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## “One Belt, One Road” initiative: a comparative analysis of the project implementation in the Central Asian countries

**Abstract.** *The idea of connecting Europe and Asia by transcontinental routes is not new. The term «New Silk Road» has repeatedly been heard from the Middle East, Europe, and the United States. But only China was able to offer specific frameworks for financing an abstract idea. Nine years have passed since the presentation of the “One Belt, One Road” strategy by Chinese President Xi Jinping.*

*This article is aimed at conducting a comparative analysis of the project results in the countries of Central Asia.*

*The analysis of the results allows us to say with a great deal of optimism that participation in the “One Belt, One Road” initiative contributes to the development of both continental ties in general and noticeable dynamics in the Central Asian region in particular.*

*The results are not equal and are uneven. Some countries, such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have been very successful in implementing projects under the initiative. In Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, progress is slower due to political and national specifics. Nonetheless, there have been certain results. The globalization and integration of transport infrastructure has already brought significant benefits in many areas of industry and the economy, even those not directly related to the OBOR projects.*

**Keywords:** *Central Asia, «One Belt, One Road» initiative, globalization, regionalization, development of trade relations in Eurasia, international transport corridors.*

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### Introduction

The new strategy known as the “Silk Road Economic Belt” is the driver of many economic growth processes in Central Asia. Despite the understandable differences between the participating countries in the construction volume, technical and scientific capabilities, and the availability of labor resources, even now in the analytical reports of the World Bank

and other fairly authoritative sources, there is an unambiguously positive trend in all areas of economic development of the Central Asian countries.

Despite the differences in approaches and assessments of the PRC initiative by Asian and European countries, common points have been formulated that define the cooperation principles for the countries participating in the initiative. There are only five points.

1. Coordination of regional development plans and principles of economic policy, as well as joint planning of large projects.

2. Formation of a single network of transport corridors uniting Asia, Europe and Africa, and creation of infrastructure for railways and roads, seaports, airports, transportation of energy resources.

3. Elimination of physical and non-physical barriers in trade, and simplification of customs and border procedures.

4. Integration of finance, increasing the coverage and scope of currency swaps.

5. Cooperation in the humanitarian sphere – particularly in the development of interstate student exchange, tourism, and with contacts in the field of health and non-governmental organizations [1].

The initiative is financed by the Silk Road Fund established in 2014, with investment opportunities of \$40 billion (for 2014). A significant number of investments have been made by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (comprised of 87 member states as of 2019). According to the forecasts of the bank's specialists, by 2022 investments in the project may reach \$700 billion.

In March 2016, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution No. 2344, which called on the entire international community to strengthen the processes of regional economic cooperation by participating in the construction of the «One Belt, One Road» (OBOR) project.

In October 2017, at the 19th Congress of the CPC in Beijing, a resolution on amendments to the Charter of the CPC was adopted, according to which the Belt and Road Initiative was included in the text of the Charter. The consolidation of the foreign policy initiative in the main document of the Communist Party of the PRC may mean that there has been a transition from ambitious rhetoric to the operational implementation of the program[2].

All these official confirmations of the value and broad prospects of the initiative, of course, contributed to the popularization of the projects planned under the OBOR and attract additional investors.

The main projects that are announced for the Central Asian region as a whole are the following;

1) The China-Central Asia pipeline with a capacity of about 100 billion m<sup>3</sup>. The main branches will pass through the territory of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan;

2) The Eurasian Land Bridge, otherwise referred to as the «New Eurasian Continental Bridge» or the «Second Land Bridge» (the first being the Trans-Siberian Railway). This railway corridor extends from the port of Lianyungang (PRC) through Mongolia and Kazakhstan to Russia, and further to Poland and Germany. This project will significantly reduce the time needed for transportation of goods;

3) The China-Central Asia-Western Asia Corridor. This railway skirts the China-Kazakhstan railway near the capital of Kazakhstan, Astana, and heads southwest to Iran through Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan;

4) The Khorgos-Aktau Railway – an additional trans-Kazakhstani railway line from the port of Aktau to the Khorgos logistics center;

5) The China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway, a 270 km high-speed route between the city of Kashgar (China) through Osh (Kyrgyzstan) to Andijan (Uzbekistan).

