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on

OBOR: China's Strategic Quest for Market, Energy and Geopolitical Influence: A Status Note on the Eve of the Belt and Road Forum, Beijing, 14-15 May 2017

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China is preparing extensively for “the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation” to be held in the suburbs of Beijing on 14-15 May 2017. President Xi Jinping is scheduled to host 29 Heads of State and Government at the Forum.¹ The Chinese government is discussing and consulting with participants about an outcome document. State Councilor Yang Jiechi (in charge of the preparatory work) has stated to achieve the following objectives at the Forum: (a) to thoroughly review the progress of the initiative, showcase important early harvest outcomes, further build consensus for cooperation and sustain the momentum of cooperation; (b) to discuss major cooperation measures going forward, facilitate greater synergies of development strategies, deepen partnership and work for interconnected development; (c) while promoting China's economic and social development and structural adjustment, work to advance international cooperation for win-win outcomes.² This has set the stage for understanding the rationale for undertaking such an initiative by the Chinese Government and examining performance of the initiative over the last three years.

I

OBOR: Origin and Motivations

One Belt One Road (OBOR) is fundamentally a strategic project of China to acquire a dominant global status through the implementation of economic, energy and connectivity related projects in 64 countries of Asia, Africa and Europe.

Prof. Wang Jishi, a Chinese strategist and former Dean, School of International Studies, Peking University, articulated the strategic idea to “Look Westwards” and “March Westwards” in late 2012. He argued that US rebalancing strategy in Asia is centered on the idea of “return to Asia” and the US strategy is shifting “eastwards”. Major global players like

India, Russia and the EU had adjusted their geo-strategies and they are beginning to look eastwards. In this context, China should make strategic plans to “March Westwards”. Wang argued that China should increase economic and trade cooperation with, all countries in South Asia, Central Asia, West Asia and the Caspian Sea region. He argued that important interests of the EU, Russia, India, the US, Japan and China converge and compete in these regions. In contrast to Western Europe and East Asia, the countries in South Asia, Central Asia, West Asia and the Caspian Sea region “do not have, nor could they have, a regional military alliance (or opposing alliances) under the leadership of the US”.³

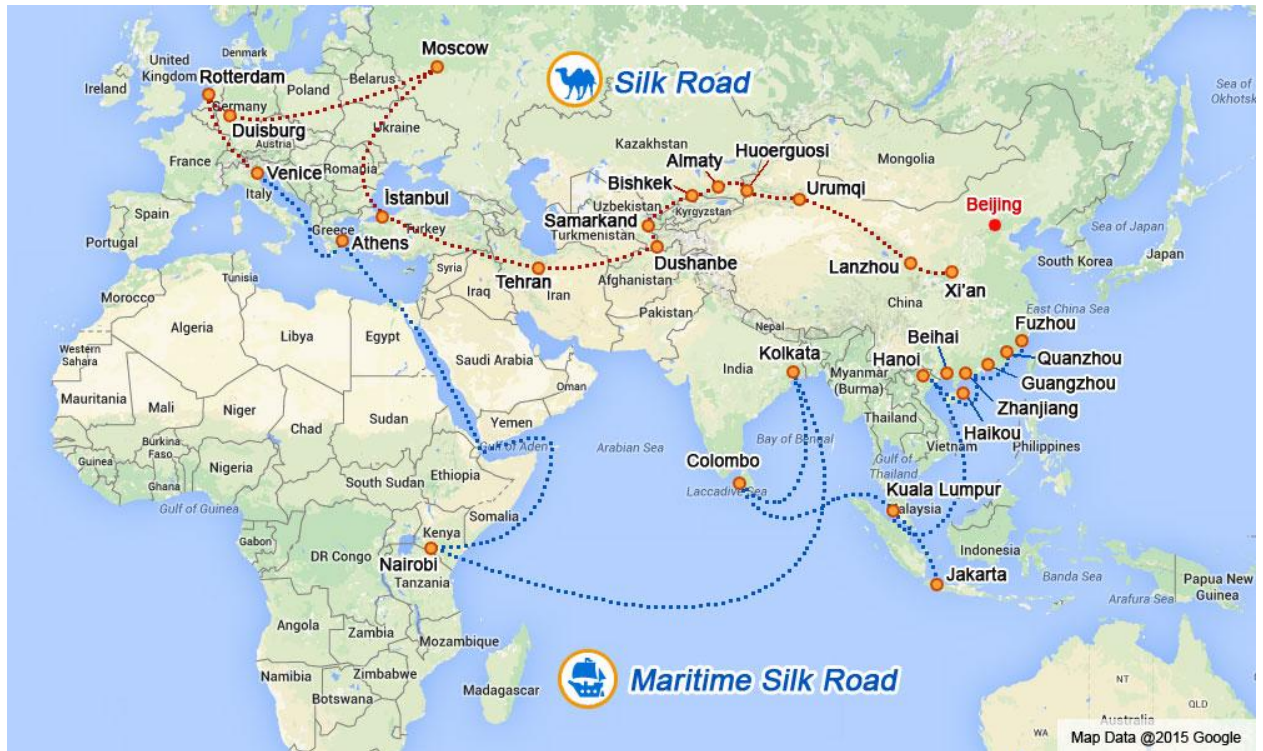
It is noteworthy that China’s leadership ambitions have been challenged in East Asia. Hence, the fifth generation of Chinese leadership was motivated to break away from China’s traditional confinement in East Asia.⁴ This could be the primary reason why “March West” received serious attention from the top leadership of China. Secondly, it would provide China with an alternative geographical area to expand its influence. Moreover, “March West” would accelerate the “Western Development Strategy”, a national strategy launched in 2000 to promote the growth of China’s western provinces in light of its less development compared to the eastern and coastal provinces.

