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One Belt, One Road: new framework for international relations?

Abstract

Since 2013 “One Belt, One Road” (OBOR, also “Belt and Road Initiative”) has been one of the most commonly used terms in public discourse regarding Chinese foreign policy. This shows the importance of the initiative to the Chinese leaders, particularly president Xi Jinping. The enterprise consists of two parts: The Silk Road Economic Belt and The 21st-century Maritime Silk Road. The article aims to consider the future development of the project. The analysis of Chinese documents, statements of political leaders, and expansion of the project from 2013 to mid-2017 was employed in order to assess possible outcomes of the policy. The results of the study lead to three conclusions. Firstly, OBOR is becoming an umbrella term for different regional development strategies across Eurasia, Africa and perhaps beyond. Those strategies include many aspects, ranging from economy, through security, science to environmental protection. Secondly, OBOR became the cognitive framework, a paradigm, for international relations – the way that people perceive them. Thirdly, the introduction of the initiative may be the beginning of China in the role of architect of new global institutions and rules. However, the rapid expansion of OBOR, both in terms of quantity of participants as well as various aspects of cooperation, may lead to ineffectiveness of the initiative.

Keywords: OBOR, trade, diplomacy, multilateralism, global order

Since 2013 “One Belt, One Road” (OBOR)¹ has been one of the most commonly used terms in public discourse regarding Chinese foreign policy. The initiative, presented by president Xi Jinping, consists of two parts: The Silk Road Economic Belt and The 21st-century Maritime Silk Road. The Belt spans from China via Central Asia, Russia, Central Europe to Western Europe. The maritime road starts in China, goes through South China Sea, Indian Ocean and Suez Canal to Europe. Many scholars hold the view that this is just Chinese response to internal economic problems combined with possible solution to security problems.² From the economic point of view, China seems to simply boost its export. At first glance, Beijing’s initiative indeed aims to strengthen existing trade routes and to establish new ones towards Europe in order to promote export of manufactured products. Simeon Djankov goes even further and add to that another

¹ „One Belt, One Road” is recently often presented by Chinese government and media as “Belt and Road Initiative”. In this article, the first form will be used.

² Theresa Fallon, “The New Silk Road: Xi Jinping’s Grand Strategy for Eurasia”, *American Foreign Policy Interests* 37, no. 3 (2015): 153, doi:10.1080/10803920.2015.1056682; Antonina Habova, “Silk Road Economic Belt: China’s Marshall Plan, Pivot to Eurasia or China’s Way of Foreign Policy”, *KSI Transactions on Knowledge Society* VIII, no. 1 (2015): 66; Arnaldo M. A. Gonçalves, “China’s ‘One Belt, One Road’ Initiative. Just Economics?”, *Pyrex Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 3, no. 2 (2017): 27; Georgi Georgiev, “The Chinese ‘One Belt, One Road’ Initiative – New Opportunities for the European Union and Its Neighbours in the Black Sea Region,” *KSI Transactions on Knowledge Society* VIII, no. 2 (2015): 34; Andrzej Bujak and Zdzisław Śliwa, “Global Aspects of Security Environment – the ‘One Belt, One Road’ Project,” *Economics and Law* 15, no. 4 (2016): 449–50, doi:10.12775/EiP.2016.029; Yong Wang, “Offensive for Defensive: The Belt and Road Initiative and China’s New Grand Strategy”, *The Pacific Review* 29, no. 3 (2016): 461, doi:10.1080/09512748.2016.1154690.

four economic objectives: expansion of Chinese construction companies, elevation of renminbi status as global reserve currency, obtaining energy security and creating demand for Chinese goods abroad.³ In terms of security, China certainly wants to achieve two objectives. First, speed up development of Central Asia, which could have stabilising effect on Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Second, establish overland trade routes, which could be used extensively during any potential military confrontation on the seas. In this narration infrastructure construction (railroads, sea ports, airports) in the Eurasia is advocated by China because of selfish interest, both economic and in terms of security. None can argue, that China is not trying to increase its value of export or broaden strategic options. However, there are at least three distinctive features of “One Belt, One Road” which prove the initiative to be far more important than a regular economic or security policy. Firstly, the scope of the initiative is not limited to profiting China in term of economic gains. It gathers a few dozen of countries, which voluntarily agreed to cooperate. It would be unusual for other countries to participate in activities, which are in contrary to their own interest. Additionally, collaboration goes beyond economics. It also includes internal security, science, cultural exchange and more. Secondly, the initiative is supported by numerous institutions, both recently established and with a long history of financing different projects. Among them are Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), various international development banks and Chinese Silk Road Fund. Thirdly, development of