As can be seen, there are not many projects in quantitative terms. However, one must take into account that along the entire length of the New Silk Road, not only overpasses as such will be built, but also all the necessary road infrastructure will be created, including facilities for the production of crushed stone, asphalt, rails and sleepers, factories for road and railway equipment, assembly and repair workshops. Modern stations equipped with maximum convenience for passengers, catering facilities, hotels, gas stations, loading terminals, and large logistics centers are already being built. In addition, in the modern world, logistics is unimaginable without the use of innovative digital technologies. Therefore, laying fiber-optic communication lines and maintaining their uninterrupted operation will also require considerable financial costs for fitting out with the necessary equipment and for training qualified specialists. Naturally, specialized machinery

and equipment will require the construction of production and service centers to ensure the stable operation of the entire telecommunications complex. An important task will be to ensure security of all these facilities, neutralizing the threats of terrorism and extremism in the countries of Central and South Asia.

Other important areas of investment under the OBOR initiative are energy, agriculture, processing plants, housing construction, and product quality testing and certification. Sectors that are not directly related to the construction of roads have the opportunity to quickly join the production process of the participating countries, ensuring an increase in the material well-being of people and, ultimately, guaranteeing social stability in the region. While covering an ever wider range of investment interests, China is also stimulating the reform of the legal framework. Synchronization of customs and border requirements, development of common principles of tariffing, and elimination of non-physical barriers inevitably lead to the intensification of the work of the governments of Asian and European countries at the highest level.

### Research methodology

Theoretical research methods were used: system approach, analysis, deduction method, classification, refinement, and detailing. The Chinese initiative «One Belt, One Road» and the countries of Central Asia were chosen as the object of the study.

In addition, quantitative research methods were used in the analysis: the use of databases, statistical data, reports, analysis of data from foreign research centers. The historicism principle allowed studying not only the internal factors in the formation of transport and logistics policy, but also the dynamics of its activities in a specific historical situation.

When analyzing the object of the study, Central Asia was considered as the most promising region for the construction of trade routes and the connection of Asia and Europe into a single transport unity. Historical and chronological facts

were systematized. A literary review of scientific and media publications about the Chinese initiative «One Belt, One Road» was carried out.

### Discussion

The works of Chinese scientists who are actively involved in the development of the «One Belt, One Road» project itself are the most valuable. These studies have their own specifics, as special attention is paid to the ideology and the general line of promoting the initiative. Along with this, the focus is on issues of continuity between the OBOR project and previous political and cultural traditions, as well as on the mindset and values of the project. In particular, the authors often emphasize that the initiative, in addition to the goals of a purely political nature, also pursues the cultural potential for uniting civilizations [3].

The level of research on the One Belt, One Road initiative in the post-Soviet countries is at the level of empirical materials and primary generalizations, which is not surprising, given its short existence. The format of dissertations prevails, with many Russian scholars primarily researching the economic impact of the initiative and its effect. For this study, we were interested in works containing statistical data and analysis of the problems and contradictions of the initiative, as well as the difficulties of its implementation, especially in the countries of Central Asia.

There are currently not so many comprehensive studies (monographs or dissertations) on the problems of the One Belt, One Road strategy in the Russian Federation. An important work devoted to the general scientific discourse on this topic was the collective monograph «The New Silk Road and Its Significance for Russia» by the Institute of the Far East of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

This monograph indicates the general idealistic justification of the project and its integration potential, but also notes the rapid growth of China's economic influence in Central Asia as Russia's influence weakens, the deepening of relations between China and the EU as Russian-European relations weaken. The paper summarizes possible challenges

and threats, including the weakening of the competitiveness of the Trans-Siberian Eurasian continental corridor compared to the China-Kazakhstan highway.

