

One Belt One Road Initiative: Chinese Cultural Diplomacy with South Asian Countries

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Abstract: *Chinese President Xi Jinping has given the world a new name-community of common destiny. OBOR initiative has been chosen to operationalize the idea. When Chinese President Xi Jinping first announced OBOR in order to build a more interconnected world, the world since then is divided over how to comprehend the real intent of China behind this initiative. Scholars who interpret the development from the realist point of view are of the opinion that this is nothing but the Chinese attempt of expanding hegemony in Asia and beyond. Those who are acquainted with the 5000-year history of China differ to see the development with a zero-sum mindset and agree more to China's version of peace, development, cooperation and win-win approach. China has sought peaceful relations with other countries throughout the history. Over the years, China economy grew at an unprecedented pace making it as a second largest economy. China wants to share its development with rest of the world. OBOR calls for the comprehensive integration. OBOR not only envisages economic cooperation, but also cultural and people-to-people exchanges. In the world of globalization, we should not just integrate the markets of different regions, but also the cultures of different countries for a more strong foundation of mutual understanding and cooperation. Cultural diplomacy is an exercise in soft power. There is a positive correlation between OBOR and cultural diplomacy. Building soft power helps promote the implementation of the One Belt, One Road. This paper aims to look at the ways to improve cultural*

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exchange with the South Asian countries along the One Belt, One Road, what are its challenges and opportunities.

Key Words: OBOR, People to People Relations, Culture, Cultural Diplomacy, South Asia

1. Introduction

The economic development of China is remarkable. Over the last three decades, the Chinese economy grew at almost 10% annually and from 1978 to 2008, the annual growth of output per capita averaged 8.7% after adopting open door policy. Now China is the second largest economy in the world in 2010 just overtook Japan. The main driving factors of this rapid progress are the performances of exports and foreign direct investment. The Chinese economy has been regarded as the new success story of the export-led growth strategy, after Japan and the four Asian tigers: Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan. The country has experienced a tremendous growth of GDP which increased from 364.5 billion RMB in 1978 to 51,932.2 billion RMB in 2012. The effects of the opening were not a long time coming and China emerged as the most dynamic trading nation in the world for three decades since 1978. While China's exports and imports accounted for scarcely 10% of its GDP in 1978 they amount to 75% of its GDP today. China's share of world's exports in 1978 was only 0.6% with an absolute value of 7.6 billion US\$ what made it only ranked as thirty-second largest exporting country worldwide. By 2013 however China had become the first largest exporting nation in the world with a nominal value of US\$2.2 trillion (WDI, 2015 and Morrison, 2015). China plans to spearhead investment in transport corridors including new air, rail and road infrastructure projects (Fallon, 2015).

In order to continue of this economic development of the country, the idea of the One Belt One Road or the New Silk Road Economic Belt or OBOR was first proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping on September 7, 2013, when he visited Kazakhstan. President Xi further raised this initiative of jointly building the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road when he visited Indonesia on October 3 of the same year. It is also mention that this initiative has taken for the first time by Chinese leader in the history of country diplomacy which involves 65 countries and 4.4 billion people (Wang and Zhu, 2016).

These two concepts envision the creation of a highly integrated, cooperative, and mutually beneficial set of maritime and land-based economic corridors linking European and Asian markets. Specifically, one authoritative Chinese source (a

paper issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce in March 2015 and titled “Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road”) states that:

The Belt and Road run through the continents of Asia, Europe, and Africa, connecting the vibrant East Asia economic circle at one end and developed European economic circle at the other, and encompassing countries with huge potential for economic development. 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 other¹.

The main focus of the study is the Chinese cultural diplomacy with South Asian region specially three countries like Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. South Asia is a growing developing region in the world. It is the neighboring regions and big trading partner of China. As a whole it has important distinguish characteristics. The five economies of SAARC (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Maldives) covered almost 3.94 million square kilometers area, with a population of more than 1611 million. The aggregate amount of gross domestic product of Southern Asian economies (nine countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Pakistan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka) reached US\$ 3.24 trillion, and per capita GDP is US\$ 1777 in 2015 (UNCTAD Stat, 2017). The volume of foreign trade of these five SAARC countries is nearly US\$ 966.9 billion in 2013. The foreign direct investment inflows totaled US\$ 32.3 billion and outflow US\$ 2 billion respectively in 2013 (Wang and Zhu, 2016).

