

# 06

## The Communist Party of China and Its Political Influence in Sri Lanka under the Gotabaya Rajapaksa Regime

ASANGA ABEYAGOONASEKERA, *Senior Fellow, Millennium Project, Washington DC.*

### Abstract

The International Department of the Communist Party of China has spread its reach to many developing nations, including Sri Lanka. It provides policy suggestions to Sri Lankan think tanks and political parties to encourage them to embrace and emulate China's model of reforms. The global pandemic has accelerated such soft power projections. This is evident in how China is openly pursuing its dual approach of economic diplomacy coupled with the Communist Party of China's activities and involvement in Sri Lanka. The close relations between the political party led by the Rajapaksas, the Sri Lanka Podujana Party, and the Communist Party of China is evident. The chapter will discuss the International Department of the Communist Party of China's strategies of engagement in Sri Lanka. The analysis will explore the limitations of China's political reforms arising from its Leninist political structure, which is causing tension within China between the reformists and power hawks. With the present politico-economic crisis, and in the post-Rajapaksa regime of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, how will China's approach fit in? What are the possible long-term implications?

*The author thanks Shruti Jargad for developing the table, "Exchanges between CPC and Political Parties in Sri Lanka."*

### Recommended citation:

Abeyagoonasekera, A. (2023). The Communist Party of China and Its Political Influence in Sri Lanka under the Gotabaya Rajapaksa Regime. In Xavier, C. & Jacob, J. T. (Eds). *How China Engages South Asia: Themes, Partners and Tools* (pp. 67-83). Centre for Social and Economic Progress. Retrieved from <https://csep.org/4h8VLtV>

## Introduction

The “peaceful rise of China” was a phrase coined by Zheng Bijian, chair of the China Reform Forum and former executive vice-president of the Central Party School of the Communist Party of China (CPC), in 2002. Zheng’s view was that China’s rise to prominence in the international arena would come with a commitment to protect global peace and sustainable prosperity through the projection of soft power. China’s trajectory between the tenures of General Secretary Hu Jintao and General Secretary Xi Jinping reflects a strong commitment to this view. The country has followed a strategy of leveraging soft power, which has led to the International Department Central Committee of the CPC (IDCPC) establishing its presence in many nations, including Sri Lanka. The IDCPC provides policy suggestions to think tanks and political parties in Sri Lanka to encourage them to embrace and emulate China’s model of reforms.

Such soft power projections have accelerated during the global pandemic. This is evident in how openly China is pursuing its dual approach of economic diplomacy coupled with CPC activity in developing nations such as Sri Lanka. The island nation’s ruling political party, Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) led by the Rajapaksas, maintains a close relationship with the CPC. Joint seminars by the SLPP and the IDCPC demonstrate this close political collaboration and how the CPC is perceived as a possible model to be emulated (IDCPC 2020). Further, Sri Lankan policymakers and certain sections of the general public have expressed acceptance and praise of the Chinese model of development. These sentiments, expressed by those in the higher echelons of Sri Lankan politics, count among several factors that could weaken democratic governance in Sri Lanka.

The chapter will discuss the CPC’s strategies of engagement in Sri Lanka. It suggests that the nature of China’s political system and its involvement in Sri Lanka create a conflict within the island nation—a tendency towards centralisation of power rather than

accountability to and oversight by parliament. With the present politico-economic crisis, and despite Mahinda Rajapaksa’s exit as prime minister, the CPC can be expected to play a more prominent role in the country’s political affairs.

## China’s political model

Under its Leninist structure, members of the CPC are engaged in running the state and are also part of private-sector institutions and businesses. This tight control allows the Party to keep the communist model intact while calibrating reforms. Stephen Kotkin’s work shows how communist regimes that open their economies inevitably become more autocratic regimes (Foreign Policy Research Institute, 2020). This points to the danger in emulating China’s political model.

When China opened up its economy in 1978, it invited greater exposure to ideological influences from outside that could challenge the CPC’s control. Deng Xiaoping famously quoted, “If you open the window for fresh air, you have to expect some flies to blow in” (Punyakumpol, 2011). The CPC foresaw that opening up the economy would greatly benefit China’s economic trajectory but would also potentially cause a colour revolution in society. To prevent this ingress of liberal, democratic values, the CPC developed a centralised power structure and now oversees a surveillance state (Albert, Maizland, & Xu, 2021). Further, to counter ideas that oppose China’s political status quo, it exports its political vision through several means.

One such tool is the expansion of infrastructure diplomacy under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) across many continents. With its aggressive ‘wolf warrior diplomacy’ during the pandemic, the CPC has also taken a step toward engaging with developing nations and power centres in a more assertive manner (Balachandran, 2021). Several direct comments by the Chinese embassy in Colombo to the US ambassador signal this interventionist cum confrontational mode of engagement (*Colombo Gazette*, 2020a). A key part of this

agenda is promoting the China model as a substitute for the liberal democratic model.

The dual challenge facing China is keeping the CPC Leninist structure intact while influencing developing nations to engage in an alternative model. In a report on the CPC's influence on Europe, scholars from Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS) identified that China's authoritarian ideals pose a significant challenge to liberal democracy as well as Europe's values and interests. The same report explains the CPC's use of various tools to achieve its goals (Benner et al., 2018). The same can be said of developing nations, particularly Sri Lanka, which has a significant Chinese sphere of influence due to its debt burden.

According to David O. Shullman (2019), "CPC conducts large-scale training of foreign officials about its development methods and provides increasingly sophisticated technology to authoritarian governments." Further, he explains that "Chinese information efforts have factored into election campaigns in numerous developing countries across continents, including Zambia, Peru, Sri Lanka, and Nepal."

According to Ambassador Shivshankar Menon, it was clear that China chose its preferred candidate, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, before the 2019 presidential elections, which is a clear indication of Chinese intervention in the domestic politics of Sri Lanka (*ISAS Events*, 2020). This comes after a previous accusation of China funding Rajapaksa's political campaign (Abi-Habib, 2018). This could be seen as a political investment by China to secure its influence in the island nation.

China completely denies this assessment of internal political interference, claiming that it follows a non-intervention policy (Lo and Zhou, 2018). Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang's comment that "China will stick to the principle of not interfering" (Lo and Zhou, 2018) even during Sri Lanka's constitutional crisis does not hold water due to China's preference for the Rajapaksa regime.

