

# **US Attempts to Block The Rise of China**

## **Introduction:**

The Chinese Civilization is one of the oldest civilizations in the history and it is considered to be the “cradle” of civilization, and the earliest written records of the history of China goes back to the year 1250 BC. Although this fact, China has witnessed too many ups and downs through its history due to either inside or outside reasons, where it has suffered civil wars and military invasions by other countries, kingdoms and nations.

The Chinese history is a succession of multiple dynasties that lived in periods of unity and peace, and periods of war and unstable statehood. The last Chinese dynasty was the Qing (1644-1912), whereafter the Republic of China was declared in 1912, and then in 1949 the declaration of the final nowadays state of China as the “People’s Republic of China”.

Despite the fact that China’s territory location is far from the modern world designated by the US and Europe specifically, but it has always been of great importance to the world economy and trade. This importance was implemented by the famous “Silk Road” that was a route that linked mainly the trade between the Roman Empire and China starting in the 3rd century BC and remained for centuries as the connection between the Western world with the Middle East and Asia.

China has suffered, historically, lot of humiliation and intervention of foreigners in its affairs till the year 1945 when Japan lost the world war two and withdrew from the Chinese south coast, and this led to a civil war between nationalists led by Chang Kai Check and communists led by Mao TSE Tung, resulted in a victory of the Chinese communist movement that took advantage and arrived to declaring the “ People’s Republic of China”, PRC, by Mao TSE Tung in the year 1949, and the “Chinese Communist Party” became the sole governing political party of the new republic.

Chang Kai Check escaped to Taiwan with the help of the United States, so the Chinese territories become divided between two countries the PRC that joined the Soviet side and the National China that joined the US west side and got a permanent seat in the Security Council. Later on when conflicts raised between the PRC and the Soviet Union, the USA entered to support the PRC and gave them

the permanent security Council seat and that's how China got the "Veto" right and became one of the big countries on the international stage after centuries of humiliation, civil wars, invasions and isolation.

Nowadays, China is the most populous country of the world with a population of 1.4 billion, 74.5% of them with no religion with the majority of the Han ethnic group. The Chinese army contains 2,185,000 active personnel and ranked 1<sup>st</sup> worldwide with a budget of 209.4 billion \$ in 2021. In addition to this China is a nuclear military power.

China is a market-oriented economy that follows economic planning through industrial policies and strategic five-years plans, and the Chinese economy is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> world wide after the United States of America and it is considered as the "factory" of the world.

Based on these facts, China needs to open new large markets to its factories in order to suit the increasing growth of its economy. That's why the international politics and states relations witnessed for the first time in Chinese history, a Chinese participation in outside conflicts when they sent military consultants to supervise the fight against the ISIS in Syria. Moreover, as transmitted by Russian responsible, China prepared to participate in the operations against Isis by sending carriers to the Middle East for a reason that the crisis in Syria is threatening the Chinese national security because of Chinese "Uyghur" participants, North-West habitants of China, in the war against Syrian regime. Specially that China considered historically that threats against its national security came from center of Asia supported by the United States around and inside the Chinese territories in order to block the Chin-rise that is planning to become the biggest international power after centuries of solitude.

### **Problematic:**

How the Western campaign led by the USA is trying to blockade the rise of China?

And how is China resisting the formation of siege around to limit its influence over the world?

To answer the above questions, this research will be divided in two parts, first part will discuss the siege or blockade that the West countries led by the United States are trying to make around China over land and sea routes. The second part

will focus on the Chinese plans to resist the Western trials to make a blocking siege around China and prevent it from spreading its power and influence over the world.

## **Part I: The blockade drawn around China:**

As we discussed in the introduction about the Chinese history, we notice that China become a big power only from the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and became a super international power nearly at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This huge jump in the Chinese power has rung the bell for the western campaign that saw in China a very dangerous opponent that will sooner or later be fighting in the race of ruling the world.

The stage of the competition of the two major campaigns, Eastern and Western, is overall the globe and enters in all the fields; economic, political, military, ... That's why the US team tried to transmit the zone of fight to the territories around China in order to keep it busy in neighborhood crisis. Moreover, the West worked hardly and still working on blocking the trade routes in face of Chinese economy both in land and sea.

In the first section of this part, I will discuss the land blockade against china, and in the second section I will talk about the Western trials to block sea routes in face of the Chinese trade.

