

## STRATEGIC PLANNING AND RISK ANALYSIS OF ONE BELT, ONE ROAD TRADE ROUTE

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### ABSTRACT

The route, known as the historical Silk Road, was reactivated in 2013 by the President of China, announcing it as the "One Belt, One Road Project." Commercial Project: It will cover significant investments covering China, Asia, Africa, and Europe, and many multinational companies will put their goods and products into service from this trade route. Since its establishment, the People's Republic of China has been the dominant power in the Asian region and constitutes the Project's starting point. China has the most neighbors globally and controls the Silk Road, making it a pioneer in the region in areas such as land, rail, and sea trade and energy security. China has made various agreements with the route countries in this Project, and the necessary infrastructure works have been started. In the commercial Project of the century, Turkey's geostrategic importance is excellent. Turkey plays an essential role in circulating multinational companies' goods, products, services, and market competition. The study aims to analyze the risks affecting the Project and reveal the Project's strategic planning process. The Project also faces some threats as it hosts too many companies, involves too many countries, and has a large amount of finance. In this study, the problems in the region were examined with the descriptive analysis method, and risk analysis was created. From the beginning to the present, the primary stages of the project were reviewed with the strategic planning process model. Eliminating the Project's risks, which is expected to be completed in 2049, will be an essential supporting factor in the effective operation of the strategic planning process.

**Keywords:** New Silk Road Project, Multinational Companies in Silk Road, One Belt, One Road Trade

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The People's Republic of China has the most neighbors globally, with 14 countries. Neighbors; Russia, Korea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Mongolia, Vietnam, Nepal, Bhutan, Burma, and Laos. The Chinese government, which has ties to many countries, has to pursue peaceful policies. Any favorable procedure to be followed will be in China's interest. In his speeches, Chinese President Xi Jinping stated that he wanted to pursue friendly policies with his neighbors during his lessons and trips.

In his statement on the subject, Jinping said:

*"Let us insist on being good neighbors living in harmony and brotherhood by passing on our friendship to future generations. China will resolutely pursue an independent and peaceful foreign policy through peaceful development. We respect the domestic and foreign policies pursued by the peoples of all countries through the development of their own free will. We never interfere in the internal affairs of Central Asian countries. We never seek to seize power to steer regional affairs, and we do not seek to establish spheres of influence. Together with Russia and all Central Asian countries, we are ready to work tirelessly to create a harmonious region by reinforcing communication and coordination"* (Jinping, 2017).

The historical Silk Road, which has been the heart of trade until geographical discoveries in history, has been the source of China's friendship project and has brought the Modern Silk Road Project to life by taking inspiration from Chinese history. With the Project, China is taking firm steps toward dominating the world economy rapidly.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 History of Silk Road Trade Route

Asian lands have been the point of formation of civilizations from past to present and have hosted great empires (Frankopan, 2018). These civilizations are mainly based on water resources, fertile agricultural lands, and trade routes. The Silk Road is also the most important trade route on the route. The silkworm produces

protein fiber while making its cocoon; the fabric formed by weaving this fiber is silk (UNESCO, 2021). Due to the intense silk trade, the German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen named the trade route the "*Silk Road*." Silk Road BC II. In the 19th century, silk and spice varieties were first traded from China to Europe, and then precious stones such as paper, porcelain, fabric, silver, gold, and copper were started to be sold.

The Silk Road has become a safe trade corridor opening to Europe and Anatolia, starting from China. Since the trade route with a length of 8,000 km<sup>2</sup> took days or even months, there were caravanserais for the rest of the merchants, caravans, and travelers (Bozkurt, 2000). Caravanserais is an indication that the road is safe. In addition, the silk road is of great importance not only commercially but also in terms of subjects such as religion, language, history, culture, and knowledge transfer.

Significance of historic roads by Frankopan:

It is stated as "*Ideas, themes and stories flowed through the main roads and were spread by travelers, traders, and pilgrims...*" (Frankopan, 2018).

The Silk Road enabled the spread of Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism to large masses (Arslan, 2018). The Silk Road has been the cradle of civilizations for centuries, the leading economic resource of the countries on the route, providing the spread of religions to large masses. From ancient times to the present, trade has been the most important factor shaping the country's destiny. Countries that traded effectively on the Silk Road were the most powerful states of their time, such as China, Ottoman, Rome, and Egypt. The critical source of the power of these states came from their dominance of trade routes. Those who owned commerce dominated money, military power, and extensive lands. The Silk Road is a historically important trade route that brings different cultures together. Today, China was one of the leading countries in world trade in B.C. Luxury goods from the East were an indicator of wealth; only certain people bought silk, which became the first luxury good (Frankopan, 2018). Silk was so valuable that it was even used as money. The silk trade was a significant source of income for China. The Chinese state system has sentenced the transfer of silk

production stages to foreigners to a death sentence (UNESCO, 2021). Silk has become so valuable that there were customs and quality control officers in certain parts of the silk road (Bozkurt, 2000). The main route of the historical Silk Road connects the continents by starting from China by land, to Central Asia, then to Mesopotamia via Iran, and then to the ports of Antakya and Sur in the Mediterranean (Bozkurt, 2000).

This route was the most used trade route until new ways were discovered together with geographical discoveries. The Silk Road has been the center of trade for fifteen hundred years (Akpınar, 2012). The countries through which the Silk Road passes: In general; There are Central Asian countries such as "*China, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan*", and then in Anatolia, "*Cizre, Doğubeyazıt, Erzurum, Erzincan, Sivas, Kars, Trabzon, Tokat, Amasya, Sinop, Kastamonu, Bitlis, Kayseri, Malatya, Kırşehir, Konya, Isparta, Antalya*" and the last route is Akhan Caravanserai in Denizli, followed by Aegean ports (Ersöz Tügen, 2019).

