

The Silk Roads From Past to the Future and Their Interactions With the Foreign Trade of Turkey

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Abstract

Transportation is a major factor in trade. Commercial activities can be increased in parallel to improvements in transportation infrastructure. The Silk Road functioned in this manner historically and played a paramount role in the development of international commerce. In this context it proved vital in the execution of intensive commercial activities, initially between Asia and Europe, and later in Africa. Although the Historic Silk Road lost its significance in the late 17th century, it is currently being revitalised. In this context economic and political collaboration between nations is sought through a variety of initiatives - the so-called New Silk Roads. Major among such initiatives are oil-natural gas pipeline projects (OPP-NGPP), Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA), the Northern Distribution Network (NSR-NDN), the Trans-Korean Railroad with the Trans-Siberian Railroad (TKR-TSR), and the Gulf-Asia Model: Turkey is actively involved in most of these. In this paper, brief information about such initiatives is offered and their de facto and potential effects on the foreign trade of Turkey revealed. Data show that such initiatives (excluding the TKR-TSR and the Gulf-Asian Model due to their distance) have positive effects on Turkey's foreign trade.

Keywords: *the historic Silk Road, the new silk roads, oil-natural gas pipeline, transportation, foreign trade.*

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Geçmişten Geleceğe İpek Yolları ve Türkiye'nin Dış Ticareti ile Etkileşimleri

Öz

Ulaştırma, ticaret faaliyetinin temel unsurlarındandır. Şayet ulaştırma imkânları gelişmişse ticarî faaliyetler de buna paralel olarak artırılabilir. İpek Yolu da tarih boyunca bu fonksiyonu icra etmiş ve uluslararası ticaretin geliştirilmesinde önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Bu kapsamda Tarihî İpek Yolu, önce Asya ve Avrupa daha sonra Afrika kıtaları arasında kara ve deniz yoluyla yoğun ticarî faaliyetlerin icrasına imkân sağlamıştır. 17. yüzyılın sonlarında önemini kaybetmesine rağmen, Tarihî İpek Yolu, bugün farklı formlarıyla canlandırılmaya çalışılmaktadır. Bu çerçevede, uluslararası Yeni İpek Yolları adı altında birtakım inisiyatifler vasıtasıyla iktisadî ve siyasî işbirliklerine gidilmektedir. Bunların başlıcaları petrol-doğalgaz boru hattı projeleri (PBHP-DGBHP), Avrupa-Kafkasya-Asya Ulaşım Koridoru (TRACECA), Kuzey Dağıtım Ağı (NSR-NDN), Kore-Sibirya Demiryolu (TKR-TSR) ve Körfez-Asya Modelidir. Türkiye bunların önemli bir kısmında fiilen yer almaktadır. Bu çalışmada, söz konusu inisiyatifler hakkında kısa bilgiler verilmekte ve bunların Türkiye dış ticaretine fiilî ve muhtemel etkileri ortaya konmaktadır. Veriler göstermektedir ki bu inisiyatifler (uzaklıkları dolayısıyla TKR-TSR ve körfez-Asya Modeli dâhil edilmemiştir) Türkiye'nin dış ticaretine olumlu etkilerde bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Tarihî İpek Yolu, Yeni İpek Yolları, petrol-doğalgaz boru hattı, ulaştırma, dış ticaret.*

1. Introduction

As both an iconic symbol and a source of wealth, silk was important as one of the most valued products carried on the interconnecting routes between continents. Thus, this internationally desirable product played a significant role in the establishment of relations between countries, while its name became inextricably linked with the routes along which it was transported from the second century BC to the late 17th century. At that point its value diminished with the rise of new methods of transportation; roads, railways, and seaways. The 19th century saw a resurgence of interest in the history and potential use of the Historic Silk Road and its peripheral regions. With the exploration for oil and natural gas reserves -which involved much of the world in the search for potential collaboration with source and other user countries- the concept ‘the Modern Silk Roads or the New Silk Roads’, in the sense of their revitalisation, was born. The context being different, however, the term ‘the New Silk Road’ contains several meanings depending upon the views/aims/projections of the countries and/or country groups on the region.

Many international initiatives have been launched with the aim of benefiting from the resources located in the centre of the Historic Silk Road Region. The most important of these are the so-called Asian Silk Road [oil and gas pipeline projects (OPP-NGPP)], the European Silk Road (TRACECA), the American Silk Road (NSR-NDN), the Korean-Russian Silk Road (TKR-TSR), and the Gulfian Silk Road (the Gulf-Asia Model). The main factor for the establishment of the the mentioned initiatives is the presence of oil and natural gas. Turkey is involved in most of such initiatives in terms of the economic and political aspects. In this paper, the New Silk Roads on the routes of the Historic Silk Road are studied and their potential for the countries involved, particularly Turkey, is revealed. In this context, de facto and potential effects of these initiatives are studied in terms of Turkey’s foreign trade. The data gathered show that the effects of such initiatives are positive.

Material and method

This is a desk study, materials for which are books, articles, and statistics. The paper consists of three sections. The first of these is a brief history of the Silk Road and its commercial structure. The second is on current international initiatives on the Historic Silk Road, namely the New Silk Roads and their commercial potential. The last section includes the role played by Turkey with regard to both of the above in the Historic and New Silk Roads. In this context, the impact of the New Silk Roads on Turkey’s foreign trade is studied.

In order to demonstrate the effect of such initiatives on Turkey's foreign trade, all countries were classified according to their involvement in the projects. In this context, by using the crude oil transportation data of 2002-11 gathered from the Petroleum Pipeline Corporation of Turkey (BOTAS) and foreign trade data from 1996-2012 provided by the Statistical Institute of Turkey (TÜİK), the de facto effects of currently active projects i.e. the 'Kerkuk-Ceyhan' and 'Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan' Crude Oil Pipeline Projects (COPP) and the potential effects of other international initiatives (excluding TKR-TSR and the Gulf-Asian Model due to their distance) i.e. 'Natural Gas Pipeline Projects (NGPP)', 'Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA)', and the 'Northern Distribution Network (NDN)', are found to be positive for Turkey's foreign trade.

2. The Historic Silk Road

2.1. History of the Silk Road

The Historic Silk Road flourished for approximately 1,700 years as the most important network of trade routes in history.² These were proclaimed as the 'road of silk' (Silk Road) by the German geologist and geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen in his 19th century book 'China'.³ However, it is also said that the term 'Great Silk Road' was first coined by Cjan Syan, a Chinese traveller who lived in the pre-Christian era.⁴ Following the collaborative construction of the Karakorum highway between China and Pakistan in 1980, German researchers concluded from their excavations in the region that the Historic Silk Road had not, in fact, been constructed by the Chinese but had already been in use by tribes prior to the coming of the Chinese, who eventually used this road as a part of new intercontinental trading network; initially for the silk trade and later for other activities.⁵

The term Historic "Silk Road" describes a series of trading networks that facilitated the transfer of goods between Western markets in the Middle East and Europe and Eastern markets, primarily in China. While the Caucasus mountain passages and the Central Asian steppes were major

² Yichun Xie, Robert Ward, Chuanglin Fang, Biao Qiao, "The urban system in West China: A case study along the midsection of the ancient Silk Road – He-Xi Corridor", *Cities*, 2007, 24:1, p. 64.

³ Helmut Uhlig, *İpek Yolu; Çin ve Roma Arasında Eski Dünya Kültürü*, Çev.: Alev Kırım, İstanbul, Okyanus Yayıncılık, 2000, s. 11; Xie et al., *ibid*, p. 64.

⁴ Elbrus İsayev, Mustafa Özdemir, "Büyük İpek Yolu ve Türk Dünyası (The Great Silk Road and Turkish World)", *Zeitschrift für die Welt der Türken*, 2011, 3:1, p. 112.

⁵ Uhlig, *ibid*, p. 199.

obstacles to trade and travel, there were, however, great oasis cities serving as way stations along the route.⁶ Chang'an, currently known as Xi'an in China was the starting point of the journey. The caravan route then divided into the North Road and South Road as it crossed the Western Territory and met commercial roads in Rome.⁷

The main land routes of the Silk Road in B.C.150 were as follows:⁸

- Changan-Yümen Kuang-Dun Huang-[‘Hami-Turphan’ (north route) or ‘Karaşar’ (middle route) or ‘Loulan’ (south route)]-Kuça-Aksu-Kashgar-[‘Semerkand-Buhara’ (north route) or ‘Baktra’ (middle route) or ‘Yarkent-Baktra’ (south route)]-Merv-Schahrud-Hamadan-Palmyra-Antakya-the Mediterranean-Puteoli-Ostia-Rome.

- Changan-Yümen Kuang-Dun Huang-Miran-Endere-Niya-Hotan-Yarkent-[‘Kashgar-Semerkand-Buhara’ (north route) or ‘Baktra’ (middle route) or ‘Kashgar-Baktra’ (south route)]-Merv-Schahrud-Hamadan-Palmyra-Antakya-the Mediterranean-Puteoli-Ostia-Roma.

