The impact of the New Silk Road on international maritime logistics

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Abstract. The article identifies the problem of transport corridors of the Eurasian continent, along which goods for various purposes are delivered. Promising areas of trade and economic cooperation between the countries of Central Asia have been identified within the framework of the New Great Silk Road project, taking into account the impact of cargo delivery along alternative routes, including sea.

1 Introduction

The historical retrospective of the Great Silk Road covers centuries-old socio-political events that unite the common historical destinies of the peoples of the countries of Central Asia. For many centuries, trade and economic relations have strengthened the historical community of the peoples of Central Asia.

In the 19th century, two trends, intertwined, opened the region to the outside world: on the one hand, European science showed an active interest in the "white spots", on the other, there was a territorial growth of empires, primarily Russian and British, associated with the inclusion of the Central Asia to one of the points of their rivalry [1, 2].

The military expeditions of Bekovich-Cherkassky, Buchholz, the trips of Valikhanov, Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky and other explorers to a certain extent geographically discovered the region of Central Asia.

2 Method

The term itself underwent a certain evolution and over time, in addition to a purely geographical definition, began to acquire a historical and cultural meaning. By the second half of the 19th century, as Britain expanded from the marginal coastal regions of Eurasia deep into the continent, and, on the other hand, Russia from the north, the space of inner Asia narrowed more and more, and with it the definition itself crystallized.

By the end of the 19th century, among Russian and Western researchers, Inner or Central Asia was associated with the concept of Turkestan, which in turn was divided into three components, the so-called Russian (later Soviet) Turkestan, Chinese, which includes most of the modern Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region China and northern Afghanistan.

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Here, the definition of "Turkestan" acted, in fact, as a historical and cultural marker of a space characterized by relative internal unity, a common cultural dominant, lifestyle, and linguistic closeness.

Finally, the last interpretation of this term appeared in the middle of the 20th century, mainly to refer to the five Asian republics of the USSR-Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. Actually in the Soviet tradition, as you know, the region was called Central Asia and Kazakhstan. A similar division was in the practice of tsarist Russia.

The history of this region, according to ancient chronicles, is replete with examples of various wars and conquests. In ancient times, this region was quite strongly integrated into the space of Iran - these were also ancient Persia, Parthia, the power of the Sassanids and other states. Due to close integration with the Middle East, Maverannahr was conquered by Alexander the Great, who was called here "Iskander the two-horned". From time to time, Maverannahr fell under the influence of conquerors from the south, then from the north (and with them massive migrations). Historical examples of the inclusion of nomads in the zones of influence are the era of the ancient Aryans, Saks, the power of the Kushans and the period of domination of the Turkic Khagans. Since the era of the appearance of the Turks in the VI century, there has been an active expansion of the range of Turkic-speaking peoples and tribes. On the one hand, there was a metization of Turkic newcomers and Sogdians, and on the other hand, irreversible processes of assimilation of the latter were going on.

As already mentioned, the historical Maverannahr was the object of conquests and wars. In fact, this transit territory was a key element, being at the crossroads of Eurasian transport communications, the main of which was the Great Silk Road. Naturally, this aspect of the inner life of a given space formed the initial unity. Historically, the simplest form of integration has always been geography.

Traditionally, the majority of the political elite in the Central Asian states were from the nomadic aristocracy. In the last three Central Asian states, the nomadic aristocracy also constituted mainly the military-political elite of the khanates (commanders, leaders of military detachments to collect taxes), sometimes the ruling dynasties also had nomadic roots (the Ming dynasty in Kokand, the Ashtar Khanids (Genghisids) in Bukhara, the Turkmen khans or Kazakh Genghisides in Khiva).

The military support, in addition to small regular troops, was mainly made up of military contingents of nomads. Representatives of the sedentary culture occupied various posts in administrative bodies (in the Divan, the offices of the khan, the vizier, and others) and, undoubtedly, constituted the spiritual stratum (imams, mullahs, ishans, hojas).

Historically, until recently, the administrative and political structure of the states of Central Asia was based on a whole group of factors that were the basis for their relatively stable existence, among which the ethnic principle probably occupied one of the last places.

