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ABOUT US

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**Myanmar's Strategic Crucible:
China's Global Initiatives as
Vectors for Human Intelligence
(HUMINT)**



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Abstract

Amid escalating Sino-US competition, the volatile Myanmar has emerged as a crucible for China's geopolitical reconfiguration in the Indo-Pacific region. This article analyses how Beijing leverages its recently launched Four Global Initiatives (4GIs), i.e., the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, the Global Civilisational Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative, between 2021 and 2025 in turbulent Myanmar as sophisticated vectors for expanding Human Intelligence operations following the 2021 military coup landscape. By analysing recent developments in Myanmar from the prism of recently launched 4GIs, this study attempts to unravel how benevolent-looking Beijing's initiatives subtly conceal a strategic convergence of soft power and intelligence primarily aimed at securing the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, stabilising the Junta regime, normalising Pax-Sinica norms and thereby positioning Myanmar as a crucible for China's narrative war and regional dominance.

Introduction

Myanmar holds paramount strategic importance for China in countering Indo-US rivalry, serving as the linchpin of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) that bypasses the Malacca Strait choke point for Indian Ocean Region (IOR) access. Myanmar's Kyaukpyu port in the Bay of Bengal and pipelines from China secure energy imports, while rare earth mines fuel tech supremacy, thereby directly challenging India's Act East and US-led QUAD encirclement. Amid turbulence in Myanmar, Beijing's support of the Junta preserves \$20+ billion in BRI assets, thereby projecting regional dominance via debt leverage and proxy stability. This positions Myanmar as a forward Chinese base for Pax-Sinica, diluting US Indo-Pacific influence and hedging India's NER buffer.¹

China has launched its Four Global Initiatives (4GIs), i.e., the Global Development Initiative (GDI) in 2021, the Global Security Initiative (GSI) in 2022, the Global Civilisational Initiative (GCI) in 2023 and the Global Governance Initiative (GGI) in 2025, to recalibrate its hardware-focused Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) downward trajectory toward holistic software dominance, correcting overreliance on debt-trap infrastructure and enabling invisible sharp edges of influence globally. GDI fosters economic dependencies, GSI embeds security, GCI addresses culture, and GGI orchestrates global norms. Globally, these innocuous-looking benign initiatives inherently synergise Human Intelligence (HUMINT) expansion, normalise techno-authoritarianism amid growing Sino-US rivalry in the Indo-Pacific region and project a parallel world order in favour of Global South allegiance.^{2 3}

Following the Feb 2021 military coup, Myanmar's turmoil persists unchecked, with the Tatmadaw (Myanmar's official armed forces) controlling approximately 21% of territory as of mid-Nov 2024, while a patchwork of Ethnic Armed Groups (EAGs) holds 42%, and the balance of territory is contested. (ISP-Myanmar's research estimates that EAGs now hold 37.84 % of the country's area⁴). Under Operation 1027 (launched in Oct 2023), the Three Brotherhood Alliance, i.e., the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the Arakan Army (AA), seized Lashio (Shan State hub and Junta's North East Command HQ) by mid-2024,

unsettling supply lines and triggering bridge demolitions prior to China's Jan 2025 ceasefire mediation.⁵ The 2025-26 elections, conducted in a phased manner to pretend legitimacy, were marred by rampant fraud, violence and abysmal turnout. The Junta backed the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), which dominated in all three phases, securing 58% of seats. With the military's 25% quota, USDP controls 86% of the parliament, thereby legitimising Junta rule, despite the UN sham label.⁶ The Junta's persistent airstrikes have displaced approx. 3.6 million (UN/HRW 2026 estimates), contracted Myanmar's economy and driven thousands of refugees into Mizoram (India).⁷ Myanmar's civil war has also triggered hazardous cross-border spillovers, i.e., arms trafficking fuelling North East Region (NER) insurgencies and fentanyl precursors bankrolling cartels, thus creating strategic vacuums that China exploits through its 4GIs, Private Military Contractors (PMC) or Private Security Companies (PSC), EAG ceasefires and HUMINT networks to safeguard CMEC pipelines.⁸

