the state has usable coastlines, rich natural resources and comfortable climate. The island states and peninsula countries must be affected by the ocean. (Wang and Qu 2013)

(3) The third one is the national territorial area. The land area must be compatible with population, natural resources and other power factors. At the same time, the land area also determines the degree of difficulty in the deployment of offensive and defensive forces. (Wang and Qu 2013)

(4) The fourth factor is national population. The development of maritime power needs not only a certain number of naval personnel, but also a large number of people engaged in marine production. To defend the national territory and seek for sea power requires both the quantity and high quality of personnel. (Wang and Qu 2013)

(5) The fifth one is national character. Whether the state has the “talent” to acquire sea power and conduct commercial activities. The national character is important to the national development of navy and sea power. It also influence the combat ability of the navy. (Wang and Qu 2013)

(6) The last one is the about the government. Government’s inclination and policy influence the state’s domination of the sea. Whether the government pays attention to naval construction and the development of maritime rights is crucial to the sea power of a country. (Wang and Qu 2013)

To sum up, along with the classical realism, sea power is of great importance for a state in the pursuit of political power. There are two aspects in the acquire of sea power. The first one is military forces through the control of affiliated ports and bases and the strong navy. The second one is economic power through the control of navigation and maritime transport lanes which serve for commercial trade. Both of these two aspects can be regarded as national interests and can contribute to a state’s power.

5. Analysis

In this analysis chapter, the thesis is going to apply the theories mentioned above to the problem formulation. That is to say, this chapter will use classical realism and geopolitics to analyze the different opinions of China and India toward the BRI respectively. National interest defined by power and sea power in geopolitics will be the two focuses. This chapter has two sections. The first is from China's perspective to analyze its goal of BRI. The second section is about India's concern of BRI. Classical realism and geopolitics will be used in both sections which means both China and India are regarded as realists states.

5.1 China's Perspective

Since China is regarded as a realist state, the BRI as a foreign policy can be considered from the view of the pursuit of power, mainly economic power.

5.1.1 Expand Power on the Indian Ocean

According to the Action Plan of the BRI, the Indian Ocean is an important and inevitable area of one of the route in the MSR.

According to Mahan's sea power theory, China does not have a strong sea power judging from the six elements. In terms of the geographic location, China is away from the maritime trade lanes to Europe and the Middle East. In terms of the coastlines, only less than half of the country is along the coast, which lead to the seriously unbalanced development between coastal cities and inland cities. Thus, China pursues its power on the Indian Ocean in order to develop its economic interactions with Europe and the Middle East countries.

There are several reasons for why China seeks for the power on the Indian Ocean. According to classical realism, power is the goal of a state which present in various forms. Two main reasons are the security of energy supply and the reduction of trade cost.

1. the security of energy supply

The energy security is of the utmost importance for every country because energy supply is the fundamental requirement of the development of a country, whether in

terms of military or economy. (Torino and Carabinieri 2017) The great success of China's economy cannot be separated from energy. Thus, energy security is the basic pillar of China's development and the highest goal of China's energy strategy. Energy security is crucial for China's pursuit of power. (Xunsi and Yuqing 2017)

With the development of China, the energy demand is growing extremely high as can be seen in the graph (figure 7). The need of import energy is of utmost importance. The sea transport as the main method for China for now, is of great importance. The Indian ocean as unavoidable area on the line, is thus crucial to China.

For now, as can be seen in figure 8, China's core maritime route is from the South China Sea pass through Malacca, bypass India, and then enter the Persian Gulf all the way through the Suez Canal into the Mediterranean Sea. This route is not only the line for China's oil imports but also the main export route for China. China's entire maritime strategy is based on this route. (An and Zhang 2017)

However, the Straits of Malacca are now under the control of the New Zealand, Malaysia and Indonesia. It is very narrow and easy to be blocked. In the United States' global strategy, the Straits of Malacca is one of the 16 throat waterways in the world that must be controlled. The United States' establishment of a military base in Singapore means that the region may be placed under the control of U.S. military forces. At the same time, it is under the heavy deployment of India. Various emergencies can easily lead to short-term transportation disruptions in these straits, leading to short-term global or local supply disruptions. The Straits of Malacca is China's "lifeline on the sea", but the Chinese navy is far behind. Once an accident occurs, it will cause great hidden dangers to China's "energy security". "Who controls the Malacca Strait and the Indian Ocean, who will put their hands on the strategic oil channel of China. At the same time, we can threaten China's energy security at any time." (An and Zhang 2017)

Under this circumstance, China tend to develop new energy supply routes to solve this problem.

Among the six major economic corridors, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Bangladesh-China-Indian-Myanmar Economic Corridor are the two projects to be promoted. The previous plan for Bangladesh, China, and Myanmar is not yet clear, but some related projects are already in operation. For example, the construction of

ports in China and Sri Lanka has been under construction, and the construction of oil and gas pipelines between China and Myanmar has also been improved. (Leilei 2015) These ports should be inspected from a geopolitical point of view.

Take the Gwadar Port as an example. In November 2016, Gwadar Port in Pakistan was officially opened to the world and it has epoch-making significance for China. Located near the throat of the Persian Gulf, Gwadar Port is within easy reach. It is close to the throats of several important maritime routes from Africa, Europe via the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf to East Asia and the Pacific. It is also close to the global oil transportation hub Hormuz. The strait is only about 400 kilometers. The oil in the Middle East, through Gwadar port, enters China's Xinjiang from the land and can shorten the oil transportation around the Strait of Malacca by 12,000 kilometers. (China's strategic breakthrough 2016)

Moreover, the CPEC also involves the construction of oil pipelines, China-Pakistan railways, highways, ports, and some industrial parks, which contribute to the transport of energy. (Leilei 2015)

2. reduce trade cost

According to the sea power theory, one of the performance of sea power is the economic power through the control of navigation and maritime transport lanes which serve for commercial trade.

