



Open access Journal

International Journal of Emerging Trends in Science and TechnologyIC Value: 76.89 (Index Copernicus) Impact Factor: 4.219 DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.18535/ijetst/v4i8.32>

China and Central Asian Regional Reconstruction: “One Belt One Route”

Authors

Suraiya Nazeer¹¹PhD in the Department of Central of Central Asian Studies, University of Kashmir

Abstract:

The Chinese Silk Road is the Trans-Eurasian network of trade routes connecting East and Southeast Asia to Central Asia, India, Southwest Asia, Mediterranean, and Northern Europe. The Road flourished roughly from 100 BC to around 1450. The Road is a system of caravan roads that in Ancient Times and Middle Ages traversed Eurasia from Mediterranean to China. From historic times it flourished the development of trade and cultural relations between peoples and actors involved. The Silk Road acts as a symbol of openness, inclusiveness, cooperation and peace. It also acts as a place where the humanist, spiritual, cultural, artistic and technical exchanges take place. The One Belt and One Road program is a major strategic measures introduced by China in response to the emerging trends in Economic Globalization. China proposes a new approach of promoting worldwide economic prosperity and to benefiting other regions in terms of driving forward cross-regional economic integration through economic growth in China and Asia. In the Post Cold War Period, there are at least two reconstruction that are historically very significant in Eurasian continent, one is the implosion of Soviet Union, the other will be the “Belt and Road” initiative in China.

In this context the present study wants to explore the new project of Silk Route, challenges and prospects that china is facing in building its project. It is thus significant in analyzing the impact of the project to reconstruct regional interests and balance powers throughout the world especially Central Asia. The study will also focus on the following questions as what are the future prospects, will the neighbouring countries benefit from the initiative? And will China’s investment enrich the world?

Key words: ‘Balance of power’, ‘Challenges’, ‘Globalisation’, ‘Silk Route’, ‘Regional Interest’, ‘US Hegemony’

Significance

The initiative as put forth by the Chinese government in 2013 is an ambitious and far reaching project. The importance of the project is multidimensional. The project will help in improving social and economic structure of the major parts of the world. The project is also significant in the sense that it will bring in potential stability and peace in the region, as well as to the whole world. It will drive forward Regionalism in China and Asia.

Introduction

The countries of Central Asia are strategically important because of “Great Game” and are growing more as of “New Silk Road”ⁱ. The interests in the region have been on rise for

ⁱⁱRegionalism. ⁱⁱⁱThe region of Central Asia found itself at the heart of Eurasian continent^{iv}. The region Eurasia will cover all of the Europe and Asia, including the Middle East and Arab Peninsula.^v There are two incidents which would prove phenomenal in touring down the political barriers and help in economic integration of the region with the rest of the world. They are opening up of China to the rest of the world in the early 1980s particularly the introduction of ‘New Silk Route’ and the ‘Implosion of the Soviet Union’ in the early 1990s. With this Eurasian Region would enhance its Economic Globalisation that is advancing in a rapid pace in other parts of the world especially North. The indicators are shown in a number of ways as largest share of world trade takes place between Eurasian

Economies. Such kind of developments is of great importance to the Central Asian Region. At the time of Soviet Union the economic investment of Central Asia were mostly towards Moscow. The trend is changing now and the region is looking towards the China, South Asia, Europe and the Middle East to gain access to markets. Gone are the days when the countries in Central Asia found themselves in land locked position. The region is now more liked or is linking to the world's great and dynamic economies.^{vi}

Also, the collapse of Soviet Union puts the countries of Central Asia into an array of new challenges. The most important challenge among them was the challenge of establishing a system of effective and enduring interstate relations within the region itself, strengthening the stability and security of the Central Asian space as a whole, and the creation within this space of effective mechanisms for political and economic cooperation.^{vii}

The other reason may be withdrawal of NATO^{viii} forces from Afghanistan will reduce the influence of west particularly USA as a major hyper power in the region. The other players in the Great Game are China and Russia.^{ix} However, the Chinese policy in Central Asia is a part of global foreign policy strategy of the Peoples republic of China.^x Thus the greater rival for Russia in the region is China which is the main economic partner and most important investor for the Central Asian countries.^{xi}

Result Discussion

Thus concept of Regionalism, along with New Economic Globalization, is one of the most in the dominant trends determining development in the region.^{xiii} Regionalization tends to be most successful in countries with strong politico-military and techno-economic capabilities. This is clearly visible in the examples of Western Europe and East Asia. In the wealthy countries of Northern Europe, Regionalism is used for the opening of new markets and the strengthening of international labour market position. The trend is now moving fast in the Central Asian region with the introduction of 'One Belt One Route'.^{xiii}

