

The Important Value and Future Prospect of Sino-Myanmar Relations*

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Abstract—The year 2020 marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Sino-Myanmar diplomatic relations. As an important neighbor of China, Myanmar is connected with China by mountains and rivers, creating conditions for the development of “Paukphaw” friendship between the Chinese and Burmese peoples. Over the past decade, Sino-Myanmar relations have been continuously strengthened. It is in the common interests for the two nations to develop Sino-Myanmar relations in a new way and carry forward the “Paukphaw” tradition. It is of great significance to maintain the regional stability of South Asia and Southeast Asia, advance the development of “the Belt and Road Initiative” and bring about the great rejuvenation of Chinese nation. As a friendly neighbor to each other, only by creating a Sino-Myanmar community with a shared future, jointly advancing the construction of a comprehensive strategic partnership, innovatively developing the “Paukphaw” friendship between the two peoples, and pursuing peaceful development through extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits can the two nations benefit from each other and achieve mutual benefit and win-win results.

Keywords—Sino-Myanmar relations; strategic value; prospect

I. INTRODUCTION

China and Myanmar are linked by mountains and rivers. The “Paukphaw” friendship has been for a long history and the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations is approaching. All along, with the joint efforts of governments and peoples of the two countries, the two sides have established a “long-term stable, future-oriented, good-neighborly, friendly and comprehensive cooperative bilateral relations”. [1] Myanmar is endowed with unique geostrategic value. The friendly and peaceful development of Sino-Myanmar relations is conducive to safeguarding peace and stability in Northern Burma border area and steadily pushing forward its domestic peace process, is in favor of continuously improving Myanmar’s international and domestic environment, and enhancing its international political status [2], facilitates the continuous development of Myanmar’s national economy, the continual improvement of the quality of life of the Burmese people, and the improvement of living standards of the Burmese people. For China, to develop a positive relation with Myanmar will help realize the strategy of going south to

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the Indian Ocean by virtue of Chinese superior geographical position and open a breakthrough for China to break out of the strategic encirclement built by some western powers in the Asia-Pacific region, and also be beneficial to diversifying China’s oil transportation channels, guaranteeing the security of energy supply and maintaining the national economy safety. Meanwhile, the cooperation between China and Myanmar in developing alternative drug crops works in favor of solving the hidden dangers of drug cultivation in Myanmar, so as to combat drug smuggling in the border areas and provide a good environment for social development in China’s border areas. Maintaining and deepening the good-neighborly relations of friendship and cooperation with Myanmar is conducive to creating a favorable surrounding environment for China. It is of great significance for us to carry out the great western development strategy, “promote the development of the southwest border areas, build a harmonious socialist society and bring about a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” [3].

II. STRATEGIC VALUE OF DEVELOPING SINO-MYANMAR RELATIONS

Looking back at the development history of Sino-Myanmar relations and considering the complex international and domestic situations of the two countries, the author believes that it is both possible and necessary to continue to keep a bilateral friendly relation of “good-neighbourliness and friendliness and win-win cooperation”. The people of China and Myanmar have more than 2000 years of historical and cultural exchanges. Since the founding of new China, the two countries have established a partnership of good-neighbourliness and friendliness and peaceful cooperation on the basis of the Five Principles of “Peaceful Co-existence”, laying a solid foundation for healthy development of Sino-Myanmar relations in the 21st century. China and Myanmar are close neighbors with geographical advantages and large economic complementarities, which makes the two countries have certain advantages in trade cooperation. “Trade between China and Myanmar has grown rapidly in recent years. Data show that in 2017, bilateral trade volume between China and Myanmar reached 13.536 billion US dollars, with a year-on-year growth of 10.2%, of which China’s exports to Myanmar amounted to 9.09 billion US dollars, with a year-on-year growth of 10%, and China’s imports from Myanmar amounted to 4.527 billion US dollars, with a year-on-year growth of 10.5%. China remains the largest trading partner in its

investment in Myanmar” [4]. Myanmar urgently needs to strengthen trade cooperation with China to develop its domestic economy, and also looks forward to benefiting from ‘the Belt and Road Initiative’ construction. Finally, as a permanent neighbor, ethnic contradictions and conflicts in Northern Myanmar can hardly be solved without China’s support and help. Over the years, China and Myanmar have always understood and supported each other in maintaining regional peace and stability and safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity. China has always respected Myanmar’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, and is willing to provide assistance to Myanmar’s domestic peace process in accordance with its wishes, so as to jointly safeguard peace and stability of Sino-Burmese border area. [5] The stability of the situation in Northern Myanmar is directly related to the peace and development of Sino-Burmese border area. The two sides should, on the basis of mutual respect and trust, build a “harmonious but different” bilateral relationship, and conduct sincere cooperation in the development of “the Belt and Road Initiative”, so as to achieve common development, mutual benefit and win-win result.