The Historical Silk Road does not have a one-way route; it is a multi-directional network of roads extending from East to West, from Asia to Europe (Akpınar, 2012). It has many routes, both by land and by sea. A versatile route enabled the silk road to contact many countries and have alternatives under all circumstances. It has been the common interaction point of societies from different cultures, races, and languages.

### **3. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH**

#### **3.1 Method of the Risk Analysis**

In the research.

A risk analysis has been made with a descriptive analysis method for the risks that threaten the security of the Silk Road. Four problems were created with the descriptive analysis method. Problem sentences are coded as the alphabet of "P." These problems are:

P<sub>1a</sub>: Can the energy competition of regional (Russia, Chinese companies, etc.) and global (U.S. companies, etc.) powers in the region take place as a conflicting factor in the One Belt, One Road Project?

P<sub>1b</sub>: Do the border problems in the region pose a security threat to the trade and logistics companies involved in the One Belt, One Road project?

P<sub>1c</sub>: Are there any problems related to terrorist activities in the region, and do the multinational companies, logistics companies, and nation-states involved in the One Belt, One Road Project threaten themselves?

The risk analysis revealed priority issues that states and international organizations should address for more effective and safe trade. These parameters, which threaten the trade route, should be eliminated with regional cooperation.

### **3.2 Method of the Strategic Planning**

Silk Road's strategic planning analysis was also known as the One Belt, One Road project. In the research, the Strategic Planning Process Application was used by Demir and Yılmaz (2016) and applied by Puiu et al. (2009) and the State Planning Organization (DPT) (2006). The existing processes of the One Belt One Road project and the expected processes have been revealed with this analysis. The steps in the Strategic Planning Process are listed as Situation Analysis, Mission and Principles, Vision, Strategic Objectives and Targets, Activities and Projects, Tracing and Evaluation, and Performance Measurement. The data obtained by the descriptive analysis method were applied and evaluated in the strategic planning process.

### **3.3 Discussion of Findings of Risk Analysis of One Belt One Road Trade Route Project**

The Silk Road is one of the most important actors of trade, which will determine the fate of countries in the future, as it was in the past. The new silk road project is one of the most comprehensive trade agreements, starting from China, connecting Asia, Africa, Russia, and Europe with trade, facilitating trade between countries. The land route of the Silk Road started from China and reached Europe after coming to Turkey via Central Asia and Iran. The progress of the road in Europe extends from the city of Rotterdam in the Netherlands, which has the largest port in Europe, to Venice (Atlı, 2014).

The Silk Road has different routes that ensure trade continuity in every field. The route that the Silk Road follows from the sea is from the South China Sea to Kolkata, which is the essential part of India, and then "*from the Indian Ocean to Kenya, passing through the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea and joining with the Black Silk Road in Venice*" (Atli, 2014). In this direction, the Project covers the country by land, the country by sea, and the country by air. In total, it passes through 64 countries. Another critical aspect of the project is that when the project is fully realized, it is predicted that 60% will be saved in the transportation time of the commercial goods and 42% in the transportation costs (Turan, 2020). In this case, the "One Belt, One Road" project paves the way for new trade agreements, as trade between countries is much faster and cheaper. In this way, China is making a breakthrough in foreign exchange much quicker and safer. Because it is more affordable than other brands, the demand for products made in China is relatively high.

China is the world's factory in production, but it is dependent on foreign sources for the energy it uses. To meet this dependency, it makes significant investments in many parts of the world. Especially the countries it invests in are underdeveloped or developing countries. China will export its products from all three routes by producing more with the new silk road project. The Silk Road did not have a single route in history, and the route was reshaped according to the conditions of the time (Deniz, 2016). The route of the new silk road project has been pre-reserved according to today's requirements and includes three different routes: land, iron, and sea. The expectations from the Project, in which millions of dollars have been invested, are high, and China, which supports in the future, plans to dominate the world economy quickly.

China and all countries on the route will benefit from the Project. China wants to increase its dominance in the region, and for this, it targets to trade. As it is known, trade has been one of the most critical factors determining the fate of countries for centuries. The historical silk road lost its importance after geographical discoveries.

Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the "*One Belt One Road*" project to the whole world in Astana, Kazakhstan, after his international trips on September 10, 2013, and made the silk road necessary again. Today, maritime trade still maintains its importance. In the trade between China and Europe, the sea route is mainly used because the sea route is cheaper, faster, and heavy cargo can be transported. Ships passed through unsafe areas such as the Strait of Malacca and the Gulf of Aden (Atlı, 2014).

Commercial goods will be sent to Europe safely using land and railway with the new silk road project. Since Turkey is seen as a bridge between Europe and Asia, it is considered a key country in exporting and importing products to Europe.

The fact that only the energy sector constitutes 63.1% of all investments made by China in Turkey between 2005 and 2018 shows the need for China for Turkey in the energy leg of the Belt and Road project (Algül, 2020).

Since Turkey is a transit country, it is one of the leading actors in the Belt and Road project. Turkey is a developing country. At this point, there is a great need for industrial production. The Belt Road Project will reach energy, the primary source of industrial output, much faster and more. Passing the pipeline through our country will also increase the energy supply. The Belt and Road Project is a well-established project that requires significant investments in trade, logistics, and energy and will generate much more profit from the assets. It is one of the most important projects of the 21st century on the international platform. It is predicted that China will take the place of the USA in the period between 2025 and 2040. The struggle between China and the USA is not just economic. Intelligence, trade, military, etc., are also competitive in the fields. The U.S. has been the only country that has shaped the world since the 20th century and has no competition. It sees China as a giant threat country for the U.S. China is leaping forward commercially and following politically peaceful policies with neighboring countries.