For example, territorially the Kokand Khanate consisted of lands inhabited by Kazakhs and Kyrgyz. The actual center of the khanate was located among the settled agricultural culture of the Ferghana Valley with its Turkic and Iranian-speaking population and ancient cities.

There was no rigid ethno-linguistic differentiation here, the population of the emirate consisted of both Turkic-speaking nomadic and semi-nomadic ethnic groups, as well as Iranian- and Turkic-speaking settled farmers, the latter being a more cohesive group in economic and cultural terms.

There were several more semi-independent possessions, for example, the so-called Aral possession, which was periodically ruled by Turkmen, Kazakh and Karakalpak rulers, as well as Kazakh, Turkmen and Kyrgyz nomadic tribal associations.
Undoubtedly, Islam was a single cultural marker for all these formations. True, from time to time, for political purposes, the Central Asian rulers, in order to justify raids on the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz, the seizure of their lands, declared a “holy war” (gazavat) against the “infidels”.

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In September 1924, the Central Executive Committee of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic adopted a resolution “On demarcation”, according to which the Uzbek, Turkmen, Kyrgyz (Kazakh), Kara-Kyrgyz (Kyrgyz) and Tajik peoples were given the right to form state national formations.

In December 1929, Tajikistan acquired the status of a union republic. In 1936, when Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan received the status of union republics, the national-territorial "statehood" of the peoples of Central Asia was legally formalized.

Despite the fact that the ethnic areas mostly coincide with the titular name of the respective countries, they do not fully reflect it. The complexity of the situation, as already mentioned, lies in the fact that the ethnic origin was closely intertwined with economic, cultural and landscape-geographical determinants. Therefore, reflecting only ethnic settlement, the state border lost its meaning.

The opening of the way to the west for the Chinese is associated with the travels of Zhang Qian, who during the time of Emperor Wudi (second century BC) reached the middle reaches of the Syr Darya and Bactria along the Western route and then returned to China along the Jade route.

Zhang Qian traveled for diplomatic purposes and the situation was when the main political power of Central Asia at that time (the Huns) entered into diplomatic and trade relations with China.

It is not known exactly when the export of silk from China began, but it is known that it appeared in Central Asia by the middle of the second millennium BC, and in the fifth century BC. - in Greece. Luxurious clothes made of silk Aristophanes calls "Amorgas chitons"; many modern researchers believe that they were depicted by some ancient sculptors.

After the campaigns of Alexander the Great, who expanded the borders of the Greek world to Persia and India, the first information about the Silk country - Serik appears for the first time. There is evidence that Cleopatra wore silk dresses, and in Rome, according to Martial, there was a special market where silk was traded. In 380 Ammianus Marcellin writes: “Silk, which was common only among the nobility, is now worn in all strata of society without distinction, even the lowest” [3].

The Silk Road road system was not permanent. So, in the Han era, the path is divided into three roads: Northern, Southern and Middle. The length of each was up to two thousand kilometers. In the Tang era (7th-8th centuries), communication along the Middle Road and the Steppe Road became more active, Chinese products are found in burials of that time in the Caucasus and Altai. There was a new route to India through Tibet and Nepal. Through Arab merchants and Swahili merchants, Chinese porcelain came to South Africa.
Everywhere Chinese goods were valued unusually, they were credited with magical properties. There were even specific "diplomatic" tricks, when peace was bought for silk and alliances were made.

China exported mainly silk, porcelain and various ornaments, but imported all sorts of curiosities unfamiliar to the Chinese: carpets, precious dishes, exotic animals, ivory, precious woods, furs, colored glass, jewelry, luxury items and slaves (fakirs, magicians, dancers).

Through trade along the Great Silk Road, the Chinese became familiar with such working animals as donkeys, mules, and camels. Horses, which China has always lacked, were used for administrative or military purposes, so there was an active "trade in horses and silk" along the Uyghur route.

The Silk Road did not always operate with the same intensity, did not always maintain its integrity. The message on it depended on the ability of the ruling dynasty of China to ensure the safety of the movement of caravans. Therefore, in the years of the weakening of the central power of China, trade on the way faded somewhat. And sometimes the volume of trade reached enormous proportions, as in the first half of the 18th century.

