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### The Chinese Silk Road and their Reception in Central Asia

China has been using the metaphor of the Silk Road since very early in the 1990s, but made it an official policy only in September 2013. Chinese President Xi Jinping publicized the launch of the 'Silk Road Economic Belt' during his visit to Kazakhstan in September 2013.<sup>1</sup> The Belt will follow a broad axis going from Xi'an to Lanzhou, Urumqi, Kazakhstan's border, and then, according to the map published by the Xinhua News Agency, it will go west through Iran and Turkey to reach the Mediterranean and Europe, leaving Central Asia and Russia partly on the side.<sup>2</sup> One year later, in fall 2014, Xi Jinping announced that China will contribute \$40 billion to set up the Silk Road Fund, which will provide investment and financing support to carry out infrastructure, resource, industrial, and financial cooperation.

However, the Chinese Silk Road Economic Belt is duplicated with a '21<sup>st</sup> Century Maritime Silk Road', which connects China with the Southeast Asian countries, Africa, and Europe via Indian Ocean.<sup>3</sup> Far from believing only in the revival of continental trade, as the US portrays its own Silk Road, China is developing a dual, continental and maritime, strategy. This maritime strategy is embedded not only by trade but by strategic partnerships to form a "pearl necklace" (in the Chinese words) in South and Southeast Asia through the establishment of a series of permanent military bases to secure energy supplies such as those in Chittagong in Bangladesh, Coco Islands in Myanmar, Habantota in Sri Lanka, Marao in the Maldives, and Gwadar in Pakistan.<sup>4</sup>



As seen from Beijing's perspective, the Silk Road offers another opportunity, related to domestic issues, which few external observers noticed. The Chinese narrative on the Silk Road downplays the acuity of

the Uyghur issue by incorporating Xinjiang into a deep-rooted Han history, and that of Islam by highlighting the pre-Islamic periods of the Han and Tang dynasties. It therefore contributes to China's rewriting of history and to its celebration of the alleged historical continuity between ancient and contemporary China. This would obscure the long centuries where the Turkestani world (that includes both Central Asia and Xinjiang) was developing independently from a remote China. James Millward perceptively notes, "What in the West are celebrated as Silk Road exchanges and interconnectivity are, in China, portrayed rather as evidence that the world is beating a path to China's (once again) open door. Rather than as a transnational bridge between civilizations, the Silk Road here is nationalized as China's doorstep."<sup>5</sup>

### **Local Responses to China's Growing Presence**

The Central Asian governments desire to minimize external pressures on their societies. On the one hand, they must manage the contradiction between opening up in order to find geopolitical balance and economic partners. On the other hand, they seek insulation from external political influences including foreign NGOs, and pressures to expand democracy and practice good governance. These cross-pressures have affected policy choices. Turkmenistan has opted for more insulation and less international integration, while Kyrgyzstan more integration and less insulation. The ability to manage this contradiction depends upon elements such as the solidity of the state apparatus, consensus among elites, and a country's ability to offer its population prospects for development.

Security is strengthened by two main drivers – the geopolitical balance, or interplay of major powers, and reinforcement of national sovereignty through economic development. Ruling elites treat both drivers as intimately linked. International partners must assist with economic development. Economic development has thus become another key driver for the international positioning of the Central Asian states which are more concerned about finding partners for development than geopolitical speculation. Their economic potentials, but also their limits, have come to give meaning to the shifting of power in favor of China. However, the worldview from Central Asia is structured by another major element - fear of loss of collective identity. The nation-states that emerged in 1991 conceive themselves as permanent establishments, but their futures are fragile. Since their future is uncertain, that of ethnic groups must be preserved above all. It is possible to re-establish a state, but if "ethnic consciousness" has disappeared, then are play of the struggle for independence hardly makes sense. This element is bound to play a role in the future of Central Asian strategies, and influence the relationship to China.

