

The OBOR Initiative and ASEAN's Infrastructure Construction: Impact and Challenges

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Abstract: The “Silk Road Economic Belt” and “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” are initiatives first introduced by Xi in the fall of 2013 during visits to Kazakhstan and Indonesia. Besides the benefit from the initiative, the risk is the geopolitical impact of the Belt and Road, especially the risks of China's neighbor countries - ASEAN. The paper focuses on the initiative impact on the ASEAN's infrastructure in some sides, especially in economic, political, labor forces and immigration aspects. It will suggest some solutions for the issue. The demographic risks can't be resolved by one country. The governments should cooperate to govern the foreign contractors and employees, enhance law enforcement cooperation to crack down the illegal immigrants. Besides that, we should focus on the education and training. Training can improve the quality of labor force, decreases the number of human trafficking victims.

Keywords: OBOR, ASEAN, infrastructure, economic-political aspect, labor forces, immigration

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I. INTRODUCTION

On March 28, 2015, China's top economic planning agency, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), released a new action plan outlining key details of Beijing's “One Belt, One Road” initiative. The “Silk Road Economic Belt” and “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” are initiatives first introduced by Xi in the fall of 2013 during visits to Kazakhstan and Indonesia. The “Belt” is a planned network of overland road and rail routes, oil and natural gas pipelines, and other infrastructure projects that will stretch from Xi'an in central China, through Central Asia, and ultimately reach as far as Moscow, Rotterdam, and Venice. The “Road” is its maritime equivalent: a network of planned port and other coastal infrastructure projects that dot the map from South and Southeast Asia to East Africa and the northern Mediterranean Sea. The new Belt and Road plan, jointly released by the NDRC and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Commerce, highlights that the scope of the initiative will extend well beyond infrastructure construction. The program will also include efforts to promote greater financial integration and use of the Renminbi by foreign countries, create an “Information Silk Road” linking regional information and communications technology networks, and lower barriers to cross-border trade and investment in the region, among other initiatives. New regional institutions, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and New Silk Road Fund (NSRF), are also designed in part to complement and support the Belt and Road's development.¹ Besides the benefit from the initiative, the risk is the geopolitical impact of the Belt and Road, especially the risks of China's neighbor countries - ASEAN.

The paper focuses on the initiative impact on the ASEAN's infrastructure in some sides, especially in economic, political, labor forces and immigration aspects. It will have five parts. The first part is introduction. The second part is literature review. The third part is about the overview of the Sino-ASEAN relation and the OBOR initiative. The next part discusses the prospects and risks which the OBOR brings to the ASEAN member states. The five part is how to overcome the challenges to get the benefits for both sides and then come to conclusion.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The ‘One Belt One Road’ initiative has become the favorite topic for scholars since it was announced. Brig. Dr Waseem Ishaque & Dr. Muhammad Zia-ur-Rehman in the paper ‘One Belt One Road (OBOR) - Building the Community of Shared Destiny and Common Development Through Inclusive Participation’ focus on the peaceful development of China is for the better service to humanity and inclusive development of the world through win-win cooperation. The study focuses on that to realize the vision of common prosperity of mankind, President Xi Jinping's initiative of “One Belt One Road” is manifestations of great Chinese dream of

¹ Scott Kennedy and David A. Parker (2015), ‘Building “One Belt, One Road”’, *CSIS*, Accessed October 2018, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/building-china's-one-belt-one-road>

regional connectivity and enhanced economic integration, which prevailed in the past and have to be revitalized for eventual benefit of relevant countries, the region and the world at large.¹ The book *The Belt & Road Initiative in the Global Arena Chinese and European Perspectives* which was edited by Yu Cheng, Lilei Song and Lihe Huang was the result of the forum “The Belt and Road to a Better Future: China–Europe Youth Dialogue” hosted by Tongji University in June 2016, which collected truly innovative suggestions by young scholars from Europe and China. This proceedings of the forum on the One Belt, One Road initiative covers the cultures, religions, languages, political systems, and national interests of the different Eurasian nations, trying to provide answers to questions on the implementation of the Belt and Road initiative, which is likely to encounter numerous challenges.²

Southeast Asia countries will be a part of the ‘One Belt One Road’ initiative. Many scholars have researched the relation and challenges which the ‘One Belt One Road’ initiative brings to ASEAN. Alvin Cheng-Hin Lim in the paper ‘China’s “Belt and Road” and Southeast Asia: Challenges and Prospects’ mentioned the risk and benefits that the initiative will bring to Southeast Asian countries in the foreign investment and infrastructure aspect.³ In the paper ‘TPP, OBOR and ASEAN: Where Will They Lead To?’, Ba, Alice D. discussed about the impact of the TPP, the OBOR to ASEAN. In projecting different conceptions of regional integration, the Trans-Pacific Partnership and China’s “One Belt, One Road” initiatives compete not just with one another but also potentially challenge ASEAN centrality, as well.⁴ Evelyn Shyamala A/p Paul Devadason Vgr Chandran A/l Govindaraju in the paper ‘What Does the ‘One Belt, One Road’ Initiative Mean for ASEAN?’ discussed the impact of the initiative and the attitude of ASEAN. Members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) welcome initiatives the ‘One Belt, One Road (OBOR)’ and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). However, there are some reservations and concerns to these initiatives.⁵

