

President of Kyrgyzstan: Our foreign policy doctrine is the Great Silk Road

Askar Akayev, President of the Kyrgyz Republic, has issued a program, entitled "The Diplomatic Conception of the Great Silk Route," which is the "Doctrine of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic." This program, which was released officially in early 1999, identifies the Silk Route, or Silk Road, a project also known as the Eurasian Land-Bridge, as the conceptual basis for the foreign policy orientation of the Kyrgyz Republic today.

The Kyrgyz Silk Road program has received wide publicity throughout the region, including its publication in the Russian newspaper Nezavisimaya Gazeta, as an article under President Akayev's by-line.

Excerpts follow. The text has been rendered into English from the unofficial German translation, made available to EIR courtesy of the Kyrgyz Embassy in Bonn, Germany.

Past and present of the Great Silk Route

The Great Silk Route has a history of several thousand years, during which, in ancient times, it provided the trade and economic, cultural and humanitarian, and political and diplomatic links between East and West and, to a certain extent, North and South. In the various phases of its existence, the content and meaning, direction and dimensions of the contacts underwent changes, but one thing remained constant: For this long period of time, the Great Silk Route was the bridge between different countries and civilizations.

Trade was carried out on it, which catalyzed the development of crafts. Travellers and researchers made a huge contribution to the development of science, as they studied the countries and peoples inhabiting the lands along the entire Route.

The world got to know the ideas and works of the greatest philosophers, scientists, and statesmen. There was an intensive mutual enrichment of cultures, and an exchange of knowledge, spiritual and philosophical conceptions, and views. Thanks to the Route, great epics became the property of all mankind. Syncretic and monotheistic religious ideas were spread by the Great Silk Route. Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity all found their adepts along the Great Silk Route.

The Great Silk Route was of incalculable importance for establishing and maintaining diplomatic relations between the centers of political life, the major nations of Europe and Asia. Numerous historical sources, for instance, report on the high level of official contacts and diplomatic missions between Byzantium and China, powers that played no small

role in the international life of that period. . . .

Despite many changes in direction, the main arteries of the Great Silk Route were destined to cross the territory of Kyrgyzstan.

On the eve of the new, third millennium, the idea of a rebirth of the Great Silk Route has broad international support, which has to do with two tendencies in the modern world. The first is the deepening of processes of interdependence and globalization. . . . The second tendency is the high level of regional and subregional integration.

The sustained and dynamic development of political and economic relations today is inconceivable without friendship, partnership, trust, and mutually beneficial relations, among all the nations of the Silk Route region.

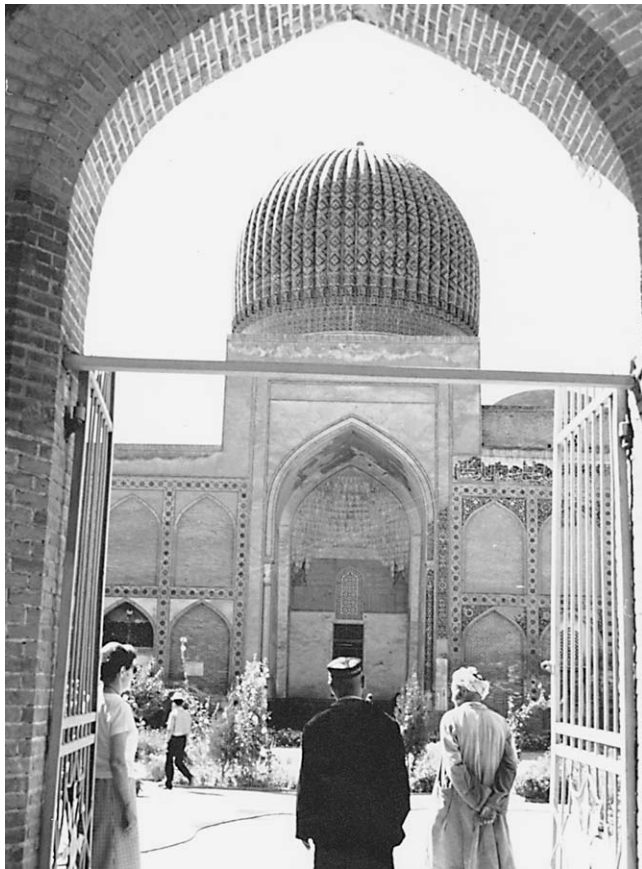
The geographical area of the Great Silk Route has no borders or limits. An expansion for countries which want to develop cooperation with those countries belonging to the Great Silk Road, is lawfully conditioned in the course of historical development. Arms races, local conflicts, extremism and terrorism, illegal production, the proliferation of drugs and drug consumption, natural catastrophes as well as technological and human catastrophes, extreme social poverty—these problems lead to insight into the natural and objective necessity of the rebirth of the Great Silk Road on a qualitatively new foundation.