At the collapse of the Soviet Union, China arrived in Central Asia with few assets. Prior to this date, direct relations between the two regions had been impeded by the generally hostile state of Sino-Soviet relations, but also because international relations were regarded as a space reserved for Moscow. For the Central Asian states, establishing direct bilateral relations with Beijing has thus required overcoming negative clichés of China created and cultivated by Soviet propaganda. These clichés reinforced Central Asian long-standing apprehensions of their large neighbor to the east. In two decades, China has managed to become a new and essential player in the Central Asian scene. It is appreciated by the Central Asian regimes for its diplomacy, its good neighbor measures, and the prestigious status offered by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). On the economic front, China is viewed in two ways. Its presence benefits Central Asian economies, which are aware that their future depends upon their capacity to integrate the commercial dynamics from the Asia Pacific region. At the same time, China's economic weight emphasizes Central Asian specialization in raw materials export and hampers their commercial and industrial autonomy. China is also a cause for cultural concern, in terms of territorial

threats, of power and demographic differentials, and of interference over domestic affairs via the Uyghur question.<sup>6</sup>

Central Asian fears about China are generated by the immense power differential between small fragile states and a demographic and economic giant, but also by uncertainties over future evolution of their big neighbor. Many Central Asians are anxious about potential instability of the Chinese Communist Party, as well as rising Chinese nationalism – a phenomenon which a new generation of rulers could conceivably propose to undermine the territorial treaties with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, along with the good neighborhood policy.<sup>7</sup> Other Central Asian experts paint a picture of system collapse of one-party rule and China's descent into a period of disorder. This would entail a loss of subsidies from Beijing, possible population movements across the borders, and a risk of unrest in Xinjiang.<sup>8</sup> The Central Asians see themselves as losers in scenarios of regime reinforcement of official Han nationalism as well as collapse, especially as any population movement across Chinese borders would be proportionally massive for neighboring states.

They are also concerned about Chinese political influence in Central Asia, which remains more potential than real at present, with the exception of the Uyghur issue. With the exception of the Uyghur diaspora, on which Chinese authorities bring full weight to bear, the Central Asian regimes try to remain impermeable to Chinese political influence. Central Asian elites are not "victims" of Moscow and Beijing, as if they had been forced to be authoritarian and anti-Western. Evidence can be found in Kyrgyzstan, a country which has managed to uphold greater ideological plurality and authorizes expression of a diversity of viewpoints, without Beijing's interference. Even Moscow's greater influence does not explain Central Asian regimes' choices, which are driven by domestic issues and local political culture. The ruling classes required no model to decide upon the course of their regime. Their alliance with Beijing is above all an axis of convenience, but no political rapprochement is envisaged: as the main Kazakhstani Sinologist Konstantin Syroezhkin has summed it up - the Sino-Central Asian alliance is "cold politically, and scorching economically".<sup>9</sup>

The uncertainty of the Chinese neighborhood is also strategic. Even if Sino-Central Asian military cooperation is limited for the moment and Russia still largely dominates the security sector, the situation is evolving. China hopes to become more and more involved in this sector, which is provoking mitigated sentiments among the Central Asians. The latter hope at the same time to liberate themselves partially from Russian tutelage, but are concerned about Beijing's rise to power in this military sector, the sign of a growing power differential. Sino-Russian military partnership is declining rapidly and might be replaced by competition in the world arms market. Modernization of the People's Liberation Army, with investment in both transformational offensive and defensive capabilities, will increase its ability to conduct missions in Xinjiang and potentially outside its borders.<sup>10</sup> Not only is the Chinese army rising in power to further heighten the imbalance with Central Asian armies, but factors of destabilization have not declined. Revival of the Uyghur question since the 2008 bomb attacks, and the Urumqi riots in July 2009<sup>11</sup> are of major concern to the Central Asian elites, who would be unable to counter any punitive operations led by the Chinese army on their territory.

In addition, the future of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and potentially the Uzbek part of the Fergana Valley, is uncertain, heightening fear that China's non-interventionist stance could change if the Central Asian states fail to guarantee their own security. In 2009, provocative declarations made by a senior Chinese military leader about the possibility of intervening in Central Asia in order to secure China's borders<sup>12</sup> did not receive official comment in Central Asian capitals, but that silence reveals local anxieties.

