

The Development of the “One Belt and One Road” and Its Impacts on China-U.S. Relations

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In 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping has taken the initiatives of promoting the “One Belt and One Road”. The “One Belt” refers to the Silk Road Economic Belt, and “One Road” to the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The “One Belt and One Road” has become one important part of China’s strategy of domestic economic and social development, as well as one important part of China’s foreign strategy.

The “One Belt and One Road” Initiatives: Positive and Constructive

The Silk Road connected China and Europe from around 100 B.C., while the Maritime Silk Road was used by Chinese merchants and merchants of other countries to move silk, ceramics and tea from China to overseas markets.

The One Belt will improve traffic connectivity so as to open the strategic regional thoroughfare from the Pacific Ocean to the Baltic Sea, and gradually move toward the set-up of a transportation network that connects Eastern, Western and Southern Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

The One Belt boosts a market of 3-billion population, which is unparalleled both in scale and potential. China's proposal of building the

One Belt, based on the idea of common development and prosperity, and aiming to better connect the Asian and European markets, will enrich the idea of the Silk Road with a new meaning, and benefit all the people along the Belt. China's One Belt and One Road initiatives involve several cultures and 63 percent of the world's population.

The One Road will cover more than 20 countries and regions that share a broad consensus on enhancing exchanges and friendship, and promoting development, safety and stability within the region and beyond. The ancient Maritime Silk Road was developed under favorable political and economic backgrounds and was the result of cooperative efforts from ancestors of both the East and West. The One Road initiative covers countries and regions with a total population of 4.4 billion and a total economic volume of US\$21 trillion, 63 percent and 29 percent respectively of the world's total.

Principles of the “One Belt and One Road” Initiatives

There are three principles of the “One Belt and One Road”: concertation, co-construction and sharing.

China's proposal to build the One Road is aimed at exploring the unique values and concepts of the ancient road, enriching it with new meaning for the present era and actively developing economic partnerships with countries situated along the route. Specifically, the proposal seeks to further integrate current cooperation in order to achieve positive effects.

The One Road will further bring together the "One Belt," the "Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor" and the "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor", which together connect Europe and Asia. Such connections will greatly enhance China and other countries' abilities to develop economically while limiting external risks.

The One Road will also enhance cooperation in non-traditional security while maintaining maritime security. The One Road has already received positive response and support from many relevant countries.

Both the One Belt and the One Road will reach Europe, including Germany. So the "One Belt and One Road" will have significant impacts on China-European Relationship.

The One Road will boost regional prosperity and will promote development of the countries along the route and boost regional prosperity. It will exert an important influence on the economic development of Asia.

The initiative links countries along the Road economically and culturally. The countries could share resources and achievements in trade, which will make Asian economy even more dynamic.

China has played a positive role in promoting global economic growth. As a major developing country, China has continuously improved its international communication and cooperation skills, and attaches more importance to interdependence in its external economic activities.

Equality and mutual benefit,

interdependence and common prosperity are the starting point of China's One Road initiative. The 21st century is a maritime century and China's One Road initiative shows its readiness to conduct peaceful cooperation with other countries in developing the oceans.

It is an inevitable choice for the world to build a platform for win-win cooperation under the current trend. The One Road provides the Asia-Pacific countries with an opportunity to strengthen dialogue and coordination in a bid to maximize common interests.

The One Road initiative fully demonstrates China's sincerity to strengthen cooperation with ASEAN countries to boost connectivity and set up a regional financial mechanism.

The initiative is an adjustment and upgrade of the current regional cooperation mechanism, which will create a whole greater than segments.

Guidelines of the "One Belt and One Road"

There are five guidelines of the "One Belt and One Road": Policy communication, Facilities connectivity, Unimpeded Trade, Financial integration, and Connected popular feelings.

The proposals to build the One Belt and One Road are initiated by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013. The former is to be established along the ancient Silk Road trade route, stretching to China's northwest from its coastal area via Central Asia, the Middle East and on to Europe, while the later will run through the country's south to Southeast Asia.

The proposal put forward by Chinese President Xi Jinping to rejuvenate the ancient trade route reflects China's earnestness to spur regional growth and share development opportunities with neighbors and far-away partners as well.

China and other countries should have concerted efforts in the "One Belt and One

Road” initiatives, which will stimulate economic potential of developing countries and boost China-EU ties. China's Silk Road strategy draws interest from over 50 countries. China pitches for closer neighborhood, growth and stability by “One Belt and One Road” initiatives. ASEAN welcomes China's new Maritime Silk Road initiative. Strengthening economic ties along the two routes are an opportunity for the country to push forward opening up and maintain economic advances.