During the Asian Hun State period, from the second century B.C. to the fourth century A.D., there were three major routes on the Silk Road: the north, middle, and south:⁹

- North Route: Turphan-Urumçi
- Middle Route: Kurla-Kuça-Kashgar
- South Route: Çarklık-Kashgar
- West to East Route: Antakya-Syrian ports-Tigris and Euphrates Reservoir-Caspian Sea-Balkh(Belh)-Pamir Plain-Kashgar-Hotan
- A further important road to the East passed through the Caucasus and south of the Caspian Sea.
- According to another source, the routes of the Historic Silk Road were as follows:¹⁰

⁶ Michael Robert Hichok, “The other end of the Silk Road: Japan’s Eurasian initiative”, *Central Asian Survey*, 2000, 19:1, p. 17.

⁷ Xie et al., *ibid*, p. 64.

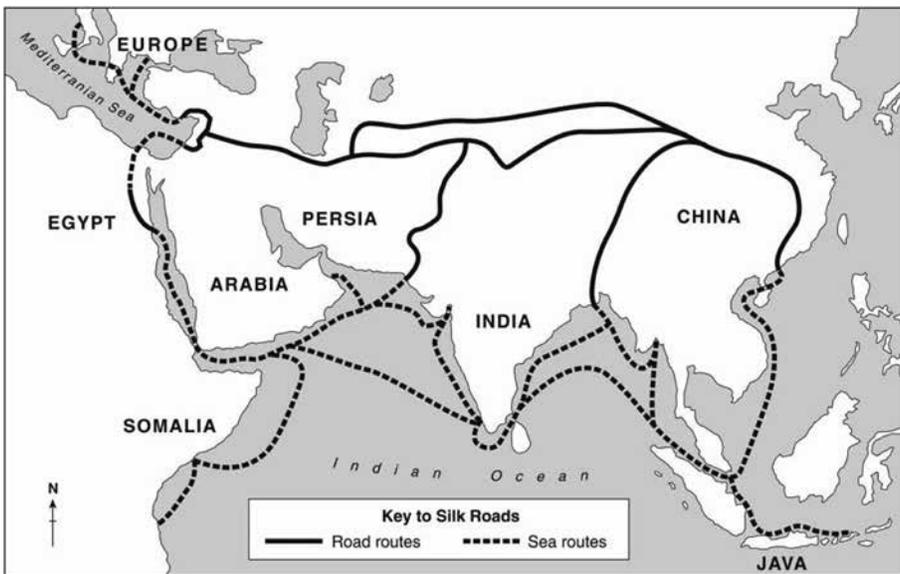
⁸ Uhlig, *ibid*, p. 395.

⁹ İsayev and Özdemir, *ibid*, p. 114.

¹⁰ Wikipedia, “İpek Yolu”, http://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C4%B0pek_Yolu, Retrieval date: 27.05.2013.

- North Route (depicted by Herodotus in B.C.450): Don River-Parthian Region-Kansu (west of China).
- South to East (estimation): Mesopotamia Region-Antakya and Gaziantep (Anatolia)-Iran-Pamir Plain.
- South to West (estimation): Gaziantep and Malatya (Anatolia)-Thrace (Trakya)-İzmir (Aegea).
- South Route to West (estimation): Trabzon and Sinop (Black Sea)-Alanya and Antalya (Mediterranean)-Europe.
- West to East Route (multimodal): A combination of Egyptian and Mesopotamian Routes-Barygaza (a port city on Indian Ocean).

Map 1: The Historic Silk Road Routes



Source: Shirin Akiner, “Silk Roads, Great Games and Central Asia”, *Asian Affairs*, 2011, 42:3, p. 392.

The Map 1 shows that the Historic Silk Road from China to Rome (Italy) included both land and sea routes from East to West. In another source, the Silk Road route from West to East by sea extends from Southern Europe through Egypt, Arabia, Somalia, Persia, India, Java and then reaches

China.¹¹ Marco Polo, explorer and tradesman from Italy, also mentioned the Silk Road in his book “Il Milione”.¹² The outward and inward routes he and his companions followed were as follows: Outward: Venice-Acre-Trebizond(Trabzon)-Baghdad-Terbil-Ormuz-Balkh-Kashgar-Lanzhou-(Karakorum)-Lanzhou-Beijing-Chengdu-Pagan; Inward: Pagan-Chengdu-Beijing-Hangchow-South China Sea-Sumatra-the Indian Ocean-Arabian Sea-Ormuz-Terbil-Trebizond-Constantinople(İstanbul)-Venice.¹³

As will be seen the Historic Silk Road was actually series of different routes indicating that it was a combination of multi-modal transportation ways. However, it should also be noted that the routes are not definite as their determination presents many difficulties i.e. names of cities-territories-countries differ from those used in other periods when attempting to compare them with those available in the various oriental and occidental sources. For example, Hoço, an ancient Uyghur city in the Turpan Valley, has been re-named as Kao Ch’ang by the Chinese: this name has never been used by the Uyghur people.¹⁴

2.2. Commercial Structure of the Historic Silk Road

Uhlig says that civilisation started with silk. Silk, as one of the first products to be produced/marketed in a capitalist manner, became not only a symbol of wealth but also Capital in its own right. Moreover, it was the first foreign exchange medium between West and East, the first with a convertible value, and the only commodity equivalent to gold. Furthermore, silk was not only used to make a fabric; it was the raw material for many other products and used as a means to promote international relations.¹⁵

¹¹ John Major, “Silk Road: Spreading Ideas and Innovations”, <http://asiasociety.org/countries/trade-exchange/silk-road-spreading-ideas-and-innovations>, Retrieval date: 10.07.2013.

¹² Lucia Toniolo, Alfonsina D’Amato, Riccardo Saccenti, Davide Gulotta, Pier Giorgio Righetti, “The Silk Road, Marco Polo, a bible and its proteome: A detective story”, *Journal of Proteomics*, 2012, 7:5, pp. 3365-3367; Uhlig, *ibid*, p. 378.

¹³ Toniolo et al., *ibid*, pp. 3365-3367.

¹⁴ Uhlig, *ibid*, p. 67.

¹⁵ Some of the materials made from silk are as follows: sewing thread, string, rope, armour, liquid containers, insulating materials, and paper. Moreover, silk was used as payment of the salaries of civil servants and for some other services. In China, silk was also used as a diplomatic gift. For example, 6,000 kg silk pieces and 8,000 silk bobbles were sent abroad as present in B.C. 1. China considered these gifts as not only a means to ensure peace and stability but also of protecting the domestic economy (Uhlig, *ibid*, p. 139-140).

Good ideas and innovations travel far and easily. Historically, they spread along trade routes. The Historic Silk Road, was, therefore, the vector by which people, goods, ideas, beliefs, inventions, devices, and techniques were transmitted. Among the various inventions that travelled its route were paper (from China), the noria (irrigation waterwheel from Roman Syria), foodstuffs (apples from Kazakhstan, oranges from China, grapes from the western regions).¹⁶ As an example of a transmitter of technique, Xueyi et al. studying monetary theory and policy in China, set out the structure of economic activity in the various dynasties of ancient China and offer the following details in their paper on monetary structure for Europe and later North America:¹⁷

- Monetary thought was accumulated by thinkers of various vocations in ancient China.
- Some monetary theories and concepts in ancient China developed earlier than in Western countries.
- Monetary policy was conducted regionally but overseen nationally in Imperial China.
- Monetary thought and social development facilitated each other in ancient China.
- Ancient monetary thought in China probably travelled along the Silk Road to Western countries.

While silk is the best known, many other products were traded along the Silk Road. Caravans moving towards China carried gold and other precious metals, ivory, precious stones, alfalfa, grapes, sesame, pomegranates, walnuts, cucumbers, carrots, lions, peacocks, elephants, camels, horses, and glass; goods which were either unknown or not manufactured in China until the 5th century A.D. Movements in the opposite direction included furs, ceramics, jade, bronze objects, lacquer, bambooware, gunpowder, and iron.¹⁸ Another source lists some of the goods traded in different periods along the Silk Road as follows: textile products, coral, topaz, wine,

¹⁶ Major, *ibid.*

¹⁷ Z. Xueyi, Z. Yaguang, J. Whalley, "Monetary Theory and Policy from a Chinese Historical Perspective", *China Economic Review* (accepted manuscript), doi:10.1016/j.chieco.2013.04.006, 35, 2013.

