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# CABINET

*KINGMUN 2019*

## DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to King County Model United Nations 2019 and the State Council of the People's Republic of China. My name is Jackson Kelley, and I am serving as your Director. I am a senior at Bellarmine Preparatory School in Tacoma, and this is my fourth year involved in MUN. I am joined by my Chair, Anusha Srivastava, a junior at Tesla STEM High School, as well as my Assistant Director Maia McGrath, a junior in the Everett Community College's Ocean Research College Academy (ORCA) program.

We have selected two topics for the committee: "The Belt and Road Initiative and Expanding China's Economic Influence" and "Addressing Urban Air and Water in China through Industry Reform." Both of these topics are currently relevant issues to the people and government of the People's Republic of China, so you should expect active and involved debate.

Once known as "One Belt One Road," the Belt and Road Initiative is an international economic and infrastructure-related project the Chinese government is sponsoring. Involving countries along the historical Silk Road and far more, this initiative is poised to give China's economy a boost if successfully implemented. The committee must determine a method of implementation that gathers more than the partial support the international community is giving it, and it must find a way to address concerns set forth by other countries.

One of China's most pressing issues in today's world is also environmental pollution in both air and water. These both pose a serious danger to public health, as clean water is essential to many of China's citizens as well as some of its industries, and a water shortage is potentially on the horizon. Urban air pollution, especially in a highly urbanized country like China, also poses a serious threat to health, so it is imperative that the committee finds solutions to these issues.

**We, as a dais, have written this background guide to give you an understanding of the topics, as well as a springboard for further research and preparation. We hope you are able to utilize this information to have an impactful discussion and form working solutions to these pressing economic and environmental issues. Feel free to email us with any questions. I am absolutely psyched to see you all in action in KINGMUN's Cabinet committee!**

**Always yours,  
Jackson Kelley  
Director | State Council of the People's Republic of China**

## **Committee Overview**

**Welcome to the State Council of the People's Republic of China at KINGMUN 2019. The State Council is the chief executive body of the People's Republic of China, and it is responsible for executing the policies of the Communist Party of China, as well as the laws and regulations adopted by the National People's Congress (NPC). The State Council forms the head of the Central People's Government, one of the three primary branches of the Government of the People's Republic of China, with the other two branches being the Communist Party of China and the People's Liberation Army. The State Council holds the power of administrative legislation, administrative leadership, economic management, diplomatic administration, social administration, proposal submission, and other powers assigned by the NPC, its Standing Committee.**

**The State Council itself is primarily responsible for adopting administrative regulations, submitting legislative proposals to the NPC, delegating tasks and responsibilities to the ministries and commissions under the Council, implementing national economic and social development plans and the State budget, directing and administering internal affairs through its ministries, conducting foreign affairs and agreements, and directing and administering the building of national defense. The Council is also responsible for managing various bodies of the Central People's Government, such as altering and annulling inappropriate orders, directives, and regulations issued by ministries entering states of emergency across the State. The Council also exercises other functions and powers assigned by the NPC or its Standing Committee.**

**As the chief administrative organ of the People's Republic of China, the State Council receives its funding from the People's Bank of China. State Council Finances are managed by the National Audit Office, which supervises the revenue and expenditure of all departments under the State Council, local governments, financial and monetary organizations, and institutions of the State.**

**In KINGMUN 2019's cabinet committee, delegates will represent ministers, who hold full voting powers within the Council. Delegates will collaborate with the rest of the committee to create national administrative regulations that address the topics discussed and align with the laws of the NPC and its Standing Committee. Delegates will not only need to have knowledge of the topic but also of their respective ministries and their specialties, and how those specialties apply to the topic. Additionally, delegates should be well informed of the economic status and capabilities, past and present policies, cultural attitudes, and the structure, jurisdiction, and procedure of the State Council.**

**The background guide is meant as a tool for delegates to gain basic knowledge of the issue. However, it is not meant to serve as a primary information source. Delegates must use the background guide to help guide further, in-depth research on the topics at hand.**

**This committee will require you to learn and work with new Rules of Procedure (ROP). These rules of procedure will be uploaded to the website and you will be notified when they are available.**

**Position papers must be submitted on time for delegates to be considered for an award. In the cabinet at KINGMUN 2019, the position papers delegates write will not be like typical position papers. Position papers should be a page long for each topic, briefly summarizing the history; their minister's stance on the topic; past and present country, ministry, and committee actions and policies; past and present international actions and policies; the current situation; and potential solutions in the form of proposed national administrative regulations.**

**Position Papers are due by April 21st at 11:59 p.m. Please submit them to [cabinet@kingmun.org](mailto:cabinet@kingmun.org) with your name, country, and "position paper" in the subject line.**

# Topic A: The Belt and Road Initiative and Expanding China's Economic Influence

## Overview of the Topic

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), initially known as One Belt One Road (OBOR), is a trans-continental infrastructure and economic project operating in nations lying along the original Silk Road and elsewhere. Through its implementation, the Chinese Government hopes to promote the free flow of economic factors, the efficient allocation of resources, and economic policy coordination. It also aims to create an inclusive and balanced regional economic cooperation architecture that benefits the entire international community. The BRI is composed of six land routes, or “belts,” and one maritime route, or “road,” that run through Central and West Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and some parts of Oceania.