The gradual evolution of OBOR initiative is certainly broader than what was suggested by Wang. However, it can be said that Wang Jishi’s rationale for “March Westwards” provided strategic justification for the OBOR initiative of China.

When Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Central Asia in September 2013 and Southeast Asia in October 2013, he for the first time talked about the initiative of building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road. In March 2015, National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Commerce of the PRC, with the State Council’s authorization issued, the document “vision and actions on jointly building silk road economic belt and 21st-century maritime silk road” (Vision document hereafter). Later, the initiative was refereed as “One Belt and One Road (OBOR)”. Subsequently, this was renamed as Belt and Road initiative (BRI). However, the initiative is still known as yi dai yi lu (一帶一路) in Chinese language. This paper will use the term OBOR.

The vision document notes that the Silk Road Economic Belt focuses on bringing together China, Central Asia, Russia and Europe (the Baltic); linking China with the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea through Central Asia and West Asia; and connecting China with Southeast Asia, South Asia and the Indian Ocean. The 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road is designed to go from China's coast to Europe through the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean in one route, and from China's coast through the South China Sea to the South Pacific in the other.⁵ (See map I.) Table provides names of countries along the route and the region. A new map was published in *the China Daily* on 15 April 2015 where Chinese government included South Asia and South Pacific in the official route (see map 2). The initial map did not include South Asia in land route of OBOR, however, the revised map issued by China in April 2015 incorporates South Asia.

Map 1: Routes of OBOR



Source: Xinhua finance agency

Table: China plus 64 countries

East Asia	China, Mongolia
Southeast Asia	Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam
Central Asia	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
West Asia and North Africa	Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen
South Asia	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka
Europe	Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine

Map 2: Revised Routes of OBOR



Source: *China Daily*

Apart from strategic advantage, economic benefit has been a major driver for initiating OBOR. It signified a major attempt by the Chinese government on a project involving 65 countries, partly because of the compulsion of the domestic economy that focused on restructuring and resource management. In this context, it is logical here to briefly analyze China's economic situation.

The economic rise of China is an important development of the 21st century. China experienced a near double digit growth for over three decades, it became the 'manufacturing hub' of the world economy and overtook Japan as the second largest economic entity. The period of high growth rate (1978-2011) is over and the Chinese government has committed itself to a 'new normal'. The economy is currently undergoing crucial structural transformations and it witnessed a relatively slow growth of 7.3 percent in 2014, 6.9 percent in 2015 and 6.7 percent in 2016.

