

Opinion – China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Pragmatism over Morals?

Written by Tabita Rosendal

This PDF is auto-generated for reference only. As such, it may contain some conversion errors and/or missing information. For all formal use please refer to the official version on the website, as linked below.

Opinion – China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Pragmatism over Morals?

<https://www.e-ir.info/2021/10/18/opinion-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-pragmatism-over-morals/>

TABITA ROSENDAL, OCT 18 2021

Is China beating the US and EU through its pragmatic approach towards cooperation under the “Belt and Road” Initiative (“[?][?][?][?]” (BRI)? Despite the advent of the US’ “Build Back Better World” (B3W) and the EU’s “Connecting Europe Globally” (CEG), evidence from Sri Lanka suggests that some countries still look to China for support due to the ‘no-strings-attached’ nature of its investments. The stark reality is that China’s “pragmatic values”, combined with loans, may outcompete the two Western initiatives.

The US and EU forward their initiatives through a focus on Western values such as liberalism, democracy, freedom of speech, and human rights – all moral frameworks which supposedly lead to ‘good governance’ (US White House, 2021; EU Council, 2021; Yan, 2021; Pleeck and Gavas, 2021; Qureshi, 2021). Conversely, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) holds that the BRI has pursued a pragmatic framework of non-interference (respecting sovereignty) and ‘win-win’ (mutual benefits) (FMPRC, 2021A; Ginsburg, 2021). In a nutshell, China claims to meet the countries where they are, with investments made in areas or sectors in which they seek support (Li and Vicente, 2020; FMPRC, 2021B; Wang and Cao, 2021: 65). Moreover, non-interference goes both ways: China remains pragmatic about cooperation and urges other countries to do the same, ultimately securing mutual political support in times of strife (China Power, 2017; Dezenski, 2020; Jie and Wallace, 2021). However, while countries do benefit from Chinese investments, China arguably remains at the head of the negotiation table, with its own interests at the fore (Rolland, 2017; China Power, 2017). But what does this mean in practice?

The Belt and Road Initiative in Sri Lanka

In recent years, Sri Lanka has been under international scrutiny due to (refuted) accusations of Chinese ‘debt-trap diplomacy’, i.e., that China has attempted to increase its economic or political leverage over the country through extending excessive credit that Sri Lanka could not repay – the main example being the 99-year lease of Hambantota Port to China Merchants Port Holdings Company (CMPHC) (Jones and Hameiri, 2020).

However, the Sino-Sri Lankan relationship is long-established and has only picked up speed after the BRI’s announcement. The ties were already cemented during the Sri Lankan civil war; when the US cut off aid, China provided investments, armaments, and diplomatic support to the government (Marshall, 2009; Sakhuja, 2009). After the war, when Sri Lanka began investing in infrastructure projects to save its economy, China supplied alternative financing as opposed to the IMF and World Bank (Ferchen and Perera, 2019; Daily FT, 2021).

While Beijing has supported the elected governments of Sri Lanka since the civil war, this support has been piecemeal and problematic, not least due to Sri Lanka’s official policy of non-alignment and continuously close ties with countries such as India (Srinivasan, 2021A; Wignaraja, 2020). Indeed, tensions with the India-leaning Sirisena-Wickremesinghe government (2015-2019) proved difficult to tackle; as India commenced formal visits and proposed large investments, Chinese visits were curtailed. Nevertheless, China worked hard to regain its favor and ultimately succeeded after Wickremesinghe’s dismissal, when China-friendly Mahinda Rajapaksa was appointed Prime Minister (Myers, 2020). By November 25, 2020, China was Sri Lanka’s largest lender, with loans around \$923.7 million (Ada Derana Biz, 2020). To complement investments, Sino-Sri Lankan ties have been furthered in areas such

Opinion – China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Pragmatism over Morals?

Written by Tabita Rosendal

as culture under the BRI’s ‘people-to-people bonds’, and ‘pragmatic cooperation’ has been enhanced so that Sri Lanka may learn from China’s governance practices (Srinivasan, 2021C).