¹⁸ Serkan Yalçın, "Revitalizing the Eurasian Trade: Prospects from the TRACECA Project", *Journal of Academic Studies*, 2007, 9:33, p. 27.

glassware, gold and silver cups, indigo, spices, perfume, rubber, medical lubricants, tortoise-shell, lapis lazuli, muslin, timber, medicine, pearls, diamonds, rubies, sapphires, woven silk, and medicinal herbs. Human beings (slaves) were also traded on these roads.¹⁹

Information on the organisation and schedule of caravans on the Historic Silk Road is insufficient, and the frequency of caravans in the different periods is also unknown. Some documents mention twelve caravans a year in the 1st century A.D. It is, however, uncertain if this number refers to one route only or to all routes. On the other hand, some documents, state that caravans were always on the roads, and there was no time when they could not be seen.²⁰ The Silk Road enriched not only merchants but also peoples and cultures right across Eurasia.²¹ In this context, a stream of priests and monks also moved Eastward bringing with them the Nestorian, Manichaean, and Buddhist religions and, later, Islam.²² It should be noted that illnesses too were carried on these routes. For example, the most dreaded of them, the Black Death, or bubonic plague devastated Europe in the late 1340s after spreading from China.²³

It is asserted in one source that the heyday of the Historic Silk Road in terms of transportation density was the 7th and 8th centuries A.D.,²⁴ while its height in terms of political security and maintenance of the infrastructure was asserted to be during the period of Mongol control over the entire transit route in the 13th and 14th centuries A.D.²⁵ The latter is confirmed in another source as “The Mongol expansion throughout the Asian continent from around 1207 to 1360 helped to bring political stability and thus to populate the Historic Silk Road”.²⁶ However, a further source states that following the conquest of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258, transit trade between East and West from the 13th to the 15th centuries A.D. was carried out via Egypt, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean. Eventual explorations of

¹⁹ Uhlig, *ibid.*, pp. 11, 167, 171-172.

²⁰ Uhlig, *ibid.*, p. 230.

²¹ Major, *ibid.*

²² Toniolo et al., *ibid.*, p. 3365.

²³ Major, *ibid.*; Toniolo et al., *ibid.*, p. 3365.

²⁴ İsayev and Özdemir, *ibid.*, p. 112.

²⁵ Hichok, *ibid.*, p. 17.

²⁶ Toniolo et al., *ibid.*, p. 3365.

sea routes in 16th century caused the weakening of the Historic Silk Road.²⁷ In this context, sea transportation with short term direct delivery, replaced long term intermediary delivery-based journeys. That is, the Historic Silk Road was replaced by ships.²⁸

3. The Modern Silk Roads

3.1. Birth of the New Silk Roads

The Silk Road of the past served the numerous traders, armies, and adventurers as a communication and transport link between cultures and economies. During the period of the Han Dynasty (B.C.206-A.D.220), the Silk Road left its mark on the development of civilisations throughout Eurasia by playing a unique role in foreign trade and political relations as possibly the world's first "internet" linking Asia to Europe and Africa. With the collapse of the former Soviet Union, a revitalised Historic Silk Road is once again expected to play an important role in the region's political stability and its economic development.²⁹ Exploration for oil and natural gas reserves being among the main factors for the renaissance of these roads.

Three memorable metaphors about the region date from the 19th century:³⁰

1. The first is 'The Historic Silk Road' coined by Ferdinand von Richthofen in 1877. This encapsulates the sense of mystery and exotic splendour of the ancient trade routes. Today, the current term 'the New Silk Roads' is used as a metaphor for reconnection. It implies transport corridors, international trade, oil and gas pipelines, and tourism.

2. The second 19th century metaphor the 'Great Game', is thought to have been invented by Arthur Conolly around 1840. It too evokes all the intrigue, daring, and heroism of the Russo-British struggle for supremacy in the land north of the Hindu Kush. Today's 'New Great Game' is taking place as the great powers continue their pursuit of rival political and eco-

²⁷ İsayev and Özdemir, *ibid*, p. 119.

²⁸ Wikipedia, *ibid*.

²⁹ Yalçın, *ibid*, p. 27.

³⁰ The boundaries of Central Asia shift depending on the period in question and the conceptual framework. It is possible, for example to map: the linguistic groups i.e. the Turkic, Iranian, and Mongolian peoples; or the physical features like the steppes, deserts, and oases; or the religions i.e. Buddhism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, and Shamanism; or the different ways of life such as the nomadic, the sedentary etc. All these maps overlap, but are not entirely congruent. The term 'Central Asia' is understood today to refer not to the larger definitions of the region, but specifically to the following five states of the former Soviet Union: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan (Shirin Akiner, "Silk Roads, Great Games and Central Asia", *Asian Affairs*, 2011, 42:3, pp. 392-393, 400-401).

conomic goals. The main players now being Russia, China, and the United States - the US taking the place of Britain – with Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and India playing secondary roles. The EU and Japan are also involved.

3. Finally, ‘Central Asia’, the notional locus for the Historic Silk Road and the Great Game is, in fact, a mythical area being no more than a term invented in 1843 by the famous geographer and explorer, Alexander von Humboldt, to refer to this ‘fuzzy’ region, somewhere between Europe and Asia.

The opening-up of Central Asia and the Caucasus has revived the use of two of the above-mentioned historical metaphors -The Historic Silk Road and The Great Game- to characterize the economic and political transition in these regions. Currently, however, neither is applicable in their historical sense. Moreover, the inherent contradiction in these ideas (that is, the Historic Silk Road meaning international free trade, and the Great Game implying national power and trade controls) may serve to mask some of the more interesting political and economic realignments taking place as leaders in the Caucasus and Central Asia seek to diversify their foreign policy options.³¹ It should, however, be noted that the new self confident and assertive Central Asian states set the rules. So that whereas in the 19th century the great powers set the agenda, it is now principally the Central Asian states that take the decisions on the establishment of partnerships, doing business, and permitting access to their resources.³²

In terms of significant economic and political aspects, Central Asia is important for India as it too searches for New Silk Roads. However, the best short routes from India to Central Asia pass through Pakistan, Afghanistan or China, and India’s relationship with these countries is tense due to past battles. India, therefore, now avoids problems with China and Pakistan in order to normalise their commercial relations³³ and thereby benefit from the advantages of the Region. Central Asian economies also attract South Asian countries. For instance, after Uzbekistan gained its independence in 1991 South Asian capitalists from Pakistan and Afghanistan as well as India flocked to it and to other Central Asian economies, bringing capital, information, and technology.³⁴

³¹ Hichok, *ibid*, p. 17.

³² Akiner, *ibid*, pp. 400-401.

³³ Erhan Başyurt, “Hindistan, İpekyolu’nu arıyor”, *Aksiyon*, 15.02.1997, <http://www.aksiyon.com.tr/aksiyon/haber-2277-32-hindistan-ipekyolunu-ariyor.html>, Retrieval date: 27.05.2013.

³⁴ Karen Leonard, “The Silk Road Renewed? South Asian Entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan”, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 2010, 33:2, pp. 276.

In recent years, some efforts have been made to develop East Asia's economic potential. For example, South Korea wants to specialize in certain key strategic industries while becoming the region's business hub. Russia wants to exploit the vast eastern region for its natural resources and build a railway connecting Europe to East Asia. Japan wants to end its economic crisis, while China seeks to bring about a new era of prosperity for its people. However, these aspirations are subject to change because of North Korea's stated intention to develop nuclear weapons. In the light of this, regional nations are obliged to balance their economic priorities with issues of political and military security.³⁵

Japan, however, is initiating various strategies. In this context, in July of 1997 its former Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto announced the start of Japan's new 'Eurasian Diplomacy'. Recognising the fact that the Silk Road also runs east he stated his conviction that it was time to develop a Pacific perspective, to envision through Asian eyes a region encompassing Russia, China, the states of Central Asia and the Caucasus. Oil and gas, while important, are not the sole reasons for Japan to become involved. As an Asian country it could serve as a non-Western example of successful modernisation and forward-looking industrial policy.³⁶

3.2. International Initiatives and the New Silk Roads

Regarded as being the godfather of geopolitics Halford Mackinder argued more than a century ago that, "whoever controls the Eurasian 'world island' would control the world". For this purpose, there are various initiatives, already launched or yet to be started, under the umbrella title of the New Silk Roads. Among these the Historic Silk Road takes its place at the core of relevant projects. Economic and political aspects are certainly among the aims of such initiatives, but it is also felt that the New Silk Roads could promote security, prosperity, and connectivity within some of the most volatile, impoverished, and isolated nations on the planet.³⁷ Akiner states that the New Silk Roads are symbolised as being based on mutual interest, peace, and stability and that it is a revitalisation of the Historic Silk Road.³⁸

³⁵ Stephen Blank, "Economics and security in Northeast Asia: The iron silk road, its context and implications", *Global Economic Review: Perspectives on East Asian Economies and Industries*, 2002, 31:3, p. 3.

³⁶ Hichok, *ibid*, p. 22.

³⁷ Andrew C. Kuchins, Thomas M. Sanderson, David A. Gordon, "Afghanistan: Building the Missing Link in the Modern Silk Road", *The Washington Quarterly*, 2010, 33:2, pp. 35, 39.

³⁸ Akiner, *ibid*, p. 401.

The concept ‘the Modern Silk Roads or the New Silk Roads’ contains several meanings depending upon the views/aims/projections of the countries and/or country groups on the region. Major among such initiatives are the Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA), the Northern Distribution Network (NSR-NDN), the Trans-Korean Railroad with the Trans-Siberian Railroad (TKR-TSR; Iron Silk Road), and the Gulf-Asia Model. Brief information about these initiatives is given below and their connection with the Historic Silk Road revealed. As will be seen, the main factors for the establishment of the said initiatives are oil and natural gas plus some others.

