

THE UZBEK-TURKISH VISION OF THE SILK ROAD IN THE CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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Abstract: *Turkey's Silk Road Initiative, which was launched in 2008 at the "International Forum on the Role of Customs Administration in Facilitating and Promoting Trade among Silk Road Countries" in Antalya, Turkey. The Antalya forum focused on the simplification of border crossing procedures among Silk Road countries. Seventeen Silk Road countries. According to the former Turkish Minister of Customs and Trade Hayati Yazici – "...the Silk Road will become one of the most important economic routes of the global economy, transporting large amounts of goods from Central Asia to Europe and vice versa.."*

The Marmara Group (<http://www.marmaragrubu.org/economic-summits>) debated the New Silk Road initiative of China at the 18th Eurasia Economy Summit organized in Istanbul on April 7 2015, with 44 countries participating.

Turkey is believed that the Silk Road initiatives will enable to upgrade Uzbekistan-East Asia-Turkish cooperation and bring more economic opportunities and trade links for the Turkish people, improve their living standards and boost the country's economic growth.

Uzbekistan is the major and richest market for Turkey. Within this perspective the China, Central Asia, ASEAN and Turkey collaboration initiated the founding of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to finance the infrastructure. The bank was functional in October in 2015, and Turkey is among its founding members. It is the top of the agenda in order to revitalize the ancient Silk Road.

Keywords: *Turkey, Silk Road, Asia, Uzbekistan, Eurasia, Central Asia, China.*

INTRODUCTION.

The Great Silk Road is one of the examples of long-term mutually beneficial cooperation in economic, political, cultural and other spheres between countries and peoples with different religious and ethnic traditions in the history of ancient civilizations of the world. In ancient times, some major trade routes were formed, such as the Salt Road, which passed through the African continent, mainly through the Sahara Desert. Among these routes, the most important and famous in the world was

the Great Silk Road, which stretched from the shores of the Atlantic Ocean to the shores of the Pacific Ocean, crossing the entire Asian continent and connecting the Mediterranean countries with the Central Asia to Far East in antiquity and the early middle Ages. The Great Silk Road is not simply a product of the overall economic and trade development of countries along the line. For many millennia, it has constantly served to bring different peoples together, exchange ideas and knowledge, mutual enrichment of languages and cultures, promoting broad cultural interaction and exchange between the peoples of the East and West, making an indelible contribution to the history of human civilization.

The ancient Central Asian silk routes laid out by the Timurid empire (*Turko barlos* tribe's leader Amir Temur and the Timurids being in-laws of the line of Genghis Khan, founder of the Mongol Empire. Members of the Timurid dynasty had established two significant empires in history, the Timurid Empire (1370-1507) based in Central Asia, Afghanistan, Persia, and the *Baburid* Empire (1526-1857) based in the Indian subcontinent) that constituted the ancient silk road. Rather than track through Russia, most would go below the Caspian and Black seas to reach Turkey and Europe.

Until now, there was no generalized study, which would be comprehensively considered diplomatic relations of the Chinese Qing dynasty in the context of their interaction with neighboring Central Asian people by the way that the Central Asia's Sinology in relatively poorly studied of the historical period of XIIIth, XIXth-XXth century. Lots of "white spots" and remains in the study of foreign policy of Chinese Qing Empire with Kashgar roads that the trades linked with Uzbek khanates/states and Turkey

Although currently published - mainly in Chinese - a significant number of general sketches of the Russian-Chinese, Japanese-Chinese relations, the fundamental scientific history of this relationship, supported by all available sources, to be written. Since it took almost forty years, and during that time was released a number of books in the West, Japan and China, less in Uzbekistan.

METHODOLOGY.

