

## 'Debt Trap Diplomacy' as Narration: How Linguistic Hegemony Work

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**Abstract:** China has a mega project, namely OBOR (One Belt One Road) or the Silk Road. China's OBOR project refers to 5 priority aspects in its cooperation, including: policy coordinator, facility liaison, free trade, financial integration and grassroots cooperation. With this increased power, China is able to implement the Debt Trap Diplomacy strategy to realize China's OBOR program. Debt Trap is a situation where the debtor country is difficult or unable to repay the money borrowed where the debtor will enter into a continuous debt cycle that ends in giving assets in exchange for debt. The Debt Trap Diplomacy narrative then becomes familiar with the term binding debt. This term becomes the legality of foreign investment which can be claimed as another type of Chinese hegemony to be able to compete with the United States and its allies. This research is important to see that there is a public tendency to view China's policies financially. This research method is qualitative, with secondary data from various sources, such as books, journals, articles.

## Introduction

Foreign policy has variables to be analyzed; one of the most significant is about the linguistics. The phrase or dictions used in some policy should be relevant so that will be easier for public to know the object or aims of the policy. It is also important for public to know the reason of government implementing the policy; whether it is about the concern of government for the period. Linguistic also plays important role on manage the public attention, by the means of chosen linguistic some may be found that the government may have goodwill on the policy.

This study discusses the analysis of Chinese hegemony in realizing BRI (Belt Road Initiative) a case study of debt trap diplomacy in Sri Lanka. Through debt trap diplomacy in Sri Lanka, it is able to increase China's power and hegemony in the Indian Ocean Region. Economic interests, namely the security of China's

energy lines, are the interests behind the goals of China's hegemony in the Indian Ocean. The purpose of this study is to understand and know China's interests in Sri Lanka and the economic, military and political impacts of implementing debt trap diplomacy in Sri Lanka. This research uses 2 concepts, namely the concept of masalah and the concept of hegemony. This study uses descriptive qualitative research methods with secondary analysis (secondary analysis). The results of this study indicate that, through the BRI project in Sri Lanka, namely Hambantota Port, China was able to implement debt trap diplomacy in Sri Lanka which was able to achieve China's interests, namely hegemony in the Indian Ocean Region. In terms of the concept of hegemony, according to Gramscy, the interests of a country to carry out hegemony are economic interests, namely China's interests in securing its energy path. This is the background for China to implement debt trap diplomacy in Sri Lanka. In

addition, debt trap diplomacy has had a significant impact on Sri Lanka, namely the debt crisis, the tendency of the Sri Lankan regime to be pro-China and China's intervention in military training in Sri Lanka. This research is expected to be a means for policy makers to be more considerate in policy making in diplomacy between countries.

In international studies, linguistics plays important role to deliver the phrase of policy. In the foreign policy analyses, public should be aware of the conditional on why the policy should be implemented. The complexity of the frequent changes in the world related to the impact of the international financial crisis continues to emerge. However, the world economy is recovering slowly and leaving a new problem, namely the uneven distribution of global development. The BRI initiative (Belt Road Initiative) comes with the aim of embracing the global trend towards multipolar economic globalization which seeks to uphold a global free trade regime and an open world economy within the framework of cooperation. The BRI initiative is a form of collaboration between economic interests and political interests. China's BRI includes two aspects, namely the 21st-century maritime silk and the silk road economic belt. (Kurniawan, 2016) BRI is a Chinese policy in which there are several ambitious Chinese programs that want to be achieved through BRI, one of which is intervention in the economy and investment through 2 channels, namely land and sea. The vision of China's BRI strategy itself is as a means to connect China's economic and development paths both land and sea between China, Europe, Central Asia, and Russia. (Kurniawan, 2016)

There are 2 BRI projects within the framework of the China - Sri Lanka Cooperation, namely Colombo Port and Hambantota Port. (M.Fahrizal, 2019) By

implementing the BRI program, it can increase China's power in the economy, making China a superpower country that can compete with the United States' influence in economic competition regional and global. With this increase in power, China is able to implement the Debt Trap Diplomacy strategy to realize China's BRI program. a Debt trap is a situation where the debtor country is difficult or unable to repay the borrowed money which the debtor will enter into a continuous debt cycle that ends in giving assets in exchange for debt. This diplomacy model is a new model of China's economic diplomacy with a hard power diplomacy motif.