Bruno Jetin in the paper “‘One Belt-One Road Initiative’ and ASEAN Connectivity: Synergy Issues and Potentialities’ argues that the Chinese initiative is potentially a good news for ASEAN which has huge infrastructure investments needs to implement its master plan for connectivity (AMPC). But this will depend on the capacity of ASEAN to maintain its centrality and speak with one voice to China when investment decisions will be taken. Otherwise, the risk is that the OBOR strategy may deepen existing divides between mainland ASEAN and maritime ASEAN, while the purpose of the AMPC is precisely to alleviate them. The paper will analyze these issues and explore the solutions to achieve a synergy between China’s OBOR and AMPC.⁶ In the paper ‘One Belt, One Road, One ASEAN? Chances and Risks for Regional Integration and Development’, Dominik Hofzumahaus and Gintushaann Indirakumar discuss the possible consequences of the Chinese Silk Road Initiative for regional integration and development in Southeast Asia. In this context, individual country perspectives are presented and the respective risks and opportunities in the ASEAN context are discussed.⁷ The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank which is one of the part of the initiative also became the topic of some scholars. Olga Daksueva and Serafettin Yilmaz in the paper ‘The AIIB and China-ASEAN Relations Shaping a New North-South Paradigm’ aims to examine the AIIB from a normative perspective, investigating its role as a cursor for structural changes in China’s foreign policy conceptualization. It goes on to hypothesize that, over the past few years, there has been a gradual transformation in China’s relations with Southeast Asian countries, which indicates a shift from a traditional “South-South” model to a “North-South” model.⁸

The paper ‘One Belt One Road (OBOR) and Malaysia: A Long-term Geopolitical Perspective’ of Abdul Rahman Embong, Hans-Dieter Evers and Rashila Ramli concentrates on the maritime part of this development policy, geo-political effects like increasing political dependency due to Chinese capital investments and acquisition of property rights in ports and condominiums. Regarding these developments, a Malaysian maritime

¹ Brig. Dr Waseem Ishaque & Dr. Muhammad Zia-ur-Rehman (2018), ‘One Belt One Road (OBOR) - Building the Community of Shared Destiny and Common Development Through Inclusive Participation’, *ResearchGate*

² Yu Cheng, Lilei Song and Lihe Huang (2018), *The Belt & Road Initiative in the Global Arena Chinese and European Perspectives*

³ Lim, Alvin Cheng-Hin (2015, December), ‘China’s “Belt and Road” and Southeast Asia: Challenges and Prospects’, *Jati*, Volume 20, 3-15

⁴ Ba, Alice D. (2016), ‘TPP, OBOR and ASEAN: Where Will They Lead To?’, (RSIS Commentaries, No. 108). RSIS Commentaries. Singapore: Nanyang Technological University

⁵ Evelyn Shyamala A/p Paul Devadason Vgr Chandran A/l Govindaraju (2017), ‘What Does the ‘One Belt, One Road’ Initiative Mean for ASEAN?’, *Research SEA*

⁶ Jetin, Bruno. (2017) “‘One Belt-One Road Initiative’ and ASEAN Connectivity: Synergy Issues and Potentialities’, *Working Paper No.30*, Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam

⁷ Dominik Hofzumahaus and Gintushaann Indirakumar (2018), ‘One Belt, One Road, One ASEAN? Chances and Risks for Regional Integration and Development’, *The International Conference for 70th Anniversary of Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University*

⁸ Olga Daksueva and Serafettin Yilmaz (2018), ‘The AIIB and China-ASEAN Relations Shaping a New North-South Paradigm’, *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 95–121

policy is called for to match OBOR and the Indonesian Maritime Fulcrum, as well as ASEAN integration.¹ In the paper *China's Strategic Adjustments: Impact on the World, Region and Vietnam*, Nguyen Quang Thuan discusses the strategic adjustment of China with the 'One Belt One Road' initiative as example. The "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) strategy, combined with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the internationalization of the yuan, is the main focus, and exerts a strong impact on the existing international financial institutions as well as the economic relations between China and many other countries in the world. While Europe has been concerned about China's unfair competition and the dependence on Chinese investment, ASEAN has increasingly deepened the mutual economic dependence between itself and Beijing. A negative outcome of this is the rising economic dependence on China of quite a few ASEAN member states, including Vietnam.²

Most of studies focus on the initiative's impact on the economic, security and diplomacy side, especially on the relation between China and Europe, between China and Southeast Asian countries. This paper will focus on economic, political, labor forces and immigration aspects.

III. OVERVIEW OF SINO-ASEAN RELATION AND THE ONE BELT ONE ROAD INITIATIVE

3.1 The relation between ASEAN and China

On 8 August 1967, ASEAN was created in Bangkok with the participation of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Thailand. The motivation of the ASEAN foundation was not only to "accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region," but also "to promote regional peace and stability". Whether consciously or unconsciously, considerations of national and regional security also figured largely in the minds of the founders of the ASEAN. In fact, the immediate motivation to form ASEAN was a common desire of its members for collective action toward external powers in the Cold War. The Bangkok Declaration stated that ASEAN is open to "all States in the South-East Asian region subscribing to the aims, principles and purposes" but it did not include the communist countries. According to Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew (1978), the formation of ASEAN helped the members "to have their interests taken into consideration when great powers make their compromises".³ ASEAN formation was the response to the uncertainties of the rise of China and the American and Japanese responses. However, in comparison to external threats which could be considered differently, the ASEAN members shared a common perception of internal threats. This was explained by the fear of the national liberation movement in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, and by the communist insurgency along the border areas between Malaysia and Thailand, and between Malaysia and Indonesia. ASEAN grew when Brunei became its sixth member on 1984.

