

Cooperation Between Uzbekistan and China in the Framework of the Revival of the Silk Road

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Abstract:

This article examines the bilateral cooperation between Uzbekistan and China in the revival of the Silk Road.

Keywords:

diplomacy, TRACECA, Zhang Qian, Fa Xian, Xuan Zang, "One Belt- One Road", SCO.

Introduction

China (PRC), which has significantly strengthened in economic terms after the socio-political and socio-economic reforms carried out since the beginning of the 90s of the twentieth century, has shown significant activity in the implementation of the considered diplomacy. At the same time, China's participation in the implementation of its version of Silk Road diplomacy, as one of the experts notes, is based on the tactics of "overcoming the mentality of the Cold War and confrontation"¹. As one of the authors rightly notes, "it is the Chinese route, implemented under the slogan of recreating the historical Silk Road, that could become the most promising, since it runs on land and does not, unlike TRACECA, have a "sea component"².

"Beijing", writes the French expert Marc Rousset in his book *New Europe: "Paris — Berlin — Moscow"*, is making great efforts to modernize the Great Silk Road right up to the borders of Europe, considering economic expansion more important than the creation of military bases, which are mainly Russian there today³. (It should be added that China, in the context of the cultural revival on the Silk Road, announced the creation of a guarantee fund for the payment of certain items of expenses to Chinese tour operators⁴).

(There is a monument dedicated to the Great Silk Road near the Shaanxi Historical Museum in Xi'an, China. It also depicts ancient Samarkand, Ulugbek madrasah)⁵.

Theoretical background

On June 15, 2004, the newspaper "Zhenminzhibao" wrote: "In ancient times, Uzbekistan was one of the most important centers of trade and a link between East and West. The famous "Silk Road" passed through this city. Tashkent keeps traces of famous historical figures of

¹Karrar H. The new Silk Road diplomacy: China's Central Asian foreign policy since the Cold War. – Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010. – P.83.

² Shustov K. Kitayskiy Shelkoviy put' // Veb-sayt «Fonda strategicheskoy kul'turi»- www.fondsk.ru;

³Rousset M. La nouvelle Europe: Paris-Berlin-Moscou. Le continent paneuropéen face au choc des civilisations. - Paris: Godefroy de Bouillon, 2009. — p.355, 359;

⁴ See: World Tourism Organization - <http://www.unwto.org>

⁵ Dni uzbekskoy kul'turi v Kitae. 15 iyulya 2011 g. // Veb-sayt Nasional'nogo informatsionnogo agentstva Uzbekistana (UzA)– www.uza.uz.

China, such as Zhang Qian, Fa Xian and Xuanzang, who visited this city in their time⁶. " Official Beijing, therefore, highly appreciated the role of Uzbekistan in the cultural revival of the Silk Road.

On October 26, 2005, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China Wen Jiabao addressed the 4th meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Moscow. Wen Jiabao pointed out the need for the unconditional implementation of the already agreed plans for cooperation in the cultural field, to accelerate the development of documents on cooperation of the organization's member countries in the field of education. He stressed the urgency of expanding cooperation in the field of tourism, which could be based on the fruitful concept of the "Silk Road".

In his opinion, it is also necessary to "improve cooperation in the field of health, expand opportunities in terms of combating serious epidemics, such as avian influenza." Training of human resources needs to be strengthened. In this regard, the Chinese side has already started implementing plans to train 1,500 specialists and managers for other SCO member states. Each side can make optimal use of its advantages to enhance exchanges and cooperation in the field of training, Wen Jiabao said⁷.

In April 2008, China and the Central Asian republics signed an **Agreement on the status of the Silk Road as a world Heritage site**, and drew up a schedule for considering nominations for the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List (Kazakhstan nominated 10 of its attractions in this list, China - 48, Kyrgyzstan-7, Tajikistan-8, Turkmenistan - 57 and Uzbekistan – 33)⁸.

The "One Belt, One Road" initiative was first launched in 2013. President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping. Its main goal is to restore the spirit of the ancient Silk Road, develop regional economic cooperation through this, unite transport infrastructures, bring the countries involved closer together culturally, and strengthen peace and security in the region. Uzbekistan supported the "One Belt, One Road" project, initiatives in the fields of transport, trade, investment, energy and high technologies⁹. "Uzbekistan initially supported the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, the implementation of which is an important factor in the sustainable development of our countries"¹⁰; President Mirziyoyev said.

As of the end of April 2019, China has signed cooperation agreements under the "One Belt and One Road" initiative with 126 countries and 29 international organizations: in Asia-36, Africa-37, Europe-26, Oceania-9, North America-11, South America-7.

