

State of Mankind

How much do you know?

Excerpts from

How the Specter of Communism Is Ruling Our World

(138)

Implementation of the Communist Party's peripheral strategy involved first creating pivotal states, which are then used as a base for achieving strategic goals in the entire region. According to the Party's think tanks, pivotal states are countries that have considerable regional power that Beijing has the capability and resources to guide; they have no direct conflicts with the CCP in terms of strategic interests, and don't share close interests with the United States. [43] In addition to the aforementioned Australia, Kazakhstan, and others, examples of pivotal countries for the Chinese regime include Iran in the Middle East and Myanmar.

In the Middle East, Iran receives the greatest Chinese investment. Iran is an important oil producer in the region and has been in ideological opposition to the West since the late 1970s, making it a natural economic and military partner for the CCP. Beijing has maintained close economic and military relations with Iran since the 1980s.

In 1991, the International Atomic Energy Agency discovered that the CCP had exported uranium to Iran and that China and Iran had signed a secret nuclear agreement in 1990. [44] In 2002, when Iran's uranium enrichment project was revealed, Western oil companies withdrew from the country, giving the CCP an opportunity to capitalize on the situation and cultivate closer relations with Iran. [45]

Bilateral trade volume between the CCP and Iran grew exponentially between 1992 and 2011, increasing by more than one hundred times in seventeen years, although there was significant slowdown due to pressure caused by international sanctions on the Iranian regime. [46] Due to the CCP's assistance, Iran was able to weather the international isolation imposed on it and develop a broad arsenal of short- to medium-range ballistic missiles, as well as anti-ship cruise missiles. The Chinese also provided it with sea mines and fast attack craft, and helped Iran establish a covert chemical weapons project. [47]

Another pivotal state favored by the CCP regime is Myanmar, its neighboring country in South Asia. Myanmar has a long coastline, which provides strategic access to the Indian Ocean. The CCP regards the opening of a China-Myanmar channel as a strategic step to minimizing reliance on the Strait of Malacca. [48] The Burmese military government's poor human rights record has caused it to be isolated by the international

community. The 1988 democracy movement in Myanmar was ultimately crushed with military force. The following year, in Beijing, PLA tanks opened fire on pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square.

The two authoritarian governments, both condemned by the international community, found a degree of solace in their diplomatic company and have since enjoyed close relations. In October 1989, Myanmar's Than Shwe visited China, and the two sides signed a US\$1.4 billion arms deal. [49] In the 1990s, there were again many arms deals between the two sides. Equipment the CCP has sold to Myanmar include fighter planes, patrol ships, tanks and armored personnel carriers, anti-aircraft guns, and rockets. [50] The CCP's military, political, and economic support thus became the Burmese military junta's lifeline in its struggle for continued survival. [51]

In 2013, the Chinese invested US\$5 billion into the China-Myanmar crude oil and gas pipeline, said to be China's fourth-largest strategic oil-and-gas import conduit. Although it met with strong popular opposition, in 2017, it went into operation with the backing of the CCP. [52] Similar investments include the Myitsone Dam (currently placed on hold due to local opposition) and the Letpadaung Copper Mine. In 2017, bilateral trade between China and Myanmar totaled \$US13.54 billion. The CCP is currently planning to create a China-Myanmar economic

corridor with 70 percent of the share held by the Chinese side. This includes a deep-water port for trade access to the Indian Ocean, [53] and the Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone industrial park. [54]

From Chapter Eighteen

The Chinese Communist Party's Global Ambitions