This is like what happened in Sri Lanka, which is a form of investment cooperation with China in the form of the Hambantota Port development project. It was noted that China provided loans to Sri Lanka amounting to 1.12 billion US dollars. (Madusaka, 2021) The increase in debt increased from 75% to 95.4% of GDP and was accompanied by worsening economic conditions in Sri Lanka due to the internal conflict in Sri Lanka. (Madusaka, 2021) Sri Lanka's inability to pay China's debts within the stipulated deadlines forced Sri Lanka in 2017 to surrender 85% of the shares of Hambantota and transfer ownership of Hambantota Port for 99 years. (Miranvile, 2018) In the end, Sri Lanka chose China as its previous investor, Sri Lanka had applied for investment funds to the IMF, India, and London but was rejected due to the absence of potential benefits from Hambantota Port. On the other hand, China has provided an unconditional investment loan to Sri Lanka which is funded through EXIM Bank.

### **Theoretical Review**

Hegemony Gramscy in this concept Gramsci there are 3 limitations of conceptualization in hegemony,

namely: economy, political society and civil society. (Gramsci, 1971) The economy is the basis for hegemony. Economics is a limitation to interpret the dominant mode of production in society. Mode of production consists of production techniques, production social relations that grow because of differences in social class. Political society refers to coercive relations in various state institutions - armed forces, police, law and prison institutions, departments of financial administration, trade, industry, social security. Social society refers to private organizations such as churches, trade unions, schools and intellectuals who have specific tasks. (Siswanti, Teori Hegemony Antonio Gramsci, 2017)

Hegemony is obtained through political, cultural and intellectual efforts to create a common view in society. It can be concluded that Gramsci is trying to explain that ideology becomes a tool of domination that gives legitimacy to the rulers and the ruled. Gramsci's theory is appropriate to discuss China's interests in hegemony in the Indian Ocean Region to become hegemons in the Indian Ocean region and according to Gramsci there are 3 elements behind a country carrying out hegemony namely economy, state and people. (Gramsci, 1971) Related to this, China's intention to become hegemony in the Indian Ocean is a form of his efforts to achieve economic interests, namely China's energy security. If China is able to carry out energy security in the region, then the country's economy will be stable because energy is a vital tool for a country's economy. In addition, the interests of the people are also one of the reasons behind the implementation of BRI because it is able to provide job opportunities for the community while also ensuring the sustainability of the people's lives.

According to Paul Baran, there are 3 components in dependence, namely foreign capital, local governments in satellite countries and the bourgeoisie. The intervention of developed countries in the economies of poor countries will hinder the progress of these countries and will continue to live backwardness. The high power of the owners of capital and technology coupled with the international globalization of foreign investors has emerged as the party that dominates the finances obtained from this sector. (Akbar, 2018) The explanation above is in accordance with the debt trap diplomacy that occurred in Sri Lanka. According to Paul Baran's dependency theory, world economic inequality is the result of domination by capitalist or industrial countries. Development and underdevelopment really show the strength of capital-owning countries with third world countries that keep the differences between the ruling and poor countries apart. Therefore, there are 3 components in dependence, namely foreign capital, local government in satellite countries and the bourgeoisie. That the economic relationship that exists between China, which is a developed country and Sri Lanka, which is a poor country, is an economic relationship with the owners of capital. In the context of Sri Lanka's economic condition, which has not been stable since its independence until now, which has started to build an economic system, coupled with debt and a lot of Chinese foreign investment in Sri Lanka.