Despite the availability of abundant cost-effective, rapid and low-risk technological intelligence options, China, with the second largest available human assets (both citizens and diaspora) after India, strategically underscores HUMINT alongside tech-driven methods. Beijing has refined its peculiar HUMINT operations alongside tech-driven methods for reduced detection ability, accelerated operations and heightened ambiguity to confuse adversaries, thereby ensuring a resilient, multi-layered espionage ecosystem. This article identifies China's distinctive HUMINT footprints within new evolving 4GIs in Myanmar, building on the phenomenal success of incremental intelligence collection through BRI-era public diplomacy. Operating in Myanmar's strategic context amid the Sino-US rivalry in the Indo-Pacific region, these networks meticulously gather intelligence bits while maintaining plausible deniability. This article traces HUMINT-4GI relations following BRI's post-COVID decline, revealing Beijing's pivot toward normative and intelligence-driven global influence in Myanmar. This article is also an attempt to establish causal connections between China's HUMINT operations and its 4GIs in Myanmar by systematically identifying HUMINT elements embedded under the cloak of evolving 4GIs.

CHINESE 4 GIs AND HUMINT OPERATIONS IN MYANMAR

China's 4GIs, launched between 2021 and 2025, mark an evolution of the BRI launched in 2013 and are now deliberately being projected as a cure for global shortfalls in peace, growth, security, governance and trust. Christopher Krebs, the first director of the U.S. Cyber Security and Infrastructure Security Agency, has summarised his analysis of the differing strategic goals of Russia and China in their cyber operations and foreign influence campaigns against the US as *"When we think about Russia, they're trying to disrupt the system and China is trying to manipulate the system."* The 4GIs quartet launched in quick succession marks the inclusive growth of Beijing's global power projection beyond BRI infrastructure-focused projects toward a self-reinforcing ecosystem which is methodically challenging Western liberal order. Collectively, the 4GIs tackle Beijing's perceived global governance deficits through a holistic, multifaceted strategic framework wherein the GDI brings fresh development ideas, the GSI redesigns security views, the GCI enhances cultural exchanges and the GGI sets the governance rules. The 4GIs synergise internally to dismantle liberal democratic norms and systematically transfer influence from Western institutions to Beijing's state-centric paradigm. The GDI forges economic dependencies, the GSI delivers security-technology partnerships, the GCI crafts legitimising narratives and finally the GGI institutionalises these gains through rule-making dominance. Together, the 4GIs generate a self-reinforcing cycle where material reliance, security alignment and ideological convergence amplify China's geopolitical leverage.⁹ Chinese official narratives describe the 4GIs as an 'organic whole' in which the GDI provides the material foundation, the GSI safeguards a peaceful environment, the GCI builds value consensus and the GGI supplies institutional guarantees. This systemic framing portrays China as offering a full spectrum of governance packages and not an isolated project.¹⁰

Under the cloak of 4GIs, China spreads techno-authoritarian ideas through its economic power wherein the GDI pays for digital projects like Beidou satellites and AI rules and creates dependencies; the GSI sells surveillance tools as peacekeeping aid; the GCI

defends censorship as cultural sovereignty; and finally, the GGI seeks to transform existing bodies like the UN while also proposing parallel new institutions, such as the International Organisation for Mediation (IOMed), a Hong Kong-based mediation group launched on 20 Oct 2025 with a focus on resolving international disputes through mediation.¹¹ Within the span of five years, 4 GIs have secured over 100 endorsements for the GDI Fund, engaged security partners like Russia, Iran and Pakistan through GSI dialogues, integrated AI governance bodies and IOMed with SCO/BRICS frameworks and signed 43 Global South MoUs for Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS)/Renminbi (RMB) settlement.^{12 13 14} The GCI has elicited responses from political parties and organizations across more than 150 countries and contributed to the unanimous UN endorsement of an International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations.¹⁵ The GGI had received positive responses and support from nearly 160 countries and international organizations.¹⁶