### **Section 1: Land trade routes blockage:**

When talking about Chinese land trade routes, the old "silk road" comes directly to mind. The Silk Road was an ancient trade route that relied Asia to the Western world and the Middle East, also it was a major line of trade between the Roman Empire and medieval European Kingdoms with China.

The Silk Road, that started from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE till the 18<sup>th</sup> century, opened the way of an interaction between the East and the West where products like silk and ideas like religion were shared. In other words, this road made a kind of globalization between different far regions. This road was not a straight road, and it was the German geographer Ferdinand Von Richthofen who designated the route as the "Silk Road".



**Map1: Map of the ancient silk road**

This map above shows the ancient Silk Road in the North West of China, but we have to mention that there were another two trade routes in the Southwest of China and by sea, which also played a major role in the development of trade from China to the world.

Due to the fact that China is becoming the “factory” of the world in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, and the need to open large markets for its goods around the world, the United States and its allies felt the necessity to fight this Chinese economic growth and blocking the Chinese trade spread. For this reason, the Western campaign created a belt of crisis in the states around China to make it busy in its neighborhood and weaken its powerful spread to other continents and weaken its political influence over the world.

This crisis that we are talking about start in center of Asia passing by Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmir, Myanmar and the South-East part of Asia, and not ending in the Southern sea of China. However, we are not going to discuss in details the situation in each of the cited countries above, but it is important to mention that the Kashmir crisis is one of the major problems that is located just on the borders of China. And what makes this very old issue critical is that Kashmir area is located between the biggest Asian nuclear powers, China and India and Pakistan, and the

conflict about the dominance over Kashmir could be the cause of destructive war mainly between India and Pakistan, and it will affect China definitely specially that there is a border conflict between China and India in the Himalaya and Chinese government is trying to hold the stick in the middle and wants to keep acceptable relations with the two parties because this is essential for its “new” silk road.

From the other way, the United states is supporting India and keeps good relations with Pakistan, also USA is present from the year 2001 till this year, Thailand and the Philippines and Japan and South Korea are allies with the United States, Mongolia is up to sign a military agreement with the USA, Bangladesh cooperates closely with USA in many issues like economics and security. In addition to that, USA keeps good relations with Myanmar and Nepal and Vietnam that has a border conflict with China.

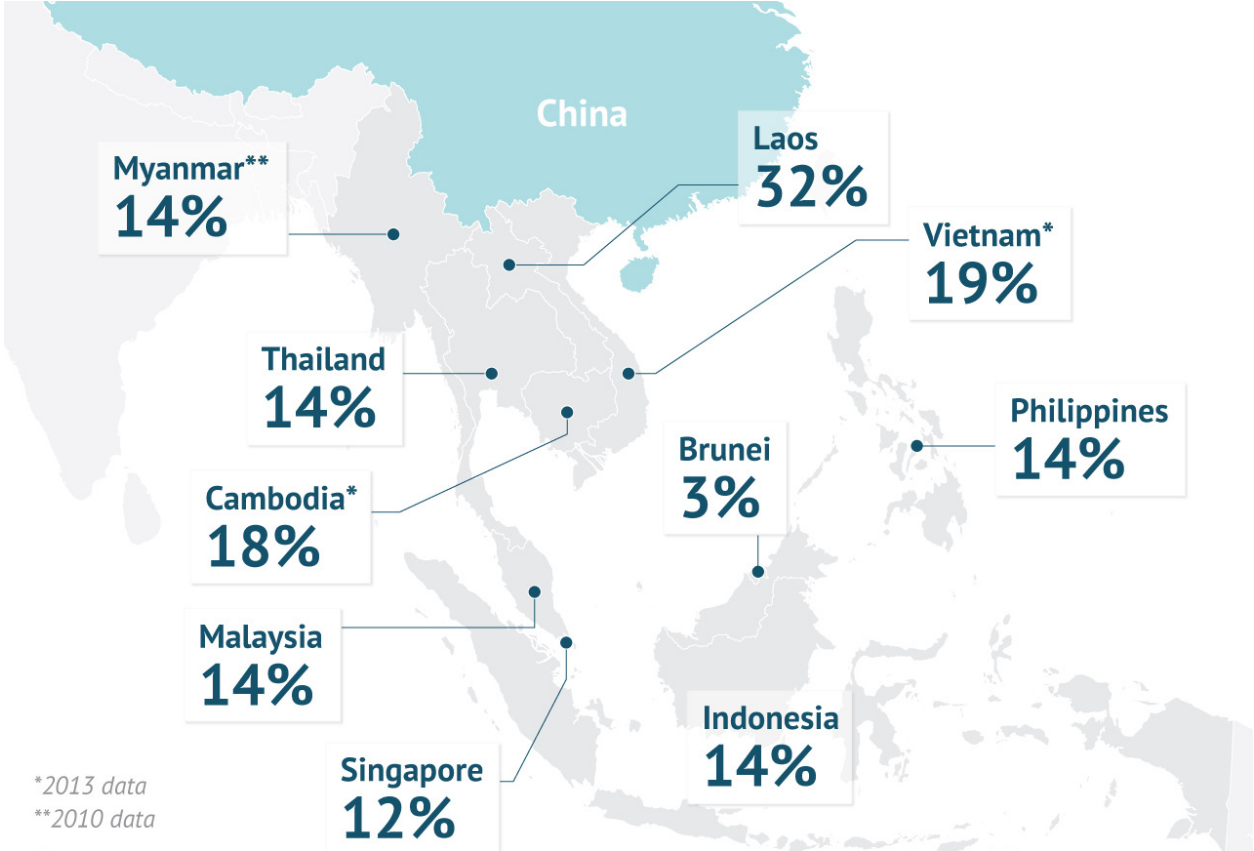
The United States presence in center and Eastern part of Asia is not only political but also military and there are many American military bases in many Asia countries like Japan, Australia and Afghanistan supported by many carriers in the Sea of Japan and the Indian Ocean, in addition to a satellite sky control and surveillance to not only Chinese neighborhood but for every inch of the world.

