Report on 'The Uncontrolled Rise of China'
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Introduction

Objective

This report takes a look at how China is getting too powerful with no <mark>one to keep them in check.</mark>

Pre-Research Thoughts

I believe that China is expanding its power in an uncontrolled manner that is dangerous to the rest of the world. However, despite the severe propaganda against China, I believe that the damage China causes is minimal **compared to** the atrocities by major superpowers in the last century or so.

Scope

This report will cover

- rapid rise in China and the reasons behind it
- arguments against China
- arguments defending China

Discussion

Rapid Rise

Prior to a few decades, China was a country that was weighed down by crippling poverty. It was very inefficient and isolated from the rest of the world.

China set up various new policies that instigated rapid growth and pulled millions out of poverty. One such policy was the introduction of SEZs (Special Economic Zones) with tax and business incentives to attract foreign investments. China had a large inflow of capital, in exchange for providing cheap labor. This cheap labor factor is what significantly reduced unemployment. The government prioritizes the growth of the community more than the growth of individuals. This has ensured the development of the entire nation, rather than just the richest people.

In India, the govt just focuses on implementing policies so as to gain enough popularity to win the next election. Hence the policies are always short-sighted, because the ruling party knows that if it makes good long term policies instead of short term, they will lose the next elections and all the benefits of their policies will actually be enjoyed by their successors. Meanwhile, in China, there is a one-party democratic system; the Chinese Communist Party always stays in power; hence, it makes strategic long term policies, without any fear of losing the next elections.

Furthermore, China has spent more of its resources into its development instead of using it on military endeavors, like the US; thereby allowing all the other sectors to flourish and get millions of people out of poverty.

Arguments Against China

There are various aspects that make China's expansion a worrying concern. It is not being hindered in its efforts for rapid expansion of power despite the following:

Human rights violations

The basic rights such as labor rights are violated. In particular, minorities (such as Uyghur Muslims) are being persecuted severely. They are forced to convert religions, stripped-off of their culture, and exploited for cheap labor. Furthermore, they are deprived of basic freedom to speech which contradicts the very essence of a democracy - highlighting the totalitarian nature of the government.

The violation of human rights threatens the very essence of a civilization, and is obviously a concern for the rest of the world.

Censorship

Only Chinese apps and media are allowed, as a means of censoring all content that is against the Chinese government. Despite there being various apps with different features, once again, there is only an illusion of freedom of choice as everything is under the control of the state.

Moreover, various Chinese apps have allegations/history of spying on their users, as a means of collecting data, with popular apps like Tiktok being one of them recently. This data gets sold to data mining companies, which then target the users with specialized advertisements for products.

Even when the Covid-19 outbreak emerged, the media was prevented from announcing it to the world, for maintaining China's image; they ended up risking the lives of millions across the world by doing so.

Cyber Crimes

China has been involved in cyber crimes with large-scale implications, with many breaches being backed by the state. When looking at past occurrences, the US, the EU, NATO, the UK and other countries accused China of exploiting vulnerabilities in Microsoft Exchange Server (mail/calendar server)[1]. It affected around 250,000 organizations worldwide and allowed hackers to steal company emails and to breach a compromised Exchange server.

International Waters

China builds artificial islands and sets up military bases there in order to claim disputed ocean waters. This obviously harms the biodiversity and sustainability of these natural environments, affecting both the flora and fauna (i.e. both plants and animal biospheres). China does this in order to extract the natural resources of those regions and to simultaneously prevent other countries from doing so. Moreover, they are able to avail more efficient trading routes.

This can especially be seen at the South China Sea. There are many 'islands' that didn't even exist up until a few years ago. Satellite images show numerous ships pumping sand out of the sea. China has heavily militarized the cluster of islands in the region, and build its own naval bases, to keep other countries in check. China insists that its intentions are non-militaristic, but its actions say otherwise. [2]

Biowarfare

There is research that suggests that Covid-19 was a bioweapon. It seems very suspicious that the origin of the virus was from Wuhan, the same place where there is a research center for virology(Wuhan Institute of Virology).[3] Moreover, the fact that China hid the news of the outbreak makes it seem even more obvious that this was intentional.

One possibility is that China used the virus to cripple the rest of the world, as no country was even prepared for the possibility of a pandemic. Countries' economies, healthcare, education system, and other sectors were heavily tested; many countries were just not able to cope. For instance, Italy's health care was not ready and the death toll clearly showed that.