While the Great Silk Road may have played the role of a connecting bridge in the past, its current task—under the conditions of globalization—goes far beyond these dimensions. The cosmic and planetary dimensions manifest themselves in their entirety, understood as an organic connection to modern progress and the development of human civilization as such.

The Renaissance of the Great Silk Road, under new historical conditions, refutes those ideas which are met with in the past, according to which the worldview and mentality of the West and of the East are artificially conceived as being in no way comparable with each other. Fortunately, a far more world-comprehensive idea is uppermost in the minds and hearts of people who populate the region of the Silk Road.

The ideas of humanism, tolerance, and a rebirth of the spiritual are opening a path in relentless struggle against prejudices and intolerance toward those who think differently, which beliefs are centuries old.

Kyrgyzstan, which lies at the immediate center of the Eurasian continent, at the seams of different cultures, and thereby experiences and absorbs the multiplicity of cultures



The Guri Mausoleum in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, some of the beautiful architecture found today along the ancient Silk Road.

and worldviews, has, under the current conditions, the necessary preconditions for being a bridge of friendship and cooperation among all countries belonging to the region of the Great Silk Road.

Kyrgyzstan: An integral part of the Great Silk Route

The land with the name Kyrgyzstan

After regaining national independence, Kyrgyzstan developed itself in a qualitatively new way — the way of political and socio-economic change.

Such notions as democratization, civil freedom, or supremacy of the law, have found their way into daily use. Principles of balance of powers and a system of restraint and counter-balances, in a reciprocal relationship, have tangibly demonstrated their effectiveness.

Favorable conditions were created in order to promote initiatives and activities of citizens in local organizations, in order to develop regional self-administration as one of the foundations of life of the nation at all levels.

The idea of Kyrgyzstan—our common house—has be-

come a conscious basis for the deepening and consolidation of international agreement and the creation of conditions for a human life of dignity for all citizens of the nation. In Kyrgyzstan, which has equally taken up the spiritual heritage and the rich traditions of the East and the West, members of many nationalities and religious confessions live together in peace and concord.

Kyrgyzstan has created the conditions for the formation of an open society with a developed market economy, it has successfully solved the problem of macroeconomic stabilization, and it has now entered upon the phase of economic upturn.

In Kyrgyzstan at the present time, a national information structure with access to global computer networks is being established.

One of the priority tasks of the whole society is to strengthen the positive trends in the economy and to secure a lasting process of growth: with promotion and aid for domestic entrepreneurs, especially for small and medium-sized firms, by means of attracting direct investments, and a broad utilization of new technologies.

In Kyrgyzstan, a climate conducive to investment has been created, and a legal foundation has been formed which provides foreign investors the necessary guarantees and privileges.

The stable political system, the openness, and the democratic economy of Kyrgyzstan, create good preconditions for the development of mutually advantageous international cooperation.

Kyrgyzstan has entered upon an era of democracy and its rebirth as an independent nation.

Kyrgyzstan and the countries of the region of the Great Land-Bridge

The use of the prefix “anti-” is fundamentally precluded with respect to bilateral cooperation in the conception of Kyrgyzstan’s foreign policy. This is conditioned by the whole course of the historical development of Kyrgyzstan as an independent state, by the fact that our country pursues a foreign policy directed at peace and develops its relations with the outside world on the basis of universally valid principles and norms of international law.

As an unwavering proponent of a broad and multilateral international cooperation in the common solution of global and international problems, Kyrgyzstan’s policy position is anti-drug, anti-extremism, and anti-terrorism. Kyrgyzstan is an irreconcilable opponent of illegal weapons trade and its proliferation, and it is struggling to achieve stability, progress, and economic prosperity, not only in its own region, but in the whole world.

