



Centre for
Contemporary
Chinese Studies

HH Sheikh
Nasser
al-Mohammad
al-Sabah
Programme

‘One Belt, One Road’ and China’s Westward Pivot: Past, Present and Future

‘一带一路’ 和中国的向西转向：历史，当代和未来

**Interdisciplinary Conference
跨学科国际会议**

**21st – 22nd March 2017
IM222, Al-Qasimi Building, Elvet Hill Road
Durham, DH1 3TU**

To register for a place please email: sgia-events@durham.ac.uk

**School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University
英国杜伦大学政府及国际事务学院**

Conference Programme
会议议程

21 March 2017

Panel 1: One Belt One Road and China's Westward Pivot

第一场分会：一带一路和中国的向西转向

10:15-10:45: Refreshments and Networking 签到

10:45-11:00: Welcome 致开幕词

Professor Thomas Allen (Durham University Law School, Master of Grey College)

11:00-12:00: China in Greater Asia: Imagination, Interaction and Influence 中国与亚洲地区间的互动：想象，交往和牵动

Professor Anoush Ehteshami (Professor of International Relations, Al-Sabah Programme Chair, Director of the Institute for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University)

12:00-13:00: China's Emergence as the Gulf's Leading Trade Partner: Developing Opportunities and Possible Constraints for the Gulf Cooperation Council 中国与海湾阿拉伯国家合作委员会成员国之间的贸易伙伴关系：机遇与挑战

Professor Timothy Niblock (Professor of Middle Eastern Studies, Exeter University)

13:00-14:00: Lunch 午餐

14:00-15:00: China and the Changing Security Environment in South Asia 中国与变幻中的南亚安全局势

Dr Lars Erslev Andersen (Senior Researcher, Danish Institute of International Studies)

15:00-16:00: China's Economic Diplomacy in Conflict Regions 中国在冲突地区的经济外交

Dr Yang Jiang 江洋博士 (Senior Researcher, Danish Institute of International Studies)

16:00-16:15: Tea Break 茶歇

16:15-17:15: Intercontinental "Silk Hub": Sino-Emirati Relations and the UAE's Role in China's Trade and Investment in West Asia 跨大陆“丝绸贸易枢纽”：中国与阿联酋经贸关系

Mr Philip Gater-Smith (PhD Researcher, School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University)

18:00: Conference Dinner 大会晚宴

22 March 2017

Panel 2: The Silk Roads and Social and Historical Contexts of OBOR

第二场分会：丝绸之路及一带一路的社会历史背景

9:30-10:30: On the Silk Roads before Zhang Qian's Envoy to Western Region 张骞通西域以前的丝绸之路

Professor Lin Meicun 林梅村教授 (Professor of Silk Road Archaeology, School of Archaeology and Museology, Peking University)

10:30-11:00: Coffee Break 茶歇

11:00-12:00: Chinese Ceramics Trade along the Silk Roads and its Cultural Impact on the World Civilizations ‘一带一路’上的瓷器贸易与世界文明再产生

Professor Fang Lili 方李莉研究员 (Director, Institute of Art Anthropology, China Academy of Arts, Chairman, China Society for Anthropology of Art)

12:00-13:00: Communications of Ancient China to the West: Archaeological Evidence on the Chinese Imperial Porcelain Relics 中国古代与西方的交流：以御窑瓷器为依据

Dr Zhang Ran 张然博士 (Researcher, Department of Archaeology, Durham University)

13:00-14:00: Lunch 午餐

14:00-15:00: Inscribing and Expanding the Silk Roads: From UNESCO to OBOR 铭刻和拓展丝绸之路

Dr Susan Whitfield 魏泓博士 (Director, International Dunhuang Project, the British Library)

15:00-16:00: One Belt One Road, One Language or Many Languages? 一带一路上的语言文化

Dr Mamtimyn Sunuodula 苏诺博士 (Acting Director, Centre for Contemporary Chinese Studies, Durham University)

16:00-16:30: Tea Break

16:30-18:00: Exhibition of Professor Zhu Legeng's Ceramic Art and an Illustrated Talk by Professor Zhu 朱乐耕教授陶瓷艺术展 (President, Creative Art Academy, China Academy of Arts, renowned Chinese ceramic artist)

Conference Abstract

The last few years have seen a deepening interest in China's relations with Central and Western Asia, particularly in the context of China's recent 'pivot' westwards and its main strategic vehicle of the 'One Belt One Road' which is arguably set to define the economic, cultural and political spaces from China itself to the heart of Europe. Debate continues regarding China's aims and objectives in Asia and the Indian Ocean world, and these cover a full spectrum of issues and concerns; whether focusing on China's desire to secure and control its multi-ethnic frontiers by increasing cooperation with its western neighbours, or trying to understand China's increasing drive to boost its international prestige and projection of power beyond its borders.

