

Noah and I affirm, Resolved: The European Union should join the Belt and Road Initiative.

China's current campaign westward, labeled the Belt and Road Initiative, is a global development strategy involving infrastructure development and investments aimed at building relations and economic networks across the world.

However, the massive scale of the BRI prevents such efforts from manifesting as [Ciurtin '17 of the European Institute of Romania finds](#) that the projects require trillions of dollars of investment, making China incapable of financially and logistically managing such an ambitious project on its own.

Indeed, [Scissors '19 of AEI](#) reports that there's a shortage of hard currency used to make investments and finance construction, confirmed by the fact that new BRI projects dropped sharply by over 50 percent in the first half of 2019 when compared to the first half of the previous year.

Luckily, the EU's great economic power can resolve Beijing's dilemma. **Ciurtin** furthers that, without European cash, China lacks critical funding necessary to continue its initiative, making the European Union the only possible partner. The BRI can only further its development with Europe's support and financial participation.

Contention 1: Energy Poverty

Through the BRI, developing nations are able to receive vital energy-based infrastructure projects.

Tabuchi 17' of the New York Times reports that,

"But overseas, the Chinese are playing a different game. [Shanghai Electric Group](#), one of the country's largest electrical equipment makers, has announced plans to build coal power plants in Egypt, Pakistan and Iran with a total capacity of 6,285 megawatts — almost 10 times the 660 megawatts of coal power it has planned in China. The China Energy Engineering Corporation, which has no public plans to develop coal power in China, is building 2,200 megawatts' worth of coal-fired power capacity in Vietnam and Malawi. Neither company responded to requests for comment. Of the world's 20 biggest coal plant developers, 11 are Chinese, according to [a database](#) published by Urgewald. Over all, Chinese companies are behind 340,000 to 386,000 megawatts of planned coal power expansion worldwide, Urgewald estimated. A [typical coal plant](#) has a capacity of about 500 megawatts and burns 1.4 million tons of coal each year, [enough to power](#) almost 300,000 homes. Kevin P. Gallagher, a professor of global development policy at Boston University and an expert in Chinese energy investment overseas, said **a strong infrastructure demand in developing countries and a sharp fall in coal financing by the World Bank and Asian Development Bank had opened up the field for Chinese involvement.** "In China, you have lots of very competitive and politically influential companies — but all of a sudden there's no demand," Professor Gallagher said, referring to China's slowing economic growth. "So China is helping these companies go overseas to help make the adjustment at home less painful." Much of China's overseas push has come under a state initiative called "[One Belt, One Road](#)," announced in 2013, which calls for up to \$900 billion in infrastructure investments overseas, including high-speed railroads, ports, gas pipelines and power plants. China's two global policy banks, the China Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank of China, have already provided more than \$43 billion in overseas coal financing since 2000, according to [a separate database](#) of Chinese energy investments published this year by Boston University."

The BRI opens the doors for Chinese energy companies to help the developing world.

Hilton 19' of Yale University writes that,

“Just building the land-based Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road will absorb massive amounts of concrete, steel, and chemicals, creating new power stations, mines, roads, railways, airports, and container ports, many in countries with poor environmental oversight. But more worrying still is the vision of industrial development to follow, and the energy that is planned to fuel it. While China has imposed a cap on coal consumption at home, its coal and energy companies are on a building spree overseas. **Chinese companies are involved in at least 240 coal projects in 25** of the Belt and Road **[BRI] countries**, including in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Serbia, Kenya, Ghana, Malawi, and Zimbabwe. China is also financing about half of proposed new coal capacity in Egypt, Tanzania, and Zambia. While a few of these new plants will use the latest technology — in Bangladesh, for example, China is building the country’s first “clean coal” plant — many are less advanced and are not being planned with the carbon capture technology that would make them less threatening to efforts to control climate change.”

For example, China is financing proposed new energy sources in Tanzania and Zambia, and **Tabuchi** indicates that Chinese energy companies have plans to build more coal plants overseas, accounting for,

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Without a financed Belt and Road Initiative, developing countries lack access to electricity, which translates to no light, inability for people to heat their homes, cook meals properly, and power essential appliances.

The impact is air pollution

The Worldwatch Institute 19’ notes that,

“**At least 2.7 billion people**, and possibly more than 3 billion, lack access to modern fuels for cooking and heating. They **[have to] rely** instead **on traditional biomass sources, such as firewood, [or] charcoal**, manure, and crop residues, **that** can **emit harmful indoor air pollutants when burned**. These pollutants **[that] cause nearly 2 million premature deaths worldwide each year, an estimated 44 percent of them in children**. Among adult deaths, 60 percent are y’all women. Traditional energy usage also contributes to environmental impacts including forest and woodland degradation, soil erosion, and black carbon emissions that contribute to global climate change.”

Fortunately, **Tabuchi** concludes that just one coal plant,

"A typical coal plant has a capacity of about 500 megawatts and burns 1.4 million tons of coal each year, [is] enough to power almost 300,000 homes. Kevin P. Gallagher, a professor of global development policy at Boston University and an expert in Chinese energy investment overseas, said a strong infrastructure demand in developing countries and a sharp fall in coal financing by the World Bank and Asian Development Bank had opened up the field for Chinese involvement."

Contention 2: Trade

Right now, trade between the EU and its global partners has stalled, putting the EU's fragile economy at risk.