As the world's largest trading state, China's biggest interest lies in the reduction of transportation costs. Thus, one of the main reasons of the BRI is to strengthen its power on the Indian Ocean so as to improve China's maritime transport ability. Projects that have received financing have reported how the completion of the project will reduce transportation time and costs. Commodity transported will benefit from it, as will global trade. The ports constructed on the Indian Ocean are out of this concern. Simeon believes that the success of BRI is therefore also in the interests of countries along the route, as their exporters will also use these upgraded infrastructures. (Djanov 2019)

Take the European Union as an example, according to Eurostat's statistics, in 2017, the import and export volume of goods between the 27 countries of EU and China was US\$644.46 billion, an increase of 13.7%. Among them, the EU-27 exports 2218.9 billion U.S. dollars to China, an increase of 19.1%, accounting for 10.4% of

the total exports of the EU-27 countries. While China imports 422.58 billion U.S. dollars, an increase of 11.1%, accounting for 20.1% of the total imports of the EU-27 countries. The trade deficit of the EU-27 countries was USD 200.69 billion, an increase of 3.5%. China is the second-largest export market and the largest source of imports for the EU's 27 countries. (Eurostat, 2018)

Electromechanical products, transportation equipment and chemical products are the three main products exported by the EU-27 to China. In 2017, the total exports of these three types of products accounted for 64.9% of the EU-27's total exports to China, which were US\$69.07 billion, US\$51.96 billion and 230.1 billion US dollars respectively. With an increase of 21.2%, 16.7% and 18.0%, respectively. In addition, the export value of mineral products grew significantly, an increase of 56.0%. (Eurostat, 2018)

Thus, reduce the trade cost by improving the shipping lanes on the Indian Ocean is of great importance of the BRI. Not only the European Union, Africa, the Middle East and other countries also have close trade relations with China. The transportation of products mainly depends on roads, railways and water transport. The lag-behind of infrastructure in some countries may cause the high cost and inconvenience of maritime trade. Thus, seeking the power on the Indian Ocean can be seen as to control navigation and maritime transport lanes which serve for commercial trade according to the sea power theory. (Amighini 2017)

4.1.2 Improve economic power

According to the classical realism, economic power is contained in the national interest pursued by the state.

As is stated in the Action Plan, *“Domestically, China seeks to utilize Belt and Road to promote economic growth throughout its historically lagging western provinces. Internationally, the program is an opportunity for China to shoulder additional responsibilities as a rising global power and improve its image in the eyes of South Asia and other great powers: “China is committed to shouldering more responsibilities and obligations within its capabilities and making greater contributions to the peace and development of mankind.”* (Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road n.d.)

After decades of rapid economic growth, the economic development of China is facing several problems. First, the unbalanced development of the regional economy is becoming a problem that has plagued the New Normal of the Chinese economy. There is huge gap between the economic development of the eastern, central and western regions. The level of economic development in the western region lags far behind that of the eastern region. Another issue that has plagued China's economy is the excess capacity. In the long run, China's economic development has always depended on investment, and the economic development model has shown signs of slowing down according to the economic cycle. (Du 2016)

Under these circumstances, China invests in the infrastructure constructions in the south Asia area so as to drive the regional economic development including western part of China.

China wants to reduce the dependence of the economy on domestic infrastructure investment and the growth associated with such investment. This means that these construction companies, equipment manufacturers and other companies that thrived during the construction boom in China had to look elsewhere for opportunities. The BRI aims at searching for new export markets for Chinese production. Moreover, the BRI allows exporting not only goods, but also excess productive capacity in transport and infrastructure sectors, by building new railways and facilities abroad. One of the most important motivations of the BRI is to find overseas exports for these companies. China expects its companies to plan and build their self-sufficient projects. Existing projects can prove this. A study conducted by the China Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank on loans in 2013-2015 showed that 70% of overseas loans have a precondition: at least part of the funds is used to purchase equipment in China or related to the payment of labor costs to Chinese employees. (James Kynge, 2015).

A further goal of the whole initiative is to improve digital connectivity in Eurasia, so that China shall be connected to Central Asia and ideally Europe through digital besides traditional trade. Giving the renminbi an international stature is also a goal of the BRI, to expand trading and bond issuance abroad. (Amighini 2017)

China is highly dependent of energy and commodities imports which lead to the strategy of securing energy supply and shortening transportation lines on both land and sea. The construction of infrastructure and energy projects in the participants states is a good way to mitigate the overcapacity of China. So as to restart the

manufacturing industry and support the state-owned enterprises in China. “From an economic point of view, the BRI is very much a Sinocentric strategy from which small countries might benefit, while provoking resentment among larger ones.” (Magnus 2018)

4.2 India’s consideration

4.2.1 Kashmir: India’s strategic interest

As one of the six economic corridors in the BRI, CPEC has three lines, the East line, the Central line and the West line. After the coordination of various Pakistani domestic factions, the west line is settled as the priority line. The fact that this transport line is crossing the dispute area Kashmir between India and Pakistan causes India’s opposition. More importantly, Kashmir is of crucial strategic importance for India. Thus, India believes that the establishment of the CPEC violates its territorial interests in the Kashmir region. (The Observant 2017)

India has a quite special geographical location. In the north, it is blocked by the Himalayas and share common border with East Asian countries. In the west, it has common border with Pakistan while with Myanmar in the east. Facing with the Indian Ocean in the south. This geopolitical location limits India’s role in this region. India’s geographic borders in the north and west are basically “impossible to pass through”. In the east, its relations with Myanmar is not that stable which makes India lack of enough influence. The Indian Ocean to the south needs a strong navy to go out. Thus, if India wants to step out of the South Asian subcontinent, and the possession of Kashmir which infiltrate its own forces into Afghanistan is of great importance. Only in this way India can achieve a certain amount of discourse in the affairs of the Middle East, Western Europe, and even international affairs. At the same time, Pakistan’s military forces and economic power are not comparable with India. If India wants to expand its living space and participate in the Middle East and even in international affairs, the occupation of Pakistani-controlled Kashmir is of utmost significance for the route to the Middle East. (An and Zhang 2017)