Initially proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping to the Indonesian Parliament in 2013, the Initiative was revealed to the public on March 28, 2015. The Initiative was created in response to a lack of long term infrastructure growth and investment, as evidenced by a World Pensions Council (WPC) report which revealed that Asia, excluding China, required \$900 billion USD or more of annual infrastructure investments over the next decade. These were primarily in debt investments, with the required amount of expenditure being 50% above current spending rates.

The BRI is funded by numerous groups, most notably the Silk Road Fund, the China-Led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and the World Bank Group (WBG), who signed on in 2017. The WBG has given its support to the BRI, and has committed about 80 billion USD for infrastructure projects in Belt and Road countries in addition to providing advisory services and analytics for Belt and Road nations.

As of 2019, the BRI encompasses nearly 70 nations, affects a population of over 4.8 billion people, and covers economies worth a total sum of approximately 21 trillion USD. It accounts for 62% of the world's GDP, 30% of global maritime based economic production, and approximately 65% of global land. The Fitch ratings agency reported in 2017 that 900 billion USD worth of projects were already planned or underway.

Despite the Initiative's current success, the BRI does not have full international support, as numerous parties are concerned about potential environmental and social detriment that may result from the BRI's focus on enhancing infrastructure. Additionally, many nations are concerned about debt sustainability with regards to infrastructure projects funded by China, with the United States of America going so far as to advise nations not to accept Chinese lending for infrastructure projects.

## History

Merely a year after he assumed office, President Xi Jinping made headlines by unveiling the Silk Road Economic Belt initiative in 2013. A month later, he would announce the New Maritime Silk Road before the Indonesian Parliament; these two initiatives are now grouped under the term One Belt, One Road Initiative or the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). As the name implies, the concept behind this initiative represents a revival of the Silk Road and with it, China's economic glory as a global power central to international trade and diplomacy. The Belt and Road Initiative was aptly timed as well, with China seeking to expand their economic influence across the globe, particularly by tapping into European markets. This proposal would eventually blossom into one of the hallmarks of Xi's presidency and the core of China's foreign policy strategy.

The two concepts behind the initiative envision a series of highly efficient maritime and land-based economic corridors that would link European and Asian markets together. The Silk Road Economic Belt, when proposed, was designed to advance infrastructure development and enhanced connectivity over several key land corridors. These land routes fall under the priorities of linking six main economic corridors: (1) the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor; (2) the New Eurasian Land Bridge; (3) the China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor; (4) the China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor; (5) the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor; and (6) the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor. The New Maritime Silk Road, on the other hand, focuses on linking Chinese ports to Europe and Africa through the South China Sea and Indian Ocean as well as with the South Pacific Ocean in a separate route. The two proposals would eventually be combined in the Chinese State Council's 2015 action plan under the name of One Belt, One Road (OBOR), which has remained the most ambitious foreign policy project undertaken in history, many times larger than the Marshall Plan developed by the US after World War II and spanning 65 countries and nearly 60% of the global population. From an economic and political standpoint, this initiative stands to greatly benefit China; the construction of these corridors would drastically cut down trade costs, increase demand for Chinese goods and services, secure an energy supply, and accelerate progress towards a global reserve currency. Since its conception in 2013, 71 countries have taken part in the project, and China has invested nearly 900 billion dollars in

projects relating to the Belt and Road, pouring enormous amounts of capital into Chinese public financial institutions, like the Exim Bank, who are then able to lend cheaply to Chinese companies involved in BRI projects. This enables Chinese companies to effectively compete with foreign companies for projects due to their easy financing.

The “road” component of the BRI mainly depends on a network of railways, pipelines, telecommunication lines, and roads. The “belt” aspect is equally dependent on these forms of hard infrastructure; the distinction between the two has become increasingly blurred as more projects emerge. One of the major areas that China has focused on, surprisingly, has been infrastructure development in Africa; although outside of the intended Eurasian network, there have been numerous projects initiated and completed in the region. Chinese foreign direct investment in Africa has experienced a sharp increase since 2013, with money going into a variety of sectors involved in infrastructure; this investment is also a major source of loan financing for public infrastructure projects. The most prominent example of China’s involvement in Africa takes shape in its efforts towards rail networks in East Africa, most recently with the establishment of the Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway. In 2011, Kenya signed a memorandum of understanding with the China Road and Bridge Corporation, a nonbinding agreement which would initiate the construction of the rail line. This railway line was 90% funded by China’s Exim Bank and the primary contractor was the China Road and Bridge Corporation, who will also be responsible for the line’s maintenance and operation for the next decade. The Nairobi-Mombasa railway project has created nearly 50,000 jobs for locals, and trained more than 5,000 technicians since construction began in late 2014. Although numerous African leaders praised the project as a model for Chinese cooperation and important tool for stimulating trade, there has been significant backlash as well, from both foreign powers and Kenyan citizens. Extensive Chinese funding of the project has given rise to concerns that Kenya would be forced into handing over land, minerals, or other strategic assets if it defaults on loans. Additionally, since its launch in 2017, the Mombasa-Nairobi railway has been fraught with allegations of corruption, poor management, and racism against both Chinese and Kenyan officials. China has conducted similar projects in both Ethiopia and Nigeria with the construction of modernized standard gauge railways to stimulate economic activity and bolster Chinese-African relations. Ethiopia is also home to the Eastern Industrial Zone (EIZ), one of five industrial zones that China has pledged to build in Ethiopia. The EIZ is a manufacturing hub and industrial park, but there has been minimal progress seen on Ethiopia’s part towards any direct technological transfer.