This can be evidence that Sri Lanka is poor in capital so it depends on injections of funds and foreign investment. In addition, Sri Lanka's fall into debt trap diplomacy was also due to the high injection of funds from the capital owner, namely China in the Hambantota Port development project which was not able to provide profits for Sri Lanka due to policy errors and lack of

management that made this country achieve high losses. and fell into debt trap diplomacy which ended in the acquisition of 85% of Hambantota's shares and the transfer of ownership for 99 years. This is in accordance with Paul Baran's explanation that the intervention of developed countries in the economies of poor countries will hinder the progress of these countries and will continue to live backwards. Sri Lanka as a land owner only gets a small income compared to a capital owner who gets a bigger profit, thus creating Sri Lanka's dependence on financial assistance and investment from China to develop the country's economy. This is in accordance with Paul Baran's assumption that the unbalanced relationship that exists between developed and poor countries results in dependence and underdevelopment of third world countries because according to him, the movement of the two countries is only aimed at gaining big profits from poor countries.

### **Research Methods**

In this study, the author uses a qualitative method where data collection is done through document analysis and meaning. Descriptive research is research that provides a clearer picture of social situations. This study aims to explore and clarify social phenomena by describing the variables that have been formulated.

The data used are primary data sourced from the official website of SLPA, President Rajapaksa, Hambantota International Port News, the annual official report from Exim Bank in 2007, annual playing reports from SLPA (Sri Lanka Port Authority) in 2017, interviews with the Minister of Coordination and Monitoring of Development and Sri Lanka's Minister of Digital Technology Namal Rajapaksa and secondary data taken from books, news journals, and other data to support the writing of this research.

### **Debt Trap Diplomacy**

Rajapaksa became president in 2005. He has ambitions to pursue his dream project of turning Hambantota which is his home place into an international shipping center. After feasibility studies conducted by Canadian and Danish consultants failed to launch the project, Rajapaksa approached China Harbor and agreed. The MOU was signed in October 2006. With the involvement of China Harbour, Rajapaksa managed to get a funding promise from the Chinese Government when he visited China in 2007. In September 2014, Sri Lanka officially entered into a Colombo Port development cooperation with China with an allocation of 1,4 million and estimated implementation until 2025. (Zhang, Debt Trap Diplomacy: The Dissemination of ORC State Capitalism, 2019) Until 2021 Sri Lanka is trying to renegotiate its USD 50.8 billion debt which has matured with interest of 1.4 billion Sri Lanka's installment interest to China. Sri Lanka also borrowed funds worth US\$ 2.6 billion for the Katunayake Expressway project, coal-fired power plant, electric railway, toll road construction and electricity projects in Uva and the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka funded by EXIM Bank.

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### **China China's Interests in Energy Line Security**

According to a data report from China Power Team News, China's increasing oil import volume was due to a decline in domestic oil production, which declined because China's large oil fields were old. In 2017 the increase in China's crude oil imports reached 3.8% compared to 2015. Meanwhile, in 2018 China's oil import demand increased to 64.4%. (Team, 2016) According to report data from Warta Ekonomi showed that there was a 6.9% decline in domestic oil production in 2016. (Team, 2016)

### **Tabel of China Oil Importing Countries 2018**

Country	Value (US\$ Billions)
Russia	35.1
Saudi Arabia	26.3
Angola	22.0
Iraq	19.9
Oman	15.4
Brazil	14.3
Iran	13.4
Kuwait	10.6
Rest of World	51

*(Source: China Power, 2021)*

In Gramsci's theory explains that economic interest is one of the variables of hegemony. The author can analyze that China's intention in the acquisition of Hambantota Port is the Hegemony of the Indian Ocean Region through this hegemony China is able to secure the oil import route and this is in accordance with Gramscian's theory. Data on the increase in Chinese imports shows China's dependence on oil imports, especially from

Russia and Saudi Arabia. With the hegemony of the Indian Ocean, it is possible to control and maintain the stability and security of China's energy lines. If security has been achieved, China's energy needs will be guaranteed and able to maintain China's economic stability. Therefore, the Indian Ocean plays an important role in achieving China's economic interests, this is the goal of China's Hegemony in the Indian Ocean Region.