Furthermore, the blockade that the Western campaign is drawing around China is not related only to the political or military presence of them in countries around China or countries located on the Chinese trade route to obstruct or hamper the Chinese commercial flow. But the US and its allies intend to create unstable situations in these countries in order to oblige China to focus more on these neighborhood conflicts. If we take into consideration the example of Afghanistan, US troops are now preparing to withdraw from this country that they invaded 20 years ago; why? Maybe we should wait some time until the answer appears when the inside war returns back transforming Afghanistan to an unstable territory. Same could be applied to Myanmar, the Korean conflict and the crisis of Kashmir.

However, Taiwan also represents a major challenge for PRC and the conflict between the two parties is not a trivial one, and China has announced that it will use the military force if Taiwan achieve de jure independence, sending a message for the USA to diminish its control in Taiwan.

PRC looks to the countries in the South and South-East of Asia as trade and economic partners and sources of investment where China has large influence on

the economy of these states (see Map2). Also, China looks to the North and West Asian countries as sources of energy and gas to feed its massive appetite for energy.

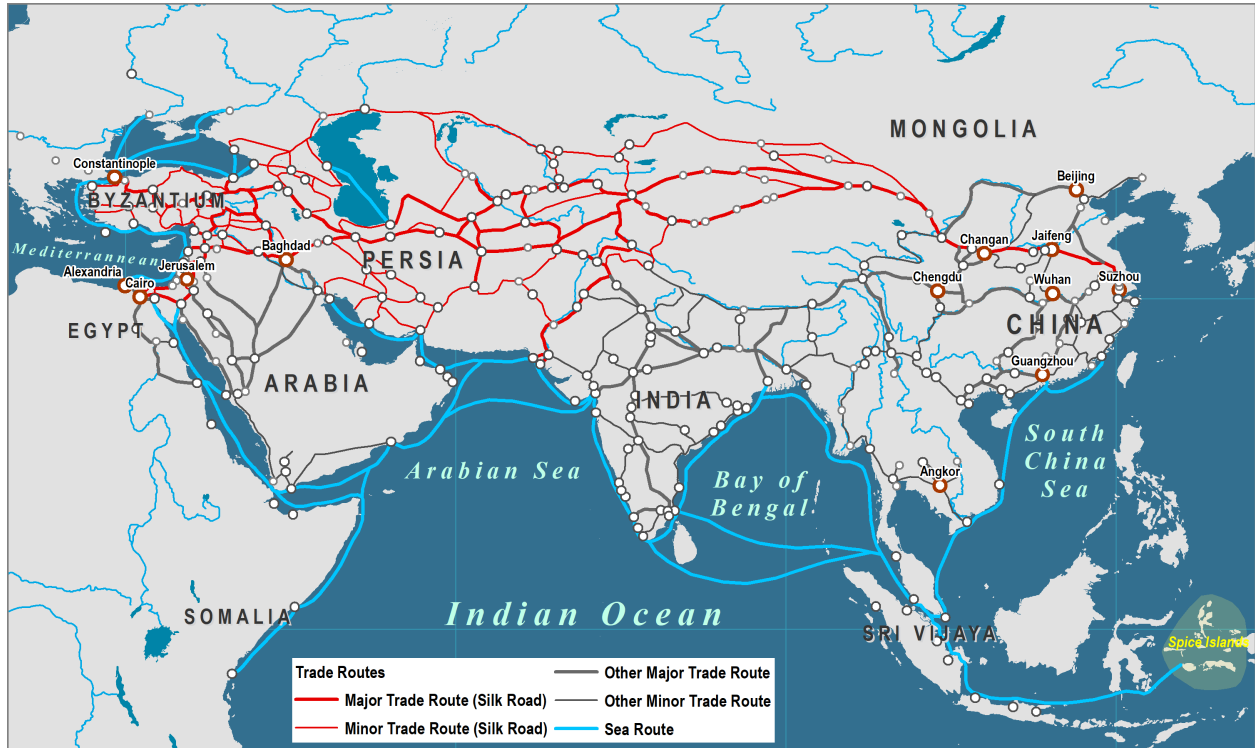


**Map2: PCR trade influence on South and South-East countries**

This was a brief view of the land blockade of Chinese trade routes by a belt of conflicts in some countries and unfriendly political reign in other countries. In the next section we will discuss the sea siege that is used to block the Chinese sea routes of trade.

**Section 2: Sea trade routes blockage:**

The ancient land Silk road was not the only ancient known rout of trade historically; on the contrary, there was another sea Silk road that was very active in international trade between the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC and the 15<sup>th</sup> century and connecting China, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, Arabian Peninsula, Egypt and Europe. (Map 3)



**Map 3: The sea silk road (the blue line)**

Nowadays, the United States is trying by its navy forces to control the sea lines of communications specially by controlling the doors of the Southern sea of China. This sea that is considered to be the lung of the Chinese maritime trade, and China is trying to take control over this area as it is affecting the Chinese national security.

The states that are surrounding the Southern sea of china are: Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Taiwan (map 4). And as it shows in map 4 below, the red dashed line represents the Chinese maritime claim in this sea because of set of Chinese islands, specially Spratly and Parcel islands, that china claims that these two islands are inhabited and thus according to the international law of the sea, the Chinese borders starts there and this gives China an additional exclusive economic zone due to this fact.