China is also widely criticized by Central Asian experts on environmental issues. This theme is important in a region haunted by Aral Sea catastrophe, the risk of regional conflict linked to water management, the polluting past of the Soviet regime, and the nuclear heritage of Kazakhstan. In the latter, public opinion is strongly anti-Chinese with respect to ecological questions. Two of Kazakhstan's main rivers, the Ili and the Irtysh, originate in China - the former in the Tian-Shan Mountains and the latter in the Chinese Altay Mountains. The Chinese regularly draw water upstream from both rivers, without seeking agreement from Kazakhstan. Only in 2010 did Beijing finally declare itself ready to sign an agreement for the protection of both cross-border rivers, but it is likely to refuse any figure restricting its right to upstream pumping from either source.<sup>13</sup> The problem remains to be properly addressed. Local experts consider China's attitude to be indicative of low regard for Kazakhstan's legitimate concerns. Even the most Sinophile experts are convinced that the Kara Irtysh-Karamay Canal in Xinjiang will have a negative impact on Kazakhstan's economic and ecological condition.<sup>14</sup> Xinjiang's intensive development also raises ecological issues: in addition to the fact that winds carry nuclear particles from the Lob Nor experimentation site into Central Asia, China is also having a negative impact on Kazakhstan's soil quality, water supplies and forests.<sup>15</sup>

### **Sinophobia and Sinophilia**

Sinophilia and Sinophobia go hand-in-hand in Central Asia. Not only are both currents present, but may also be found in the same person depending on the angle of view or the question being addressed. However, Sinophobia is claiming an upper hand and might have long-term social consequences. While official declarations proclaim the need to maintain friendly relations with Beijing have been unanimous, this has not been the case among experts, who present more varied viewpoints. The dominant suspicion that China still has imperial designs on Central Asia and merely wants to conceal or delay them is predominant. Even the most optimistic, who consider that Beijing's economic and geopolitical presence is a guarantee of stability for Central Asia, turn out not to be Sinophiles on the cultural level.<sup>16</sup>

Sinophile circles currently have little formal standing in Central Asia. Despite this, decision-making circles, including the presidential families, political elites, and the private sector oligarchs and directors of large public companies, who are linked through a variety of political, personal, regional, and corporatist allegiances, are informally oriented toward China. Since all have personal interests to protect and have established direct contacts with Chinese decision-makers through embassies, business contacts and political leaders. China has little need to finance institutional mediators to convey its viewpoints among decision-making circles because it has direct access to them. In addition, were an official pro-Chinese lobby to emerge, it might cause adverse public opinion with possible counter-effect of generating a more overt anti-Chinese lobby.

The Sinophobe groups, at present, are unable to establish institutional standing, as their criticisms of China would directly challenge authorities' pro-Chinese policies, and would trigger mechanisms of repression. In addition, while pro-Chinese lobbies are likely to emerge and coordinate as part of the politico-economic establishment, anti-Chinese circles have divided motivations and social affiliations. They are comprised of political opponents with pro-Western, nationalist or Islamic sensibility. Uyghur associations, workers' unions, small businessmen and entrepreneurs -all would have a difficult time formulating common viewpoints for the purpose of building workable cooperation.

Business people comprise a complex group, developing both Sinophile and Sinophobe sensibilities. All have gained from the boom in commercial trade with China, but some fear Chinese competition. This concern over competition is most developed in Kyrgyzstan, where a bazaar economy has come to play a

central role in the country's functioning. Business circles are at the core of this process of state collapse and corruption, and thus involve a politically and socially sensitive milieu which reacts fitfully to the Chinese presence. In Kazakhstan, the sense of competition with Chinese traders is less developed, because the latter have fewer rights to establish businesses, but also because they engage more in large-scale trade, which is better regulated, and because fewer Kazakhs work in the small retail trade. Tajikistan follows Kyrgyzstan's path, even if the local trade economy here is less developed since economic survival patterns are tied to migrations. In neither Uzbekistan nor Turkmenistan do business circles come into direct contact with Chinese businessmen, although there appear to be tensions between Chinese and Uzbek traders at the Karasuu bazaar.

Among intellectuals, the China question seems less important than the relationship to Russia, the West, or Turkey. China is not yet considered a civilization choice which might carry Central Asia in a new direction, except as a threat. Admirers of the Chinese political system can be counted on the fingers of one hand, since partisans of an authoritarian regime as the only solution to Islamism or to "democratic chaos" either endorse Russia or Belarus, or push for a specific national model. They are not inspired by Chinese-style monopolyism nor the Beijing version of communism. Those who think themselves as part of the "Soviet" or "Eurasianist" traditions are pleased about the Sino-Russian alliance against the West, but give their clear preference to the Russian model. Those with a Western, pan-Turkic or Islamic orientation see China as a negative element which halts the evolution of their society in the desired direction. While there are pro-Western, nationalist, pan-Turkic or Russophile ideological traditions, nobody in Central Asia calls for a cultural choice in favor of China. Though Beijing may be thanked for its economic aid and anti-American geopolitical influence, scarcely any experts are Sinophile on questions of identity or ideology.