In launching the OBOR initiative, President Xi Jinping set out ambitious new goals for trade and economic integration in Asia aimed to promote global interconnectedness of peoples and places into the 21st century. The OBOR has been presented as a 'game-changer' by Chinese authorities themselves as much as by critical observers. Thus, Francis Fukuyama notes that OBOR 'represents a striking departure in Chinese policy' whereby Beijing is 'seeking to export its development model to other countries' (2016). The OBOR, he further asserts, will determine the 'future of global politics', transforming the whole of Eurasia from Indonesia to Poland' and generating 'immense prestige' for 'China's form of authoritarianism' in this enterprise. Not to take the One Belt One Road at face value, there are of course reasons to question the viability of the enterprise when set against the profound challenges it faces in the implementation phase. Such challenges are the markedly different political systems, diverging economic situations, and the often competing and incompatible social and cultural conditions dictating national and communal life in Asia. When set against China's unwillingness to intervene we can see better not only the potential difficulties ahead in this volatile region, but the ways in which instability, conflict and corruption can hinder China's grand design. Other observers have drawn attention to the strategic shift of global economic power from EuroAtlantic world to East Asia and the impact of this on China's regional and foreign policies. Systemic shift is about global balances but it is also about regional integration, and in the context of the OBOR it can be seen as a process which can bind China and the Middle East together, a trend which can best be described as the 'Asianisation of the Middle East'.

President Xi also invoked the ancient trading networks between China and the West, known as the 'Silk Road' in modern times, linking the past with the present and drawing parallels between them. The Silk Road is often selectively associated, by Chinese society at large and Chinese political leaders, with Chinese strength, booming trade, territorial expansion and cultural cosmopolitanism, especially under Han and Tang Dynasties. The Silk Road also reminds us that not only goods were transported and exchanged, but rather it represented a continuous flow of ideas, cultures, religions and languages across vast spaces. This was an equally important part of that exchange. Twenty-four different scripts were used for writing 17 ancient languages were unearthed from the Silk Road sites along Tarim and Turpan basin in Xinjiang and manuscripts recovered from Buddhist caves in Dunhuang were written in multiple languages and scripts. This indicates the existence of a high level of linguistic exchanges and multilingual populations (Kamberi 2005), while Persian, the language of Sogdian merchants, acted as the lingua franca of trade and communication in much of the later periods (Millward, 2013). Historical and archaeological findings suggest a high degree of religious diversity and intercommunal influence along the Silk Road, which is still very much

observable today. Such examples are held up as evidence of interaction, symbolising cultural and linguistic diversity as well as religious and ideological tolerance by contemporary authors and politicians. This conference wants to explore these relationships further and intends to do so through the lens of the OBOR as a modern embodiment of the ancient Silk Road.

By bringing together a distinguished group of international experts, the conference will examine the OBOR and the Silk Road from an interdisciplinary perspective and multiple viewpoints, including international relations, political economy, China's development politics, archaeological and historical evidence, and transcultural flows. In particular, the Conference aims to address the following key questions:

1. What are China's objectives in launching OBOR and how is OBOR seen from Central and Western Asian perspectives?
2. To what extent the historical memory and cultural identities define the success or failure of OBOR and China's other initiatives in Central and Western Asia? How does the current discourse about the historic Silk Road link with 'One Belt One Road'?
3. How does Chinese model of development and modernisation sit with its vision for projection of power and alleged 'exporting' of the Chinese model to Eurasia?
4. In what ways, economic interdependence and trade links promote or hinder peace and security in China and Eurasia region?

Conference Convenors

Professor Anoush Ehteshami (School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University) (a.ehteshami@durham.ac.uk)

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