The Colombo Port City (CPC) is currently the main BRI project in Sri Lanka; with a stated aim of elevating the country to the level of a ‘small Singapore’, it is the single largest foreign investment in Sri Lankan history with a construction cost of \$1.4 billion (Farzan, 2021; LKI, 2020; CHEC Port City Colombo, 2021). However, related projects exercise considerable influence. For example, the East Container Terminal (ECT) / West Container Terminal (WCT) of Colombo port are central to a dispute between Sri Lanka, India, and Japan (Javaid, 2021). The Sri Lankan government unilaterally reneged on the deal for India and Japan to develop the port in February 2021. It was quickly suggested by Indian, Japanese, and US’ sources, including state officials, scholars, and media, that China had pulled its weight in the port to block the advance of the two Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) countries (Manoj, 2021; Haidar and Srinivasan, 2021; Singh, 2021). India and Japan ultimately accepted Sri Lanka’s deal to develop the WCT instead, but speculation on China’s role never subsided. However, other players have had their plans in Sri Lanka foiled too.

The US has attempted to counter China’s presence by forwarding strategic cooperation frameworks such as the Status of Armed Forces Agreement (SOFA), which the Sri Lankan government has yet to accept, along with the \$480 million Millennium Challenge Compact (MCC) Accord, which the US terminated in 2020 due to a ‘lack of partner country engagement’ (Mendis and Reichenbach, 2020; Economy Next, 2020). Similarly, EU investment schemes in Sri Lanka such as the Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) have been hit and miss. The country was excluded from the GSP+ in 2010 due to the Civil War, but the scheme was reinstated in 2017 (de Silva, 2020). However, in June 2021, the European Parliament adopted a resolution to temporarily withdraw Sri Lanka’s GSP+ status since the country has utilized the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) to detain critics, activists, and writers. This is set to severely impact Sri Lanka’s economy, as the EU is its second largest trading partner accounting for more than 22.4% of Sri Lankan exports in 2020 (ANI News, 2021; Srinivasan, 2021B).

Meanwhile, China has not dialled down its efforts in Sri Lanka. In addition to infrastructure projects, China has provided economic support to the country during the Covid-19 pandemic and has donated a large quantity of medical equipment and vaccines through its ‘mask diplomacy’ (Chandrasena, 2020; Karunatilake and Pal, 2021). These donations came when Sri Lanka was criticizing the West for turning its back on the nation. Conversely, Sri Lanka’s ambassador to China, Dr. Palitha Kohona, has stated that China will remain Sri Lanka’s ‘closest and most dependable friend’ no matter what the West or India says (Rutnam, 2021). Whether China’s friendship in Sri Lanka is genuine or not, one thing is certain: Xi is a close ally to current president Gotabaya Rajapaksa. However, growing criticism of the CPC along with other BRI projects may test this friendship in the future (Srinivasan, 2021A; Hundlani and Kannangara, 2020).

The question of human rights

As illustrated, Sri Lanka has become increasingly isolated from the West due to its human rights violations during the civil war. Moreover, under the Rajapaksa government, conditions have deteriorated; Sri Lankan critics have been surveilled and harassed, and basic human rights for ethnic groups have worsened (UNHRC, 2021B; DeVotta and Ganguly, 2021). Nevertheless, Beijing has continued to help (Singh, 2018). China voted against the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) resolution on Sri Lanka’s human rights record in March 2021, but the resolution still passed. The Rajapaksa government now seems to have rejected the resolution, which risks further alienating the country from the West and the international community (Abeyagoonasekera, 2021).

In return for this support, Sri Lanka has had China’s back. The government has publicly defended the BRI, refuted rumors of debt-trap diplomacy, enhanced military cooperation, and thus far, supported the CPC Economic Commission Bill which may further China’s interests (Rajagopalan, 2021). The two countries seem to have respected the core interests and sovereignty of their counterparts while backing each other in international controversies. This mutual, unconditional support – forwarded under the discourse of pragmatic cooperation – has ensured China’s position in the country.

Opinion – China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Pragmatism over Morals?

Written by Tabita Rosendal

Time will tell whether Sri Lanka continues to rely on China for investments, or whether it will address its human rights issues and turn to other nations for support. Currently, the latter seems doubtful. Sri Lanka’s tilt towards Chinese pragmatic values will thus be at the expense of the Tamil population, human rights defenders, and journalists (Amnesty International, 2021).