³ Simeon Djankov, “The Rationale Behind China’s Belt and Road Initiative”, in *China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Motives, Scope and Challenges*, ed. Simeon Djankov and Sean Miner (Washington, DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2016), 7.

“One Belt, One Road” became theme of many international summits and conferences, most notably Belt and Road Forum of International Cooperation in May 2017. Active engagement of politicians, media and scholars in discussion related to this concept position OBOR as a prospective framework for international relations. That means China, for the first time in history, has an opportunity to establish the new paradigm for perceiving global affairs. Consequently, “One Belt, One Road” may be considered the beginning of China acting not as a benefiter of the global system, but as an architect of new global norms.

Scope of the initiative

From the beginning, both The Silk Road Economic Belt and The 21st-century Maritime Silk Road were equally emphasised by China. They were announced in September 2013 (The Economic Belt) in Astana and in October the same year (the Maritime Silk Road) in Jakarta by president Xi Jinping. Presentation during visit abroad and in those two particular countries set the tone for the initiative. However, OBOR, and in particular Silk Road Economic Belt, is not a new idea. According to Tim Summers, it origins can be traced from regional development plans implemented in China since the 1980s.⁴ Even though Chinese central leadership have put special emphasis on development of coastal regions, the provincial authorities in borderland tried to establish ties with neighbouring countries. The construction of first railway linking Xinjiang and Central Asia started in 1984, at the

⁴ Tim Summers, “China’s ‘New Silk Roads: Sub-National Regions and Networks of Global Political Economy,” *Third World Quarterly* 37, no. 9 (2016): 1633, doi:10.1080/01436597.2016.1153415.

beginning of Sino-Soviet rapprochement, and was finished in 1990. Later the project was named “new Eurasian land bridge” and spanned from Jiangsu province in east China to Netherlands.⁵ In the end, it was not a very successful enterprise, but the idea prevailed. Similarly, Maritime Silk Road was in use long before 2013. Although, it was much more important trade route for China than the land bridge.

Nevertheless, with involvement of central leadership, in particular Xi Jinping, the initiative became cornerstone of China’s engagement with the world. In October 2013, at internal “work forum on diplomacy to China’s periphery” Xi stressed usefulness of regional economic cooperation to development.⁶ At the beginning concept focused exclusively on neighbouring countries, but it expanded rapidly toward other parts of the world. In March 2015 Chinese authorities released document “Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road”. As it stated:

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,

⁵ John W. Garver, “Development of China’s Overland Transportation Links with Central, South-West and South Asia”, *The China Quarterly* 185, no. 2 (2006): 2–3, doi:10.1017/S0305741006000026.

⁶ Jinghan Zeng, “Does Europe Matter? The Role of Europe in Chinese Narratives of ‘One Belt One Road’ and ‘New Type of Great Power Relations’”, *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 55, no. 5 (September 2017): 1170, doi:10.1111/jcms.12535.

and from China's coast through the South China Sea to the South Pacific in the other.⁷

It clearly states three routes of Silk Road Economic Belt. First, from China to Europe (or more specific "the Baltic" region). Second, from China to South-Western Asia. Third, from China to other regions of Asia. It also provides two routes of Maritime Silk Road – to the West (Indian Ocean) and East (Southern Pacific). This geographical expansions shifted perception of OBOR from Chinese peripheral policy to more mature, international concept. Along the routes are located six economic corridors: new Eurasian land bridge (the one which history can be tracked up to 1980s), China-Mongolia-Russia, China-Central Asia-West Asia, China-Indo-china Peninsula, The China-Pakistan, and Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar.

