



# EthicalMUN III

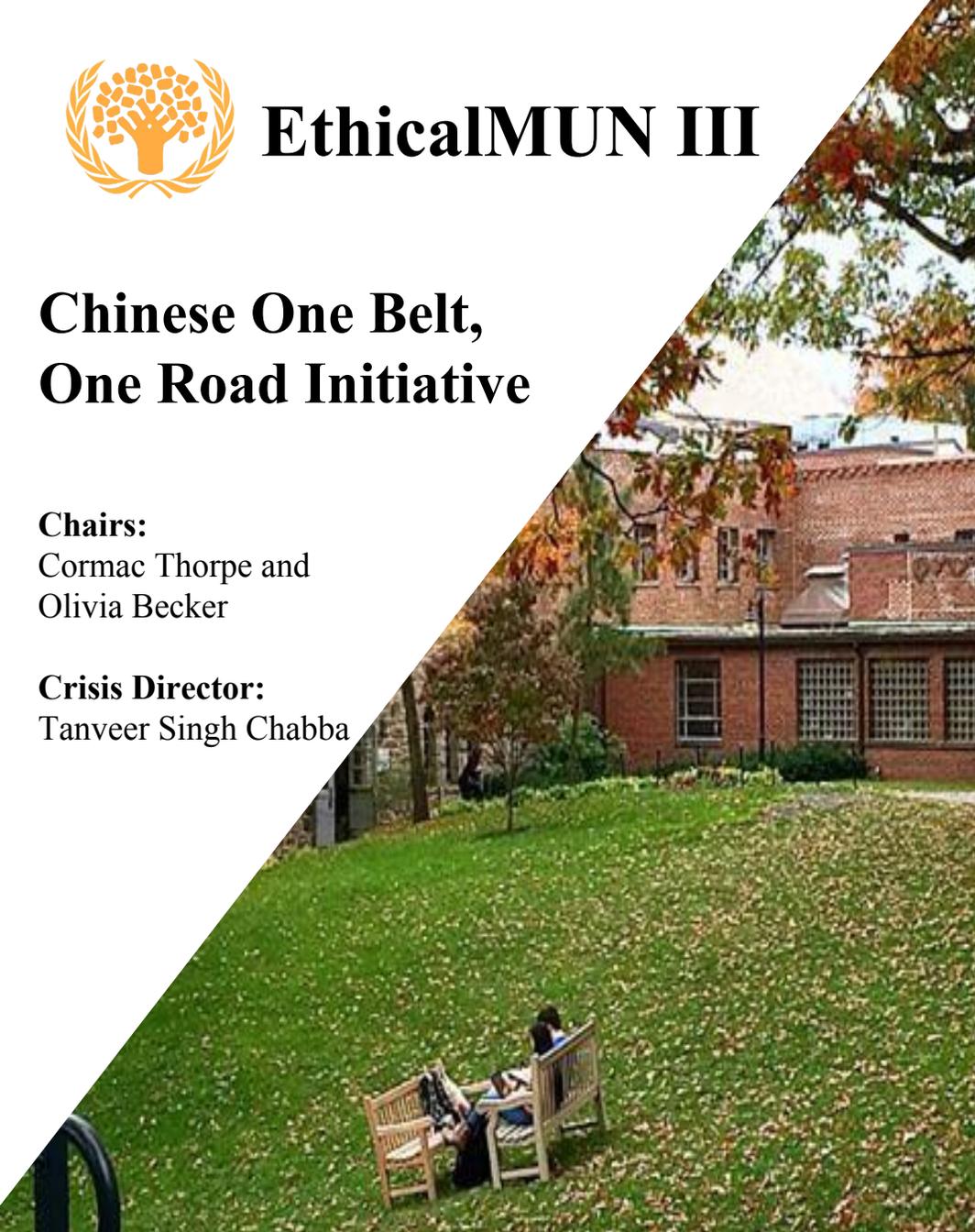
## Chinese One Belt, One Road Initiative

### **Chairs:**

Cormac Thorpe and  
Olivia Becker

### **Crisis Director:**

Tanveer Singh Chabba





# EthicalMUN III

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Dear Delegates,

We are delighted to welcome you to EthicalMUN III and are looking forward to spending this time with you. We are really excited to see your hard work and creativity come to life through unique solutions to the Chinese One Belt, One Road Initiative. First, we wanted to tell you all a bit about ourselves:

My name is Cormac, I am a senior and I've been involved in Model UN since my freshman year. Model UN has been an incredible way for me to improve my debate and public speaking skills while at the same time learning about interesting global issues. Outside of Model UN, I play soccer, run a community service club, and love studying science, Spanish, and geography. This marks the last conference of my high school career, so I'm super excited to be chairing the Chinese One Belt, One Road Initiative committee and serving as Co-Secretary General of EthicalMUN III.