Money over morals?

While we cannot generalize based on the case of Sri Lanka, it does point to a larger trend in BRI cooperation. Countries with problematic human rights reputations, such as Afghanistan (UNHRC, 2021A; Marsden, 2021) and Pakistan (HRW, 2021; Sacks, 2021), seem to favor China’s pragmatic approach and will likely continue to do so. Other countries struggling to uphold human rights and desperate for investments – developing or developed – could also potentially choose China as their partner (Faiz, 2019).

Therefore, the US and EU may have overestimated the power of Western values as opposed to those associated with Chinese investments under the BRI. Even with the same amount of money for investments, China has a clear advantage: it does not impose conditionalities for aid, at least not like the West does (Dezenski, 2020). As seen in Sri Lanka, it is not a question of money or morals – it is a question of *money without morals*. Consequently, the B3W and the CEG will struggle to compete with China if the focus remains on forwarding infrastructure with Western values. For years, China has been cooperating with countries that the West would not consider due to their political systems or human rights approaches, and it has strengthened its own bi- and multilateral position through a focus on credibility and assuaging fears of the ‘China threat’. Therefore, despite criticism, the BRI – and the pragmatic values associated with Chinese investments – are unlikely to lose popularity any time soon.

References

- Abeyagoonasekera, Asanga. 2021. “Sri Lanka’s rejection of the UNHRC resolution: A shift towards China?,” in *Observer Research Foundation (ORF) Debates* (April 1, 2021), (accessed September, 19, 2021), <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/sri-lanka-rejection-unhrc-resolution-shift-towards-china/>
- Ada Derana Biz. 2020. “China the largest lender to Sri Lanka,” in *Ada Derana Biz* (November 25, 2020), (accessed September 8, 2021), <http://bizenglish.adaderana.lk/china-the-largest-lender-to-sri-lanka/>
- Amnesty International. 2021. “Sri Lanka 2020,” in *Amnesty International Report 2020/21* (June 2021), pp. 337-340, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/English.pdf>
- ANI News. 2021. “EU parliament adopts resolution on Sri Lanka, propose GSP withdrawal,” in *ANI News* (June 11, 2021), (accessed September 19, 2021), <https://www.aninews.in/news/world/europe/eu-parliament-adopts-resolution-on-sri-lanka-propose-gsp-withdrawal20210611073846/>
- Chandrasena, Charindra. 2020. “Chinese Government to provide 25,000 PCR test kits to SL,” in *The Morning*, (October 23, 2020), (accessed September 9, 2021), <https://www.themorning.lk/chinese-government-provides-25000-pcr-test-kits-to-sl/>
- CHEC Port City Colombo (Pvt) Ltd. 2021. “Port City Colombo,” (2021), (accessed September 17, 2021), <https://www.portcitycolombo.lk/>
- China Power. 2017. “How Will the Belt and Road Initiative Advance China’s Interests?,” in *China Power Project at Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS)* (May 8, 2017), (updated August 26, 2020), (accessed September 28, 2021), <https://chinapower.csis.org/china-belt-and-road-initiative/>
- Daily FT. 2021. “Perceptions of China’s Belt & Road Initiative and investments in Sri Lanka,” in *Daily FT* (April 6, 2021), (accessed September 13, 2021), <https://www.ft.lk/special-report/Perceptions-of-China-s-Belt-Road-Initiative-and-investments-in-Sri-Lanka/22-715870>

Opinion – China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Pragmatism over Morals?