Next important document regarding development of OBOR, "Building the Belt and Road: Concept, Practice and China's Contribution" was released in 2017. It was presented in May, a few days before Belt and Road Forum of International Cooperation in Beijing. As of 2017, it is the most comprehensive outline of Chinese vision for OBOR. The document directly states existence of five trade routes and six economic corridors (mentioned above), however it also indicates inclusiveness of initiative as open to countries "around the world".⁸ It also enumerate six means of communication: railroads, highways, sea transportation, aviation, pipelines, and aerospace.

⁷ "Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road," 2015, http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/newsrelease/201503/t20150330_669367.html, accessed August 29, 2017.

⁸ Office of the Leading Group for the Belt and Road Initiative, *Building the Belt and Road: Concept, Practice and China's Contribution* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2017), 4, <https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/wcm.files/upload/CMSydylyw/201705/201705110537027.pdf>.

Both documents present many areas of possible economic cooperation. Among them, for instance, are: improving connectivity infrastructure (transport, energy, communication), developing customs coordination (recognition of regulations, law enforcement, better inspection and quarantine, certification and statistical information), expanding trade, promoting new industries, and financial integration. Although economic-related policies dominate in a paper, there is also a lot of space dedicated to other means of cooperation. Cultural and academic exchanges, media cooperation, production and translations of movies, joint applications for World Cultural Heritage sites, tourism, sharing information on epidemics and other public health issues, cooperation in research and development, entrepreneurship training, exchanges of legislative bodies, think-tanks collaboration, and so on, and so forth. In “Building the Belt and Road: Concept, Practice and China’s Contribution” major development was adding environmental protection to the scope of initiative. Even though economic matters dominate in OBOR, none can underestimate impact of cultural exchange. After all, one of the immaterial products that travelled along ancient Silk Road from India to China was Buddhism.⁹ Nowadays it is a part of Chinese intangible cultural heritage.

The last¹⁰ major document released by Chinese authorities is “Vision for Maritime Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative” in June 2017. As the title suggest, it focuses on the development of The 21st-century Maritime Silk Road. Apart from two previously established maritime routes (in this document called “blue economic passages”) to the Indian Ocean

⁹ Ravi Bhoothalingam, “The Silk Road as a Global Brand”, *ASCI Journal of Management* 44, no. 2 (2015): 61, doi:10.1177/0009445515613869.

¹⁰ As for submission of text, i.e. August 2017.

and to the Southern Pacific, it proposes another one – to the Europe via Arctic Ocean. It is an inclusion of another old concept, known as Northeast Passage, into OBOR. Besides geographic expansion, this document proposes new areas of policy cooperation, for instance to monitor coastal and ocean blue carbon ecosystems.¹¹

The importance of those two documents released in 2017 may be deducted not only from the content but also from effort to make them available to the broad audience. Both of them have been released concurrently in seven different languages – all of the United Nation official languages and German. This is clear indication that Beijing is aiming to spread its ideas on international cooperation to as many governments as possible.

Apart from comprehensive papers describing OBOR, there are numerous other documents related to initiative. From more specific official documents (e.g. “Guiding Principles on Financing the Development of the Belt and Road”, “The Belt and Road Ecological and Environmental Cooperation Plan”), through local plans (e.g. “Five-year (2016-2020) Action Plan for Chengdu to Integrate with the Belt and Road Initiative”) to bilateral documents with other governments (e.g. “Memorandum of Arrangement On Strengthening Cooperation on the Belt and Road Initiative Between The Government of the People’s Republic of China And The Government of New Zealand”).¹² During Belt and Road Forum alone, China has

¹¹ National Development and Reform Commission and State Oceanic Administration, “Vision for Maritime Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative” (Beijing, 2017), 5, <https://www.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/wcm.files/upload/CMSydyglw/201706/201706200153032.pdf>.

¹² “Belt and Road Portal”, 2017, https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/info/iList.jsp?cat_id=10059, accessed August 29, 2017.

signed with dozens of countries, or unilaterally released, 76 types of different documents, spanning from MoU regarding tourism to nuclear energy.¹³ Through this network of agreements, Beijing is legitimizing OBOR as credible framework of international cooperation.