A region is invariably an area embracing the territories of three or more states. These states are bound together by ties of common interests or geography. The Regionalism in contemporary world is one of the most interesting developments

in International Relations. The charter of United Nations recognise it and the Vandenberg Resolution, adopted United Nations Senate on 11 June, 1948 gave it a strong endorsement. In the words of Walter Lippman, 'the true constituent members of the International order of the culture are communities of states'. The phenomenon has reached to full development in Western Europe, but is also emerging in other continents as far example Central and South Asia.^{xiv}

As we know the fact that after the fall of Soviet Union, the importance of China in Central Asia raises. Thus for these newly emerging Central Asian countries, establishing the direct relations with Beijing was necessary with regard to the Chinese interests in Central Asia. We categorise it in phases. In the first half of the 1990s, Beijing concern was to sign democratisation treatise, demilitarisation the border and prevent the strengthening of Uygur Separatism. In the Second half of the 1990s and early years of the twenty-first century, its aim was to create a platform for discussion and mutual discovery, and to build a collective security framework through Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. From the years 2000 onwards China moved to establish itself vigorously on Central Asian Market.^{xv}

One Belt One Route

The Chinese Silk Road the trans-Eurasian network of trade routes connecting East and Southeast Asia to Central Asia, India, Southwest Asia, the Mediterranean, and Northern Europe. The Road flourished roughly from 100 BC to around 1450. The road is a system of caravan roads that in the Ancient Times and the Middle Ages traversed Eurasia from the Mediterranean to China. From historic times it flourished the development of trade and cultural relations between peoples and actors involved.^{xvi}

The Silk Road acts as a symbol of openness, inclusiveness, cooperation and peace. It acts as a place where the humanist, spiritual, cultural, artistic and technical exchanges take place. The "One Belt and One Road" program is a major strategic measure introduced by China in response to the emerging trends in economic globalization. China proposes a new approach of promoting worldwide economic prosperity and to benefiting other regions in terms of driving forward cross-regional economic integration through economic growth in China and Asia.^{xvii} The Road is a

system of caravan roads that in the Ancient Times and the Middle Ages traversed Eurasia from the Mediterranean to China. From historic times it flourished the development of trade and cultural relations between peoples and actors involved.

Historical Perspective

The Road flourished roughly from 100 BC to around 1450. In the nineteenth century what is now Xinjiang, to explore ancient sites along the Silk Roads, leading to many archaeological discoveries, numerous academic studies, and most of all, a renewed interest in the history of these routes. Today, many historic buildings and monuments still stand, marking the passage of the Silk Roads through caravanserais, ports and cities. However, the long-standing and ongoing legacy of this remarkable network is reflected in the many distinct but interconnected cultures, languages, customs and religions that have developed over millennia along these routes. The passage of merchants and travellers of many different nationalities resulted not only in commercial exchange but in a continuous and widespread process of cultural interaction. As such, from their early, exploratory origins, the Silk Roads developed to become a driving force in the formation of diverse societies across Eurasia and far beyond.^{xviii}

The New Silk Route as Regional Integrator

As we know this fact above that there are at least two reconstructions happened or happening in Eurasian continent which proved or will prove to be phenomenal one is the 'Disorganization of Soviet Union', the other will be the "Belt and Road" initiative in China. This 'Belt and Road' Initiative was first proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013. It is a trade and infrastructure network that includes the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime 'Silk Road'. Although the initiative was proposed in 2013 but the majority of the planning was done during 2014. It runs through the continents of Asia, Europe and Africa, connecting the vibrant East Asia economic circle at one end and the developed European Economic Circle at the other. The Belt also comprises other countries that all have huge potential for economic development.^{xix}

The 'Belt and Road' Initiative is an international strategy rather than a regional strategy. The goals

of the strategy are to coordinate an all-around opening of China to the world and promote further integration of the country into the global economy. The Silk Road economic belt is regarded as the most important factor of China towards neighbouring countries as Central Asia. The clear objective is to strengthen economic cooperation between Europe and Asia and to build a new model of global governance.^{xx}

The key factor for 'Belt and Road' Initiative is handling the diplomatic relations with neighbouring countries. Implementation of 'Belt and Road' Initiative is going to reconstruct regional interests and balance powers throughout the world especially Central Asia. Central Asia is a vastly complex area. The 'Belt and Road' Initiative will provide the possibilities of greater ties between China and Neighbouring Countries. As China's interest in rest of the exports has and will be largely focused on natural resources and military hardware. China also needs an easy access to Central Asian market. The 'New Silk Route' will provide impetus for this relationship to go forward.