As a main target of the Chinese foreign policy, the country inevitably will focus to build cooperative partnerships to support its regional and global cultural diplomacy strategies with the aim to strengthen China economically, politically, and militarily. The success of Chinese leaders’ efforts to establish productive bilateral and multilateral cooperation, along with its image-making strategies, will depend on effective policies, as well as on China’s domestic situation, credibility and international standing.

1. “Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road” issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China, March 2015, http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/newsrelease/201503/t20150330_669367.html

Within the tradition of political diplomacy, culture has always been used as a means of displaying assets, building relationships and claiming power (Bound *et al.* 2007). Cultural diplomacy is defined as ‘the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding’ (Cummings, 2003, p. 1).

One of the five cooperation priorities of Belt and Road initiative is People-to-people bond. BRI is perhaps the smartest mix of what political scientist Joseph S. Nye, Jr. (2011) termed as smart power– hard power with soft power diplomacy. According to a senior official of PRC, “The success of the Belt and Road Initiative, an important part of China’s opening up under the “new normal lies in integration of hard and soft power under the principle of win-win cooperation.”² Cultural diplomacy along the BRI is the rejuvenation of glorious and historical linkages among various cultures. BRI is the noblest initiative in recent times where “fish” and “fishing skill” both is shared. This would enable the economy of countries grow and fight with the problems of poverty, terrorism etc. Yasemin Dobra-Manço has rightly put it, “As the inventor of the magnetic compass, China has a central role to play in helping the world find direction.”³

This study will emphasis on how China will build the cultural integration that means people to people relations upon implementing this initiative, allowing for extensive cultural and academic exchanges.

2. Why China Takes OBOR Initiative

The rise of China as a formidable global economic power is enabling it to expand its geopolitical influence. The implementation of OBOR initiatives will give China greater access to energy and other natural resources, from countries such as Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Russia, and enormous markets along the Silk Road route to power sustained economic growth at home and advance its national economic interests abroad. The infrastructure development, trade and economic initiatives of the Silk Road strategy will reinforce China’s geopolitical position in the region and throughout the world (Yu, 2016).

China’s ‘Silk Road economic belt’ also has a strong domestic angle. Arguably, the ‘belt’ starts not at China’s western border with Central Asia, but within China’s eastern coastal regions. For Chinese policymakers, it is a way to help the

2. Soft power key to B&R construction, <https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/ghsl/wksl/10733.htm>

3. Cultural Diplomacy For Safeguarding Silk Road And Maritime Heritage
<http://silkroutes.net/OBORSafeguardingSilkRoadHeritage.htm>

economic development of China's less advanced central and western provinces. These would be opened up to regional trade and domestic, State-owned enterprises would invest there. With the addition of a 'maritime silk road' in 2014, Xi also took into account the interests of China's more advanced coastal regions and created a hybrid package that included the major interests of all China's regions (Fallon, 2015).

In China's view, economic development should also help fight Islamic extremism and promote security both in Western China and in Central Asia. However, the effectiveness of this approach can be questioned. China has been trying to fight the "three evils" of separatism, extremism, and terrorism in its own Xinjiang and Tibet regions through economic and social development, but results have been limited because of a lack of cultural sensitivity⁴.

Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region is a crucial point in China's Westward policy. The province is the key link between China and Central Asia, the Middle East and Europe. At the same time, it is one of the major points of vulnerability for China because of the separatism among the dominant Uighur population. There are some fears that external powers could use the separatist tendencies among ethnic minorities in the country in order to destabilize China. In 2014 the Chinese president Xi said: "The long-term stability of Xinjiang is vital to the whole country's reform, development and stability; to the country's unity, ethnic harmony and national security as well as to the great revival of the Chinese nation"⁵. Hence, stability and economic development of the neighboring states in Central Asia are seen as an important prerequisite for guaranteeing stability and security in the western regions of China (Habova, 2015).