The Great Silk Road was a channel not only for trade exchange, but also for the exchange of technologies and artistic techniques. So, in China, local vessels of a characteristic Mediterranean shape and objects decorated in the "animal style" characteristic of Indo-European cultures are found, and in Altai, Kuban and the Don - products made in the style of Chinese craftsmen.

The Silk Road brought cotton to China, which was valued as highly as European silk. With the development of trade relations in China, new materials and technologies began to appear, such as linen, wool processing and carpet production.

3 Result

The “Great Silk Road” is a term first introduced in 1870 by the German geographer Carl von Richthofen to designate a system of trade caravan routes that connected (from the 2nd century BC to the 16th century AD) the main cultural and economic regions of Eurasia: China, Central Asia, India, Middle and Near East, Mediterranean and Europe. The idea to lay the first route for the delivery of Chinese silk to the west belonged to the emperor of the Han Dynasty Liu Che (140-87 BC), known as Udi (“Sovereign Warrior”). However, the direction of the routes of the Great Silk Road was not constant. It changed due to changes in the political situation in Central Asia and under the influence of climatic factors.

The Great Silk Road reached its heyday during the reign of the Tang Dynasty (618-907). During this period, economic and cultural ties between the peoples of Eurasia were carried out along three roads.

The information of the Arab authors of the 9th-10th centuries makes it possible to restore with greater or lesser accuracy for the period under consideration the section of the Great Silk Road with all its branches that passed through Central Asia.

During this period, Central Asia experienced a kind of trade boom associated with the development of cities, crafts and trade. The subject of trade was a wide variety of goods brought from different countries, which were in great demand in the Central Asian markets, in particular fabrics, jewelry and metal products, and much more.

Fergana horses, leather, furs, glassware, jewelry, carpets, agricultural crops, which were also in great demand in the markets of other countries, should be included among the goods exported from Central Asia.
Khordadbeh, Kudamam ibn Jafar, Ibn al-Fakih, al-Muqaddasi, al-Istakhri should be distinguished, who gave a geographical description of the northern branch of the Great Silk Road [4].

Merv (now Mary, Turkmenistan), which had important political and commercial importance in the 9th-10th centuries, served as a gateway to Central Asia. From Merv, travelers went to Amul (now Charzhou, Turkmenistan) further to Bukhara, from there to Samarkand. The Arabs indicated the distance between these cities, and they occupy from 36 to 39 farsaks (1 farsakh=6-7 km.).

Then the travelers moved from Samarkand to Zamin (Uzbekistan), here the trade route was divided into branches, these are the so-called Fergana (southern) and Shash (Turkic). According to V.V. Barthold, this path was divided in Sabata. From Zamin the road went to the city of Akhsiket (now the ruins of Iski akhsy, Uzbekistan). These roads connected the Muslim regions with the regions of Central Asia. Further, the path followed from the city of Akhsiket through Quba to Osh, and then to Uzgen. This route for caravan trade was convenient and passed through the steppes [General works on the history of Central Asia: http://publ.lib.ru/ARCHIVES/B/BARTOL'D_Vasiliy_Vladimirovich_/Bartol'd_V.V.html].

According to Mahmud of Kashgar, this mountain pass is called Kachuk Art and he was between Uzgen and Kashgar [The Great Silk Road: formation and main stages of development: https://stud.kz/ru/referat/show/121629].

From Aqaba the road led through the Kara-Koyun valley to the medieval Atbash (now the ruins of Koshoi-Korgon). According to archeology, Atbash in the 7th - 12th centuries was the headquarters of the Turkic Khagans. According to the Arab traveler-geographer Kudama ibn Jafar, the Atbash -Upper Barskan road connects, it passed through the Kochkor and Issyk-Kul valleys [GREAT SILK ROAD. PAGES FROM THE HISTORY OF THE SILK ROAD, https://www.europe-china.kz/info/68].