The annual trade volume between India and Central Asia is one billion U.S. dollars which is only one-fifth that of China. The focus of Modi’s diplomatic trip to Central

Asia is to obtain natural resources such as natural gas, oil, and uranium in countries such as Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. The problem faced with India is how to enhance interactions with these countries. The construction of the Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline was constrained by the political conditions in Afghanistan. And it was difficult due to Pakistan's complete blockade against India. There are other external passages to serve as alternatives, such as crossing Iran to connect Central Asia and India, or building a north-south railway linking the ports of Mumbai and Western Candela to Iran's Chabahar Port and Bandar Abbas, or developing pass ways which can access to Central Asian countries from the route to Russia. But all these all require huge financial support. (Joshi 2015)

Furthermore, if India occupies Pakistani-controlled Kashmir, the connect between Pakistan and China will be cut off. Apart from the suppress of Pakistan, and India can also control China's oil and gas pipelines leading to Tibet via Pakistan and seize China's energy channels. There is double effects of the control of Kashmir. (Monika 2015)

4.2.2 Contest for influence in Indian ocean

According to the theory of geopolitics, state who control the sea can be the hegemon. On the basis of India's geographic location, India has a very long coastline on the Indian Ocean. The Indian Ocean was treated as an area with India's traditionally huge geopolitical and economic spheres of influence. Thus, the pursuit of power on Indian Ocean is important for realist India and this is one of the reasons of India's negative attitude toward the BRI. (Siling 2015)

After independence, India attached great importance to the role of the Indian Ocean. Kavalam Madhava Panikkar pointed out that, "for India, the Indian Ocean is the only important sea area. India's lifeline is concentrated here, and its future depends on maintaining the freedom of this sea area. Unless the Indian Ocean enjoys freedom as well as the cross-strait of India is fully guaranteed, it will be impossible to revitalize the industry, develop commerce, or stabilize the political situation, etc." (Panikkar 1965) It should be pointed out that since its independence, India has actually treated the Indian Ocean and South Asia as his backyard, thus instinctively exclude China's cooperation with the Indian Ocean and countries in South Asia. (Cuiping 2017)

According to an Indian scholar, he believes that Indian's location is unique in terms of India's security and trade. "India's position and power make it the organizer of the order of the Indian Ocean region." (Pillalamarri 2017)

Since the Indian Ocean is crucial to Indian, India's consideration in the construction of the Gwadar Port project in Pakistan, as well as other ports on the Indian Ocean is involving many political and security factors.

India believes that the strategic purpose of the MSR is far more than its economic significance. By strengthening the ties between countries and investing in infrastructure in the coastal areas of the Indian Ocean, China's opportunities to participate in economic development in the region will increase significantly. In addition, this initiative can provide China with an opportunity to expand its influence in the Bay of Bengal. New Delhi has been wary of China's power in the Indian Ocean, and due to the lack of details, the MSR initiative will increase this possibility. Therefore, it can be seen as the purpose of occupying the dominant position of the Indian Ocean through the promotion of economic and cultural influence, thus expanding China's influence in the entire Indian Ocean. (Baruah 2014)

India worries about the possibility of offshore infrastructure offering overseas bases. Often referred to as the "string of pearls" theory (figure 10), analysts believe that China's developed ports could be used as naval bases. As China establishes a commercial port network along the Indian Ocean, the strategic location of these facilities poses a threat to any other potential or established power in India or the region. Because of the concerns that China's infrastructure in Indian Ocean might be to counterbalance and even encircle India, the Indian government demonstrates the strategic position of all the ports. India recruits economic partners in its neighboring countries to serve as evidence of potential friction between the two states. (Nicolas 2015)

According to the BRI, China is and will build ports in Gwadar (Pakistan), Hambantota (Sri Lanka), and Kyaukphyu (Myanmar). It is just these constructions raised India's worry about the long term intention of China in the Indian Ocean. Indian scholar Mohan stated that "although these are now civilian ports, India is concerned that they may be a harbinger of China's permanent naval presence in the Indian Ocean." Mohan (2014b) wrote: "although these are now civilian ports, Delhi is

concerned that they may be a harbinger of China's permanent naval presence in the Indian Ocean." For example, the visit of a Chinese submarine to Colombo has troubled India. Mohan also focused on China's growing influence on the Indian Ocean island nations. *"this is a long-term issue with India."* Mohan (2014) points out, "it is no secret that the Indian security establishment is deeply suspicious of China's Silk Road initiatives ", *"New Delhi's strategic community has long been opposed to China's railways construction and the Indian Ocean in land border ports construction as a 'strategic encirclement.'"* (media reviews 2015)

Kanwal Sibal, the former Indian Foreign Secretary, stated India's concern that *"There is a method in the madness in terms of where they are locating their ports...this kind of effort is aimed at counterbalancing and undermining India's natural influence in these areas."* (Nicolas 2015)

Through a classical realism dimension, all the constructed ports under the BRI, even if they are for commercial use for now, can be serve as naval bases in focal strategic positions which will cause conflict of powers between China and India. (Nicolas 2015)

4.2.3 India's power in south Asia

China and India are regarded as the two most powerful states in the South Asia region. According to the classical realism, states have an innate desire to dominate others and when there is a conflict of national interest, states' relations will be contradictory. (Kumar and Malhotra 2014)

Under the BRI, the construction of infrastructure ties China politically and economically to its neighbors, and also the way round. This growing influence of China over India's neighboring countries causes India's cautious attitude.