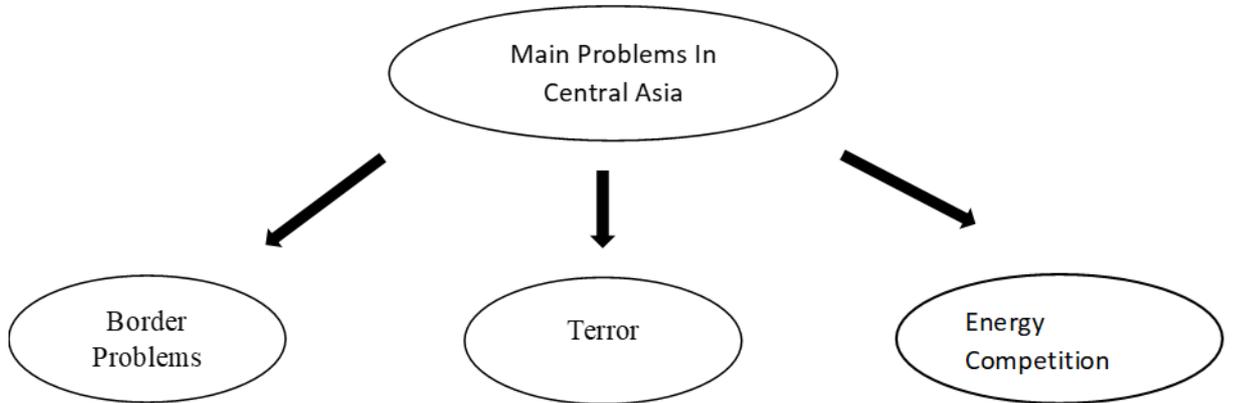
With the decrease in the world trade volume in recent years, this road will contribute significantly to the global economy. Infrastructure studies for uninterrupted, continuous, and safe logistics show the support of the states for this Project. Silk Road, which will start in China, will reach Europe and Africa via two lines. The section that includes Turkey is the most critical part of the Project as the middle corridor. The highway line will reach the interior of Europe through the route that provides for Turkey via Central Asia. The sea route will reach Europe by following the route of the Middle East gulfs over the Indian Ocean. This modern Silk Road project will connect all countries to global trade and increase their economic development (Serper, 2017). Such a large and international project brings with it security problems. The more strategic the route is, the more critical it is to insecurity. It is not possible to use an unsafe commercial route. In this direction, China also signs bilateral security agreements with countries. For the continuity of trade, it is necessary to ensure the safety of the roads, and in this direction, the global problems should be minimized. The Kashmir Problem, which has not been resolved between India and Pakistan since 1947, and China's border problem with India constitute a security problem on the land route of the Project (Serper, 2017). Internal turmoil in Afghanistan, which borders China, poses a threat to the Project. The Belt and Road Project was introduced in Afghanistan in 2013, where the United States of America was present and prevented the Taliban from intervening in the administration. The Taliban moved into the vacant areas after the U.S. withdrew its troops. The Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan requires re-establishing bilateral relations. In addition, the terrorist organization DAESH, which shows its presence in Iraq, poses a threat to the Project. Iran is a country where the land route of the Modern Silk Road passes.

Goods coming through Iran go to Turkey and then to Europe. A problem to be experienced in Iran will disrupt the trade with Europe. Since the Project covers many countries, the slightest diplomatic tension threatens the Project. In addition, the Chinese government has established the Silk Road Economic Belt Fund to meet the

investment expenditures for the silk road. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank was selected to realize the infrastructure works of the Belt and Road project. China has the highest production but is dependent on foreign sources for energy and production. China supplies most of the oil needed for its heavy industry through pipelines. The rest is realized by maritime trade, so a comprehensive trade line has been planned (Serper, 2017).

Conflict or asymmetric foreign power interventions on this Project's route will endanger the supply of products and goods and the transit and way (Yetgin, 2021). Central Asia is a region of terrorism, border problems, and energy competition. Many ethnic groups in the region bring along cultural and especially religious conflicts. These problems pose a security threat to the "New Silk Road Project." There are many problems with the security parameters in the region. In the article, three main topics are examined in security strategies.

These problems related to security issues are shown in Figure 1 below ;



**Figure 1.** Risks that Effect the Trade<sup>1</sup>

The majority of the Muslim population lives in the Asian Region. Since DAESH/ISIS also basically defends Islamic jihad, many people in the region are part of the terrorist organization and go to Syria. The organization has provided militant support in the areas where it is located. Approximately 2000-4000 people have joined

<sup>1</sup> Drawn by author

ISIS from the Central Asian Region to fight in Syria in the last three years. The organization aims to attract countries, including the Middle East and Central Asian countries, to war and ensure their division (Akşam, 2021).

There is an intense fight against terrorism in Central Asia. A terrorist network of this size can be fought militarily on the ground. A political and economic organization can be established in the ASEAN model for the Silk Road Project. In this way, the countries involved in the Project can act and make integrated decisions. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established in Thailand in 1967 (MFA, 2021). The organization's founding members are Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Countries such as Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia were included in the organization in the following years.

In the founding text of ASEAN, the aim of the organization is stated as: *"Cooperation in economic, social, cultural, technical, educational and other fields, ensuring regional peace and stability within the framework of respect for the concept of justice, law, and United Nations principles."*

And;

*"The issues such as stopping conflicts and ensuring political stability, which was at the forefront during the founding years of ASEAN, were replaced by efforts to develop economic cooperation in the post-Cold War period"* (Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), 2021).

The ASEAN Convention is a legally binding agreement between the 10 ASEAN Member States (ASEAN Convention, 2021).