Since 2013 scope of the initiative is clearly expanding – in terms of geographical and policy diversity. It started as a concept of peripheral diplomacy and economic development tool, but quickly spread toward other areas. Most of the ideas are not particularly new, yet they are appealing to many countries. OBOR already attracted a few dozens of governments, and will almost certainly attract many more in future. First Belt and Road Forum was attended by representatives of 57 states, among them presidents of Argentina and Chile, prime minister of Fiji and members of cabinet from Australia, Brazil and New Zealand.¹⁴ There is a strong possibility the next comprehensive document on OBOR will acknowledge some Latin America countries as part of it. Additionally, the range of policies covered by the initiative is likely to broaden as well. Taken together, these direction suggest that the role of promoting economic ties with Europe will, with time, diminish within OBOR framework.

¹³ “List of Deliverables of Belt and Road Forum”, *Xinhua*, 2017, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-05/15/c_136286376.htm, accessed August 29, 2017.

¹⁴ “Belt and Road Attendees List,” *The Diplomat*, 2017, <http://thediplomat.com/2017/05/belt-and-road-attendees-list/>, accessed August 29, 2017.

Institutional Ecosystem

Development of OBOR requires financial support for the specific project. After all, programs related to infrastructure construction are very capital-intensive. The idea of establishing a new international development bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, was announced by Xi Jinping during the same state visit to Indonesia, on which he proposed The 21st-century Maritime Silk Road. As Xi stated in Indonesian parliament:

China is committed to greater connectivity with ASEAN countries. China will propose the establishment of an Asian infrastructure investment bank that would give priority to ASEAN countries' needs.¹⁵

At the beginning, plans for AIIB was limited, and focused mostly on building connections between China and members of Association of South-East Asian Nations. The need for this financial institution simply came from a clear urgency in Asia for construction of new infrastructure¹⁶. However, with the help of Chinese diplomacy, the idea got attention among many countries in Asia, Africa Europe and even South America. The Bank officially started on 25th of December, 2015 with 57 founding members, 22 out of them were non-regional states: Austria, Brazil, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Luxemburg, Malta,

¹⁵ Wu Jiao, "President Xi Gives Speech to Indonesia's Parliament", *China Daily*, 2013, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013xiapec/2013-10/02/content_17007915.htm, accessed August 29, 2017.

¹⁶ Min Ye, "China and Competing Cooperation in Asia-Pacific: TPP, RCEP, and the New Silk Road," *Asian Security* 11, no. 3 (2015): 221, doi:10.1080/14799855.2015.1109509.

Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom. In 2017 Bank's Board of Governors approved more than 20 new members. As for August 2017, 34 out of 80 members and prospective members are non-regional¹⁷. New members are shifting Bank's focus from investments in China's neighbourhood to more distant locations.

Despite the fact that AIIB is a separate entity from OBOR, it is likely to finance many projects under the initiative. Shared membership and goals (most noticeably: enhancing connectivity) position AIIB as the perfect tool for stimulating the development of OBOR. It is possible that other international development banks will follow this example. During the Belt and Road Forum Chinese Ministry of Finance signed the memoranda of understanding on "collaboration on matters of common interest" under the Belt and Road Initiative with the Asian Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the European Investment Bank, the New Development Bank (the "BRICS Bank") and the World Bank Group. At the opening plenary session of Forum, president of the last mentioned institution have finished his speech with a statement: "We're ready to help make the promise of the Belt and Road Initiative a reality".¹⁸ This indicates a possible extension of World Bank involvement into OBOR. However,

¹⁷ Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank, "Members and Prospective Members of the Bank", 2017, <https://www.aiib.org/en/about-aiib/governance/members-of-bank/index.html>, accessed August 29, 2017.

¹⁸ Jim Yong Kim, "Remarks of World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim at the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation – Opening Plenary Session," 2017, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/speech/2017/05/14/remarks-of-world-bank-group-president-jim-yong-kim>, accessed August 29, 2017.

it is important to bear in mind that cooperation does not require formal accession to the initiative. The same circumstances apply to other development banks.

The sole financial institution directly associated with OBOR is Silk Road Fund. It is Chinese state owned investment fund established in order to stimulate investments in countries within the Initiative. It started operating in December of 2014, with an initial capital of 40 billion USD. The first project funded by Silk Road Fund was 1,65 billion USD Karot hydropower in Pakistan.¹⁹ During Belt and Road Forum China announced the addition of another 14,5 billion USD to the Fund.²⁰ Currently, it is the biggest financial instrument in the OBOR controlled by the single government.