From the dimension of India's location, the closest region of India is Central Asia. Central Asia has abundant energy and is a strategic channel for India's west, Europe, and the Middle East. (Magnus 2018) India is located right at the southern tip of Asia. Its interest lies in the development of a strong and stable relationship with the economic power that is East Asia, a potential energy hub that is Central Asia, as well as Western Asia and the Middle East, which provide energy for India and are the most active regions in northwest India. If such a network of relationships were established,

it would control India's troubled neighbors and release the potential economic benefits in that region. (Kumar and Malhotra 2014)

In 1983, Indira Gandhi explicitly proposed to maintain India's managerial role in South Asia region. She stated that India will only interfere in the internal affairs of South Asia region if it is required. India also does not allow such interference by a large foreign country. If other South Asian countries need any help to solve their internal crisis, they should first look for assistance from the internal South Asia region. "*South Asia is India's South Asia*" is the core content of this kind of doctrine. It not only requires that the power of external powers not to get involved in South Asia, but also requires South Asian states to seek help from India only to resolve the crisis. (Siling 2015) During that period, the development of infrastructure level was very low in the South Asia. At that time, India had supervised on South Asia. Thus, few countries were interested in establishing relations with China or counterbalancing India's national interests except for Pakistan. The result was that there was a big difference of the political and economic influence between of New Delhi and Beijing in the capital of the neighboring country in South Asia. However, after ten years of infrastructure construction, China has exceeded the trade relations between India and Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar. (Cuiping 2017)

Traditionally, South Asia has been regarded as India's "natural" sphere of influence. (Wagner and Tripathi 2018) However, over the past few years, China has invested heavily in the region as part of the BRI. China's investment in South Asia is a challenge to India's foreign policy failure to find an appropriate response. (Wagner and Tripathi 2018)

In the past decades, China has conducted multi-level contacts with South Asian countries. China's foreign policy toward South Asia has strategic, economic, political and various aspects motivation. China set up close relations with almost all the South Asian countries. China might be an official member state of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) which is unfavorable for India. Because India consider that China may obstruct all the projects that will strengthen India's power over the SAARC region. (Monika 2015)

India is wary of China's economic and trade cooperation with any South Asian country. For example, India has a good relationship with China and Pakistan and doubts that China-Pakistan development relations are directed against India and

complains that China is not "sensitive enough" to India's "security concerns." (Siling 2015)

Fearing the advancement of the BRI, the level of regional economic cooperation will deepen, and the Chinese economy may have an impact on the Indian economy. India believes that China has increased its influence in South Asia, which is regarded as the strategic backyard of India, and strengthened the development of strategic assets in South Asia, including the construction of the Karakoram Highway in Pakistan and South Asia, and the construction of ports in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Myanmar. China's diplomatic influence on these countries has surpassed that of India. As been stated many times, China's economic and trade cooperation with South Asian countries has often been viewed by India as to "surrounding" India. The BRI runs through an important part of the Indian Ocean and South Asia. In particular, with the exception of India, most other countries in South Asia and the coastal countries of the Indian Ocean have all supported the BRI. This situation has clearly made India more taboo about the BRI. It is afraid that China will increase its influence in the Indian Ocean and South Asia through this move, thus affecting the identity and interests of its regional big countries. (Siling 2015)

Take the CPEC as an example, China will provide about \$54 billion in aid to India's regional rival Pakistan by 2030. The Chinese government has invested about \$14 billion in Sri Lanka's infrastructure projects between 2005 and 2015. The Chinese government has pledged \$38 billion to Bangladesh and plans to invest and credit more than \$8 billion to Nepal. Indian security experts believe that under this circumstances, India's influence in the region are narrowing down, so the fear that India will be surrounded by all the neighboring China bases (the so-called String of Pearls) include the ports in Gwadar in Pakistan and Hambantota port project in Sri Lanka. (Wagner and Tripathi 2018)

There is a great fear by India that China's influence in South Asia will erode on India's own sphere of influence. The only way to limit China's influence in South Asia is to expand its own cooperation with all neighboring countries. (Mohan 2014)

6. Discussion

In this section, after the introduction of the BRI and the analysis of the perspective difference between China and India toward the BRI, the relations of China and India under the BRI is going to be discussed.

According to the theory of classical realism, states have internal desire to acquire power. National interest as the core concept in classical realism, is defined by the concept of power. The conflict between states is caused by the difference of national interest. Each state makes its foreign policy according to its own national interest. Thus, the perspective difference between China and India can be regarded as the difference of their national interest and their pursuit of power. (Nicolas 2015)

According to the sea power theory in geopolitics, the power over the ocean is of great importance for the state's development and the pursuit of political power. The control of the sea can take the form of the control of maritime transport lanes and navy forces. From the analysis chapter, this thesis explains the different national interests of both China and India. The conflict of their national interests and their potential common interest will determine their relations. This chapter will demonstrate the relations between China and India under this BRI.

India is the world's largest democracy while China is the world's largest socialist country. The relations between India and China can be described as complex and dynamic, alternating between periods of tension and robust cooperation. Both countries ranked as among the world's leading emerging economies, and acted as champions of the developing world and advocates of a multipolar world order. (media reviews 2015)

The relations between the two states are tensioned with the promotion of the BRI due to the conflict of national interests. India was the only state that is invited but absent at the Belt and Road Forum in 2017 in Beijing. Other than the positive cooperation of other states, on the contrary, India has adopted various foreign policies and actions to show its skeptical attitude.

The Indian government has always been paying close attention to the BRI. But they

primarily do not regard this initiative as an “opportunity”, but as a threat or competition to India. On the one hand, we can see from the high-level interaction between China and India that the Indian leaders did not express its support to the BRI. Instead, India’s politicians and academia put forward successive proposals in 2014, for example, the “project Mausam” and other versions of the silk road even though these plans did not have much substantive content. (Sakhuja 2014)

The construction of infrastructure of China in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh, which are regarded as India’s natural sphere of influence, invades India’s power over the Indian Ocean and the South Asia. China’s activities in the borders between China and India caused caution and tension of India. The port construction of China in Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Djibouti lead to the “string of pearls” theory of India. Shivshankar Menon, India's former national security adviser, declared that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is “not acceptable to us”. (Magnus 2018)

In early July of 2017, Modi visited Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Kenya. commented that India is trying to strengthen its influence in Africa and compete with China, which has long been rooted in the African continent. In November, Modi visited Japan and the two sides launched the “Free Corridor” initiative to hedge the BRI. (Jiali 2015)

For decades, China has been both a focal point of India’s foreign policy and its main rival on the international scene. The conflict of interest of caused by the BRI has contributed to India’s concerns vis-à-vis China. Such as the confrontation in Doklam in summer 2017.