Chinas Changing Role in Central Asia

The contemporary international relations is governed by the emergence of geopolitical tensions that started with the onset of Ukrainian Crisis which resulted the Crimean annexation to Russia and the imposition of economic sanctions on Russia by the western countries. All these things compel the Russia to Strengthen its Eastern Policy.^{xxi} In East the Central Asia is of specific geopolitical importance to Russia and the strategy which Moscow is applying is that it has emerging slowly and reluctantly with its new role in the Region. Besides Russia there are other powers like USA and China which are active in the region.^{xxii} Russia's external policy conception is based on the necessity to create a favourable international environment for the country's economic revival.^{xxiii} However, China as the number one trading partner in the Region that compels Russia to adjust its counterbalanced strategy in the region. Russia being over outmatched by China, China is a major player in the Region in the present context.^{xxiv} The countries in Central Asia face a number of challenges which includes a range of internal threats to stability, whether through weak and corrupt governments, divided societies, drug-trafficking and its corrosive effects

on state institutions, radicalised groups and widespread poverty.^{xxv} Besides the two countries as Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, Central Asia's weakest links: The former suffered in the 1990s Civil War^{xxvi}, while the latter went through two revolutions in the last decade alone.

Conclusion

While analysing the Central Asian Region also looking at the history there are two incidents which proved to be most important keeping in view the changing strategically relations are concerned. They are Disintegration of Soviet Union and emergence of One Belt One Route. Both these incidents help to enhance the economic Globalisation of the region. The New Silk Route will act as a symbol of openness, inclusiveness, cooperation and peace. It would also act as an impetus to enhance the regionalism in the region of Central Asia.

References

1. The "One Belt and One Road" program is a major strategic measure introduced by China in response to the emerging trends in economic globalization. China proposes a new approach of promoting worldwide economic prosperity and to benefiting other regions in terms of driving forward cross-regional economic integration through economic growth in China and Asia. Tim Summers, "China's 'New Silk Roads': Sub-National Regions and Networks of Global Political Economy", *Third World Quarterly*, Rutledge Taylor and Francis, Vol. 37, No. 9, 2016, pp.1629-1630
2. The phenomena of Regionalism reached to its peak in the twenty first century. The term Regionalism is an ideology or political movement it seeks to advance the causes of regions. We can understand the term by differentiating it into two different meanings. We can understand it at international level, regionalism refers to transnational cooperation to achieve a common goal or resolve a shared problem or it refers to a group of countries, such as Western Europe, the Western Balkans, or Southeast Asia, that are linked by geography, history or economic features. In other words the regionalism refers to a process in which sub-state actors become increasingly powerful and independent of the state: power devolves from the central state to regional governments within it. Also we can say that it refers to a territory that is located within, or sometimes across the borders of a nation state. Artatrana Gochhayat, *Regionalism and Sub-Regionalism: A Theoretical Framework with Special Reference to India*, *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, Vol. 8(1), 2014, p.10
3. Johannes Linn, *Central Asian Regional Integration and Cooperation: Reality or Mirage?*, EDB Eurasian Integration Yearbook, 2012, pp.96-98
4. Eurasia is a Region which is located Geographically in Europe and Asia. The Region has access to four oceans. The Eurasian stretches from Hinggan to the Carpathians, from South it is framed by the deserts belt and inaccessible Pamir, Tianshan and the Himalaya, from the north by the Arctic Ocean. Nataliya A. Vasilyeva, Maria L. Lagutina, *The Russian Project of Eurasian Integration: Geopolitical Prospects*, Russia: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, pp.83-84
5. Johannes Linn, *Central Asian Regional Integration and Cooperation: Reality or Mirage?*, EDB Eurasian Integration Yearbook 2012, available at <https://www.brookings.edu/.../central-asian-regional-integration-and-cooperation-reali...>, accessed on 21-08-2017