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countries. According to the former Turkish Minister of Customs and Trade Hayati Yazici, the Silk Road will become one of the most important economic routes of the global economy, transporting large amounts of goods from Central Asia to Europe and vice versa

In Turkey, the Marmara Group Strategic and Social Research Foundation is closely monitoring the Silk Road initiative. The Marmara Group debated the New Silk Road initiative of China at the 18th Eurasia Economy Summit organized in Istanbul on April 7 2015, with 44 countries participating.

LITERATURE REVIEW.

Today's existing literatures on the subject is characterized by two features in common: Books are either too specific, cover specific "narrow" period or "narrow" issue, or written too popular, but it does not cover of the Central Asian-Turkey-China relations as a whole. To date, there are not any comprehensive analytical study of the relationship between the regions. At the same time, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the scientific revolution introduced new East Asian written sources, especially Japan and Chinese sources, and various domestic archives. All this seems to be implicitly suggested the need to develop in this area of the new integrated conceptual approach to the study of Central Asia and West Asia, on the one hand, requires a multifaceted synthesis of facts and data, and the other - a higher level of conceptualization.

Turkish researchers note that Turkey is seeking to improve relations with Uzbekistan and China through the Silk Road, considering this as an alternative option for its development. In particular, E. Günay explores in one of his articles the problems and prospects for the integration of the BRI and the Turkish "Central Corridor" project (Günay, 2019: 157–175). A. Altai writes that Turkey's reconciliation with China does not mean its distance from the West. Turkey wants to diversify its economic relations rather than replace the West with China (Altay ,2020:).

An inevitable topic for Turkish scholars when studying Turkish views on relations with China through the Silk Road or BRI remains the history of the Uyghurs from ancient times to the present. Some Turkish authors argue that the Uyghur issue is not an internal matter of China and that Turkey cannot remain silent about human rights violations in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China (Karaca R. K., 2007, 219–259; Günay B., 2005, 110–112).

If we look to Chinese scholarly work, then we can understand that the China's Marxism is leading to the fact that they have focused a studying the problems of the peasantry and the workers' uprising, and the role of "national minorities", i.e. non-Chinese people (*Mongols, Tibetans, Uighurs and others*) inhabiting in the territory of the country. In the second half of the XXth century the group of historians has used the

"truthfulness notes Qing Dynasty", the concept of which is identical to the concept of official annals. However, in recent two decades, Chinese scientists were forced to revise their own history. For example, in the pages of the Chinese editions began to appear evaluation Silk Road policy opposite mentioned above.

Western historiography learn new methods, which sought to apply to the history of China. Individual moments that characterize certain features of the foreign policy of Turkey in respect of neighboring countries, noted American historians for example George Fairbank is not quite right in asserting that "the Chinese world order" could exist only for the Chinese side. Is it possible to deny that the "Chinese world order" objectively existed in many of the neighboring countries of China and quite a long time but for us the most close and interesting assertion J. Fairbank that the Chinese point of view of the surrounding country "was justified, and cultural motifs oriented policy.

Unlike Chinese colleagues, Turkish scholars generally believe that Chinese scientists have difficulty in applying methodological approaches in their studies and are based on the official Chinese version of events (as in the study of Central Asia-China relations through the Silk Road - the official imperial historiography), thereby keeping the same approach to the history that has been practiced in China since ancient time. In accordance with this approach, Source books selects only those factors, which correspond to the "core" of the concept, and all other materials are rejected or ignored as unreliable

However, none of above-mentioned works were not directly studied of "Sinocentrism" as a basis for foreign policy of the China in the late XIXth and first quarter of the XXth century.

RESULTS.