In regards to the New Eurasian Bridge, which has been welcomed less openly by European leaders, China has begun a few projects along the corridor. However,



the number of projects is relatively lower compared to its projects in Southeast Asia and Africa. Nevertheless, efforts to link China to Europe have continued.

Since its conception, the BRI has made significant changes and advancements as the vision behind the initiative continues to evolve. For example, its geographic focus has expanded beyond the initial plans, evident with Venezuela's addition to the plan in 2017. Additionally, the scope of the initiative now includes work towards "financial integration", "cooperation in science and technology," and the creation of trade "cooperation mechanisms." The project was also officially cemented into Chinese policy in 2017, when it was introduced into the Chinese Communist Party Constitution; doing so would ensure a reliable source of funding for Belt and Road projects. Going forward, careful analysis and decisions must be made about the future steps the BRI will take globally, even as far as outer space, as many of the projects under the initiative come to fruition.

## Current Situation

The effort by China to strengthen infrastructure and trade through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) takes place in two ways, according to the Chinese president Xi Jinping. First, the Silk Road Economic Belt takes place as an overland infrastructure project set to better connect China with Central and South Asia, as well as beyond into Eastern Europe. This belt and its numerous corridors connect China to many governments typically not invested in by large foreign powers. These countries readily take these deals with China, often agreeing to long-term loans with few conditions, which makes them even more appealing to non-democratic countries who dislike the numerous conditions set forth by the West that often aim to change their governmental structure.

The second part of Belt and Road Initiative is the New Maritime Silk Road, which ranges from Southeast China and Indonesia to Egypt, even reaching the Mediterranean Sea. China-sponsored ports have appeared in strategic locations throughout the region, such as Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. These ports connect China to more natural resources, especially oil, and countries, particularly those in Africa that are untouched by the six land corridors.

Many western countries are skeptical of Chinese motives for pursuing the BRI; after all, many of the loans granted by the Chinese government have yet to be paid off, and international organizations like the Center for Global Development have stated that many of these loans are at moderate to high risk of never being paid off. China has granted extensions to many of these loans, often advancing into countries such as Sri Lanka and Pakistan, fully operating their ports on foreign territory as a consequence for failing to pay back loans.



**This movement worries the United States and other western governments, who fear the increasing Chinese influence in developing countries in addition to the increased Chinese military presence in unstable regions. These concerns are well-founded, as China is in the process of opening a naval base in Egypt and working to secure more Chinese-operated ports. The United States has criticized China for expanding its influence.**

**The BRI is nonetheless poised to elevate the Chinese economy, re-stimulating the slowing growth rate the country has been experiencing. By satisfying the popular pressure to find new markets for China's consumer exports and industrial capacity, it simultaneously promotes a more assertive nation and stimulate economic growth. This move to strengthen global ties has not conformed to the tactics previously pursued by Chinese leadership, who have advocated for playing the long game, but the BRI appears to be working well for the Chinese economy, despite international qualms about investing in unstable environments and providing loan money to struggling countries.**

## **Case Studies**

### **The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor**

**As one of the most ambitious and most comprehensive projects undertaken by China as part of the Belt and Road Initiative, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) consists of massive Chinese investment into infrastructure projects that aims to connect Pakistan's Gwadar Port on the Arabian Sea to China — a 3,000 kilometer stretch. CPEC is estimated to be valued at nearly 62 billion USD and has been declared a flagship project by both Pakistan and China. The corridor also provides a unique opportunity to examine some of the economic, political, and social nuances of the initiative and its projects in action.**

**CPEC was first publicly announced in 2015 when Pakistan and China formalized a series of fifty-one agreements and a memoranda of understanding, where China pledged 46 billion USD in investments over the next ten to fifteen years. That number has significantly increased since the agreements were signed, especially as China pours money into highways, railways, and energy projects. CPEC's importance within the broader scope of the Belt and Road Initiative cannot be understated; its location enables it to serve as a potential connection between the land based Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road. Additionally, it has the potential to resolve the so called "Malacca Dilemma." The Malacca Dilemma is a term referring to the economic vulnerability that 85% of China's oil imports travel through the Straits**

of Malacca. With CPEC, China hopes to alleviate this vulnerability by using the corridor to transport foreign imports.

A major component of the CPEC investment plans involves energy and transportation infrastructure. Pakistan's government estimates that the inefficiencies and breakdowns in its crumbling and archaic transportation network has caused a 3.55% loss in the country's GDP. CPEC envisions a massive overhaul of Pakistan's transportation system through the construction of three main corridors for cargo transport: the Western Alignment, the Eastern Alignment, and the Central Alignment. China has also moved in thousands of road builders into Pakistan to finish construction of the Karakoram Highway, which is currently China's only overland link to Pakistan. Chinese investment has also centered around improving Pakistan's ageing railway system, through initiatives such as the rebuilding of the Main Line 1 railway between Karachi and Peshawar by 2020; this railway accounts for 70% of the Pakistan Railway's traffic. In addition to rebuilding physical railway infrastructure, CPEC projects include the reconstruction of train stations and passenger coaches, bringing the total investment in Pakistan's railway system to around 5 billion USD by the end of 2019. One of CPEC's main objectives is also to develop and operationalize the Gwadar Port in southern Pakistan, which would enable China to project trade outward into the Arabian Sea and by extension, the Indian Ocean. The port will be located near a designated special economic zone, consisting of manufacturing hubs, warehouses, and display centres.