Among the Sinophobe political groups, those with Islamic convictions should be mentioned. Only Tajikistan has a recognized Islamic political party, although it is becoming increasingly marginalized. It may also be assumed that Tajik elites with a pan-Islamic or pan-Iranian sensibility have particularly negative opinions of China, a nation which they see as a new foreign cultural ascendancy competing with or succeeding the more traditional domination of the West or Russia. In the other Central Asian states, Islamism (a political movement demanding the creation of an Islamic state in which *sharia* law would be applied) is prohibited, but in Kyrgyzstan or Kazakhstan well-known figures can express Islamic sensibilities in the sense of a wider religiosity or interaction with the Islamic community, the *Ummah*. For them as well, China is the new enemy of Central Asian societies, and its fight against Uyghur Islamism is proof. Central Asia is therefore likely to become part of a general movement which, depending on China's rise to power, will tend to see Islamists direct their criticisms at Beijing and not solely at the West.

Each Central Asian state has therefore a Sinophobia/Sinophilia balance that is specific to its actors and circumstances. First, the three border countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, have to be distinguished from the two non-border ones of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. While the China-adjacent countries had to negotiate delicate border treaties and fear that one day they might have to transfer even more territory to their neighbor, the non-adjacent two do not perceive China as a power that could potentially undermine national unity. The former have experienced significant private enterprise trade flows and migrations from China, whereas the latter's economic relations with Beijing are limited to official agreements between large companies, and involve practically no private trade exchanges, or any back-and-forth cross-border migratory flows of Chinese, Uzbek, or Turkmen traders.

However, this latter line of divide is only temporary. Many Uzbek petty traders already travel to China or have a stall at Karasuu, so Uzbekistan will likely experience similar trade developments after the

isolationist regime of Islam Karimov. Then the country can re-engage with its historical vocation as a trade crossroad of Central Asia. For Turkmenistan, China is probably going to appear more slowly in everyday life, since neighboring Iran and its close relations with Turkey will continue to be important. However, Turkmenistan's quasi-total dependency on China for its gas exports became a big concern for the Turkmen elites, with however few possibilities of finding alternative strategies.

Within these three border countries, several lines of divide appear. The two poorest and most fragile countries, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, consider the Chinese presence as a positive element, even as it also provokes anxieties. Beijing's ascendancy is a reinforcer of additional stability, since is one of the only great powers to devote so many resources to the development of transport infrastructures, bank loans, etc. Belonging to the SCO is prestigious and a positive development, even if criticized for drifting from its initial security objectives. For these two countries, the question of China is often formulated in terms of having "no other choice," since the candidates that are lined up to invest in their economies are too few to enable them to benefit from competition. Kazakhstan has economic reservations about Chinese involvement, and manifests greater ambitions of regional autonomy. However its room of maneuver in relationship to Russia has been reduced due to its entry into the Eurasian Economic Union, hence a renewed interest in securing its partnership with China as a counterbalance to Russia.

### **The Uyghur Issue and a Cultural Gap**

As could be expected, Xinjiang is a key element of Central Asian concerns, not because of principled sympathy for Uyghurs but because of pragmatic issues arising out of Xinjiang's proximity. Kazakh researchers criticize the general marginalization to which the Uyghurs have been subject on their ancestral territory. According to them, the "Far West" development project and the idea of redressing regional disparities in development are useful for the Han populations, enabling them to overcome land shortage problems by moving to China's Northwest, but it has been detrimental to the indigenous populations of this autonomous region.<sup>17</sup> Central Asian experts draw attention to the fact that the national minorities remain confined to the sectors of least growth and are mostly unable to gain access to higher education, whereas the Han tend to occupy those sectors for which technical specializations are required.<sup>18</sup> The shortage of cadres is not addressed in a way that benefits the national minorities. Instead, it is being solved by bringing in Han Chinese from eastern regions, thereby modifying Xinjiang's ethnic makeup to the detriment of Turkic peoples.<sup>19</sup> The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps or *Bingtuan*, used by Beijing as its armed wing against Uyghur separatism and also as a major component of its demographic colonization of Xinjiang, is probably the most criticized Chinese institution, the one that causes the most fear and that some imagine may indirectly take root in Central Asia.