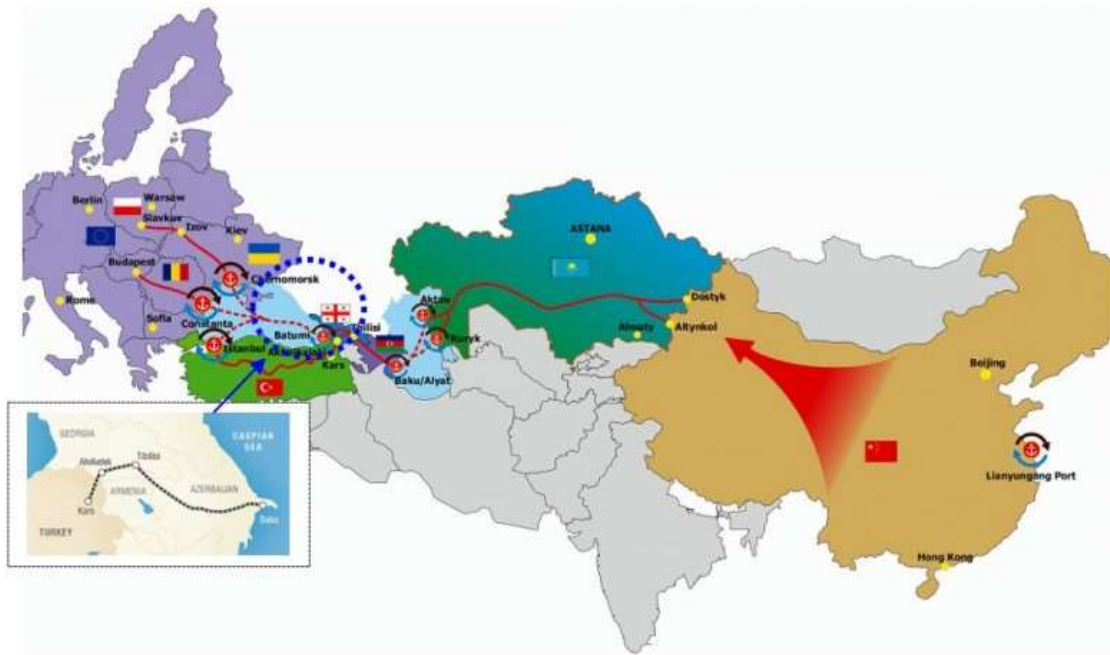
In the middle ages, Silk Road started from the city of Xi'an (Xi'an (Chinese: 西安), formerly romanized as Sian, is the capital of Shaanxi province), located in the northwest of China passing through Turkic Xingjian (Currently located in the northwestern border of China, Xinjiang (Full Name: "Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region") is the largest province in China), Ferghana valley (It used to be called ferghana, during the Kushan empire. The ancient kingdom referred to as Dayuan. Thus, the area has traditionally been ethnically diverse, with substantial Uzbek, Tajik, and Kyrgyz populations which tend to live in large pockets rather than within easily discernible borders. The area is also home to significant Russian, Kashgarian, Kipchak, Bukharan Jew, and Romani minorities), Samarkand (The historic town of Samarkand, located in a large oasis in the valley of the Zerafshan River, in the north-eastern region of Uzbekistan, is considered the crossroads of world cultures with a history of over two and a half millennia), Bukhara (The Historic Centre of Bukhara, situated on the Silk Roads, is more than two thousand years old. It is one of the best

examples of well-preserved Islamic cities of Central Asia. Today Bukhara viloyat is one of the region of the Republic of Uzbekistan), Merv (The Park “Ancient Merv” is the oldest and most completely preserved of the oasis cities along the Silk Roads in Central Asia. It is located in the territory of Mary velayat of Turkmenistan) regions across mountains, deserts and following Persian (Current territory of Iran) multiple routes on its path to Anatolia Turkey. It ended in Europe going through Thrace (Thrace is a historical and geographic area in southeast Europe, centered on the modern borders of Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey). Silk Road branched into two arms in Iran, one to Latakia of Syria and the other to Anatolia.