Of particular importance for this work was the doctoral dissertation of K.A. Yevtushin “Modern Diplomatic Strategy of China”. The dissertation systematically defines the principles and determinants of the formation of China’s foreign policy strategy over the past 35 years and concludes that the Silk Road Economic Belt has become the main vector of China’s grand strategy in the 21st century.

There are two camps among political scientists and international economists from the Russian Federation – for and against this project, and this division is based not only on differences in research approaches, but also on political beliefs and values. The supporters of the project are scientists and experts who share the values of Soviet-style nationalism and rely on neo-Marxist methodology (mainly on the theory of world systems by E. Wallerstein and others) – Graev, Ostrovsky, Tokachuk, Karaganov, and others. They consider the OBOR as an alternative scenario of globalization and regional integration to the West, based on fundamentally different institutions, such as the ideology of etatism, Asian-style accumulation, the dominance of state property, a high level of redistribution of resources, protectionism in the economy, and illiberal management methods.

In general, this topic is of steady interest in professional and academic circles. The volume of empirical knowledge, generalization and evaluation of project results is growing. The quantity and quality of studies related to the problem of Eurasian integration within the framework of the initiative directly depend on the priority of this topic in the international relations of world powers in the current era.

## **Results**

The analysis of the results allows us to say with a great deal of optimism that participation in the “One Belt, One Road” initiative contributes to the development of both continental ties in

general and noticeable dynamics in the Central Asian region, in particular.

The results are not equal and are uneven. Some countries, such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have been very successful in implementing projects under the initiative. In Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, the progress is slower due to political and national specifics. Nonetheless, there have been certain results. The globalization and integration of transport infrastructure has already brought significant benefits in many areas of industry and the economy, even those not directly related to the OBOR projects.

If we talk about the dynamics of the development of the Central Asian region as a whole, then there are undoubtedly successes. Over the period of 2013-2018, the geography of the OBOR initiative expanded noticeably. More than 100 states expressed their readiness to support the initiative and join the joint construction. Strategic linkage with projects has taken place in 92 countries [4]. Along with the Kazakh program «Nurly Zhol,» cooperation programs are underway with the SREB and the EAEU in Russia, as well as with development programs of Tajikistan, Poland, Hungary, Saudi Arabia, Laos, Cambodia, and Bangladesh.

In 2021, China’s foreign trade turnover exceeded the \$6 trillion for the first time. In addition, the volume of foreign trade between China and countries along the Belt and Road increased by 23.6 percent on an annualized basis[5].

An important criterion for the success of the initiative was the increase in the number of trains on the China-Europe-China route to 10,000 per year. Fears that trains from Europe to China would run empty did not come true. According to various agencies, the occupancy of return traffic is 50-70%.

365 international passenger and cargo airlines have been opened; the number of new flights is 402. Direct routes have connected China with 43 Belt and Road countries, amounting to 4,500 direct flights every week [6].

On March 28, 2015, the document “Concept and Action Plan to Promote the Joint Construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century

Maritime Silk Road” was released, and in May 2017, the first forum “Belt and Road: Cooperation for the Sake of Common Prosperity” was held, which significantly expanded understanding of the OBOR initiative by experts.

Along with clear successes, convincingly showing that the OBOR initiative is not only recognized by the world community and is being implemented in practice, elements of criticism are increasingly appearing in expert assessments. Western experts began expressing their concern especially persistently after a number of problems in the implementation of projects arose in the countries of Southeast Asia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Mongolia, and some others.

The main concern is the prospect of these countries’ inevitable debt dependence on China. Notably, this is not even about the ability to repay loans alone, but also the inability to even service the debt [7]. The question is also quite natural – what will China do if a partner country cannot pay? Do those countries risk paying off the debt with their resources or sovereignty? From China, there is no clarity on this issue yet.

One of the most important problems is the opacity of deals and conditions signed by countries. Information in open sources is not published. This inevitably leads to an increase in the corruption component and, as a result, rejection among the population, which cannot see any benefit for themselves in the planned projects. The concept of «trade secrets» in this case is unacceptable, since loans are allocated under state guarantees.