Our country is very happy that, in the entire area over which the Great Silk Road stretches, there are no serious problems or contradictions of an antagonistic character to be observed between the countries of the region.

Among those participating in the international dialogue,

the consciousness of the necessity for solving deeply rooted problems peacefully at the negotiating table will become ever stronger. In this sense, Tajikistan, whose history is not to be separated from that of the Great Silk Road, is a good example. Political freedom, the effort to seek compromises and mutually acceptable solutions which the leaders of the earlier opposition have demonstrated, and the multiplicity of the mediation efforts and the missions of good will on the part of the neighboring countries, permit us to hope that the process of peace and national reconciliation in this country will become irreversible. Our country's initiative to convene a peace conference for Afghanistan has met with great recognition. The joint efforts and the cooperation of all countries which belong to the region of the Great Silk Road, can and should bring about the peace long yearned for in this so sorely tried country, and thus to turn forever this sad page in the history of this region.

The creation of a nuclear-free zone in Central Asia, the ending of the arms race and the conversion of weapons production, as well as the creation of conditions for a lasting development of all countries of the Great Silk Road, without exception, justify the hope that the region of the Silk Road will become transformed, with its immense potential and its resources, into one of the most flourishing, happiest regions of the world at the beginning of the third millennium, to the extent that the problems which touch upon the interests of all countries are jointly solved, and all obstacles in the way of a free flow of goods, capital, services, and labor are removed in the entire region of the Silk Road.

Kyrgyzstan is making targeted efforts for the development of cooperation with all the countries in the region of the Great Silk Road. In view of its geographical situation, our country has the favorable possibility of developing its relations in various directions, such as with bordering countries, with Europe, or with East and Southeast Asia.

Kyrgyzstan and the bordering countries

Our country is making a concerted effort to deepen multilateral cooperation with the bordering countries, to expand political, economic, and spiritual-cultural relations.

The fact that a common historical, political, economic, and spiritual-cultural background exists for these countries, which constituted one unified whole in the past, prescribes the objective necessity for mutual support and the development of relations in the context of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Kyrgyzstan is watching attentively the dynamic, and participates actively in the many integration processes in the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] countries, and it is also making a contribution in the area of consolidating and deepening of regional and intra-regional integration.

In recognition of the important role which a favorable external environment plays for further development, Kyrgyzstan is making continuous and effective efforts to consolidate security in the region of its national borders with all neighboring countries. Together with other countries of the region,

Kyrgyzstan has signed a series of agreements which aim at strengthening confidence-building measures in the military area and further reducing the armed forces, which has made it possible to find solutions to the border issues remaining from the past.

Kyrgyzstan is geographically and also historically very close to the Muslim states of the region of the Great Silk Road, which have significant potentials for investment, industrial growth, and development of raw materials.

Kyrgyzstan and Europe

The importance of Europe for Kyrgyzstan is based on the following reasons: the necessity and the usefulness of cooperation with the highly developed European countries, the usefulness of further development of connections to the East European nations, as well as participation in the concerns of all of Europe, which concern nations bordering on Kyrgyzstan. In the course of the development of relations with European countries, Kyrgyzstan, aside from efforts it has already undertaken on the bilateral level, will intensify its multilateral diplomacy, utilizing the unique possibility of participating in the work of European-wide arrangements, which deal with questions of security (including the Central Asian region), economic cooperation, and the construction of democratic institutions.

Kyrgyzstan and East and South Asia

Kyrgyzstan's cooperation with the countries of East and South Asia is developing on the bilateral level as well as in the context of international organizations. Regardless of the financial and economic difficulties under which some Asian nations at the moment are suffering, their economic potential will play an increasing role on the stage of international events.

Considering the rich experience that the countries of South Asia have in the economic realm, Kyrgyzstan will lay stress upon its enormous interest in an active participation in the various regional forums of ASEAN [the Association of Southeast Asian Nations] states, as well as in cooperation on the regional level.

States are guided by their national interests, in consideration of the geostrategic and geopolitical realities. In this connection, Kyrgyzstan can be successful in developing relations with all the countries of the Great Silk Route, if it takes into consideration the following factors:

a) According to economic data, Kyrgyzstan is considered a developing country. . . . This allows it to join the leading organs of multilateral diplomacy of the countries of the South and to pursue its national economic and political interests.

b) As a country with a transitional economy, Kyrgyzstan has the right to count on support from developed countries and from international financial organizations, in the implementation of its reform policy.

c) Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked country. Due to its position right in the center of the East-West and North-South transpor-

tation and communications lines, its natural need for links to modern means of communications and reliable access to ocean transport, as well as the objectively understandable need for it to be transformed into a transit land, Kyrgyzstan is working for the development of all forms of communication, especially in the area of transportation and information, also in the interests of the other countries of the Great Silk Route.