The world changed when the Cold War ended in 1990 with the collapse of one of the world's superpower, Soviet Union. The other superpower, United States of America became the most powerful country in the world. Economic development became the most motivation to most of nation states. Countries in the world began to cooperate, joining the international integrations to develop their countries. As the result, ASEAN expanded cooperation in the economic aspect. In 1992, ASEAN signed the Framework Agreement on Enhancing ASEAN Economic Cooperation. Agreement has created the fundamental framework for ASEAN cooperation in six areas, including: commercial and industrial; minerals and energy; finance and banking; food, agriculture and forestry; transport and postal services - telecommunications. On this occasion, five original member countries of ASEAN also signed an agreement on setting up ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), laying the foundation for an important expansion of economic cooperation, trade and Economic Community building ASEAN International (AEC) later.⁴

Political cooperation and security within ASEAN and between ASEAN and its partners are also increasingly consolidated and developed. One typical result of this process is the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was initiated and put into operation from May 7/1994, with the participation of 18 countries in the region (including 6 ASEAN member countries, the US, Japan, China, Russia, Canada, European Union, Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam, Laos, Papua New Guinea and South Korea). After that, ASEAN opened to the other countries in Southeast Asia with the enrolling of Vietnam in 1995, Laos and Myanmar in 1997, Cambodia in 1999.

¹Abdul Rahman Embong, Hans-Dieter Evers and Rashila Ramli (2017), 'One Belt One Road (OBOR) and Malaysia: A Long-term Geopolitical Perspective', IKMAS Working Paper Series, Institute of Malaysian and International Studies University Kebangsaan Malaysia

²Nguyen, Quang Thuan. (2017) *China's Strategic Adjustments: Impact on the World, Region and Vietnam*

³Pham, Quang Minh. (2011) 'In Search of an ASEAN Identity', *Multiple identities via spirituality, histories and cultural representations*, The Work of the 2010/2011 API Fellows

⁴ ASEAN National Secretariat of Vietnam – Foreign Ministry-ASEAN Department, Accessed October 2018, <http://asean.mofa.gov.vn/en/>

China–Southeast Asia relations did not begin to significantly move forward until the aftermath of the 1997 Asia Financial Crisis. China's decision not to devalue the renminbi saved countries such as Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia from further economic damages and greatly improved China's status and image in Southeast Asia. Coinciding with its economic boom in the new century, China looked to Southeast Asia as a convenient region to support its growing influence as a global power. In contrast with Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia seems to offer a more favorable environment for cooperation for China.¹ Against the backdrop of changing regional dynamics, China showed greater enthusiasm toward exclusive regionalism, backing a number of ASEAN-led institutions, including the ASEAN Plus Three and the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI).

In 2002, ASEAN and China signed the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the East Sea (DOC). Because of the tensions caused by disputes over the South China Sea between ASEAN member countries and China, Secretary of the 10 ASEAN countries and China have negotiated and signed the Declaration on the conduct of parties in the East sea (DOC) in Phnom Penh on April 11, 2002. This is a significant step forward for the process of settling the disputes in the South China Sea, to create conditions for the parties to carry out confidence-building cooperation, towards building the Code of Conduct (COC) has calculated legally binding on the parties in the East sea. At Summit 9th (Bali, Indonesia, May 10/2003), ASEAN issued a Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (also known as the Bali Declaration II), formalizing the implementation of the idea of three pillars of the ASEAN Community.² In 2010, China claimed "indisputable sovereignty" over the South China Sea, but said that the other nations in the area could continue to navigate its waters.³

As a part of East Asia, ASEAN actively participated the integration process of East Asia. The integration The East Asia Summit (EAS) for the first time, was held at the Crab-la-five Depot, Malaysia, Indonesia on May 12/2005, with the participation of leaders of ASEAN member countries, China, India, Japan, Korea and New Zealand. At this meeting, the leaders of the countries signed the Joint Statement on East Asia Summit, which set out the objectives, principles, areas and modalities for the functioning of the EAS. Accordingly, the EAS will be a forum for dialogue leaders on strategic issues in order to support the goal of community building in East Asia; is an open and inclusive process, in which ASEAN plays a key role; complement and support the other regional fora available, the annual meeting on the occasion of the ASEAN chair ASEAN Summit. Heads of state have agreed to identify five priority areas of cooperation (among nearly 20 areas mentioned in the discussion), including energy, finance, education, natural disasters and epidemics. At the East Asia Summit, the 6th (held on 19/11/2011 in Bali, Indonesia), Russia and the US have participated as an Official Member of the EAS. The EAS leaders issued a "Declaration of Principles EAS mutually beneficial relationship".⁴

China cultivated a more cooperative relationship with members of ASEAN. China has pursued this ambition with a diplomatic campaign designed to bind the region to China - politically, economically, and militarily. China's transformation into a major economic power in the 21st century has led to an increase of foreign investments in the bamboo network, a network of overseas Chinese businesses operating in the markets of Southeast Asia that share common family and cultural ties. In the relation with China, Southeast Asian countries can be put into two categories: maritime ASEAN (Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Timor-Leste, the Philippines, and Singapore) and mainland ASEAN (including Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam). Among maritime ASEAN, Malaysia is the top cooperation partner for China. Singapore, the Philippines and Indonesia are key cooperation partners; Timor-Leste and Brunei are general partners. Among mainland ASEAN, Thailand is the top cooperation partner; Laos and Cambodia are key cooperation partners; Myanmar and Vietnam are general partners. Accordingly, Malaysia and Thailand are expected to become China's pivot countries, thus becoming part of a strategic supporting belt.⁵

The One Belt One Road initiative is a part of the Chinese strategies toward ASEAN. Both ASEAN and China have ambition to be the centrality in East Asia so the Sino-ASEAN will be impact not only on both sides but also on other countries in East Asia.

¹ Liu, Tony Tai-Ting. (2018) 'The Rise of China and Its Geopolitical Implication', *Asian Politics*, Volume 23, No.1, 6

² ASEAN National Secretariat of Vietnam – Foreign Ministry-ASEAN Department, Accessed October 2018, <http://asean.mofa.gov.vn/en/>

³ Foreign Relations of China', *Wikipedia*, Accessed October 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_relations_of_China

⁴ ASEAN National Secretariat of Vietnam – Foreign Ministry-ASEAN Department, Accessed October 2018, <http://asean.mofa.gov.vn/en/>

⁵ Xue Li and Li Yongke (2017), 'The Belt and Road Initiative and China's Southeast Asia Diplomacy', *The Diplomat*, Accessed October 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/11/the-belt-and-road-initiative-and-chinas-southeast-asia-diplomacy/>

3.2 The One Belt One Road Initiative

Several routes are proposed for the 'new Silk Road.'