This Chinese attitude created disputes with other neighbor countries that become afraid of the Chinese expansion works by creating artificial islands and trying to control the maritime movement in this sea.





Map4: countries surrounding the Southern sea of China

In order to see the importance of the South China sea it is enough to mention that half of the world trade ships enter this sea and the estimated value of the goods carried by these ships is more than 5 trillion of dollars per year. For these reasons, PRC is planning to start a system of air defense over the area covering the water surface of the sea and imposing new rules of aviation above the sea which is faced by large objection by the other states supported by the United States that is trying to decrease the Chinese influence and control over this vital area of international trade.

Strait Malaka is the most crowded sea road in the world and it is considered to be the principal entrance of the South China sea. This strait is located between Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia, and due to its strategic importance, the US navy forces executed military maneuver and training, with the participation of Indian marine forces, near the entrance of this strait. Moreover, the US administration tries always to keep US troops and carries in the waters of the Southern sea of China and near the artificial islands that PRC is creating in order to halt the full dominance of the PRC over the sea and to give support to other neighbor countries in their conflicts with China, and all this for the main purpose of the United States that is blocking the maritime routes of trade in face of Chinese economy.

Concerning the North side of the maritime map, we notice that the Chinese sea trade routes are surrounded by Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines and all these countries are closer the United States campaign and some of them have different conflicts with the PRC.

According to the facts above, it is very clear that the USA, its Western adversaries and its Eastern partners, are working hard to blockade the sea trade routes in face of the Chinese powerful economy. Wherever there is a conflict between the PRC and one of its neighbor states, we will see the interference of the United States to support these states in order to keep China busy with non-ending disputes in a try to keep the giant in the bottle!

In the next part we will discuss how the PRC is fighting back to break the blockage created by the Western campaign that is trying to keep it besieged inside a belt of crisis and conflicts.

## **Part II: The Chinese Counter Fight:**

As mentioned before in the introduction, China has suffered a lot of harm and invasions from other nations and foreigners and this was of critical influence on decision makers that decided to isolate their state from the other world and they built the “Great Wall of China” to serve in this direction and secure the Chinese territories from attacks coming from North and North-West of Asia. However, this decision didn’t save China from further attacks and interventions, and for this reason the Chinese leaders started from the 20<sup>th</sup> to change the solitude attitude toward opening China to the world and vice versa.