### **China's Interests in Hegemony in the Indian Ocean Region**

The Indian Ocean is an important ocean for China. 80% of the world's maritime trade oil passes through the Indian Ocean, 40% through the Strait of Hormuz, 35% through the Strait of Malacca and 8% through the Strait of Babylon-Man and others. 80% of China's oil imports and 65% of India's oil imports via the Indian Ocean from the Middle East. (Shaikh, 2021) Several BRI projects have been built which are located around the Indian Ocean to coincide with China's maritime routes as a realization of the String Of Pearls strategy, several ports have been built, namely: Hanin Port in China, Gwadar Port in Pakistan, Male Port in Maldives, Colombo and Hambantota Ports in Sri Lanka. Lanka, Kyaupkyu Port in Myanmar and Chittatog Port in Bangladesh. (S.Sidhu) According to a report from Syahrony Alby written in Media Neliti.com, China has a String of Pearls strategy, which is a port development strategy along the Sea Lines Of Communication (SLOC) maritime route that coincides with the Indian Ocean used for trade activities, logistics and naval shipping (Alby, 2017).

Gramscy explained that the interests of the state are one of the elements of hegemony. In the case of the string of pearls strategy, it can be analyzed that what China is doing in accordance with Gramscy's theory, China's goal of implementing this strategy

is to stabilize the country's political situation. Because with this strategy, China is able to balance development in its country, especially in the Xinxiang Province which is still less developed and industrialized compared to other regions. As well as Gwadar Port which is a route that will connect Xinxiang Province through the expansion of the highway.

In addition, from the same data above, this strategy is able to provide economic benefits for China. In Gramscy's theory explains that economic interests are one element in hegemony. The author analyzes that, the intention of implementing this strategy for economic interests in accordance with Gramscy's Theory is proven by the existence of several port projects around the Indian Ocean that are able to open new Chinese market routes to improve the Chinese economy. In addition, the purpose of implementing this strategy is China's energy security which is a vital tool of a country for its economic sustainability. Because the availability of abundant energy or lack of energy can increase or destroy the economic progress of a country.

### **Sri Lanka's Interests in Improving National Security Capabilities**

According to a report from Matapolitik.com, China has been Sri Lanka's largest arms supplier since 1950 in the form of small arms, ammunition, landmines, navy ships and aircraft. China-Sri Lanka military relations continued to improve until 2006. In the period 2005-2010 Sri Lanka was China's 8th largest market. (Patricia, 2020) In 2009 there were 4 senior officers in Sri Lanka who were sent and stationed at the China National Defense University and increased to 40 people who trained there. In 2011 a PLA delegation also visited Sri Lankan officer training grounds to provide additional training and channel assistance to the SLAF Defense College to prepare for Joint

maritime operations. The Sri Lankan military held a seminar on Counter terrorism supported by the Chinese defense organization Polly Technology. (Patricia, 2020)

### **Sri Lanka's Efforts to Become an Economic and Activity Center in the Indian Ocean**

Investment cooperation with China in The Colombo Port Expansion Project or CPEP. This agreement contributes to facilitating the Construction of the Colombo Port which includes 3 terminals along 1,200 meters and the construction of the reclamation of the metropolis (Port City). (Haryati, 2018) The allocation of funds for the construction of the Colombo Port from China reached US\$1.4 million with an implementation period of up to 2025 and was able to create 80,000 jobs in Sri Lanka. According to Lupita quoted from Bolong id. News Head of SLPA Ratnayake said that the expansion being built at the Jaya Container Terminal (JCT) in Colombo was able to help usher in a new golden era for the port and shipping industry. (Lupita, 2020) Colombo Container Terminal. In this project, the government also bears the economic costs of fishermen and sets aside US\$7 million which is distributed to fishermen's associations in 3 years. (Haryati, 2018)

The construction of the Hambantota Port, where in the construction of this port, China is willing to provide loan funds through EXIM Bank with 2 interest rate options, namely loan funds with an interest rate of 5% but have the potential to increase and loans with a fixed interest rate of 6.3% and Sri Lanka chose an interest rate of 6.3% to avoid an increase in interest rates. The agreement ended in financing by EXIM Bank of 85% with a 15-year loan term of US\$307 million with an interest rate of 6.3% and management fees of 0.5%. China's interest rates are higher than other banks which only provide 2-3%

interest. (Zhang, Debt Trap Diplomacy: The Dissemination of ORC State Capitalism, 2019) In 2017 there was an agreement to acquire an 85% stake in Hambantota Port and a 99-year transfer of ownership by China Merchant Port Holdings Company Limited because the port caused losses to Sri Lanka.