McKinsey&Company

Figure 1: Routes of the "One Belt One Road" initiative (Source: McKinsey&Company website)

The "Silk Road Economic Belt" and "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" are initiatives first introduced by Xi in the fall of 2013 during visits to Kazakhstan and Indonesia. The "Belt" is a planned network of overland road and rail routes, oil and natural gas pipelines, and other infrastructure projects that will stretch from Xi'an in central China, through Central Asia, and ultimately reach as far as Moscow, Rotterdam, and Venice. The "Road" is its maritime equivalent: a network of planned port and other coastal infrastructure projects that dot the map from South and Southeast Asia to East Africa and the northern Mediterranean Sea. The official document lays out the basic goals of the Belt and Road Initiative: "It is aimed at promoting orderly and free flow of economic factors, highly efficient allocation of resources and deep integration of markets; encouraging the countries along the Belt and Road to achieve economic policy coordination and carry out broader and more in-depth regional cooperation of higher standards; and jointly creating an open, inclusive and balanced regional economic cooperation architecture that benefits all."¹ Transport connectivity is at the core of the initiative. It will build with participating countries seamless and sustainable intermodal transport links along its corridors following common standards.

The "One Belt One Road" initiative envisages six economic corridors for greater economic cooperation and integration across a vast region extending to China's west and south: Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Corridor (BCIM) which is on cooperation in transportation infrastructure, investment and commercial circulation and people-to-people connectivity; China-Indochina Corridors (ICP) which are the multiple connecting international transport links in Mekong River area; China-Central-West Asia Economic Corridors (CAWA) which runs from Xinjiang China and exits the country via Alashankou to join the railway networks of Central and West Asia and beyond; New Eurasian Land Bridge (NELB) which is an international rail line running from Lianyungang, Jiangsu through Alashankou, Xinjiang to Rotterdam, Holland; China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor (CMR) which will strengthen the long-established, frontier trade and cross-border cooperation between these countries and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CP) which runs from Kashgar, Xinjiang to Pakistan's Gwadar port.²

Both mainland Southeast Asia and maritime Southeast Asia is in the economic corridors. Myanmar is a part of land corridor that bypasses the Malacca Straits is mirrored in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor—SREB's South Asian showpiece megaproject—which offers a similar overland transshipment route from the Arabian Sea to China from Pakistan's Gwadar port.

Laos and Cambodia arguably have the closest and most stable relations with China in mainland Southeast Asia. In Laos, the high-speed railway between the southern Chinese city of Kunming and the Laotian capital of Vientiane will be the showpiece SREB megaproject in Southeast Asia. It runs from Kunming to Vientiane, a strategic location along the East-West Corridor that connects Vietnam's Danang with Phitsanulok in central Thailand and Mawlamyine in Myanmar. Involving the construction of 154 bridges, 76 tunnels, and 31

¹ Helen Chin and Winnie He (2016), *The Belt and Road Initiative: 65 Countries and Beyond*, Global Sourcing Fung Business Intelligence Centre, p8

² China's "One Belt One Road" Initiative: An ESCAP Report', *Population and Development Review* 43(3), 2017 p583-587

train stations, the Kunming-Vientiane line is estimated to cost 7 billion USD, which the Lao government will finance with concessionary loans from China. Another railway in Southeast Asia is from Kunming to Thailand. This medium-speed 840 km Sino-Thai railway will connect Kunming with the Thai cities of Nong Khai, Bangkok, and Rayong.¹ It passes through Boten, then over the Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge, and finally arrives in Bangkok. Construction is planned to begin before the end of 2015, and the project is scheduled to be completed in 3 years. While the Kunming-Bangkok Expressway was completed in December 2013, construction of the disputed China-Lao Railway project, possibly causing severe environmental problems in northern Laos, only began in December 2015.

In maritime Southeast Asia, the successful Indonesian bid could prove helpful in securing a successful Chinese bid to construct the proposed high-speed railway line between Kuala Lumpur (KL) and Singapore to construct the China's OBOR plans. KL-Singapore high-speed railway proposal on OBOR, Singapore's involvement will go beyond the planned KL-Singapore high-speed rail line, with experts expecting Singapore to become a key financial and logistics hub in the still unfolding OBOR network.²

China remains Myanmar's largest economic partner, both in terms of investment and trade. Laos and Cambodia arguably have the closest and most stable relations with China in mainland Southeast Asia. There are territorial and maritime disputes between the Philippines and China. Prospects for OBOR in the Philippines are dim given the Aquino government's anti-China rhetoric and insistence on pursuing the settlement of their bilateral disagreements through multilateral forums rather than bilateral discussions as China prefers. Vietnam is an unlikely partner for OBOR given its fears of economic domination by China and its maritime disputes with China over contested islands in the South China Sea. Malaysia and Thailand are expected to become China's pivot countries, thus becoming part of a strategic supporting belt. Therefore, the ASEAN can be divided into three groups: The top cooperation partner with Malaysia, Thailand; the key cooperation partner with Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore; the general cooperation partner with Vietnam, Myanmar, Brunei. The initiative construction will improve the ASEAN's infrastructure connection with all sub-regions in Asia, between Europe Asia and Africa step by step and will finish all investment and trade barriers for the creation of a sound business environment within the region and in all related countries.