Written by Tabita Rosendal

DeVotta, Neil, and Ganguly, Sumit. 2021. “The United Nations Turns Up the Heat on Rajapaksa,” in *Foreign Policy* (March 30, 2021), (accessed September 19, 2021), <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/03/30/rajapaksa-united-nations-war-crimes-human-rights/>

Dezenski, Elaine K. 2020. *Below the Belt and Road: Corruption and Illicit Dealings in China’s Global Infrastructure*. Washington, DC: Foundation for Defense of Democracies Press, <https://www.fdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/fdd-monograph-below-the-belt-and-road.pdf>

Economy Next. 2020. “Sri Lanka MCC grant terminated by US,” in *Economy Next* (December 17, 2020), (accessed September 17, 2021), <https://economynext.com/sri-lanka-mcc-grant-terminated-by-us-76975/>

European Union Council (EU Council). 2021. “A globally connected Europe: Council approves conclusions,” in *EU Council Press Releases* (July 12, 2021), (accessed September 19, 2021), <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/07/12/a-globally-connected-europe-council-approves-conclusions/>

Faiz, Abbas. 2019. “Is China’s Belt and Road Initiative Undermining Human Rights?,” in *The Diplomat* (June 7, 2019), (accessed September 18, 2021), <https://thediplomat.com/2019/06/is-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-undermining-human-rights/>

Farzan, Zulfick. 2021. “Port City will elevate SL to the level of Singapore – Mahindananda,” in *News First* (April 16, 2021), (accessed September 18, 2021), <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2021/04/16/port-city-will-elevate-sl-to-the-level-of-singapore-mahindananda/>

Ferchen, Matt, and Perera, Anarkalee. 2019. “Why Unsustainable Chinese Infrastructure Deals Are a Two-Way Street,” in *Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy* (July 23, 2019), (accessed September 17, 2021), <https://carnegie-tsinghua.org/2019/07/23/why-unsustainable-chinese-infrastructure-deals-are-two-way-street-pub-79548>

Foreign Ministry of the People’s Republic of China (FMPRC). 2021A. “The Belt and Road Initiative: Build a Better Future Through Extensive Consultation and Win-win Cooperation–Speech by Consul General Zhao Jian at the 15th Annual Silk Road Conference Hosted by the Central Asian Productivity Research Center,” in *FMPRC Mission News* (September 22, 2021), (accessed September 29, 2021), https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zwjg_665342/zwbd_665378/t1908908.shtml

FMPRC. 2021B. “Let Us Strengthen Confidence and Solidarity and Jointly Build a Closer Partnership for Belt and Road Cooperation. Keynote Speech by H.E. State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi At Asia and Pacific High-level Conference on Belt and Road Cooperation,” in *FMPRC Speeches* (June 24, 2021), (accessed September 29, 2021), https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/wjbz_663308/2461_663310/t1886403.shtml

Ginsburg, Tom. 2021. “The BRI, non-interference, and democracy,” in *Harvard International Law Journal* (2021), Vol. 62, pp. 40-66, <https://harvardilj.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/BRI-Non-interference-and-Democracy-Ginsburg.pdf>

Haidar, Suhasini, and Srinivasan, Meera. 2021. “After India, Japan reacts sharply to Sri Lankan cancellation of ECT pact,” in *The Hindu* (February 3, 2021), (accessed September 13, 2021), <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/after-india-japan-reacts-sharply-to-sri-lankan-cancellation-of-ect-pact/article33743155.ece>

Human Rights Watch (HRW). 2021. “Pakistan – Events of 2020,” in *HRW World Report 2021* (2021), (accessed September 21, 2021), <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/pakistan>

Javaid, Arfa. 2021. “East Container Terminal (ECT) Project: All you need to know,” in *Jagran Josh* (February 2, 2021), (accessed September 10, 2021), <https://www.jagranjosh.com/general-knowledge/east-container-terminal-project-1611817385-1>

Opinion – China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Pragmatism over Morals?

