

How China and the International Community Can Jointly Promote the Construction of “the Belt and Road”

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In September 2013, Xi Jinping, the President of China, systematically expounded China's "Silk Road Economic Belt" strategic scenario in a speech delivered at Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan. In October 2013, during his visit to Indonesia, Xi Jinping put forward an initiative for building a "21st Century Maritime Silk Road". The above two initiatives are known jointly as "the Belt and Road Initiative". For China, the Belt and Road Initiative manifests the need to broaden and deepen its opening-up process, in a continuing effort to match with the goals of "two 'one hundred years' working persistently to improve the external environment and the world situation. For Asia, the Belt and Road Initiative comes from Asia, will rely on Asia, and benefit Asia, with connectivity expanding the common interests of Asian countries. For countries along the Belt and Road, the Initiative will promote and speed up economic prosperity and regional economic cooperation, and strengthen exchanges and mutual learning among different civilizations. For the world, the Belt and Road Initiative is a great cause, strengthening mutually beneficial cooperation between China and Asia, Europe, Africa and other countries, to promote peace and development of the world, and to benefit the people around the world.²

Since its introduction, the Belt and Road Initiative has received widespread attention in the international community, stimulating official and scholarly speculation and commentary and judgments from foreign powers and neighboring countries. Judging from the current state of international public opinion and policy research, there are question marks surrounding the initiative from beyond the region. While attitudes and actions from external powers, particularly the US, may constitute a negative factor, major countries along the Belt and Road express

understanding and agreement for the initiative more than suspicion and opposition. Therefore, there is a good overall foundation for the implementation of the strategy.

As the Belt and Road is not a unilateral Chinese strategy, but involves the participation and interests of many countries, China must actively communicate and coordinate with the international community to jointly promote the Belt and Road construction.

First, to communicate and coordinate:

China should take advantage of the Boao Forum for Asia, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the APEC summit, the BRICS summit, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, the G20 summit and other international occasions to fully consult and communicate with different countries on the construction of the Belt and Road.

While neighboring countries will be widely concerned in the Belt and Road construction, they may have different understandings of Chinese strategic intent. Therefore, China should study countries along the Belt and Road, maintain communication with them, acquire a deep understanding of their views and ideas, and work to resolve their doubts. Only as China and the relevant countries develop a growing consensus, can the construction of the Belt and Road successfully take off. China should seek to promote the recognition among these countries that the Belt and Road construction is not a solo, but a chorus between China and them. The Belt and Road is the route to promoting common development and achieving win-win cooperation and common prosperity for the countries along the Belt and Road, and the way to improve understanding and trust



1 A moderately prosperous society by 2020, ahead of the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in 2021, and by 2049, the 100th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the achievement of a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious

2 Chahar Society: "Common Modernization: essential characteristics of 'One Belt One Road' initiative".

and strengthen friendship and peace by all round communication; its purpose is to build a community of interest, destiny and responsibility based on mutual trust, economic integration and cultural inclusiveness.

Before China's Belt and Road initiative, a number of important regional players and external powers have promoted some overall regional or local development strategies or plans, for example, Japan's "Silk Road Diplomacy" concept of 1997, the United States "New Silk Road" program in 2011, Russia's promotion of Eurasian integration, and the EU's work to advance cooperation and assistance for countries from Central & Eastern Europe and Central Asia. China should, on the one hand, interpret the Belt and Road initiative fully, so that it is clear to all that China's initiative does "not intend to replace the existing regional cooperation mechanisms and initiatives, but to promote development strategy docking, and the complementary advantages of the countries along the Belt and Road on the current basis". On the other hand, in the Belt and Road design process, China should fully absorb and learn the advantages of the existing plans or programs and supplement them in important areas that have been overlooked. In advocacy and implementation of the Belt and Road initiative, priority should be given to neglected areas in the existing supply of public goods, or to meeting incremental demand.

Second, to promote together:

For the countries along the Belt and Road, the initiative should not be an empty slogan, but consist of tangible practical initiatives, bringing tangible benefits to them. Doubts from potential partners in the region arise to a considerable extent from lack of understanding of the specific policies developed for the initiative, and lack of confidence in the specific measures to be implemented. In order to allay these concerns, China and the countries along the Belt and Road should actively take advantage of existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation mechanisms to consult and to promote the Belt and Road construction

on an equal basis, step by step. On the one hand, to strengthen bilateral cooperation, China can carry out multi-level, multi-channel communications and consultations, promoting the comprehensive development of bilateral relations. On the other hand, China can work to strengthen the role of multilateral cooperation mechanisms, while continuing to play a constructive role in relevant international forums, exhibitions and other platforms in countries along the regional and sub-regional pathways of the initiative. On the concrete realization of the initiative, China should follow the "three-joint principle", or "jointly consult, jointly build and jointly share", that is to jointly consult on policies, jointly promote projects, jointly share the construction results. In this mode, China should play a pro-active role, aiming for early results from the cooperation mechanism and in project innovation, thus advancing the win-win development agenda, enhancing mutual trust and cohesion among peoples and laying a solid foundation for the development of the five major goals of the initiative, i.e. policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-to-people bonds.

For countries and regions outside the route, the Belt and Road initiative is not closed, but open and inclusive. The countries of the Belt and Road are not limited to the scope of the ancient Silk Road. Every country and international and regional organization can participate, and contribute to results that benefit the wider region. Meanwhile, China should strengthen cooperation with the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, other multilateral development banks and the development finance institutions of every country, to fully implement the plans of the Belt and Road in infrastructure development, trade integration, human resources and administrative capacity building, monetary and financial safety nets, etc., and to continually promote and reinforce the major pillars on which the construction of the initiative is founded.



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