Involvement of international developmental institution into the initiative provides additional opportunities for China to strengthen the engagement of different partners. As OBOR is expanding geographically, it is almost certain that more and more projects labelled under the initiative will be funded by them. It is another factor which legitimize OBOR.

Multilateral cooperation and diplomacy

Evolution of OBOR as a framework for international relations requires not only plentiful documents and financial mechanisms, but also meaningful political dialog. China is probably one of the most prominent supporters of multilateral

¹⁹ “China’s Silk Road Fund Makes First Investment in Pakistan’s Hydropower Project”, *Xinhua*, 2015, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-04/21/c_134167533.htm, accessed August 29, 2017.

²⁰ Hou Qiang, “China Boosts Silk Road Fund’s Capital to Meet Enormous Funding Demand: Official”, *Xinhua*, 2017, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-05/14/c_136282715.htm, accessed August 29, 2017.

diplomacy in the world, therefore unsurprisingly it organized first Belt and Road Forum on International Cooperation, attended by dozens of representatives of governments and international institutions. Though, it took Beijing almost three and half years to organize the summit. The next meeting is planned in 2019.

Additionally, there is a broad spectrum of more specific conferences within OBOR. For instance OBOR Security Cooperation Dialogue, which was held on 4-5 of May 2017, with an aim to foster mechanism of cooperation on internal and external security. This event was attended by representatives of more than 20 governments.²¹ Some of the meetings are not necessarily designed as purely political, as they encompass different aspects of cooperation under OBOR. One of the examples is Digital Belt and Road Initiative Meeting held on 6-7 of December, 2016. The event brought nearly 100 experts and scholars from China and several other countries. Digital Belt and Road Initiative is science program, which aspiration is to use space-based observation to provide information helpful in sustainable development within OBOR.²²

Similar to use of long-established trade routes, OBOR also spreads to different forms of multilateral cooperation. One of the best examples exists within international collaboration in tourism. In 1993, at United Nation's World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) General Assembly, the idea of Silk Road tourism project was raised. It was designed as tool for

²¹ Xiang Bo, "Beijing Holds Security Cooperation Dialogue on Belt and Road Initiative", *Xinhua*, 2017, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-05/04/c_136257488.htm, accessed August 29, 2017.

²² "Digital Belt and Road Initiative Meeting Held in Beijing," *Institute for Remote Sensing and Digital Earth. Chinese Academy of Sciences*, 2016, http://english.radi.cas.cn/News/NU/201612/t20161221_172699.html, accessed August 29, 2017.

promotion tourism in the countries of ancient Silk Road. Since then, the little know idea was slowly developing. In 2015, during the 7th UNWTO International Meeting on Silk Road Tourism, first Tourism Ministerial Meeting of Countries along the Silk Road Economic Belt was organized. It was attended by representatives of over 25 states, which have an opportunity to discuss further cooperation in tourism – this time under OBOR framework.²³

With the further evolution of OBOR, there is a strong possibility of adaptation of other international cooperation mechanisms under the initiative. Additionally, it is likely that China will promote OBOR issues during regional forums which it initiated: Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), China-Central and East Europe Countries Meetings (“16+1” cooperation), Forum of China and Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (China-CELAC Forum), Arab-China Cooperation Forum and Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

China will try to bring as many multilateral fora as possible under the initiative. Engaging the international community into multilateral cooperation and diplomacy may be one of the most effective tools to legitimize OBOR as a framework for international relations. Meaningful dialog about the current and future shape of OBOR among involved countries is vital to maintaining its interest into the initiative.

²³ “7th UNWTO International Meeting on Silk Road Tourism and 1st Tourism Ministerial Meeting on the Silk Road Economic Belt”, *UNWTO Silk Road Programme*, 2015, <http://silkroad.unwto.org/event/7th-unwto-international-meeting-silk-road-tourism-and-1st-tourism-ministerial-meeting-silk-roa>, accessed August 29, 2017.