IV. THE PROSPECTS AND RISKS

4.1 In the economic and political aspects

Table 1: Rate of GDP Growth 2012 – 2016 (%)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
ASEAN	6.2	5.2	4.7	4.7	4.8
China	7.9	7.8	7.3	6.9	6.7

Source: ASEAN Secretariat, Statista³

Economy of China and ASEAN contribute mainly to the world's economy. In 2016, the combined GDP of ASEAN-if it were a single economy- placed it as the 6th largest in the world and the 3rd largest in Asia, at US\$2.55 trillion. The rate of GDP growth in China and ASEAN decreased in the period 2012 – 2016. China's rate of GDP growth decreased from 7.9% in 2012 to 6.7% in 2016. In ASEAN, the rate of GDP growth decreased from 6.2% in 2012 to 4.7% in 2015. It increased to 4.8% in 2016. However, the economic growth of China is faster than the economic growth of ASEAN. China and Southeast Asia already have strong ties in economic cooperation. ASEAN is currently China's third largest trading partner. With the implementation of the upgraded version of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area, ASEAN may overtake the EU as China's largest trading partner in the future.⁴

Table 2: China's FDI in ASEAN

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
ASEAN (billion dollars)	6.1	7.627	7.809	14.604	10.279

Source: Statistical Bulletin of China's Outward Foreign Direct Investment

China is one of the important investment partners in Southeast Asia. The FDI increases every year. According to the table 1, in 2012, China invested 6.1 billion dollars to ASEAN, increased to 7.809 billion dollars in 2014. It increased doubly to 14.604 billion dollars in 2015. 10000 USD million dollars

¹ Lim, Alvin Cheng-Hin. 'China's "Belt and Road" and Southeast Asia: Challenges and Prospects', 5

² Ibid, 8

³ Accessed October 2018, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/263616/gross-domestic-product-gdp-growth-rate-in-china/>

⁴ Xue Li and Li Yongke (2017), 'The Belt and Road Initiative and China's Southeast Asia Diplomacy', *The Diplomat*, Accessed October 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/11/the-belt-and-road-initiative-and-chinas-southeast-asia-diplomacy/>

Table 3: China's FDI in ASEAN by country (million dollars)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Singapore	12383.33	14750.70	20639.95	31984.91	33445.64
Indonesia	3098.04	4656.65	6793.50	8125.14	9545.54
Laos	1927.84	2770.92	4490.99	4841.71	5500.14
Vietnam	1604.38	2166.72	2865.65	3373.56	4983.63
Myanmar	3093.72	3569.68	3925.57	4258.73	4620.42
Thailand	2126.93	2472.43	3079.47	3440.12	4533.48
Cambodia	2317.68	2848.57	3222.28	3675.86	4368.53
Malaysia	1026.13	1668.18	1785.63	2231.56	3633.96
Philippines	593.14	692.38	759.94	711.05	718.93
Brunei	66.35	72.12	69.55	73.52	203.77

Source: 2017 Statistical Bulletin of China's Outward Foreign Direct Investment

According to the table above, Singapore and Indonesia are two countries in ASEAN receive the most FDI from China. Philippines and Brunei are two countries receive the least FDI from China. The China's FDI flows into some sectors, consists of the leasing and business services sector, the manufacturing sector; the wholesale and retail trade sector; the financial services sector; the water conservancy, environment and public facility management sector; the construction sector; the agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishery sector; the production and supply of electricity, heat, gas and water sector; the real estate sector. The leasing and business services sector were mainly concentrated in Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, etc. The manufacturing sector were mainly concentrated in Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, etc. The wholesale and retail trade sector were mainly concentrated in Singapore, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, etc. The financial services sector was mainly concentrated in Singapore, Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, etc. The water conservancy, environment and public facility management sector were mainly concentrated in Singapore. The construction sector was mainly concentrated in Singapore, Cambodia, Indonesia, etc. The agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishery sector were mainly concentrated in Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, etc. The production and supply of electricity, heat, gas and water sector were mainly distributed in Indonesia, Myanmar, etc.¹

China and ASEAN have collaboration in education, especially in higher education. Most collaboration and exchange in higher education between China and ASEAN countries (except Singapore) is found in the provinces neighboring ASEAN countries. As China's neighbor, Vietnam has strengthened its relations and collaboration with China and joined organizations concerned with higher education in the region. China is a popular destination for Vietnamese students and offers more scholarships for Vietnamese students. ASEAN members and their higher education institutions now see China as an attractive partner, especially its top-tier universities. Based on the Agreement on Trade in Services signed by China and ASEAN in 2007 under the ASEAN-China Free Trade Zone, education services are a market item that can be "traded" trans-nationally within the region. Meanwhile, NGOs such as the Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (a consortium of major public universities from various Southeast Asian countries) foster cooperation among member institutions, particularly through regional fellowships and academic exchange programs. The number of students from ASEAN countries studying in China keeps rising. In 2010, there were 265,090 foreign students from 194 countries studying in China. Confucius Institutes where teaching Chinese and intercultural exchange, are spreading among its ASEAN neighbors: 12 in Thailand, seven in Indonesia, three in the Philippines, two in Malaysia, two in Myanmar, one in Singapore, one in Cambodia, and one in Laos. Institutional level exchange and collaboration are becoming regular and frequent, as evidenced by the annual China-ASEAN University President Forum.²

By being part of the OBOR, ASEAN countries will have greater access to AIIB, which can lead to a bigger regional community. ASEAN is constructing the ASEAN Community which need a huge budget to implement its master plan for connectivity (AMPC). The AMPC and OBOR may contribute to achieving the "Post- 2015 Vision." It would succeed the 2015 Asian Community's Economic and Socio-Cultural Blueprints. Meanwhile, the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) can easily materialize upon setting-up of the required facilities and promotion of shared ideas. It will generate employment and help in constructing the trans-ASEAN energy pipelines for funneling oil and gas from