The Chinese model of growth created wealth in China; however, it also resulted in creating serious developmental and social problems. The reform era saw growth concentrated in eastern or coastal areas in China, the issue of regional disparity and inequalities in income and wealth proved that distribution of growth is not fair. Some scholars even termed it as a crisis. It is suggested that if the problem is not solved, the 'middle-income trap' could be a reality.⁶

In this background, it is logical that the vision document noted “In advancing the Belt and Road Initiative, China will fully leverage the comparative advantages of its various regions, adopt a proactive strategy of further opening-up, strengthen interaction and cooperation among the eastern, western and central regions, and comprehensively improve the openness of the Chinese economy.” This highlights the significance of OBOR from China’s domestic perspective.

Yang Jiechi recently (February 2017) has confirmed that OBOR “adheres closely to China’s regional development strategy, new urbanisation strategy and opening up strategy and will provide a strong boost to China’s all dimensional opening up”. Therefore, benefit to China’s domestic economy remains a major driver for OBOR. Moreover, OBOR offers opportunities for China’s economic restructuring, industrial upgradation as well as “going global” strategy.

In the era of economic slowdown in China, the idea is to create new markets and get economic benefits by building infrastructure (road, railways etc) and industrial corridors and establishing industrial complexes along the ports/hubs and build transportation and communication networks in the region. It is not a charity project and is all about creating new market for Chinese companies.

Energy

A study by the Institute of Quantitative and Technical Economics (IQTE) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) in 2015 notes “China is facing an extremely serious energy security situation”.⁷ While speaking at the sixth meeting of the Central Leading Group on Financial and Economic Affairs in June 2014, Xi Jinping emphasized that China will encourage energy cooperation through the OBOR and expand oil and gas cooperation with countries in Central Asia, West Asia, the Americas and Africa during the implantation of the project. He said “we will also intensify our efforts in energy exploration and extraction,...launch initiatives to create, revise and abrogate laws and regulations in energy sector.”⁸

Significantly, the IQTE study notes that OBOR has been planned to provide a crucial opportunity to connect energy resources and consumption market of Central Asia, East Asia, Western Asia and South Asia in order to form a new regional energy market. This will effectively exploit rich energy resources of the region rather than form a fixed supply relationship through a single pipeline.⁹ On the basis of IQTE study, it is logical to analyse energy component of China’s OBOR initiative vis-a-vis various regions.

Northeast Asia: Russia and Mongolia are important countries from the perspective of China’s energy security. The implementation of OBOR has provided more chances of energy supply to China from Russia and Mongolia. The IQTE study on OBOR suggests that the “future is likely to witness a new growth pole if power grid inter connection and oil and gas market integration can be achieved in the Russian Far East, Northeast China and Bohai Sea of China and North Korea.”¹⁰

Southeast Asia: Overall, Southeast Asia is rich in oil and gas resources. The study highlights that Southern China has a good industrial foundation, but poor energy resources. Southwest China, Mekong river valley and Myanmar have abundant water resources, but poor industrial foundation. Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei have abundant oil –gas resources but do not have matching industrial system.¹¹

It seems various regions of China will offer themselves as the destination of energy resources and the neighboring countries to be the ‘supplier of energy resources to help China to develop as an industrial power.

The study also talks about linking energy markets in west China, Central Asia and West Asia. It also suggests an energy network, including Iran, Afghanistan, China, India and Pakistan in the future. The study recommends that the ‘infrastructure for oil’ principle of China should be further expanded and applied as this would lead to the development of the infrastructure constriction among the OBOR more rapidly.¹² Again, ‘infrastructure for oil’ model was successful for China in Africa. It might not be appropriate for other countries.