The Silk Road Economic Belt concept is an important element of China's strategy of westward extension of its strategic security space. It is a supplementary mechanism for guaranteeing energy supplies for the Chinese economy, decreasing country's vulnerability, primarily, vis-à-vis the United States and ultimately, safeguarding national sovereignty. M. Swaine from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace points out: "Beijing stress on periphery diplomacy is intended to strengthen China's relations with periphery countries in many areas while defending its core interests regarding sovereignty issues"⁶.

4. Didi Tang, "China Bans Ramadan Fast for Muslims in Northwest," <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/china-bans-ramadan-fast-muslim-northwest>, July 3, 2014.

5. Xinhua News Agency (2014) President Xi stresses Xinjiang's stability vital to whole nation, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-04/30/c_133302106.htm

6. Swaine, M. (2014) Chinese Views and Commentary on Periphery Diplomacy. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 28 July 2014, <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/clm44ms.pdf>

Present Economic Situation of China and South Asian Countries

In the last over three decades, the Chinese economy grew at around 10% annually. The Chinese economy is one of the most important in the world. It has a tremendous growth rate and is the scene of massive foreign investment. Factors important in attracting FDI to other countries have also been key to China's success. China's large domestic market, low wage costs, role of overseas Chinese, political stability and improved infrastructure, complemented with open FDI policies, especially the establishment of SEZs, seem to have been major factors in attracting FDI. Apart from the economic environment, political commitment is an important ingredient in attracting FDI. In China, the political leadership imposed a vision for the path of growth and development of the country. China's experience shows that FDI contributes to GDP growth. FDI will continue to contribute to China's economic development.

South Asia is a region where live to nearly one-quarter of the world population. The cultural diversity of this region, golden history, socio-economic developments have always fascinated thinkers, from Adam Smith to Karl Marx, to Nobel Laureate Gunnar Myrdal, who titled his famous magnum opus on the region, *Asian Drama* (1968). South Asia provided a rich testing ground for development practitioners, and leading paradigms in development economics can be traced back to the region (Chowdhury and Mahmud, 2008).

In the economic development of South Asian countries FDI plays a very important role as an external capital source. It has contributed to the economic progress of the recipient countries like Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan by bringing in modern updated or advanced technologies and providing access to foreign markets. FDI can serve as a major complement to domestic investment and capacity building for the growth of South Asian countries.

In *the Appendix Table 1* presents some important macroeconomic variables such as GDP growth rate, GDP per capita, participation and share of world trade, population, FDI inflows, gross domestic savings and total investment in the specific country. It is observed that most of the South Asian countries economic growth, total GDP, gross savings, and total investment position are improving day by day.

In *the Appendix Table 2* shows that in total 11 procedures are required to start a business in China whereas Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand the number is 3, Bangladesh (9), India (12), and Pakistan (10). In China it needs 31.4 days to start a business. But in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan it needs 19.5, 28.4 and 19 days

respectively. It is also observed in *the Appendix Table 2* that most of the indicators (especially global competition index, ease to access loan, labor efficiency, and domestic market size) of business climate are worse in South Asian countries than in China, Malaysia and Singapore in 2015-16.

According to the World Bank's Logistic Performance Index 2014, China's rank is 28 (whereas 2012, the rank was 26) compared with 108 for Bangladesh; 54 for India; 53 for Indonesia; 25 for Malaysia; 72 for Pakistan; 5 for Singapore; 89 for Sri Lanka, 21 for South Korea and 48 for Vietnam out of 160 countries. From *the Appendix Figure 1*, it is observed that the position of China is better than some South Asian countries such as India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Maldives but worse than Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea.

The Appendix Table 3 shows the quality of infrastructure in selected Asian countries in 2015-16 period on the basis of yearly report of world economic forum (WEF). It is observed that in terms of overall infrastructure quality of China ranks 51 out of 140 countries. China has a higher rank than some Asian countries such as Bangladesh (124); India (74); Indonesia (81); Pakistan (98); Philippines (106); Thailand (71) and Vietnam (99) but lower than Malaysia (16) and Sri Lanka (26). It is also observed that railroad infrastructure quality is better than the road, port and air transport infrastructure in China. Electricity supply position of China in the world was 53 out of 140 in 2015-16.

