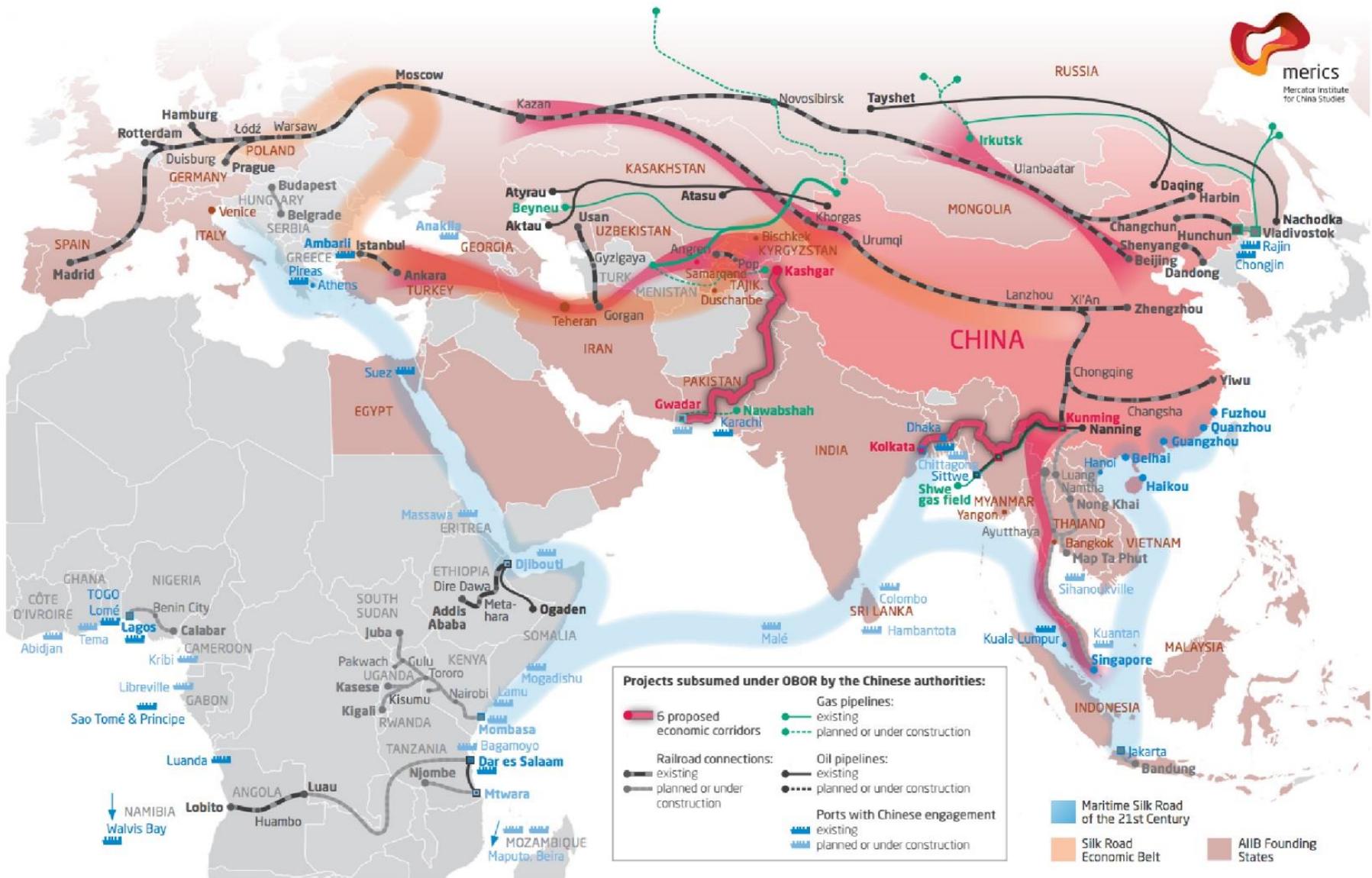


Country Update in the Context of BRI

Thuta Aung, Consultant
Bangkok 25th September 2019

Introduction

1. BRI/CMEC - the top development infrastructure projects Myanmar
2. Data is scarce in Myanmar and protected jealously by top officials
3. Relationship with China is important to Myanmar



Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

Issues

1. Co-creating sense of ownership throughout CMEC - Sustainable Connectivity
2. Absorption Capacity and the Future of Work for populations in CMEC project areas.
Potential case studies: Mandalay and Magwe
3. Action Research on Constructing a Culturally Appropriate Stakeholder Engagement Framework
4. Limited excitement across the population

Working hypothesis

Connectivity = Prosperity

- ▶ British Burma was well connected to global value chains in that era.
- ▶ But such prosperity was not inclusive. Hence the connectivity was not welcomed and unsustainable.
- ▶ The only way for BRI to be successful in Myanmar is to go for Sustainable Connectivity.

Threats to smooth collaboration efforts

1. Myanmar, institutionally, not understanding China
2. Zero dollar tourism
3. Ethnic conflicts in E & NE
4. Differences in technological adoption and arguably education levels.

CMEC/BRI project implementation requires:

- ▶ Effective and skilled translators - fluency alone is insufficient.
- ▶ Strong teams capable of stakeholder engagement.
- ▶ Media engagement and content generators (i.e. storytellers and narrators).

Involvement of other DPs

- ▶ Japan's rail project from Mandalay to Yangon via Naypyitaw
- ▶ India's Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport
- ▶ AIIB, ADB, IFC/WB investments in Myingyan Power Plant.

Mind the Gaps, please!

- ▶ China is world leading in Fintech and modern communication technologies.
- ▶ There's hope for Myanmar too, considering 3G and 4G penetration is fastest and widest (area spread) in CLMV. (Source MPT)
 - ▶ Myanmar's ability to leadfrog is proven through Smartphone adoption.

Education partnerships

- ▶ Scholarships on offer from PRC Government
- ▶ People to people exchanges: currently for think tanks and CSOs
- ▶ Academic exchanges at degree level can lead to more solid collaboration opportunities.

Education partnerships contd

- ▶ Training on Negotiation
- ▶ Training on PPP
 - ▶ Union Civil Service Board
 - ▶ Think Tanks Associated with GoM and the NLD such as the Renaissance Institute.
- ▶ Content creation from third party/independent bodies.

Final thoughts

- ▶ Interested regional governments should be engaged in coordination with Naypyitaw.
- ▶ Multilaterals such (ADB, AIIB, UN etc) coordinating more effectively will lead to better RoI /VFM.
- ▶ Being a developing country - rife with problems - but some can be turned into opportunities. (R)

Q & A +
comments/critiques
welcome!