Geopolitical influence

Now, it is well documented that Deng Xiaoping’s “24 character guidelines” to keep a low profile in international affairs has been sidelined by Xi Jinping. China’s long term goal is to be a dominant power in Asia as well as the world. President Xi Jinping is credited with putting forward the concept of China Dream or the Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. President Xi has expounded the Chinese dream as one of the strong state, rejuvenation of nation and the happy life of people.¹³ After the Party Congress, President Xi highlighted that China will march towards the two great goals. First goal is “the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects” by the year 2021. Second is to become a “modern socialist country” that is “prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious” by 2049.¹⁴ Chinese leadership has noted that “The important thinking of the Chinese dream has not only energized our people's determination and confidence in accomplishing the great renewal of the Chinese nation but also substantially boosted China's appeal and influence in the world, enhanced our stature and voice in international affairs and given full expression to the strong synergy between our domestic and external agenda.”¹⁵

Chinese experts have acknowledged that “one of the most remarkable features of Chinese foreign policy since the 18th National Congress of CPC is greater significance attached to the national interest.”¹⁶ Prof Wang Jishi has stressed that China may regard itself as the middle of north, south, east and west when developing its overall national geo-strategy.¹⁷ This resonates with the “middle kingdom syndrome” which is quite evident in change of policy over unsettled territorial/maritime disputes. Yang Jiechi’s article in *Qiushi* (seeking truth) emphasized “**territorial sovereignty ahead of peaceful settlement**” in the context of South China Sea dispute¹⁸

President Xi Jinping has also talked about building “a community of common destiny”. However, “China’s vision of a ‘Common Destiny’ could be problematic because it assumes that all countries in Asia want what China wants. A ‘Common Destiny’ according to China has enormous implications for global geopolitics and the existing Asian political order... By promoting a Chinese-led concept of ‘Asia for Asia’, Beijing is creating competition between its proposals and what Asian countries want to do on their own.”¹⁹

II Challenges and Risks Involved

Implementation of the OBOR plan will be perhaps the greatest challenge for President Xi Jinping and his team as it involves several serious risks.

A study by the Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE) notes that China’s OBOR initiative faces three self-induced challenges. First is the implementation of projects. Chinese companies have had some notable failures, such as construction of Poland’s A2 highway by the Chinese Overseas Engineering Group and the cancellation of deal by China Machinery Engineering Corporation in Turkey. Second challenge is selection of projects for finance. Chinese banks may be at greater risks of investing in non viable ventures. The third and most important challenge is to separate economics and politics and not support projects primarily for political reasons.²⁰

Professor Wang Yiwei from School of International University, Renmin University, Beijing, has underlined following risks of the OBOR initiative in his award winning study.²¹ The first problem is political risks, which can be divided into two categories: domestic political risks of various countries and geopolitical risks. The second problem is security risks, which can be divided in traditional and nontraditional security. It includes: (a) natural risks (b) environmental risks (c) threat of extremist forces (d) threat of non-government organizations (e) maritime security risks. The economic risks are demonstrated in following aspects: (a) macro risks such as possible problems of AIIB and Silk Road Fund (b) industrial risks-not only problems concerning the overcapacity of China and its industry ‘going global’, but also that of achieving industrial improvement for countries along the routes and (c) lack of risk response mechanisms. Legal risks are also important. China has adopted its own socialist legal system, which is different from those 64 countries on the route. Legal risks can occur due to issues related to investment, labour, environmental concerns, poor management etc. Moreover, this can occur due to different laws in countries along the route. Finally, moral risks faced by OBOR initiative at the level of enterprise, individual and national could be also problematic.²²

Apart from the above challenges and risks involved, it is pertinent to argue that following issues will be critical as far as implementation of OBOR is concerned. (a) China has to respect international law and practices when it comes to disputed territories and regions, otherwise, balancing and counterbalancing will negatively affect the prospects of successful implementation. (b) China’s model of investment has not been appreciated by many countries. Generally, Chinese companies import Chinese materials and equipment as

well as labour. This creates tension with local populations. This was quite evident in local protests in countries such as Kazakhstan and Sri Lanka. Further, a study of loan practices by the China Development Bank and the Export Import Bank of China in 2013-15 showed that 70 per cent of overseas credit was made on the condition that at least part of the fund be used to purchase Chinese equipments and involve Chinese labour.²³ Thus, China's model of investment seriously needs reform. (c) Finally, the issue of technology is also important. China lags behind in terms of cutting-edge and core technologies. It would be inappropriate to transfer previous generation technology to neighboring countries in the era of economic restructuring and up-gradation.

