



中国传媒大学  
COMMUNICATION UNIVERSITY OF CHINA



Institute for a Community  
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人类命运共同体研究院



## The Historical Connectivity between the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) and the old Silk Route traditions



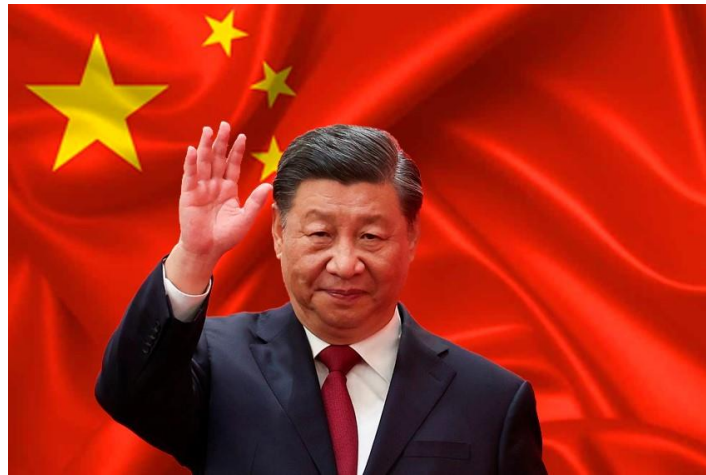
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## **Introduction**

The Initiative of Belt and Road (BRI), also well-known as the New Silk Road, is a huge infrastructure project that is being undertaken by the Chinese government. President Xi Jinping presented this enormous bundle of investment and development proposals to the public in the year



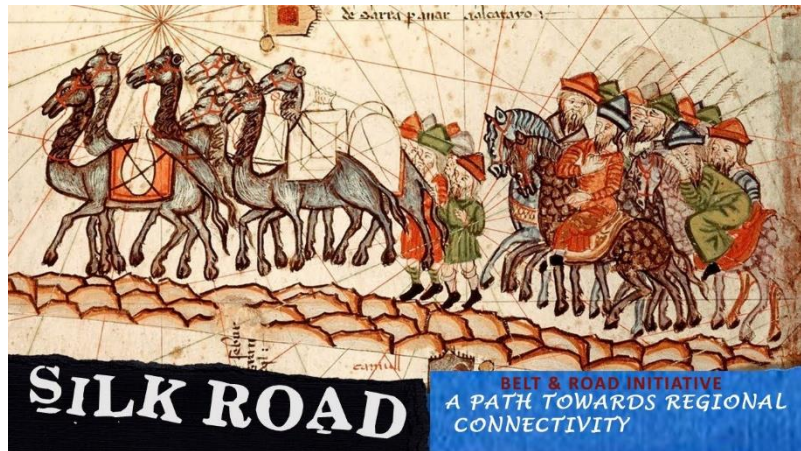
2013. The formation of a physical construction among East Asia and Europe was the initial goal that they focused on. Since that time, China's political and economic power has significantly increased as a result of the program's expansion to South America, Africa, and Oceania. As a result of the skyrocketing costs for a variety of projects, the plan has been subjected to criticism from other nations. Some experts view it as a dangerous continuation of China's expanding power. The US and other Asian nations are worried that the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) may obscure China's efforts to expand its military presence and expand its regional presence. Despite the fact that President Joe Biden has retained his suspicions regarding Beijing's behaviour, Washington has had a difficult time providing participating states with a more appealing economic plan.

## **Historical BRI and the old Silk Route traditions**

An important trading route that facilitated growing economic and commercial interaction amid the west and the east, the Silk Road was an ancient trade route. There was a time when the land Silk Roads and the sea Silk Roads were both a part of the larger Silk Road

network. Beginning in the Western Han period, the Silk Road was established, which lasted from 206 BC to 25 AD. The official establishment took place in the year 138 BC.

According to Chinese historical traditions, Zhang Qian was dispatched on a diplomatic mission to Xinjiang, which was once known as the Western



Regions. Zhang Qian's mission was accomplished by the Western Han court. The formal beginning of the land Silk Highway may be traced back to that initiative, which was responsible for carving out a road from the Central Plains to the northwest. The Han reign (206-220 BCE) of China established trade links spanning between countries like Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan in Central Asia, as well as South Asian states such as India and Pakistan. These networks were established during China's westward expansion. One of the outcomes of this was the formation of the very first Silk Road and the distance between these routes and Europe was greater than 4,000 km.

### **Emerging trends in the BRI strengthening the old Silk Route traditions**

In 2013, President Xi made the comment while he was travelling to Kazakhstan and Indonesia on official business. The Economic Belt known as Silk Road, which would run over land, and the Silk Road, which would run along water, were the two sides of the concept that were proposed. Belt and Road is the name that was ultimately chosen for both

of these programmes, although they were once known as One Belt, One Road. From the Soviet republics in the west to India, Pakistan and the rest of Southeast Asia in the south, Xi had envisioned a large network of highways, trains, energy pipelines, and faster boundary passages. This network would span from the west to the south. Xi asserts that this form of network will "break the bottleneck in Asian connectivity" and result in enhancing the connectivity at global level. China has not only been developing infrastructure, but it has also been encouraging other nations to utilise its technology goods.

The Chinese government intends to provide financial support for the construction of ports all along the coast of the Ocean of Indian, extending from East Africa to Southeast Asia and even into some regions of Europe, in order to handle the growing amount of maritime businesses.



China has very lofty goals for the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and two-thirds of the world's population and 40% of its gross domestic product are represented by the 147 nations that have either committed to projects or showed interest in doing so with regard to those initiatives. The western regions of China have been overlooked up to this point, but China is now under pressure to strengthen its worldwide trade relations with those regions. Two of the most important challenges are the encouragement of economic growth in the western region of Xinjiang, which is seeing an increase in separatist instability, and the assurance of longstanding energy goods from the Middle East and Central Asia,



preferably through lines that the United States military is unable to destroy. There is a widespread consensus among Chinese leaders that economic change is necessary in order to avoid sliding into the dreaded middle-income trap. Despite the fact that nations are having difficulty transitioning to the construction of higher-value goods and services, wages are increasing and living circumstances are getting better as low-skilled manufacturing becomes better.

A closer relationship between the BRI economies and the global economy as a whole is developing. The share of global exports from BRI nations has grown substantially in the past 20 years. If the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) materializes in more practical terms, it may facilitate the promotion of trade between nations, especially those that have not yet achieved complete economic integration.

Belt and Road Initiative economies may see more investment, cross-border commerce, and GDP growth if transportation infrastructure, including trains, is expanded. Cooperation across regions need to improve infrastructure. Some of the world's most vital economic corridors may see trade facilitation if these initiatives are successful.

### **Conclusion**

The formation of a physical construction among East Asia and Europe was the initial goal that has significantly increased China's political and economic power. In order to realise the Global Development, Security, and Civilization Initiatives, as well as to construct a world that is accessible to all, secure for all, peaceful for all time, and prosperous for all, China is willing to collaborate with other nations to strengthen and expand cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).