During the June 2026 visit to China, President Min Aung Hlaing explicitly welcomed and supported Xi Jinping's four Global Initiatives. The visit also reaffirmed the longstanding China–Myanmar “Pauk-Phaw” friendship, strengthened comprehensive strategic cooperation, and advanced efforts to build a China–Myanmar community with a shared future. Both sides further reiterated mutual support for each other's sovereignty, security and development interests.¹⁷ Earlier on 25 Apr 2026, Myanmar support for 4GIs was also conveyed by Hlaing himself to the Chinese Foreign Minister in Nay Pyi Taw. Subsequently, on 28 Apr 2026, the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the UNs and other international organizations based in Vienna also reaffirmed Myanmar's support for the 4GIs during the launch of the Event of the Vienna Chapter of the Group of Friends of Global Governance (GFGG).¹⁸ Earlier on 09 May 2025, Jinping called for enhanced strategic ties between China and Myanmar, accelerating CMEC projects, forging a shared-future community and advancing 4GIs. During the apex meeting, Jinping focused on “Paukphaw” brotherhood and the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, while Hlaing lauded swift Mandalay aid, pledged collaboration and security in economic/energy projects and also endorsed 4GIs.¹⁹ With the 5G expansion plan of Huawei in 2025 under CMEC, surveillance dependencies, arms transfers and Peace

Monks Council proposal funds for Theravada temples and Confucius Classrooms (CC), and 2026 election support as South-South governance, the Chinese operational synergy in the Myanmar post-coup environment is evident.

Unique Chinese HUMINT Operations

Globally, the disruptive technologies have revolutionised intelligence collection methods by providing cost-effective solutions for immediate collection of colossal data without risking precious human life. With the availability of the second largest pool of human resources, China, unlike other advanced nations, has innovatively evolved its doctrine through global initiatives to elegantly blend traditional human-centric operations with fast-evolving cutting-edge tech, that too without raising a red flag. This amalgamation has remarkably enhanced China's 4GIs influence globally and has turned HUMINT into a hybrid force multiplier for influence and intelligence dominance.

Contrary to the conventional intelligencer tradecraft of collecting information by a selective specialised agent, the Chinese have devised a unique modus operandi of "thousand grains of sand or mosaic approach or human wave or citizen spying"²⁰ wherein many Han people and diaspora settled abroad are utilised for acquisition of intelligence while performing their routine work. Beijing's creativity and ability to combine all the elements of 'societal power', including espionage, information control, industrial policy, political and economic coercion, foreign policy, the threat of military force and technological strength, pose a challenge to the existing rules-based international order.²¹ China's HUMINT collection strategy leverages a vast network of seemingly ordinary individuals to gather small pieces of information while performing their routine work, which are later combined into a complete intelligence picture. Even with inherent advantages of technology, China has prioritised HUMINT for pursuing its foreign policy objectives. Interestingly, China has subtly fused traditional intelligence methods with modern tools, which invariably has strengthened its ability to collect vital information and also has supported its rise as a global power.

GDI and Chinese HUMINT Traces in Myanmar

China launched GDI at the UNGA in Sep 2021 to advance the UN's 2030 Agenda via six principles: needs-based prioritisation, people-centred development, inclusivity, innovation, ecological balance and pragmatic execution. The GDI targets poverty reduction, food security, health crises, financing gaps, climate action, industrialisation, digital economy and connectivity, basically to frame China as the Global South leader against Western inequality. In a short time, the GDI gained support from more than 100 countries and organisations, with more than 80 countries in its "Group of Friends."²² China has also launched the China-UN Global South-South Development Facility (2025-2030) alongside the UN Office for South-South Cooperation in Sep 2025 to focus on digital transformation and green development in the most vulnerable countries, including Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States through Huawei/Beidou infrastructure and AI capacity-building²³ Myanmar has interestingly met the criteria of LDC status at least two consecutive times but was deferred by the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) to 2027.²⁴