III Early Harvests of OBOR

State Councilor Yang Jiechi and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Chinese experts have highlighted the following early harvests of OBOR. ²⁴ (a) China has signed bilateral cooperation agreements with countries along the OBOR route. So far 34 countries and international organizations signed inter-governmental cooperation agreements with China to build OBOR on the basis of which detailed cooperation plans will be finalized. (b) Financial support mechanism is taking shape. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has started functioning from the beginning of 2017. Silk Road Fund formally launched its first batch of investment projects (c) The development in industrial capacity cooperation has been accelerated. China has signed agreements with more than 20 countries to initiate systematic industrial capacity cooperation. A great many of important projects have been launched in different countries (d) Connectivity: presently, construction of railway between Hungary and Serbia, and High-speed railway in Indonesia have started. Construction of railway networks connecting China and Laos, China and Thailand has begun. Construction also have started for a number of high-way projects. (f) Significant development has been made in economic corridor construction. (g) Trade and investment: In 2015, Chinese enterprises made direct investments to 49 countries related to OBOR, with a total amount US \$ of 15 billion.

However, it is a fact that many of the infrastructure projects undertaken by China predates the OBOR initiative. For example, gas pipeline, rail and road construction projects in Central Asia which China had built before the announcement of OBOR, but now it claims them to be a part of the initiative.

Further, the establishment of AIIB has been highlighted as a bank created for the purpose of financing the OBOR projects. This cannot be justified as this was not the only purpose of the bank when it was established.

It is pertinent to note that the Government has not highlighted the impact of implementation of OBOR on China's regional and provincial development as (the vision document and other official statements highlight). China released its first big data report "Belt and Road in big data" on 20 October 2016 in Beijing. As per the report Guangdong, Zhejiang, Shanghai, Tianjin, Fujian, Shandong, Henan, Yunnan and Beijing are the top ten

most active participants in China. This demonstrates that OBOR has not impacted positively on the regional development strategy of China. Coastal and eastern regions of China are most active participants of OBOR. Further, the big data report said that Guangdong province topped all Chinese provincial level regions in trade volume with relevant countries along the route accounting for 20.9 percent of national total. Guangdong is followed by Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Beijing. Significantly, this can add to the problem of regional disparity in China.

Further, there is still ambiguity about huge cost as well as financial mechanism to be followed for individual or whole project. China should come out clearly on the issue of 'debt trap' fear among many nations.

The success of OBOR initiative will depend on following factors: (a) How does China deal with several political, economic, security, legal, moral, technological risks and challenges involved in the implementation of the projects? The risks are quite serious and complex and carry a high percentage/chances of failure; (b) What are countries on the route to get, especially in terms of their economic development and security? Each country will assess the benefit from infrastructural and other projects; (c) How China deals with regional stake-holders. A policy of balancing and assertiveness might prove counterproductive, as evident in East Asia. China needs to be sensitive to interests and aspirations of regional stakeholders in Asia.

IV

Changing Contours of OBOR in South Asia

In his address at a special event organized by ICWA in September 2014, President Xi Jinping noted "with OBOR as wings, China wants to take off together with South Asia."²⁵ He also talked about assistance to South Asia. "The message then was that China is a neighbor to South Asia and India will not have a free run in the region. In fact a distinct approach to South Asia has been in making by China since at least the beginning of this century"²⁶ It is of no surprise that Chinese scholars have used the terms such as 'New Springtime' in China-South Asia relations and 'rediscovery of the strategic status of South Asia' in recent years.²⁷

It is important to note that South Asia was not originally a part of OBOR although it was mentioned in section III of the vision document outlining the framework of the initiative.²⁸ Further, the vision document notes "The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor are closely related to the Belt and Road Initiative". Initially, official map of OBOR did not include CPEC or BCIM.