Debt traps

China has distributed large amounts of loans to low and middle income countries. It seems generous, until the clauses and contracts for these loans are analyzed. China intentionally gives out loans to countries that definitely cannot repay them, with the aim of using those countries for its benefit. Clearly, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) not only acts as a geopolitical influence, but also as a weapon - once the country gets crippled by these tempting loans, it becomes a puppet for China and its expansion, by the taking over the infrastructure of the borrower.

In the case of the Sri Lankan port of Hambantota, China pushed Sri Lanka into borrowing money from Chinese banks to fund the project, despite the lack of large potential commercial gains.[4] However, Sri Lanka could not keep up with the loans, and China demanded the port as collateral, forcing the government to give away control to a Chinese company. In the case of Africa, China has been accused of spying. After 'gifting' the African Union building, China intentionally left a backdoor to the servers, to secretly access data. Moreover, microphones were found all over the building. [5]

Some of the known regions where China has invested in large amounts and hence under risk of these debt traps

- Indian subcontinent
  - Sri Lanka
  - Pakistan
- Indo-Pacific
  - Thailand
  - Laos
  - Cambodia
- All of Africa except Swaziland

Dependence of other countries

A large majority of countries in the world are dependent on China for production, imports and exports of goods. This dependence has led to countries being helpless when they are against policies that they disagree with.

Taking an example, Australia is extremely dependent on China for a huge fraction of its economy, with China being its largest trading partner. Around 40% of Australia's exports is with China.[6] This has caused fears in the country about China's growing influence, with many saying that this is of utmost concern. Australia has hence formed alliances with other countries such as the Quad and AUKUS, in order to address this.

Arguments Defending China

However, despite the above, China isn't exactly the monster that it seems when compared to the other superpowers like the US and the Soviet Union from the last century.

Regarding cyber crimes, China isn't the only country which is a culprit. Various other countries have also been involved in scandals and tampering incidents; Russia, for instance, has been accused of tampering in the 2016 US Presidential Elections. It seems unfair to put the blame solely on a single country - China.

When it comes to the BRI, there is research[7] that suggest that Chinese lenders are willing to renegotiate the terms of loans[4]; there are various instances where Chinese investment has genuinely improved the standard of living in countries, especially in African ones like Lesotho. While other states use force to exploit resources of countries, China hardly harms the governments of these countries. It's just being smart, with non-violent strategies to bring more countries under its control. Despite extensive militarization, China limits its use of violence, which is in stark contrast to the US' expeditions for resources.

Despite claims that Covid-19 was a bioweapon, it hasn't been confirmed yet and there is a possibility that it was genuinely just an accidental leak. Hence, unless it has been proved, China can't exactly be pronounced guilty.

Finally, online resources are heavily backed by Western media; they show only the Westerners' side of the story. Hence, despite incomplete data and a lack of the full picture, China is portrayed and interpreted as a super villain.

Conclusions

The rapid and uncontrolled rise of China is indeed concerning; however, the points defending China highlight that it isn't the super villain it is portrayed to be; it is no different from any other emerging superpower throughout history. It is evident that further **unbiased** research must be performed.

However, it is also evident that it is too dangerous to just let China continue its current efforts without any hinderance. This is clearly an international issue with worldwide consequences, and not just a regional one.

The following measures may be taken to address the issue of China's rapid rise and growing dominance:

- Products made through exploited labor should be boycotted, to hinder the Government's efforts at exploiting workers. Even if a company does produce goods in China, it should ensure that employees and laborers avail good working conditions.
- As the digital world is still relatively recent, more ideation is required to address the issue of cyber crimes. New laws must be agreed upon to properly police cyber crimes, as it could have serious repercussions if left unhindered A suggestion would be for the UN to issue heavy penalties for such crimes.
- The UN must come in and make stricter laws for governing international waters, to ensure that China doesn't just bully its neighbors.
- China's microbiology research must be monitored to ensure that their bioweapons are kept in check and other countries can be prepared in the case of an 'accidental' leak.
- Other countries should support countries that are under the BRI, in order to reduce China's dominance over them.
- International companies should find alternative countries to produce their goods. It may not be easy, but it is necessary to reduce the current dependence on China.

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