CPEC also brings relief to Pakistan's long-standing and unrelenting energy crisis, which has cost its economy 2-2.5% of its GDP annually. Energy projects are not constructed by the Chinese or Pakistani government; they are constructed by private independent power producers while China's Exim Bank finances the investments. Several of the projects have prioritized renewable energy, with investment into endeavors like the construction of the world's largest solar power plant and several hydropower and wind power plants.

However, CPEC isn't without significant challenges and obstacles as regional security poses the biggest threat to its success. Chinese investment into the region is contingent upon peace and stability in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and western China; without this, construction of infrastructure projects is at risk. CPEC expansion also has the potential to aggravate existing social and political tensions, and generate new sources of conflict within Pakistan. Growing concerns in Gwadar, where the port is to be built, exemplifies the negative reception CPEC has had in some areas of Pakistan. China faces a potential Balochistan insurgency in the area as a result of concerns that Chinese investment will benefit China more than local populations. The fiscal impact of the project is also to be noted, as it is estimated that Pakistan would be required to repay principal debt and interest of approximately 3.5 billion USD per year over a period of 20 years. Going forward, China has stated that it looks

**to guarantee payment of this debt once CPEC is fully operational, but future host states will be eyeing the corridor as a indicator of success when considering whether to cooperate with Chinese investment.**

**2013 - The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is proposed by President Xi Jinping to the Indonesian Parliament in an October speech. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is proposed later that month**

**2015 - On March 28, the BRI is made public by the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Commerce, with State Council authorization. The State Council has outlined the principles, framework, key areas of cooperation, and the cooperation mechanisms of the BRI, which begun operation along the AIIB**

**2018 - WBG conducts a study on the economics of the BRI in attempts to soothe growing international fears over expanding Chinese socioeconomic influence in the global community**

**2014 - Premier Li Keqiang calls for accelerating the BRI along the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar and China-Pakistan Economic Corridors, the Leading Group for Advancing the Development of One Belt One Road is formed, and the Silk Road Fund is established**

**2017 - The World Bank Group (WBG) signs on as a partner for the BRI, as approximately 900 billion USD of BRI projects are either in development or already underway.**

**2019 - The BRI encompasses nearly 70 nations with a population of over 4.8 billion, economies worth a total sum of approximately 21 trillion USD, which accounts for 62% of the world's GDP, 65% of global land economic production, and 30% of global maritime economic production.**

## Guiding Questions

1. How can China address political backlash to BRI projects in foreign countries?
2. Should China expand the BRI outside of Asia, Europe, and Africa? If so, what would that look like in terms of investment and funding?
3. How does China ensure that BRI projects are conducted in a manner that safeguards the financial security of foreign countries and ensures debt sustainability?
4. How can the Council address foreign concerns that China's infrastructure projects stands to benefit itself more than host states?
5. Going forward, how should China choose the locations and host states for new BRI projects? How should political leadership and credit history factor into these decisions?
6. How should China's financial guidelines for loans and lending money be revised to lower the volatility of investment into BRI projects?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

A short video briefly describing the BRI overall, which then goes into detail about how the BRI is a plan for Chinese expansion

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EvXROXilpvQ>

This link includes some reservations and possible issues about the BRI. Delegates should consider these when proceeding with an action plan for the future.

2. <https://www.chinausfocus.com/finance-economy/five-challenges-for-the-belt-and-road>

An in depth look at the BRI, providing insight into China's goals and the basis for the BRI.

3. <https://www.cfr.org/background/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative>

This link is the World Bank providing some basic commentary on the BRI, discussing the fact that as something that has never before been attempted.

4. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/regional-integration/brief/belt-and-road-initiative>

This is the Chinese government's official action plan on the BRI.

5. [http://english.gov.cn/archive/publications/2015/03/30/content\\_281475080249035.htm](http://english.gov.cn/archive/publications/2015/03/30/content_281475080249035.htm)

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# Topic B: Addressing Urban Air and Water Pollution through Industry Reform

## Introduction

In 1958, Chinese Communist Party Chairman Mao Zedong initiated the Great Leap Forward, a revolutionary initiative aimed to revitalize China's economy to match that of Western Europe and the United States. However, decades of drastic industrialization have since devastated the country's environment, distinguishing pollution as a critical issue in Chinese politics. Though China faces many types of pollution from a wide range of industries, the pollution of air and water sources creates the biggest issues by far, posing direct threats to the health of Chinese citizens. Large urban areas, including Beijing and its surrounding cities, have been particularly affected by air pollution, reaching a point where many citizens frequently wear gas masks to protect themselves from the harmful substances they would otherwise inhale.

Chinese manufacturers are large contributors to the issue, notoriously disposing toxic waste into local lakes and rivers and eliminating local ecology. As a result, contaminated sewage, and chemical and industrial wastewater, are coupling with airborne waste to fester disease among large populations of Chinese citizens. In recent years, cancer rates throughout China have soared, and the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences has recently determined lung cancer to be the greatest cause of death in the country. Unsurprisingly, other medical experts have observed the strong correlation between these rates and the growing presence of pollution in local air and water supplies.

The root of the health issues regarding water extend beyond pollution to encompass distribution problems as well. China does not suffer from any form of water scarcity, holding roughly the equivalent amount of water — at 2000 cubic meters per person — as the UK within its borders. However, 80% of China's potable water sources are located in the southern regions, leaving the more than 500 million citizens in the north living in a state of "water scarcity" or worse. The northern regions account for much of China's agriculture and infrastructural investments, and the lack of safe water poses a serious threat to the economic well-being of the entire country.