In Gramscian theory explains that economic interests are one of the elements in hegemony. In the construction of the Colombo port project above, it can be analyzed that what Sri Lanka is doing is in accordance with Gramscian theory, as evidenced by Sri Lanka's ambition to become an economic center and port activities in the Indian Ocean marked by increased port development around the Indian Ocean Region for the economic interests of the country. The existence of the Colombo port, container terminal and Port City is one of China's efforts to achieve its economic interests to make the country a transportation link in the Indian Ocean region and turn the region into a modern urban area in Sri Lanka. In addition, the author analyzes the data in accordance with Gramsci's theory that in providing Chinese investment funds in the project is also able to facilitate China's goal to become a hegemon in the Indian Ocean that is able to provide benefits for China's economic interests. The large injection of funds given by China to projects in the Colombo Port allowed Sri Lanka to fall into the Debt Trap Diplomacy again as was the case in the Hambantota Port project because the funds provided by China for this project were greater than the funds in the Hambantota Port Project. Therefore, the author analyzes that there is a possibility for China to apply Debt Trap Diplomacy to this project which led to the Chinese acquisition of the Colombo port.





(Source: CNN)

### **Figure Map of the Port of Colombo and Hambantota**

From the picture above, it can be analyzed that, in Gramscian's theory, it is explained that economic interest is one of the elements in hegemony. In the map of the location of the Ports of Colombo and Hambantota above, it can be analyzed through the construction of projects in Colombo and Hambantota, the ambition of Sri Lanka and China to become hegemony in the Indian Ocean in accordance with Gramscian's theory of economic interests is one of the elements in hegemony. Sri Lanka's desire to become a hegemon in the Indian Ocean can be seen through the project he proposed because the ports of Colombo and the Port of Hambantota are strategically located in the Indian Ocean as shown on the map in Figure 5. Sri Lanka's ambitions are inseparable from the economic interests they want to achieve, which is to become an economic center and activity in the Indian Ocean which will be able to increase the country's financial income. In addition, China's ambition to become a Hegemon in the Indian Ocean Region is also seen from the injection of funds and China's full contribution in these two projects, in the end China has full authority in controlling this project. With this, China is able to make it easier to

monitor energy ships and ensure their security.

### **Countries Around the Indian Ocean which Trapped in BRI by China**

#### **Maldives**

The Maldives borrowed US\$200 million for infrastructure development linking the capital Male to the island of Hulumale where the airport and large tracts of land are still available. (Staff A. , 2018)The bridge was completed in 2018 and was given the name "China Maldives-Friendship Bridge". Besides the Maldives bridge, it also continues to borrow from China for other infrastructure development. China also signed 25 lease agreements with the Maldives for the use of the Marao Islands. On July 25, 2001, China proposed to build a naval base in the Marao Islands in the Indian Ocean. In 2010 China actively used nuclear-powered submarines and the Dong Feng 44 submarine, missile and ballistic missile submarines in the region. (Staff A. , 2018)Chinese Maldives Ambassador Mohamed Faisal told the South China Morning Post accessed on Avast News that "That the country would push ahead with Chinese projects and seek more investment from the country, regardless of concerns raised by regional power India". Since Xi Jinping's first visit to the Maldives in 2014, Chinese investment in the country has grown rapidly. The two countries also agreed to build a sea observation station which was also initiated by China. In 2018 it was found that 3 Chinese warships were allowed to dock in Male. There is 70% of China's foreign debt in the Maldives. (Staff A. , 2018)

According to Gramscian's theory that economic interests are one of the variables in hegemony, according to the data above, China's efforts to increase infrastructure cooperation, investment and military



activities in the Maldives are one of economic interests. Through an increase in investment in several projects in the Maldives and China's military activities in the country, it is able to show an increase in its activities and influence in the Indian Ocean which is one proof of China's hegemony in the Indian Region which can be seen through the intensification of cooperative relations with the Maldives which is a strategic country located in the Indian Ocean region. Indies. In this regard, China is able to channel its economic interests in the Indian Ocean, namely securing China's energy route, 80% of which passes through the Indian Ocean and monitoring China's energy distribution to its country is one of the efforts to maintain China's economic stability.