In June 2026, China and Myanmar agreed to accelerate the CMEC, including the Kyaukpyu Deep-Sea Port and Muse–Mandalay Railway, while advancing energy, the digital economy, AI, agriculture and trade cooperation. China also supported post-earthquake reconstruction, infrastructure and livelihood projects, while Myanmar joined the Group of Friends of the GDI.²⁵ Under the guise of development aid, the GDI establishes a parallel techno-authoritarian framework through compact, eco-friendly, digital-centric projects that entrench Chinese standards. Huawei 5G networks, Beidou satellites and surveillance systems span 149 countries, including Myanmar, fostering digital dependencies that legitimise state-dominated data control while sidestepping Western privacy protections.^{26,27} Beijing has reportedly been supplying Myanmar's military Junta with surveillance technology used to monitor communications, track opponents and, in some cases, facilitate arrests and executions.²⁸ Myanmar is said to have authorised China's installation of Continuously Operating Reference Stations

(CORS)²⁹ which deliver precise, real-time Positioning, Navigation and Timing (PNT) data for surveying, mapping terrain/resources and tracking movements vital for HUMINT fusion and SIGINT. Embedded in 5G infrastructure, they facilitate pervasive surveillance via two-way messaging, allowing Beijing remote data access and manipulation for strategic oversight in border/conflict zones.

China leverages economic power in Myanmar via dual engagement with the Junta and non-state actors, outpacing Europe's sanctions-only strategy. It secures investment protections through joint security firms and expedited Kyaukpyu port projects, while imposing the "five-cut policy" (internet, fuel, electricity, food, commodities) on groups like the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), MNDAA and United Wa State Army (UWSA) to deter attacks and safeguard rare earths/trade routes.³⁰ As per the Progress Report on the GDI 2025, China-Myanmar cooperation via 14 small and beautiful Lancang-Mekong Cooperation projects spans agriculture, environment, tech, culture, education and disaster prevention, alongside poverty reduction pilots, cross-border fire control, forestry networks and mangrove conservation.³¹ These grassroots initiatives under the cloak of GDI deploy vast Chinese manpower as workers, experts, and trainers and embed them locally for cultural immersion and intelligence gathering. Routine site surveys enable technical mapping of terrain, resources and vulnerabilities, yielding granular HUMINT unachievable by remote tech alone. China is rapidly expanding its technological influence in Myanmar through Geedge Networks' leaked systems, embedding the Great Firewall's censorship tools. In Sep 2025, over 500 GB of internal files revealed deployment in 6 data centres serving 13 ISPs, monitoring 81 million connections. Features like Deep Packet Inspection (DPI), VPN fingerprinting, traffic filtering and user tracking dashboards enable real-time surveillance, website blocks and geo-location profiling, and experimental tools for reputation scoring, relationship mapping and geo-fencing further empower narrative control, aligning with GDI digital governance.³²

GSI and Chinese HUMINT in Myanmar

The GSI launched at the Boao Forum for Asia on 21 Apr 2022 is articulated through six core commitments, i.e., indivisible security, sovereignty respect, UN Charter adherence, legitimate security concerns, dialogue-based dispute resolution and comprehensive traditional/non-traditional security. The GSI rejects Cold War alliances and zero-sum games and prioritises state-centric stability through cyber sovereignty, biosecurity and AI governance, positioning Beijing as a mediator for Global South security dilemmas while contrasting Western collective defence models. The GSI is operationalised via a Feb 2023 concept paper and sponsors platforms like the Global Public Security Cooperation Forum to showcase Chinese surveillance technologies and digital infrastructure solutions, advancing win-win partnerships across fragmented geopolitical landscapes.³³³⁴ Over 90 bilateral and multilateral documents now incorporate GSI language while systematically converting the GDI economic dependencies into enduring security partnerships that discreetly embed Chinese standards.³⁵ In Central Asia, joint counterterrorism drills conducted through SCO frameworks are gradually enhancing People's Liberation Army (PLA) interoperability with regional militaries.³⁶ GSI's signature achievement remains China's Mar 2023 mediation normalising Saudi-Iran relations, restoring diplomatic ties after seven years and securing both nations' commitments to GSI principles. This breakthrough is hailed by 100+ countries and has demonstrated China's neutral broker credentials while expanding its Chinese Middle East footprint and also embedding GSI concepts into bilateral agreements across BRICS, SCO and African Union frameworks.^{37 38}