**Air pollution in China also poses a serious threat to health, and insufficient measures taken by the Chinese government have allowed these issues to exacerbate. In June of 2018, the previous action plan for combating urban air pollution expired, promptly being replaced by an equally passive action plan. This plan continues to set goals and regulations for individual cities, but its failing implementation leaves Chinese citizens exposed to the dangers of pollution -- currently every major Chinese city exceeds the World Health Organization's exposure limit to contaminants.**

**These topics are of great importance to the Chinese people and government as the international community moves toward popular efforts to combat climate change and pollution worldwide. Accordingly, it is imperative for the committee to come to effective solutions to resolve the deadly effects of air and water pollution in China.**

## **History**

**Due to the recent economic boom, China's environmental pollution has accelerated to unprecedented rates. However, China's history of mistreating the environment dates to centuries ago to the ancient Chinese dynasty system. Each dynasty held the Mandate of Heaven, a religious and political doctrine used to justify the current ruler's claim to power. Each of the dynasties eventually lost power and the Mandate of Heaven as a result of overthrow, natural disasters, and famine. The latter of the three reasons was far more common, as the Chinese dynasties would exploit their natural resources to best exercise and retain power. This exploitation continued, especially after the Chinese Communist Party took power in 1949, and Chairman Mao Zedong greatly prioritized industrialization and economic revitalization in government affairs.**

**Coal then became the primary source of energy for China during the Great Leap Forward in 1958, when China attempted to catapult itself to a position from which it could compete with the manufacturing giants of the time, such as the United Kingdom and United States. Thousands of backyard furnaces were installed to power this movement, and as a result, carbon dioxide and other harmful fumes began to contaminate the atmosphere. When an economic boom hit China in the 1970s following then-Chairman Deng Xiaoping's political reforms, the overall emission of pollution increased rapidly.**

**Mainstream environmental protection only started in 1979 with the Environmental Protection Law, which was later followed by Air Prevention and Control Law in 1987 and other laws that came after the turn of the century, such as the Cleaner Production Promotion Act in 2002. Most of these laws focused on the air pollution that the citizens in urban environments dealt with every day. Finally, a new Environmental Protection Law was enacted in 2015, but compared to the standards that China currently has in place, the country still lacks regulation and enforcement of such legislation.**

However, the worsening state of water pollution now outweighs that of air pollution. After decades of Chinese corporations dumping their sewage, chemical, and production-related wastes into local water sources, the impact is becoming clear. Many rural communities are severely endangered by this contaminated water, unless they are one of few which derive their water from deep underground sources. According to international standards, over 80% of the water in rural communities in China is not safe to bathe in or drink.

To solve this newer problem, many speculate that China will have to revise its policies of relaxed regulation, as demonstrated in the most recent Environmental Protection Law. Rural citizens are crying foul at the disparaged environment in which they live, and it is up to the State Council to find a way to balance the country's economic interests with the rights of their citizens to liveable communities by holding major manufacturing industries accountable.

## Timeline

**1958** – The modern age of Chinese pollution is launched with the Great Leap Forward, transforming China's state of pollution from relatively minor atrocities committed by the dynasties to a global leader in pollutant emissions.

**1970s** – Through the thousands of factories built during the Great Leap Forward and the home furnaces owned by hundreds of thousands of Chinese, air pollution begins to garner the attention of the nation.

**1978** – Deng Xiaoping takes power in China and revitalizes the economy, revoking past isolationist policies and instead welcoming foreign investment and privatization in China. The economy grows further, creating more prosperous industries and exacerbating the problem with the pollution.

**1979** – The Environmental Protection Law is enacted, stating that companies must take measures to reduce their emission of pollutants into local environments. The Law also introduces a tax on waste upon exceeding a certain limit.

**1987** – The Air Prevention and Control Law is the first law in China to pose limits on emissions on Chinese companies.

**2002** – The Cleaner Production Promotion Law uses taxation and tax breaks as an incentive to promote more responsible polluting among Chinese corporations, a strategy that has been implemented across the globe.

**2015 – The new Environmental Protection Law sets more specific limits on emissions, requiring companies to make that information public. The government will act accordingly when goals are not met.**

**2018 – China releases its action plan for 2020 emissions goals, and members of the international community express slight disappointment. These goals are not revolutionary, but they do target certain industries and punish certain cities that blatantly fail to meet the standards set for them.**

## **Current Situation**

**Air and water pollution continues to be at the forefront of Chinese politics as a large majority of China's population faces safety hazards exacerbated by either poor air or water quality. Additionally, China is headed towards an impending water crisis with eight provinces, primarily in the north, suffering from acute water scarcity. These provinces account for 38% of China's agricultural output and nearly half of its power generation. Water pollution only furthers limits water supply, so addressing water pollution is critical in ensuring a sustainable future. After a study on water from 4,778 sources was done in 2014, data revealed that nearly half of China's population lacks access to clean water safe for human consumption. Unfortunately, China has yet to see any significant improvements in its water quality; although overall national water quality has improved, the level of pollution in many bodies of water far exceeds both the capacity for water treatment facilities and national standards of water quality.**