Concluding Remarks

During the official speech at Belt and Road Forum in Beijing Xi Jinping said:

We have enhanced coordination with the policy initiatives of relevant countries, such as the Eurasian Economic Union of Russia, the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity, the Bright Road initiative of Kazakhstan, the Middle Corridor initiative of Turkey, the Development Road initiative of Mongolia, the Two Corridors, One Economic Circle initiative of Viet Nam, the Northern Powerhouse initiative of the UK and the Amber Road initiative of Poland. We are also promoting complementarity between China's development plan and those of Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, Hungary and other countries.²⁴

This may be the most accurate description of OBOR aim. The results of this investigation show that OBOR is a comprehensive, inclusive initiative, which cannot be dismissed simply as Chinese strategy for expanding trade or preserving security. Furthermore, the scope of the initiative is growing rapidly. Therefore, this study has identified three conclusions.

Firstly, OBOR is becoming an umbrella term for different regional development strategies across Eurasia, Africa and perhaps beyond. Those strategies include many aspects, ranging from economy, through security to science and environmental protection. Some features of the initiative are developing better, others still lack of meaningful action.

²⁴ Xi Jinping, "Full Text of President Xi's Speech at Opening of Belt and Road Forum", *Xinhua*, 2017, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-05/14/c_136282982.htm, accessed August 29, 2017.

However, the increasing number of countries and policies included into OBOR shows attractiveness of it. “One Belt, One Road” (or “Belt and Road Initiative”) is already outdated term, which easily could be changed into “Belts and Roads”. In near future, with expansion to Latin American countries, the Initiative may even evolve into “Global Silk Road”.

Secondly, “One Belt, One Road” became cognitive framework, a paradigm, for international relations –the way that people perceive them. There are numerous conferences, meetings and programs under OBOR. Social scientists, journalists and other representatives of public opinion allocate a lot of time to discuss them. That legitimize the initiative and add importance to it. One possible implication of this is that idea of categorizing involved countries into one entity is credible. At the end, the countries in the world may be divided into two categories – those who participate in OBOR and those, who are reluctant to integrate with the block. Using different terms: those which actively participate in globalization, and those which want to slow down this process. It will not be Cold War style rivalry, although it may bring some tensions, most likely between United States (which is not positively predisposed towards the initiative) and its partners. Some even hold the view, that OBOR may challenge current order in Eurasia.²⁵

Thirdly, introduction of „One Belt, One Road” may be the beginning of China in role of architect of new global institutions and rules. Since 1978 China was benefiting from the structure of international relations. With rapid economic development, the influence of Beijing raised. However, until

²⁵ David Arase, “China’s Two Silk Roads Initiative What It Means for Southeast Asia,” *Southeast Asian Affaris*, no. 1 (2015): 42, muse.jhu.edu/article/583040.

recently China mostly concentrated attention on collection information regarding international norms and exploiting it. Nowadays, it taken more active attitude, by proposing policies, regulations and new mechanisms of cooperation. Marc Lanteigne hold the view that China made transition from “system-influencing” toward more “system-determining” state.²⁶ OBOR is the prime example of this progression. Beijing’s involvement into global governance will almost certainly become more common in the future.

Confident and active foreign policy has become a feature distinguishing Xi Jinping administration from his predecessors.²⁷ Development of OBOR will constitute major part of it. As far as China is willing to include other countries advices on the evolution of the initiative and tries to internationalize the concept, OBOR has a chance to become new framework for international relations. The reason for that is even though the concept is imperfect, at least it presents a vision of development. None of other major powers tries to do that. Nonetheless, if China unilaterally decide to selfishly exploit established mechanism of cooperation, the initiative will lose its attractiveness. Ultimately, there may be also a dilemma of overextension of OBOR. It may become more troublesome to achieve consensus among growing number of countries regarding growing number of policies. After all, Jack of all trades is a master of none. More research is needed to better understand impact of this particular matter on future of the initiative.

²⁶ Marc Lanteigne, *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 74.

²⁷ Jian Zhang, “China’s New Foreign Policy under Xi Jinping: Towards ‘Peaceful Rise 2.0’?” *Global Change, Peace & Security* 27, no. 1 (2015): 6, doi:10.1080/14781158.2015.993958.

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