China and the Central Asian countries were among the main actors on the Historic Silk Road. In this context trade between these countries has always been crucial and favoured by both sides. However, earlier relationships have faced changes. Items such as jade, tea, silk, and rhubarb have been replaced by crude oil, natural gas, weapons, and infrastructure. The Historic Silk Road is regarded as having been revived in terms of new trade in energy. Central Asian states have huge hydrocarbon potential which have not yet been fully explored and they seek foreign participation in developing and transporting these reserves. Russia, the Western countries and China are the influential partners for the Central Asian states in terms of moving their hydrocarbon resources and, accordingly there is a major struggle for dominance among these actors. For example, following the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, China speedily established diplomatic relations and signed a series of agreements on bilateral economic cooperation with Central Asian states.³⁹

One of the European Union’s (EU) projects designed to assist the former Soviet Union countries with regard to the development of trade in Eurasia, is the so-called renaissance of the Historic Silk Road, TRACECA. The concept was first developed during an EU meeting held in Brussels in 1993 with the declaration of the revitalisation of the ancient 6,400 kilometre Historic Silk Road.⁴⁰ Member countries of TRACECA are Armenia,

³⁹ İdris Demir, “Revival of the Silk Road in Terms of Energy Trade”, *Gaziantep Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 2010, 9:3, pp. 513-514, 518, 524, 527.

⁴⁰ The effect of TRACECA on some countries: Armenia: the century-old railway road from Kars (Turkey) through Gyumri (Armenia) to Tbilisi (Georgia) to enable full utilisation of the potential of the communication roads of Turkey; Georgia: a large railway line will connect the Chinese port of Lianyungang on the Yellow Sea to the Georgian Ports of Poti and Batumi on the Black Sea and then to Western Europe [the route is: Constanta(Köstence)-Poti-Baku-Tashkent-Almaty-Aktau-Druzhba-

Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.⁴¹ TRACECA's main objective is to provide funding for technical assistance to increase the possibility for the Caucasus and Central Asian countries to access Europe and world markets through alternative routes. As with the American vision of an East–West energy corridor, the EU would like to redirect trade away from Moscow and into the Trans-European Networks.⁴² The TRACECA project is implemented in four broad categories and by four working groups: Trade Facilitation, Road, Rail, and Maritime transport. Major projects include: Technical Assistance (road, rail, maritime, horizontal, legal and trade, inter-modal), Investment, and Traffic Projects.⁴³

Russia, has reacted to these developments. An announcement from Moscow in July 1999 stated that it intended to levy duties on oil exported to non-Customs Union CIS countries -this includes those countries most heavily involved in the TRACECA programmes- to prevent Russian oil from being resold to Western Europe at cheaper prices through alternative routes. Russian tax revenue losses may well be real, however, Moscow's actual message is more political than economic. If the states around the Caspian Basin choose to enter into economic relations against the interests of their more powerful neighbours, they are certainly at risk in doing so. However, the situation in Central Asia and the Caucasus is now very different from the 19th century when Russia and Britain competed for influence among separate tribes in the original Great Game; these newly independent states are no longer passive pawns in the process.⁴⁴

The US, Russia and China all have their own Central Asia integration schemes in the security and economic spheres: China has the Shanghai

Alashankov-Lianyungang (Muhteşem Kaynak, "Ulaştırımda Yeni Eğilimler ve Türkiye'nin Bölgesel Lojistik Güç Olma Potansiyeli", *Avrasya Etüdüleri*, 2003, 24, p. 9)]; Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan: as they do not have the vast natural resources of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, the project provides them with infrastructural development; institutional, legal, and administrative reforms; supports for the private sector and assistance for economic development; and FDI (Yalçın, *ibid*, pp. 26-27, 32-34).

⁴¹ TRACECA, "The Silk Road of the 21st century", <http://www.traceca-org.org/en/home/the-silk-road-of-the-21st-century>, Retrieval date: 27.08.2013.

⁴² Hichok, *ibid*, p. 21.

⁴³ Yalçın, *ibid*, p. 27.

⁴⁴ Hichok, *ibid*, p. 22.

Cooperation Organization (SCO), Russia the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and the US the New Silk Road.⁴⁵ The New Silk Road (NSR) strategy, declared by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and senior US officials in the first half of 2009 is a key aspect of the US plan to promote stability in Central Asia following the departure of 33,000 American and NATO troops from Afghanistan by 2014. As Clinton sees it, “commodity and energy exports have the ability to reveal the potential of regional economies”. The proposed NSR projects includes establishment of the following transit corridors: completing the Afghanistan’s Ring Road; linking railways between Afghanistan and Pakistan; constructing the Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India (TAPI) pipeline; implementing the Central Asia Counternarcotics Initiative (CACI); and forming a regional electricity market by building a transmission line between Central Asia and South Asia (CASA-1000).⁴⁶

These new supply lines have been termed the Northern Distribution Network (NDN) which underscores a demilitarized, commercial nature as well as an open-ended vision of a multiplicity of supply routes to Afghanistan.⁴⁷ The central element of the NSR is to develop and expand the NDN which aims to transport large quantities of non-lethal supplies from Europe to the NATO troops in Afghanistan through Russia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.⁴⁸ The NDN Routes are as follows: Pakistan Route: Pakistan-Afghanistan; North Route: Latvia-Russia-Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan-Afghanistan; South Route: Georgia-Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan-Afghanistan; KKT Route: Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan. While the creation of the NDN was motivated by the U.S. military’s immediate logistical needs, its establishment offers a unique opportunity for Washington to establish a New Silk Road, which would help stabilize Afghanistan in the long term, and transform Eurasia too.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Younkyoo Kim, Fabio Indeo, “The new great game in Central Asia post 2014: The US ‘New Silk Road’ strategy and Sino-Russian rivalry”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 2013, 46, p. 277.

⁴⁶ Kim and Indeo, *ibid*, p. 278.

⁴⁷ Kuchins et al., *ibid*, pp. 33-34.

⁴⁸ Kim and Indeo, *ibid*, p. 278.

⁴⁹ Kuchins et al., *ibid*, pp. 35-37.

The TKR-TSR, another extension of the New Silk Roads established between Korea and Russia with the involvement of several other countries, has implications for the North's domestic economy, inter-Korean relations, both the Koreas' wider foreign relations and Russia's Asian policy. This linkage is also of great importance to other major powers: China, Japan, and the U.S., all of which have vital interests in the peaceful resolution of the division of Korea. The other larger implications that emerge from consideration of the TSR-TKR and from other similar programmes to develop Asia are as follows:⁵⁰

- All projects for Korean and trans-national regions of Asia's economic development must overcome strong domestic opposition to succeed.
- This programme shares a common denominator with other projects such as the joint Russo-Iranian-Indian project and the TRACECA for developing Asian infrastructure.
- This programme is, implicitly or even explicitly, an effort to limit China's political-economic power over Asia, especially the Korean peninsula and Russia's Far East.
- This programme and other tied projects represent individual parts of a much larger process that aims to overcome major obstacles to development, security, prosperity, and stability in Asia.

The Gulf-Asia model, another initiative between the Gulf and Asian countries, has a simple target: the Gulf exports energy and energy-related products, and imports Asian manufactured goods, construction services, food, and labour. The fact that oil and gas is considered to be a strategic sector by governments of both regions limits investment opportunities. Nevertheless, some significant direct investments have been made. For example, national oil companies (NOCs) in the Gulf have positioned themselves as strategic investment partners with Asian customers.⁵¹ In this context, for example, the Gulf region is likely to meet China's growing need for natural gas. Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates are, after Russia, the second, third, fourth, and fifth natural gas holders of the world. Gulf Region governments have also been opening their doors to foreign investment in natural gas operations.⁵²

⁵⁰ Blank, *ibid*, pp. 4-5, 8-9.

⁵¹ IISS, "Still quite narrow: the Gulf-Asia 'new Silk Road'", *Strategic Comments*, 2011, 17:9, pp. 1-2.

⁵² Demir, *ibid*, p. 525.

An example of partnership in this model is as follows: Asian firms showed great interest in Iraq after the country opened up its oil industry to foreign companies in 2008, and they won several licences. China's main state oil companies; China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC), China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), and Sinopec (operating in Kurdistan) have secured strong footholds in the country, alongside Western international oil companies. The financial markets of Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam attract Gulf investors and have relatively better foreign investment possibilities as they also offer investment opportunities in the sectors in which Gulf investors are experienced: real estate, energy, tourism, and banking. The Gulf States could also be a hub for transshipment, re-export, and service provision, as shown by Dubai's entrepot model which has made the UAE India's largest trading partner since 2008.⁵³

3.3. Commercial Potential of the New Silk Roads

Central Asia and the Caspian basin take centre place in the New Silk Roads. The region is split between oil and gas-rich states such as Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan (Group A) and states such as Armenia, Georgia, Tajikistan, and Kyrgystan (Group B) which lack meaningful petroleum resources. The countries in Group A, rather than simply being a transit corridor, expect to exploit their oil and natural gas reserves as the means to revitalise their overall economies, while the countries in Group B, facing different economic choices, hope to take advantage of their geographic position to encourage the development of transportation infrastructure, thus allowing them to share in the good fortune of their neighbours' oil and gas resources.⁵⁴

Structural changes in the world economy have accelerated the economic realignment of the two regions. China's economy grew fifteen-fold between 1980 and 2011 to become the world's second-largest after the US. By 2050, India is expected to be the world's third-largest economy. On current trends, Asia could account for half of global output by then. Even now Asia accounts for 50% of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) trade, a big change from 30 years ago when some 80% of GCC trade was with the developed economies of Europe and the US.⁵⁵

⁵³ IISS, *ibid.*, p. 2-3.