The northern road from Kulan to Aspara (village of Chaldovar) passed through the territory of modern Kyrgyzstan through numerous villages of the Chui valley to the city of Nevaket (village of Krasnaya Rechka). According to Arab geographers, there were numerous cities and villages of Merke, Aspara, Nusket, Haranjuvan, Saryg, Jul, Kirmirab and Nevaket on this site.

The northern road from Nevaket led through Suyab (now the village of Shabdan) to the Upper Barskan, on the southeastern shore of Issyk-Kul, then the path lay through the Santash pass in the Karkara region to East Turkestan.

In the valleys of Talas and Chu, the northern road was divided into five branches, passing directly through the territory of modern Kyrgyzstan.

The first (Chatkal) branch of the northern route started near the city of Taraz and went through the Kara-Bura pass and the Chatkal valley to Fergana. The Muslim geographers of the 10th century Ibn Haukal, al-Muqaddasi [The Great Silk Road: formation and main stages of development: https://stud.kz/ru/referat/show/121629] report about the Chatkal valley and the city of Ardalanket located there.

The second branch of the northern road also started at Taraz, passed through the territory of Kyrgyzstan and led to the Upper Barskan through the valleys of Talas and Suusamyr.

The third (Ili) branch began in the Harran region (village Ak-Su). According to A.N. Bernshtam, this path passed through the Taikechu ford on the Chu River, the Kurdai Pass, in the Alma-ATA region [Arab travelers on the Great Silk Road: https://ca-c.org.ru/daturus/jumanaliev.shtml].

The fourth branch of the northern road is connected with the city of Dzhul (the ruins of Chala-Kazak). V.V. Bartold wrote on the basis of written sources of the 9th-10th centuries that this path passed from Dzhul through Taraz and connected with the road from Akhsiket.
The last, fifth branch began in the city of Nevaket (village of Krasnaya Rechka) and went along the Boom Gorge to the banks of Issyk-Kul, where it connected with the southern road.

Arab geographers ibn- Hardadbeh, Kudama ibn-Jafar, al Istakhri and others gave in their works a geographical description of the northern branch of the Great Silk Road, in which they noted the existence of cities and settlements in the 9th-10th centuries on the territory of Kyrgyzstan. Judging by the reports of Arab geographers, we can say that the northern branch of the trade route occupied a special place on the Great Silk Road [4-6].

Moreover, travelers indicated the routes of roads and localities, the distances between them, without which it would be impossible to restore the routes of caravan trade. There is no doubt that the settled and nomadic population took an active part in international trade, this is emphasized by Arab geographers.

In addition, thanks to the reports of these travelers, we know that on the territory of Kyrgyzstan, at that time, urban civilization, craft and trade, which occupied a significant place in their economic life, were rapidly developing. The above gives an understanding of the geopolitical landscape in which the region of Central Asia historically existed and the conditions that affect the possible geopolitical configuration of the region in the future [Arab travelers on the Great Silk Road: https://ca-c.org.ru/datarus/jumanaliev.shtml].

4 Discussion

Thus, based on historical traditions, objective socio-political and trade and economic relations of the peoples of Central Asia, we can conclude that the resuscitation of the Great Silk Road in modern conditions is an objective necessity for further improvement of integration processes not only in the Central Asian region, but also for the rest of the participants in this mega-project of the 21st century.

One of the promising projects promises to be the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China transport corridor [7-10].

At the same time, the possibilities of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan transport corridor are very high. So, on June 5, 2020, the first multimodal transit was launched along the route Lanzhou -Kashgar- Irkeshtam -Osh-Andijan-Tashkent-Mari. The launch of freight traffic along this route is the result of work on the effective use of the possibilities of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China corridor. For the transportation of goods, rail and road transport is used.

In addition, the Tashkent-Andijan-Osh- Irkeshtam -Kashgar transport corridor project is not the only one for Uzbekistan. As you know, in 2021, the issue of the implementation of the trans-Afghan project became the focus of attention. This direction promises to enter the market of more than two hundred million in Pakistan, and, more importantly, the shortest route to the oceans, a task that looks more tempting than alternative projects.