Written by Tabita Rosendal

- Jie, Yu, and Wallace, Jon. 2021. “What is China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)?,” in *Chatham House Explainer* (September 13, 2021), (accessed September 17, 2021), <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/09/what-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-bri>
- Jones, Lee, and Hameiri, Shahar. 2020. “Debunking the Myth of ‘Debt-trap Diplomacy’: How Recipient Countries Shape China’s Belt and Road Initiative,” in *Chatham House Research Paper* (August 19, 2020), (accessed September 14, 2021), <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/08/debunking-myth-debt-trap-diplomacy>
- Karunatilake, Waruna, and Pal, Alasdair. 2021. “China approves \$1.5 billion currency swap with Sri Lanka,” in *Reuters* (March 10, 2021), (accessed September 9, 2021), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-sri-lanka-economy-china-idUSKBN2B21UL>
- Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute (LKI). 2020. “Port City SEZ – a catalyst for modern services in Sri Lanka,” (May 22, 2020), (accessed September 17, 2021), <https://www.portcitycolombo.lk/downloads/2020R-Port-City-SEZ-22-05-20.pdf>
- Li, Yichao, and Vicente, Mário Barbosa. 2020. “The Chinese Partnerships and ‘the Belt and Road’ Initiative: A Synergetic Affiliation,” in *The Belt and Road Initiative: An Old Archetype of a New Development Model*, ed. by Francisco José B. S. Leandro and Paulo Afonso B. Duarte. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 203-235.
- Manoj, P. 2021. “Chinese hand seen behind blocking India’s bid to develop ECT at Colombo port,” in *The Hindu Business Line* (February 5, 2021) (accessed September 13, 2021), <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/chinese-hand-seen-behind-blocking-indias-bid-to-develop-ect-in-colombo-port/article33760430.ece>
- Marsden, Magnus. 2021. “China, Afghanistan, and the Belt and Road Initiative: Diplomacy and Reality,” in *The Diplomat* (September 15, 2021), (accessed September 24, 2021), <https://thediplomat.com/2021/09/china-afghanistan-and-the-belt-and-road-initiative-diplomacy-and-reality/>
- Marshall, Larry. 2009. “Sri Lanka – Winners and Losers in Sri Lanka’s Long War,” in *Le Centre tricontinental* (CETRI) (December 4, 2009), (accessed September 18, 2021), <https://www.cetri.be/Winners-and-losers-in-Sri-Lanka-s?lang=fr>
- Mendis, Patrick, and Reichenbach, Dominique. 2020. “Can Pompeo’s Visit to Sri Lanka Offset China’s Influence?,” in *The Diplomat* (October 31, 2020), (accessed September 9, 2021), <https://thediplomat.com/2020/10/can-pompeos-visit-to-sri-lanka-offset-chinas-influence/>
- Myers, Lucas. 2020. “The Limits of China’s Influence in Maritime South Asia: Sri Lanka’s Foreign Policy Rebalance,” in *Wilson Center Asia Dispatches* (November 17, 2020), (accessed September 18, 2021), <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/limits-chinas-influence-maritime-south-asia-sri-lankas-foreign-policy-rebalance>
- Pleech, Samuel, and Gavas, Mikaela. 2021. “A New Global Connectivity Strategy: The EU’s Response to the BRI,” in *Center for Global Development* (August 4, 2021), (accessed September 9, 2021), <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/new-global-connectivity-strategy-eus-response-bri>
- Qureshi, Mariam. 2021. “G7 Summit 2021: China’s Rise vs the West,” in *International Team For the Study of Security (ITSS) Verona* (July 7, 2021), (accessed September 24, 2021), <https://www.itssverona.it/tag/build-back-better-world-b3w>
- Rajagopalan, Rajeswari Pillai. 2021. “China in Sri Lanka: The Colombo Port Conundrum,” in *The Diplomat* (May 7, 2021), (accessed September 8, 2021), <https://thediplomat.com/2021/05/china-in-sri-lanka-the-colombo-port-conundrum/>
- Rolland, Nadège. 2017. *China’s Eurasian Century? Political and Strategic Implications of the Belt and Road*

Opinion – China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Pragmatism over Morals?

Written by Tabita Rosendal

Initiative. Washington, DC: The National Bureau of Asian Research.

Rutnam, Easwaran. 2021. “Sri Lanka to advance relationship with China despite concerns – Dr. Palitha Kohona,” in *Daily Mirror* (Sri Lanka), (March 23, 2021), (accessed September 9, 2021), <https://www.dailymirror.lk/opinion/Sri-Lanka-to-advance-relationship-with-China-despite-concerns-%E2%80%93Dr-Palitha-Kohona/172-208343>

Sacks, David. 2021. “The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor—Hard Reality Greets BRI’s Signature Initiative,” in *Council on Foreign Relations Blog* (March 30, 2021), (accessed September 14, 2021), <https://www.cfr.org/blog/china-pakistan-economic-corridor-hard-reality-greets-bris-signature-initiative>