⁵⁴ Hichok, *ibid.*, p. 18.

⁵⁵ IISS, *ibid.*, p. 1.

Given its geographic location and oil-producing capacity, the Middle East will probably remain as the main supplier of energy to Asia. Imports already meet 75% of Asian demand, and are expected to account for 90% by 2030. The Middle East already supplies about 60% of China's oil needs.⁵⁶ There are various reasons for this rise in China's energy consumption, the first of which is its rapid economic growth. While its share in the primary energy demand on a world scale was 5% in 1971, by 1995 it had increased to 11%. In 1993 China's crude oil consumption was already more than its domestic production. Since then, its import volume has increased and if this trend in economic activity continues, China's demand for oil could be as high as 7-12 mb/d by 2020.⁵⁷

All Central Asian states come within the middle-income range of countries. Information on these are as follows:⁵⁸

- Kazakhstan is the richest with its GDP. This is mainly because of its very large territory and world-class reserves of oil, gas, uranium, and lithium. It also has grain, cattle and other resources. According to one source, Kazakhstan has oil reserves of 8.0 billion barrels and 65.0 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Another source states that it has 5.4 billion barrels of crude oil reserves.⁵⁹ By 1998, oil accounted for more than 60% of its exports.⁶⁰

- Turkmenistan, too, has huge gas reserves and is a major producer of cotton. One source gives Turkmenistan oil reserves of 0.5 billion barrels and 101.0 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.⁶¹ According to the 2012 Statistical Review, it holds 11.7 percent of the world's proven natural gas reserves.⁶² Oil and gas constitute 80% of its revenue.⁶³

- Uzbekistan is a balanced economy with many different resources including very large reserves of gold. It is also one of the top cotton pro-

⁵⁶ IISS, *ibid.*, p. 1.

⁵⁷ Demir, *ibid.*, pp. 523-524.

⁵⁸ Akiner, *ibid.*, p. 397.

⁵⁹ Demir, *ibid.*, p. 517.

⁶⁰ Yalçın, *ibid.*, p. 34.

⁶¹ Demir, *ibid.*, p. 517.

⁶² Kim and Indeo, *ibid.*, p. 283.

⁶³ Yalçın, *ibid.*, p. 34.

ducers of the world; Bukhara, for instance, exported over a million tonnes of cotton in 1998, 150,000 of which were exported via TRACECA.⁶⁴

- The two mountain states of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan both have some gold and hydropower reserves. However, these are the poorest states.

Information on some of the countries in the Caucasian and Caspian regions are as follows:

- Armenia has a small-scale agricultural economic structure. According to the 2012 statistics, its GDP composition by sector of origin is as follows: agriculture: 21,1%, industry: 37,7%, services: 41,2%. The country has no proven crude oil and natural gas reserves as of 2012.⁶⁵

- Azerbaijan is relatively an industrial country. According to the 2012 statistics, its GDP composition by sector of origin is as follows: agriculture: 6%, industry: 63,8%, services: 30,2%. The country has 7 billion bbl proven crude oil reserves and 849,5 billion cu m of natural gas reserves as of 2012.⁶⁶

- Georgia is relatively a service based economy and it's GDP composition by sector of origin is as follows according to the 2012 statistics: agriculture: 7,8%, industry: 23%, services: 69,2%. It has 33.19 million bbl proven crude oil reserves and 93.41 billion cu m of natural gas reserves as of 2012.⁶⁷

All initiatives are candidates designed to increase the commercial potential of the countries related to the New Silk Roads. For example, the NSR-NDN could generate huge economic advantages among both trading and transit states. Some of these are as follows:⁶⁸ Firstly, an overland route running from Lianyungang to Rotterdam via Xinjiang and Central Asia would reduce the time it takes to transport goods from China to Europe from 20-40 days to about 11 and lower costs from \$167

⁶⁴ Yalçın, *ibid.*, p. 34.

⁶⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook; Armenia", <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/am.html>, Retrieval date: 06.09.2013.

⁶⁶ Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook; Azerbaijan", <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/aj.html>, Retrieval date: 06.09.2013.

⁶⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, "The World Factbook; Georgia", <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gg.html>, Retrieval date: 06.09.2013.

⁶⁸ Kuchins et al., *ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

to \$111 per ton, i.e. by over 30% while cutting the present journey time by half. Secondly, a UN study has estimated that GDP across Central Asia would grow by 50% within a decade if the related states cooperate with each other on fostering trade. Thirdly, intercontinental trade is projected to increase Afghanistan's GDP by 8,8-12,7% and 2-3% in Xinjiang.

4. The Silk Roads and Turkey

4.1. The Role of Turkey in the Historic Silk Road

The main route of the Historic Silk Road linking China with the Byzantine Empire was, to a large extent, under the control of the Turks. Starting from the north of Beijing the boundaries of the Turkic territories passed through Iran, Khorasan, the Ural Mountains, and Caspian Sea to reach the Black Sea. They neighboured the major states of those times; China, Iran, and the Byzantine Empire. Thus the Historic Silk Road played an important role for Turks in the establishment and improvement of their economic relations with China, the Caucasus, Russia, India, and the Arab countries. The Turks played a paramount role in making the Historic Silk Road famous and this is clearly recognized in an Uzbek saying: 'There are two big roads in the universe; the Milky Way in the sky and the Silk Road on earth'.⁶⁹

Turks also took part in relevant production and trade processes. For instance, in the 6th A.D., Turks not only manufactured and sold very popular gilded armour but also horseshoes, horse riding equipment, and farmers' hand tools. In this way they developed their economy, becoming the main exporter of china to the West. Moreover, Iran was the fashion centre for Chinese elegance in those times, as Paris was for Europe a hundred years ago. Turks were the greatest beneficiaries of this situation as they were traders in silk from both Iran and the Byzantine lands. That is, they were selling the silk of Iran and the Byzantine lands to China which had once been the biggest exporter of this commodity.⁷⁰

Prior to the exploration of new seaways in the 17th century, India in the Historic Silk Road's eastern region had been one of the most important trading centres. As a consequence it was regularly attacked

⁶⁹ İsayev and Özdemir, *ibid*, pp. 112-113.

⁷⁰ Uhlig, *ibid*, pp. 343-345.

by dynasties of Turks from Central Asia and Afghanistan. India was ruled by Turkic dynasties from the 13th to the 19th centuries. The most influential of these was the Mughal (Mongol) Empire which ruled from 1526 to 1857. Turkic dynasties encouraged Turks to spread from Central Asia so that a commercial network, mainly under the management of Turkic administrators was established along the Historic Silk Road from India to Anatolia in today's Turkey.⁷¹

Current boundaries of Turkey have had connections with the Silk Road routes throughout history. In this context;

- During the time of the Asian Hun State between the 2nd century BC and the 4th century A.D., the route from West to East included Antioch (Antakya), a Roman city then in Syria.⁷²

- In the 9th century A.D. the main commercial centres of the Parthian Empire in the East and the Rome-Parthia frontier were Zeugma (Belkis) on the bank of the Euphrates and Antiocheia (Antakya) on the bank of the Orontes river (Asi).⁷³

- The outward and inward routes of Marco Polo and his companions included cities of modern Turkey: Outward: Venice-Acre-Trebizond(Trabzon)-Baghdad-Terbil-Ormuz-Balkh-Kashgar-Lanzhou-(Karakorum)-Lanzhou-Beijing-Chengdu-Pagan; Inward: Pagan-Chengdu-Beijing-Hangchow-South China Sea-Sumatra-the Indian Ocean-Arabian Sea-Ormuz-Terbil-Trebizond-Constantinople(İstanbul)-Venice.⁷⁴

- According to another source, many cities in Turkey were included in the routes. Among them are; South to East: the Mesopotamia Region-Antakya and Gaziantep (Anatolia)-the Iran-Pamir Plain; South to West: Gaziantep and Malatya (Anatolia)-Thrace (Trakya)-İzmir (Aegea); North to West: Trabzon and Sinop (Black Sea)-Alanya and Antalya (Mediterranean)-Europe.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Başıyurt, *ibid.*

⁷² İsayev and Özdemir, *ibid.*, p. 114.

⁷³ Uhlig, *ibid.*, p. 184.

⁷⁴ Toniolo et al., *ibid.*, p. 3366.