While India is not as capable as China in terms of economic strength and infrastructure construction, India is not only allied with its regional states in the Indian Ocean, but also with the United States and Japan. Together with Japan, India is trying to exploit energy, generate electricity, build ports and transport infrastructure projects in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar. India also has a quartet of talks with the United States, Japan and Australia to develop an alternative strategy that appeals to Asia. (Magnus 2018)

However, there are other voices in India that admits the potential benefits that the BRI may bring to India. There are certain common national interest that will lead to a cooperative relations between China and India.

The “Maritime Silk Road” offers many opportunities for India, and in particular it will help offset India’s technological deficiencies in maritime infrastructure construction. India can use China's technology to manufacture high-quality ships and build worldclass ports. It can also gain access to China in the fields of marine biopharmaceuticals, seawater use, offshore wind energy, sea tide, energy, capture and cultivation of aquatic products, and offshore engineering equipment manufacturing. Core technology, which will help due to the lack The implementation of the India-ASEAN Maritime Interconnection Initiative blocked by infrastructure (Sakhuja 2014)

Both former Indian Prime Minister Singh and current Prime Minister Modi have expressed their desire to promote cooperation with China in the Bangladesh-Indian-Burmese economic corridor, which is also an important part of the BRI. However, India is not willing to include the BCBEC project within the conceptual scope of the BRI of China. It is noteworthy that India did not hesitate to participate in the "Asian Investment Bank" and was even very active. India has invested US\$8 billion to become the second shareholder of the Asian Investment Bank, although one of the main reasons is the great shortage of funds for infrastructure construction in India. But it is also a manifestation of Sino-Indian cooperation. After all, the Asian Investment Bank's commitment to promoting regional infrastructure construction and interconnection is an important support for the BRI. (Hailin 2015)

China is also India’s largest bilateral trading partner. Both states are also members of the BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) among others. And they frequently take similar stances towards industrialized nations in international trade and climate negotiations. In order to strengthen cooperation with China, India has established bonded zones for Chinese enterprises and established Sino-Indian joint ventures to jointly undertake business risks. In 2015, China confirmed the establishment of two industrial parks in India for automobiles and power equipment. Furthermore, China launched a strategic cooperation with India such as railways, with an investment of US\$ 5.8 billion. (Yekun 2016)

Thus, the relations between China and India is being complicated. See from the

India's response toward the BRI, national interest is the determinant of whether India is positive toward the BRI or against it. the BRI is caught in a great power struggle between China and India. (Nicolas 2015) As Chinese influence flows along new transportation lines, the global significance rests on the effects the expansion will have on the Sino-Indian, Indian-American, and Sino-American relationships. For New Delhi, recent Chinese expansion is seen as a challenge to India's sphere of influence. (An Analysis Of The National Interest Of India Politics Essay 2015) In addition, with India promoting its new Look East strategy that seeks to increase Indian influence in East Asia, China might soon find itself in a similar position. Nevertheless, continued economic ties between the two nations will prove beneficial, as any confrontation between the two will only harm the growth of both states. (Sakhuja 2014)

For China, the role of India is also completed. On the one hand, it has all kinds of conditions that China wants to be close to: India is the second largest developing country in the world, it is a big market with great potential, it is a member of the BRICS countries, and it has become the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. India and China often have similarities in many policy positions on the international stage and often cooperate. However, on the other hand, India has often encountered various conflicts with China: interfering with the South China Sea issue, causing a border dispute or interfering in the issue of Tibet. The coexistence of various contradictions in India has often caused China to fight against it and neither is it. (Yekun 2016)

Both the economy of China and India are growing rapidly which brings them new opportunities to pursue their national interests. As a result, the competition between the two states is inevitable in the long run. Both the states aim to be great powers in the international system and create an external environment conducive to the realization of its aspirations. However, many scholars believe that India aims to achieve this objective not by relying on China's economic power, but by using U.S. military might. (Pop 2016)

7. Conclusion

This thesis has been done to find out why, among the majority supportive states, the Indian government hold reservations toward the Belt and Road Initiative. With the school of Realism used as the guiding theories in this paper, this thesis tries to figure out the national interests involved in the BRI between China and India. Through these national interests, as well as the sea power theory, this thesis analyzes the conflict of interest between China and India which is the reason for the perception gap. Finally the thesis try to evaluate the Sino-India relation under the BRI.

The proposal of the BRI was under a complex background, both domestically for China and internationally for the rest of the world. The world economy is in recovery with changes. The BRI has five key areas, that are Policy Coordination, Facility Connectivity, Unimpeded Trade, Financial Integration, and People-to-People Bond. 65 countries and 4.4 billion people are involved in this initiative. (Du 2016) Among the majority supportive states, Indian is one of the few states that clearly shows its negative attitude toward the BRI.

According to the classical realism, national interest is defined as power which is the ultimate goal of a state. In the geopolitics, sea power from Mahan is regarded as crucial for a state in the pursuit of power. The conflict of national interest is the reason for the confrontation between realist states. (Wang and Qu 2013)

In the analysis section, this paper finds out that the main national interests involved in the BRI for India, are mainly the power on the Indian Ocean, as well as the strategic and economic power over the South Asian states.