Turkey, according Davutoglu (Oğuzlu, Türk Dış Politikasında Davutoğlu Dönemi. URL:

http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/trUploads/Yazilar/Dosyalar/2009912_tar%C4%B1k.makint.pdf), is unique because of location at the crossroads of regions of Europe and Asia and traditions inherited from the Ottoman Empire. It is obvious that Turkey - "central country", located in the heart of Eurasia and having multiple identities. Turkey is again taking the position as a key investment and cooperation partner that will help bridge East and West. Located in both Asia and Europe, Turkey has long held a unique role as a cultural and economic center. During the times of the ancient silk road, trade flourished between continents and across regions, with Turkey serving as the central exchange post.

Today Turkey foreign policy welcomes the initiative of China to establish the Silk Road Economic Belt that will strengthen historical ties of countries on the historical Silk Road in political, transportation, commercial, financial, and civic society areas as a regional economic integration model, since such an initiative will bring prosperity to the people of these countries (Chinese Business Review, 2014: 736). Turkey hope more benefit through the Silk Road Initiatives. Ankara and Beijing have proclaimed as the most important task - for short years to triple the turnover, bringing it to 2020 to 100 billion US dollars (<http://www.iimes.ru/rus/sat/2010/28-11-10.htm>). Meanwhile, Turkey undertook a proactive policy, later known as “Middle Corridor Initiative,” aiming to set up a transport route from the Anatolia to Central Asia and China (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018:). With the completion of the Baku–Tbilisi–Kars railway (BTK) railway link, Turkey has achieved in connecting its national railways to the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR) — an important part of the China-Turkey-Europe transit corridor — extending from the Caspian Sea to Central Asia and China.



Source: Compiled from TITR Association and Azerbaijan State News Agency maps.

Turkish Minister of Economy highlights Turkey's interest in shaping the future of Eurasia together with the other participating countries. Turkey has often stressed the importance of its historic, ethnic, linguistic and cultural ties with Central Asia and in many cases these ties helped advance significant multilateral projects between Turkey and Central Asian republics.

Following the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (December 26, 1991) independent republics have been established, e.g. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. These republics are members of United Nations and also retain close links with Russia and form multilateral organizations such as the *Union State*, the *Eurasian Customs Union*, and *Eurasian Economic Union*, except Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan economy mainly relies on commodity production including cotton, natural silk, gold, uranium and natural gas. *Aral Sea* and *Fergana Valley* make Uzbekistan unique. Home market capacity with a population of 31 million creates the largest consumption group in the region. Geographically has an important place in Central Asia. The country, which was situated on the Silk Road, lost its importance in international trade and logistics with the opening of *Suez Canal*.

German geographer *Ferdinand von Richthofen* coined the term in 1877 for the ancient overland trade route through Central Asia. Since then, many routes that linked China to the outside world have been called "*Silk Roads*" or "*Silk Routes*" despite the fact that silk was neither the earliest nor the most commonly traded commodity on any of these routes.

The New Silk Road concept was seriously taken into consideration in the 1990s after the Soviet Union's collapse (Gan Junxian, 2010: 66)

For Turkey is a modality of projecting its influence into Central Asia. For Russia, «Silk Road» represents the Trans-Siberian. Finally, for China, «Silk Road» although it is presented as a bridge to Turkey, in reality, it is a power platform into Eurasia.

It is the European Union's intention, through TRACECA, through diversify of transport rout to reduce dependence on Russia. China's main targets is Europe, and it uses Turkey, Central Asia or Russia just as means of transit, without a special interest, except a certain stability and security.

CONCLUSION.

Turkey is believed that the Silk Road initiatives will enable to upgrade East Asia, Central Asia-Turkish cooperation and bring more economic opportunities and trade links for the Turkish people, improve their living standards and boost the country's economic growth.

The successful development of continental trade requires close and effective coordination through Silk Road program between the Turkey and the transit countries of Central Asia. Such coordination must be based on their common interests as defined through careful analyses by both sides and by close consultation between them. Rather than define their common interests narrowly in terms of trade, the two sides should extend the inquiry into all matters that will be affected by the opening of Eurasian land corridors along historical Silk Road, including nearly all sectors of their economies, diversification, governmental institutions, national and regional security, and demography.

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