⁷⁵ Wikipedia, *ibid.*

• İzmir was the western end point of Asia and among the last cities on the Historic Silk Road.⁷⁶ The Ottoman-Iran Wars between 1588-1628 adversely affected the economy of the Armenians dealing with the silk trade and, as a consequence, they re-directed their business from Aleppo to İzmir Harbour. Thus the Historic Silk Road extending from East to West was; Iran Kashan, Kum, Tehran, Qazvin, Tabriz, Yerevan, Kars, Erzurum, Tokat, Ankara, Afyon, Denizli (Laodicea), Nazilli (Mastaura), Sultanhisar (Nysa), Aydın (Tralleis), Menderes Magnesia, Selçuk (Ephesus), and İzmir regained its importance in the business of the transportation of goods.⁷⁷

At different periods Turks took many measures to continue their connection with the Silk Road. Some of which are given below:⁷⁸

• The Seljuks constructed good, soundly built, roads to ensure the safety of transportation activities in Anatolia.⁷⁹

• The Ottoman Empire allowed commercial activities coming from Aleppo via the Historic Silk Road, to flow directly to İzmir.

• The aim of the Ottoman tax concessions that began in the 16th century under the Capitulations was to redirect commercial activities to Anatolia and the Silk Road. At that time many traders from the Netherlands, Britain, and the Levantine came to the Ottoman Empire.

• After the fall of Andalusia, the Ottoman Empire took some displaced Jews under its protection. There were two reasons for such a decision, the first of which was humanitarian and the second economic. In this context, the Ottoman Empire, wishing to benefit from the Jewish banking experience, settled them in the major trading cities of İzmir, Thessaloniki, and İstanbul in order that the commercial flow be redirected away from South Africa and towards Anatolia and inner Asia, that is, to the Silk Road.

⁷⁶ Ahmet Davutoğlu, “Beşinci Büyükelçiler Konferansı”, İzmir Üniversiteler Platformu, 05.01.2013, İzmir, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakani-sayin-ahmet-davutoglu_nun-besinci-buyukelciler-konferansi-kapsaminda-izmir-universiteler-platformu-tarafindan-d.tr.mfa, Retrieval date: 27.05.2013.

⁷⁷ Recep Yıldırım, Raziye Oban, “The importance of heritage roads on the development of Western Anatolia and Izmir”, The 2nd International Geography Symposium GEOMED 2010, *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2011, 19, p. 96.

⁷⁸ Davutoğlu, *ibid.*

⁷⁹ Yıldırım and Oban, *ibid.*, p. 94.

However, due to the decline in the significance of the Historic Silk Road, the following events concerning the Anatolian connection occurred:⁸⁰

- As the Ottoman Empire weakened the Anatolian route lost its importance in terms of being the commercial and cultural bridge between East and West.
- At the end of the Ottoman period, the burgeoning railway system saw a dramatic decline in traditional transport routes.

Currently, the Historic Silk Road is being revitalised in terms of its touristic potential in addition to international initiatives aimed at meeting economic and political targets. In this context, Turkey, in addition to its involvement in the foregoing commercial activities, is undertaking various restoration/renovation activities. For this purpose, 11 caravanserais on the Anatolian routes have been restored by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and made ready for visitors. These are:⁸¹ Ağzıkara (Aksaray), Ak (Denizli), Alara (Antalya), Alay (Aksaray), Çardak (Denizli), İncir (Burdur), Sarı (Nevşehir), Silahtar Mustafa Paşa (Malatya), Sultan (Aksaray), Susuz (Burdur), Şarapsa (Antalya).

4.2. The Role of Turkey in the New Silk Roads

Due to its geo-strategic position, Turkey, in terms of its political and economic aspects, is involved in most of the international initiatives relating to the New Silk Roads. Here, I offer some information concerning its role and the impact of the initiatives on the country. Turkey is involved in the so-called Asian Silk Road (oil and gas pipeline projects), the European Silk Road (TRACECA), and the American Silk Road (NSR-NDN). It is not involved in the so-called Korean-Russian Silk Road (TKR-TSR) and the Gulfian Silk Road (the Gulf-Asia Model) due to its distance from such initiatives.

The long-term stability of the Caucasian and Central Asian states will depend on their ability to attract foreign direct investment to build their economies, while at the same time restoring their traditional cultural and commercial relations with Russia, Iran, and Turkey. Potential markets in Turkey and Europe, however, already rely on Russian natural gas imports

⁸⁰ Yıldırım and Oban, *ibid.*, pp. 94-96.

⁸¹ Wikipedia, *ibid.*

which are likely to remain as a cheaper alternative to Caucasian or Central Asian gas for some time. Turkmenistan has explored a variety of options to export gas to Turkey's markets through either Iran or via a cross-Caspian pipeline, but the capital costs for the development of these routes make its gas more expensive. Nevertheless, for strategic reasons Turkey decided on using Turkmen gas to diversify its energy sources. For now, though, Russian or Azeri options remain as the commercial routes of choice.⁸²

In this context Turkey is actively involved in the international oil and natural gas pipeline projects. As of 2013, the international crude oil pipeline projects (COPP) in line with the Historic Silk Road routes are as follows: Iraq-Turkey (Kerkuk-Ceyhan) COPP (two pipelines) and the Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan) COPP. In addition to these the international natural gas pipeline projects (NGPP) that Turkey is involved in through its state company 'BOTAS' as of 2013 are as follows: Turkey-Greece-Italy NGPP (ITGI); Turkey-Bulgaria-Romania-Hungary-Austria NGPP (NABUCCO); Trans-Anatolian NGPP (TANAP); Iraq-Turkey NGPP; and Trans-Caspian Turkmenistan-Turkey-Europe NGPP.⁸³

TRACECA is important for Turkey. Starting in Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine) the corridor passes through Turkey, crossing the Black Sea to the ports of Poti and Batumi in Georgia. It then uses the transport network of the Southern Caucasus. From Azerbaijan it crosses the Caspian Sea (Baku-Turkmenbashi, Baku-Aktau) and meets the railway networks of the Central Asian states of Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan whose transport networks are connected to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and eventually to China and Afghanistan.⁸⁴ There are, however, some barriers to the execution of the TRACECA. The conflicts between Turkey and Armenia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russia, and between Iran and the USA, plus disputes over the the Caspian Sea oil fields, are major obstacles to the realization of the project. In addition to these, regional instabilities in Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia and in Nagorno (Mountainous) Karabakh, may cause problems for the implementation of the Project. Furthermore, as the TRACECA will be an alternative to the Moscow-centred trade and transport flows reaching Europe, Russia is actively lobbying for alternative roads via its own territory. In addition

⁸² Hichok, *ibid.*, pp. 19, 34.

⁸³ BOTAS, "International Projects", <http://www.botas.gov.tr/index.asp>, Retrieval date: 28.08.2013.

⁸⁴ TRACECA, *ibid.*

to this, as the TRACECA roads are opened up, the northern countries will inevitably place increasing emphasis on improving services in order to maintain the competitive advantage of their transport corridors.⁸⁵

Within the framework of the NSR-NDN, and with the planned US and NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014, the major powers are all competing to increase their influence in Central Asia. Other states: India, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and the EU have also involved themselves in this rivalry.⁸⁶ In this context, for instance, Turkey is also involved in the network which comprises a rail link starting in Latvia and passing through Russia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan; a road route via Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan for goods initially delivered to the Manas Transit Centre near Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan); and a Caucasus pathway that ferries cargo from the US and Europe to the port of Mersin (Turkey), and to Poti (Georgia), for delivery via the Caspian Sea to Afghanistan.⁸⁷

While giving particular importance to the revitalisation of the Historic Silk Road by restoring its heritage sites, Turkey, as mentioned above, also seeks to increase its role in the New Silk Roads. In this context, Ahmet Davutoğlu, Turkey's Minister of Foreign Affairs, emphasized the projections concerning the revitalisation of the Historic Silk Road and the importance of taking part in the plans for the New Silk Roads.⁸⁸ A senior official in the same Ministry also emphasized the significance of the Historic-New Silk Roads and proposed various measures for their revitalisation. In this context, while he placed emphasis on the missing section between İstanbul and Beijing in the İstanbul-Europe-USA-China link in the context of the Historic Silk Road, he recommended the following:⁸⁹

- The nations between China and Turkey have not yet been integrated into the global economy. The most significant element in this chain is the need for economic reconciliation between Turkey and Iran.
- A strategic collaboration between Turkey, Iran and Russia, is a must for the revitalisation of the Historic Silk Road.

⁸⁵ Yalçın, *ibid*, p. 35.

⁸⁶ Kim, *ibid*, p. 277.

⁸⁷ Kim, *ibid*, p. 279.

⁸⁸ Davutoğlu, *ibid*.

⁸⁹ Aydın Nurhan, "Ekonomik Küreselleşme ve Türkiye", <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/ekonomik-kuresellesme-ve-turkiye-tr.mfa>, Retrieval date: 27.05.2013.

• As this would result in vital benefits for the West they should commit themselves to fashioning this missing link.

4.3. The Impact of the New Silk Roads on Turkey's Foreign Trade

As mentioned earlier, the New Silk Roads are on the revitalised Historic Silk Road routes and their peripheral areas. The countries/territories of today's world involved in the Historic Silk Road -inclusive of its secondary connections- are as follows:⁹⁰ Land Routes: China, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Nepal, India, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, and Turkey; Sea Routes: China, Viet Nam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, East Timor, Myanmar, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Oman, Yemen, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Djibouti, Eritrea, Sudan, Egypt, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Bulgaria, Greece, and Italy. There are 19 countries/territories on the land routes and 29 on the sea routes. Excluding the repetitions in both routes, there are, as of today, some 43 countries/territories along the Historic Silk Road. This indicates a clear connection between the Historic and the New Silk Roads.