The principles of cooperation and the elaboration of a basis for relations to the countries of the Great Silk Route

The implementation of the political concept of the Great Silk Route is based on the following principles:

- Partnership, friendship, and cooperation, with equal rights, with all countries of the Great Silk Route;
- Mutual dependence;
- Mutual advantages;
- Long-term perspective;
- Versatility in the orientation of developments of international cooperation.

Partnership, friendship, and cooperation, with equal rights, with all countries of the Great Silk Route—these are the most important components of a principle which has objective and universal character, and at the same time, is interrelated with the hopes and efforts of every country which is interested in creating a favorable environment on its borders, as well as in bi- and multilateral diplomacy. This principle represents fully the universally recognized principles and norms of international law, as they are set down in the UNO charter, including mutual respect of sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders, non-interference in internal affairs, renunciation of violence, solution of conflicts through peaceful means, as well as mutually beneficial cooperation, with equal rights.

Mutual dependence—this has become a completely new phenomenon, at the end of the 20th century. Globalization leads to insight into the incontrovertible fact, that no single country can come to grips with the challenges that threaten the whole of humanity, be it in the military or economic realm.

The meaning of the principle of mutual advantage, is obvious. The development of a mutually advantageous international cooperation in the context of the region of the Great Silk Route, allows all countries without exception, to find answers to many questions and to solve problems which they are facing at the moment. The countries of the region are already engaged in building as well as diversifying existing means of transportation, which will allow for the rapid and optimal access to communication on a world scale; thus stimulus is created for the development of international trade in the region as well as outside its borders; contacts among all people of all the countries in the region will be deepened and intensified, on a spiritual, cultural level, in science, education, as well as tourism, for recreation as well education about new countries.

The principle of a long-term perspective is organically interlinked with the foregoing. The entire historical experience of the development of the Great Silk Route, just as of the countries which have been drawn into its orbit over the course of centuries, has convincingly demonstrated the necessity and the relevance today, of a development of relations among states which seek a long-term perspective.

Versatility in the orientation of the development of international cooperation, is an indispensable precondition for the creation of favorable prerequisites and possibilities to realize a balanced, flexible, and maneuverable policy on the international stage; it corresponds to Kyrgyzstan's long-term national interests and defines itself through goals and tasks which are to be solved in the future.

Perspectives for the realization of the foreign policy concept of the Great Silk Route

The realization of the diplomatic concept of the Great Silk Route, for Kyrgyzstan as well as for the other countries in the region, has long-term and favorable consequences.

A Renaissance of the Great Silk Route, in the current historical period, makes it possible to achieve all the necessary conditions for transforming the region into a zone of stability, security, friendship, collaboration, and equal partnership.

The Great Silk Route of the present creates favorable conditions for deepening international cooperation, in the common solution of these global problems which humanity faces at the dawn of the third millennium.

An expansion of the geographical space of the Great Silk Route, will allow for a more complete utilization of existing possibilities and of the rich potential for deepening international contacts on the economic, trade, science, technical, and spiritual-cultural levels. . . .

There are sufficient grounds to assume that all the countries on the Great Silk Route will exert the maximum effort, so that in the new millennium, from the region of the Silk Route, this vast area which traverses east to west the whole Eurasian continent and unites a great variety of cultures, traditions, and historical destinies, only positive impulses for construction, progress, and common prosperity will emerge.

Kyrgyzstan is in the position, and is ready to come forward as the link among the countries of the Great Silk Route.

The interests and tasks of foreign policy, for Kyrgyzstan, lie in guaranteeing in the highest possible measure and through political, diplomatic means, the consolidation of international guarantees for independence, sovereignty, and economic independence, as well as territorial integrity.

To achieve these stated goals and tasks, Kyrgyzstan is fully determined and willing to promote and nurture friendly, good-neighborly, and partnership relations with all the countries of the Great Silk Route, and to participate very concretely in the processes of integration.

Askar Akayev