This critical analysis of Chinese policy is part of a broader background of suspicion about Beijing's real objectives in Central Asia. Experts emphasize the historical dimensions of Chinese foreign policy and on its legacy in relations with other nations. Historians point to the fact that China's presence in Central Asia has always been that of a conqueror seeking expansion to the detriment of Turkic-Mongolian peoples. Many Central Asian experts argue that Chinese diplomacy gets its results through long-term strategies, not via quick, sharp blows. Thus, if Beijing is careful not to offend the national feeling of the newly independent Central Asian states by claiming more territories, this does not mean that it will not return to the issue in future decades.<sup>20</sup> These persistent suspicions of China's suspected ulterior motives have been strengthened by the prevailing nationalist mood in contemporary China, not to mention the aggravation of tensions with Japan over the interpretation of the past and the rehabilitation of pre-Communist traditions. Many experts, for example, mention that an increasing number of Chinese publications present the Qing advances into Central Asia as having had a positive "unifying" effect. The

2008 launch of a large scientific project on the history of the Qing dynasty allegedly confirmed the intention of the Chinese government to revive its foreign policy traditions of widening its sphere of influence.<sup>21</sup> Lastly, the discovery that some Chinese school textbooks published in the 2000s displayed maps in which a large part of Central Asia (namely, the “historical” lands, which include all of Tajik Pamiir, all of Kyrgyzstan, and the Kazakh region of Semirechie as far as Lake Balkhash) is presented as belonging to the Chinese Empire also caused much dismay among Central Asian experts. For them this is a sign that Beijing has not totally abandoned its territorial ambitions and may one day renege on its border treaty commitments.<sup>22</sup>

A fundamental continuity of China’s history is linked to the question of migration. The huge population differential and migration risk are at the core of Central Asian anxieties: even if the figures are modest at the moment,<sup>23</sup> the potential for a Chinese “migration invasion” into Central Asia would mean a fundamental undermining of the new states’ autonomy. Whereas the region has fewer than 60 million inhabitants, an over-populated China contains over 1.3 billion people. Each year the Chinese population increases by more than 15 million people, a number equivalent to the total population of Kazakhstan. Kazakh newspapers have taken this as an opportunity to specialize in denouncing what they call China’s “soft expansion” (*tikhaia ekspansiiia*) into Central Asia.

Finally, Central Asian specialists share a sentiment that there exists a “civilizational difference” between China and Central Asia. Diverse arguments are used to prove this apparently impassable culture barrier. Some conceive of it in terms of Islam, others in terms of Russian-Soviet acculturation, and still others as involving a difference in national essences. Murat Auezov maintains, for instance, that the two regions are irreconcilable on the cultural level, in part because the Chinese consider the Central Asians to be “barbarians”.<sup>24</sup> Klara Khafizova lays stress on the sense of hierarchy embedded in Chinese tradition, which does not uphold equality between peoples.<sup>25</sup> According to Ablat Khodzhaev, ostensible differences in “ethnic mentality” between the Chinese and the Turkic populations have persisted across the centuries without having been abolished or modified.<sup>26</sup> The then director of Tajikistan’s Center for Strategic Studies Sukhrob Sharipov is of the mind that Islam enables its populations to withstand assimilation into other cultures.<sup>27</sup> And according to Syroezhkin, this “civilizational barrier,” based on Russian-Soviet acculturation, ought to be maintained, since too much Sinophilia would liquidate the future of the Central Asian peoples, dissolving it in cultural assimilation and interethnic marriage.<sup>28</sup>

## Conclusions

In relation to cultural questions and long-term outlook, Central Asian experts hold pessimistic views of China. They believe that states of the region will have difficulty in trying to overcome the power differential with China to their advantage. They consider that the ultimate objective of the Chinese authorities concerning Central Asia’s independence is unclear and that little prevents the current fraternal status quo from one day being abandoned—especially in relation to territorial and demographic matters. The predominant suspicion is that China continues imperial designs on Central Asia and merely wants to conceal or delay them. Even the most optimistic, who consider that Beijing’s economic and geopolitical presence is a guarantee of stability for Central Asia, turn out not to be Sinophiles on the cultural level. All experts dismiss the notion that the Sinicization of Central Asian societies could take place by any means other than force. More, they all think it is important to maintain the “civilizational barrier” between Central Asia and China on the grounds that falling into the Chinese sphere of cultural influence would mean the ethnic disappearance of Central Asian societies.