Another group of problems is related to the ever-increasing opposition of the United States and Europe, which until recently were ready to support the initiative, but under the pressure of political changes, they have begun to actively criticize China’s economic expansion in Central Asia. Especially a lot of criticism has been caused by China’s non-compliance with national norms and standards in the field of ecology and technological safety, as well as concerns regarding non-observance of workers’ rights and labor safety.

We must pay tribute to the leadership of the PRC, which does not ignore criticism and has

already revised some of the priorities in the principles of relations with the Belt and Road countries. At the meeting on August 27, 2018, Xi Jinping set new emphasis on the implementation of the OBOR.

In particular, it was emphasized that the goal of the «Belt and Road» is economic cooperation, and not the formation of a geopolitical alliance or a military alliance. The main goal is to improve the models of global development and global governance, to promote the healthy development of economic globalization.

Xi Jinping proposed the creation of a system of policies to financially support the Belt and Road Initiative and called on non-governmental funds to invest in projects aimed at building infrastructure and developing resources in countries along the Belt and Road. It is necessary to strengthen the regulation of investment activity and pay increased attention to the prevention of risks abroad [7]. This approach allows us to hope that individual problems can be solved, with a correct assessment of any localized threats.

### Kazakhstan

Seven years of implementation of the program have already brought tangible results. 3,000 km of highways of republican significance have been reconstructed and built (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Road Construction Republican Significance [9]

Direction	Length
Western Europe - Western China	527 km
Center - South	324 km
Center - East	795 km
Kapshagay - Taldykorgan	160 km
Astana - Petropavlovsk - Russian border	177 km
Uralsk - Kamenka	100 km
Aktobe – Atyrau – Astrakhan	42 km
Taldykorgan - Ust-Kamenogorsk	20 km
Kalbatau – Maykapshagai	18 km
Beineu – Aktau	982 km
Zhetybay - Zhanaozen	73 km

Beineu - Akzhigit	85 km
Shchuchinsk – Zerenda	80 km
Taskeseken – Bakhty	80 km
South-Western bypass of Astana	34 km
Stapaev bypass	15 km
Pavlodar – Omsk	59 km
Bridge over the river Tobol	3 km

In addition to the construction of roads, transport hubs are being actively built. Today, the largest one is the dry port of Khorgos. This project is not directly related to the OBOR initiative, but its capacity allows for the most efficient management of cargo flows between China and Europe, the Central Asian region and the countries of the Persian Gulf. According to statistics, more than 158.2 thousand TEUs passed through Khorgos in 2019.

In fact, Kazakhstan has already created three strong checkpoints in the Silk Road chain. These are the container terminal on the Yellow Sea of Lyanungang, the border center of Khorgos, and the Caspian port of Aktau. Up to 70% of all overland trade exchanges between East and West pass through the territory of Kazakhstan, amounting to 1200 out of 1700 trains sent from China to Europe.

In 2018, checkpoints on the Kazakh-Chinese border of a new type, Nur Zholy, were put into operation. The time for vehicles to pass from the beginning of registration to obtaining a pass was reduced from 3 hours to 40 minutes. Thanks to this, the flow of trucking has increased to 200 vehicles per day, with potential having been designed for the passage of 2500 vehicles. The expected annual income from import and export only through Nur Zholy checkpoints is 50 billion tenge. In total, according to 2019 data, Kazakhstan earned more than 450 billion tenge on transit. In terms of developing its own infrastructure (according to official data), Kazakhstan is ahead of Russia. For example, Kazakhstan completed all stages of the construction of the international transport corridor «China-Western Europe» as per schedule; on the part of the Russian Federation, the formation of a section of this ITC on their territory is still far from completion [10].