My name is Olivia, I am a sophomore, and I have been doing Model UN for the past five years. It has taught me not only about foreign policy but has also bettered my ability to think outside of the box, speak publicly, compromise, and advocate for a viewpoint I do not believe. In my free time, I enjoy doing community service, running around the reservoir, and studying civics and geopolitics. I am looking forward to being the Chair of the Chinese One Belt, One Road Initiative Committee at EthicalMUN III, in addition to serving as the co-Chief of Staff of the conference! I look forward to meeting you all in May!

We have both been delegates for several years and can honestly say that the experiences we had and the skills we gained through Model UN have been truly life-changing. It is therefore our sincere wish that all of you have similarly impactful experiences and gain valuable skills at EthicalMUN III!

This committee will engage a wide range of perspectives in a debate surrounding China's One Belt, One Road Initiative, which has wide-ranging implications for the entire world. It takes place in the present, unlike some other committees you may have been a part of, which means that the situation on the ground on May 18th, 2019 will be your starting point. However, everything after that date is our decision and creation, so we encourage you to expect the unexpected, take risks, and think outside the box. The figures each of you represent have unique interests, and you will run into conflict with each other over the course of the conference. While you must stay faithful to your figure's interests, you must also be able to overcome your differences and implement successful policies together.

In the OBOR Committee, the standard parliamentary procedure for a crisis committee will be used. Due to the nature of this, there is no fixed time to discuss each topic, but the first committee session will begin with each delegate giving an opening statement, followed by a major crisis. The background guide below is an excellent starting point for your research, but you definitely need to do more than just this. In terms of policies, we want to reiterate that EthicalMUN prohibits the use of laptops during the conference, so please make sure to have all of your notes printed out. We are excited for you to write the next chapter in the history of international trade and policy, and we hope you are too!

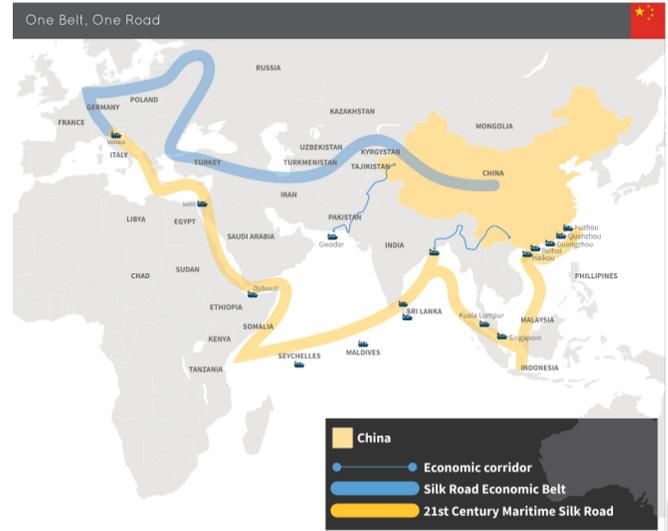
See you in May!

Don't hesitate to email us with any questions,

Olivia ([21opbecker@ecfs.org](mailto:21opbecker@ecfs.org)) and Cormac ([19cmthorpe@ecfs.org](mailto:19cmthorpe@ecfs.org))

## Committee Description

China's ambitious global construction project, the One Belt, One Road Initiative (OBOR), covers more than 68 countries and 65% of the world's population, making it one of the largest infrastructure and investment projects in history. In an effort to improve trade and connect Asia, Africa, and Europe, China is building infrastructure along and between both the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" and the "Silk Road Economic Belt." While it is an unprecedented investment in infrastructure and trade, China is also using OBOR as a foreign policy move that some major powers see as a threat to global order. As it continues to expand, the world must consider if OBOR should be funded or combatted, how it should be regulated, the effect it will have on developing countries, and its impact on global economic markets and politics.