## IDCPC and the promotion of the Chinese model of governance

The International Department Central Committee of the CPC (IDCPC) has in recent years played an active role in the Sri Lankan political landscape (Table 1). The seminar held by the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), belonging to the Rajapaksa brothers, and the IDCPC on November 4, 2020, is a prime example of this (IDCPC, 2020). It was reported that the seminar was the result of a consensus reached between President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and President Xi Jinping and was held to promote regular engagement between the two and share in-depth insights on their governance experiences (Hui, 2020c).

This illustrates two visible political trends. First, CPC-affiliated organisations are increasingly promoting the Chinese model of governance in nations such as Sri Lanka. Second, political actors in such nations are willing to explore opportunities offered by the Chinese model of governance at the cost of liberal democratic values. The close monitoring of these two trends is essential to the discourse on the expanding influence of the CPC.

At the seminar, Song Tao, then Director of the IDCPC, stated that "expanding bilateral Belt and Road cooperation will boost the economic development of the two countries and bring more benefits to the two peoples", while noting that Sri Lanka is an important partner for China in the construction of the BRI (Hui, 2020a). Further, Sri Lankan ruling-party policymakers — including Basil Rajapaksa, President Rajapaksa's brother and political strategist of the SLPP — have accepted and praised the Chinese model of development (*NewsWire*, 2020). These are clear indications of an expanding Sino-Lanka political relationship.

## Opposition, trade unions, and China

The socialist essence of the Rajapaksa coalition stems from the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and coalition partners such as the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (CPSL). Many coalition members, including CPSL leader Dew Gunasekera, are strong old-school advocates of the Chinese model and promote a strong Sino-Lanka relationship (*Daily News*, 2020a). The political push from these coalition partners has a significant impact on the higher committee levels of government. Sri Lanka's ability to assess the 'Chinese sphere of influence' is thus adversely impacted. Such a poor assessment of the Chinese sphere of influence by the political leadership might have cost the nation important strategic projects such as the East Container Terminal (ECT) public-private partnership with India, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact grant from the US, and the Japanese-funded Light Rail Transit (LRT) project. Such a lack of strategic foresight has further affected Sri Lanka's bilateral relationships with these nations, with both economic and diplomatic costs.

During Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit to Sri Lanka in early 2022, a few important areas of concern for Indo-Lanka relations were discussed. The devolution of power, Tamilian grievances taken up at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), and the stalled ECT development agreement were at the top of his agenda during discussions with President Gotabaya Rajapaksa (Mohan, 2021). A few days after the visit, a weekend newspaper called *The Sunday Times* claimed that Chinese intelligence was behind the delay in the execution of the ECT port agreement with India (*The Sunday Times*, 2021). Whatever the veracity of such claims, the newspaper did observe a broader Chinese geopolitical push into Sri Lanka's strategic decision-making process.

The ECT, a tripartite agreement with India, Japan, and Sri Lanka, which was secured during the previous Sirisena-Wickramasinghe regime, was cancelled due to a massive trade-

union protest in Colombo Port. The port trade unions threatened to stop all operations in the port if the government agreed to the development of the ECT under a public-private partnership (PPP) agreement with an Indian developer/port operator. The government bowed under this pressure, and the ECT contract was denied to the Indian company, Adani Group, on grounds of national interest. However, the Sri Lankan Cabinet of Ministers decided to award a USD 12 million renewable energy joint venture project to China MS/Sinosar-Etechwin at the same time (Rubatheesan, 2021). This was a national security concern for India due to the geographical proximity of the energy project to the Indian shoreline. With New Delhi now pushing its security concerns in turn, this latter project was eventually terminated by the Sri Lankan government (Bagchi, 2021).

Importantly, geopolitics was the unusual agenda for the protest against the ECT by trade-union leaders. Sanjaya Kumara Weligama, president of the Progressive Workers Association for Commercial Industry and Services, in a statement with the 23 unified trade unions belonging to the Colombo Port said that "none of the patriotic forces in the country wants to overthrow the Government but help direct the Government on the right path" (*Daily News*, 2021). Their effort was portrayed as protecting the nation's strategic assets. However, patriotism of such magnitude was not seen when the Hambantota port was leased in a 99-year agreement to China. Compared to the Chinese Hambantota lease, the ECT tripartite agreement had no geopolitical concerns nor did it threaten the sovereignty of the nation. On the contrary, the development of the ECT with an Indian partner would have brought Sri Lanka substantial economic returns since "around 70% of Colombo Port's transshipment business is India-related" (Sri Lanka Export Development Board, 2019).

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's earlier wish to proceed with the ECT for a 51/49 per cent government majority share was on the right path to achieving an important PPP

with two key strategic partners—India and Japan. Therefore, the opposition to the project was driven by deceitfully orchestrated fear instigated by trade unions who weaponised nationalist sentiment. According to a media report, the “Indian diplomatic sources, said India is of ‘strong view’ that Chinese agencies were funding some protests against the ECT deal” (South Asia Monitor, 2021). Further a Sri Lankan popular newspaper reported that the “ECT initiative was promoted by Chinese Intelligence, with the objective of having it blocked” (*Sunday Times*, 2021). It can therefore be surmised that the protests had clear support from an internal political force backed by China.

The contrived fear that certain external powers will take over Sri Lanka’s strategic assets, hyped up by ultra-nationalists, further dragged the ailing economy into a narrow corridor of maligned mercantilism with very few opportunities (Abeyagoonasekera, 2021). The incessant displeasure with, and rejection of, agreements from western quarters such as the MCC grant (*ColomboPage*, 2020a), Status of Forces Agreement with the US (Gunasekara, 2019), Japan’s LRT (*Reuters*, 2020), and India’s ECT (Janardhanan, 2021) indicate the Sri Lankan government’s political allegiance towards China. China’s strong influence in Sri Lanka was cultivated by bribing and financing the policy circle, the elites, and other influence groups, including political parties (Pal, 2021).

The heavy Chinese influence could drag Sri Lanka toward a different economic and political model—from the existing free-market model, which promotes liberal values, to a malignant protectionist model with a semi-controlled economy. The recent market interventions and import bans by the government illustrate that this shift has already begun (Nordhaus & Shah, 2022). The ailing economy, with further borrowings such as the March 2021 currency swap deal of USD 1.5 billion, shows that the Gotabaya presidency prefers China as the most trusted partner for borrowing, akin to the administration of his brother, Mahinda Rajapaksa (2005–2015). The Colombo Port City Project by China,

with its reclaimed seafront sitting next to Colombo Port, was given full clearance by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa’s regime to operate a special economic zone with extra-jurisdictional rights. These are clear signs of the regime amalgamating the Chinese development model. Member of Parliament Wijedasa Rajapaksa compared the Port City acquisition to the Hambantota Port lease, adding that “the 1,100 acres reclaimed do not belong to Sri Lanka, the Western Province or the Colombo District. Through the bill, a commission will be set up to regulate that land. The Commission acts in accordance with the requirements of the Chinese company ... this land has been released from all 14 tax acts including the Inland Revenue Act. Even Parliament cannot deal with this and its salaries are paid in foreign currency. If we go there and buy something, we have to pay taxes for it. This is completely similar to any other country” (*ColomboPage*, 2021).