Estimates of infrastructure 'gaps' amount to trillions of US \$. Particularly in Asia the need for infrastructure investments in energy, transport, water, communication is enormous. The Asian Development Bank estimates the need for USD 8 trillion in infrastructure spending in Asia between 2010 to 2020 (Wolff, 2016). According to Brunjes *et al.* (2013), China invests more in Asia. A big portion of that investment is aimed toward Southeast Asian countries (Shambaugh, 2005); however, since 2003 Chinese economic involvement in South Asia has risen noticeably. Between 2003 and 2012, China more than doubled its exports to Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Just over a quarter of Bangladesh's imports now come from China. Additionally, China has offered hundreds of millions of dollars in investment for large infrastructure projects, including port facilities in Bangladesh, Burma, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka (Curtis, 2011).

3. Cultural Integration between China and South Asia

Cultural diplomacy is organized both by diplomats working for a government's foreign ministry and by those working for stand-alone entities with varying

degrees of governance and funding links to foreign ministries. Activities undertaken within cultural diplomacy's scope manifest an aspect of the culture of the state which the government represents, and involve a wide range of participants such as artists, singers and so on, the manifestations of their artistry, the promotion of aspects of the culture of a state (language, for instance), and the exchange of people, such as academics. The practice incorporates a wide range of activities and now more often includes cultural activity targeted at the wider population rather than elites, as well as sport (Mark, 2008). According to Mulcahy (1999), like trade, travel, and immigration, educational and cultural exchanges are part of the normal interactions among nations. Cultural exchanges stand on their own and should foster better relations within the family of nations, although not necessarily support for a nation's foreign policy. Cultural programs (faculty and student exchanges, performing arts productions, museum shows, book exhibits, and lectures) should be distinguished from those activities designed to explain and defend Chinese political objectives abroad.

'Cultural diplomacy' is often viewed negatively and understandably so, due to its connotations with colonialism, imperialism and propaganda, and the unethical and immoral practices associated with such activity. Dominant states have always used culture to transmit political, social, cultural and economic values. This has become a particular concern more recently due to globalization; with the rapid growth of the internet, the rise of western corporate power, the transnationalization of the cultural industries (Jin, 2007), shifts in the flow of cultural production (Chadha and Kavoori, 2000) and changing patterns of cultural consumption (Nisbett, 2012).

Perhaps no country in the world is embracing cultural diplomacy more actively as a tool of people-to-people exchange as China is doing today. Progressive culture is the most powerful force that binds together civilizations and the greatest agent of change on the universe. By 2013, China has already outpaced US to become world's leading exporter of cultural goods.⁷

The most official document on vision of BRI has mentioned the role of people-to-people diplomacy in the following way: "People-to-people bond provides the public support for implementing the Initiative. We should carry forward the spirit of friendly cooperation of the Silk Road by promoting extensive cultural and academic exchanges, personnel exchanges and cooperation, media cooperation,

7. China becomes leading world exporter of cultural goods.
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-03/11/c_135176451.htm

youth and women exchanges and volunteer services, so as to win public support for deepening bilateral and multilateral cooperation.”⁸

4.1 Confucius Institutes

Confucius Institutes were established with the aim to promote Chinese language and culture in foreign countries in 2004⁹. It has contributed immensely to the development of multiculturalism and the building of a harmonious world since then. 6 million people have taken the Chinese proficiency tests at all levels¹⁰. Currently, 410 universities have incorporated courses offered by Confucius Institutes into their credit systems. Cultural activities organized around the globe has have seen an outstanding growth in the number of audience which reached 13 million in 2016.

PRC attaches huge importance to Confucius Institute as a medium of providing cultural ambassadorship around the world even today which is also evident from the 13th five-year plan (2016-2020) which mentions its plan to “continue to ensure Confucius Institutes are run successfully”¹¹. Confucius Institutes has been considered as the key player in the implementation of BRI.

Confucius Institutes have made outstanding achievement as the demand for Chinese language; medicine and culture have been growing exponentially. According to the statistics, there are 511 Confucius Institutes and 1,073 Confucius Classrooms in 140 countries out of which 134 Confucius Institutes and 127 Confucius Classrooms have been established in 51 countries along the “Belt and Road”. According to a special report of Confucius Institute, in 2016 alone, Confucius Institutes and Classrooms along the route enrolled a total of 460,000 students and held around 8,000 cultural events of various types, receiving 2.7 million participants. At present, 94% of the Confucius Institutes and Classrooms in countries along the route offer credit courses of Chinese language, 70% of the universities hosting Confucius Institutes have set up degree programs of Chinese language, and 10 universities have set up degree programs in Chinese teaching.

8. Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/newsrelease/201503/t20150330_669367.html

9. Confucius Institute Headquarters, http://english.hanban.org/node_7716.htm

10. Innovation, Cooperation, Inclusion and Sharing, Jointly Open a New Chapter for the Development of Confucius Institutes, <http://www.cim.chinesecio.com/hbcms/f/article/info?id=399db840b8b9471f909fe81d42482099>

11. THE 13TH FIVE-YEAR PLAN FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (2016–2020), <http://120.221.32.87:6510/en.ndrc.gov.cn/newsrelease/201612/P020161207645765233498.pdf>

Influenced by the Confucius Institutes, 20 countries along the route including Thailand, Armenia, Slovenia and Estonia have incorporated Chinese language teaching into their education systems¹².

4.2 Education

China has established a Belt and Road scholarship to 10,000 foreign students each year over the next five years to sponsor students from countries along the routes to study in China. PRC plans to sponsor 2,500 Chinese students to study in Belt and Road initiative nations each year for the next three years. Besides this, there are projects that would see the joint founding of schools and training for teachers and other professionals.¹³

China's ministry of education has inked 60 deals with the countries along the BRI. By 2015, nearly half of the 400,000 international students from 202 countries and region were from countries along the route.¹⁴

4.3 Media

Some agenda-setter¹⁵ "fake news" ¹⁶ media which US President Donald Trump has labeled as the "enemy of the people" instill perpetual fear of China threat, dumping of overcapacity, "debt trap diplomacy"¹⁷ leading to disinformation along the B&R route. Hence, the role of media has been given significant priority in the BRI to tell the true story. In order to "carry forward the spirit of friendly cooperation", ¹⁸ the Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road mentions about enhancing "international exchanges and cooperation on culture and media, and leverage the

12. Confucius Institute: a key player in the implementation of the "Belt and Road" Initiative <http://www.cim.chinesecio.com/hbcms/f/article/info?id=841e409571b746c1b9764c475796e5a1>

13. China's new scholarship to sponsor students from Belt & Road Initiative nations <https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/qwyw/qwfb/1289.htm>

14. China making headway on Belt and Road Initiative <https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/qwyw/qwfb/1285.htm>

15. What Makes Mainstream Media Mainstream, https://chomsky.info/199710__/

16. Trump on Twitter calls five US major media organizations "enemy of American people" <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1033643.shtml>

17. China's Debt-Trap Diplomacy, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/china-one-belt-one-road-loans-debt-by-brahma-chellaney-2017-01?omhide=true>

18. Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/newsrelease/201503/t20150330_669367.html

positive role of the Internet and new media tools to foster harmonious and friendly cultural environment and public opinion”. People’s Daily, the most authoritative, comprehensive and influential disseminator of information of the Communist Party of China has been hosting “The Media Cooperation Forum on Belt and Road” each year since 2014 in order operationalize the plan. Media’s from more than 100 countries participated in 2016¹⁹.

In order to ensure exchange, cooperation and coverage centering on the Belt and Road initiative, an “International Coalition for New Media Cooperation on One Belt and One Road”²⁰ has been established on July, 2016. A declaration on establishment of the coalition was issued²¹. The process is gaining momentum. China has launched its Belt and Road portal for the promotion of the initiative on March 20, 2017. The portal, which is currently in English and Chinese for multiple terminals, is planned to add multi-language versions including Russian, French, Arabic and Spanish later this year. The portal will serve as a platform for viewers to get news and views related to OBOR. Apart from these specific initiatives, China has several world class media. Xinhua and CGTN use six official languages of the UN to communicate with the linguistically and culturally diverse world to ensure greater effectiveness, better outcomes and more involvement. Global times, China daily, People’s daily are among the media which provides a neutral and objective reporting.

