EU’s “Alternative” to China’s Belt and Road Initiative

The European Union unveiled what it is touting as an “alternative” to China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Called the “Global Gateway,” the EU claims it will deliver better alternatives consisting of “high standards, good governance, and transparency,” in a rollout almost indistinguishable from the vague and poorly received US “Build Back Better World” (B3W) proposal.

US government-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) would claim in its article, “Global Gateway: Can The EU’s Giant Infrastructure Plan Rival China’s Belt And Road?,” that:

...the initiative will focus on building projects like fiber-optic cables, transport corridors, and "clean-power transmission lines" that will offer "attractive investment and business-friendly trading conditions, regulatory convergence, [standardization], supply-chain integration, and financial services."

Like the US B3W, no specific real-world projects were mentioned, wording was kept extremely vague, and much of the rollout in the media consisted instead of trying to attack and undermine China’s BRI. In fact, that is really all both the US’ B3W and now the EU’s “Global Gateway” are, smokescreens behind which the West will attempt to turn the public in each partner nation of China’s against both China and the BRI.
Ironically, throughout articles about the EU’s “Global Gateway,” photos of China’s BRI were used to show tangible examples of the vague, intangible proposals included within the Global Gateway.

The West’s Real “Alternative” is to Attack & Destroy

The RFE/RL article also claims:

The BRI has also been undercut in recent years by questions regarding the commercial value of many of its projects, growing worries over murky lending practices, and concerns over it being a vehicle for Chinese control.

Yet these “questions” are not the result of genuine criticism from among China’s partner nations. Instead, they’re being asked by US-sponsored opposition in nations working with China, deliberately attempting to block projects through a combination of political and in some cases, even armed attacks. The RFE/RL article cites Hungary as an example of the “lack of transparency” involved in China’s BRI projects - yet when one reads another RFE/RL article about Hungary’s relationship with China specifically, supposedly exposing the shortfalls of Hungary’s growing ties with China - it is based entirely on claims made by US-backed opposition figures and US-funded media platforms.

Hungarian opposition leader Marki-Zay is mentioned, a politician who is widely promoted across all US-funded media platforms in Eastern Europe including one called, “Balkan Investigative Reporting Network,” created and funded by the US National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

In Southeast Asia, political opposition groups led by US-backed billionaire Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit have protested in the streets since 2019 attacking Thailand-China relations, openly demanding projects like the Thai-China high-speed railway be canceled in favor of US-based “hyperloop” technology still in the prototyping phase, and even attacking and opposing Chinese-made vaccines during the COVID-19 crisis, Bloomberg would report.

It is US-backed opposition figures and US government-funded media operating in nations like Hungary in Eastern Europe, across Latin America, throughout Africa, and in Asia, who stand in opposition of China’s BRI. Little actual evidence exists to support otherwise empty claims made against Chinese projects and no viable alternatives are ever provided as was clearly the case regarding Thailand.

In nations like Pakistan and Myanmar, US-backed opposition groups including Baluchistan separatists in southwest Pakistan and militants fighting the central government across Myanmar, Chinese investments, Chinese-built infrastructure, and even Chinese citizens themselves have come under armed attack.

Despite the torrent of US-sponsored opposition to China’s BRI and empty promises made during the rollout of both B3W and now the “Global Gateway,” nations around the world continue eagerly working with China.

Even US state media like Voice of America in its article, “US Sidelined by Chinese Influence Campaign in Africa,” notes how eager the world is to do business with China, especially in Africa.

The article admits that most US money goes into intangible “global health programs, disease eradication and humanitarian assistance,” with mostly intangible results. What the article does not mention is that most of these otherwise intangible programs are cover for political interference and control over African states.

The US and its EU allies have also left a military footprint on Africa. The 2011 war on Libya alone had major consequences for the continent, with the US deliberately dividing and destroying one of the most developed nations in Africa. The US and its European partners including France have a heavy military presence across the continent.

The US refuses to even disclose where all of its troops are deployed across the African continent, while France admittedly has forces in Mali, Chad, Mauritania, Niger, and Burkina Faso, according to the BBC.

In contrast, China is involved in building tangible infrastructure, something the US is mostly uninvolved in. Voice of America’s above mentioned article admits China’s expertise in building transportation and telecommunication projects.

In Kenya, it was China - not the West - who upgraded and expanded rail lines helping move goods and people across the country from ports in Mombasa to the capital Nairobi and beyond.

China is building for Africa infrastructure the developed Western world takes for granted - and infrastructure the
West only built in places like Africa and Asia to facilitate the extraction of wealth and the movement of troops while maintaining their colonies. The notion of assisting developing nations in the building of infrastructure and strong, independent economies is an antithesis to Western foreign policy objectives which is to inhibit competition not only between themselves and powerful nations like Russia and China, but also between themselves and the collective developing world.

China’s infrastructure drive directly jeopardizes the West’s current “international order” under which Western hegemony is maintained by denying nations infrastructure, stability, and prosperity. This is why the United State through its “Build Back Better World” and now the EU through its “Global Gateway” are posturing as if they plan on competing with China’s Belt and Road Initiative, but upon reading the fine print, are clearly planning to simply roll it back and maintain the status quo.

Only time will tell if the US and the EU - behind their smokescreen of “competition” - can divide and destroy the developing world faster than China can prop it up.

Brian Berletic is a Bangkok-based geopolitical researcher and writer, especially for the online magazine “New Eastern Outlook“.