The China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway will become for our country not just a way out of the transport impasse, laying several hundred kilometers of tracks through a complex mountainous landscape, the republic will find itself at the crossroads of the most important trade routes connecting various points of Eurasia. This will be a new Silk Road, and this project has already been called the flagship one.

Through the Tien Shan mountains, the shortest road from the Celestial Empire to the countries of the Old World opens. Integration into an extensive network of railways will connect Kyrgyzstan not only with the most diverse countries of the continent, but also open direct access to ports in the Persian Gulf, connect the markets of Southeast and Western Asia and the countries of the Middle East.
Transport arteries for the economy are akin to irrigation canals for wildlife. Where they pass, the landscape changes completely, conditions for growth and development are created. For our economy, this is an influx of investments, the opening of new industries and an increase in business activity, an effect similar to that of watering for crops that are dehydrated.

5 Conclusion

Specialists are already conducting field research on the ground, where the railway will pass through the territory of Kyrgyzstan. The terrain is complex, which involves the construction of overpasses and the construction of tunnels through mountain ranges. Based on expert assessments, a feasibility study will be prepared and, based on it, the cost and timing of the project itself will be determined. These works, carried out as part of the preparatory phase, are scheduled to be completed next summer. The laying of the road is supposed to start immediately, all the countries participating in the project are interested in this.

The President of the Kyrgyz Republic S. Zhaparov, who called the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway a flagship project, noted in his speeches that the highway could be built within 3-4 years, that is, in the foreseeable future. “The project is being prepared with the participation of three parties. If this road is built, we will come out of the abyss and become a transit state. There will be new jobs, our economy will prosper, and we will be able to get rid of external debts” [Revival of the Silk Road. Road to a new reality: https://kabar.kg/news/vozrozhdenie-shelkovogo-puti-doroga-v-noviy-real-nost].

Experts note the importance of the fact that the agreement on the start of construction of a section of the transcontinental railway was signed at the September summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Samarkand. That is, the project is one of the priorities and of key importance for all partners in the SCO. And some aspects of the President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping discussed with the President of the Kyrgyz Republic in Samarkand personally [11].

I am sure that the signing of an agreement of understanding on this project within the framework of this SCO Summit will become an important basis for further practical joint actions between the Chinese, Kyrgyz and Uzbek sides. This document will consolidate the unity of intentions of China, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in the construction of the road [SCO summit. The President of Kyrgyzstan met with the head of China: https://24.kg/vlast/245022_sammit_shos_prezident_kyrgyzistana_vstretilsyu_sglavoy_knr].

The Chinese leader, in turn, also noted the importance of the planned project. At the same time, he drew attention to the fact that cooperation is not limited to achieving one goal, the scope of mutual interests is much wider. “Kyrgyzstan, within the framework of the Community of Common Destiny of Kyrgyzstan and China, is one of the most friendly neighbors and close partners of China. Your republic will take a more important place in the foreign policy of the PRC. We are ready to strengthen mutual support and strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation [Discussed the development of cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and China: https://mir24.tv/news/16523557/sadyr-zhaparov-i-si-czinpim-obsudili-razvitie-sotrudnichest va-kyrgyzstana-i-kitaya].

Confidence in the successful implementation of the project is also expressed in Tashkent. President of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoev confirmed his country's interest in the speedy construction of the railway at the summit in Samarkand. And three months earlier, he spoke about this at a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, touching on
important factors in international politics. “New challenges dictate the need for further development of alternative transport corridors, strengthening transport connectivity in the southern and eastern directions. In the near future, we plan to begin the practical implementation of the Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China railway construction project, which will create additional opportunities for entering the markets of the Asia-Pacific region. This route will complement the existing railway lines in the East-West direction, Sh. Mirziyoyev emphasized.

According to experts, the global processes taking place in the world, changing the architecture of international relations, will certainly become a trigger for a serious transformation of economic ties and changes in trade rules. The changes will greatly affect the Central Asian region, through which significant volumes of trade and major cargo flows will pass through Eurasia from east to west and from north to south. Therefore, the urgency of creating a new transcontinental transport corridor is only increasing, and for Kyrgyzstan it will also be a step into a new reality.

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