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SINO-MYANMAR DEFENSE COOPERATION AND CHINA'S EFFORTS TO BOLSTER ITS SPHERE OF INFLUENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN (2013-2017)

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Abstract

This paper deals with the implementation of China's Defense Policy in Sino-Myanmar Defense Cooperation to bolster China's sphere of influence in the Indian Ocean from 2013-2017. The rise of China has been viewed as a great phenomenon in the global political, economic and security realm, particularly in this 21st century. This rise has led China become the second biggest economy and also the strongest military in the world. This situation however pushed China to fulfill the increasing demand of energy and to seek for the alternative route. By sharing 2,204 kilometers of its border with China and having direct access to the Indian Ocean, Myanmar becomes a land bridge to get the access to Indian Ocean. Myanmar locates on tri-junction Southeast, South and East Asia and very abundance with natural resources. In the context of "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI), China has implemented its defense policy through the economic and military cooperation with Myanmar. This study therefore explains the implementation of China's defense policy in Sino-Myanmar defense cooperation to strengthening its position in the Indian Ocean in the search for stronger influence in the region. This research is using qualitative method qualitative research. The review of theories, literatures and previous research findings are the basic sources to form a research design and data analysis from both primary and secondary sources. This study found that China utilized its economic and defense cooperation with Myanmar to spread its hegemonic power in the region.

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INTRODUCTION.

The rise of China is one of a great phenomenon in today's international relations. Starting with economic reform in 1979, with the economic reforms in 1979, China has moved from a command economy to a free market system. This momentum has transformed China to become the second world largest economy after the United States. Not only economically, but the term of "rise" here also refers to militarily (Christopher Bodeen, 2017). According to "Stockholm International Peace Research Institute" (SIPRI) 2016, China is the world's second largest military after the United States with the total expenditure \$215 billion.

With a huge number of military spending, China indeed wants to secure their interest especially in territorial water. This is due to China is a rich maritime country in history and also a regional maritime power in East Asian. Reflected to "China Defense White Paper 2015", China's military strategy aims at expanding maritime security (Xinhua New Agency, 2011). This declaration has revealed that "maritime power" is becoming an essential part for Xi Jin Ping to pursue what is it called the "Chinese dream" (Yoon, 2014).

As China's rising continues, it constantly spreads the influence to its neighbors and other countries— both land and water. One of the strategic plans is the development of maritime silk road as part of BRI in the Indian Ocean region (IOR). IOR is the third largest among world's oceanic division. This region is very rich

with natural resources and it is an important route for linking Asia to Middle East, Europe and Africa. For China, the Indian Ocean is a necessity for China to fulfill the economic and security interest. Besides, it supports the People Liberation Army (PLA) and its navy (PLAN) to build its naval power into a blue water navy by 2030.

The main purpose of this article is looking at the implementation of China's Defense Policy in Sino-Myanmar Defense Cooperation to bolster China's sphere of influence in the Indian Ocean in the case of BRI from 2013-2017. This article is divided into several section. The first section is to describe the strategic environment of China and Myanmar. The second part deals with The Dynamic of Myanmar's Security and its relations with some important major power. The next part discusses the "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) as the tool of the China Foreign and Defense Policy in expanding its sphere of influence. The last section analyses the implementation of BRI toward Sino-Myanmar in economic and military cooperation and its implications to ASEAN.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative method. In order to systematically scrutinize the topic and issues in this study, it employs review of relevant theories, literatures and previous research findings. It then interprets both primary and secondary sources as the components of data in analyzing the issues proposed in this topic.



Figure 1. Myanmar Map
(Source: Encyclopedia of the Nations, 2018)

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Strategic Environment of China and Myanmar

What is special from Myanmar? Looking at geographical position, Myanmar is a unique place— lies on tri-junction Southeast, South and East Asia. It covers the total area of 678,000 square kilometers (Pike, 2017). Myanmar's territory touches five different countries including the two giants, China and India. Myanmar's topography can be divided into four parts; In the north and west, there is a mountain area with the length around 1,830 to 6,100 m and with the altitude 6,000–20,000 ft. and including the coastline of the Arakan Yoma mountain and the Bay of Bengal; in the east, there is a Shan— a deep plateau; in the southeast, there is a main cultivation area surrounded by Irrawaddy river and the Salween River and in the South, there is delta and lower valley regions which is part of Irrawaddy and Sittang rivers (Encyclopedia of the Nations, 2018).

