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As China Moves In, Serbia Reaps Benefits, With Strings Attached

By BARBARA SURK  SEP 9, 2017

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Some fear that China’s ambitions would keep the authoritarian leaders of countries like Serbia in power and leave the nations deep in debt and stuck with environmentally flawed projects.

“The BRI new norms – along with the Balkans’s old governing values – will challenge those of the European Union”.
“Chinese economic corridors and infrastructure project replicate China’s preference for state-led rather than market-based decisions, with the politicization of investment, subsidy and contract decision, rejecting the EU’s model of open and transparent bidding procedures”
“China’s ambitions in the Balkan region have set up a potential clash with the European Union plans – with countries like Serbia placing themselves in the middle.”
There are raising fears that Beijings’ largess in the Balkans is not just about business, but also about geopolitics.

Xi Jinping’s decision to extol his signature policy in Serbia was a canny move that put the initiative on a collision course with the European Union’s projects in the region. “His strategy exploited the European Union’s troubled relations with the West Balkan countries seeking to join the bloc and signaled that – as the United States retreated from the world stage – China was aiming to expand its influence right into the heart of Europe.”
“Fears that Chinese investments would leave the nation deep in debt and stuck with environmentally flowed projects”. “Serbia is likely to be saddled with huge debts”

Despite the fact that the previous owner American U.S. Steel had abandoned Smederevo in the middle of the European economic crisis, leaving some 5,000 jobs in danger - the NYT found a steelworker at the Smederevo plant who said that “the Americans are the aristocracy of the industrial world... that workers were valued, well paid and respected when the Americans ran this place... while what the Chinese are doing here is destroying us”.
SERBIA’S RESILIENCE TO NEGATIVE BRI FRAME

POLITICAL IDENTITY AND “CORE INTEREST”
SERBIA’S RESILIENCE TO NEGATIVE BRI FRAME

MATCHING NEEDS
SERBIA’S RESILIENCE TO NEGATIVE BRI FRAME

INSTITUTIONALIZING
COOPERATION
SERBIA’S RESILIENCE TO NEGATIVE BRI FRAMEWORK

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POSITIVE FRAMING IN THE SERBIAN MEDIA
CHALLENGES FOR SERBIA’S BRI COOPERATION
CHALLENGES FOR SERBIA’S BRI COOPERATION

SLOW ADMINISTRATION
CHALLENGES FOR SERBIA’S BRI COOPERATION

GEOPOLITICAL PRESSURE
CHALLENGES FOR SERBIA’S BRI COOPERATION

SERBIA’S IMPROVING YET STILL SLOW ECONOMY

GDP GROWTH = 1.3%
UNEMPLOYMENT = 11.7%
PUBLIC DEBT = 65.7% OF GDP
FOREIGN DEBT = 73.2% OF GDP
GDP PER CAPITA = $5,600
CONCLUSION:
BUILDING CAPACITIES FOR THE WAY FORWARD

- STRATCOM
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