A. Maintaining Stability in Myanmar and Even South Asia and Southeast Asia

Myanmar is a country with 135 ethnic minorities. Due to historical and external factors, Myanmar government has been at loggerheads with ethnic minority areas, among which the most intense clashes is located in the North part and Northeast part border China. As the largest ethnic armed force in Northern Myanmar, Kachin Independence Army has a fierce conflict with the Myanmar government. These large-scale ethnic armed forces have become one of the major concerns and the most difficult problems for the successive governments since the independence of Myanmar. China and Myanmar are connected by mountains and rivers and interlaced with ridges of fields. More than 2,000 kilometers of borderline facilitates people-to-people contacts between the two sides. Therefore, ethnic conflicts and wars not only lead to unstable domestic political power and slow economic development in Myanmar, but also have a significant impact on the stability and security of Southwest China. For Myanmar, developing relations with China is conducive to upholding domestic stability. Its regional peace and stability also depend on China’s support and assistance. After the Kokang conflict in 2008, the Chinese government made significant efforts to resettle Burmese refugees in a humanitarian spirit. The Chinese government has made active efforts and kept multi-dimensional communication and exchanges with all parties in Myanmar to resolve ethnic conflicts and contradictions in Myanmar, which is of great fundamental and constructive significance to support Myanmar’s national reconciliation [6]. Myanmar’s development of relations with China not only serves regional peace and stability, but also helps Myanmar resist sanctions imposed by Western countries, improve its international environment and enhance its international status. Since the 1980s, Myanmar has faced a severe international situation. It is mainly reflected in the fact that Western countries headed by the United States, in the name of democracy and freedom, have accused the Burmese military government of trampling on human rights, undermining democracy and ineffective drug

control. They have both imposed economic sanctions on Myanmar and hindered other international organizations from providing economic assistance to Myanmar. Although ASEAN has accepted Myanmar’s accession, ASEAN countries have different attitudes towards Myanmar. The subsequent Southeast Asian financial crisis broke Myanmar’s vision of using ASEAN to enhance its political status. The political, economic and diplomatic relations between Myanmar and ASEAN have not accelerated in accordance with the established track, but entered a new period of adjustment. After the financial crisis, ASEAN was eager to seek help from the West and no longer interfered with the West’s accusation of human rights issues in Myanmar, which was quite different from the previous situation of unanimously defending Myanmar. The constructive intervention policies proposed by Thailand, Philippines and Malaysia have also aroused the discontent and opposition of Myanmar. There was a conflict at the border between Myanmar and Thailand. As far as the current situation is concerned, the main reason for the difficulty in forming a good relationship between Myanmar and India is that the gap between the two countries is deep, and there will be no major breakthrough in the short term. “Under the situation that Myanmar is faced with a complex situation at home and abroad, the Chinese government has conducted exchanges and cooperation with Myanmar in political, economic and cultural fields in line with the principle of non-interference in its internal affairs”. [7] It will play a positive role in develop Myanmar’s economy, further consolidating the friendship between China and Myanmar, keeping peace and stability in South Asia and Southeast Asia, and advancing the development of China’s relations with other ASEAN member states. From a geopolitical perspective, Myanmar is strategically important to China. In the new era, the United States has adjusted its policy towards Myanmar, and tried to shape Myanmar into a pro-western democratic state under the pretext of easing economic sanctions against Myanmar and recommending the democratic process in Myanmar. The United States has wooed Burma to restrain China and constructed a so-called “C-shape” encirclement to contain China, which causes increasing instability in Sino-Myanmar geo-security. Therefore, to promote the development of a sound Sino-Myanmar relation is of great contemporary value to ensure the security and stability of China’s southwest frontier and the smooth passage of the Indian Ocean, govern peripheries of China and boost peaceful development at home. To sum up, China and Myanmar have profound historical origins and natural geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-security relations. The development of such a healthy and far-reaching Sino-Myanmar relations is conducive to upholding regional peace and stability as well as the sound economic, social and cultural development of China and Myanmar, which is fully in the fundamental interests of the people of China and Myanmar.