With its strategic location and abundance of natural resources, Myanmar has become a strategic point for some countries who wants to build connectivity and cooperation, including its giant neighbor— China.

Refers to China Defense White Paper 2015, it reflects the focus of China interest on maritime sector. As the top exporter and importer country, China is gaining wealth through trade from the ocean. Besides, the growing economic of China has led to the demand of domestic energy needs especially in oil and natural gas. To understand the importance of Myanmar for China's National Interest can be seen through the foreign policy implemented by China at the crossroads of South and Southeast region, which is directly connected to Indian Ocean— a place with plenty of energy and mineral resources (Amrita, 2014). These factors are making Myanmar is not only strategically but also economically important for China. Therefore, it can be argued that Myanmar becomes a strategic interest for China

through the issues of “Energy Security, Securing access to the Indian Ocean and border security” (Amrita, 2014).

Secondly, the strategic position of Myanmar for China’s growing interest can be seen through China’s dependency on Indian Ocean (Ward, 2017). As one-third of its perimeter being the coast and linking to the Indian Ocean, China has seen Myanmar as the most strategic entry point to build access of its economic, political and security interest to Indian Ocean. This is not only for the trade routes but also for the security purpose. The various projects have been executed by China including the construction of road, rail and air transport from Yunnan Province in Southwest to Indian Ocean through Myanmar (Tiantian, 2017). Besides that, China wants also to increase its naval capability which also supports its SLOC (Sea Lanes of Communication) by building naval base in Kyaukpyu. From this view, it can be understood that the current Chinese projects on economic and military sectors to Myanmar can be seen as China’s “two-ocean strategy” in order to gain strategic access to both Indian and Pacific Ocean (“Kyaukpyu: Connecting China to the Indian Ocean,” 2018).

Another variable to assess the growing interest of China in Myanmar is the willingness to secure the border area. Quoted from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China official website: “China is ready to continue to play a constructive role in promoting Myanmar’s peace process, and make joint efforts with Myanmar to safeguard peace and stability along the border between the two nations.” In supporting its rise, China should be able to maintain peace and a stable neighborhood. In fact, there are non-traditional security issue in north and north-east area of Myanmar-China boundary that could harm the stability in the southwest China which includes drug trafficking, illegal immigrants, smuggling, gambling and money laundering (Amrita, 2014).

Myanmar however with its abundance of resources still lacks of technology and has some under developed area (Maguire, Glenn B., Eugenia Victorino, 2015). In this situation, China as a rising power which shares a 2,000-kilometer border with Myanmar has assisted in infrastructure development which is a part of the cooperation between two countries. For instance, 20 out of the 21 hydro-power companies in Myanmar are Chinese company (Anita E. Mathew, 2011). In addition, China also involves in rail, road, tele-communication and airport development projects in Myanmar. Through this economic dimension, China has contributed on Myanmar’s GDP growth increasing from 5.5 percent in 2012 to 6.5 percent in 2013 (Xiaoyang, 2014).

Apart of economic sector, China has supported Myanmar’s objective on political aspect in international community especially when it comes to the negotiation of natural resources exploitation with regional or international companies (Tea, 2010). Looking at its strategic position, Myanmar is very rich in natural resources and surrounded by two big emerging countries (India and China) and new emerging and developing countries of Southeast Asia. For a country to manage its sustainable development, they should be able to get access to the sources of important natural resources. Energy is a main source for a country to keep growing. In this purpose, Myanmar sees the close relation with China as a chance to increase its influence with other power such as India and ASEAN to gaining more political support for its development as well as increasing the economic objective.

Belt and Road Initiative: The Combination of China Foreign and Defense Policy.

Regardless of China's desire in increasing maritime power, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has an essential meaning to counter US dominance in Indian Ocean (Lele, 2013). Foreign policy here refers to the

diplomatic relations between China and Myanmar while defense policy refers to economic and military cooperation between China and Myanmar.