### **Pakistan**

The CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) project of the US\$55 Billion Gwadar Port connects from China's Xinjiang Province to Gwadar seaport in Pakistan. (Shaikh, 2021) The CPEC project is not only a port project but also infrastructure development, railway and road energy. Gwadar Port is an important port in China's string of pearls and this port is also a Chinese military military headquarters, Navy ships, submarines are in this Gwadar Port. The strategic value of this port is its distance of 240 miles from the Strait of Hormuz. The route is a sea route established by China for its oil shipments. In addition to ports, China is also building nuclear reactors in Pakistan. China also places military naval forces in this port and provides military training to Pakistani military forces.

According to Gramscy's theory, economic interests are one of the variables in hegemony. The author analyzes that China's goal in providing substantial funds for several projects in Pakistan is to achieve economic interests. Because China

is trying to secure its energy route in the Strait of Hormuz with energy security, China is able to achieve its economic interests, namely maintaining the country's economic stability. With the existence of military activities and military headquarters at Gwadar port, it is clear evidence of China's dependence on energy imports by making efforts to secure the route through Hegemony in the Indian Ocean Region country, especially Pakistan, which is in the Strait of Hormuz which is an important strait in China's energy distribution. . In addition, Pakistan is a country that coincides with the oil import route from Saudi Arabia to China. Related to this, the data above is in accordance with Gramscy's theory

### **Myanmar**

According to data from CNBC News, the OBOR project in Myanmar under the CMEC (China-Myanmar Economic Corridor) agreement focuses on the construction of a US\$1.3 billion deep sea port in Kyaukphyu. China's foreign debt in Myanmar is US\$4 billion or 40% of the country's GDP. (Forum, 2018) China built Myanmar's Kyaukphyu port and supplied 100 medium tanks, 100 light tanks, 24 fighter aircraft, military vehicles, rocket launchers and various military purposes to Myanmar. (Sebayang, 2020) The port will be built and operated by a Chinese company for up to 75 years which is an alternative route to the Malacca Strait for energy imports from the Middle East. In addition, there is an oil and gas pipeline worth US\$ 1.5 billion with an annual transport capacity of 22 million barrels of oil, about 65 of which are imported from China, connecting the port to Kunming in Yunan Province, China. The Myanmar government owns 30% of the port's shares. (Forum, 2018) According to Soe Win as a member of the Central Economic Committee of the National League of Democratic Political Parties reported on

IPDF news as saying that "China's interest rate is very large, unlike the loan we received from the Japanese government, Chinese loans are much more expensive." According to Sun, "the progress of the Kyaukpyu Port project is progressing." slowed down due to local opposition to the benefits of China's economy being able to turn ports into a transport hub for Chinese goods instead of a regional growth center." (Forum, 2018)

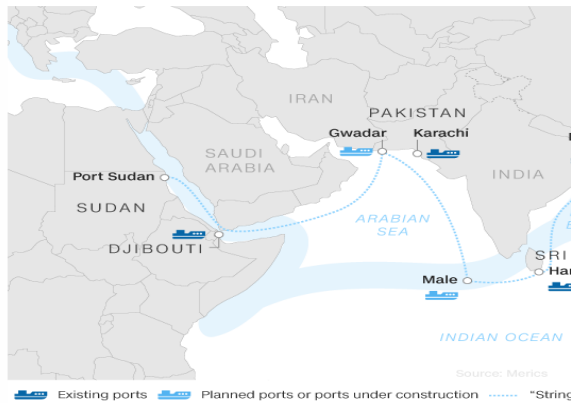
According to Gramscy's theory, economic interest is one of the variables in hegemony. The purpose of Myanmar borrowing funds to China for the construction of Kyaukpyu Port is to become a port center in the region and this is in accordance with the Gramscy theory that the purpose of hegemony is economic interest. With the achievement of Myanmar as a port center in the region, Myanmar's economy has increased significantly. This is also in accordance with China's goal of providing large loans to Myanmar and the port will be acquired for 70 years, it is able to achieve China's economic interests, namely the security of energy lines according to Gramscy's theory. Ensuring the security of its energy supply can make it easier for China to maintain its economic stability because it is a vital necessity for the country's economy.