Like the ASEAN model, a political and commercial organization can be formed within the Silk Road Project. The organization to be created can be formalized at the U.N. Security Council. If 38.,39.,40., 41 articles of the U.N. Security Council protect the organization, the security weakness in the organization can be eliminated. In this way, the countries involved in the Project both increase their self-power and have sanction power. Countries can integrate faster and sign a security agreement, which is vital for

the Project. The binding of the Project with the organization will also increase. China, Britain, France, Russia, and the USA are permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. If one of these countries vetoes any decision, the decision is not implemented. In the Council, which consists of 15 countries, including these five countries, decisions are taken with the affirmative votes of 9/15 members. One Belt One Road Project is a threat to the U.S. economy. In addition, since the USA is not involved in the Project, the U.N. Security Council will likely veto the security of the Silk Road.

For this reason, the USA should be integrated into the Project and not wholly excluded. If it can trade on the route via indirect routes and the necessary agreements are signed, the USA may not pose an obstacle in ensuring security by voting positively in the Security Council for the Project. The participation of the USA in the U.N.'s support of the project is essential because the USA is a country that can influence the U.N. Security Council resolutions.

According to U.N. Article 38, when there is a conflict between countries, the Security Council first makes peaceful recommendations to the parties to resolve the problem (United Nations Convention, 1945). The Security Council, which is responsible for maintaining international peace and security, has the authority to intervene militarily when necessary. The section from Article 38 to Article 51 of the U.N. Convention includes the policies of the Security Council to be implemented in situations that threaten international peace and security (United Nations Convention, 1945).

According to Article 43, paragraph 1 of the UN Charter:

*"All Members of the United Nations, to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, shall include, at the call of the Security Council, the armed forces necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security and the right of passage by a special agreement or agreements."*

They undertake to offer all kinds of assistance and facilities to the service of the Council." (United Nations Convention, 1945). The signed agreements are also ratified

by the constitutions of the parties (United Nations Convention, 1945). Therefore, if the U.N. Security Council ensures the security of the Silk Road, countries undertake to protect security by giving constitutional guarantees. The two most important organizations that can intervene militarily worldwide are NATO and the U.N. The silk road is under U.N. security will almost completely solve the security problem. In addition, countries that are not on the route, such as the USA, should not be excluded entirely. If negotiations are made and trade in these countries is ensured, the trust in the Project will increase, and the Project's sphere of influence will be expanded. In this way, the trade network becomes more extensive.

The USA intervenes in the Middle East as part of the fight against terrorism. It has continued its activities in these countries, especially Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, and built bases in various regions. In this way, it preserved its existence even though it was officially separated from the area. The next stop of the USA after the Middle East is Central Asia. Today, the USA, which has completely turned to Central Asia, is trying to have a say in the region, especially with terrorism and economic agreements, and wants to establish bases here. But in Central Asia, Russia and China are pretty uncomfortable with the U.S. presence. The USA was disturbed by the New Silk Road Project and held a summit with the G7 countries, including England, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, and Italy. It is an infrastructure project covering less developed countries that will rival the Belt and Road Project. This Project is considered an alternative to the Silk Road (Karan, 2021).

The Central Asian region is problematic militarily and politically. Since the Silk Road Project is extensive and comprehensive, the infrastructure investments made reached millions of dollars. The slightest vulnerability to be experienced can render the investments made dysfunctional. States do not prefer to trade on an unsafe route. The main element of the operation of the Silk Road Project is defined as security. Goods must be transported safely on the way; border issues, border issues, terrorism, and energy competition threaten Central Asia and the Project. This Project cannot be

carried out as desired until these problems are resolved. The presence of Daesh/ISIS is increasing in the region.

The U.S. government entered the country to clear Afghanistan of al-Qaeda after al-Qaeda's terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in 2001. This situation became the gateway of the USA to Central Asia. The USA's presence in Afghanistan threatened China's Belt and Road Project. The existence of the USA, which lasted for 20 years, came to an end in 2021. However, the Taliban terrorist organization, which took over the administration by filling the gap left by the USA in a short time, is a more significant threat to the Project. The end of the USA's relationship with Afghanistan means that the obstacle to the expansionist policies of Russia and China in the region is removed.

This situation is also explained as follows: "*Russia is trying to increase its influence in the post-Soviet geography within the scope of the intimate environment doctrine. In this strategy, which can also be read as a "politics of going south" through Central Asia, Afghanistan is essential for Moscow. There is a possibility that the ongoing violence in Afghanistan will spread to Central Asia and affect Russia. On the other hand, thanks to Afghanistan, which has stabilized, it may be possible for Russia to go south and reach the Indian Ocean*" (Kaya, 2021). In addition, although the USA has officially exited Afghanistan, it has not given up on Central Asia. It wants to establish bases in Central Asian countries. The terrorist organization Taliban is in power in Afghanistan, one of the neighboring countries of China, and the spread of terrorist acts to Pakistan, which is a neighbor of China and Afghanistan, is a threat to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The close relations between China and Pakistan enable the USA and India to act together in the presence of organizations such as QUAD (Kaya, 2021).

The official entry of the USA to Central Asia after the September 11 attacks made the security in the region take on a different dimension, and other countries began not to feel safe enough. Asian countries, like Middle Eastern countries, are constantly struggling with problems within the country, outside the country, and geographically.

Uncontrolled population growth in the region brings about unemployment; In Asia, where economic issues are experienced, political tensions stemming from authoritarian governments, internal conflicts arising from excessive interventionism of the state administration, and human rights violations are experienced. These tensions in Asia, which hosts different religions, languages , and cultural differences, constitute the source of terrorism, especially "*ethnic nationalism, tribalism and regionalism problems*" (Erol, 2004).

Most countries in Central Asia meet their water needs from the Amu Derya and Syr Darya rivers, the largest rivers in the area. The Amu Darya River passes through Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan (Esin, 1991). The Syr Darya river, on the other hand, passes through "Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan" (Canov, 2009). The countries on the transit route use the waters of these two rivers for agricultural drinking water by building dams and establishing hydroelectric power plants. Since each country where the rivers pass uses only the right to use the water as if it belongs to them, less water reaches the other nation during periods of low rainfall, which causes periodic crises. Even a minor tension in the region threatens the New Silk Road Project.