In a simple definition, China's foreign policy can be defined as "a pattern of interaction between China and other states which is determined by national objectives and interest". Refers to document on "The Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference" (CPPCC) 1949, China's foreign policy supposed to "guarantee independence, freedom and territorial integrity of the state, to support world peace and friendly cooperation to all countries in the world, and prevent imperialist policies of aggression and war" (English--People's Daily Online, 2018). Then, it has been revised during the "First Plenary Session of the Eighth National People's Congress" by emphasizing that China foreign policy should obey "an independent foreign policy as well as to the five principles of peaceful coexistence" (Chinese Consulate General, 2014). As has been stated by Xi Jin Ping, the bilateral relations with Myanmar is really important for China (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2013).

Since China established its diplomatic relations 67 years ago with Myanmar, China put the basis of the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2017). Following the importance of relations with Myanmar, China emphasizes the fundamental interests of the two peoples by implementing "strategic cooperation, and be good neighbors, good friends, good brothers and good partners forever".

China, in this 21st century has been pursuing a defensive in nature in their defense policy with the main concern on "enhancing national security, unity, and national development interest, achieving the all-round, coordinated and sustainable development of China's national defense and armed forces; increasing the performance of

the armed forces, implementing the military strategy of active defense, pursuing a self-defensive nuclear strategy; and fostering a security environment conducive to China's peaceful development (Ministry of Defense of the People's Republic of China, 2005)."

According to China government white paper, The Chinese government strongly upholds a defensive in nature toward the national defense policy. The aspects including within the defense policy are:

- "To build up national defense, resist aggression, control armed destruction, and defend the state's sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and security.
- To overwhelm national defense, and put it in the service of, the nation's overall economic development which means the modernization of the national defense of a country requires the support of its economic and technological forces; and the modernization level of national defense can only be improved gradually along with the increase of the country's economic strength.
- To implement an active defense in the military strategy. Strategically China pursues the defensive policy featuring self-defense and gaining mastery by striking after the enemy started, and uphold the principle: "We will not attack unless we are attacked; if we are attacked, we will certainly counter-attack."
- To conduct the army with the Chinese way— reducing quantity and improving quality.
- As China upholds the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, China puts the priority on safeguarding world peace, and opposing aggression and expansion" (Chinese Consulate General, 2014).

Following China's defense policy to Myanmar, China still upholds "the basis of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit and deepened exchanges and cooperation in political, economic, trade, cultural, people-to-people and military fields" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018). In the context of BRI, China has invested there has invested projects such as ports in Myanmar. Kyaukphyu port in Rakhine State seems to be a prominent position in China's investment after a deep-water port in Sittwe (Marantidou, 2014). Not only in term of economic cooperation, China also has involved in Myanmar's peace process by upholding "persuading for peace and facilitating dialogues" (Sun, 2017). In this situation, China becomes the mediator between the Myanmar central government and ethnic armed groups.

The Analysis of The Implementation of Belt and Road Initiative toward Sino-Myanmar in Economic and Military Cooperation

The Implementation of BRI in Economic Cooperation

Referring to BRI on China defense policy perspective, one of the policy implementations is through the economic

cooperation with the littoral countries in the Indian Ocean— in this case with Myanmar. The economic cooperation between China and Myanmar has been established since 1990s until present (Kudo, 2016). In fact, China nowadays has become the mains supplier of consumer goods to Myanmar particularly through the border trade. In addition, to enhance the economic cooperation, China has been involved in some projects in Myanmar in the areas of infrastructure, state-owned economic enterprises (SEEs) and energy.

"In fact, there are many sub-regions along the border on the Chinese side which would like to join the zone in order to bolster regional trade activities," U Than Myint - Union Minister for the Ministry of Commerce (Phyo, Su, 2017)

Following the statement above, there are five memorandums of understanding (MoUs) which have been signed by China and Myanmar up to present— including China-Myanmar Border Economic Cooperation Zone which involves Myanmar ministries of commerce.