Now, there is a trend in China to define CPEC as a flagship project of OBOR. Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Hong Lei noted on April 20, 2015. "The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is located where the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road meet. It is, *therefore*, a major project of the "Belt and Road" initiative."²⁹

When Foreign Minister Wang Yi talked about early-stage harvest of OBOR in May 2016, he said “China-Pakistan economic corridor started early and developed fast, with a number of major projects launched.... China-Bangladesh-India-Myanmar economic corridor is steadily developing”³⁰. State Councilor Yang Jiechi in his interview to *the People’s Daily* and *China Daily* in February 2017 referred to economic corridor construction as an early harvest of OBOR. For many Chinese experts and media, now CPEC is part of overall OBOR. It needs to be noted that “The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor impacts on India’s core concerns of sovereignty and its now being shown as part of the OBOR has obviously made India even warier of the OBOR.”³¹ Further, the process of BCIM cooperation started around more than 15 years ago. It would be incorrect to cite BCIM as an early harvest achievement of OBOR initiative.

Conclusion

As per official pronouncements, a clear roadmap and plan of actions will emerge during the BAR Forum on 14-15 May 2017. Participant countries may identify major cooperative projects and sign financing agreements. Six parallel panel discussions are expected to focus on policy coordination and connections of development strategies, connectivity, economic and trade cooperation, investment and financing systems, people-to-people relations and think tank communication. Further, it is noteworthy that a ministerial delegation from North Korea will be participating at the Forum. North Korea is not on the proposed route of OBOR. There could be only strategic reasons for the participation of North Korea.

Finally, it can be said that OBOR is China's long-term and strategic agenda to acquire market, resources and dominance in Asian and world affairs. The initiative can clash or compete with the interest and aspirations of major Asian and non-Asian countries. Significantly, OBOR has reinforced the strategic importance of South Asia and China cannot overlook concerns of regional stake-holders. Even Chinese scholars agree that factors such as the growth of India, the drawdown of foreign forces from Afghanistan and China’s Western Development Strategy entering a new phase, have made South Asia an area of critical strategic significance.

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Disclaimer: The views expressed are that of the Researcher and not of the Council.

Endnotes:

¹ Chinese Foreign Ministry has informed that following 29 Heads of State and Government will attend the Forum: Argentinean President Mauricio Macri, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, Chilean President Michelle Bachelet, Czech President Milos Zeman, Indonesian President Joko Widodo, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev, Lao President Bounnhang Vorachit, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Swiss President Doris Leuthard, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn, Fijian Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib

Razak, Mongolian Prime Minister Jargaltulga Erdenebat, Myanmar State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydlo, Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic, Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy and Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe.

² State Councilor Yang Jiechi's interview to *the People's Daily* and *the China Daily*, reproduced as: "Welcome to Belt and Road Forum", *Beijing Review*, no. 7 February 16, 2017

³ Wang Jishi "Marching Westwards: Rebalancing of China's Geostrategy" *International and Strategic Studies Report*, No. 73 October 2012 available at www.ciss.pku.edu.cn/Code/AccessoriesMaker.aspx?id=2270 accessed on 5 January 2014

⁴ Yun Sun "March West: China's Response to US Rebalancing" available at www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2013/01/31-china-us-sun

⁵ "Vision and actions on jointly building Silk Road economic belt and 21st-century Maritime Silk Road" available at <https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/>

⁶ A term used to describe the situation in which a country becomes stuck at a certain growth level.

⁷ *One Belt One Road: Connectivity and Common Development – Energy Infrastructure Development and Energy Market Integration in Asia-Pacific Region* (Beijing, China Social Sciences Press, 2016) pp 48- 107

⁸ Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 2014) p. 143.

⁹ *One Belt One Road: Connectivity and Common Development – Energy Infrastructure Development and Energy Market Integration in Asia Pacific Region* (Beijing, China Social Science press, 2015) pp 48- 107

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

¹³ Xi Jinping, *The Chinese Dream of the Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation* (Beijing, Foreign Language Press, 2014)

¹⁴ Later, these were referred to as "two centenary goals".