Rensch of the OECD 19' writes,

"Projections for [economic] GDP growth in the [EU] has been revised down to fallen to 1% this year and 1.2% in 2020, from 1.8% in 2018, according to the OECD's Interim Economic Outlook, published on Wednesday. This is 0.8 percentage points lower than the OECD's estimate just a few months ago in November. Laurence Boone, OECD chief economist, said: "Growth in Europe has been particularly disappointing, as trade growth both within the EU and with external partners has stalled. "What worries us is how much it [growth] is slowing in the euro area." Speaking at the organisation's headquarters in Paris on Wednesday, she said the slowdown in growth was a result of trade, weak financial markets and high inflation resulting from policy uncertainty globally and Brexit. Trade and investment in the eurozone have declined in the last two years, Boone said. She also pointed out that with the slow growth and lack of investment, [concerningly], job creation could halve to 2 million this year and next, [from] after hitting 4 million in 2018. This is "worrying as wages were starting to pick up", she said."

In fact, Wearden of the Guardian 19' explains,

"Germany's economy is on the brink of recession after business confidence plunged to its lowest level in seven years."

Fortunately, the BRI will restore and revitalize the EU's economy by increasing trade.

Xu of Hong Kong University explains that,

"This massive project [BRI] is centered on two main routes over land and sea. On land, the focused is on transport and energy infrastructure for the Silk Road Economic Belt (the Belt). By sea, [and] investments in new ports serve as pillars for promoting trade along the Maritime Silk Road (the Road). Both of which will impact Europe massively. The land route ends up in Europe and the sea route is currently the busiest trade corridor between Europe and China. Heavy investment will ease transportation bottlenecks affecting cross-border trade."

Dezan Shira & Associates 17' finds that,

"There are a number of ways European companies can benefit, either directly or indirectly. Firstly, new supply chain networks. With more railway and port development projects, logistics [European] companies can build new supply chain hubs and routes. For example, in order to connect Lianyungang and Istanbul, multinational logistics company DHL has arranged to handle more freight traffic and now provides peer-to-peer services along the new route. Next, lower transportation costs. [And] As a result of improved infrastructure, European companies will be able to benefit from lower costs and faster transportation times if they want to sell products to BRI countries. For example, the Chongqing-Duisburg railway line built in 2016 can reduce transportation time between the two cities by 12-13 days. For international trading companies in Europe, this is highly beneficial to expand their businesses in China."

In the past BRI infrastructure projects have been a massive success.

Herrero of Bruegel 16' assesses that after the Duisberg railroad was built,

"However, information on the few finalised projects can give a hint of the potential cost reduction in transportation. In the case of railway, the best example is the Yuxinou Railway (from Chongqing to Duisberg) because it is already functioning and data on the reduction in transportation time is available. More specifically, Chongqing's mayor declared in 2015 that **railway transportation costs on that route had been slashed by 50 percent.** This is in line with the reduction in transportation time that has been achieved by introducing this new railway line: from 17-18 days to 12-13 days according to the Yuxinou official website and Chinese national official media⁸. In the case of maritime transportation, the cost savings stem from efficiency improvements in ports, many of which have not even been finalised. However, some examples of improvements in efficiency already exist, in particular for the Qingdao port. After some improvements in the functioning of the port, Qingdao customs reported that transportation costs out of and into the port would be reduce by about 5 percent⁹"

Which is why Xu concludes, BRI infrastructure would increase trade for the EU

"Simulating the impact of a reduction in transportation cost on EU trade. From a regional perspective, the EU is the largest winner of the Belt and Road Initiative, with trade rising **by more than 6%.** Halving the cost of railway transportation is behind the large gains in trade within Europe, particularly for landlocked countries. Trade in the Asia region is also positively affected by the reduction in transport costs but only half as much as the EU, with trade increasing 3%. Surprisingly, Asian countries are found to be neither top winners nor losers. This can be explained by the fact that estimated reductions in maritime transportation costs are quite moderate."

The impact is alleviating poverty

The Borgen Project 18' writes,

"**One in four Europeans experiences at least one form of poverty.** Forms of poverty include income poverty, severe material deprivation, very low work intensity and social exclusion. Income poverty is the most common form of poverty in Europe, affecting 17.3 percent of people. **[And] One hundred eighteen million people**(23.5 percent) **of the EU-28 population** were **[are] at risk of poverty**, or social exclusion, with 43 million of those not able to afford a quality meal every second day. This is known as severe material deprivation."

Fortunately, Koopman of the World Economic Forum 19' explains that an increase in infrastructure creates open trade and,

"**Open trade is particularly beneficial to the poor, because it reduces the cost of what they buy and raises the price of what they sell.** As new research from the World Bank and the World Trade Organization makes clear, **[and] farmers and manufacturing workers earn more income when their products can reach overseas markets.** With today's trade tensions, it is easy to lose sight of the progress the world has made over the past few decades of economic integration. **Since 1990, more than one billion people have lifted themselves out of poverty, owing to growth that was underpinned by trade.**"

Syracuse University 16' furthers that,

"Regression analysis using country fixed effects (which remove the influence of characteristics of a country that do not change over time in order to assess the net effect of variations of the explanatory variables within each country on the outcome variable) finds that trade has significant effects on poverty. **A 1 percentage point increase in trade is associated with a 0.149 percentage point decline in poverty,** and a 1 percentage point decline in the average tariff rate is associated with a 0.4 percentage point decline in poverty."

Thus we affirm