Another problem that may hinder the Silk Road project is border problems. Different problems in the Asian region combine and bring along other problems such as avalanches. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, independent nation-states were established in Central Asia. At the end of the authoritarian rule of the Soviets and the ethnic groups that did not pass the stages of becoming a nation-state declared their independence and became states. It still constitutes the root cause of ethnic conflict and border problems that have survived today. There are severe border problems between "*Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan,*" which are expressed in the narrow sense, and these countries also experience border problems with their neighbors "*Russia, China, Afghanistan, Iran and Azerbaijan*" (Joldoshev, 2019). Although some border problems have been resolved, border discussions continue in

the Fergana Valley and between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. In April 2021, an armed conflict broke out between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. (Abdulkerimov, 2021). There have been border problems between India and China for many years, and armed clashes broke out in 2020 and 2021. Although the problems in Central Asia have been officially resolved, the emergence of a new problem is not complex at all. These lands, which contain so many differences and struggles, are ready to return to the battlefield at any moment. For the operation of the New Silk Road Project, which is of high cost and security is at the forefront, starting from Central Asia and extending to Europe via Turkey, all route countries must undertake protection not only by considering their interests but also by strategic partnership.

When interdependence in energy is examined from the perspective of China, since China is the country that imports energy, it is a country that is more dependent than the supplying country. Of course, countries that supply power to China are not entirely independent. The two sides are dependent on each other for their economic interests at different levels. China is the world's largest importer. For this reason, the continuity of production depends on China's import of sufficient energy. China alone accounts for more than half of the world's coal consumption (Early, 2021). This relationship is just one example of China's dependence on energy. China is the country that consumes the most energy globally, including oil, natural gas, coal, nuclear energy, hydroelectric power, and renewable energy. The major countries from which China imports crude oil are Russia, Saudi Arabia, Angola, Iraq, Oman, Brazil, and Iran. China imports natural gas through pipelines; from Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. China may be an utterly foreign-dependent country in energy, but its dependence is not one-sided because it is the world's factory. Almost no country does not import products from China, the world export leader.

For this reason, the slightest problem in China's production will have a global impact. The New Silk Road Project will ensure safe exports and imports with mutual economic interests. In particular, providing a secure energy supply is one of the central

axes of the Project. With the "win-win" policy, China, the project owner, and all countries on the route and will trade will win. The trade that will be made will ensure positive progress in political relations. The new Silk Road Project will provide versatile advantages when fully realized. It is not a coincidence that Chinese President Xi Jinping simultaneously said "Zero Problems with Neighbors" as the Project. For the Project to work as planned, all countries within its scope, especially China, which has problems with their neighboring countries, must resolve their issues and exclude them from the Project.

According to the Descriptive Analysis Method, the problem statements created for risk analysis are shown below.

**Table 1.** Problem Results

#	Problem	Result
P <sub>1a</sub>	Can the energy competition of regional (Russia, Chinese companies, etc.) and global (U.S. companies, etc.) powers in the region take place as a conflicting factor in the One Belt, One Road Project?	Approved
P <sub>1b</sub>	Do the border problems in the region pose a security threat to the trade and logistics companies involved in the One Belt, One Road project?	Approved
P <sub>1c</sub>	Are there any problems related to terrorist activities in the region, and do the multinational companies, logistics companies, and nation-states involved in the One Belt, One Road Project threaten themselves?	Approved

According to the findings obtained by the descriptive analysis method, it has been confirmed that the main factors that may pose a risk to the commercial activities of the companies in the region are border problems, energy competition, and terrorism problems.

### 3.4 Discussion of Findings of Strategic Planning of One Belt One Road Trade Route Project

Strategic planning carries a long-term and future-oriented perspective (Eryiğit, 2013). Strategic planning is a discipline that reveals and guides the organization (Narinoğlu, 2007). In this context, strategic planning is the planning of results, focuses on outcomes, not inputs, and is planning for change; It strives to ensure that the difference can be in the desired direction and supports the change, is dynamic, and directs the future (Eryiğit, 2013). It should be reviewed and adapted to changing conditions (Parlak and Sobacı, 2010). Strategic Planning generally requires an emphasis on effective information gathering, alternative strategic development, research, and future implications of current decisions to get the best results (Yılmaz, 2003). The strategic planning process (Demir and Yılmaz, 2016), adapted by Puu et al. (2009) and the State Planning Organization (2006), was used in this study for the single commercial belt, single road project involving nation-states.

#### 3.4.1 Strategic Planning Model

The Strategic Planning Model Process is shown below.



Figure 2. Model of the Research

In line with the information obtained from the literature, the findings shown in the table below were obtained during the strategic planning process for the Silk Road Trade Project.

### 3.4.2. Discussion of Strategic Planning Model

#### Situation Analysis

In the situation analysis, the following evaluations are made (Gözlükaya, 2007: 42-43):

- Historical development
- Legal obligations and legislation analysis of the organization
- Determination of the organization's fields of activity and products and services
- Stakeholder analysis (analysis of the target audience of the organization and those who are positively or negatively affected by the activities of the organization, related parties)
- Internal analysis (analysis of the organization's structure, human resources, financial resources, corporate culture, technological level, etc.)
- Environmental analysis (analysis of the environment and external conditions in which the organization operates).