- China – Myanmar Economic Corridor
Before the development of "China - Myanmar Economic Corridor", China and Myanmar have accelerated its trade

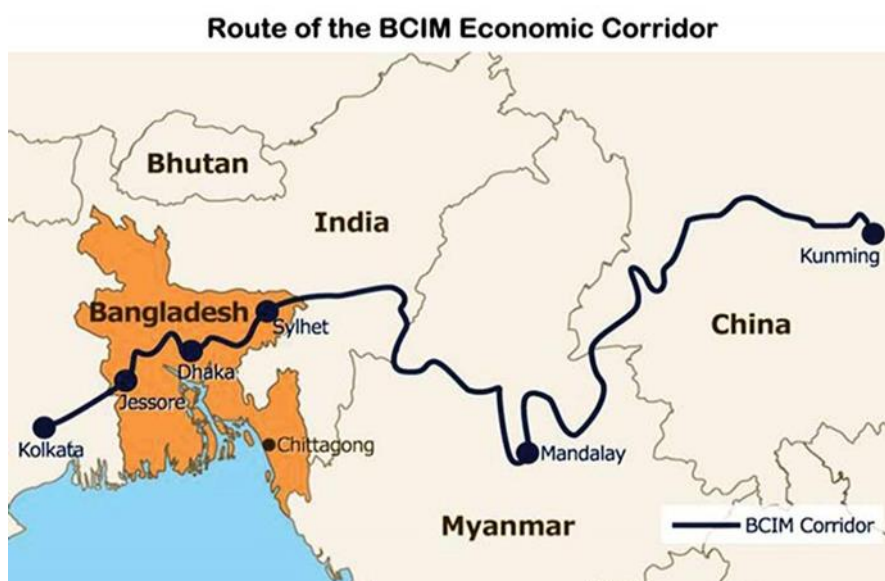


Figure 2. BCIM Economic Corridor (Source: Asia Briefing, 2013).



Figure 3. China-Myanmar Economic Corridor

Source: "China Plans Economic Corridor with Myanmar For Access To Indian Ocean," NDTV.com, last modified November 21, 2017, <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/china-plans-economic-corridor-with-myanmar-for-access-to-indian-ocean-1778361>.

and investment route through Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar (BCIM) corridor. BCIM Economic corridor is "a specific trading route which operates common trade agreements and infrastructure of the countries involved– Bangladesh (via Chittagong), China (via Kunming), India (via Kolkata) and Myanmar (via Mandalay)– in order to increase the trade productivity". BCIM Economic Corridor firstly introduced by Chinese scholar from Kunming therefore this initiative was also known as Kunming Initiative (Sahoo, 2014).

Although China and Myanmar have been connected through BCIM Economic Corridor, China however assumes that a direct economic corridor would be better (NDTV, 2017). After the construction China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, China seeks Myanmar as an essential part to support to economic corridor specially to gain access to the Indian Ocean. China-Myanmar economic corridor will create Y-shaped which starts from China's Yunnan province, heading to Mandalay

in Myanmar. From there it extends to the east and west to Yangon New City and Kyaukpyu special Economic Zone, in the Rakhine province.

One of China's ongoing project in this route is the oil and gas pipelines linking Kunming and Kyaukphyu in Rakhine State which began to operate in 2014. Besides that, China is also negotiating to build a deep-water port at Kyaukpyu. Therefore, A railway between Kyaukphyu and Kunming would be part of Chinese President Xi Jinping's program Belt and Road initiative to build trade and transport connections linking China and Asia with the Middle East, Africa and Europe (Myint, 2018).

- China-Myanmar Energy Project

China's rapid economic growth has led to the increasing amount of domestic energy needs (Hong, 2011). According to World Energy Outlook (IEA 2010), the total of oil demand increased from 2.3 million barrels per day (mb/d) in 1990 to 8.1 mb/d in 2009. Due to the economic boom and its stagnant

domestic oil production, it has led Chinese NOCs (national oil companies) to expand the energy resources overseas in the early 1990s.

Regardless the achievements of China's "going out" strategy for oil and gas, China is facing potential force and rising costs. This is due to the higher oil dependence on some political unstable country such as African and Middle East countries. Therefore, China has to diversify its sources of energy resources, and place to get a higher priority on oil and natural gas from as closer to home as possible. Under Belt and Road Initiative, the energy project has boosted the economic development of China and strengthens the bilateral relations with its neighbors particularly with Myanmar. As for China, it can fulfill the high demand on energy. Meanwhile, in return for Myanmar it can develop the abundance of resource through the infrastructure development invested by China also provide electricity to some undeveloped city in Myanmar.