China’s economic grip on Sri Lanka could have significant consequences for the Sri Lankan political model and political parties, especially the ruling SLPP. With the SLPP’s two-thirds parliamentary majority, and the October 2020 constitutional reforms transferring power to the executive, the country appears to be on a clear path toward authoritarian rule. “China does not necessarily advocate, much less force, other states to adopt one-party authoritarian rule for themselves. Instead, China wants to quash opposition and criticism of Chinese Communist Party rule abroad and ensure Chinese access to markets and natural resources” (United States Institute of Peace, 2020). From the inception of BRI in 2013, China has strategically managed to quash criticism in Sri Lanka by winning over policymakers who even promised the public that they would investigate Chinese projects for corruption (*Daily Mirror*, 2015).

Another area that Indian Foreign Minister Jaishankar highlighted was the long unaddressed minority community grievances and human rights concerns in Sri Lanka. A recent report by Human Rights Watch highlights serious challenges for Sri Lanka



internationally, which can only be resolved through multilateral support and diplomacy. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, has warned that the council will reach a “critical turning point” in its dealings with Sri Lanka at the upcoming session due to Sri Lanka’s long unresolved commitments and the present unfavourable developments, especially the country’s recent militarisation (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

In contrast, this is of no concern for China as it reflects the central command model of the Chinese government. As the Sri Lankan government is challenged internationally for failing to resolve domestic issues concerning reconciliation, accountability, and the grievances of minority communities, it will expect more support from China, especially at the UNHRC. China has stood with Sri Lanka in the past, defending it at the UNHRC and against human rights concerns raised by the West (*Tamil Guardian*, 2022).

This indicates a space of uninterrupted political growth for China to expand its influence in Sri Lanka. It is also reflective of Sri Lanka’s dangerous multi-dependency on China for diplomatic, economic, and governance-related activities. Therefore, in the Gotabaya presidency, we see a strong departure from Sri Lanka’s liberal democratic values toward a China-centred value system in a geopolitical landscape where China’s influence has further expanded.

## Militarisation in Sri Lanka

The increasing militarisation of different sectors under the Gotabaya presidency shows its affinity toward the China development model (Pereira, 2020; *ColomboPage*, 2020b). Nations with semi-autocratic majoritarian governments, weak democratic indicators, a lack of rule of law and respect for basic human rights, provide ideal sites for experiments with the Chinese model. Myanmar, with its recent coup, and Sri Lanka have drifted from democratic models toward a more military-centric, semi-autocratic model (*The Economist*, 2020). In both scenarios,

China has been a key strategic partner who has defended the countries’ human rights agendas and backed the ruling regimes at international forums. In both these nations, China has a large infrastructure development agenda through the BRI and also direct political influence and interest.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa is a former military officer and has appointed other former military officers to bring in their expertise and discipline to form a highly inefficient system of government. The new majoritarian regime of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, with its 28 military appointments to various state sectors such as banks, health, aviation, and agriculture, has been negatively perceived by the western democratic front (Human Rights Watch, 2021; *Tracking Militarization in Sri Lanka*, n.d.). For example, Human Rights Watch, in its latest country report, highlighted militarisation as a threat to a democratic society.

This is the first time that Sri Lanka is undergoing such broad militarisation of government processes (Sri Lanka Army, n.d.; *EconomyNext*, 2021), which has had a strong impact on civil servants and the business community. One fifth of the presidential task force in Sri Lanka, responsible for formulating the country’s post-COVID economic response, was from the armed forces. Sri Lanka’s credibility as a free and open society has also been affected (*Tracking Militarization in Sri Lanka*, n.d.).

This model is reflective of the CPC model of centralised command control. In April 2021, a Military Assistance Protocol was signed during Chinese State Councillor and Defence Minister General Wei Fenghe’s visit to Sri Lanka (Ministry of Defence Sri Lanka, 2021). During the visit, President Rajapaksa expressed his interest in “governing experience from the Communist Party of China on poverty alleviation and rural revitalization” (CGTN, 2021). The multiple bilateral defence agreements between Sri Lanka’s military and the People’s Republic of China is a clear indication of the latter’s deepening influence on the civil-military balance in Sri Lanka.

## China's influence on Sri Lanka's foreign policy

The “balanced and nonaligned” foreign policy of Sri Lanka, articulated in President Gotabaya’s election manifesto (Rajapaksa, n.d.), is struggling to maintain a balance due to the growing Chinese sphere of influence. The government’s earlier position that it will revisit the Chinese Hambantota port 99-year lease agreement was mere rhetoric that never materialised (Bloomberg, 2019). In reality, the government prefers to hedge, executing two contradictory policies simultaneously hoping for one to materialise support. The decision to hedge with China and India while being rhetorically neutral can have serious policy consequences, including the erosion of the country’s principal values and commitments to international law, democracy, and human rights due to the acceptance of an alternative to the existing democratic liberal model.

The CPC is busy making inroads into Sri Lanka, influencing Rajapaksa’s SLPP as well as think tanks such as Pathfinder Foundation in Colombo. In 2020, Pathfinder Advisory Services signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Chinese telecom provider Huawei to establish a framework to jointly develop ICT solutions for ports, airports, education, and agriculture in Sri Lanka (Daily FT, 2020). At the conference of the ‘China-Sri Lanka Political Parties Belt and Road Consultation Mechanism’ on June 11, 2020, Pathfinder Foundation recommended a book titled *Prevention and Control of COVID-19* by Dr. Zhang Wenhong to the health sector of Sri Lanka to explain the “health procedures recommended by the book are beneficial for more than just coping with COVID-19, but are also essential in sustaining a healthy Sri Lankan society” (Hui, 2020b).

The strategic community is being led by a China-favouring group of public intellectuals who continue to support China’s growing influence (Daily News, 2020b; Xinhua, 2021). There are clusters of such public intellectuals who are being given more prime time and have significant media coverage. Their arguments

have helped sway public opposition against the development of the ECT and have fanned growing anti-India sentiments.