As of 2013, the Silk Road has come to the fore again with the "One Belt, One Road Project" announced by Chinese President Xi Jinping. This Project positively affected China's relations with Asian countries, increased its strategic importance in the region, and enabled it to take an essential step toward becoming a global power. So far, China has signed agreements with nearly 150 countries to develop this Project. According to data from the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, Beijing invested over \$20 billion in this Project last year. (Tr Euronews, 2022). The primary purpose of the Belt and Road Initiative is to strengthen the links between the East and the West in a multidimensional way. In this context, projects are carried out in energy transportation lines, digital infrastructure, and transboundary logistics and infrastructure

investments. Studies such as harmonizing customs procedures are also carried out (Atlı, 2020).

### **Mission and Principles**

The mission is an explanation of what an organization does. (Heathfield, 2010). With the Belt and Road project, China aims to revive the old Silk Road trade routes, an important trade network. The Project is significant in increasing economic relations and requiring strategic cooperation and partnership relations to implement the Project and create the necessary infrastructure.

### **Vision**

The vision is the organization's answer to what we want to be, and it is the expression of the state they aspire to be in the future (Demir and Yılmaz, 2016). This Project supports the increase of China, Asia, Europe, and Africa; ensuring economic policy coordination; aims to increase investment, business opportunities, and cultural interaction by promoting regional infrastructure (El-Namaki, 2017). The One Belt, One Road Project was introduced to the whole world by China and is accepted as the most significant economic Project of the century. The Project will change international balances as well as its financial aspect.

### **Strategic Objectives and Targets**

Although strategic goals are more specific than the mission statement, they have enough generality to encourage creativity and innovation. The goals determine the institution's strategic direction (Kılıç and Erkan, 2006).

The Objectives and Targets are:

•Officially, the One Belt, One Road Initiative highlights five key areas of cooperation (Wade, 2019):

- Coordinating development policies,
- Forging infrastructure and facility networks,
- Strengthening investment and trade relations,
- Increasing financial cooperation,

- Deepening social and cultural changes.

•Uzbekistan, on the other hand, is another powerful country in the region, which has rich underground resources in the Central Asian region and a strategic region such as the Fergana Valley. When evaluated within the scope of the Project, Uzbekistan is in the position of a strategically important country for China both as an essential energy source for its developing industry and for providing its trade safely and transporting it to Europe.

### **Activities and Projects**

Activities and projects are a detailed description of the strategies and steps used to implement the strategic plan below.

- By realizing the Georgia Anaklia Port Project, it aims to become an essential component of the One Belt, One Road Initiative. (Filiz, 2020).

- The new Eurasian Land-Bridge project creates a series of rail corridors stretching for approximately 7,500 miles (12,000 kilometers) from China to Western European destinations, with travel time estimated to be two weeks (OBOR Europe, 2019). When the Project is implemented, China and Europe will be connected through Kazakhstan, Russia, and Belarus (OBOR Europe, 2019).

- It covers the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and road, railway, power lines, and fiber optic networking projects. Within the scope of the projects under consideration, China aims to connect the northwestern Xinjiang region to Pakistan's Gwadar port. With this Project, 3000 km of gigantic highways and railways will be built, and pipelines will be made to import liquefied natural gas and oil from Iran and the Gulf countries (Nurmuhammedov, 2017, p. 59).

- While the China - Bangladesh - India - Myanmar Economic Corridor aims to facilitate the flow of goods between India and China, two of the world's largest economies, It will provide more economic resources to the growing markets of Bangladesh and Myanmar (Filiz, 2020). The proposed corridor will cover

approximately 440 million people, 1.65 million square kilometers in the countries covered by the Project, combining road, rail, water, and air connections (Baffa, 2013).

- With the Piraeus Port project, it is expected that the products exported by China will be delivered to Germany, Hungary, and Austria within 7-11 days via rail and road connections (Işıkoğlu, 2019).

- Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the Project to the world during a visit to Kazakhstan shows that Kazakhstan is considered a country of high importance in terms of the Project. Because Kazakhstan is one of the most powerful states in the Central Asian region, but at the same time, it is a state on strategic routes to connect China to Europe (Gurel, 2021). It emerges as a global project that will question Russia's dominant power in the Eurasian region and cause the Central Asian states to enter new periods in terms of economic and international relations (Gurel, 2021).

- The train, which departs from Çerkezköy station in Turkey, travels 8,693 km and reaches China in 12 days, passing two continents, two seas, and five countries. Turkey has become the most strategic point of the middle corridor stretching from Beijing to London and the Iron Silk Road extending from Kazakhstan to our government (Ulaştırma Bakanlığı, 2020).

- Expressing that they care about China's "Belt and Road" initiative, the Taliban regime agreed with China. It said, "This project will revive the ancient Silk Road. Also, we have copper mines that can be re-operated thanks to the Chinese. As a final note, China will reach our world markets. represents our opening" (Tr Euronews, 2022).

- Another important competitor project threatening Turkey's position in the One Belt One Road Initiative is the Greek Piraeus Port Project. COSSO, one of the largest shipping companies in China, has leased Piraeus Port from Greece for 35 years. (Filiz, 2020).

### **Tracing**

Monitoring is the systematic monitoring and reporting of the realizations of the objectives set out in the strategic plan. Apart from using reports and other

communication channels in monitoring, it mainly focuses on resources, activities, and outputs (Acar, 2007). Products and services loaded on wagons in China are transported to Baku Alat port by ferrying from the Caspian Sea. Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan routes are used with the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project. As the products will be transported to Europe via Turkey, located in the middle corridor, Russia will be bypassed. In this case, the transportation distance will be significantly reduced. Thus, China will have secured itself in this regard by creating alternative routes for transportation. (Filiz, 2020). This situation brings Turkey to a more key point among the participating countries (Dal, 2017). Argentina decided to participate in the Modern Silk Road project, which President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping announced in 2013 as the "*project of the century*." Argentine President, who attended the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympic Games, signed the agreement on his country's participation in this Project during his meeting with the President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping. With the participation of Argentina, the ambitious commercial Project that was previously desired to be created between Europe, Asia, and Africa will extend to Latin America.