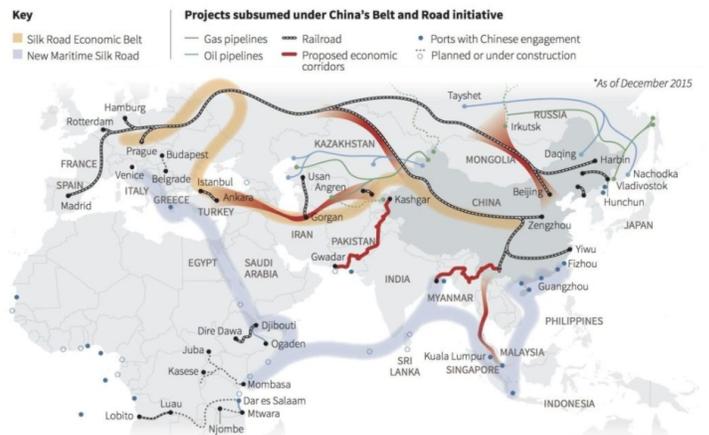


## Background Information and Historical Context

### Introduction

#### Reviving the Silk Road

Announced by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013, the Silk Road Initiative, also known as China's Belt and Road initiative, aims to invest in infrastructure projects including railways and power grids in central, west and southern Asia, as well as Africa and Europe.



Source: Mercator Institute for China Studies. C. Inton, 24/03/2017

REUTERS

China's One Belt, One Road Initiative (OBOR), also known as the

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is the brainchild of Chinese President Xi Jinping. Announced in 2013 with the goal purpose of restoring the ancient Silk Route, it has rapidly become a vast and ambitious investment project connecting China (the second largest economy in the world) to Africa, Europe, and the rest of Asia. OBOR, called the “Project of the Century” by Chinese authorities, is a multi-trillion-dollar plan that spans about 78 countries, 60 percent of the world’s population, and 40 percent of global GDP. The project involves building a large network of railways, maritime ports, roadways, oil and gas pipelines, power grids, and associated infrastructure projects. It has two main components: the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB), which connects China to Europe by land, and the Maritime Silk Road (MSR), connecting China to Africa and Europe by sea. These are further divided into six main economic “corridors”:

“New Eurasian Land Bridge that connects Western China to Western Russia, China – Mongolia – Russia Corridor that connects North China to Eastern Russia via Mongolia, China – Central Asia – West Asia Corridor that connects Western China to Turkey via Central and West Asia, China – Indochina Peninsula Corridor that connects Southern China to Singapore via Indochina, China – Pakistan Corridor that connects South Western China through Pakistan to Arabia sea routes, and Bangladesh – China – India – Myanmar Corridor that connects Southern China to India via Bangladesh and Myanmar. Additionally, the maritime Silk Road connects coastal China to the Mediterranean via Singapore-Malaysia, the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Strait of Hormuz.”<sup>1</sup>

### *History of the Silk Road*

The Silk Road was established when China began trading with the West in 130 B.C. during the Han Dynasty. It was a network of trade routes that connected China and the Far East with the Middle East and Europe, all of which were powerful economies and dynasties of their time. The routes themselves remained in use until 1453 A.D., when the Ottoman Empire boycotted trade with China, subsequently closing them. Although almost 600 years have passed since the Silk Road was flourishing as a means to increase and facilitate international trade, it has had a lasting impact on commerce, power, culture, and history that influences today's geopolitical landscape.

The name itself ("Silk Road") comes from the popularity of Chinese silk among traders in the Roman Empire, as it was an important commodity in both the West and the East. The Silk Road routes contained a large network of trading posts,

markets, and thoroughfares, all of which were strategically located. They were designed to streamline the transport, exchange, distribution, and storage of various types of goods.

The materialistic/tangible trade along the so-called Silk Road included fruits and vegetables, livestock, grain, leather and hides, tools, religious objects, artwork, precious stones, and metals. In fact, paper and gunpowder, both of which were inventions during China's Han Dynasty, were some of the most-traded items between the West and the East. However, the non-tangible things exchanged were of equal importance. Through this economic belt, the circulation of language, culture, religious beliefs, philosophy, and science could transpire.