China wants to secure its energy supply and reduce its trade costs through the expansion of power in the Indian Ocean. With the service of the Gwadar port in Pakistan, China can shorten the oil transportation by 12,000 kilometers, at the same time, avoid the previous route of the Strait of Malacca which is easily blocked by several states. China also intends to improve its economic power to the world especially the South Asia. Through the construction of CPEC and BCIM, the economic cooperation between China and south Asian states are enhanced with benefits for both sides. (China's strategic breakthrough 2016)

Start from its own national interest, India has a different perspective of China's

policies. The transport line in CPEC is crossing the dispute area Kashmir between India and Pakistan causes India's opposition. Kashmir is of crucial strategic importance for India. Thus, India believes that the establishment of the CPEC violates its territorial interests in the Kashmir region. (The Observant 2017) The Indian Ocean is regarded as the utmost important area for India as its backyard. Thus, China's growing power on the Indian Ocean forms a contest with India's sea power. India considers China's port positions as to "encircle India". Similarly, There is a great fear by India that China's expanding economic power will enhance its influence in South Asia region which will erode India's own sphere of influence. It is regarded as power conflict by India. The BRI causes a great power struggle between China and India. (Joshi 2015)

The relations between China and India is being complicated under the BRI. See from the India's response toward the BRI, national interest is the determinant of whether India is positive toward the BRI or against it. When there is common interest between the states, India shows positive attitudes the certain project such as the establishment of the ADB. However, when there is conflict of interest brought by the BRI, tensions will be caused between the two states. The Doklam confrontation was an example.

India and China are the most powerful states in south Asia area. The BRI will promote China's national interest in south Asia and the Indian Ocean. While India wants to safeguard its unique influence in the South Asian subcontinent and the Indian Ocean. These goals currently seem very clear, and the strategic structural contradictions caused by the competition between China, India and the Indian Ocean are also inevitable. (cuiping 2017)