However, this set of cultural fears toward China cannot counterbalance the pragmatic stance of the Central Asian leadership. For them, China's economic involvement in the region is a 'no choice' strategy: the West is seen as an unreliable partner both in terms of its strategic commitment in backing their state sovereignty and in the political conditionality of its economic investment; and Russia's renewed influence fosters concerns for the strategy autonomy of the Central Asian states. For this is the true paradox of the current Ukrainian crisis: despite their discontent about Russia's reassertion and the concerns about maintaining sovereignty, the Central Asian states, in particular Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, and to a lesser extent Uzbekistan, are obliged to hope that Russia's economy will continue to blossom and not collapse. If the ongoing economic crisis seriously impairs Russia's development, the repercussions on the Kazakh economy, on Russian investments in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and on the millions of Central Asian households whose future depends on remittances would be terrible and ultimately dangerous for the legitimacy of the Central Asian regimes.

In such a context, China looks like a 'less evil': its economic involvement comes with no political conditionality except backing their vision of the Uyghur issue, China's political pressures on the regimes is not – yet? – visible and Beijing itself is not interested in engaging into the local domestic politics. Seen from the Central Asian states, China remains therefore the most secured choice for a close partnership, at least in the short and medium term.

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<sup>1</sup> Wu Jiao, and Zhang Yunbi, "Xi proposes a 'new Silk Road' with Central Asia," *China Daily*, September 8, 2013, [http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-09/08/content\\_16952304.htm](http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-09/08/content_16952304.htm).

<sup>2</sup> Shannon Tiezzi, "China's 'New Silk Road' Vision Revealed," *The Diplomat*, May 9, 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/05/chinas-new-silk-road-vision-revealed/>.

<sup>3</sup> Xinhua, "China's Initiatives on Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21<sup>st</sup> century Maritime Silk Road," <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/special/silkroad/>

<sup>4</sup> O. Zajec, "La Chine affirme ses ambitions navales," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, September 2008, no. 654, pp. 18-19.

<sup>5</sup> James A. Millward, "Positioning Xinjiang in Eurasian and Chinese History Differing visions of the 'Silk Road,'" in C. Mackerras, and M. Clarke, eds., *China, Xinjiang and Central Asia* (London: Routledge, 2009), 65-66.

<sup>6</sup> On a more global view on the China-Xinjiang-Central Asia interaction, see C. Mackerras, and M. Clarke (eds.), *China, Xinjiang and Central Asia: History, transition and crossborder interaction into the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (New York: Routledge Contemporary China Series, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Konstantin Syroezhkin, Almaty, September 29, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Saodat Olimova, vice-director of the Sharq Analytical Center, Dushanbe, March 28, 2008, and June 16, 2010.

<sup>9</sup> "V politike – kholodno, v ekonomike – goriacho," K. Syroezhkin, *Kazakhstan-Kitai. Ot prigranichnoi torgovli k strategicheskomu partnerstvu* [Kazakhstan-China. From Border Trade to Strategic Partnership] (Almaty: KISI, 2010), vol. 2, p. 154.

<sup>10</sup> S.J. Blank, *China's Military Power: Shadow over Central Asia* (Arlington: Lexington Institute, 2006); K.L. Syroezhkin, *Kitai: voennaia bezopasnost'* (Almaty: KISI, 2008).

<sup>11</sup> On the Urumqi riots and the media handling of the event by a self-confident China, see Shan Wei, and Chen Gang, "The Urumqi Riots and China's Ethnic Policy in Xinjiang," *East Asian Policy*, vol. 1, no.3, 2009, pp. 14-22; Yuhui Li, "Notes on the Chinese Government's Handling of the Urumqi Riot in Xinjiang," *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, vol. 7, no.4, 2009, pp.11-15; K.L.Syroezhkin, "Sobytiia 50go iulia v Urumchi: prichiny i uroki," *Kazakhstan v global'nykh protsessakh*, no. 3, 2009, pp.98-110; *Repression in China. Roots and Repercussions of The Urumqi Unrest* (The Hague: Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, November 2009); and the World Uyghur Congress website, <http://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/> (accessed May 12, 2010).