"Routes extended from the Greco-Roman metropolis of Antioch across the Syrian Desert via Palmyra to Ctesiphon (the Parthian capital) and Seleucia on the Tigris River, a

Mesopotamian City in modern-day Iraq.”<sup>2</sup>

*Potential of the Project and Its Global Impact*



Similar to the Silk Road routes centuries prior, OBOR is of vital significance to China. It is not only a strategy to boost domestic growth, but also a new part of the country's economic diplomacy strategy. China anticipates an increase in economic activity by connecting less developed regions on the border (i.e.. Xinjiang) with neighboring nations. The project hopes to create new markets for Chinese goods, while simultaneously

allowing the manufacturing powerhouse to gain virtually permanent control of cost-effective routes for the exportation of goods. China has announced investments over \$1 trillion in the numerous and widespread infrastructure projects, and is funding them by offering low-cost loans to the participating countries, which include: Pakistan, Kenya, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Russia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Iran, Turkey, Poland, Lithuania, Slovenia, and Ukraine.

Many of these nations are positive about OBOR contributing to massive investments by China in local transmission projects, which help grow developing economies. For example, Nepal, which is a landlocked nation, joined OBOR recently with the signing of a deal that aims to improve cross-border connectivity with China. Because of OBOR, Pakistan will soon benefit from the \$46 billion China Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC) that allows access to Arabian Sea routes through more connectivity of neighboring nations.

Although China markets their One Belt, One Road Initiative as an inclusive project to bolster regional development, and thus, enhance the global economy, other, more developed nations view it as a strategic move by Xi Jinping to attain importance and control on both a regional and global scale. After all, OBOR is a China-focused trading network. The United States, in particular, takes major issue with the initiative. However, this anti OBOR sentiment and action is in many ways, beneficial for China. As US President Donald Trump threatens Asian nations by means of trade tariffs, China sees this as an opportunity to emerge as *the* regional leader for centuries to come.

## Current Crisis



Present day; With the increase in size and power of China's OBOR initiative, each nation, regardless of geographical location, is faced with the question of whether to support it or not.

Developing nations: OBOR offers the promise of a better future, major investments in your nation leading to greater infrastructure, more jobs, more trade and more connectivity. However, it gives China a lot of control in your region and later, might pose a threat to global order given this extreme dominance. While navigating

OBOR, keep in mind the major benefits your country reaps if involved, while also understanding the sacrifices you are making in the process.

Developed nations: OBOR poses a major threat to your country's control, power, and relevance in Asia. How do you navigate this threat in a diplomatic way? Is it by tariffs? Is it by public press releases warning other countries of the dangers OBOR hypothetically poses? Do you support it to maintain good relations with the various nations involved? The choice is up to you.

### **Questions to Consider**

1. What is your one true motive and how can you achieve it?
2. What is the fastest way to get what your delegation wants?
3. Do you want to make an alliance? If so, who will your allies be?
4. Who can help you get where you want to be?

5. How much is your delegation willing to risk?
6. What can you do with the resources you have?
7. How will you take into account the health issues, violence, and political fragmentation while considering your own interests when devising a plan?
8. How could the action you take be affected by arising crises? How could your plan fall apart with new developments?

### **Portfolio Powers and Delegate Views:**

#### China

China is the leader, biggest supporter, and primary funder of the BRI. It aims to grow this initiative tremendously, leading to increased influence on the world stage and tremendous economic gains.

### South Korea

South Korea hopes that by supporting this initiative, OBOR will be the connection between New Southern and New Northern policies, thus expanding South Korea's economic and diplomatic influence. However, the top nine ASEAN countries with the highest trade volume with South Korea are not participating in projects or have canceled them due to enormous

### Japan

Despite much tension between Japan and China, the sovereign nation is a supporter of OBOR. Beijing's grand designs support Tokyo's own broader economic ambitions in Asia, thus there this major potential for economic gain. Simultaneously, Japan remains ambivalent.