### **Evaluation and Performance Measurement**

The 42-wagon freight train of the China Railway Express, which departed from the city of Xi in China, passed through Marmaray and reached Prague by performing the first China-Europe railway journey and went down in history. 11,483 km was given within the route by crossing two continents, ten countries, and two seas (Turhan, 2019).

•Countries participating in the Project aim to make infrastructure investments in the following areas (Akyener, 2017): Railways, Highways, Airports, Pipelines, Ports, Fiber Optic Transmission Lines, Electricity Transmission Lines, Free Trade Zones, Logistics Bases, Infrastructure projects, Financial Incentives and Investments, Technology transfer, Other Energy Projects.

• On December 29, 2014, Silk Road Fund Co. was established in Beijing by the China Investment Company, the State Administration of Foreign Exchange, the Import-Export Bank of China, and the China Development Bank to finance the Project. Ltd (SFR) was established. The foundation purpose of the fund is to provide investment and finance facilities to increase economic cooperation trade and, increase connections between the countries involved in the Project and realize growth within the scope of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road initiative. The fund's total capital is 40 billion USD and 100 billion Yuan (Silkroadfund, 2014).

•The Project includes many funding sources besides SRF. The most important of these are the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), BRICS New Development Bank (NDB), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), European Investment Bank (EIB), China-ASEAN Investment Cooperation Fund, and Energy Development Fund. (Grieger, 2016).

•The train, which made its first flight from Baku to Kars on the Baku - Tbilisi - Kars Railway Line, gave a new direction to world railway transportation. This line, which started its operations on October 30, 2017, has gained significant momentum in railway freight transportation between Asia and Europe. The transportation time between China and Turkey has decreased from 1 month to 12 days. The distance between Marmaray and Far Asia – Western Europe has been reduced to 18 days (A.A., 2021).

#### **4. PRACTICAL IMPLICATION**

As of 2018, the project is being implemented by the Chinese government and participating countries and Chinese, local, and international private companies within the framework of bilateral and multilateral agreements (Yalçınkaya and Güzel, 2021). Despite this, considering the nature of the contracts within the project's scope, the initiative in question has also been evaluated as an effort by China to influence the international legal order. Accordingly, China plans to have a more significant impact

on global economic governance in the future by starting this project with a specific regional trade and investment initiative (Yalçınkaya and Güzel, 2021).

With the One Belt, One Road Project put forward by the People's Republic of China; China aims to become an essential element in the ongoing economic competition between the USA and Japan, to come to the fore in regional security and cooperation in Asia, and to become a regional power (Fallon, 2015). One of the Belt-Road project goals is to squeeze the USA from the Atlantic Ocean, a neighbor of the Asia-Pacific region (Karamurtlu, 2020). The starting and ending point of the project is the increasing commercial and economic dependence of European countries on China, which is damaging the Trans-Atlantic alliance day by day and gradually separating the E.U. countries from the USA (Karamurtlu, 2020). In the first period when the Silk Road strategy was put forward, China planned to open up to the world via iron roads by excluding Russia (Özadaşlı, 2015). However, Central Asian countries would be distant towards a project that Moscow would not participate in and therefore would disapprove of, forcing China to include Russia in the Silk Road Project (Özadaşlı, 2015). In the early stages of the project, Russia was disturbed by China's attempts to center Central Asia. For a while, Moscow even considered this initiative as a rival organization to the Eurasian Economic Union, especially in 2004, the highway between the 4395 km long Lianyung Port (Jiangsu) Khorgas (Xinjiang-Xinjiang-Uygur Autonomous Region) connecting east and west of China was put into service. With this project, the Chinese domestic market has had the opportunity to open up to Central Asia (Özadaşlı, 2015). China states that the project will contribute economically to the region's countries, strengthen its cooperation, and make international agreements to realize the project. The fact that the project will pass through many geographies from China to Europe may increase the economic prosperity of many countries. According to some views, this project will create economic mobility for nations and their companies, even though it has emerged from China's national opportunity approach. In addition, according to these views, the

project can provide a new paradigm transformation for all chaotic issues that risk turning into a world war, such as financial crises, refugee crises, hot conflict zones, and the Cold War (Zepp-LaRouche, 2016).

The project covers large geography, and the railway is one of the most critical logistics elements. The Northern line of the project starts from Kazakhstan, reaches Poland via the Trans-Siberian railway line, and runs Europe via the Southern Line, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Iran, and Turkey (Mutlu, 2021). On the other hand, the Middle Line starts from Kazakhstan, including the railways, which is expressed as the Silk Road economic belt; It reaches Europe via Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey (Eralp, 2018). Political problems between Russia and Ukraine Due to the political issues between Russia and Ukraine, the problems in the Northern Corridor as a result of the suspension of cooperation of Russian railways with Ukrainian railways in 2016 and the blocking of railway transit passes from Ukraine support the development of the Middle Corridor as an alternative (Zeybek, 2020). The war between Russia and Ukraine today will further reinforce the problem in the Northern Corridor. There have been developments regarding the Europe-Caucasus-Asia Transport Corridor (TRACECA), a project of the European Union designed to transport the rich resources of Central Asia to Europe via the Caucasus (Bae and Kim, 2014). China has activated the 600 km China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan international railway project (Bae and Kim, 2014).

As of 2017, the countries covered by the project account for 40% of global product exports (Filiz, 2020). Countries participating in the project; aim to make infrastructure investments in areas such as railways, highways, airports, pipelines, ports, fiber optic transmission lines, electricity transmission lines, free trade zones, logistics bases, infrastructure projects, financial incentives and investments, technology transfer (Akyener, 2017).