<sup>12</sup> *Ta Kung Pao* [Hong Kong], September 24, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> "Kazakhstan nameren podpisat' soglasenie s Kitaem o transgranichnykh rekakh" [Kazakhstan is ready to sign an agreement with China on cross-border rivers], RIA Novosti, February 24, 2010, <http://www.rian.ru/world/20100224/210592367.html> (Accessed April 24, 2010).

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<sup>14</sup> B. Zhiger, and K. Khafizova, "Kazakhstan I Kitai v XXI veke: strategiiia sosedstva" [Kazakhstan and China in the 21st Century: Neighborhood Strategy], *Analytica*, June 21, 2007, [www.analitika.org/article.php?story=20070615050207340](http://www.analitika.org/article.php?story=20070615050207340) (Accessed November 1, 2008).

<sup>15</sup> K.T. Talipov, "Prirodnye resursy Sin'tszian-ugurskogo avtonomnogo raiona Kitaia: problem na fone optimisticheskikh prognozov" [The Natural Resources of the Uyghur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang in China: Problems on a background of Optimistic Forecasts], *Shygyz*, no. 1, 2005, pp. 95-100.

<sup>16</sup> More on Sinophobe and Sinophile circles in Laruelle, and Peyrouse, *China as a Neighbor. Central Asian Perspectives and Strategies*.

<sup>17</sup> G.U. Khadzhieva, and V.M. Krivonogov, "Ekonomicheskaiia modernizatsiia zapadnykh regionov Kitaia: zadachii perspektivy" [Economic Modernization of the Western Regions of China: Objectives and Outlook], *Shygyz*, no. 1, 2005, pp. 90-95; G.U. Khadzhieva, "Problema regional'nogo razvitiia Kitaia i strategicheskie podkhody k ee resheniiu" [Problems of China's Regional Development and Strategic Approches to Resolve them], *Shygyz*, no.1, 2004, pp. 88-93.

<sup>18</sup> Syroezhkin, *Problemy sovremennogo Kitaia i bezopasnost' v Tsentral'noi Azii*, p. 141.

<sup>19</sup> G.U. Khadzhieva, "Zapadnye raiony KNR v kontekste gosudarstvennoi strategicheskoi programme" [The Western Regions of the PRC in the context of the State's Strategic Programme], in *Uigurovedenie v Kazakhstane: traditsiia i novatsiia* [Uyghur Studies in Kazakhstan: Traditions and Novations] (Almaty: Nash mir, 2007), pp. 164-171.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Murat Auezov, Almaty, March 10, 2008.

<sup>21</sup> E. Usubaliev, "Kitaiskaia 'kolonizatsiia' Afriki" [The Chinese colonization of Africa] *Analytica*, February 12, 2007, <http://www.analitika.org/article.php?story=20070212052315456> (Accessed April 16, 2008).

<sup>22</sup> B. Zhumalieva, "Kazakhstan I Kitai: vzaimovliianie i sotrudnichestvo" [Kazakhstan and China: interaction and cooperation], *Ekonomicheskie strategii – Tsentral'naia Aziia*, no. 5, 2007, p. 43.

<sup>23</sup> Russian experts often declare that Kazakhstan receives between 150,000 permanently settled Chinese and 300,000 migrants that regularly cross the Chinese border, but these numbers appear to be inflated. In Kazakhstan, the customs services of the Interior Ministry registered 30,000 Chinese citizens crossing over the border in 2006, while for the same year, the customs service of the Committee of National Defense estimates that the flow is around 170,000 people per year. In Kyrgyzstan, the chairman of the Border Service declared that there were about 60,000 Chinese persons living in Kyrgyzstan at the beginning of 2008. In Tajikistan, according to the Interior Ministry Migration Service there were a little more than 10,000 Chinese laborers in 2008. No figures are available for Uzbekistan or Turkmenistan.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Murat Auezov, Almaty, March 10, 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Zhiger, and Khafizova, "Kazakhstan I Kitai v XXIveke: strategiiia sosedstva."

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Ablat Khodzhaev, Tashkent, March 22, 2008.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Sukhrob Sharipov, Dushanbe, March 26, 2008.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Konstantin Syroezhkin, Almaty, March 4, 2008.