

Chinese patronage could be very costly

Dr. Richard L. Benkin



It's a good thing that I'm a naturally curious person. The other day, I was on the road from Dhaka to Tungipara to visit the mausoleum of the Father

of the Nation, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman; and to pay due respect to the Bangabandhu. While on the road, I saw a huge infrastructure project that was digging an entirely new road and building a new bridge. It was extensive and would make for a much improved experience moving between the two places.

As we were riding, I saw a tin barrier with a logo on them that said "China Power." Then, a little while later, I saw another, then several more. I turned to my traveling companion, the great Bangladeshi human rights attorney Rabintra Ghosh, and asked if this was a Chinese project. He told me it was, and I remarked that there seemed to be an increased Chinese presence here since my last trip to Bangladesh five years ago.

Anyone who has sat in Dhaka traffic knows that this country would benefit from infrastructure modernization. I also know that such projects are expensive. If China offers to help with financing such things, I can understand why a country would agree to one. In light of others' experience, however, we might ask if Bangladesh is mortgaging its children's futures for some immediate relief.

I work with Pashtun, Sindhi, and Baloch who are seeing the impact of the massive infrastructure project, CPEC, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Long term, it ignores the interest of the various peoples who comprise Pakistan and is being done so for Chinese interests not theirs. I also work with a number of Macedonians who tell me that Chinese projects in their country have been at the expense of their own interests. Moreover, a

gled out on future reports.

John Hurley, one of the study's co-authors, noted that CBI provides something that smaller countries need terribly, infrastructure financing, but that this can become "too much of a good thing."

China's selects projects that favor its own strategic geopolitical interests, and part of that intention seems to be making a string of nations dependent on them and thereby more compliant to their demands. The report identifies Pakistan as the country most at risk, and my own sources inside that country said that they see Pakistan becoming little more than a Chinese colony once CPEC is completed.

being auctioned off in Afghanistan. Bangladesh could be especially vulnerable because of the impact of these interest rates (has anyone asked to see what China is charging?), and because it is in Bangladesh's interest to be a prominent ally of India's, not small piece of a federation threatening it. Whether it is water rights, trade, succor for the many Bangladesh fleeing land erosion, or cooperation in anti-terrorism; Bangladesh benefits from a good relationship with its neighbor. Most importantly, Bangladesh's interests lay in maintaining its democracy and independence.

There are better ways to proceed: Demand that debt relief be written

Bangladesh could be especially vulnerable because of the impact of these interest rates (has anyone asked to see what China is charging?), and because it is in Bangladesh's interest to be a prominent ally of India's, not small piece of a federation threatening it. Whether it is water rights, trade, succor for the many Bangladesh fleeing land erosion, or cooperation in anti-terrorism; Bangladesh benefits from a good relationship with its neighbor. Most importantly, Bangladesh's interests lay in maintaining its democracy and independence

The report also notes that in exchange for the money, China has been charging extremely high interest rates, promising to throw smaller nations further into debt and dependence.

It is not coincidental that China is targeting nations that surround India. With the debt piling up (because

into the contracts with Bangladesh making no concessions in return (this would be a great way for China to provide Bangladesh with foreign aid); use the relationship as leverage to gain similar relationships with other wealthy nations like the United States to maintain and even strengthen Bangladesh independence.

per



Front Page (1)

All Pages <>

Mo
Fr
Th
(2
Ci
W
As
Bc
Cc
Ec
Oj
Ne
Bt
Cc
Ca
Er
Sp
Ne
Ba
Gl
(1
Sh
Ne
Oj
Ar
C
N
Y