

Sino-Turkish Cultural Ties under the Framework of Silk Road Strategy

MA Lirong^①

(Middle East Studies Institute, Shanghai International Studies University)

Abstract: *Cultural ties are the foundation and the key fact of Sino-Turkish relationship. The Sino-Turkish cultural ties revolve the succession and development of the spirit of the Silk Road constituted by reciprocal economic concepts, inclusive humanistic concepts and cooperative security concepts. It can also provide an example to multi-ethnic and multi-religious integration issues in global governance. The Sino-Turkish culture ties shoulder the missions of enhancing value communication, mutual trust and consensus against terrorism, which adds new connotation and new methods for China and Turkey, two powers at the ends of the Silk Road, to further deepen the bilateral relationship. China's Silk Road strategy has created new opportunities to the cultural ties between China and Turkey, which is conducive to promote the relationship between China and the Arab-Islamic world and expand China's influence in the Europe so as to promote the relationship between China and the West. A new mode of the Sino-Turkish Silk Road strategic cooperation can be established based on the Silk Road which connects Europe and Asia.*

Key Words: *The Silk Road; Sino-Turkish Relationship; Cultural*

^① Dr. Ma Lirong, Professor and vice director of Middle East Studies Institute, Shanghai International Studies University and deputy editor-in-chief of *Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (in Asia)*. This article is the preliminary-stage achievement of the studies of a research program specially entrusted by China's Education Ministry (12JF010), a project funded by China's National Fund for Social Sciences (11BGJ033), a major project of the key research base for humanity and social sciences established by China's Education Ministry (10JJDGJW021), and a key research project funded by China's Education Ministry (08JZD0039). The research is also financed by Shanghai's Key Academic Discipline.

I. Tortuous History of the Cultural Ties between China and Turkey Started from the Silk Road

China and Turkey locate at the two ends of the Silk Road. In the long history, the Silk Road, which connected the West and the East, linked the peoples in China and Turkey together and promoted the cultural ties between the two. For instance, some Chinese words, such as “茶叶”(tea)、 “瓷器”(china)、 “水”(water)、 “衣服”(clothes), have been absorbed by Turkish language. Chinese traditional customs, like zodiac and shadow play, have also been passed into Turkey. Both the princely robes of the Byzantine Empire and precious porcelain of China’s Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties can be found in Turkish Topkapi Palace Museum. Among them, porcelain describing the picture of China’s Red Cliff and Su Dongpo, an ancient Chinese poet’s words on the Red Cliff as well as the Turkish princely robes made by Chinese satin are the most valuable artifacts to study the ancient Sino-Turkish cultural ties. It is worth noting that the Turkish Topkapi Palace Museum itself is an arts center that combines the architectural culture from both China and Turkey, in which the coloring, composition and style of the painting on eaves are quite similar with the Chinese Forbidden City. It once again proves the long time friendship between Chinese and Turkish people. As a historic city, Istanbul, due to its location at the west end of the ancient Silk Road, was a transit point that transiting Chinese goods such as porcelain and satin, as well as Chinese technologies such as four great inventions, from China to Europe. Therefore, Istanbul has been described by Marx as a golden bridge that connecting the West and the East. As a representative of the common cultural heritage of China and Turkey, the image of Avanti has been quite popular in works of folk art of China and Turkey. It has even become a pan-cultural phenomenon, which actively promotes cultural exchanges and mutual trust between the two. In Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasty, both China and Turkey were great powers. These two ancient powers locates at the two ends

of the Silk Road and are core countries of the Islamic civilization and East Asia's Confucian civilization respectively. Although they carried out cultural exchanges in both peaceful and non-peaceful ways, the "soft" Silk Road has long been the important link in the Sino-Turkish relationship even till now. After the founding of the Republic of Turkey, it actively established friendship with countries all over the world and formally established diplomatic relations with China. After twists and turns during the rule of China's Northern Warlords Government (1912-1928) and Nanjing National Government (1925-1948), China and Turkey had diplomatic exchanges in 1934. Since then, exchanges between the two in areas of politics, economics and culture became even more frequent. In addition, similar historical background, national experiences and social transformation further enhance closeness between the two nations. Turkish bourgeois revolution led by Kemal greatly encouraged Chinese people's struggle against imperialism and feudalism. Chiang Kai-shek, chief of the former Nanjing National Government, even worshiped Kemal as an idol and carried out Kemal's governing philosophy in China. As a symbol of the friendship, an autographed photo of Chiang Kai-shek dressed in military uniform has been placed in monumental mausoleum of Kemal Ataturk based Ankara (Zan, 2010: 60).