¹MOFCOM (2017), Statistical Bulletin of China's Outward Foreign Direct Investment, Ministry of Commerce PRC

² YANG Rui (2012), 'Internationalization, Regionalization, and Soft Power: China's Relations with ASEAN's Member Countries in Higher Education', *Front. Edu. China*, 7(4):486-507

ASEAN's oil-producing countries. Energy security is of urgent necessity for both China and the ASEAN non-energy producing countries.¹

There are also the risks from the OBOR initiative. One of the risks is the appearance of "asymmetric" pairs of economic relations between China and its neighbors, especially in Southeast Asia. There are some cases in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. With Cambodia, behind the impressive numbers of Chinese investment and aid to Cambodia, lie hidden agendas and serious social and political implications. There are concerns that the government is at risk of losing its autonomy. If it were to rely solely on China, Cambodia also risks losing face and becoming marginalised if it continues to put China ahead of ASEAN. Another outstanding example of growing dependence on China is Laos. China's growing influence in Laos, marked by expanded investment and trade, has led some international agencies to warn Laos about an unhealthy financial dependence on China. In 2014, China became Laos' leading investor with funds totaling more than USD 5 billion, covering mining, hydropower and agribusiness, putting it at great risk of coming under Chinese domination.²

Another side, due to certain limitations in the level of economic development of China, investments from China often do not assist sustainable development or the transfer of technologies to the other partner in the long term. In addition, they tend to have a negative impact on the natural and social environments of the countries in the long run. For example, in the case of Vietnam, Chinese FDI does not focus on agriculture, forestry, fisheries, etc., but on the exploitation of Vietnam's natural resources. Extraction of ores from Vietnam to export raw materials, such as coal and tin, to China does not bring much economic benefit for Vietnam or have positive spillover effects, but it makes environment polluted and negative impact on the sustainable development of Vietnam.³

With respect to Chinese investment in Laos, Laos also harbours some distrust towards China. A number of Chinese-backed infrastructure projects in Laos have been shelved for various reasons, including a lack of transparency in the bidding process. These pairs of asymmetric economic relations have arisen partly due to some countries' need for foreign investment capital for development based on "using natural resources as capital". These countries appear to be the reserves of energy and natural resources to serve the goals of Beijing. These risks can be the reason that countries afraid to attend the One Belt One Road Initiative and slow down the implementation progress.

Another problem comes from ASEAN. ASEAN's problem is that it has not the financial means to carry out successfully the ambitious projects of the AMPC. Policy and institutional barriers have not been reduced. Rules, regulations and standards have not been harmonized between ASEAN member state. Additional delays come from the difficulty in reaching an agreement on how the project will be funded and what the conditions will be. The first 250 km phase of the project within Thailand cost around US\$ 5.2 billion while the China-Laos railway will cost around US\$ 7 billion. Because Thailand and especially Laos have limited financial capacities, the bulk of the financing will come from China. In many countries, big infrastructure projects when financed by China are realized by Chinese companies with Chinese workers which reduce job opportunities for local workers.⁴

4.2 In the labor force and immigration aspect

ASEAN has a long history of immigration and refugees. Refugee flows have been both regional in origin, with the Indochinese refugee flow of 1975–1996 being one example, and, extra-regional (in the sense of a flow inward to the region) with many refugees from the Middle East seeking asylum or transiting countries in Southeast Asia. Recent intra-regional flows have included Burmese and Vietnamese minority groups, Filipinos fleeing violence in the southern Philippines, and Hmong from Laos.⁵

Table 4: Chinese FDI enterprises with local employees in ASEAN

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Chinese FDI enterprises in ASEAN	2,600	2,700	3,300	3,600	4,300
Local employees in ASEAN	118,300	159,700	159,500	315,000	283,900

Source: Statistical Bulletin of China's Outward Foreign Direct Investment

With the FDI increase, more and more Chinese enterprises come to ASEAN for their business. In 2012, there was 2,600 Chinese enterprises, increased to 3,300 Chinese enterprises in 2014. In 2016, there was

¹Henelito A. Sevilla Jr. (2017, June-December), 'China's New Silk Route Strategy and the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)', *Indian Journal of Asian Affairs*, Vol. 30, No. 1/2, pp. 85-91, p89

²Nguyen, Quang Thuan, *China's Strategic Adjustments: Impact on the World, Region and Vietnam*, 8

³Ibid, 9

⁴Jetin, Bruno. "'One Belt-One Road Initiative' and ASEAN Connectivity: Synergy Issues and Potentialities', 10

⁵Penelope Mathew and Tristan Harley (2016), 'Regionalism and Refugee Protection', *Griffith Law School Research Paper No.16-13*

4,300 Chinese enterprises. It obviously created more jobs for local people in ASEAN. In 2012, the Chinese enterprises hired 118,300 local employees, increased to 159,700 local employees in 2013. It decreased to 159,500 local employees in 2014 but kept increasing in 2015 with 315,000 local employees and in 2016 with 283,900 local employees. When the initiative construction completes, the number of jobs will increase, making the opportunities for Chinese and Southeast Asian countries' employees. At that time, the challenge is lack of skilled labor which depends on training, education, physique, and health.

For the labor forces quality, ASEAN has reached some achievements. A third of 18-23 year olds in ASEAN attended tertiary level education in 2016. In 2008, ASEAN reached the threshold of 90% of literacy rate for both women and men. The increase in adult literacy rate in ASEAN is up to 94.9% overall in 2016, or 96.3% and 93.5% for women and men, respectively.¹ They are the first stage to improve the quality of labor force and prepare for the 'One Belt One Road' initiative implication.