With its primary function as a trade route, the One Road will promote common development of the region and boost Asia's role as an important and sustainable engine for the growth of global economy, which entails hardware improvements crucial for the economic upgrade.

More than 600 years after Zheng He made the blueprint for the modern Maritime Silk Road (MSR), trade between China and Kenya continues to expand.

China is currently constructing a standard gauge rail line that will better regional connectivity and build upon Zheng He's footprint further to link Mombasa with Kenya's capital Nairobi.

It is obvious that the One Road unleashes a windfall for African countries in terms of new markets for products, transfer of technology and skills as well as easier mobility.

The One Road does not forget Africa. It provides a historical chance for countries along the route. But it is not China's business alone. It needs cooperation. Win-win situation also means do-do situation.

The “One Belt and One Road” is not Reaction to U.S. Pivot to Asia

Rather than seeking regional dominance, China's plans to build an East-West trade network across the Asian continent are pacifist in nature because of their inclusiveness and aiming at mutual benefit.

Western media outlets have portrayed the proposals as a counterweight to the U.S. "Pivot to Asia" strategy of rebalancing its resources towards the Asia-Pacific. But they should note the historical episodes related to the Silk Road, and the planned network's forebear.

Admiral Zheng He and his fleet had seven voyages overseas, the longest of which took them to the eastern African coast over the equator. On these expeditions, Zheng He carried with him neither guns nor gun-powder but porcelain, silk and tea.

As an effort to revive the ancient routes of peace and exchange that the two luminaries explored, the "One Belt" and the "One Road" initiatives -- do not challenge the fronts of Washington's trademark policy, which is widely seen as an effort to ensure U.S. hegemony and security interests unchallenged in the region.

However, the United States plans to deploy 60 percent of its fleet in the Pacific, and equip the Pacific Command with the most cutting-edge capabilities by 2020, in addition to increasing its diplomatic and economic resources in the region.

Instead of seeking to establish an enlarged military presence that is likely to complicate the regional security situation, China's proposals are focused on infrastructure, trade and economic cooperation.

That's why the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, founded to finance infrastructure construction and promote regional interconnections, is popular among countries along the Silk Road routes, with the number of founding members rising to 26 since October 2014.

In addition, China will contribute US\$40 billion to set up the Silk Road Fund, which will be used to help projects related to connectivity for countries along the routes.

As a developing nation coping with the new reality of slower economic growth, the vision proposed by Chinese President Xi

Jinping in 2013 is also dedicated to facilitating the economic development of China's less developed western provinces and regions, which border many Asian neighbors along the Silk Road.

More importantly, the benefits of the One Belt and One Road will go beyond China and its Asian neighbors. As evidenced by the Venetian merchant and traveler Marco Polo, who reached China by the route, the initiatives will boost people-to-people exchange and understanding between East and West.

When considering these factors, the logic of linking the initiatives with the U.S. strategy of maintaining its influence in Asia is untenable.

With China laying bear its concepts and intentions of win-win development, common prosperity and cultural inclusiveness in the initiatives, it is believed that the project will also be helpful in solving disputes on the much-hyped "troubled water."

What's more important is the benefits do not stop there. More frequent exchanges of people, commodities and ideas will lead to better understanding between trading partners, as proven by the original Silk Road that spans across Asia, Africa and Europe.

What China seeks is not regional domination but win-win situation, not confrontation but cooperation, not dominance but peaceful co-existence.

China and the United States should cooperate in the "One Belt and One Road"

The "One Belt and One Road" has become one important part of China's foreign strategy.

Both the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road have will have significant inclusiveness and impacts on China-U.S. Relationship.

There are four major features in current China-U.S. Relationship:

- * Many common interests and lots of differences;
- * Tenacity and fragility;
- * Cooperation and competition;
- * Driven by outside factors (externally) and inner factors (domestically).

To maintain a productive and creative China-U.S. Relationship has been beneficial for the development and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and the world at large. The two countries should deepen mutual trust and support each other to safeguard regional stability. They should boost cultural, technological and educational exchanges.

If China and the United States have cooperation in order to push the One Belt and One Road initiatives to go smoothly, it will benefit both sides when the two nations aim at building a new type of major-country relationship. The "One Belt and One Road" can:

- * Promote trade and economic exchanges among China, the United States and the countries concerned;
- * Inspire mutual culture exchanges between China and the United States; and
- * Facilitate cooperation in non-traditional security field between the two countries