Oil and Gas Pipeline Project.

The China-Myanmar pipeline project was initiated in 2004 and took an important progress when "China National Petroleum Corporation" (CNPC) imported natural gas from Middle East to China and also assist Myanmar in providing gas locally. The gas pipeline has length 2,520km-793km to Myanmar section and the 1,727km to China section.

The pipelines location started from Kyaulpyu, the west coast of Myanmar, the place of oil being constructed. Meanwhile, for the crude oil pipeline

starts from Maday Island, while the gas pipeline begins at Ramree Island in Kyaukpyu. The pipelines projects spread throughout the state of Rakhine, Magway, Mandalay and state of Shan, before entering the Ruli region in the Yunnan province of China. The gas pipeline runs through Guizhou, Chongqing and Guangxi and end up at Kunming, Yunnan province. Meanwhile, the crude pipeline carried the crude oil that CNPC imported from Africa and the Middle East into China, via Myanmar.

Regardless of the energy source development interests in Kyaukpyu, China has an interest to build a deep-sea port to connect the poor southwestern region of China to the strategic position Indian Ocean (Writer, 2017). As in 2016, the China's CITIC, including China Harbor Engineering Company won the projects of the construction deep-sea port and the creation of an industrial area.

The Implementation of BRI in Military Cooperation

The military cooperation between China and Myanmar has been existing since 1990s, as China's PLA (People Liberation Army) became the assistance of Myanmar Army Force or known as Tatmadaw (Shivananda, 2011). The cooperation was started with the negotiation of purchase of weaponry systems including jet fighters, armored vehicles and naval vessels. Further, the Sino-Myanmar military cooperation was designed to achieve their common objective of expanding their military capability up to the Indian Ocean.



Figure 4. Gas Pipeline from Myanmar to China, 2011

Source: Shwe Gas Movement.

China's Growing Influence

Kyaukpyu could give China a key strategic base

● China ● U.S. ● India ● Potential ⚓ Naval base



Source: Bloomberg

Bloomberg

Figure 5. China's Growing Influence in Indian Ocean

Source: Bloomberg.



Figure 6. Myanmar Military Expenditure
 Source: Tradingeconomics.com | SIPRI, 2018)

Myanmar military expenditures has been fluctuating from 2012 to 2013, the amount increased to 3268.6 USD Million and increased to 3801 USD Million in 2015. Meanwhile in 2016 and 2017, the total expenditure of Myanmar decreased to 3634.3 USD Million in 2016 and 2604.1 USD million in 2017. According to The National Defense and Security Council, one of factors which affected Myanmar military expenditure is to deal with the rebel group (Pike, 2015). As in 2014, Myanmar with its military powerful voice in parliament, has spent 23.2 percent of its national budget on military expenditure against the rebel group.

- Joint Military Exercise.

Army Training

The exchange of high-level visits between the two armed forces—Tatmadaw and PLA (People Liberation Army) has proven the significant aspect on military relations. One of aspect supports this military relation is through the Army Training, such as training programs for weaponry where China involved Myanmar officers at the PLA's Staff College and Defense College.

Border Stability

The other aspect of China - Myanmar defense cooperation is security

cooperation along the border area. Due to the lawless nature of China - Myanmar border area, there are many notorious for various types of transnational crime such as human trafficking and the drug trade. This situation is further exacerbated by the presence of rebel group such as Kokang. However, China in pursuing its peaceful rise should be able to maintain the peace particularly with its neighbor in border area. To cope with this issue, China has series of military cooperation with Burmese army by deploying troops along the border with Myanmar, and conducted military exercises in a full-scale show of force.

Naval Drills

China for the first time has conducted its joint naval exercise with Myanmar in 2017. Three Chinese warships, including guided-missile destroyer Changchun, guided-missile frigate Jinzhou and replenishment ship Chaohu and from Myanmar, The F11 Aung Zeya and UMS Anawrahta (771), two Myanmar frigates, also participated in the exercises took part in the joint drills. According to China's defense ministry, "this event is a part of 180 Day of Goodwill visit and has concern on some subjects including communication,

formation maneuver, and joint search and rescue operations” (Parameswaran, 2017).