Appendix

Figure 1: the ancient maritime silk road of China

Source: Baidu Baike

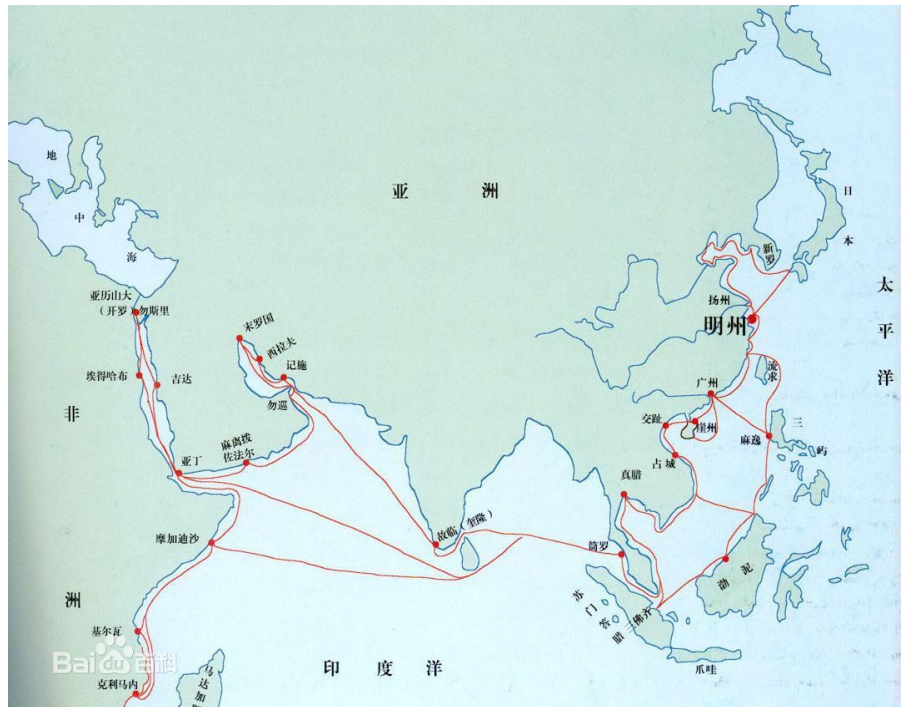


Figure 2: the road map of the BRI

Source: XINHUA NET



Figure 3: economic corridors in the BRI

Source: “One Belt, One Road”: An Economic Roadmap

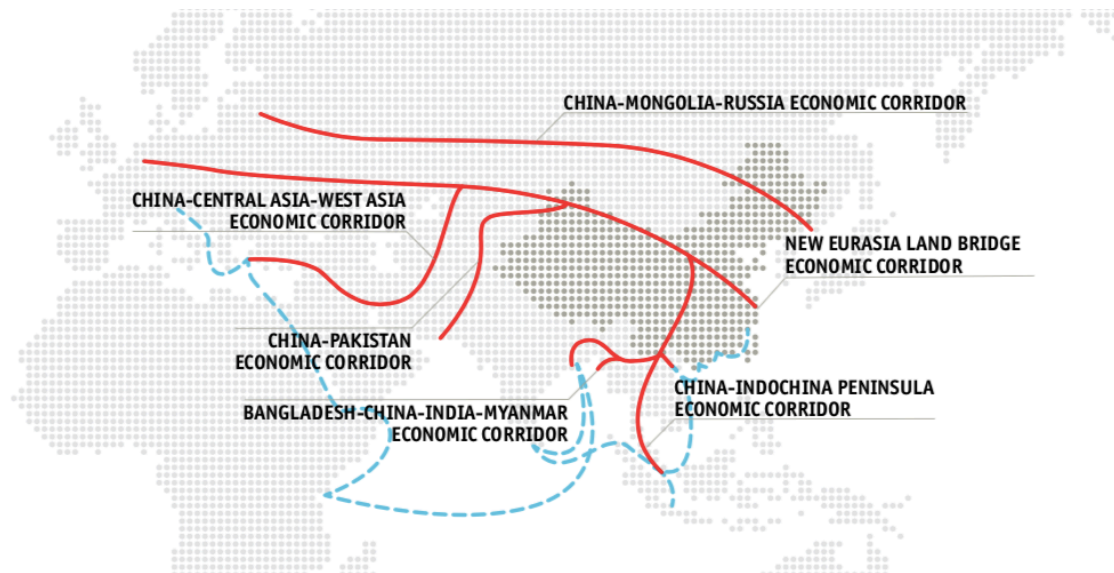


Figure 4: China’s annual GDP growth rate

Source: the World Bank Database

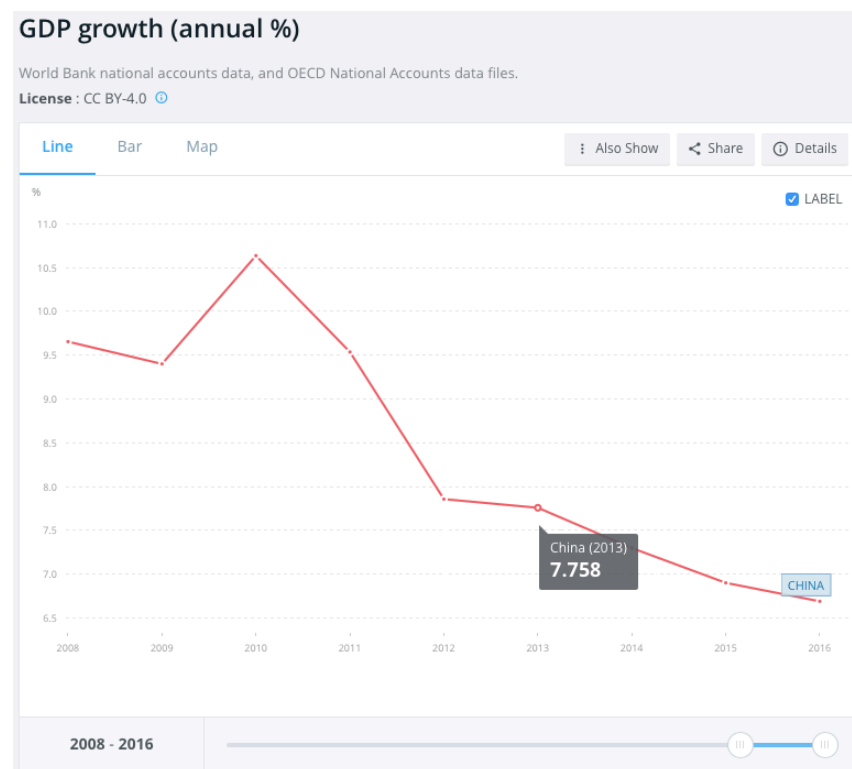


Figure 5: world’s annual GDP growth

Source: the World Bank Database



Figure 6: the description diagram of the “Project Mausam”

Source: Indian Ministry of Culture



figure 7: China's oil imports

source: The Wall Street Journal, 2012

China Rising

China's oil imports are projected to skyrocket through 2035

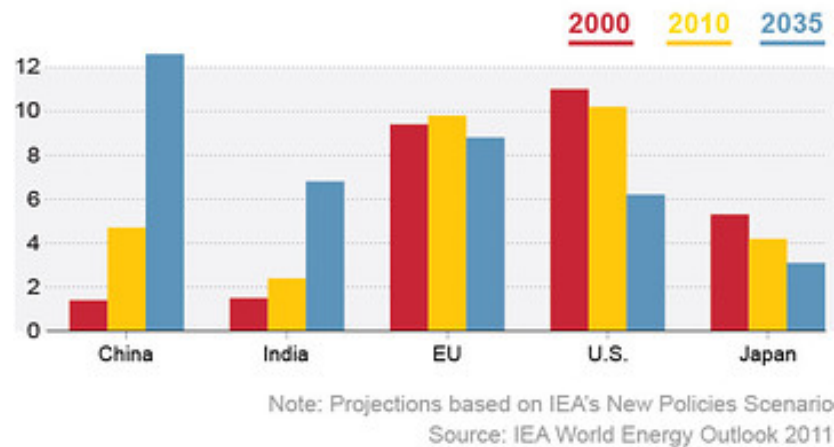
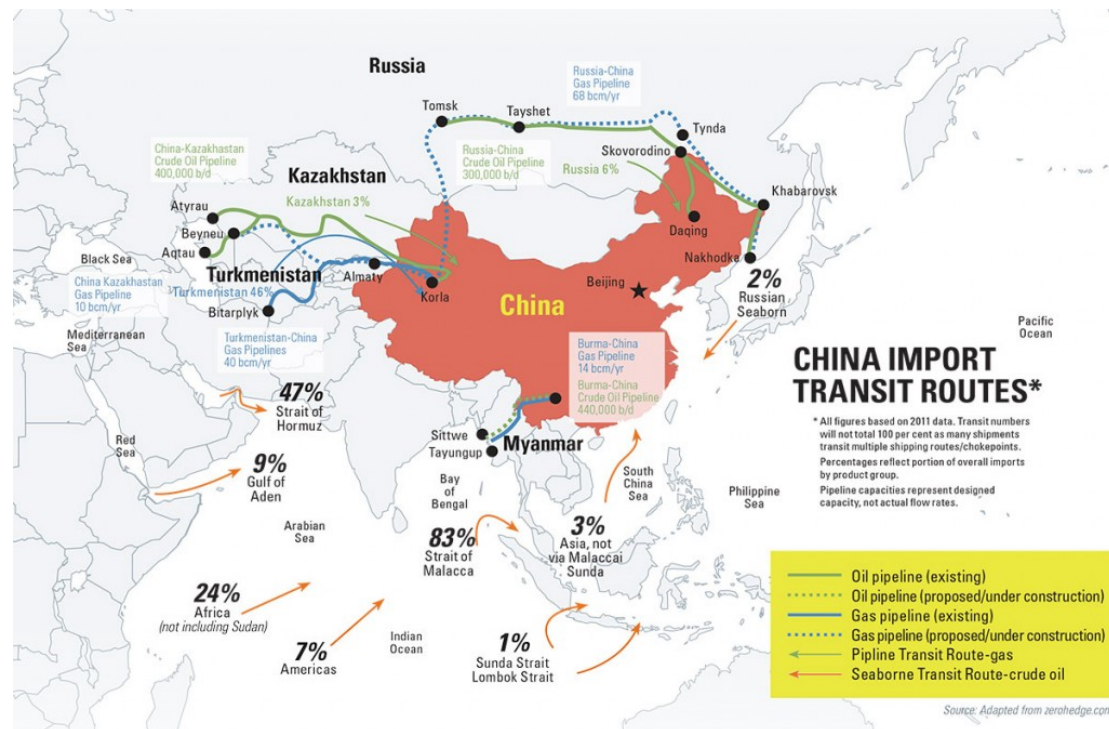


figure 8: China's energy import shipping lines²

source: Alberta Oil



² The McMahon line in the picture is not admitted by Chinese law.