Sakhuja, Vijay. 2009. “Sri Lanka: Beijing’s Growing Foothold in the Indian Ocean,” in *The Jamestown Foundation China Brief* (June 12, 2009), Vol. 9(12), pp. 7-10, https://jamestown.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/cb_009_09.pdf?x17306

de Silva, Charumini. 2020. “EU GSP+ to remain uninterrupted for Sri Lanka,” in *Daily FT* (October 30, 2020), (accessed September 9, 2021), <http://www.ft.lk/top-story/EU-GSP-to-remain-uninterrupted-for-Sri-Lanka/26-708245>

Singh, Anita Inder. 2021. “China’s Port Investments in Sri Lanka Reflect Competition with India in the Indian Ocean,” in *The Jamestown Foundation China Brief* (May 7, 2021), Vol. 21(9), pp. 7-12, <https://jamestown.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Read-the-5-7-2021-Issue-in-PDF.pdf?x17306>

Singh, Gunjan. 2018. “Evolution of China-Sri Lanka Relations,” in *Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) Brief* (September 2018), (accessed September 16, 2021), <https://www.vifindia.org/sites/default/files/Evolution-of%20China-SriLanka-Relations.pdf>

Srinivasan, Meera. 2021A. “News Analysis – a perception shift in relations between Sri Lanka and China?,” in *The Hindu* (July 9, 2021), (updated July 10, 2021), (accessed September 10, 2021), <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/news-analysis-a-perception-shift-in-relations-between-sri-lanka-and-china/article35240800.ece>

Srinivasan, Meera. 2021B. “EU Parliament resolution puts spotlight on Sri Lanka’s rights situation,” in *The Hindu* (June 14, 2021), (accessed September 19, 2021), <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/eu-parliament-resolution-puts-spotlight-on-sri-lankas-rights-situation/article34815656.ece>

Srinivasan, Meera. 2021C. “Sri Lanka has prioritised relations with China, Gotabaya tells General Wei,” in *The Hindu* (April 29, 2021), (accessed September 13, 2021), <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/sri-lanka-has-prioritised-relations-with-china-gotabaya-tells-general-wei/article34442051.ece>

United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). 2021A. “31st Special Session of the Human Rights Council – The serious human rights concerns and situation in Afghanistan,” in *UNHRC News* (August 24, 2021), (accessed September 19, 2021), <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27403&LangID=E>

UNHRC. 2021B. “Sri Lanka: Experts dismayed by regressive steps, call for renewed UN scrutiny and efforts to ensure accountability,” in *UNHRC News* (February 5, 2021), (accessed September 18, 2021), <https://www.ohchr.org/FR/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=26715&LangID=F>

US White House. 2021. “FACT SHEET: President Biden and G7 Leaders Launch Build Back Better World (B3W) Partnership,” (June 12, 2021), (accessed September 18, 2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/06/12/fact-sheet-president-biden-and-g7-leaders-launch-build-back-better-world-b3w-partnership/>

Wang, Dong, and Cao, Dejun. 2021. *Reglobalisation: When China Meets the World Again*. New York: Routledge.wong

Wignaraja, Ganeshan. 2020. “Resetting China-Sri Lanka relations for a Biden presidency,” in *East Asia Forum*

Opinion – China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Pragmatism over Morals?

Written by Tabita Rosendal

(November 18, 2020), (accessed September 18, 2021), <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2020/11/18/resetting-china-sri-lanka-relations-for-a-biden-presidency/>

Yan, Liang. 2021. “Can the G7 really build back a better world?,” in *East Asia Forum* (July 24, 2021), (accessed September 19, 2021), <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/07/24/can-the-g7-really-build-back-a-better-world/>

About the author:

Tabita Rosendal is a Ph.D. student at the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University, Sweden, and an affiliate at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS), Copenhagen, Denmark. Tabita’s current research concerns China’s domestic and foreign politics, with a special focus on the Maritime Silk Road, part of the Belt and Road Initiative, and its implementation and success in different ports. Her project analyzes the role and agency of Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in China and Sri Lanka in a bid to provide a nuanced account of Chinese strategic interests.