Thus, Sri Lanka has shifted from a balanced policy with India toward a hedging foreign policy with China. Seen as a strong future power in the region, it is departing from a balanced foreign policy. The above-described public intellectuals support such a deviation. This raises reasonable questions as to whether their activity is linked to CPC-related initiatives. As Stephen M. Walt points out in his work *The Origins of Alliances*, “the weaker the state the more likely it is to bandwagon rather than balance” (Walt, 1987). Deteriorating economic conditions, with multiple miscalculated strategic choices and the continued militarisation of government functions, will further reduce Sri Lanka’s options, creating greater opportunities for the CPC to expand its influence within the Sri Lankan sociopolitical network.

With the present political crisis, where three cabinets were appointed in two months in April and May 2022, there is a direct impact on Rajapaksa’s semi-autocratic political model and foreign policy, especially toward China (Gupta, 2022; Al Jazeera, 2022). The proposed structural adjustment to the Constitution, the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment, which will revise the earlier 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment and shift power toward the legislature, will help redemocratised the political environment (PTI, 2022).

## Push and pull factors

Chinese push factors for a CPC model in Sri Lanka are evident from high-powered delegation visits such as the seven-member delegation led by Yang Jiechi, Politburo member of the CPC Central Committee, in October 2020 (ColomboPage, 2020c). China is using its already well-established diplomatic relationship with the Rajapaksa regime to accelerate BRI projects with more loans and by supporting the ailing economy and pushing its CPC political model (Srinivasan, 2021).

The Chinese embassy in Colombo plays a critical role in this strategy, actively engaging on social media and promoting an alternative model in Sri Lanka. China's endorsement of a particular kind of regime in Sri Lanka is clear; supporting the militarised model and voting in favour of Sri Lanka at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) resolution in Geneva are clear push factors from China. China is clearly pushing for an alternative political model, accelerating with the CPC centenary and founded on close historical and present associations at the political party level. China will also push at different government levels, including at the public sector and bureaucratic levels, on training for public sector efficiency (Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration, n.d.). Another evident push factor of the Chinese political model involves media personnel, academia, and think tanks (*Colombo Gazette*, 2020b; *Daily FT*, 2018). According to a Chatham House report, Chinese State-Owned Enterprises have been actively involved in shaping Sri Lankan policies in labour, environment, and local institutions (Wignaraja, et al., 2020).

After China backed Sri Lanka by voting against the UNHRC resolution, Sri Lanka's Foreign Secretary Jayanath Colombage, clearly expressed that the resolution was a "Western conspiracy" against the nation (*Tamil Guardian*, 2021). This assessment has accelerated a pull from the Sri Lankan government to adopt the Chinese model. The telephonic conversation between President Xi and President Gotabaya Rajapaksa after the UNHRC resolution provides a clear indication of this—President Rajapaksa thanked China for its support at the UNHRC and further explained, "The eradication of poverty is my prime concern for which we can take a cue from China." The Chinese development model is to be emulated in the provincial areas of the country to bring development (*Daily News*, 2021), perhaps to support President's 'Gama Samaga Pilisandara' (Direct Dialogue with the Village) initiative (*Daily News*, 2020c).

This strong pull factor will go beyond existing infrastructure diplomacy. Hambantota Port and Port City and their new laws are clear indications that China intends to stay on the island for a long time. The current development model in Sri Lanka, including its important component of majoritarian militaristic politics, shows a growing inclination towards the CPC's development model and politics.

## Conclusion

The strongly majoritarian government elected in Sri Lanka in 2020, comprising President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his brother, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, promised political reform, ranging from constitutional change to moving power from the legislature to the executive. Unsurprisingly, the political influence of the CPC in Sri Lanka has accelerated since then. The IDCPC has played a considerable role in the administration of Sri Lanka by President Rajapaksa and the ruling political party, SLPP. The partnership and strategic positioning of the SLPP and IDCPC have created an active affinity to adopt China's political and economic development model.

There have been changes in Sri Lanka's foreign policy, from a balanced foreign policy to a hedging one with China. The heavy militarisation of government functions, and the weaponisation of trade unions against multilateral development projects with India, Japan, and the United States, are all symptoms of this trend.

These symptoms indicate a growing domestic shift toward a more centrally controlled form of government, contrary to democratic principles, in a semi-autocratic model accepted by China. This political shift toward a semi-autocratic model has had significant consequences for Sri Lanka and the region. Under the Rajapaksas, the CPC's approach fits well and will have long-term implications for the nation's already frayed democratic fabric. How far this trend will continue will depend on the domestic political climate.



Table 1: Exchanges between CPC and political parties in Sri Lanka

Date and Event	Attended by	Remarks
<b>22 to 27 December 2015:</b> Sri Lankan officials visit China for 'Belt and Road' government training, co-sponsored by the Ministry of Public Administration and Management of Sri Lanka, Beijing Foreign Studies University, and China Merchants Bureau Shekou Industrial Zone Holdings Co., Ltd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 bureau-level officials from Sri Lanka</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The visit includes classroom lectures, government exchanges, and field research.</li> <li>• Chinese experts give presentations on China's political, economic, cultural, ecological and international relations (<i>Xinhua</i>, 2015).</li> </ul>
<b>12 to 15 December 2017:</b> Visit to Sri Lanka by a delegation of the 19th National Congress of the CPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wang Yajun, assistant minister of the IDCPC</li> <li>• Ranil Wickremesinghe, prime minister of Sri Lanka</li> <li>• Kabir Hashim, general secretary of the United Nationalist Party</li> <li>• Mayantha Dissanayake, general secretary of the Liberal Party</li> <li>• Leaders of United Nationalist Party and left-wing political parties of Sri Lanka</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wickremesinghe and others praise the fruitful results of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, and express their expectations to further strengthen exchanges and cooperation between Sri Lanka and China (IDCPC, 2017).</li> </ul>
<b>26 May 2018:</b> Special meeting of the High-level Dialogue between the Communist Party of China and the World Political Parties and the SCO Political Parties Forum held in Shenzhen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guo Yezhou, vice minister of the Foreign Liaison Department of the CPC Central Committee</li> <li>• Deputy general secretary of the Sri Lankan Liberal Party and adviser to the president</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The two sides exchange views on the development of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the relations between the two parties (IDCPC, 2018a).</li> </ul>
<b>2 August 2018:</b> Guo Yezhou meets with delegation of officials of the United Nationalist Party of Sri Lanka in Colombo, Sri Lanka.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guo Yezhou, vice minister of the IDCPC</li> <li>• Ranil Wickremesinghe, prime minister of Sri Lanka and leader of United Nationalist Party</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wickremesinghe states that exchanges between the two governments and political parties should continue to be strengthened, cooperation under the Belt and Road framework should be deepened, and bilateral relations should continue to be enhanced. (IDCPC, 2018b).</li> </ul>