Below, the impacts of the New Silk Roads on Turkey's foreign trade are given. For this purpose, the countries having direct relations with Turkey are taken into account in terms of collaboration in the oil and gas projects, and relevant assessments are made. In this context, details concerning the international COPP of Turkey are available in Table 1.

Table 1: International COPP of Turkey (2013)

| | Lenght (km) | | Capacity (million barrels/year) |
|---|----------------|-------|---------------------------------------|
| | Turkey | Total | |
| Iraq-Turkey COPP (Kerkuk-Ceyhan) | Line I | 641 | 553 |
| | Line II | 656 | |
| | Grand Total | 1.297 | |
| Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey COPP (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan) | Turkey | | 365 |
| | | 1.076 | |

Source: BOTAŞ, *Annual Report*, 2011, Ankara, p. 29.

⁹⁰ The names of countries are taken from the maps in the following sources: Uhlig, *ibid.*, 395; Akiner, *ibid.*, 392; IIS, *ibid.*, Major, *ibid.*; Toniolo et al., *ibid.*, p. 3366.

Currently, Turkey has two international COPPs, one of which is with Iraq, the other with Azerbaijan and Georgia. While the first has two lines with a total length of 1,876 km, 1,297 km of which is in Turkey; the latter is 1,776 km long, 1,076 km of which is in Turkey.

Table 2: Crude Oil Transportation through Iraq-Turkey COPP (2002-2011) (000 barrels)

| Year | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Amount | 175.667 | 60.278 | 37.685 | 13.167 | 12.932 | 43.700 | 132.941 | 167.467 | 144.590 | 163.276 |

Source: BOTAS, *Annual Report*, 2011, Ankara, p. 29.

According to the crude oil statistics of BOTAS, there was a decline in transportation between 2002-07 due mainly to unrest in Iraq. From 2007 on, the trend was upward, and for 2011 the amount moved was 163,276,000 barrels.

Details of the international natural gas pipeline projects (NGPP) in which Turkey is involved as of 2013 are as follows:⁹¹

- Turkey-Greece-Italy NGPP (ITGI): 3,6 bcma of gas to Greece and 8.0 bcma of gas to Italy, a total of 11.6 bcma of gas will be transported to Europe from the Caspian Region via Turkey.

- Turkey-Bulgaria-Romania-Hungary-Austria NGPP (NABUCCO): The gas produced in Azerbaijan (Shah Deniz), Iraq, Turkmenistan, and other Caspian sources, plus Egypt and Iran, is planned to be the source for the line, the transportation capacity of which will be 31 bcma. The total length of the pipeline is 3,825 km; 2,512 km of which runs through Turkey.

- Trans-Anatolian NGPP (TANAP): In agreement with SOCAR (Azerbaijan), 10 bcma of Shah Deniz Phase-II gas will be transported via the BOTAS natural gas transmission system from the borders of Greece and Bulgaria to Europe.

- Iraq-Turkey NGPP: This is an integrated project, involving field development, production, gas processing, and pipeline construction for natural gas reserves in Northern Iraq intended to develop a natural gas corridor between Iraq and Turkey by transporting 10-12 bcma gas to Turkey and Europe.

⁹¹ BOTAS, *ibid.*

- Trans-Caspian Turkmenistan-Turkey-Europe NGPP: Natural gas produced in southern Turkmenistan will be transported by pipeline via the Caspian Sea to Turkey and then to Europe. 30 bcma of Turkmen gas will be transported through this pipeline, 16 bcma of which is to be supplied to Turkey, and 14 bcma to Europe.

In the context of the New Silk Roads in line with the Historic Silk Road routes, the projects in which Turkey has roles include the following countries, which means that they are foreign trade partners whose trade volume is given in Table 3:

- COPP: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iraq
- NGPP: Austria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Iraq, Italy, Romania, Turkmenistan
- TRACECA: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan
- NSR-NDN: Afghanistan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Turkey's involvement in all these projects is expected to result in an increase in volume of its foreign trade. Thus, such New Silk Roads are increasing Turkey's trade capacity as the Historic Silk Road did in the past.

Table 3: Foreign Trade of Turkey with the COPP Countries (1996-2012) (000 \$)

| Countries | | 1996 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|------------|-----|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Azerbaijan | E* | 239.903 | 230.375 | 528.076 | 1.550.479 | 2.063.966 | 2.584.671 |
| | I** | 39.165 | 95.615 | 208.325 | 252.525 | 262.263 | 339.936 |
| Georgia | E | 110.319 | 131.771 | 271.828 | 769.271 | 1.092.321 | 1.253.309 |
| | I | 32.495 | 155.315 | 289.834 | 290.725 | 314.352 | 180.351 |
| Iraq | E | --- | --- | 2.750.080 | 6.036.362 | 8.310.130 | 10.822.144 |
| | I | --- | 31.788 | 66.434 | 153.476 | 86.753 | 149.328 |

* Export, ** Import.

Source: TÜİK, "Main Statistics; Foreign Trade", <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/UstMenu.do?metod=temelist>, Retrieval date: 30.08.2013.

Between 1996 and 2012 Turkey increased both its export and import volume with Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Iraq. Crude oil had a paramount

effect in this upward trend. The trade volume with Iraq is particularly noteworthy from 2010 onwards. (pls. see Table 3)

The volume of Turkey's foreign trade with countries involved in the NGPP has also increased. However, except for Azerbaijan and Iraq, partners in COPP, plus Turkmenistan, all countries in this group export more than Turkey. That is, Turkey has a trade deficit with these countries (pls. see Table 4). This demonstrates that such projects are also aimed at removing the trade gap between Turkey and these countries. Turkey is expected to raise its export volume above its import volume with the countries in the NGPP via bilateral trade agreements.

Table 4: Foreign Trade of Turkey with the NGPP Countries (1996-2012) (000 \$)

| Countries | | 1996 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|--------------|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| Austria | E | 290.514 | 292.930 | 659.097 | 835.181 | 1.052.932 | 1.000.745 |
| | I | 545.485 | 516.754 | 940.056 | 1.439.448 | 1.736.366 | 1.634.272 |
| Azerbaijan | E | 239.903 | 230.375 | 528.076 | 1.550.479 | 2.063.966 | 2.584.671 |
| | I | 39.165 | 95.615 | 208.325 | 252.525 | 262.263 | 339.936 |
| Bulgaria | E | 156.906 | 252.934 | 1.179.313 | 1.497.384 | 1.622.777 | 1.684.989 |
| | I | 362.771 | 465.408 | 1.190.079 | 1.702.534 | 2.474.621 | 2.753.650 |
| Greece | E | 236.464 | 437.725 | 1.126.678 | 1.455.678 | 1.553.312 | 1.401.401 |
| | I | 284.959 | 430.813 | 727.830 | 1.541.600 | 2.568.826 | 3.539.869 |
| Hungary | E | 102.808 | 109.994 | 379.092 | 440.766 | 508.648 | 517.874 |
| | I | 94.420 | 216.262 | 946.238 | 1.382.213 | 1.494.488 | 1.184.452 |
| Iraq | E | --- | --- | 2.750.080 | 6.036.362 | 8.310.130 | 10.822.144 |
| | I | --- | 31.788 | 66.434 | 153.476 | 86.753 | 149.328 |
| Italy | E | 1.446.419 | 1.789.307 | 5.616.755 | 6.505.277 | 7.851.480 | 6.373.080 |
| | I | 4.285.793 | 4.332.788 | 7.566.262 | 10.139.888 | 13.449.861 | 13.344.468 |
| Romania | E | 314.045 | 325.818 | 1.785.409 | 2.599.380 | 2.878.760 | 2.495.427 |
| | I | 441.290 | 673.928 | 2.285.592 | 3.449.195 | 3.801.297 | 3.236.425 |
| Turkmenistan | E | 65.657 | 120.155 | 180.635 | 1.139.825 | 1.493.336 | 1.480.052 |
| | I | 100.314 | 97.878 | 160.744 | 386.342 | 392.712 | 303.507 |

Source: TÜİK, ibid.

While, in general, Turkey's trade volume with all countries in TRACECA is increasing, its exports are lower than the exports of member countries except for Armenia (2011-12), Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Moldova (pls. see Table 5). Thus, TRACECA is also expected to result in a gradual increase in the export capability of Turkey.