In the June 2026 meeting, both Jinping and Hlang agreed to establish a China–Myanmar security partnership, strengthen law enforcement, counter-crime cooperation, and protect Chinese projects and nationals. The cooperation between two countries covered telecom fraud, human trafficking, drugs, smuggling and illegal border activity. China has also reaffirmed support for Myanmar's peace and reconciliation process, particularly along the shared border.³⁹ Earlier during the May 2025 meeting, Myanmar's GSI endorsement was reaffirmed by Jinping, while Hlaing praised the initiatives and

pledged deepened security cooperation.⁴⁰⁴¹ China's GSI has aided in curbing Myanmar's scam centre menace through satellite surveillance of Myawaddy. SDGSAT-1 imagery captured power cuts after Thailand's "three cuts" policy (Feb 2025), verifying enforcement against telecom fraud hubs along the border.⁴² This intel supported trilateral security coordination, reducing cross-border crime under GSI's security framework.

This emerging cooperation has significantly augmented China's HUMINT footprints in Myanmar by legitimising expanded human deployments under GSI's security pretext. Xi-Hlaing's crime-fighting pledge enables joint anti-fraud operations, deploying thousands of Chinese security personnel into border regions, building on "small and beautiful" GDI projects that have already embedded workers village-by-village. GSI adds uniformed HUMINT collectors gathering cultural intelligence amid scam centre crackdowns, while satellite verification provides overhead cover for on-ground networks mapping EAG's movements, rare earth sites and infrastructure vulnerabilities. The coordination also normalises Beijing's operatives accessing sensitive areas, fusing real-time human reports with geospatial data for comprehensive intelligence dominance.

China's deployment of PSCs in Myanmar, formalised through 2025 Junta laws like the Private Security Service Law, exemplifies Beijing's surging influence via joint ventures safeguarding CMEC/BRI assets, notably Kyaukpyu port, amid Junta's civil war setbacks. Deeply state-integrated, led by ex-PLA/People's Armed Police (PAP) officers under Ministry of Public Security (MPS) oversight, these paramilitary-like units wield advanced firearms, surveillance (DPI tech) and cyber tools, mirroring CPEC land enclaves in Pakistan, while evading intervention stigma. The DPI technology, or Great Firewall, enables mass surveillance, internet censorship and digital repression. Aligned with GSI's interoperability, PSCs normalise trainers for rebel intel, freeing Junta forces for offensives as force multipliers, ensuring BRI continuity with plausible deniability. This pragmatic strategy secures economic corridors, refines PLA tactics akin to Russia's Wagner, counters Western sway and perpetuates repression, exacerbating human

rights abuses, mission creep risks and militarisation without overt costs, turning PSCs into threat enablers for dominance.⁴³

Beijing's expanding maritime intelligence ecosystem via the Coco Islands of Myanmar exemplifies China's strategic footprints under the GSI, securing CMEC/BRI dominance while threatening India's Eastern flank. Through Kyaukpyu Port, Beijing bypasses the Malacca Strait, channelling Middle East/Africa energy imports directly into the IOR as the western Maritime Silk Road (MSR) anchor. As per a media report (Oct 2025), satellite imagery reveals Junta-led construction on Great Coco, new hangars, radomes, barracks for 1,500 personnel and a runway extension forming a SIGINT node despite Naypyidaw's denials of Chinese presence. GSI's common security rhetoric masks the PLA ISR leap, enabling missile/submarine tracking from Andaman/Nicobar Command, complementing Ream (Cambodia), Gwadar, and Djibouti for Northern IOR triangulation. Deepening Junta's ties, particularly post-coup, ensure access amid civil war, positioning Coco as Beijing's "eyes and ears" on India's Bay of Bengal operations. This dual-use architecture will erode India's maritime superiority in the Bay of Bengal, fuel Sino-Indian rivalry and normalise China's non-interference while encircling Quad assets.⁴⁴