Date and Event	Attended by	Remarks
<b>10 October 2018:</b> Meeting between Guo Yezhou and Mahinda K. Samara Sinha, vice chairman of Sri Lanka's Liberal Party and minister of Ports and Shipping in Beijing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guo Yezhou, vice minister of the IDCPC</li> <li>• Mahinda K. Samara Sinha, minister of ports and shipping and vice chairman of Liberal Party in Sri Lanka</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The two sides exchange views on China-Sri Lanka relations, bilateral exchanges, and China-Sri Lanka "Belt and Road" cooperation (IDCPC, 2018c).</li> </ul>
<b>25 June 2019:</b> Meeting between Guo Yezhou and Mayantha Dissanayake, party leader and chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the parliament in Beijing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guo Yezhou, vice minister of the IDCPC</li> <li>• Mayantha Dissanayake, party leader and chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the parliament</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guo Yezhou speaks of the progress made in China-Sri Lanka relations, and the cooperation on major projects between the two sides under the framework of the "Belt and Road."</li> <li>• Guo Yezhou introduces China's position on the issue of Sino-US economic and trade frictions.</li> <li>• He states that China will firmly stand with the Sri Lankan government and people and support Sri Lanka's fight against terrorism.</li> <li>• Mayantha Dissanayake similarly expresses support for China on the international stage (IDCPC, 2019a).</li> </ul>
<b>18 September 2019:</b> Sirisena meets with Chen Min'er in Colombo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chen Min'er, member of the Politburo and secretary of Chongqing Municipal Committee</li> <li>• Other delegates from CPC</li> <li>• Maithripala Sirisena, president of Sri Lanka.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The visit involves inspection visits to the Colombo Port City, the Colombo International Container Terminals and other projects, and also a visit to the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (IDCPC, 2019b).</li> </ul>

Date and Event	Attended by	Remarks
<b>18 December 2019:</b> Song Tao meets with Karu Jayasuriya, UNP leader and speaker of Parliament of Sri Lanka in Beijing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Song Tao, minister of the IDCPC</li> <li>• Guo Yezhou, vice minister of the IDCPC</li> <li>• Karu Jayasuriya, leader of United Nationalist Party and speaker of Parliament of Sri Lanka</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both sides discuss the positive bilateral relations between China and Sri Lanka and promote inter-party exchanges between CPC and UNP on party governance and state administration. Both sides also agree to strengthen cooperation to promote development in Sri Lanka (IDCPC, 2019c).</li> </ul>
<b>11 June 2020:</b> Establishment of the China–Sri Lanka Belt and Road Political Parties Joint Consultation Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Song Tao, minister of the IDCPC</li> <li>• Guo Yezhou, vice minister of the IDCPC</li> <li>• Relevant principal officials from the National Development and Reform Commission and the National Health Commission, China.</li> <li>• Leaders of the People’s Front, United National Party, Sri Lanka Freedom Party, and People’s United Front of Sri Lanka</li> <li>• Members from think tanks and the business communities of Sri Lanka and China.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The meeting aims to strengthen the exchange of experience in state governance and consolidate political and public support for China–Sri Lanka relations.</li> <li>• Both sides agree to promote bilateral cooperation in all areas and contribute to the political strength of the high-quality Belt and Road cooperation. The major themes include the pandemic and development (IDCPC, 2020a; Hui, 2020a).</li> </ul>
<b>26 August 2020:</b> Online video talks between senior leaders of the IDCPC and the ruling party of Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guo Yezhou, vice minister of the IDCPC</li> <li>• Song Tao, minister of the IDCPC</li> <li>• Basil Rajapaksa, founder and national organiser of the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP)</li> <li>• G.L. Pieris, minister of education and chairman of the SLPP</li> <li>• Sagara Kariyawasam, general secretary of the SLPP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The meeting is held in the context of the post-election victory of the SLPP.</li> <li>• It introduces the third volume of Xi Jinping: The Governance of China. The CPC’s experience in party building and philosophy of state governance are of significant interest to the SLPP (IDCPC, 2020b; Hui 2020b).</li> </ul>

Date and Event	Attended by	Remarks
<b>4 November 2020:</b> Seminar on Governance Experience held online via video link between CPC and People's Front of Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guo Yezhou, vice minister of the IDCPC</li> <li>• Song Tao, minister of the IDCPC</li> <li>• Liu Cigui, secretary of the CPC Hainan Provincial Committee</li> <li>• Sun Dahai, member of the Standing Committee of CPC Hainan Provincial Committee and Secretary General of CPC Hainan Provincial Committee</li> <li>• Qi Zhenhong, Chinese ambassador to Sri Lanka</li> <li>• Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena, speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka</li> <li>• G. L. Peiris, chairman of the People's Front and education minister</li> <li>• Namal Rajapaksa, leader of the People's Front Youth and sports and youth affairs minister</li> <li>• Ramesh Pathirana, Minister of Plantation of Sri Lanka</li> <li>• Sagara Kariyawasam, General Secretary of the People's Front</li> <li>• Other senior leaders of the People's Front, cabinet ministers and state ministers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chinese side share outcomes of the 19th Congress.</li> <li>• The Chinese side expresses that Hainan province is willing to strengthen cooperation with Sri Lanka in the fields of tropical agriculture, economy and trade, people-to-people engagement, education, and tourism through inter-party channels, and work with Sri Lanka to make new contributions to the construction of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (IDCPC, 2020c).</li> </ul>



Date and Event	Attended by	Remarks
<p><b>15 June 2021:</b> CPC Centennial Celebration organised by the political parties of Sri Lanka along with the IDCPC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Song Tao, minister of the IDCPC</li> <li>• Qi Zhenhong, Chinese Ambassador to Sri Lanka</li> <li>• Chen Zhou, vice minister of IDCPC</li> </ul> <p>Main leaders of 12 major political parties in Sri Lanka, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mahinda Rajapaksa, leader of the People's Front Party and prime minister of Sri Lanka,</li> <li>• Maithripala Sirisena, head of Freedom Party and former president,</li> <li>• Ranil Wickremesinghe, leader of the United National Party and former prime minister,</li> <li>• Dr J. Weerasinghe, general secretary of the Communist Party of Sri Lanka.</li> <li>• Dinesh Gunawardena, leader of party of the People's United Front and foreign minister of Sri Lanka</li> <li>• Other cabinet ministers and members of parliament</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chinese side expresses the CPC's willingness to work with political parties in Sri Lanka to strengthen communication and mutual learning in party building and administration, deepen the integration of national development strategies and policies, and promote cooperation between the two countries in anti-epidemic, poverty alleviation and the joint construction of the Belt and Road Initiative for new results through consultation platform.</li> <li>• The Sri Lankan side expresses that all political parties in Sri Lanka attach great importance to developing friendly relationship with the CPC, and are willing to further implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two parties and countries. They are willing to continuously deepen political mutual trust, promote cooperation between both countries in local regions, and strengthen international cooperation with China (IDCPC, 2021).</li> </ul>