The project also increases regional investments. Although the role of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is frequently emphasized for Project Finance,

the primary financing is carried out by China Eximbank and China Development Bank and supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Mutlu, 2021). The IMF has approved the reserve currency status of the Yuan (Crandall and Crandall, 2017). The most important economic opportunity is the infrastructure investments and employment opportunities in the countries on the route, which will enable the use of steel and cement capacity in the markets (Mutlu, 2021). The most crucial economic threat is China's investment in projects that have no return on investment and limit the domestic economic growth of countries and the use of Chinese companies and Chinese workers in the projects (Mutlu, 2021). As China increases its economic ties with African countries, the number of countries that become indebted to China also increases. Suppose the debt-trap relationship progresses at its current level. In that case, it is necessary not to ignore the possibility that the African continent's most significant economic, political and cultural actor will be the Chinese state by 2050 (Yılmaz, 2021).

Many multinational companies are competing in the energy sector in Central Asia. Tajikistan acquired the operating license of two gold mines in the north of the country for \$331 million from China, with a Chinese company, Xinjiang Tebian Electric Apparatus Stock Co. Ltd. (Omonkulov, 2020). With the investments of Kazakhstan and China in the Kashagan Oil Field and the Uzen oil field, the Kazakhstan-China oil pipeline works have accelerated (Omonkulov, 2020). Kaz Munai Gaz, ENI, Exxon Mobil, Shell, Total, China National Petroleum Corporation, Inpex, Phillips Petroleum companies continue their research on the Kashagan deposit and hydrocarbon resources, which is one of the essential energy deposits of Kazakhstan (Yıldız, 2018). Some investments are planned, including Turkey. Part of the Iron Silk Road is the 30 billion dollars high-speed train project designed between Edirne and Kars (Yılmaz et al., 2020). Edirne-Kars railway is an important pillar of the uninterrupted railway project, aiming to connect London and Beijing in the Silk Road vision (Yılmaz et al., 2020).

## 5. CONCLUSION

The modern Silk Road will add a new dimension to world trade. To invest in the Belt and Road Project, China makes very serious acquisitions (M&A) in the logistics sector and port services in Europe and Asia. In the first nine months of last year, a \$32 billion company was acquired by China (UTIKAD, 2018). The Project also hosts many multinational companies in the transportation of products, goods, and services and will further increase this momentum with the routes to be developed. In the study, the Project was examined in terms of risk analysis. In this line, one of the most significant commercial routes globally, possible situations that may threaten multinational companies, nation-states, and all commercial activities have been examined with a descriptive analysis method.

The historical silk road provided the synthesis of the East and the West's culture, knowledge, and belief system. It is not just a trade route; it has also served as a route people use for travel. According to today's conditions, the silk road, which has been a trade center since ancient times, has been reactivated by China, and alternative routes have been added. The road takes its name from the "silk" trade, one of the most valuable goods and even used as money. It aims to make trade safe by making the logistics part of the trade cheaper and shortening the route. The Project, which is expected to give significant impetus to international trade, requires costly infrastructure works. Product, Turkey is China's gateway to Europe. Therefore, it is indisputably a safe bridge between Asia and Europe. China aims to connect the East and the West with its new silk road project by land, rail, air, and sea. The Project is essential not only commercially but also militarily and politically. Since the political route and the neighboring countries that trade with these countries are dependent on each other, they should follow moderate political policies in the international arena. Chinese President Xi Jinping said that China has no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of neighboring countries. However, it is known that China wants to increase its influence in the Asian region and control the region. Although the Chinese

government seems to be a democratic country, it has adopted an authoritarian state system in practice. The shape assumes also affects its relations with neighboring countries. However, with the New Silk Road Project, China is trying to destroy the perception of an oppressive, expansionist government that has problems with neighboring countries. President Xi Jinping emphasizes that he is friendly with his neighbors in most speeches, statements, and conferences. The soft power policy implemented by China is currently being carried out as desired, and the project has had a positive impact on the world press. Its impact will be much more successful when the entire project is completed.

Central Asia consists of an endless tangle of problems. Due to its rich underground resources, especially oil and natural gas, the eyes of especially the USA and European countries are here. Border, water, terrorism, and energy competition are critical problems. Security must be ensured for the New Silk Road Project to progress as desired. For this reason, none of the countries in the Project should give any security weakness. A small problem to be experienced may cause the disruption of the trade to be made for days. China is one of the most active countries in the Asian continent, located in East Asia. Although it is not officially accepted, it wants and will increase its effectiveness in the region with the Modern Silk Road Project.

The strategic planning process is expected to be completed in 2049. The elimination of the risks analyzed above by the nation-states will positively contribute to the completion of the Project. Turkey line is active in the Project and has started to be used, but the capacity of companies to transport goods, products, and services from China to Europe is not yet seen in sufficient numbers. Ukraine crisis, some political instability in the Caspian region, and the recent events in Kazakhstan bring some question marks in terms of commercial security on the route of the Project. In the strategic planning process, it is understood that there has been remarkable progress in the financing aspect of the Project. It is seen that there is a significant increase in the tendency of Chinese companies and banks to the Project. Situation analysis, mission,

principles, and vision in the Strategic Planning Process; show that the Project will have a significant place in world trade. Some situations need to be clarified within the Project within strategic objectives and targets. The inability of the United States and Russian Companies to show their entire presence in the region shows that these two countries have a typical cautious attitude despite the start of the Project. Stability is crucial in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and the Caspian, which are on the route of the Project. In One Belt, One Road, The way has been cleared for important economic corridors that activate logistics management. The Project's infrastructure products and services are traceable, and their installation continues rapidly. It is thought that the land-sea and railway networks of the Project will lead to the development of world trade, the increase in the activities of multinational companies, and the increase of competition and diversity in the circulation of goods, products, and services. It is an extensive project and involves many governments and companies, necessitating a more comprehensive risk analysis.

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