¹⁵ Yang Jiechi "Implementing China Dream" available at <http://nationalinterest.org/print/commentary/implementing-the-chinese-dream-9026?page=5>

¹⁶ Zhang Qingmin, "China's Foreign Policy since 18th National Congress of the CPC" in *China International Strategy Review 2013* (Beijing, Foreign Language Press, 2014) pp 101-134.

¹⁷ Wang Jishi, "North South East and West – China in the Middle: A Geostrategic Chessboard", *China International Strategy Review 2013* (Beijing, Foreign Language Press, 2014) pp. 27-52.

¹⁸ As quoted in Zhang Qingmin, "China's Foreign Policy since 18th National Congress of the CPC" in *China International Strategy Review 2013* (Beijing, Foreign Language Press, 2014) p. 109.

¹⁹ "The 29th Asia-Pacific Roundtable: Conference Report", available at http://www.isis.org.my/files/IF_2015/IF-se/29th_APR_2015_Special_Edition.pdf

²⁰ Simeon Djankov, "The Rationale Behind China's Belt and Road Initiative in PIIE Briefing 16-2, Simon Djankov and Sean Miner eds. *China's Belt and Road Initiative: Motives, Scope and Challenges Available at* <https://piie.com/.../piie.../chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-motives-scope-and-challenges>

²¹ Wang Yiwei, *The Belt and Road Initiative: What China will Offer the World and its Rise*. (Beijing: New World Press, 2016) pp. 80-129.

²² For more details see Wang Yiwei, *The Belt and Road Initiative: What China will Offer the World and its Rise*. (Beijing: New World Press, 2016) pp. 80-129.

²³ As quoted in PIIE Briefing 16-2, Simon Djankov and Sean Miner eds. *China's Belt and Road Initiative: Motives, Scope and Challenges, P. 7 Available at* <https://piie.com/.../piie.../chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-motives-scope-and-challenges>

²⁴ Wang Yi: "One Belt One Road" initiative achieves series of important early state harvest, available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-05/22/c_135377975.htm, State Councilor Yang Jiechi's interview to *People's Daily* and *China Daily*, reproduced as: "Welcome to Belt and Road Forum", *Beijing Review* no. 7 February 16, 2017

²⁵ As quoted in Amb. Nalin Surie "China's Growing Geopolitical Reach and Intersection of Interests with China" Presentation at seminar held in Bangalore on 13 June 2015 organized by Asia Centre, Bangalore and ICWA, New Delhi

²⁶ Amb. Nalin Surie, "China's Growing Geopolitical Reach and Intersection of Interests with China" Presentation at seminar held in Bangalore on 13 June 2015 organized by Asia Centre Bangalore and ICWA, New Delhi

²⁷ See for example 更新时间, 彭念: 中国的南亚政策出现新变化, (Peng Nian, "New Changes Occur in China's South Asia Policy") available at <http://m.aisixiang.com/data/78471.html> and

²⁷ Lan Jianxue, "Developments in South Asia in 2013: Accelerated Transformation and Overlying Risks" in *The CIIS Blue Book on International Situation and China's Foreign Affairs* (2014) (Beijing: CIIS/World Affairs Press, 2015)

²⁸ Amb. Nalin Surie, "China's Growing Geopolitical Reach and Intersection of Interests with China" presentation at seminar held in Bangalore on 13 June 2015 organized by Asia centre Bangalore and ICWA, New Delhi

²⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of PRC, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei's Regular Press Conference on April 20, 2015, available at http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1256093.shtml

³⁰ Wang Yi: "One Belt One Road" initiative achieves series of important early-stage harvest", available at http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-05/22/c_135377975.htm

³¹ Distinguished lecture by Amb. Nalin Surie on "China: An Insight and the State of Bilateral Relations "at IIT, Guwahati, 17 April 2017 available at <http://www.mea.gov.in/distinguished-lectures-detail.htm?659>