## References

- Abeyagoonasekera, A. (2021, February 17). In Sri Lanka, unions speaking geopolitics, Rajapaksa govt adopting protectionism. *The Print*. Retrieved from <https://theprint.in/opinion/in-sri-lanka-unions-speaking-geopolitics-rajapaksa-govt-adopting-protectionism/606138/>.
- Abi-Habib, M. (2018, June 25). How China got Sri Lanka to cough up a port. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/25/world/asia/china-sri-lanka-port.html>.
- Agence France-Presse. (2022, March 29). India to build Sri Lanka wind farms after China pushed aside. *Economic Times*. Retrieved from <https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/renewable/india-to-build-sri-lanka-wind-farms-after-china-pushed-aside/90514049>.
- Albert, E., Maizland, L., & Xu, B. (2021, June 23). The Chinese Communist Party. Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved from <https://www.cfr.org/background/chinese-communist-party>.
- Al Jazeera. (2022, March 12). Ranil Wickremesinghe sworn in as PM of crisis-hit Sri Lanka. *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/12/ranil-wickremesinghe-to-be-new-pm-of-crisis-hit-sri-lanka-party>.
- Bagchi, I. (2021, December 4). India worked for a year to get China off Lanka projects. *The Times of India*. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-worked-for-a-year-to-get-china-off-lanka-projects/articleshow/88080863.cms>.
- Balachandran, P. K. (2021, November 10). Sri Lanka tastes China's wolf diplomacy on fertilizers. *The Citizen*. Retrieved from <https://www.thecitizen.in/index.php/en/newsdetail/index/6/21099/sri-lanka-tastes-chinas-wolf-diplomacy-on-fertilizers->.
- Benner, T., Gaspers, J., Ohlberg, M., Poggetti, L., & Shi-Kupfer, K. (2018). *Authoritarian advance: responding to China's growing political influence in Europe*. Global Public Policy Institute and Mercator Institute for China Studies. Retrieved from [https://merics.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/GPPi\\_MERICS\\_Authoritarian\\_Advance\\_2018\\_1.pdf](https://merics.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/GPPi_MERICS_Authoritarian_Advance_2018_1.pdf).
- Bloomberg. (2019, November 29). Sri Lanka's new government wants to undo Hambantota port lease to Chinese venture. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/south-asia/article/3039881/sri-lankas-new-government-wants-undo-hambantota-port-lease>.
- CGTN. (2021, April 29). Sri Lanka, China vow to enhance pragmatic military cooperation. CGTN. Retrieved from <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2021-04-29/Sri-Lanka-China-vow-to-enhance-pragmatic-military-cooperation-ZQzRoJheVO/index.html>.
- Colombo Gazette. (2020a, October 6). Chinese embassy in Sri Lanka attacks US envoy. *Colombo Gazette*. Retrieved from <https://colombogazette.com/2020/10/06/chinese-embassy-in-sri-lanka-attacks-us-envoy/>.
- Colombo Gazette. (2020b, February 11). China's red carpet trap for Sri Lankan media. *Colombo Gazette*. Retrieved from <https://colombogazette.com/2020/02/11/chinas-red-carpet-trap-for-sri-lankan-media/>.
- ColomboPage. (2020a, February 28). Sri Lankan government decides not to sign MCC agreement. *ColomboPage*. Retrieved from [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_20A/Feb28\\_1582873544CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_20A/Feb28_1582873544CH.php).
- ColomboPage. (2020b, November 19). President looks to China's model of development for Sri Lanka. *ColomboPage*. Retrieved from [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_20B/Nov19\\_1605802105CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_20B/Nov19_1605802105CH.php).
- ColomboPage. (2020c, October 9). Sri Lanka President aims to bring about development of country similar to China. *ColomboPage*. [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_20B/Oct09\\_1602256911CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_20B/Oct09_1602256911CH.php).
- ColomboPage. (2021, April 15). 'Port city would become a Chinese colony through the Economic Commission bill' - MP Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe. *ColomboPage*. Retrieved from [http://www.colombopage.com/archive\\_21A/Apr15\\_1618509702CH.php](http://www.colombopage.com/archive_21A/Apr15_1618509702CH.php).
- EconomyNext. (2021, January 2). Sri Lanka military to run driver database, produce driving licenses. *EconomyNext*. Retrieved from <https://economynext.com/sri-lanka-military-to-run-driver-database-produce-driving-licenses-77457/>.
- Daily FT. (2018, December 18). Pathfinder Foundation opens 'China-Sri Lanka Cooperation Studies Centre'. *Daily FT*. Retrieved from <https://www.ft.lk/news/Pathfinder-Foundation-opens--China-Sri-Lanka-Cooperation-Studies-Centre-/56-669107>.
- Daily FT. (2020, November 9). Pathfinder and Huawei in strategic partnership to develop ICT. *Daily FT*. Retrieved from <https://www.ft.lk/front-page/Pathfinder-and-Huawei-in-strategic-partnership-to-develop-ICT/44-708648>.

*Daily News*. (2020a, July 1). CPC's people-oriented philosophy sets example for world – DEW. *Daily News*. Retrieved from <http://www.dailynews.lk/2020/07/01/local/221954/cpc%E2%80%99s-people-oriented-philosophy-sets-example-world-dew>.

*Daily News*. (2020b, November 24). Pathfinder ties up with Communist Party of China. *Daily News*. Retrieved from <https://epaper.dailynews.lk/Home/ShareArticle?OrgId=3eb744e7&imageview=0>.

*Daily News*. (2020c, October 3). 'Gama Samaga Pilisandara'. *Daily News*. Retrieved from <https://www.dailynews.lk/2020/10/03/local/230465/%E2%80%99Gama-samaga-pilisandara%E2%80%99D>.

*Daily News*. (2021, March 30). A firm pledge to stand by Sri Lanka. *Daily News*. Retrieved from <http://www.dailynews.lk/2021/03/30/local/245349/firm-pledge-stand-sri-lanka>.