### Russia

Unofficially, nervous. The huge pouring of resources in the Russian near abroad in the Central Asia,

making it ultimately the Chinese backyard. A geopolitical thinking in Moscow reigns supreme, with its zero-sum approach. In the eyes of the Kremlin, anything that China gains there in economic, political is subtracted from the Russian one.

### Poland

Poland's PM Beata Szydlo, quoted by the Polish Radio, said that Asian countries, including China, are interested in cooperation with Poland. Szydło took part in a One Belt One Road Forum dedicated to China's the new Silk Road initiative. Poland's PM described the One Belt One Road plan as "an initiative that will probably dictate the conditions of economic development in the region in the coming decades."

### Germany

Germany's attitude towards the OBOR can typically be broken down to two stages. Upon the announcement of the plans in 2013,

the German political elite and the press welcomed the Chinese ideas warmly. All of this was primarily due to the fact that foreign trading plays a significant role in the German economy; therefore, they noticed the better accessibility to the export markets in the new infrastructure network. Second, they hoped to establish better cooperation with the Chinese corporations under the aegis of the OBOR, which would enhance the presence of the German firms within China.

#### *The United Kingdom*

China and the UK are planning a RMB10 billion joint investment fund, according to sources at Bloomberg. Details of the equity split have not yet been decided; however, the fund is apparently set to focus on areas such as infrastructure, agriculture, and hi-tech industries. China and the UK have bilateral trade of just under £60 billion, of which UK exports to China last year were worth

£16.8 billion and imports from China were £42.3 billion

#### *Kazakhstan*

Kazakhstan's plan—announced by President Nursultan Nazarbayev in a State of the Nation address on November 11, 2014—is called the Nurlı Zhol, or Lighted Path, an initiative directly tied in to OBOR. Kazakhstan had already proactively pitched its agenda toward China more than a decade earlier, and indeed Kazakhstan's pitch was one of the reasons Xi Jinping initially presented the OBOR plan in Astana, in October 2013.

#### *Syria*

The postwar reconstruction of Syria is an attractive project for Chinese firms, which would like to see a stable Syria play a key role in the "One Belt, One Road" economic initiative.

Pakistan

So far, so good. Few can take issue with Pakistan for accepting Chinese munificence, if indeed it is that, to fix its crumbling infrastructure. The dismal power situation had shaved off as much as 2 percent points of growth annually, leaving the economy floundering at an expansion rate of less than 5 per cent, below potential. Having missed the services revolution that transformed next-door India because the poor security situation within its borders had made it risky to house outsourcing operations for Western firms, the energies of Pakistan's talented white-collar workforce had been unexploited to a large degree.

Kenya

Linking Nairobi to Mombasa, this is the first part of the East-African route in OBOR, hoping to connect to Uganda and Rwanda in the future. The train's first run was a highly anticipated event in Kenya, with

many ecstatic that their barely operative "Lunatic line," built in 1901, has been upgraded.

Seychelles

As the Seychelles economy suffers from job loss and the population suffers from poverty the Seychelles views OBOR as a great way for it to improve its labor rates and economy.

Malaysia

In August, Malaysian prime minister Mahathir bin Mohamad cancelled the Chinese-funded \$20 billion East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) and pipeline project. The nation doubts the feasibility and success of the project, as well as the intentions of China.

Rwanda

Whether OBOR will become popular in Rwanda and Senegal will depend largely on how China can sell it to the leadership of those countries.

Beijing is currently dealing with a major public relations disaster in nearby Kenya, where OBOR agreements have led to accusations of Chinese colonialism and apartheid.

#### United States of America

"One Belt, One Road" initiative is not designed as a power play of geopolitics to rob the United States of its global leadership, rather, the U.S. can benefit from its participation in OBOR. However many advisors from Trump's cabinet have viewed OBOR as a national threat.

#### Mexico

Though this project could be supported by many Latin American countries including Mexico, Mexico will only support the project if other Latin American countries support it as well

#### Canada

Canadian technology might look to Chinese manufacturing as a

way to reach developing markets in Central and Southeast Asia. The fact that Canada isn't along the planned routes of OBOR isn't a concern.

#### **Endnotes**

1. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/o/one-belt-one-road-obor.asp>
2. <https://www.history.com/topics/ancient-middle-east/silk-road>