The rail transport development analysis is also quite optimistic. At a meeting in September 2020 between Sauat Mynbaev, Chairman of NC KTZ JSC, and Lu Dongfu, Chairman of the Chinese Railways Board of Directors, it was noted that the volume of traffic for 8 months of this year exceeded last year's figures by 30%. This was despite the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected all areas of the global economy. Participation in the customs agreement of the EAEU contributes not least to the development and increase in the volume of transportation by rail. The common customs space creates significant competitive advantages for Kazakhstan in the field of rail transportation. This is especially noticeable against the background of the Trans-Caspian transport corridor, the volume of traffic through which is still low. Now about 255 containers are delivered to the port of Baku on a weekly basis by the ships of the Kazmortransflot company, i.e. no more than 15 thousand TEUs per year. For the first nine months of 2020, according to data from JSC United Transport and Logistics Company – Eurasian Railway Alliance (UTLC ERA), the volume of rail traffic amounted to 384 thousand tons of TEU. This exceeds the results for the entire 2019, when 333 thousand TEU were transported. Compared to the same period of the previous year, the growth amounted to 68% (228.3 thousand TEUs in January - September 2019).

In total, according to the results of 2020, UTLC ERA plans that the total volume of traffic will exceed 500,000 TEUs. Previously, the company's strategy assumed reaching this mark would be possible only by 2022.

According to analysts, the railway «boom» was caused by quarantine restrictions. It turned out that the railway was subject to crisis phenomena to the least extent.

The consequences of lockdowns in Europe have led to the fact that the difference in the cost of transportation by sea and rail transport has sharply decreased, to the extent that costs almost became even. At the same time, the speed of overland transportation has always been and remains high. Meanwhile, the increased cargo flow revealed a shortage of wagons and

locomotives, and it became obvious that it was necessary to modernize the rolling stock fleet and related services as soon as possible so as not to lose transit.

From 2013 to 2020, the following facilities were put into operation as part of the OBOR initiative: a plant for the production of shubat in the South Kazakhstan region; a plant for the production of seamless pipes in the suburbs of Karaganda; and a JAC automobile assembly shop of the Saryarka-Avtoprom plant in the North Kazakhstan region. Several oil refineries have been modernized, including the Shymkent Oil Refinery, which made it possible to launch the production of high-octane gasoline and fully meet the demand for this fuel in the country. Investments using Chinese technology in the Taiynsha Mai plant, which produces rapeseed oil for export, in the production of powdered polypropylene in Pavlodar, contribute to a larger picture which makes Kazakhstan's export opportunities more diversified.

In addition, Kazakhstan is directly involved in the construction of three directions of the transcontinental corridor of the Silk Road Economic Belt. These are the ITC China-Kazakhstan-Russia, with access to the Baltic Sea; China-Kazakhstan-Georgia-Turkey-Europe (the international TRACECA program), which offers access to the Mediterranean and Black Seas; and China-Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran, with access to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Of the six proposed routes in these areas, the Republic of Kazakhstan takes part in five.

### Uzbekistan

The main facility in the Republic of Uzbekistan is the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China railway. The construction of this facility will provide necessary access to global trade routes with Europe and China. Work is underway to reconstruct the Kashgar-Tashkent highway and construct the Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway with access to the southern ports. High-voltage power lines from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to the capital of Afghanistan have already been installed and are operating; in the future it is planned to continue installing them in India. Long-term

plans relate to the creation of technology parks, clusters and Free Economic Zones along the routes of the new Silk Road.

### Kyrgyzstan

The Kyrgyz Republic is one of China's largest creditors in Central Asia. Based on this, in order to avoid an increase in public debt, almost all OBOR projects are financed through private investment. At the moment, no real projects are being implemented in the republic. The reasons for this are varied. For example, according to the assessment of the current President S. N. Zhaparov, the business sector of Kyrgyzstan is lagging behind in terms of preparing technological justifications for projects at the international level. China is ready to invest without state guarantees, but the Chinese leadership needs clear and well-developed business projects.

At the national level, the Taza Koom national program is associated with the OBOR concept, which provides for the creation of high-tech logistics centers in the republic. To stimulate the development of interstate electronic commerce, it is planned to expand the fiber optic data transmission lines that run from China to Europe through the territory of Kyrgyzstan. As the most effective transport hub, the modernization of Manas airport is proposed, which can become the foundation for creating a commercial transit site, including online commerce. Despite various barriers, the construction of the Kyrgyz section of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan road is actively underway.