Table 5: Chinese Visitors to ASEAN 2012 - 2015

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Chinese visitors to ASEAN (persons)	9283	12651	13059	18596

Source: ASEAN Secretariat

ASEAN has become one of the Chinese's favorite tourism destination with beautiful view, cheap cost and delicious food. The number of Chinese visitors to ASEAN increases every year. In 2012, there was 9283 persons and increased doubly in 2015 with 18596 persons. The 'One Belt One Road' initiative can promote the development of both sides' tourism.

The "One Belt One Road" initiative is intended to help make use of China's enormous industrial overcapacity and ease the entry of Chinese goods into regional markets. It also eases the entry of demographic risks. The main security issues also the main risks at the border are the drugs smugglers and illegally immigrants. China borders is a major international center of opium and methamphetamine production in the Golden Triangle, which includes Myanmar, Laos and Thailand. Officials say Guangxi and the adjacent province of Yunnan are the most drug-plagued areas in China. Between Sept 16 and Nov 15, 2015, China and Vietnam conducted a two-month-long special operation to target major drug trafficking rings and drug smuggling crimes. Law enforcement officers from China and Vietnam have investigated 1,466 drug smuggling cases, detained 2,054 suspects and confiscated 2,383 kilograms of drugs since the operation began, the ministry said. In addition to opium and meth, synthetic drug smuggling from Vietnam is also a significant problem and requires urgent cooperation, the ministry said. China and Vietnam will enhance law enforcement cooperation to crack down on drug trafficking, as the border has become the second largest channel for drug smuggling to China.² China conducts monthly joint patrols with its Laotian and Myanmar counterparts, who – petrol permitting – do additional patrols alone. There have been successes. In 2013, a Chinese-Laotian patrol found 580 kg (1,280 lbs) of yaba, worth more than 100 million yuan (£10.9m), hidden in a cargo ship. But more patrols are needed, said the UNODC's Douglas, and Mekong countries also need to coordinate and share intelligence to interdict more drugs.

Another issue is illegal immigrants. Tens of thousands of illegal aliens from Vietnam and other Southeast Asian nations are crossing into southern China each year. China has busted several criminal rings this year importing Vietnamese workers. In a publicized crackdown on two networks operating in Guangxi in 2010, police caught 369 illegal immigrants who were fanning out across southern China to work. The jobs pay less than \$5 a day, but that's three times the average wage in Vietnam and perhaps half as much as a Chinese worker could demand, including benefits and overtime, in today's more discriminating labor market.³ The Chinese labor market can absorb low-paid workers for now, and the Vietnamese labor market doesn't have enough well-paying jobs. Besides that, more and more Vietnamese women were sold to Chinese men. Chinese men in rural area are difficult to get married with a Chinese woman. It is easier and cheaper to have a Vietnamese wife. In poor, remote areas, many Chinese men "buy wives" from abroad for up to \$ 12,000. In 2012, more than 1,280 foreign women and girls were rescued and repatriated to Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar.⁴

¹ ASEAN Secretariat (2017), *ASEAN Statistical Report 2017*, ASEAN Secretariat

² Zhang Yan (2015), 'China – Vietnam border major channel for drugs smugglers', *China Daily*, Accessed October 2018, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-11/05/content_22379509.htm

³ Epstein, Gady. (2010) 'China's immigration problem', *Forbes*, Accessed October 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/forbes/2010/0719/opinions-china-immigration-illegal-aliens-heads-up.html#60158fd352c2>

⁴ Hong Hanh (2017), 'The search for Vietnamese brides was abducted to China', *Vnexpress*, Accessed October 2018, https://vnexpress.net/tin-tuc/the-gioi/cuoc-song-do-day/cuoc-tim-kiem-nhung-co-dau-viet-bi-bat-coc-sang-trung-quoc-3643400.html?vn_source=rcm_detail&vn_medium=thegioi&vn_campaign=rcm&ctr=rcm_detail_env_4_click_thegioi

V. WAY TO OVERCOME

One of the risks is the appearance of “asymmetric” pairs of economic relations between China and its neighbors, especially in Southeast Asia. Another problem is from ASEAN. These risks can be the reason that countries afraid to attend the One Belt One Road Initiative and slow down the implementation progress. A fine balance must be reached between ASEAN and China's interests to develop not only connectivity between the two entities but also the connectivity between ASEAN member states. It means that China has to include in OBOR infrastructure smaller projects that are not directly linked to China's international trade and strategic interests but which also benefit the local economy, which has different connectivity needs. In ASEAN side, policy and institutional barriers with China should be implemented to reduce. Rules, regulations and standards should be harmonized between ASEAN member state.

Migrant smuggling is considered to be a widespread phenomenon within Southeast Asia, and countries in the region are particularly focused on countering smuggling through bilateral cooperation, as well as through multilateral mechanisms such as ASEAN and the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. Many migrants also transit the region using the services of smugglers. Mixed migration flows (involving movements of people with and without international protection needs) occur as do migration flows underpinned by mixed motivations. Considerable income disparity in the subregion is a major factor underpinning the strong trend of people to migrate from lower-income countries to higher-income countries within (and beyond) the subregion. Many migrants face exploitation in Southeast Asia, stemming from their irregular status. Migrant workers in particular industries also face forced labour, exploitation and serious abuse.¹ Memorandum of Understanding and Bilateral Agreements are the important tool to put order in the migration process. They establish standards for the employment of migrant workers and protect migrant workers and provide admission procedures.