**In a recent statement released by the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, phosphorus and ammonium nitrate were identified as the primary pollutants found in these major bodies of water; both of these pollutants are most commonly found in industrial waste water, pesticides, and organic fertilizers. In an attempt to curb the discharge of these pollutants, China released its Water Pollution Prevention and Control Plan in 2015, a comprehensive strategy intended to bolster efforts for provinces to meet ground and surface water quality standards. This plan put a renewed emphasis on urban water pollution in particular, setting a target to eliminate 90% of "black odorous water" in major cities and requiring city authorities to draft action plans regarding the issue. However, experts have urged China to adopt even stricter and more transparent measures in the wake of 6,000 cases this year necessitating immediate attention, per the government-launched National Water Source Inspection. Currently, companies responsible and tried for polluting local ecosystems face a maximum fine of 1 million yuan (150,000 USD), suspension, and even closure. Regulating water pollution is only made more difficult by lax enforcement and poor reporting system, often hindering citizens from reporting local water pollution and by extension, enabling provinces to cheat water inspection**

tests. In recent years, the government has funneled large sums of money towards technological innovations and other pollution-control measures to address the issue. According to Zhang Bo, director of the Water Department at China's Environment Ministry, the total cost of implementing effective water pollution regulations could amount to an estimated 1 trillion yuan (150 billion USD).

China's urban air pollution has also garnered international attention in megacities including Beijing and Shanghai. From 2013, the year when the Chinese government launched the Air Pollution Action Plan, the country has seen impressive improvements in reducing levels of dangerously fine particles of 2.5 millimeters in diameter or less (known as PM<sub>2.5</sub>) in the air. The plan also called for a nationwide cap on coal use, banned new coal-burning capacity, and accelerated the use of filters and scrubbers; these measures cut PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels in Beijing to half the original levels between 2012 and 2016. One of the most successful and aggressive environmental policy moves made by China, the plan enabled China's three biggest city clusters to meet air pollution targets. In 2017, further command and control measures were implemented, setting a limit on the output of steel and aluminum smelters and creating the Chinese Environmental Protection Agency to enforce these measures.

Bans on polluting corporations have proven to be especially effective in China in part because most of the country's biggest polluters are state-owned. However, imposing this bans also comes with significant costs; loss of investment through bans will amount to about 250 billion yuan (37 billion USD), and the economic implications are a source of contention among Chinese authorities. Given that the previous Air Pollution Action Plan expired in 2017, China has recently released the 2018-2020 Three Year Action Plan that sets a target of an 18% reduction in PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels from the 2015 baseline for all cities to meet — not just major or megacities. Despite a general upward trend, there is still significant progress to be made. Many cities continue to have staggeringly high levels of air pollution. Beijing's current levels remain nearly four times the levels recommended by the World Health Organization, and officials continue to struggle with balancing pollution control measures with economic interests.



# Case Studies

## China's Airpocalypse of 2013

In January of 2013, Beijing experienced its worst smog outbreak since 1961. On some days the city experienced pollution levels 30 times higher than levels deemed safe by the World Health Organization (WHO), and the public began referring to the smog as the “airpocalypse,” or “airmageddon.” Flights were cancelled, roads were closed, and government vehicles were taken off the road in attempts to curb further air pollution.

Pollution levels were literally off the charts, with the Air Quality Index (AQI), typically measuring air quality on a scale of 0-300 in terms of pollution concentration as a function of time, reaching levels of 700 or more on certain days of January. The air was an eye-watering, industrial smog, reportedly tasting of chemicals and making noontime look like early evening. The smog stretched as far as 1,100 miles south of Beijing, encompassing more than 30 other medium to large Chinese cities. Parts of the cloud drifted as far as Japan, leading Japanese authorities to release health warnings to the populations of the island's westernmost cities. Traces of the Beijing smog have been found as far as the state of California in recent years.

Although the exact cause of the severity of Beijing's 2013 smog is not known, most theories speculate that stagnant winds and humidity were key in trapping high concentrations of particulate matter in the air. The primary particulate matter involved in the Beijing smog was PM<sub>2.5</sub>, which is particulate matter of 2.5 micrometers in diameter or less. These particles are small enough to lodge in the lungs, enter the bloodstream, and lead to respiratory infections, asthma, lung cancer, and cerebrovascular disease; PM<sub>2.5</sub> is highly harmful to human health, oftentimes leading to negative long-term effects. Studies conducted in four Chinese cities by Greenpeace and Beijing University have found that the number of people who die prematurely from air pollution-related causes is close to three times that of those killed by vehicular and traffic accidents. Children and other vulnerable groups were hit the hardest with one of Beijing's primary children's hospitals admitting an estimated 9,000 patients a day — a third of which had respiratory diseases or conditions.

The smog continued to cause problems for the entirety of 2013 and subsequent years. In December of 2013, the smog reached 25 of China's 31 provinces and municipalities, covering over 100 large or medium cities and spanning over 1.4 million square kilometers, affecting a population of over 800 million people.

Prompted by the all-encompassing smog and public outcry, the Chinese government launched a war on air pollution. In September of the following year, the State Council announced its Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Air Pollution, which aimed to improve air quality nationwide by reducing the level of particulate matter of 10 micrometers or less in diameter (PM<sub>10</sub>) in cities above prefecture level by at least 10%. It also aimed to reduce the concentration of PM<sub>2.5</sub> by at least 25%, from levels seen in 2012 in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and among others. A nationwide air quality monitoring system was also implemented, which now publishes PM<sub>2.5</sub>-based AQI in real time in 74 cities and counting.