The Kyrgyz business community was cautious regarding China's projects to locate not entirely environmentally friendly production facilities in the region. The tourist niche is marked as more attractive. According to experts, this industry will require far less investment funds, will pay off faster, and will begin to generate a stable income for the country. The development of road infrastructure fully meets the needs of tourism development. From the point of view of ecology, there are no complaints about the tourism business. For China, tourism is not a priority, but in the case of a two-way flow of tourists, the business of the Chinese side also does not go unnoticed.

It should be noted that China's approach to the development of an action plan to create an economic belt of the Silk Road is systemic. In the last 5 years, several research institutes have been launched in China, focused on studying and analyzing the potential of the Central Asian region. These include the Institute of Central Asia, the Institute for the Study of the Silk Road at Northwestern University, the Institute of Central Asia at the Xi'an University of Foreign Studies, and a number of think tanks[11].

### **Tajikistan**

To date, work has been completed on the construction of the Tajikistan-Uzbekistan highway, the Khatlon tunnel, and the Vahdat-Yavan railway.

With the help and active participation of the Chinese side, TPP No. 2 was put into operation in the city of Dushanbe, which will supply heat and electricity to 700,000 residents of the capital and its environs [12]. The construction of the Tajik section of the China-Central Asia gas pipeline is proceeding steadily on schedule.

According to the global plan of the OBOR initiative, not only the immediate facilities of the plan are being built, but the entire infrastructure is being recreated, i.e. access roads to stations and train stations, gas stations on highways, and centers for repair and service of equipment. These are additional jobs, and, as a result, they promise the removal of tensions in the field of labor migration. In a fairly short period of time that has passed since the start of the initiative in Tajikistan, the range of imported and exported goods has noticeably increased, their cost has decreased, and there has been a positive trend in the standard of living of the entire population of the country.

### **Turkmenistan**

Despite the advantageous geographical position of Turkmenistan in Central Asia, the closed economy of the country as well as the tight control of the private sector by the state limits the growth of investments in the BRI project. Nevertheless, there are results in both economic

and political spheres, and they give reason to evaluate the participation of Turkmenistan in the OBOR initiative quite positively.

An example is the construction of a modern freeway within the framework of the Lazurit project, which will become a common transport highway for Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey.

In July 2019, the construction of the next section of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan (TAT) railway was approved. The Turkmen side laid 10 km of railway from the Turkmen border to Akina station, in anticipation that this railway line will eventually run to the Afghan city of Andkhoy. The Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway line has already been put into operation. The longest part of this road (722.5 km) passes through Turkmenistan. Thanks to this transport route, the supply of goods to the markets of Iran and the Persian Gulf countries has become much more promising.

In addition to development of roads and railways, the most important project for the country is the transportation of natural gas. China financed the construction of the Central Asia-China gas pipeline after Russia refused to purchase Turkmen gas.

### **The main problems and factors hindering the logistics system development in Central Asia**

*Growth of public debt.* China has become the largest creditor in some Central Asian states. A report published by the Center for Global Development, which examines the debt implications of 67 countries with BRI projects, indicates that two countries in Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) are in the highest-risk category. Debts to finance infrastructure projects can stimulate the local economy, but the presence of debts that do not bring any results in generating income for the population and local budgets is a major problem. Beijing is already being accused of colluding with authoritarian regimes to plunder resources along with limited contributions to the development of the countries concerned [13].

*Sinophobia.* The main reasons for the growth of anti-Chinese and anti-regime sentiments of the society were the corruption of the elite, concerns about the impact of projects on the environment. The main element of public discourse has become the security of the countries of Central Asia against the backdrop of rising Chinese influence: while political elites are preparing for close ties with China, ordinary citizens are increasingly concerned about the “Chinese threat”.