Figure 9: railways network of CPEC

Source: CPEC

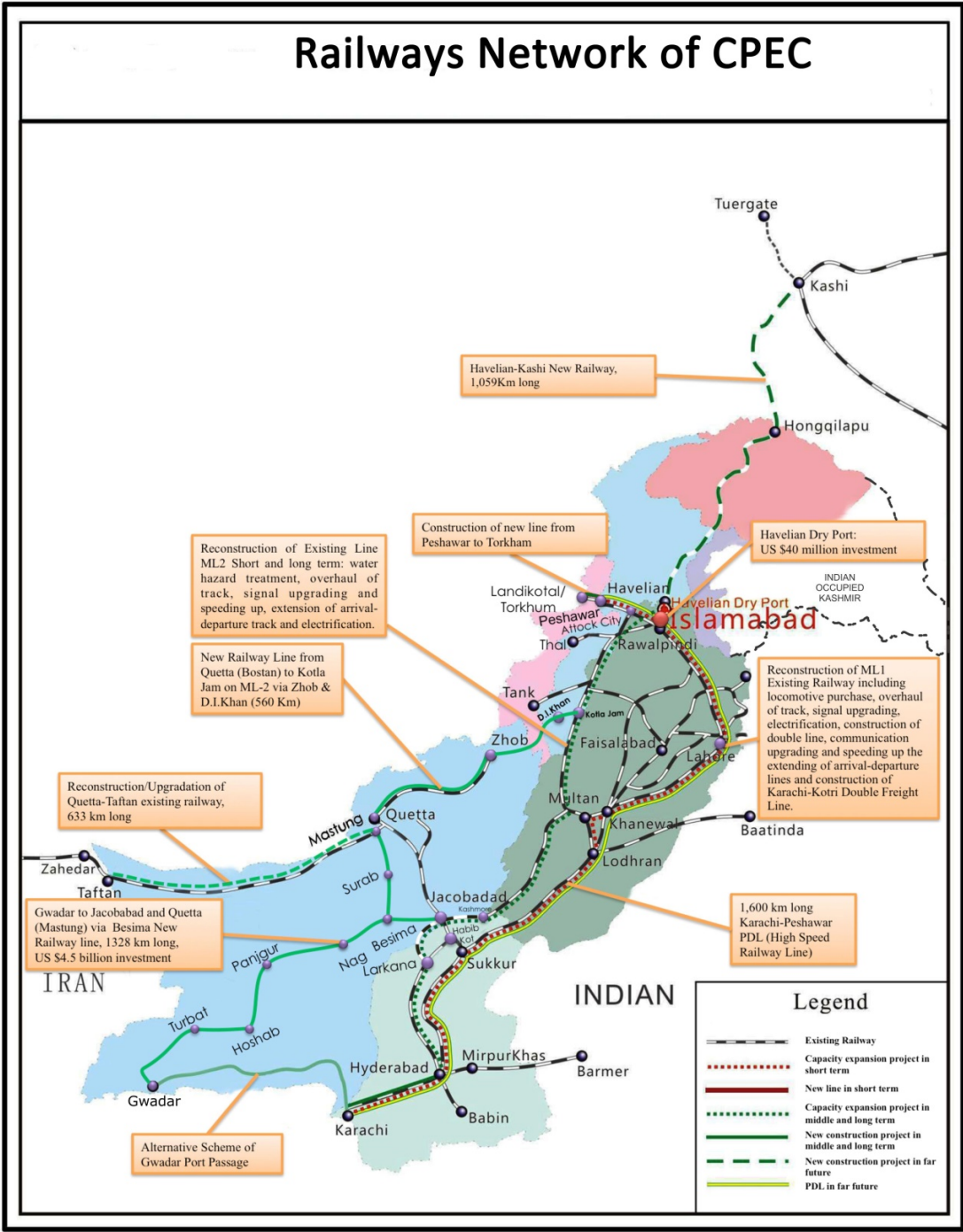
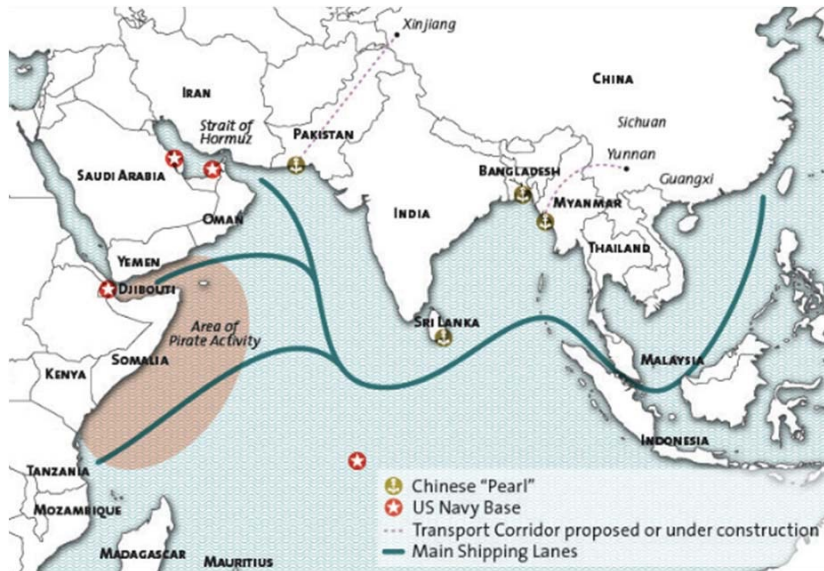


figure 10: Chinese “Pearl” 3

source: China BRI, the game changer



^{3 3} The McMahon line in the picture is not admitted by Chinese law.

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