*Daily News*. (2021, January 25). Banded together only to protect Port's ECT - Workers' Association. *Daily News*. Retrieved from <https://www.dailynews.lk/2021/01/25/local/239778/banded-together-only-protect-port%E2%80%99s-ect-workers%E2%80%99-association>.

*Daily Mirror*. (2015, March 5). Video: port city project suspended. *Daily Mirror*. Retrieved from <https://www.dailymirror.lk/65527/port-city-project-suspend>.

Foreign Policy Research Institute. (2020, December 4). What comes after the Communist Party in China?" *You Tube* video. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bV7PuqlMOzI>.

Gunasekara, R. (2019, June 25). Movement to 'STOP USA' wants SOFA and ACSA stopped in their tracks. *Lankaweb*. Retrieved from <https://www.lankaweb.com/news/items/2019/06/25/movement-to-stop-usa-wants-sofa-and-acsa-stopped-in-their-tracks/>.

Gupta, I. (2022, April 12). Sri Lanka's oppressive stability starts to crumble. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from <https://thediplomat.com/2022/04/sri-lankas-oppressive-stability-starts-to-crumble/>.

Hui, Z. (2020a, June 13). Online conference marks the start of China-Sri Lanka political parties Belt and Road consultation mechanism. *China Today*. Retrieved from [http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctenglish/2018/zdtj/202006/t20200613\\_800209824.html](http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctenglish/2018/zdtj/202006/t20200613_800209824.html).

Hui, Z. (2020b, July 24). Sri Lanka poised for an economic takeoff via BRI. *China Today*. Retrieved from [http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctenglish/2018/et/202007/t20200724\\_800215565.html](http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctenglish/2018/et/202007/t20200724_800215565.html).

Hui, Z. (2020c, August 27). Exchange on Governance Highlighted in China-Sri Lanka High-level Inter-Party Dialogue. *China Today*. Retrieved from [http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctenglish/2018/ii/202008/t20200827\\_800218854.html](http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctenglish/2018/ii/202008/t20200827_800218854.html)

Human Rights Watch. (2021, January 29). Sri Lanka: UN rights chief decries mounting abuses. *Human Rights Watch*. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/01/29/sri-lanka-un-rights-chief-decries-mounting-abuses>.

ISAS Events. (2020, October 13). Changing geopolitics of South Asia [video]. *You Tube*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I78RqPGz4w8>.

IDCPC. (2017, December 15). The 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China to visit Sri Lanka. International Department Central Committee of CPC. Retrieved from [https://www.idcpc.gov.cn/lldt/201912/t20191216\\_115119.html](https://www.idcpc.gov.cn/lldt/201912/t20191216_115119.html).

IDCPC. (2018a, May 26). Guo Yezhou meets with Deputy General Secretary of Sri Lanka Liberal Party and Presidential Advisor Jagger. International Department Central Committee of CPC. Retrieved from [https://www.idcpc.gov.cn/lldt/201912/t20191216\\_115300.html](https://www.idcpc.gov.cn/lldt/201912/t20191216_115300.html).

IDCPC. (2018b, August 2). Sri Lankan Prime Minister Wickremesinghe meets with Guo Yezhou. International Department Central Committee of CPC. Retrieved [https://www.idcpc.gov.cn/lldt/201912/t20191216\\_115436.html](https://www.idcpc.gov.cn/lldt/201912/t20191216_115436.html).

IDCPC. (2018c, October 10). Guo Yezhou meets Sri Lankan guests. International Department Central Committee of CPC. Retrieved [https://www.idcpc.gov.cn/lldt/201912/t20191216\\_115550.html](https://www.idcpc.gov.cn/lldt/201912/t20191216_115550.html).

IDCPC. (2019a, June 25). Guo Yezhou meets with delegation of officials of the United Nationalist Party of Sri Lanka. International Department Central Committee of CPC. Retrieved from [https://www.idcpc.gov.cn/lldt/201912/t20191216\\_115926.html](https://www.idcpc.gov.cn/lldt/201912/t20191216_115926.html).

IDCPC. (2019b, September 18). President of Sri Lanka meets with Chen Miner. International Department Central Committee of CPC. Retrieved from [https://www.idcpc.org.cn/english/news/201909/t20190924\\_101399.html](https://www.idcpc.org.cn/english/news/201909/t20190924_101399.html).

IDCPC. (2019c, December 18). Song Tao meets with UNP Leader and Speaker of Parliament of Sri Lanka. International Department Central Committee of CPC. Retrieved from [https://www.idcpc.org.cn/english/news/201912/t20191223\\_122526.html](https://www.idcpc.org.cn/english/news/201912/t20191223_122526.html).

IDCPC. (2020a, June 11). China-Sri Lanka Belt and Road Political Parties Joint Consultation

Mechanism Established and First Meeting of the Mechanism Held. International Department Central Committee of CPC. Retrieved from [https://www.idcpc.org.cn/english/news/202006/t20200613\\_138687.html](https://www.idcpc.org.cn/english/news/202006/t20200613_138687.html).

IDCPC. (2020b, August 26). Song Tao Holds Video Talks with Senior Leaders of Ruling Party of Sri Lanka. International Department Central Committee of CPC. Retrieved from [https://www.idcpc.org.cn/english/news/202009/t20200903\\_139647.html](https://www.idcpc.org.cn/english/news/202009/t20200903_139647.html).

IDCPC. (2020c, November 4). China and Sri Lanka hold advanced seminar on governance experience. International Department Central Committee of CPC. Retrieved from [https://www.idcpc.org.cn/english/news/202011/t20201106\\_140587.html](https://www.idcpc.org.cn/english/news/202011/t20201106_140587.html).

IDCPC. (2021, June 15). Song Tao Participated in the Centennial Celebration of the Communist Party of China Co-held by Political Parties of Sri Lanka. International Department Central Committee of CPC. Retrieved from [https://www.idcpc.org.cn/english/news/202106/t20210618\\_146253.html](https://www.idcpc.org.cn/english/news/202106/t20210618_146253.html).

Janardhanan, A. (2021, February 4). Explained: Why Sri Lanka pushed India out of Colombo terminal project, what's being offered as compensation. *The Indian Express*. Retrieved from <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-why-sri-lanka-has-pushed-india-out-of-colombo-terminal-project-and-whats-being-offered-as-compensation-7171502/>.

Lo, K., & Zhou, L. (2018, October 29). China keeps close watch on Sri Lankan crisis but won't interfere. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/2170732/china-keeps-close-watch-sri-lankan-crisis-wont-interfere>.

Ministry of Defence Sri Lanka. (2021, April 28). China-SL bilateral discussion concludes successfully. Retrieved from [https://www.defence.lk/index.php/Article/view\\_article/3330](https://www.defence.lk/index.php/Article/view_article/3330).