B. Achieving Win-win Economic Cooperation Between China and Myanmar

Developing Sino-Myanmar relations in an innovative way is conducive to promoting Myanmar’s social stability and economic and social development, maintaining China’s economic and energy security. In the 1980s and 1990s,

Myanmar was subject to a long period of western economic sanctions, China had provided a large amount of help to Myanmar in economic and social development and improvement of people's livelihood, promoting the development of economic and trade relations between China and Myanmar, which can relieve Myanmar's economic pressure to a greater extent. At present, Myanmar implements an open economy policy, actively develops foreign trade and attracts foreign investment, China has given a lot of help and support in agriculture, industry, communications and transportation, infrastructure and energy development etc., "The establishment of China-ASEAN free trade area and the deepening of the construction of the greater Mekong sub-region have further promoted the bilateral trade between China and Myanmar. Sino-Myanmar economic and trade relations enjoy a strong momentum of development with great potential" [8]. On the other hand, China has a vast market, rich resources and high technological level. The Sino-Myanmar transportation is convenient and the economic complementarities are strong. Therefore, Myanmar needs to strengthen cooperation with China in such areas as infrastructure, energy and agriculture. Developing relations with China will not only help Myanmar solving its domestic economic difficulties and maintaining domestic political stability, but also contribute to the development of China's relations with Southeast Asia. As an important part of China's relations with Southeast Asia, the sound development of Sino-Myanmar relations has great significance to China itself. First, it is conducive to implementing the Indian Ocean strategy of China and strengthening foreign exchanges and cooperation. Myanmar, located at the junction of East Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia, is an important channel for China to enter and exit the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. Myanmar's geographical advantage allows us to go south directly through Myanmar, sail from Rangoon port, and then enter Africa, the Middle East, Western Europe and other places from the Indian Ocean, so as to change China's traditional pattern of Pacific import and export and relieve the pressure of China's import and export. Myanmar's geographical advantages determine its unique role in the construction of "the Belt and Road", and it is an important hub to realize the connectivity between China and Southeast Asia, South Asia. Its long coastline and natural ports make it possible for China's overseas trade to move west out of the Indian Ocean and then directly into the Persian Gulf and Red Sea. "This potential geopolitical value enables Myanmar not only to become as a small center of East Asia connecting the marginal zone of South Asia, but also to become as a buffer zone of various forces on the Eurasian continent, so that Myanmar has great potential to become a resource political center of the marginal zone of the world"[9]. Second, maintain the national economic safety of China. Economic security is a very important part of national security. Among the various elements of China's economic security, energy security is the most important. Myanmar is a friendly neighbor of China's neighboring countries with excellent natural conditions. It is rich in natural resources and has very important energy strategic value. For China, Sino-Myanmar energy cooperation can alleviate the huge gap in China's energy supply, reduce China's dependence on the Strait of Malacca, and provide a strong guarantee for China's energy

security. From the perspective of energy security, "Myanmar has become as the center of geopolitics. [10] Although China is rich in oil resources, its demand is also greater, and it faces the situation of energy supply shortage for a long time. Since 1993, China has developed into a global net oil importer of oil in the world. By the end of 2017, China's crude oil demand has reached 12.6 million barrels per day, becoming as the second largest consumer of crude oil in the world; Data shows that in the first quarter of 2018, Chinese crude oil demand grew by 750,000 barrels per day with 8.9% year on year growth rate. [11] By 2050, China's domestic energy supply will face a bigger gap and a much larger disparity between supply and demand. Therefore, it is imperative to solve the problem of energy shortage, ensure energy supply and maintain sustainable economic development and economic security. At present, 80% of Chinese oil imports are mainly concentrated in the Middle East and need to enter China via the Indian Ocean-Malacca Strait-South China Sea-Taiwan Strait routes. The Malacca Strait is under the control of Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. It is also one of the 16 major maritime throats proposed by the US "Two Oceans Strategy" that must be controlled. The maritime forces of the United States and India are of great strategic significance to the Malacca Strait. [12] In recent years, the United States and Japan have brought the security uncertainty because of their bad intentions. In addition, Chinese current control over offshore oil transport routes is weak and has been in a passive position for a long time, the Middle East oil and the single maritime transport routes on which it depends will be seriously threatened once foreign forces intervene, and the important strategic measure to eliminate this threat is to open up new oil import routes. From the hinterland of Yunnan to the Indian Ocean via Myanmar has become as an extremely important strategic choice for China's energy security, the construction and operation of Sino-Myanmar oil and gas pipeline is also an important part of China's expansion of energy cooperation with Southeast Asia and South Asia. The opening of Sino-Myanmar oil and gas pipeline not only alleviates the "Malacca dilemma", promotes the diversification of China's energy supply, fills the energy gap, but also injects vitality into Myanmar's economic development. According to the Sino-Myanmar Oil and Gas Pipeline Agreement, Myanmar can get a 20% share of the natural gas and 2 million tons of crude oil. Myanmar supplies natural gas to China every year. China has become Myanmar's most stable and largest buyer and ensures Myanmar's stable revenue source. In addition, China pays a large amount of transit fees to Myanmar every year. From the perspective of energy economy, the "spillover effect" of oil and gas pipelines not only greatly improves Myanmar's infrastructure, promotes the economic development of cities along pipelines, but also promotes the development of oil refining, storage and transportation and sales industries, and promotes Myanmar's overall economic development. For China, the construction and successful operation of Sino-Myanmar oil and gas pipeline is an important part of transnational energy cooperation, which greatly promotes the development of China-ASEAN economic relations and makes it a prosperous economic corridor between China and ASEAN.

III. EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OF SINO-MYANMAR RELATIONS

The Sino-Myanmar fraternal friendship has a long history. The two countries have maintained a steady development trend since the establishment of diplomatic relations for more than 70 years. However, the development of Sino-Myanmar relations still faces some problems and challenges. On one hand, the development of the domestic situation in Myanmar, especially the conflict between the government and the civilian armed forces, has increasingly complicated the impact on Sino-Myanmar relations. On the other hand, Myanmar's political change presents the impact of diversification on Sino-Myanmar relations. As Ms. Sun Yun, a visiting researcher at the Brookings Institution in the United States, said: "Strategically, changes in Myanmar's foreign policy have made it difficult for China to implement its established strategic planning in Myanmar, ASEAN, and the Indian Ocean and even in South and Southeast Asia as a whole". [13] The main factors are as follows.

A. *The Multi-dimensional Impact of Ethnic Conflicts in Northern Myanmar on China*

At present, the conflicts between "civilian militarism" in north Myanmar and the Myanmar government are continuing. First, it poses a threat to the security, stability and development of China's southwestern border areas. Second, it damages China's economic interests, and Chinese-funded enterprises are facing new challenges in investing in Myanmar. It affects the reliability of China's strategy implementation, has brought challenges to China's implementation of the strategy of "the Belt and Road" and "Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar Economic Corridor". In March 2015, Myanmar military aircraft bombs fell into Lincang, Yunnan Province, causing 5 deaths and 8 injuries, in November 2016, Myanmar-North War resumed, and the shrapnel fell into China again, causing civilian injuries. The ethnic conflicts in north Myanmar not only threaten China's borders in terms of traditional security, but also bring hidden dangers to China in terms of non-traditional security. First of all, the war conflict has caused a large number of Myanmar people to leave their homes and become as refugees. The influx of refugees has brought great instability to the security of China. In August 2009, about 37,000 refugees poured into Yunnan during the Kokang conflict. [14] Conflict broke out again in Kokang in March 2015, and more than 60,000 refugees poured into China. Huge refugee groups are prone to social problems such as drug smuggling, cross-border gambling, human trafficking, mob-gathering, religious infiltration and illegal immigration. Once these problems are not handled properly and promptly, they will lead to malicious exaggeration of western people with ulterior motives, thus undermining China's international image and bringing new hidden dangers to social security in China's frontier areas. Second, the ethnic and religious conflicts in northern Myanmar provide soil for the breeding of terrorism. The recent rise of terrorist forces in Myanmar is likely to collude with the "Xinjiang Independence" in China, which will bring difficulties and obstacles to Chinese border anti-terrorism operations. On the other hand, the armed conflict in north Myanmar has brought many unstable factors to the regional economic cooperation between China and Myanmar.

