



Build Back Better World Proposal

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This article is based on **“A counter-strategy called B3W”** which was published in The Indian Express on 17/07/2021. It talks about the recent Build Back Better World (B3W) proposal moved by the G-7 Countries.

Recently, G-7 leaders have come out with the Build Back Better World (B3W) proposal. The proposal aims to address the infrastructure investment deficit in developing and lower-income countries.

Thereby, the proposal seeks to counter China’s rising influence across 100-plus countries through Belt Road Initiative (BRI) projects. Through BRI projects, China seeks to deploy corrosive tactics or debt traps for its strategic dominance in trade, foreign policy, and geopolitics in the world.

B3W is at its nascent stage, it remains to be seen what role India will play in Build Back Better World since it has been a strong opponent of BRI, which is designed by China to establish strategic dominance in trade, foreign policy, and geopolitics.

Status of BRI & Associated Issues

- The BRI project was launched in 2013, it broadly aims to facilitate cross-border transportation of goods, access to energy, creating demand for existing excess capacity in Chinese industries.

China had an overall exposure of investment of around \$750 billion between 2013 to mid-2020.

- However, from a macro view of BRI projects clearly reflects the motive of China-centric international economic integration, production networks, hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region, and, eventually, the global economy.
- For Instance, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the Bangladesh-China, India, the Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM), and the Colombo Port City Project in Sri Lanka, amongst others, are important BRI projects.

These projects are not the only commercial in nature but have strategic implications too.

- Further, the BRI project is colonial in nature as China's trade gives more market access to Chinese markets and ensures a stable supply of energy and other resources.
According to the Council on Foreign relations overall debt to China has soared since 2013, surpassing 20% of GDP in some countries.

B3W & Its Guiding Principles

- **Goal:** The Build Back Better Plan is a Covid-19 relief, future economic, and infrastructure package proposed by G-7 countries for developing and lower-income countries.
- **Components of B3W:** Through B3W, the G7 and other like-minded partners will coordinate in mobilizing private-sector capital in four areas of focus:
 - Climate,
 - Health and health security,
 - Digital technology,
 - Gender equity and equality.
- **Values-Driven Development:** Infrastructure development carried out in a transparent and sustainable manner—financially, environmentally, and socially —will lead to a better outcome for recipient countries and communities.
- **Good Governance and Strong Standards:** B3W to infuse investment by complying with the standards promoted by the Blue Dot Network, relating to the environment and climate, labor and social safeguards, transparency, financing, construction, anti-corruption, and other areas.
- **Climate-Friendly:** The investments will be made in a manner consistent with achieving the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement.
- **Strong Strategic Partnerships:** B3W will envisage countering the aggressive model of development and establish a more inclusive model of global development.

Way Forward

- **Reinventing Capitalism:** Covid-19 has exposed the fragility and societally negative outcomes of contemporary capitalist economies.
Thus, in order to build a global development as highlighted by the B3W blueprint, it will require fine-tuning of the current model of Capitalism.
- **Building Consensus in Democracies:** Any plan formulated by vibrant democracies such as these countries usually takes time and has to go through many diplomatic and bureaucratic twists and turns.
Thus, the main challenge for G-7 countries is to build global consensus and deliver projects in a time-bound manner.

Conclusion

The counter-proposal of B3W is certainly a welcome step to contain the adverse implications of a Chinese mega plan. However, B3W lacks coherent thoughts and proper planning at this stage.

Nevertheless, it is better late than never. Moreover, it remains to be seen what role India will play in B3W since it has been a strong opponent of China's BRI.

Drishti Mains Question

The counter-proposal of the Build Back Better World (B3W) proposal is certainly a welcome step to contain the adverse implications of a Chinese mega plan. Discuss.