GCI and Chinese HUMINT in Myanmar

Xi Jinping launched the GCI on 15 Mar 2023, at the CPC Dialogue with World Political Parties High-Level Meeting, championing civilisational diversity while advancing peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom through China's state-centric governance.⁴⁵ Rejecting clash-of-civilisations rhetoric, GCI promotes mutual learning over Western universalism.⁴⁶ GCI exports Confucian-digital authoritarianism via rebranded erstwhile Confucius Institutes (CI), now the Chinese International Education Foundation since 2020⁴⁷ and World Internet Conference platforms, normalising cyber sovereignty and algorithmic control.⁴⁸ Digital Silk Road (DSR) infrastructure, i.e., Huawei 5G, AI surveillance, and data localisation, protects authoritarian regimes from Western sanctions, challenging U.S.-led liberal frameworks.⁴⁹ The Ministerial Meeting of Global Civilisations Dialogue (Beijing, 10-11 Jul 2025) secured endorsements from

600+ delegates across 140 countries under “Safeguarding Diversity of Human Civilisations”, notably penetrating Eastern Europe.⁵⁰ China’s Jun 2024 UNGA resolution establishing Jun 10 as International Day for Dialogue among Civilisations achieved unanimous adoption.⁵¹ By Dec 2022, China listed 43 items on UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage roster.⁵²

In June 2026, both countries agreed to deepen the traditional “Pauk-Phaw” friendship and build a community with a shared future. Both sides also agreed to strengthen cooperation in education, cultural tourism, health, youth, media, and human resources training to enhance mutual understanding between the two countries and support local livelihoods on both sides. To reinforce historical and cultural linkages, both sides agreed to ensure the proper construction and management of memorial facilities for the Chinese Expeditionary Force in Myanmar.⁵³

In Myanmar, GCI fuses Buddhist diplomacy with CMEC infrastructure, leveraging the 1.5 to 3 million ethnic Chinese diaspora as operational anchors across Tatmadaw, EAO and National Unity Government (NUG) territories.⁵⁴ ⁵⁵ Myanmar-China Friendship Association, along with partner groups, donated 19 ticals of gold foils, valued at K47.5 million, to the Shwedagon Pagoda on 19 Mar 2025 ⁵⁶ and funded Sagaing-Mandalay restoration (Apr 2025) along Muse-Mandalay rail routes.⁵⁷ In addition, the 2011 Buddha’s tooth relic exchange secured Lingguang-Shwedagon temple pacts.⁵⁸ China’s GCI multi-vector strategy in Myanmar through relic diplomacy securing monastic networks, cultural events embedding influencers and infrastructure normalising presence institutionalises United Front Work Department (UFWD) covert operations under academic-cultural cover, while systematically challenging Western normative hegemony through parallel civilisational architectures. China seeks to cultivate pro-China loyalty amid instability via its GCI in Myanmar, leveraging cultural diplomacy in CCs through Mandarin enrolment and fusing language training with BRI vocational programs for CMEC workers, focusing on mid-tier Junta and EAO elites. This soft power undermines cultural barriers, secures narrative dominance and feeds UFWD networks, synergising with GSI military alignments.

China's expanding GCI footprints in Myanmar are increasingly evident through cultural and linguistic integration along its borderlands, where Beijing leverages soft power in subtle yet strategic ways. As per the ORCA case study, China embeds its influence not through overt control, but via proxy governance in regions such as Kokang and parts of Shan State, where Mandarin is institutionalised in education, Chinese signage replaces local scripts and administrative practices mirror Chinese systems. These developments reflect a broader civilisational strategy in which cultural diplomacy operates alongside economic engagement to reshape local identities and loyalties. Expanding trade networks, cross-border commerce and the circulation of Chinese currency further integrate these regions into China's socio-economic orbit. While framed as developmental support, such measures gradually dilute the authority of the Myanmar state and foster long-term dependence on Beijing-linked institutions. This process of incremental "Sinicisation" exemplifies how China advances its *Pax Sinica* vision not through coercion alone, but by embedding cultural norms and governance practices that align frontier regions more closely with its strategic interests.⁵⁹