Among many examples, in early 2016, protests erupted in large cities in Kazakhstan against attempts to transfer agricultural land to long-term leases, as China was considered the main beneficiary. In January 2019, an anti-Chinese rally was held in Bishkek, described as «the largest public protest in Central Asia against the growing influence of Beijing»; The protesters called for controls on work permits for Chinese citizens and Chinese-Kyrgyz marriages, as well as a reduction in the Kyrgyz debt to China [14].

*Risk of high dependence on great powers.* The participation of Central Asia in the OBOR, on the one hand, can be considered as an attempt to balance the demands of the traditional regional hegemon, Russia, which continues to dominate the political, cultural and security spheres of the region.

However, in seeking to break free from overdependence on post-Soviet Russia, the Central Asian states are effectively falling into a similar trap in their pursuit of China. Both Moscow and Beijing are stepping up the implementation of regional integration initiatives - the Eurasian Economic Union and the OBOR - to ensure their strategic and economic influence in the region. The asymmetric interdependence between the Central Asian regimes and their larger neighbors limits their ability to manage and balance the relationship; at the same time, competition between these initiatives creates opportunities for Central Asian leaders to gain some autonomy.

The success of BRI in Central Asia will depend on the interplay of several factors, including outcomes and public perceptions, as well as the impact of governance issues within Central Asia [15].

## Conclusion

We must admit with satisfaction that today the countries of Central Asia have fully realized that the raw material models of economic development have exhausted themselves. Modernization, innovation, the search for new potential are inevitable, and just as inevitable is the unification of roads and related infrastructure in order to accelerate the integration of the region into the system of international transport corridors. The geographical position of countries within the continent cannot be changed, but it is possible to change their economic situations. First of all, the countries of Central Asia can develop interrelations within the region by creating a joint medium-term program to develop transport and logistics infrastructure.

The obligatory points of the program can be defined as follows:

- 1) reduction of administrative (customs procedures) and trade barriers to the movement of goods across the borders of countries;
- 2) mutual reduction of tariffs for the use of the transport infrastructure of the CAR countries for domestic trade and access to non-regional markets; and
- 3) collective fundraising for the construction of infrastructure in the region.

Such measures meet the interests of all Central Asian states, contribute to rapprochement and the establishment of good neighborly relations, and guarantee the stability and security of international transportation. In addition, it is all-round regional integration that can significantly change the international positioning of the region. It is a close-knit Central Asia that is attractive to major geopolitical players – such as China, the United States, the EU, India, and Japan – in terms of implementing various programs and initiatives, since individually the Central Asian countries are not of economic or political interest.

The most promising economic development programs have no future without mutual support and comprehensive cooperation.

All industries related to production, be it the agricultural sector, industry and power do not

have a profitable potential without an export component. Only collective approaches and joint initiatives on the way to the development of the region's economy will make it possible to use opportunistic external interest for one's own benefit. In particular, this concerns the raising of external funds for general regional projects. Now, given the growing momentum of intra-regional dialogue, Central Asia has a good historical chance to break the stereotypes that it is the least economically interconnected region in the world.

For Kazakhstan, there are undoubtedly certain risks along this path. The economic opportunities of China and the RoK are incommensurable.

Kazakhstan, being a central figure in the implementation of the land part of the OBOR, risks falling into economic, and subsequently political, dependence on the PRC. Maintaining a multi-vector approach in foreign policy acquires particular importance and necessity in such conditions. Cooperation with the EU, the US, India, South Korea, and Japan maintains the balance of power in Central Asia to some extent. To minimize economic and political risks, it seems appropriate to implement such measures as:

- In the format of international organizations  
- the creation in the EAEU of a single group for

the coordination and synchronization of Chinese and national regional development programs;

- In the interests of the national economy - the creation of joint ventures in the implementation of regional projects which adhere to the maximum localization of production using the potential of national enterprises (strengthening the Kazakhstani component). This should include national enterprises that are not joint ventures in the production chains of transnational companies;

- Within the framework of interstate cooperation – the involvement of neighboring countries in individual projects of the Belt and Road Initiative.