On May 14, 2017, the **International Forum "One Belt, One Road"** was held in Beijing. The main purpose of the forum was to promote and continue the development trends along the route of the Great Silk Road, develop new mechanisms for economic cooperation,

⁶ Uzbekistan - drevnee gosudarstvo na Shelkovom puti. 15 iyunya 2004 g. // Elektronnaya versiya gazetii «Jenminjibao»- russian.people.com.cn;

⁷ Ven Szyabao vistupil na zasedanii Soveta glav pravitel'stv stran- uchastnis ShOS. 27 oktyabrya 2005 g. // Veb-sayt Kitayskogo informatsionnogo Internet-sentra - russian.china.org.cn

⁸ Kul'turno-istoricheskie pamyatniki shesti stran pretenduyut na vnesenie v Spisok ob'ektov mirovogo naslediya. 4 iyunya 2008 g. // Veb-sayt AO NK «Kazinform»– www.inform.kz;

⁹ «Odin poyas, odin put'»: perspektivi sovmestnix deystviy. 14 maya 2018 g. // Veb-sayt Nasional'nogo informatsionnogo agentstva Uzbekistana (UZA)– www.uza.uz;

¹⁰ Shavkat Mirziyoev: nashi narodi doljni na dele oshushat' rezul'tati sovmestnix usilii. 27 aprelya 2019 g. // Veb-sayt Nasional'nogo informatsionnogo agentstva Uzbekistana (UZA) – www.uza.uz.

stimulate the economic progress of the states involved, strengthen cultural ties between different civilizations, and promote peace and sustainable development¹¹.

The Joint Statement of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the People's Republic of China on further deepening the relations of comprehensive strategic partnership signed just before the forum notes: "Uzbekistan and China, as countries with ancient civilizations on the Silk Road, will jointly make efforts to develop its spirit, deepen humanitarian exchange, strengthen cooperation to protect cultural heritage, maintain and preserve cultural traditions and innovations, so that the fruits of the civilizations of Uzbekistan and China bring even greater benefits to the peoples of the two countries¹².

On July 11, 2019, the seminar "China-Uzbekistan Relations and Strategic Cooperation" was held within the framework of the Silk Road Economic Belt in Shanghai.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, speaking at the meeting of the heads of delegations at the round table within the framework of the second international forum "One Belt, One Road" in China in April this year, noted that Uzbekistan initially supported this initiative, the implementation of which is an important factor in the sustainable development of our countries.

Issues of international and regional interconnectedness have always been and remain relevant for Central Asia, including our country, which does not have direct access to seaports. The President put forward a number of initiatives to improve the transport and logistics potential of Central Asia, achieve food security through the "green economy", develop tourism, jointly solve environmental problems and other topical issues."

Main part

It was noted that Uzbekistan's participation in the "One Belt, One Road" initiative corresponds to the priorities of official Tashkent for further deepening of multilateral strategic cooperation with Beijing. Uzbekistan was among the first to support this initiative, becoming one of the founding members of the project. The participation of the republic in the implementation of this initiative is crucial in terms of ensuring sustainable economic development and the implementation of priority transport and infrastructure projects that can have a positive impact on Central Asia¹³.

On December 24, 2019, the SCO Secretary General Vladimir Norov met with the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Sayfullayev in the building of the SCO Secretariat.

"Our joint evening is one of many bright events within the framework of the project — "SCO — our common home", which has been successfully implemented at the initiative of the SCO Secretariat since 2016. The aim of the project is to strengthen cultural and humanitarian ties

¹¹ V Pekine nachalsya forum «Odin poyas, odin put». 14 maya 2017 g. // Veb-sayt Natsionalnogo informatsionnogo agentstva Uzbekistana (UzA) – www.uza.uz.

¹² Sovmestnoye zayavleniye Respubliki Uzbekistan i Kitayskoy Narodnoy Respubliki o dalneyshem uglublenii otnosheniy vstoronnego strategicheskogo partnerstva. 14 maya 2017 g. // Veb-sayt Natsionalnoy bazi zakonodatelstva Respubliki Uzbekistan – www.lex.uz.

¹³ Uzbekistan i Kitay: klyuchi ot budushhego. Uchastiye Uzbekistana v proekte «Odin poyas, odin put» imeet reshayusheye znacheniyе v ustoychivom ekonomicheskom razvitii strani. AN Podrobno.uz. 11 iyulya 2019 goda

between the SCO member states, get acquainted with the traditions and customs of our states, and develop a dialogue of civilizations," said V. Norov.

The SCO Secretary General stressed that the upcoming event dedicated to the cultural heritage of the Republic of Uzbekistan and its cities along the Great Silk Road, in particular the city of Bukhara, the historical center of which is included in the list of "Eight Wonders of the SCO", will demonstrate the rich ancient culture, tourism potential, and deep historical ties between Uzbekistan and China.

The Secretary General recalled a significant date in the history of the organization: "June 15, 2021 will mark the 20th anniversary of the SCO's formation. Undoubtedly, this date will be solemnly celebrated in all the SCO member states, and various important events and projects will be implemented. In our opinion, one of them can be the preparation and publication of a book dedicated to the anniversary date."