Memorandum of Understanding and Bilateral Agreements can be one of the tools to strengthen the labor flow and human trafficking through borders. Laos and China signed an anti-human trafficking memorandum of understanding in 2014, and the two countries have devised an action plan to take a stand against human trafficking. China and Vietnam will enhance law enforcement cooperation to crack down on drug trafficking, as the border has become the second largest channel for drug smuggling to China. China and Southeast Asian countries should cooperate to find the solution for this issue. A plan to establish a so-called “two countries, one checkpoint” – a “free trade zone” where the two countries can work together to control the crossing of goods and labor, reducing administrative burdens and promoting trade – is the model to manage the labor flow. For example, on the meeting of the Committee for Cooperation in Land Border-Gate Management of Vietnam – China on March 2018, the two sides exchanged and agreed on the measures to implement the automatic customs clearance system for exporters and importers through the international border gates Huu Nghi (Vietnam) - Youyiguan (China) and Mong Cai (Vietnam) - Dongxing (China).²

Besides that, we should focus on the education and training. Training can improve the quality of labor force. It also decreases the number of human trafficking victims. The one who has working skill can easily get a good job. They will not be a victim to human trafficking.

VI. CONCLUSION

The new Belt and Road plan, jointly released by the NDRC and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Commerce, highlights that the scope of the initiative will extend well beyond infrastructure construction. The program will also include efforts to promote greater financial integration and use of the Renminbi by foreign countries, create an “Information Silk Road” linking regional information and communications technology networks, and lower barriers to cross-border trade and investment in the region, among other initiatives. Besides the benefit from the initiative, the risk is the geopolitical impact of the Belt and Road, especially the risks of China's neighbor countries - ASEAN.

China cultivated a more cooperative relationship with members of ASEAN. China has pursued this ambition with a diplomatic campaign designed to bind the region to China - politically, economically, and militarily. China's transformation into a major economic power in the 21st century has led to an increase of foreign investments in the bamboo network, a network of overseas Chinese businesses operating in the markets of Southeast Asia that share common family and cultural ties. China and ASEAN have collaboration in education, especially in higher education. In the relation with China, Southeast Asian countries can be put into two categories: maritime ASEAN (Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Timor-Leste, the Philippines, and Singapore) and mainland ASEAN (including Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam). Among maritime ASEAN, Malaysia is the top cooperation partner for China. Singapore, the Philippines and Indonesia are key

¹ ‘World Migration Report 2018’, *International Organization of Migration (IOM)*, 2018, p62

² Bienphong (2018), ‘Promote cooperation in managing border gates in Vietnam-China border’, *TTDN*, Accessed October 2018, <http://tapchithongtindoingoi.vn/ly-luan-thuc-tien-kinh-nghiem/day-manh-hop-tac-quan-ly-cua-khau-bien-gioi-tren-dat-lien-viet-nam-trung-15141>

cooperation partners; Timor-Leste and Brunei are general partners. Among mainland ASEAN, Thailand is the top cooperation partner; Laos and Cambodia are key cooperation partners; Myanmar and Vietnam are general partners. Accordingly, Malaysia and Thailand are expected to become China's pivot countries, thus becoming part of a strategic supporting belt. The One Belt One Road initiative is a part of the Chinese strategies toward ASEAN. Both ASEAN and China has ambition to be the centrality in East Asia so the Sino-ASEAN will be impact not only on both sides but also on other countries in East Asia.

Both mainland Southeast Asia and maritime Southeast Asia is in the economic corridors. Myanmar is a part of land corridor that bypasses the Malacca Straits is mirrored in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. There are two high-speed railways in the China-Indochina Corridor. The first one is the high-speed railway between the southern Chinese city of Kunming and the Laotian capital of Vientiane. Another railway in Southeast Asia is from Kunming to Thailand.

By being part of the OBOR, ASEAN countries will have greater access to AIIB, which can lead to a bigger regional community. ASEAN is constructing the ASEAN Community which need a huge budget to implement its master plan for connectivity (AMPC). The AMPC and OBOR may contribute to achieving the "Post- 2015 Vision." With the FDI increase, more and more Chinese enterprises comes to ASEAN for their business. It obviously created more jobs for local people in ASEAN.

One of the risks is the appearance of "asymmetric" pairs of economic relations between China and its neighbors, especially in Southeast Asia. These risks can be the reason that countries afraid to attend the One Belt One Road Initiative and slow down the implementation progress. Another problem comes from ASEAN. ASEAN's problem is that it has not the financial means to carry out successfully the ambitious projects of the AMPC. Policy and institutional barriers have not been reduced. Rules, regulations and standards have not been harmonized between ASEAN member state. China has to include in OBOR infrastructure smaller projects that are not directly linked to China's international trade and strategic interests but which also benefit the local economy, which has different connectivity needs. In ASEAN side, policy and institutional barriers with China should be implemented to reduce. Rules, regulations and standards should be harmonized between ASEAN member state.

The "One Belt One Road" initiative is intended to help make use of China's enormous industrial overcapacity and ease the entry of Chinese goods into regional markets. It also eases the entry of demographic risks. The main security issues are the drugs smugglers and illegally immigrants. It is the same situation to all Southeast Asian countries which share border with China. The demographic risks can't be resolved by one country. It needs the cooperation of all countries. The governments should cooperate to govern the foreign contractors and employees, enhance law enforcement cooperation to crack down the illegal immigrants. A plan to establish a so-called "two countries, one checkpoint" – a "free trade zone" where the two countries can work together to control the crossing of goods and labor, reducing administrative burdens and promoting trade – is the model to manage the labor flow. Memorandum of Understanding and Bilateral Agreements also can be one of the tools to strengthen the labor flow and human trafficking through borders. They establish standards for the employment of migrant workers and protect migrant workers and provide admission procedures. Besides that, we should focus on the education and training. Training can improve the quality of labor force. It also decreases the number of human trafficking victims. The one who has working skill can easily get a good job. They will not be a victim to human trafficking. Foreign labor is a major source of employment. Therefore, the government should have a strategy to manage the flow of labor which can also bring the risks to country. China and Southeast Asian countries should cooperate to find the solution for this issue. The 'One Belt One Road' initiative can bring benefits to the participates but it still has many obstacles to overcome. To get success from the initiative, it needs the cooperation from China and other countries in the project.

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