Due to its large population, area and huge resources, the PRC was able to monopolize the majority of world industry and became year after year the “factory” of the world and a major power on the international stage competing on the pole position of the world strongest economy with the United States of America. However, this reality put the PRC in the spotlight of other international mega powers that felt the Chinese threat and started to fight its spread over the world by constructing a siege around the Asian giant to halt its international influence.

On the other hand, the PRC is fighting back the Western trials of blocking its international growth either by making alliances with other countries, as we will discuss in section one of this part, or by creating economic plans like the initiative of “the belt and the road”, as we will see in section two.

### **Section 1: The PRC Alliances:**

This kind of Chinese counter fight could be considered the political fight that the PRC is using in order to crash the siege that the US campaign is trying to make around China. For this sake, China made many alliances, treaties and agreements with many states and in different fields. Despite the fact that there is a strong relation between the PRC and Russia, but this relation didn’t arrive to be a total signed alliance. Still, these two major powers feel the necessity one to the other so they created a kind of integration between the military power of Russia and the economic power of China.

Beside Russia, Cambodia is defined to be China's best friend that stood by China's sovereignty claims in the South China Sea. However, the relation between the PRC and the ASEAN countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) is becoming an important dynamic partnership and beneficial for all parties even if some of these countries are partners to the USA, but this relation become an entrance to regional peace and stability and economic growth for East Asia region.

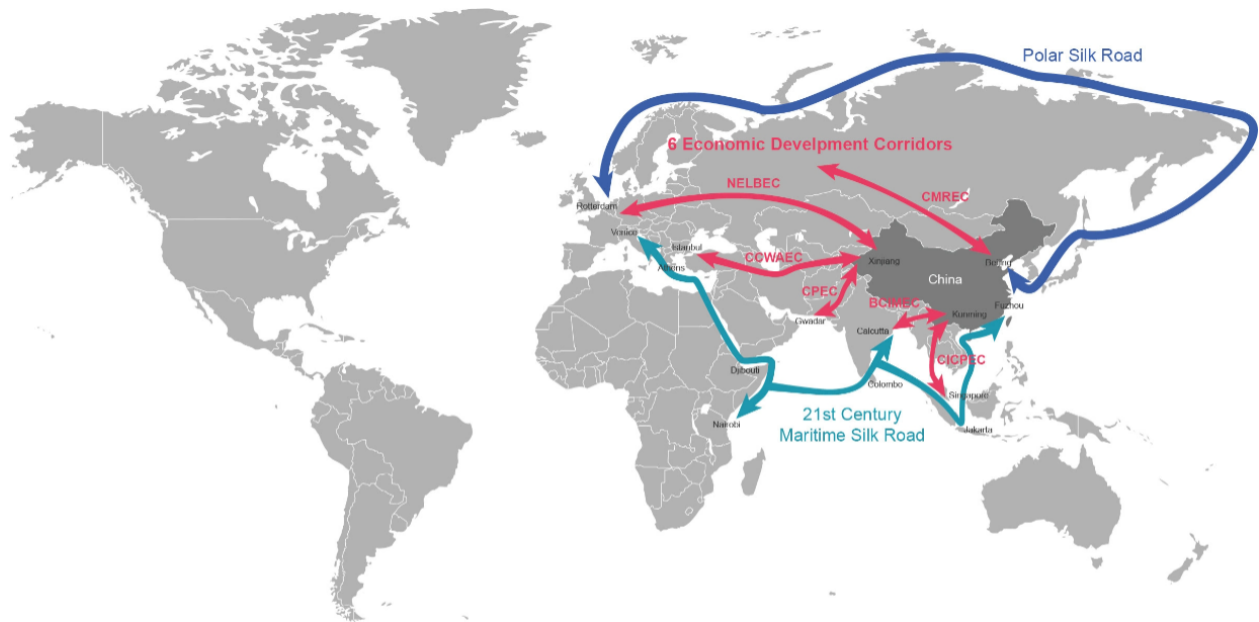
The PRC has full diplomatic relations with 178 out of 192 United Nations member states. And as a great emerging superpower, China's foreign policy and strategic thinking are highly influential and China has invested in many infrastructure projects around Eurasia, Africa and Central America. These Chinese contributions are too many in different countries around the world and we are not going to talk about them in details, but for example, China conducts large amount of trade and military assistance and humanitarian aid with many African nations like Zimbabwe, so as the PRC invested in South and Central America nations in order to increase its influence around the world.