Mohan, G. (2021, January 7). India stands for rights of Tamil people within a united Sri Lanka: Jaishankar's message to Colombo. *India Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/india-stands-for-rights-of-tamil-people-within-a-united-sri-lanka-jaishankar-s-message-to-colombo-1756633-2021-01-07>.

NewsWire. (2020, July 30). Basil wants SLPP to become like China's CCP or India's BJP. *NewsWire*. Retrieved from <https://www.newswire.lk/2020/07/30/basil-wants-slpp-to-become-like-chinas-ccp-or-indias-bjp/>.

Nordhaus, T. & Shah, S. (2022, March 5). In Sri Lanka, organic farming went catastrophically wrong. *Foreign Policy*. Retrieved from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/05/sri-lanka-organic-farming-crisis/>.

Pal, Deep. *China's Influence in South Asia: Vulnerabilities and Resilience in Four Countries*. India: Carnegie India.

Pereira, S. (2020). When the pandemic is a portal to militarization. *Groundviews*. Retrieved from <https://groundviews.org/2020/05/30/when-the-pandemic-is-a-portal-to-militarization/amp/>.

Press Trust of India. (2022, May 19). 'Lankan PM to present 21st Amendment on curbing President's powers before Cabinet next week': report. *The Times of India*. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/south-asia/lankan-pm-to-present-21st-amendment-on-curbing-presidents-powers-before-cabinet-next-week-report/articleshow/91662659.cms>.

Punyakumpol, P. (2011). The great firewall of China: background. *Torfox*. Retrieved from <https://cs.stanford.edu/people/eroberts/cs201/projects/2010-11/FreedomOfInformationChina/category/great-firewall-of-china/index.html>.

Rajapaksa, G. (n.d.). *Vistas of prosperity and splendour*. Retrieved from <https://gota.lk/sri-lanka-podujana-peramuna-manifesto-english.pdf>.

Reuters. (2020, September 24). Sri Lanka suspends Japanese-funded rail project over costs. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/sri-lanka-japan-railway/sri-lanka-suspends-japanese-funded-rail-project-over-costs-idINL3N2GL3CR>.

Rubatheesan, S. (2021, February 7). India fumes as China gets northern power projects. *The Sunday Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.sundaytimes.lk/210207/news/india-fumes-as-china-gets-northern-power-projects-431894.html>.

Shullman, D.O. (2019, January 29). Protect the party: China's growing influence in the developing world. *The Brookings Institution*. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/protect-the-party-chinas-growing-influence-in-the-developing-world/>.

South Asia Monitor. (2021, February 2). Chinese hand behind scuttling of ECT port deal? South Asia Monitor. Retrieved from <https://www.southasiamonitor.org/china-watch/chinese-hand-behind-scuttling-ect-port-deal>.

Sri Lanka Army. (n.d.). Army establishes its new directorate for agriculture and livestock. Sri Lanka Army. Retrieved from <https://www.army.lk/news/army-establishes-its-new-directorate-agriculture-and-livestock>.



Sri Lanka Export Development Board. (2019, May 29). SL, India and Japan sign MoC to develop ECT. Sri Lanka Export Development Board. Retrieved from <https://www.srilankabusiness.com/news/sl-india-and-japan-sign-moc-to-develop-ect.html>.

Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration. (n.d.). MPM study visit to HUST University, China. Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration. Retrieved from [http://www.slida.lk/slidatest/index.php/news\\_controller/pages/224?lag=en](http://www.slida.lk/slidatest/index.php/news_controller/pages/224?lag=en).

Srinivasan, M. (2021, April 12). China extends \$500 million loan to Lanka. *The Hindu*. Retrieved from <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/china-extends-500-million-loan-to-lanka/article34305277.ece>.

*Tamil Guardian*. (2021, April 4). Sri Lanka's Foreign Secretary smears human rights defenders as funded by the West. Retrieved from *Tamil Guardian*. <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/sri-lanka-s-foreign-secretary-smears-human-rights-defenders-funded-west>.

*Tamil Guardian*. (2022, March 7). Russia and Belarus rush to Sri Lanka's defence at UN Human Rights Council. *Tamil Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/russia-and-belarus-rush-sri-lanka-s-defence-un-human-rights-council>.

*The Economist*. (2020, May 14). Sri Lanka's new president is putting soldiers in charge of everything. *The Economist*. Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/asia/2020/05/14/sri-lankas-new-president-is-putting-soldiers-in-charge-of-everything>.

*The Sunday Times*. (2021, January 10). Jaishankar expressed concerns over China's 'influence' in Indian projects. *The Sunday Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.sundaytimes.lk/210110/news/>

[jaishankar-expressed-concerns-over-chinas-influence-in-indian-projects-427885.html](https://www.sundaytimes.lk/210110/news/jaishankar-expressed-concerns-over-chinas-influence-in-indian-projects-427885.html).

Tracking militarization in Sri Lanka under the Gotabaya Rajapaksa Regime. (n.d.). Crowdsourced datasheet. Retrieved from <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1j50Lzq6ZfkWjNJ0SzU57X3iJQTz1uJXEwBrU5lrOT5c/edit#gid=0>.

United States Department of Defense. (2021). *Military and security developments involving The People's Republic of China 2021*. Office of the Secretary of Defense. Retrieved from <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Nov/03/2002885874/-1/-1/0/2021-CMPR-FINAL.PDF>.

United States Institute of Peace. (2020). *China's influence on conflict dynamics in South Asia*. USIP Senior Study Group Final Report. Washington: United States Institute of Peace. Retrieved from [https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/20201216-chinas\\_influence\\_on\\_conflict\\_dynamics\\_in\\_south\\_asia-report.pdf](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/20201216-chinas_influence_on_conflict_dynamics_in_south_asia-report.pdf).

Walt, S.M. (1987). *The origins of alliances*. Cornell: Cornell University Press.

Wignaraja, G., Panditaratne, D., Kannangara, P., Hundlani, D. (2020). Chinese investment and the BRI in Sri Lanka. Chatham House. Retrieved from <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/03/chinese-investment-and-bri-sri-lanka>.

*Xinhua*. (2015, December 22). Sri Lankan officials come to China for "Belt and Road" government training. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2015-12/22/c\\_1117546373.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2015-12/22/c_1117546373.htm).

*Xinhua*. (2021, February 2). Interview: No evidence of genocide or detention camp in Xinjiang, says Sri Lanka's foreign secretary. Retrieved from [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-02/12/c\\_139739459.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-02/12/c_139739459.htm).