

ONE BELT ONE ROAD (OBOR)

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INTRODUCTION

It is a developmental strategy and framework, unveiled by Chinese leader Xi Jinping in September and October 2013 in announcements revealing the SREB and MSR, respectively. It focuses on connectivity and cooperation among countries primarily in Eurasia, which consists of two main components, the land-based "Silk Road Economic Belt" (SREB) and oceangoing "Maritime Silk Road" (MSR). Thus, the overall plan consists of two parts: "Silk Road Economic Belt" and "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" and it is known as "One Belt One Road" (OBOR) in short.¹

OBOR and Indian Concerns



Source 2

- 1- "Chines president propose Asia-Pacific Dream" (2014)
- 2- Tai-Wei Lim "China's One Belt one Road Initiative Aug. 2016"

THREE ROUTES COVERED IN THE "SILK ROAD ECONOMIC BELT ARE:

- 1) From China via Central Asia and Russia to Europe;
- 2) From China to Central and Western Asia to Persian Gulf and Mediterranean Sea;
- 3) China to Southeast Asia, South Asia and Indian Ocean.

For the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road", it will focus on two routes:³

- 1) From Chinese coastal cities, via South China Sea to Indian Ocean, extending to Europe;
- 2) From Chinese coastal cities, via South China Sea to South Pacific.

WHY OBOR

According to its "Vision and Action"⁴, the Chinese government plans to enhance cooperation in the following 5 areas.

- 1) Policy Communication: To establish intergovernmental communication mechanism to deepen common interest and promote trust and mutual consensus.
 - 2) Connecting via infrastructure: To enhance connectivity along the routes, huge investment will be made on infrastructure likes road, railway, canal, port, energy transfer network and information and communication technology network.
 - 3) Facilitation of investment and trade: To facilitate investment and trade and remove barriers and to aim to establish free trade zones. This will also encourage Chinese companies to invest in infrastructure along the countries of the planned routes.
- 3- Nivedita Das Kundu "China's One Belt One Road : Initiative, Challenges & Perspective", 2017
- 4- China's Official and Authoritative Documents.
- 4) Financial support: Finance is one of the key elements of the project and this can be supported by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), New Development Bank (NDB) and the Silk Road Infrastructure Fund, as well as the proposed Shanghai Cooperation Organization Development Fund. It will also promote the use of RMB to issue bonds for raising funds for infrastructure.
 - 5) People-to-people_ contact: In addition to economic and financial cooperation, the plan also foresees promoting cultural and educational exchange, tourism, prevention of disease and cooperation in technological research.

The strategy underlines China's push to take a bigger role in global affairs, and its need to export China's production capacity in areas of overproduction such as steel manufacturing. The initiative calls for the integration of the region into a cohesive economic area through building infrastructure, increasing cultural exchanges, and

broadening trade. Apart from this zone, which is largely analogous to the historical Silk Road, another area that is said to be included in the extension of this 'belt' is South Asia and Southeast Asia.

Many of the countries that are part of this 'belt' are also members of the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

The coverage area of the initiative is primarily Asia and Europe. However, Oceania is also included as well as East Africa.

OBOR AND INDIA

China extended an invitation to India to join Maritime Silk Route during the 17th round of border talks between the Special Representatives of the two countries in New Delhi.

OBOR project will have a connected mix of not only developed European countries but also the bustling East Asian nations. .

India needs to be careful how China progresses on this because, many roads of the "belt" are inching towards India like the Pakistan economic corridor that connects Kashgar in Xinjiang with Karachi and Gwadar on the Arabian coast and will run across the mighty Karakoram and through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

China is also extending its Tibet railway line from Lhasa to the Indian frontiers in the south. Beijing is urging Delhi to jointly develop a trans-Himalayan economic zone of cooperation with Nepal and Bhutan. Beijing has also been talking to Delhi about the so-called BCIM corridor to link the Yunnan province in Southwestern China with Myanmar, Bangladesh and eastern India.

Besides economic integration, these initiatives are also meant to showcase Chinese military might to the larger world and how it plans to use these sensitive corridors for its military mobilization.

Once all key players have undergone their own validation to become participants, these initiatives led by the Chinese could augur well for the rising Asian century.

The economic prosperity that the ancient Silk Route brought to the regions sitting on its path, could well be repeated in a much more impactful manner. The Indian government is progressive and looking to connect internally with initiatives such as Digital India, and it can marry gracefully with "Information Silk Route" where

telecom connectivity between the countries through fiber, trunk line and under-sea cables is also a key component. This will expand the bandwidth capabilities for India significantly, without which offering e-Governance and delivering public services in an efficient manner, will remain a 'pipe dream and a good marketing campaign.

India and China's Interest have always tended to coincide as far as trade & economic cooperation is concerned.

In spite of persistent differences on boundary dispute China and India has robust economic interaction. In 2014, India and China bilateral trade stood at \$ 71.53 billion. Way back in 1984, India-China accord each other "Most favoured Nation (MFN) status.

Being a key participant to such a global infrastructural initiative would mean we will have excellent connectivity of various transport modes, and a great facilitator to Make In India initiative.

Success for India depends on how we efficiently use these channels to find and grow new export markets for our products and enable efficient trade routes.

The benefits to India while participating in a globally challenging project such as OBOR are immense. For one, the technical know-how they will bring back could be used to develop or iron out issues facing domestic infrastructure sector or for envisioning projects that we never had audacity to pursue before. An increased trust between the countries involved will not only increase opportunities for extended trade across their respective industries, but sharing the know-how, co-operating in research & development and improving mutual security through co-operation in areas such as customs, are just a beginning of immense possibilities.

With a policy for achieving these objectives in place, India can cooperate and compete with China on regional connectivity and can pave the way for India's connection with the unfolding geo-economic transformation in Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

Certain projects have higher environmental risks, other do not. So the right standard is developing what you need to do in line with the legally apply in the every time.

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- 3- Nivedita Das Kundu, “China’s One Belt One Road : Initiative, Challenges & Prespects.”
- 4- Tom Miller, “China’s Asian Dream : Empire Building along the New Sil Road.” Feb. 2017.

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