### **Djibouti**

In 2017 the opening of a Chinese military base in Djibouti and the only permanent People's Liberation Army base outside China and there are 400 Chinese troops. This base was established by The Chinese People Liberation Army (PLA) at Doraleh Harbor. (Erina, 2021) There are 3 major Chinese projects in Djibouti, namely the Doraleh Port, the Djibouti-Ethiopia railway and a gas pipeline. China spent US\$ 14M on investment and lending funds in 2012-2020. China held more than 70% of Djibouti's debt. In 2018 China Merchants

Port Holdings Company and Dalian Port announced that they would invest US\$43.5M in the new development and China has also invested US\$ 3.4 billion for a railway project connecting Addis Abba to Djibouti's Red Sea Port. The IMF said in 2018 that Djibouti's strategy to promote the country as a longistic center resulted in a debt crisis and poses significant risks. Debt is estimated to be around 104% of GDP. (Brar, 2021) In 2018 the Government of Djibouti nationalized DCT and terminated Dubai-based DP World's contract to exercise control over the terminal. In 2019 The Wall Street Journal cited a ship docked at the Djibouti terminal saying that the port resembled other facilities where Chinese companies had a majority in Doraleh (Brar, 2021). In addition, China Merchants also financed a US\$ 513 million project involving the construction of a four-star hotel for the zone and China Merchants has a 23.5% stake in the port. (Staff G. , 2021)

According to Gramscy's theory that economic interest is one element in hegemony. According to the data above, the author analyzes that China's goals are in accordance with the Gramscy theory in its hegemonic intentions, there are economic interests to be achieved through funding made by China in Djibouti considering the strategic location of this port in the Indian Ocean region. China's ambition to hegemony and even guarantee the security of this ocean is none other than securing its energy route considering the location of this port is near the source countries of China's energy importers.



(Source: CNN)

### Figure China's Hegemony in Several Countries in the Indian Ocean Region

From the picture above, it can be analyzed that in Gramscian's theory the goal of a country to carry out hegemony is to achieve economic and people's interests. The author analyzes that, from the description above in accordance with the article of Gramscian's theory, the port projects being built by China in several countries are one of the efforts to achieve its economic interests. It can be seen that, from the Port project that is being built by China, it coincides with China's energy lines and it can be concluded that, its hegemony in the Indian Ocean Region is one form of China's energy security which is a vital tool for the economy of a country, especially since China has become a country. progress with rapid economic development. In addition, the existing Port projects are an effort to achieve the interests of the people, namely providing job opportunities for the people by having projects outside their country. In this way, China is able to reduce poverty in the country.

### Conclusion

The construction of the Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka, which is funded by 85% by China and is one of the OBOR projects, is colored by the ambitions of the interests of

the two countries in the Indian Ocean. This is due to the strategic location of this port in the Indian Ocean Region which is able to provide great potential benefits for both countries. Sri Lanka's decision to accept a funding offer from China with a large nominal and high interest rates led Sri Lanka to enter into Debt Trap Diplomacy. Sri Lanka's inability to repay its debts ended in an agreement to acquire 85% shares and transfer ownership for 99 years. Through Debt Trap Diplomacy, China is able to achieve its interests to become a hegemonic country in the Indian Ocean Region. This is based on China's economic interests, namely the security of China's energy lines. China's dependence on energy imports requires it to seek strategies to secure its energy pathways. Because energy is a vital need of a country in maintaining the economic stability of a country.

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