4.4 Culture

China’s Shenzhen City organized First Belt and Road Music Festival with the aim to strengthen the bond of people along the route²². Pakistan launched the first think tank dedicated to the research into CPEC development in Islamabad on March 27²³. Similarly, Chengdu published a guide to investment in major countries along the route in order to facilitate investment²⁴. China will build a cultural heritage corridor along the B&R routes to enhance cultural exchanges and cooperation²⁵. The palace Museum will introduce the relics from Afghanistan to China in 2017. The Belt and Road Initiative opens up genuine opportunities for

19. Liu Yunshan urges closer media cooperation on Belt and Road Initiative
<http://en.people.cn/n3/2016/0728/c98649-9092302.html>

20. Int’l Coalition for New Media Cooperation on One Belt and One Road established in Beijing
<http://en.people.cn/n3/2016/0726/c98649-9091297.html>

21. Int’l Coalition for New Media Cooperation on One Belt and One Road established in Beijing
<http://en.people.cn/n3/2016/0726/c98649-9091297.html>

22. First Belt and Road music festival held in Shenzhen,
https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d59544e35457a4d/share_p.html

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) to go global and thus benefits more people²⁶. China will publish the Analects of Confucius — a collection of ideas and sayings from the Chinese philosopher — in Arabic, Mongolian, Czech, Portuguese and Spanish languages for Belt and Road countries this year which is already in English, Japanese, Russian, Korean, French and German.²⁷ Likewise, The Third Maritime Silk Road International Brand Expo and the 20th Straits Textile and Clothing Fair will be held in 2017 in order to increase international cooperation and exchanges with the countries along the ancient Maritime Silk Road.

China can take the initiatives to strong the relationships with South Asian regions in the following ways:

- i. The exchange of individuals for educational and cultural purposes
- ii. Sending exhibitions and performances abroad
- iii. Sponsoring seminars and conferences both in-country and abroad that include international participants
- iv. Support for language studies programs and institutions
- v. Support for infrastructure in the form of cultural institutes/centers/forum abroad
- vi. Resources in the form of staff and personnel (both at home and abroad)
- vii. Support for country studies programs (e.g., American studies, Austrian studies, etc.)
- viii. International cooperation on cultural programs and projects
- ix. Activities that are related to trade in cultural products and services

Cinema, painting and calligraphy, literature (the Nobel Prize), traditional medicine, acupuncture, martial arts and Chinese cuisine have conquered the world without deliberate action by the Chinese government, but are powerful assets in creating a positive image abroad.

23. CPEC Center of Excellence launched in Islamabad,
<https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/qwyw/rdxw/10527.htm>

24. Chengdu publishes B&R Investment Guide, <https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/qwyw/rdxw/4793.htm>

25. China to build B&R cultural heritage corridor,
<https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/wtfz/mxxt/9455.htm>

26. Interview: Belt and Road initiative opens up opportunity for TCM to go global,
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-07/17/c_135518547.htm

27. China to publish Analects of Confucius for Belt and Road countries,
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-03/12/c_136122593.htm

Conclusion

Cultural diplomacy is an instrument to improve the intercultural communication and exchange the cooperation. It opens the scope for exchanging of ideas, values, and information having for ultimate goal to promote mutual understanding. A better knowledge of the other's culture, beliefs and interests is the first step towards the improvement of international relations. As expressed by Villanueva Rivas "a lasting and stable world order cannot rely merely on governments and power politics, it also depends on the free exchange of cultures among peoples in pursuing common intellectual and cultural interests via open cosmopolitan public and cultural diplomacies". Thus, all the actors of the global stage should play a part in cultural diplomacy from non-state actors such as transnational advocacy networks, non-governmental organizations, academia and artists to international organizations.

The cultural diplomacy of the Belt and Road is well-coordinated by China with the countries to ensure directional exchange of the elements of cultural diplomacy in all the countries along the B&R. The cultural diplomacy of B&R is about win-win collaboration.

China's cultural diplomacy is related with the realization of Chinese Dream. The Chinese Dream is linked with the dream of building a community of common destiny for all mankind. Hence, the cultural diplomacy of China along the Belt and Road is all about enhancing understanding about China, strengthening people-to-people relationship between China and the countries along the B&R and move towards building a world where the "clash of civilization" will be discouraged by harmony among civilization.

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