6. T. Delovarova, A. Davar, S. Asanov, and F. Kukeyeva , Regionalism and Regionalization in Central Asia, accessed on 9-7-2017, available at waset.org/publications/5987/regionalism-and-regionalization-in-central-asia
7. In the Post 2014 scenario the hope for peace was aroused when President Barak Obama declared the US and NATO troops would be withdrawn from Afghanistan, all the responsibilities included now lie on the Afghan national Army and Kabul Government. To some extent US achieved their objective in Afghanistan as Taliban insurgency is likely to be suppressed. S. V. Salahudin, *Militancy in Pakistan and Afghanistan: A Brief History of Causes and Effects*, Pentagon Press: New Delhi, 2012, p.161
8. Konrad Zasztowt , *The Kremlin's Strategy in Central Asia after the Ukraine Crisis*, Bulletin: The Polish Institute of International Affairs, no. 77, 2014, p.2
9. *Globalisation and Eurasia*, (ed.) Ajay Patnayak and Tulsiram, Knowledge World Publishers: New Delhi, 2010, p.446
10. Konrad Zasztowt , *The Kremlin's Strategy in Central Asia after the Ukraine Crisis*, p.2
11. T. Delovarova, A. Davar, S. Asanov, and F. Kukeyeva , Regionalism and Regionalization in Central Asia, available at waset.org/publications/5987/regionalism-and-regionalization-in-central-asia, accessed on 9-7-2017
12. Ibid Norman D. Palmer. Howard C. Perkins, *International Relations: The World Community in Transition*, AITBS Publishers and Distributors: USA, 20017, pp.558-559
13. Marlene Laruelle, Sebastien Peyrous, *Globalising Central Asia, Geopolitics and the Challenges of Economic Development*, DBS Imprints: India p.27
14. Alexander Cooley, *New Silk Route or Classic Developmental Cul-de-Sac? The Prospects and Challenges of China's OBOR Initiative* , Ponars Eurasia, 2015, pp.1-2
15. Wang Jun, *Six Principles of the "One Belt and One Road" Strategy, Asia's New Future: Towards a Community of Common Destiny* 2015, p.3
16. *The Silk Road. Road of Dialogue: The Past and the Present*, available at <https://icaren.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/e-culture.pdf>, accessed on 6-7-2017, pp.3-5
17. LIU Li-juan, *The Belt and Road Initiative Working Towards a Global Vision* , Journalism and Mass Communication, February 2016, Vol. 6, No. 2, p. 60
18. Wang Jun, *Six Principles of the "One Belt and One Road" Strategy, Asia's New Future: Towards a Community of Common Destiny*, 2015, p.3
19. Simona Moagăr-Poladian, Andreea Drăgoi, *Crimean Crisis Impact on International Economy: Risks and Global Threats*, *Procedia Economics and Finance*, Volume 22, 2015, pp.452-454
20. Craig Oliphant, *Ideas for a fairer world FPC Briefing: Russia's Changing Role in Central Asia - The Post Ukraine Context, and Implications*, The Foreign Policy Centre, available at

<https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/192183/1695.pdf>, accessed on 9-7-2017

21. Ali Banuazzi and Myron Weiner,(ed.),The Geopolitics of Central Asia and its borderlands, Great Britain: Indiana University Press ,p.235
22. Craig Oliphant, Ideas for a fairer world FPC Briefing: Russia's changing role in Central Asia - the post Ukraine context, and implications ,The Foreign Policy Centre, available at <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/192183/1695.pdf>, accessed on 9-7-2017
23. Ali Banuazzi and Myron Weiner,(ed.),The Geopolitics of Central Asia and its borderlands,Indiana University Press :Great Britan,p.235
24. The impact of the civil war on Tajikistan was enormous and its consequences will continue to be felt for a very long time. This situation has a strong impact on gender relations in the Tajik society. The gender gap widened in all spheres of life – economic, political, cultural, family. During the armed conflict in Tajikistan (1992-1994) many women lost male relatives, i.e. protectors and breadwinners. Others saw their husbands become refugees and labour migrants. These women were forced to take up the burden of keeping their households going. Women started searching additional sources of income since their husbands were either in armed groups or refugees, or had no opportunity to move about freely because of the ongoing armed conflict; Alla Kuvatova, “Gender Issues in Tajikistan: Consequences and Impact of the Civil War,” Geneva: Graduate Institute, 2005, pp. 129-133.
25. In the contemporary transition the US and NATO forces drawdown not completely. However, the process of security transition

from the West, to Afghanistan seems to be irreversible. The two factions continue their operations making war unsustainable and unavailable for the west, Vishal Chandra, *The Unfinished War in Afghanistan*, New Delhi, Pentagon Press,2015,p.1