Most of China's large-scale investment projects are concentrated in ethnic minority areas. The Mujie-Lashio Highway is the lifeline of Sino-Myanmar trade in goods and personnel exchange on land, both the Sino-Myanmar oil and gas pipeline and the planned Kunming-Kyaukpyu Railway pass through the conflict area, which inevitably falls into the conflict between the Myanmar government and the national armed forces, and even become as the victim of the balance of interests, what's more, some ethnic minority armed forces, with the aim of robbing wealth or retaliating against the central government, have targeted Sino-Myanmar energy cooperation projects or Chinese technicians, attacking and kidnapping them. In addition, the issue of ethnic minorities in Myanmar will be exploited by some social organizations with ulterior motives. They believe that China's investment in Myanmar is to plunder resources, destroy the environment and seek benefits for the Myanmar people. Just as some foreign media speculate that the project of Kyaukpyu Port is an "investment trap" or "debt trap", the purpose is nothing more than to incite local public opinion and interfere the normal cooperation between China and Myanmar. These speculations with "China Threat Theory" and "Neo-Colonialism" have aroused the disgust of the local minority people towards China, resulting in the conflict and exclusion of the normal energy cooperation projects between China and Myanmar, which often puts them under the threat of hostility or attack. The sudden suspension of the Myitsong Hydropower Station in September 2011 affected almost all Chinese-funded projects in Myanmar. The resistance of Myanmar people to the Myitsong Hydropower Station project reflected not only the dissatisfaction of Myanmar people with the investment project, but also reflects the dissatisfaction of the Myanmar people with the dictatorship of the military government under the tide of democracy. As Aung San Suu Kyi put it, "There has been a pretty strong backlash against Chinese companies in Myanmar over the past few decades, because the Myanmar people believe that Chinese companies are actually helping the military government to maintain the regime." [15] It isn't difficult to know from the words of Aung San Suu Kyi that China's investment in Myanmar has been given more political color. Finally, ethnic conflicts in north Myanmar have affected the reliability of China's strategic implementation. Myanmar, as the only way for China to implement the two-ocean strategy, is of self-evident geopolitical value. Large-scale projects built by China usually go through conflict-prone northern regions, the ethnic conflicts in northern Myanmar pose a serious threat to the security of China's investment projects in Myanmar and challenge the implementation of the strategy of China's "the Belt and Road" and "Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar Economic Corridor". For example, on May 12, 2018, Mujie's armed conflict seriously affected economic cooperation in the border areas between China and Myanmar, forcing the temporary closure of the border trade channels between the two countries.

B. *The Challenge of Myanmar's Political Change to Sino-Myanmar Relations*

After the democratic reforms in Myanmar, the Myanmar government has successively implemented a series of major reforms in the political, economic, and diplomatic fields. The domestic situation shows that the political ecology is

diversified, the economic and social interests are complicated, and the competition of various forces at home and abroad is fierce. The diversification of Myanmar's international capital sources has created a huge market impact on Chinese investment. The economic politicization tendency of China's investment in Myanmar has become more and more obvious, and it has gradually become an important bargaining chip for the Myanmar government to balance international relations and interests. It has repeatedly suffered "political discrimination" in Myanmar investment. In 2011, the Myitsone Hydropower Station was suspended, and China suffered heavy losses. In July 2014, the China-Myanmar railway project was stranded. China's investment in Myanmar has suffered political discrimination many times, seriously affecting its enthusiasm for investment in Myanmar. On the other hand, with the progress of democratization and political system reform in Myanmar, and the relaxation of sanctions against Myanmar by the international community, Myanmar has also taken the opportunity to actively improve relations with countries outside the region and promote national development through relations with other countries. This will balance China's influence in Myanmar. The first is that the improvement of US-Myanmar relations has changed the long-term isolation of Myanmar by the international community. Through the penetration of Myanmar, the United States can help it expand its economic recovery in the Asian market. It will also help to win over Myanmar as a new military security partner, strengthen the US military influence in the Indian Ocean, and use Myanmar as a pawn to contain China, adding a weight to its strategy of "Asia-Pacific rebalancing". Secondly, the relationship between India and Myanmar has gradually warmed up and the economic and trade exchanges between the two sides have continued. In Myanmar's view, India is the only choice that can balance China's influence in Myanmar. The development of bilateral relations will inevitably restrict the further improvement of Sino-Myanmar Relations. All in all, although the interests of the United States, India and neighboring countries are different, it is obvious to offset the impact of China on Myanmar. The Myanmar government is also pleased to accept more political support and economic assistance for the interests of neighboring countries in Myanmar. Finally, Myanmar's democratization reform has relaxed restrictions on the news media, freedom of speech, and the publishing industry. Western countries have used social networks such as Facebook and Youtube to exaggerate and report some untrue anti-China paradoxes and incite the Burmese people's resentment against China. In turn, it will affect the decision-making of China at the top level and bring challenges to the sound development of China-Myanmar relations.