In addition to the regions and nations named above, the PRC keeps good relations with the European Union and both sides are seeking to increase their cooperation. Also, we need to know that China is a member of the BRICS which conjoin the following nations: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa. And these countries are ranked among the world's fastest growing economies for years. Although the BRICS wouldn't become a political alliance or even a formal trading association; however, it had the potential of being a strong economic bloc that would bring political power, and the BRICS leaders used to regularly attend summits and conferences together and they acted in a way to protect each other interests.

Depending on the above, it is clear that the PRC is fighting back the trials of isolating it and blocking its growth and spread by all means and in all continents. It is clear that China has succeeded till now to impose its presence on the political international stage through the United Nations and by means of its diplomacy that built bridges with many nations even with USA partners or nations that are located in the US neighborhood, sending a serious message for the whole world that China is "at the gates".

## **Section 2: Resistance by economic plans:**

In this section we will discuss mainly the “Belt and Road” initiative that is the principal Chinese economic plan and the biggest through the world. This initiative is meant to be the new “Silk Road” that will reconnect the PRC to the world and opens wide markets to the Chinese goods and gives economical dominance for China and thus high political influence worldwide. (Map 5)



**Map 5: Road and Belt initiative lines**

The initiative defines five major priorities:

- Policy coordination
- Infrastructure connectivity
- Unimpeded trade
- Financial integration
- Connecting people

### **Facts about the Road and Belt Initiative: (BRI)**

The belt and road initiative was declared in the year 2013, on the debris of the ancient silk road, and it combines two initiatives:

- 1- The land Silk road and economic Belt comprising 6 corridors.

## 2- The 21<sup>st</sup> century maritime Silk Road.

It is important to mention that 140 countries have joined the BRI:

- 40 countries in Africa
- 34 countries in Europe and Center Asia
- 25 countries in East Asia and Pacific
- 17 countries in the Middle East and North Africa
- 18 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean
- 6 countries in South East Asia

The 6 land corridors are:

- 1- China-Mongolia-Russia corridor (CMREC)
- 2- China-Indonesia- Peninsula corridor (CICPEC)
- 3- Central Asia- West Asia corridor (CCWAEC)
- 4- China- Pakistan corridor (CPEC)
- 5- China-Bangladesh-India-Myanmar corridor (BCIMEC)
- 6- The new Eurasian land Bridge corridor (NELBEC)

The maritime silk road consists of two sea lines, one is called the polar silk road referring to the Northern Sea Route starting from Beijing and ending in Rotterdam, and the other is in the south starting from Fuzhou in China toward Jakarta passing by Calcutta and Colombo in India and it continues toward Djibouti and Nairobi in Africa, then it goes North through the Suez Canal to the Mediterranean Sea toward Venice in Italy via Athens.

The BRI is set to change the face of world trade affecting the economical, political and cultural aspects of the sphere. Also, it will increase the connectivity between nations through a set of infrastructure that will develop the movement of goods, information services and people. The BRI affects around 65% of the world population and 40% of the local production of the whole world, and it needs around 26 trillion or dollars for investments in infrastructure as estimated by the Asian Development Bank. Moreover, the Chinese currency, the yuan, will be promoted internationally through yuan-dominated projects and yuan loans.

This mega economical step will give the PRC the ability to penetrate more and more in the details of the world economy and impose itself as the principal partner in all international affairs and breaking any trials to blockade its rise.

## **Conclusion:**

The PRC is proving year after year that it is a great nation stepping fast toward the top of the world despite the fact that it stayed long time in isolation. However, the coming decades and centuries will show more the Chinese power that it was never before of military aspects and this helped China on the international reputation on the contrary of the United States that sometimes shows its hard power rather than the soft one and created many wars and military interventions in different zones of the world.

So, China is using a very smart and soft diplomacy that uses economical tools to get what is needed and this gives the PRC political returns which help it fighting back the US and Western campaign efforts to keep the Chinese giant surrounded and blocked in a siege of neighborhood or internal conflicts.

The USA is capable of ruling the world through three principal tools:

- The currency (the dollar)
- The language (the English)
- The unseen technology (ideas, social media, space, ...)

However, the Chinese are also making large steps in the above mentioned fields and the war between the two adversaries will not stop on the ground field but it will be prolonged to every sector specially that the PRC has succeeded to land on the “red planet” lately!!

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