- Arms Transfer

Since 1989, China plays an important role as a leading supplier of weapons for Myanmar. Due to the Western sanctions on arms embargo, Myanmar loss its traditional weapons supplier during the military forces. The estimation of weapons has been supplied by China achieved US\$4 billion. They are including warships, small arms, anti-aircraft guns, combat aircraft, main battle tanks, armored personnel carriers, and so on. Besides that, China also supplied trucks of various sizes and capacities and arms procurement training. Therefore, Arms supply has been one of the Chinese strategies to engage with Myanmar in expanding its influence. Figure 7 has shown the Arms Transfers Database to Myanmar according to SIPRI in USD millions. From that figure, it can be seen that

China has become the largest supplier from Myanmar from 2014 – 2016 with the total US\$ 440 millions. With the huge number of arms export, it supports China’s willing to maintain stability around the border area and also the cooperation with Myanmar security organizations– both military and police in the issue of drug trafficking and other illegal cross-border activities (Home – Parliament of Australia, 2017).

To comprehend the huge number of arms, transfer from China, from figure 8 it can be seen the details about Myanmar Arms Trade from 1990-2016. China at the figure has become the largest exporter country for arms transfer in Myanmar (Asrar, 2017). Moreover, as China is the giant neighbor of Myanmar, it will cost Myanmar less than other country to do arms transfer. The most Myanmar’s military import from China are aircraft, missile, armored vehicles, artillery and naval vessels. From 1990 – 2016 China has transferred: 120 Aircrafts, 1,029 Missiles, 21 Naval Vessels, 125 Artillery and 696 Armored Vehicles.

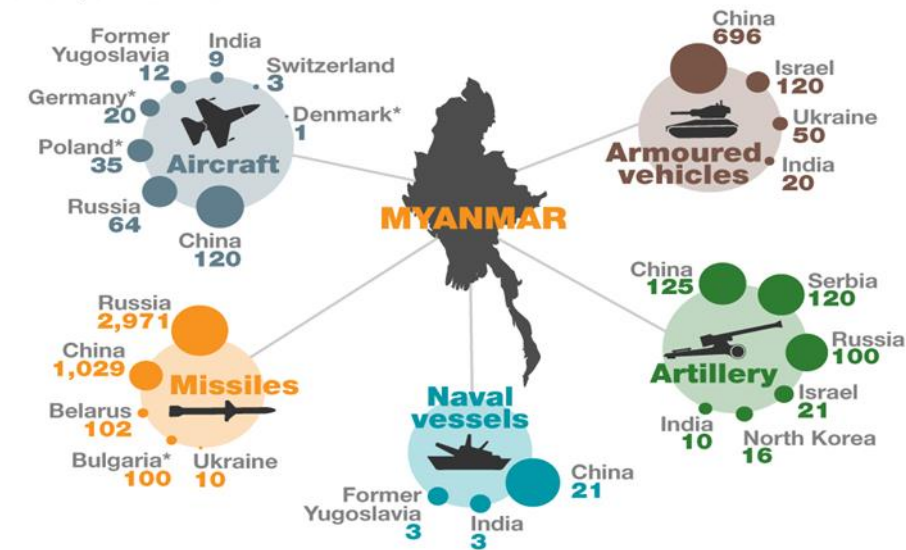
| Country | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | Total |
|---------|------|------|------|-------|
| Belarus | | | 6 | 51 |
| China | 65 | 185 | 190 | 440 |
| France | 8 | 8 | -- | 16 |
| Germany | -- | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| India | | | 27 | 39 |
| Russia | 28 | 12 | | 40 |
| Ukraine | -- | 4 | 4 | 7 |
| Total | 101 | 245 | 261 | 607 |

Figure 7. Arms Transfer to Myanmar

Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2018.

Myanmar arms trade 1990-2016: Who sold what?

Most of Myanmar's military imports come from China, Russia, Israel, Ukraine and India.



*Traded before the European Union's arms embargo on Myanmar or only traded non-combat aircraft/equipment.



Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
Icons: Noun Project | Creative Stall, Iyikon, Robert A. Di Ieso, Sandy Priyasa



Figure 8. Myanmar Arms Trade from 1990-2016

Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2016

The Implication of China and Myanmar Defense Cooperation toward ASEAN Countries

Apart of its advantages to China and Myanmar, their bilateral defense cooperation has also its economic and political security implications toward the rest of Southeast Asian countries including Laos, Thailand and Indonesia. China, for example, has also taken some crucial efforts to strengthen its relations with Laos by building closer cooperation in the field of information, culture and tourism. In 2015, China launched Laos' first satellite and it gave lot of improvements toward Laos broadcasting. Besides that, China's tourists who travel to Laos also advance the tourism sector and contributed significant revenue for Laos. In return, Laos has an important role toward China Belt and Road Initiative and it is expected toward China-Laos in 2021.

Meanwhile, China and Myanmar have also formed the triangular strategic partnership with Thailand to further promote peace and stability in the region. As Myanmar is having some internal problems, such as border issues, ethnic armed conflicts, human trafficking and drugs, China and Thailand work together to facilitate the protection of their land border. This trilateral cooperation will have more advantages outweigh the disadvantages to wider Southeast Asia. For instance, China will be easily to develop Belt and Road Initiative in ASEAN countries and for Thailand and Myanmar, it will strengthen their bonding as ASEAN country members with China.

At the regional level, these trilateral relations can also lead to the creation of stronger mutual trusts and increase the confidence building between China with ASEAN as a whole. These, of course, will

further shape a more favorable regional security environment in Southeast Asia. On top of that, it will become an important ingredient to build a more constructive regional architecture. While Indonesia may also use this framework of cooperation to further bolster the regional cooperation within ASEAN with China as one of the strategic partners in the region to achieve the goals of ASEAN Economic and Political-Security Community. In the shorter term, this framework of regional cooperation may also be utilized as an additional model to facilitate the peaceful solution in the South China Sea.

CONCLUSIONS

The rise of China has been a great phenomenon in this 21st century's world politics. This rise does not only refer to the economic, social and political aspect but more importantly it also touches the security-military aspect at both regional and global level. As a second largest military power in the world, China seeks to secure their regional and global security interests. Moreover, it is essential for the continuity of China's BRI development as the strategic instruments to bolster its regional and global hegemonic power. China with its status as a rising super power country, currently demands a lot of energies for its national and international ambitions and seek for the alternative routes to get any accesses into the Indian ocean. After building its permanent military base in Djibouti, China continuously seek to cooperate with the littoral states in Indian Ocean— including Myanmar.

Looking at its geographical position, Myanmar is located in a very strategic position. It sits on tri-junction Southeast, South and East Asia and one-third of its perimeter being the coast, linking to the Indian Ocean. Besides that, Myanmar is also very blessed with an abundance of natural resources such as natural gas. With this advantageous, Myanmar becomes the most convenient land for China, linking to the Indian Ocean. Moreover, Myanmar

shared 2,204 kilometers of its border with China. Paukphaw which in Myanmar word means siblings— is the way China and Myanmar introduce their close relations. Since the ancient times, both countries have maintained its substantive relations especially during the military regime in Myanmar.

China therefore with its defense policy of peaceful development engage Myanmar through economic and military cooperation. Besides, China also strengthen the bilateral ties through a good-neighboring policy. China have agreed through its development to give abundant of benefits to Myanmar particularly in developing the infrastructures in Myanmar and dealing with the border security issue. Meanwhile, in return, Myanmar have agreed to support China's BRI by providing an access for China to the Indian Ocean.

China therefore, from 2013 until 2017 has implemented its defense policy through the economic and military cooperation with Myanmar. In economic sector, Myanmar and China have agreed to construct the direct economic corridor and energy project particularly on oil and gas pipelines. Meanwhile, for the cooperation sector, China and Myanmar established its military cooperation since 1990s. It includes joint military exercise in army training, border stability, and naval drills and also in arms transfer.

This cooperation has resulted advantageous for both countries. As for Myanmar, it helps Myanmar to develop the infrastructure and to pursue the peace process especially in border area. Meanwhile, in return, China can fulfill the demand of oil and secure their national security interest by getting access to the Indian Ocean.

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