GGI and Chinese HUMINT in Myanmar

The GGI is China's fourth major and newest global initiative of this decade, forming part of a broader strategy to reshape international order in alignment with its power, norms and interests.⁶⁰ GGI was introduced by Jinping at the SCO Plus meeting in Tianjin on 01 Sep 2025, and it serves as a cornerstone of China's vision for a 'Community with a Shared Future for Mankind', completing a 4GIs quartet.⁶¹ The GGI methodically addresses the fundamental questions of global governance, 'by whom, how and for whom it is conducted', while reacting to the concerns of the international community and presenting itself as the correct alternative for tackling global challenges and the essential path to resolving the governance deficit.⁶² GGI sponsor five principles: sovereign equality for universal participation, rule of law for orderly systems, multilateralism for solidarity, a people-centred approach for inclusive outcomes and real results for efficient processes.⁶³ On 08 Mar 2026, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated that more than 150 countries and international organisations have expressed support for the GGI.⁶⁴

China strategically influences multilateral institutions to align them with its preferences, stifling opposition and promoting CCP perspectives.⁶⁵ A former UN staffer exposed Beijing's tactics for censoring sensitive issues, altering reports and marginalising human rights and democracy in UN forums.⁶⁶ As U.S. global influence declines under Trump's retrenchment policy, China fills the gap by penetrating existing organisations and launching new ones in emerging fields like AI, space and deep-sea mining. The GGI, framed as South-South cooperation, promotes Global South reliance, embeds intelligence networks, normalises Chinese standards and erodes Western norms alongside institutional accountability. In Oct 2021, UNSG António Guterres hailed China, marking its 50th year as a UNSC permanent member, as "an increasingly significant contributor and a major pillar of international cooperation".⁶⁷ A 24 Oct 2024 House Committee report exposed China's co-optation of the UN and WHO, including shirking obligations while advancing standards via Huawei and ZTE support.⁶⁸ Beijing also wields financial leverage and key personnel placements in UN organisations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Telecommunication Union and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (under-secretary-general post since 2007) to obstruct resolutions, raise sovereignty and development issues over liberal values and forge anti-Western alliances through aid initiatives.⁶⁹

In June 2026, China appreciated Myanmar's joining of the Group of Friends of Global Governance and the IOMed. Both sides advocated UN-centred multilateralism, a more representative global governance system and opposition to unilateralism, while Myanmar positively considered joining China's proposed World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization.⁷⁰ Earlier on 06 Sep 2025, Hlaing endorsed China's GGI in Chengdu and praised Jinping's vision as a counter to U.S. pressures while deepening bilateral ties.⁷¹ Myanmar's Union Minister, while attending a GGI Forum in Yangon on 17 Nov 2025, hosted by the Chinese Embassy, has commended the GGI as highly practical for promoting peace, prosperity and mutual respect for sovereignty in Myanmar.⁷² China has not only used their NGOs as observers during the rigged Dec 2025-Jan 2026 elections but was also the first to support Myanmar's Junta by calling the elections a democratic step, despite global rejection.⁷³

Conclusion: Myanmar as China's HUMINT Crucible

Myanmar's post-2021 coup chaos, territorial breakup, relentless airstrikes, mass displacement and the reported Junta's rigged 2026 elections have created power vacuums, thereby making a perfect environment for the implementation of China's 4GIs that represent a strategic evolution from BRI's physical infrastructure to intangible "software" dominance via norms, networks and narratives. The subtle Chinese HUMINT expansion without raising a red flag in the Bay of Bengal through 4GIs invariably weaponises Myanmar's instability through the "thousand grains of sand" model, leveraging the Chinese diaspora in Myanmar, CCs, Huawei surveillance grids and temple proxies for granular intelligence collection. Amid present governance voids, Beijing reframes Junta aid as democratic transition while embedding case officers in international forums, including the UN, through 4GIs. The boiling frog permeation erodes Myanmar's sovereignty, encircling India's NER, undermining ASEAN centrality and threatening Bay of Bengal access, thereby necessitating urgent Indian countermeasures.

Declaration

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ENDNOTES

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