At the end of the meeting, the Secretary General noted that the SCO Secretariat will continue to advocate for strengthening cooperation in the cultural and humanitarian sphere within the organization and actively work on preparing new proposals in this direction¹⁴.

25 декабря 2019 года в Пекине состоялся Вечер, посвящённый Дню культуры Узбекистана — «Путешествие в жемчужину Великого шелкового пути». Вечер стал одним из многих ярких мероприятий в рамках проекта «ШОС — наш общий дом», нацеленного на укрепление культурно-гуманитарных связей между странами «семьи ШОС», знакомство с традициями и обычаями наших государств, развитию диалога цивилизаций

On December 25, 2019, Beijing hosted an Evening dedicated to the Day of Culture of Uzbekistan — "Journey to the Pearl of the Great Silk Road". The evening was one of many bright events within the framework of the "SCO — our Common Home" project, aimed at strengthening cultural and humanitarian ties between the countries of the "SCO family", getting acquainted with the traditions and customs of our states, and developing a dialogue of civilizations and customs of our states, and developing

The SCO Secretary General stressed that the emerging trend towards regional rapprochement in Central Asia is an important factor for reviving the former potential of the Great Silk Road, understanding the commonality and indivisibility of the destinies of fraternal peoples. "The mechanism of regular Consultative meetings of the heads of Central Asian states, established at the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has brought friendly and good-neighborly relations between the countries of the region to a qualitatively new level. Uzbekistan makes a significant contribution to the development of multidisciplinary cooperation within the SCO. Large-scale work is underway to prepare for the summit of the heads of the Organization's member states in the historic city of Samarkand in 2022," the SCO Secretary General added.

14 VSTRECHA GENERALNOGO SEKRETARYA SHOS V.NOROVA S MINISTROM KULTURI RESPUBLIKI UZBEKISTAN B.SAYFULLAEVIM. INFORMACIONNIY SAYT SEKRETARIAT SHANXAYSKOY ORGANIZASII SOTRUDNICHESTVO // RUS.SECTSCO.ORG 24.12.2019 Г.

He drew the guests' attention to the world-wide fame of Bukhara, which has made a significant contribution to the development of spiritual, cultural and religious values of the world civilization.

Vice-President of the China Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries Cheng Guoping congratulated the guests and stressed that China and Uzbekistan are friendly neighbors, have deep and extensive ties in the field of economy, trade and cultural exchange. "Uzbekistan, located in the heart of Eurasia, is a world-famous ancient country lying along the Great Silk Road. "Bukhara, an ancient Uzbek city with a reputation as the "Mecca of Central Asia", has made a significant contribution to the development of human civilization, " Cheng Guoping added¹⁵.

On April 26, 2021, the SCO Secretary General spoke at the opening of the International Trade and Investment Exhibition and Conference on Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation of the SCO Countries (Qingdao, Jiaozhou, April 26-28, 2021).

The medium - and long-term goal of the Demonstration Zone is precisely to create a solid foundation for bilateral investment and innovation for the development of industry, as well as the expansion of mutually beneficial trade between the SCO countries. The key to success is its focus on creating conditions that will contribute to the further development and integration of the SCO's national economic countries with China's large-scale "One Belt, One Road" initiative, deepening regional cooperation in the areas of small business, international transport and logistics, e-commerce, education, tourism and innovation in the Organization's space.

Results

The Council of Foreign Ministers also hold regular meetings, where they discuss the current international situation and the SCO's interaction with other international organisations. The Council of National Coordinators coordinates the multilateral cooperation of member states within the framework of the SCO's charter.

The Secretariat of the SCO is the primary executive body of the organisation. It serves to implement organisational decisions and decrees, drafts proposed documents (such as declarations and agendas), function as a document depository for the organisation, arranges specific activities within the SCO framework, and promotes and disseminates information about the SCO. It is located in Beijing. The current SCO Secretary-General is Vladimir Norov of Uzbekistan, appointed to the office of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Secretary-General in January 2019.

The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), headquartered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, is a permanent organ of the SCO which serves to promote cooperation of member states against the three evils of terrorism, separatism and extremism. The Head of RATS is elected to a three-year term. Each member state also sends a permanent representative to RAT

Conclusion

15 TAM JE: INFORMASIONNIY SAYT SEKRETARIAT SHANXAYSKOY ORGANIZASII SOTRUDNICHESTVO // RUS.SECTSCO.ORG 25.12.2019 Г.

All aspects of the activities of the Demonstration Zone correspond to the tasks and areas of cooperation outlined in the Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation of the SCO member states until 2035, which was approved within the framework of the Council of Heads of Government of the Organization's member states in November 2019 in Tashkent, the SCO Secretary General noted¹⁶.

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