In general, the global concept of the Belt and Road Initiative helps to ensure that the Central Asian region enters a new orbit of geostrategic positioning. It is no secret that the Silk Road creates new opportunities for the countries of Central Asia to break through the “continental blockade”. Moreover, this concerns not only transit cargo transportation, ports and terminals. Due to the joint implementation of infrastructure projects, new industries and jobs will be created, and cross-border trade will grow, as well as tourist flows. The overall investment attractiveness of the region as a whole will improve.

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### «Бір белдеу, бір жол» бастамасы: Орталық Азия елдерінде жобаны жүзеге асыру бойынша салыстырмалы талдау

**Аңдатпа.** Еуропа мен Азияны трансқұрлықтық маршруттармен қосу идеясы жаңа емес. «Жаңа Жібек жолы» термині Таяу Шығыста, Еуропада және Америка Құрама Штаттарында бірнеше рет айтылды. Бірақ абстрактілі идеяны қаржыландырудың нақты схемаларын тек Қытай ғана ұсына алды. Қытай Халық Республикасының Төрағасы Си Цзиньпиннің «Бір белдеу, бір жол» стратегиясын таныстырғанына тоғыз жыл болды.

Бұл мақала Орталық Азия елдерінде жоба нәтижелеріне салыстырмалы талдау жүргізуге бағытталған.

Нәтижелерді талдау «Бір белдеу – бір жол» бастамасына қатысу жалпы құрлықтық байланыстардың дамуына, атап айтқанда, Орталық Азия өңіріндегі елеулі динамиканың дамуына да ықпал етеді деп айтуға оптимизмнің үлкен үлесін қосуға мүмкіндік береді.

Нәтижелер тең емес және біркелкі емес. Қазақстан, Өзбекстан және Қырғызстан сияқты кейбір елдер бастама аясындағы жобаларды жүзеге асыруда үлкен табыстарға қол жеткізді. Тәжікстан мен Түрікменстанда саяси және ұлттық ерекшеліктерге байланысты іс баяу жүріп жатыр. Бірақ белгілі бір нәтижелер бар. Көлік инфрақұрылымының жаһандануы мен интеграциясы өнеркәсіп пен экономиканың көптеген салаларында, тіпті «Бір белдеу – бір жол» бастамасының жобаларына тікелей байланысты емес айтарлықтай пайда әкелді.

**Түйін сөздер:** Орталық Азия, «Бір белдеу, Бір жол» бастамасы, жаһандану, өңірлендіру, Еуразиядағы сауда қатынастарын дамыту, халықаралық көлік дәліздері.

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### Инициатива «Один пояс, один путь»: сравнительный анализ реализации проекта в странах Центральной Азии

**Аннотация.** Идея соединения Европы и Азии трансконтинентальными маршрутами не нова. Термин «новый Шелковый путь» неоднократно звучал и на Ближнем Востоке, и в Европе, и в Соединенных Штатах Америки. Но только Китай смог предложить конкретные схемы финансирования абстрактной идеи. Прошло девять лет с момента презентации председателем Китайской Народной Республики Си Цзиньпином стратегии «Один пояс, один путь».

Данная статья направлена на проведение сравнительного анализа результатов проекта в странах Центральной Азии.

Анализ результатов позволяет с большой долей оптимизма говорить о том, что участие в инициативе «Один пояс – Один путь» способствует развитию как континентальных связей в целом, так и заметной динамике в центрально-азиатском регионе, в частности.

Результаты не равнозначные и неравномерные. Некоторые страны, такие как Казахстан, Узбекистан и Кыргызстан добились очень больших успехов в реализации проектов в рамках инициативы. В Таджикистане и Туркменистане дело продвигается медленнее, ввиду политической и национальной специфики. Но определённые результаты есть и там. Глобализация и интегрирование транспортной инфраструктуры уже принесло существенные прибыли во многих сферах промышленности и экономики, причём даже напрямую не связанных с проектами инициативы «Один пояс – Один путь».

**Ключевые слова:** Центральная Азия, Инициатива «Один пояс, Один путь», глобализация и регионализация, развитие торговых отношений в Евразии, международные транспортные коридоры.

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