IV. PROSPECTS FOR SINO-MYANMAR RELATIONS

To jointly build the "Community of Common Destiny of China and Myanmar", promote the building of a "comprehensive strategic partnership", enhance the well-being of the two peoples, and achieve "mutual benefit and win-win" is the direction of the joint efforts of the governments and people of China and Myanmar. It is also the future direction of the development of Sino-Myanmar Relations. China and Myanmar have had very close contacts since ancient times.

The two countries are connected by mountains and rivers and are close to each other. They are good neighbors of unity, friendship and mutual trust. They are also good partners with complementary advantages and win-win cooperation with a profound friendship. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out: "The friendship between China and Myanmar's compatriot has a long history and a wide range of common strategic interests." [16] China and Myanmar are mutually reinforcing in geopolitical and economic interests. China and Myanmar jointly promote the building of a "comprehensive strategic partnership" and enhance the people's welfare of the two countries that is imperative. However, due to the democratic transformation of the Myanmar government and the involvement of the United States and other Western countries, the political situation in Myanmar has been "overall stable and partially turbulent". Myanmar's political development has not made substantial new progress, and the unstable factors have continued to increase. As a friendly neighbor, China and Myanmar can only benefit the people of the two countries, enhance the well-being of the two peoples, and innovate and develop the friendship between the two peoples by "joining together, building together, sharing together", achieving mutual benefit and peaceful development, building a "community of China and Myanmar", and jointly promoting the building of a "comprehensive strategic partnership." Comrade Xi Jinping profoundly pointed out: "China and Myanmar are connected by mountains and rivers, and the friendship between the two countries is profound. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties nearly 70 years ago, the relations between the two countries have been greatly developed on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, bringing tangible benefits to the two peoples. China attaches great importance to developing relations with Myanmar and is willing to work hard with Myanmar to adhere to the fundamental interests of the two peoples, firmly grasp the correct direction of Sino-Myanmar relations, upgrade the level of comprehensive strategic cooperation, and always be good neighbors, good friends, good friends, and good partners." [17] As a "good neighbor, good friend, good friend, good partner" of Myanmar, China has played a positive and active role in promoting Sino-Myanmar relations of cooperation and win-win. However, since the democratic transformation of the Myanmar government, the "centrifugal tendency" towards China has become increasingly prominent, leading to the "separation" between China and Myanmar. Due to the dispersion of political power in Myanmar, it has affected relations with China. In recent years, the United States and other Western countries have made unprecedented strategic investment in Myanmar. They exert pressure on Myanmar through various means such as "top-level design for Myanmar, comprehensive use of economy and democracy to draw people's hearts and control public opinion", and they use Western ideas and rules to limit Myanmar's reform and development, balance power, and squeeze China's influence in Myanmar. [18] All in all, reviewing the history of Sino-Myanmar relations, Sino-Myanmar relations have withstood the test of change, but since the democratic transformation of the Myanmar government, China-Myanmar relations have suffered setbacks. The transformation and warming of relations between Myanmar and the United States and other

Western countries reflects the diversification of Myanmar's diplomacy. This is both an opportunity and a challenge for the development of friendly relations between Myanmar and China. How to promote the "comprehensive strategic partnership" between China and Myanmar in response to Myanmar's pluralistic diplomacy, and create "Community of Common Destiny of China and Myanmar" to continuously enhance the well-being of the two peoples?

First, China and Myanmar should maintain high-level interaction and strengthen strategic communication. Since the 18th National Congress, China has actively implemented the peripheral foreign policy of "amicable, secure and prosperous neighborhood" and "good-neighborly relationship and partnership". Sino-Myanmar relations have evolved from traditional friendly relations to comprehensive strategic cooperative relations. In recent years, the high-level interaction between China and Myanmar has been good, and the strategic communication channels have been smooth. The two sides have reached a consensus on the cooperation principle of "mutual respect, mutual benefit and win-win". On the Myanmar issue, China is based on the principle of not interfering in Myanmar's internal affairs. Unlike the Western countries, which blame the Burmese government for dealing with Rohingya, China understands and supports the Myanmar government's efforts for national reconciliation. Myanmar's top officials, government officials and scholars also affirmed and supported the "the Belt and Road". The two sides continued to expand exchanges and cooperation in the economic, trade and humanities fields and promote the sustained, healthy and stable development of Sino-Myanmar relations.