Table 5: Foreign Trade of Turkey with the TRACECA Countries (1996-2012) (000 \$)

| Countries | | 1996 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|------------|---|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Armenia | E | --- | --- | --- | 16 | 218 | 241 |
| | I | --- | --- | 392 | 2.626 | 133 | 222 |
| Azerbaijan | E | 239.903 | 230.375 | 528.076 | 1.550.479 | 2.063.966 | 2.584.671 |
| | I | 39.165 | 95.615 | 208.325 | 252.525 | 262.263 | 339.936 |
| Bulgaria | E | 156.906 | 252.934 | 1.179.313 | 1.497.384 | 1.622.777 | 1.684.989 |
| | I | 362.771 | 465.408 | 1.190.079 | 1.702.534 | 2.474.621 | 2.753.650 |
| Georgia | E | 110.319 | 131.771 | 271.828 | 769.271 | 1.092.321 | 1.253.309 |
| | I | 32.495 | 155.315 | 289.834 | 290.725 | 314.352 | 180.351 |
| Iran | E | --- | 297.521 | 235.785 | 912.940 | 3.589.635 | 3.044.177 |
| | I | --- | --- | 806.335 | 815.730 | 12.461.532 | 3.469.706 |
| Kazakhstan | E | 164.044 | 118.701 | 459.946 | 818.900 | 947.822 | 1.068.625 |
| | I | 100.595 | 346.376 | 558.900 | 1.392.528 | 1.995.115 | 2.056.086 |
| Kyrgyzstan | E | 47.100 | 20.572 | 89.529 | 129.902 | 180.241 | 257.470 |
| | I | 5.879 | 2.350 | 14.113 | 30.900 | 52.123 | 45.226 |
| Moldova | E | 14.397 | 26.232 | 81.108 | 148.209 | 208.885 | 224.464 |
| | I | 14.468 | 7.047 | 31.447 | 110.732 | 244.482 | 135.053 |
| Romania | E | 314.045 | 325.818 | 1.785.409 | 2.599.380 | 2.878.760 | 2.495.427 |
| | I | 441.290 | 673.928 | 2.285.592 | 3.449.195 | 3.801.297 | 3.236.425 |
| Tajikistan | E | 4.444 | 4.467 | 46.717 | 143.890 | 172.575 | 234.947 |
| | I | 2.786 | 16.511 | 47.309 | 283.689 | 324.283 | 345.178 |
| Ukraine | E | 267.539 | 258.121 | 821.034 | 1.260.423 | 1.729.760 | 1.829.207 |
| | I | 761.658 | 981.560 | 2.651.017 | 3.832.744 | 4.812.060 | 4.394.200 |
| Uzbekistan | E | 230.492 | 82.647 | 151.071 | 282.666 | 354.490 | 449.884 |
| | I | 58.054 | 85.794 | 261.466 | 861.373 | 939.882 | 813.287 |

Source: TÜİK, ibid.

Turkey shows a tendency towards an increase in its foreign trade with the countries involved in the NSR-NDN too. In this group only Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan export less than Turkey (pls. see Table 6). Realization of this project is also expected to be a factor towards increasing Turkey's trade relations with these countries particularly with regard to increasing its export volume.

Table 6: Foreign Trade of Turkey with the NSR-NDN Countries (1996-2012) (000 \$)

| Countries | | 1996 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|--------------|---|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Afghanistan | E | 2.114 | 8.053 | 113.401 | 259.791 | 275.969 | 289.915 |
| | I | 224 | 497 | 8.301 | 5.098 | 4.795 | 6.461 |
| India | E | 59.390 | 56.047 | 219.869 | 606.081 | 756.082 | 791.720 |
| | I | 258.174 | 449.307 | 1.280.473 | 3.409.938 | 6.498.651 | 5.843.638 |
| Kazakhstan | E | 164.044 | 118.701 | 459.946 | 818.900 | 947.822 | 1.068.625 |
| | I | 100.595 | 346.376 | 558.900 | 1.392.528 | 1.995.115 | 2.056.086 |
| Kyrgyzstan | E | 47.100 | 20.572 | 89.529 | 129.902 | 180.241 | 257.470 |
| | I | 5.879 | 2.350 | 14.113 | 30.900 | 52.123 | 45.226 |
| Latvia | E | 1.970 | 16.086 | 81.390 | 65.958 | 115.955 | 127.367 |
| | I | 3.426 | 11.950 | 2.622 | 71.360 | 129.787 | 160.296 |
| Pakistan | E | 77.875 | 52.857 | 187.554 | 248.147 | 213.672 | 276.127 |
| | I | 83.467 | 82.232 | 315.463 | 749.931 | 873.131 | 555.012 |
| Russia | E | 1.511.634 | 643.903 | 2.377.050 | 4.628.153 | 5.992.633 | 6.680.777 |
| | I | 1.921.139 | 3.886.583 | 12.905.620 | 21.600.641 | 23.952.914 | 26.625.286 |
| Tajikistan | E | 4.444 | 4.467 | 46.717 | 143.890 | 172.575 | 234.947 |
| | I | 2.786 | 16.511 | 47.309 | 283.689 | 324.283 | 345.178 |
| Turkmenistan | E | 65.657 | 120.155 | 180.635 | 1.139.825 | 1.493.336 | 1.480.052 |
| | I | 100.314 | 97.878 | 160.744 | 386.342 | 392.712 | 303.507 |
| Uzbekistan | E | 230.492 | 82.647 | 151.071 | 282.666 | 354.490 | 449.884 |
| | I | 58.054 | 85.794 | 261.466 | 861.373 | 939.882 | 813.287 |

Source: TÜİK, ibid.

5. Conclusion

As the oldest and longest trade route in the world the Historic Silk Road, established in the second century B.C., extended across continents, oceans, and seas. While goods and commodities, initially inclusive of silk, traded over these routes, inventions, devices, techniques, people, cultures and religions also moved along the Road. Experiencing its heydays during the 7th-8th and 13th-14th centuries A.D. its significance diminished, and by the late 17th century it fell into relative disuse as a result of the exploration of new sea routes and the rise of related transportation facilities. If considered from the beginning of its existence in the 2nd century B.C. up to the late 17th century, the total number of countries involved in the His-

toric Silk Road -inclusive of its secondary connections in terms of land and sea routes- are the following: Land routes: China, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Nepal, India, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, and Turkey; Sea routes: China, Viet Nam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, East Timor, Myanmar, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Oman, Yemen, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Djibouti, Eritrea, Sudan, Egypt, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Bulgaria, Greece, and Italy; a total, in today's terms, of some 43 countries/territories along both routes.

The Historic Silk Roads are being revitalised following the exploration for oil and natural gas reserves, in the Middle East, the Caucasus, and the Central Asian regions in particular. Resulting from these explorations, new areas of conflict have arisen among nations, and the attention of most of the world is now focused on this part of the globe. In the 19th century such conflicts were thought of as 'the Great Game' and from then on many international initiatives, with particular emphasis given to the region's oil and natural gas reserves but including weaponry and infrastructural activities, have been centred here. Among the major international initiatives dealing with oil-natural gas-weapon transportation and infrastructural services are; Oil Pipeline Projects (OPP), Natural Gas Pipeline Projects (NGPP), Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA), Northern Distribution Network (NSR-NDN), Trans-Korean Railroad with the Trans-Siberian Railroad (TKR-TSR), and the Gulf-Asia Model. Described as the New Silk Roads. In this context, the names of the initiatives could be read as; the Asian Silk Road (OPP-NGPP), the European Silk Road (TRACECA), the American Silk Road (NSR-NDN), the Korean-Russian Silk Road (TKR-TSR; Iron Silk Road), and the Gulfian Silk Road (the Gulf-Asia Model). While China and the Central Asian countries were among the main actors on the Historic Silk Road, many more countries are involved in the New Silk Road projects. Turkey is engaged in the majority of such initiatives (i.e. OPP, NGPP, TRACECA, and the NSR-NDN) in terms of their economic and political aspects.

In this paper, the impacts of the New Silk Roads on the foreign trade of Turkey are discussed. For this purpose, two international COPPs, one of which is with Iraq, the other with Azerbaijan and Georgia, are taken into account. According to BOTAS statistics there was an upward trend in the transportation of crude oil from 2007-11: In the latter year this

amounted to 163,276,000 barrels. As of 2013 Turkey also became involved in the following international NGPPs: Turkey-Greece-Italy NGPP (ITGI), Turkey-Bulgaria-Romania-Hungary-Austria NGPP (NABUCCO), Trans-Anatolian NGPP (TANAP), Iraq-Turkey NGPP, Trans-Caspian Turkmenistan-Turkey-Europe NGPP. When these projects are completed, the foreign trade of Turkey is also expected to increase gradually. In the context of the New Silk Roads in line with the Historic Silk Road routes, the projects in which Turkey has role include the following countries: COPP: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iraq; NGPP: Austria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Iraq, Italy, Romania, Turkmenistan; TRACECA: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan; The NSR-NDN: Afghanistan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

An analysis of Turkey's data on its foreign trade with the above-mentioned countries shows that between 1996 and 2012 the trend was upward for both export and import volumes. The data indicate that Turkey is currently increasing its foreign trade with all countries involved in the New Silk Road projects. Moreover, considering their potential Turkey is expected to raise its exports to these countries to above its imports from them. It can be projected that completion of such international projects will provide Turkey with many economic and political advantages greater than those described above. Thus, the New Silk Roads will increase the trading capacity of Turkey in addition to opening up other economic and political advantages, just as the Historic Silk Road did.

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