By the end of 2017, Beijing had met most of its major air quality targets on the State level as set forth in the 2013 Action Plan. The Beijing Municipal Environmental Bureau reported that the average concentrations of PM<sub>2.5</sub> dropped by 35.6% from the previous concentration of 58 micrograms per cubic meter in 2012, meeting the 2013 Action Plan requirement that Beijing cut PM<sub>2.5</sub> concentrations to 60 micrograms per cubic meter or less. In addition to a general trend towards a greater reliance on renewable energy over fossil fuels, the governments of China and Beijing shut down nearly 2,000 factories, closed coal-fired power plants, and removed an estimated 2 million or more high-emission vehicles from the streets from 2013 to 2018. Dry and windy weather also played a role in improving air quality in Beijing and in China overall. Unfortunately, Beijing has yet to reach the official international standard of less than 35 micrograms per cubic meter of PM<sub>2.5</sub>.

## Bloc Positions

### Premier of the State Council

The Premier of the State Council is the head of government and is the highest ranking title in the Civil Service. As the lead authority in the State Council, the Premier is tasked with the implementation, organization, and administration of the civil bureaucracy, in addition to planning national economic and social development. The Premier also oversees all the ministries, departments, and commissions within the Chinese legislative system. In committee, the Premier of the State Council will approve, authorize, or manage the creation of any national policy drafted by the various department heads.

### First Vice Premier of the State Council

The title of Vice Premier is held by multiple individuals at one time, with each vice premier holding a broad portfolio of responsibilities. The First-Ranked Vice

**Premier of the State Council is the highest ranking among the executive assistants to the Premier, and his portfolio consists of managing macroeconomic planning, economic development, trade, development, education, energy, and the environment. Additionally, his duties include any institutional reform to the State Council. In committee, the First Vice Premier has all the Ministers and Coordinators beneath the level of Vice Premier reporting reporting to them. All regulations or policy decisions made by these departments will require the signature of the First Vice Premier of the State Council in order to be introduced to the Council.**

## State Councilor, Minister of Foreign Affairs

**Each State Councilor is nominated by the premier and appointed by the president; each of them performs certain duties as designated by the Premier and are high ranking members of the Communist Party of China. The Minister of Foreign Affairs' duties involve a wide variety of responsibilities related to foreign relations between China and other nations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs serves to formulate foreign policies, decisions, foreign affairs documents, and statements in regard to the PRC. Any legislation regarding Chinese foreign policy, treaties, bilateral agreements, and diplomatic strategy will require the signature of the State Councilor/Minister of Foreign Affairs in order to be introduced to the Council.**

## Secretary-General of the State Council

**The Secretary-General of the State Council is an executive position, ranking below the vice-premiers but above ministers of the various ministries and departments. Officially, they are in charge of day-to-day work and State Council administration. In committee, they will play a key role in ensuring that ministries adhere to their respective jurisdictions and function as an advisory to the drafting process of legislation.**

## Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission

**The National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) is a macroeconomic management agency that has extensive administrative and decision making power over the Chinese economy. The Chairman's responsibilities include formulating policies for economic and social development, maintaining the balance of economic development, and guiding reconstruction of China's economic system. In committee, the Chairman will draft or supervise the drafting of economic**

development plans along with related ministries. Regulations involving decisions that restructure Chinese economy or guide development will require the signature of the Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission in order to be introduced to the Council.

## Minister of Ecology and Environment

The Minister of Ecology and Environment is responsible for the leadership of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, which serves to protect China's air, water, and land from pollution and contamination. In committee, the Minister of Ecology has jurisdiction over the drafting of environmental policies and any enforcement mechanisms of environmental laws. They report directly to the First Vice Premier. Any environmental legislation will require the signature of the Minister of Ecology and Environment in order to be introduced to the Council.

## Minister of Commerce

The Minister of Commerce is responsible for the Ministry of Commerce, which oversees foreign trade, export and import regulations; foreign direct investments; consumer protection; market competition; and multilateral trade agreements. In committee, the Minister of Commerce will be responsible for formulating policy related to their jurisdiction and negotiating trade agreements. They will report to the First Vice Premier and work closely with them to draft policy. Any regulations that include foreign trade negotiations, tariffs, investment, or foreign market manipulation will require the signature of the Minister of Commerce in order to be introduced to the Council.

## Minister of Civil Affairs

The Minister of Civil Affairs heads the Ministry of Civil Affairs of China, which serves to draft social welfare development plans, policies, and standards; create and manage social assistance plans, policies, and standards; oversee subsidies for residential, medical, and temporary assistance; map out disaster response policies; and organize disaster relief efforts. In committee, the Minister of Civil Affairs will draft or supervise the drafting of regulations that address social welfare, disaster relief, and other civil affairs. Regulations that include changes or additions to any of the above topics will require the signature of the Minister of Civil Affairs in order to be introduced to the Council.

## Minister of Human Resources and Social Security

**The Minister of Human Resources and Social Security heads the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People's Republic of China, which serves to draft national labor policy standards and regulations; manage the labor force, labor relations, the legal construction of labor, and social insurance; manage the employment market of China; and create employment opportunities. In committee, the Minister of Human Resources and Social Security will draft or supervise the drafting of regulations that address labor policy, social insurance, and employment. Regulations that include changes or additions to any of the above topics will require the signature of the Minister of Human Resources and Social Security to be introduced to the Council.**

## Minister of Natural Resources

**The Minister of Natural Resources heads the Ministry of Natural Resources of the People's Republic of China, which serves to supervise the development and protection of China's natural resources, prepare and execute a spatial planning system, and oversee the exchange of natural resources with foreign states. In committee, the Minister of Natural Resources will draft or supervise the drafting of regulations that address the use and management of China's natural resources. Regulations that include changes or additions to any of the above topics will require the signature of the Minister of Natural Resources in order to be introduced to the Council.**

## Minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Development

**The Minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Development heads the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the People's Republic of China, which serves to oversee the planning and construction of urban and rural areas in China, establish national standards for construction, manage the construction market of China, and supervise the housing and real estate industry. In committee, the Minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Development will draft or supervise the drafting of regulations that address housing and related infrastructure projects. Regulations that include changes or additions to any of the above topics will require the signature of the Minister of Housing and Urban-Rural Development in order to be introduced to the Council.**

## Minister of Water Resources

**The Minister of Water Resources heads the Ministry of Water Resources of the People's Republic of China, which serves to manage the development and utilization of water resources; draft water resources development strategies, plans, and**

policies; organize flood control and drought relief efforts; control soil and water losses; and lead water resource protection and water conservation initiatives. In committee, the Minister of Water Resources will draft or supervise the drafting of regulations that address the use and management of China's water resources. Regulations that include changes or additions to any of the above topics will require the signature of the Minister of Water Resources in order to be introduced to the Council.

## Minister of Transport

The Minister of Transport heads the Ministry of Transport of the People's Republic of China, which serves to draft and implement development plans, policies, and standards of industries relating to road, water, and air transportation; plan and coordinate works related to the integrated transport system; optimize transportation infrastructure and layouts; and promote the connection of differing modes of transportation. In committee, the Minister of Transport will draft or supervise the drafting of regulations that address transportation infrastructure. Regulations that include changes or additions to any of the above topics will require the signature of the Minister of Transport in order to be introduced to the Council.

## National Health Commission

The Commissioner of the National Health Commission heads the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China, which serves to draft national health policies; coordinate the advancement of medical and healthcare reforms; establish a basic national healthcare system, administrate public health, medicare, and health emergency responses; manage family planning services; oversee the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine; and supervise policies and measures to address an aging population and incorporate medicare with old-age care. In committee, the Commissioner of the National Health Commission will draft or supervise the drafting of regulations that address medical technology and healthcare. Regulations that include changes or additions to any of the above topics will require the signature of the Commissioner of the National Health Commission in order to be introduced to the Council.

## Chairman of the China International Development Cooperation Agency

The Chairman of the China International Development Cooperation Agency heads the China International Development Cooperation Agency of the People's



Republic of China, which serves to draft policies for foreign aid, provide advice on major foreign aid issues, advance China's reforms in foreign aid, and supervise and implement major programs involving foreign aid and communication. In committee, the Chairman of the China International Development Cooperation Agency will draft or supervise the drafting of regulations that address foreign aid and other measures of foreign cooperation. Regulations that include changes or additions to any of the above topics will require the signature of the Chairman of the China International Development Cooperation Agency in order to be introduced to the Council.

## Administrator of the State Administration of Foreign Exchange

The Administrator of the State Administration of Foreign Exchange heads the State Administration of Foreign Exchange of the People's Republic of China, which serves to draft and formulate foreign exchange policies, oversee the balance of payments and the external credit and debt, monitor cross-border capital flows, supervise the foreign exchange market of the state, punish behaviors that violate the foreign exchange administration's regulations, manage all of the state's foreign exchange assets, and oversee standards for information technology-based foreign exchange. In committee, the Administrator of the State Administration of Foreign Exchange will draft or supervise the drafting of regulations that address foreign exchange policy. Regulations that include changes or additions to any of the above topics will require the signature of the Administrator of the State Administration of Foreign Exchange in order to be introduced to the Council.

## Minister of Justice

The Minister of Justice heads the Ministry of Justice of the People's Republic of China, which serves to formulate legal proposals, revise the Civil Code, direct matters concerning state compensation and commercial arbitration, offer legal opinions on various ministries and agencies, plan the prosecutorial system, revise the Criminal Code, propagate the knowledge of law, and protect crime victims. In committee, the Minister of Justice will draft or supervise the drafting of regulations that address the justice department of the Central People's Government of China. Regulations that include changes or additions to any of the above topics will require the signature of the Minister of Justice in order to be introduced to the Council.

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How can China more effectively involve local leadership in making decisions regarding water and air quality?
2. Should China incorporate an incentive or punishment based system to ensure that standards are met? What would this look like?
3. How can China employ enforcement mechanisms that reduce the impact of corruption and dishonest reporting of water and air quality?
4. To what extent should China regulate major polluters, and how can this be balanced with productive economic growth?
5. Going forward, how should China mitigate of the impacts of air and water pollution? How are major corporations, especially coal power plants, going to be held accountable?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Information on China's current plan for dealing with air pollution, including analysis on potential shortcomings.

1. <https://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/10711-China-releases-2-2-action-plan-for-air-pollution>

This is an overview of the general crisis of pollution in China, including a brief history of its origins.

2. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-environmental-crisis>

This details the up-and-coming problem of rural water, the lack thereof in northern China, and how this presents a problem for hundreds of millions of people.

3. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/12/world/asia/china-underground-water-pollution.html>

This source talks about the threats of smog to individual Chinese citizens and discusses the environmental state of the whole country.

4. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/feb/16/chinese-struggle-through-airpocalypse-smog>

This article discusses the horrors of water in both urban and rural areas of China through the lens of industrial dumping and dangerous water conditions.

5. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/jun/02/china-water-dangerous-pollution-greenpeace>

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9. <https://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/10583-China-is-heading-towards-a-water-crisis-will-government-changes-help->
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13. <https://chinaenv.colgate.edu/airpollution/air-pollution-in-china/>

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