The second is to give full play to the geographical and ethnic advantages and strengthen humanities and economic and trade cooperation. China and Myanmar have a long history of compatriots. The border between the two countries is about 2,253 kilometers long and 16 cross-border ethnic groups. The similarities in language, material and spiritual culture have laid the foundation for the long-term friendship between China and Myanmar. In recent years, the cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and Myanmar have been smooth. The two sides have made gratifying achievements in training international students, film and television cultural exchanges, cultural center construction, think tank dialogue and cooperation, and basic people's livelihood service construction. Myanmar also expressed its high appreciation for China's initiative to build a "herringbone" Sino-Myanmar economic corridor. Under the framework of "the Belt and Road", the two sides have made breakthroughs in strengthening investment and trade facilitation, financing, reducing tariff barriers, oil and gas pipelines, natural gas pipelines and other capacity cooperation. As of February 2018, China invested 344 projects in Myanmar, totaling 54.85 billion US dollars, involving oil and gas, power, manufacturing, transportation and communications industries, becoming Myanmar's largest source of investment.[19] Looking into the future, the mutual alignment of strategic needs has made the cooperation between China and Myanmar a promising prospect. In the new historical period, the two countries need to strengthen exchanges and cooperation in various fields between China and Myanmar, constantly give new meaning to the friendship

and promote the Sino-Myanmar comprehensive strategic partnership of cooperation.

The third is to actively mediate and exchange and promote regional peace and security. Maintaining stability and peace on the Sino-Myanmar border is a topic of great concern to the Chinese government. The Sino-Myanmar border conflict, which has repeatedly erupted, has caused the Sino-Myanmar border to be in a state of turmoil and instability for a long time, and has become a stumbling block for the healthy development of the Sino-Myanmar relationship. On this issue, China needs to choose the right time to intervene through "creative intervention,"[20] focusing on "soft intervention" at the level of the Myanmar government, innovating diplomatic methods, and strengthening China and Myanmar's investment in people's livelihood, health care, agriculture, and education, paying attention to maintaining communication with the top level of Myanmar, giving full play to the guiding role of local governments at all levels, including the participation of non-governmental organizations, the media, and social forces. With regard to national armed forces, China needs to actively mediate its mediation, and promote the settlement of the Myanmar government and the national armed forces, provide necessary assistance to the peace process in Myanmar, and maintain peace and stability in the northern part of Myanmar.

The fourth is to strengthen non-governmental exchanges between the two countries and build a "compatriot" friendship foundation. Comrade Xi Jinping pointed out: "The country's exchanges lie in the people's blindness." [21] It refers to the friendship of state relations lies in the deep feelings of the people. The deep feelings of the folks are the key to the stability and long-lasting relationship between Sino-Myanmar and the two countries. Although Myanmar attaches great importance to relations with China, due to the intervention of the United States and other Western powers, Myanmar has become alienated from China, and some groups in Myanmar are still growing their dissatisfaction with China. China should actively shape the image of a responsible big country, promote and deepen the non-governmental exchanges between the two countries, enrich the content of bilateral humanities cooperation, and focus on strengthening exchanges and cooperation in the humanities fields such as culture, education, youth, health, tourism, media, and religion, constantly consolidate the basis of friendly relations between the two countries, deepen mutual understanding and friendly feelings, consolidate and innovate and develop the long-standing "cell wave" friendship between the two peoples, benefit the two peoples, and continuously enhance the well-being of the two peoples, contribute wisdom and strength to the "peaceful development, mutual benefit and win-win" between China and Myanmar.

V. CONCLUSION

The current Sino-Myanmar relationship does face many challenges and some uncertainties, but the huge complementarity of political and economic cooperation between China and Myanmar is objective. Since the 18th National Congress, China has actively implemented the peripheral foreign policy of "amicable, secure and prosperous neighborhood" and "good-neighborly relationship and

partnership”, continuously strengthening the cultural exchanges with Myanmar and expanding the basic people's livelihood investment in Myanmar. At present, the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Myanmar is in line with the common interests of the two peoples. On the basis of inheriting the friendship, the two countries will focus on the construction of the Sino-Myanmar economic corridor under the framework of the “the Belt and Road”, seek development by cooperation, promote peace through development, and thus consolidating the economic and social foundations of the Community of Common Destiny of China and Myanmar.

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