After the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, Turkey had long kept its exchanges with Chinese Taiwan authorities until the formal establishment of the diplomatic ties between China and Turkey in 1971. It is worth noting that during the Korean War (1950-1953), as a loyal ally of the US, Turkey sent forces to the "Union Nations forces" led by the US and had fiercely fighting with Chinese People's Volunteers, which marked the first met of these two ancient nations in modern history and left negative image to each other. From Chinese perspective, Turkey had long been the "lackey" of US imperialism; from Turkish perspective, China was misunderstood as an "evil enemy" and the "naive believer" of communism. Such negative image had not been improved until the formally establishment of the Sino-Turkish relationship in 1971 after which achievements had been made in various areas including politics,

economics and culture. In 1973, Chinese delegation attended the Turkish Izmir International Fair for the first time. In October 1974, president of Turkey's state-run news agency Anadolu Agency paid a visit to China and signed a news cooperation agreement with China's Xinhua News Agency. In June 1978, Minister of Foreign Affairs Huang Hua visited Turkey, which was New China's foreign minister first set foot on the land of Turkey since established diplomatic relations of the two countries. During his visit, Huang Hua laid a wreath to the mausoleum of Father of the Turks Kemal, which impressed the Turkish side. In 1979, for the first time, China sent a delegation constituted by 97 art performers to Turkish for performance tour. Soon after that, China and Turkey signed the 1981-1982 Cultural Exchange Program, which further promoted cooperation between the two countries in areas including science, education, culture, art, journalism, radio, television and sports. In 1981, with respectful feelings, all walks of life in Turkey assembled to memorize 100 years birthday of Kemal. In November 1993, governments of China and Turkey signed cultural cooperation agreements and carried out exchanges programs on culture, sports, education, journalism, news and some other areas. On December 14, 2001, two countries signed a memorandum of understanding on Chinese tour groups' travel to Turkey. Turkey became a destination of Chinese tourists then. The number of Chinese tourists to Turkey increases by 50% every year. In recent years, Turkish tourists to China have also increased. Additionally, the Muqam Art Troupe of Xinjiang and the art exhibition of paintings and photography of Xinjiang have caused great repercussions in Turkey, letting Turkish people understand the real lives of peoples of various ethnics in Xinjiang more directly. In December 2008, a delegation of Chinese writers paid a visit to Turkish Writers Union for the first time and had discussions with some novelist, poets and dramatists from Turkey (Xin, 2009: January 3). In October 2010, former Chinese premier Wen Jiabao visited Turkey and had friendly, candid and pragmatic talks with Turkish President Gul and Prime Minister Erdogan. After the meeting, two sides announced to establish and develop Sino-Turkish strategic cooperative relationship and

comprehensively upgrade cooperation between the two in various areas. Two sides also decided to put full efforts in holding “Chinese cultural year” activities in Turkey in 2012 and “Turkish cultural year” activities in China in 2013. They also expressed that they would try to increase the bilateral trade volume to \$50 billion by the year of 2015 (Ding, 2010: October 9). Although the exchanges and cooperation between China and Turkey has made historical achievements, “East Turkistan” problem still stand in the way of the Sino-Turkish relationship.

The so-called “East Turkistan” problem should be clarified in the historical context of the exchanges between China and Turkey. The word “Turks” comes from Chinese literatures such as *History of Zhou* (《周书》) and *History of Bei* (《北史》), in which defined “Turks” as another kind of the Huns. However, it’s difficult to find the connection between the Turks and Huns in the history. Strictly speaking, Turks refers to the ancient nomads who were active in northern Asian steppe during A.D. 6 to 8 century. At first, Turks were ruled by Avars. In mid-6th century, Turkistan people became a part of Tiele. Then, after the collapse of the rule of Avars, Turks founded the powerful Khanate of Turks. At the end of the 6th century, the Turks were divided into East Turks and West Turks, and these two parts pledged allegiance to the rulers of Tang Dynasty successively. In late Tang Dynasty, both East Turks and West Turks declined and merged into other ethnic groups (Wang, 2000: 31). Turks, as an ethnic group, disappeared in history then. The West Turks were forced to migrate westward to Asia Minor peninsula. Turks today are descendants of them. They tackled the Constantinople in A.D. 15th century, destroying the Eastern Roman Empire and establishing the Ottoman Empire. A part of East Turks established a new Turks Khanate in Mobei in late 7th century, which was named post-Turks Khanate or North Turks Khanate. Half a century later, the North Turks Khanate was destroyed by then emerging Khanate of Uighur that was regarded as the ancestry of present-day Uighurs. Therefore, ethnically speaking, today’s Uighurs and ancient Turks do not belong to a same family. In spite of the collapse of the Turks as an ethnic group, “Turks” as a word has been widely adopted in concepts of linguistics and geography. Under the

rule of the Turks Khanate, most of the minority tribes, such as Uighur, Tiele, Gaoche and Xueyantuo, accepted Turkic language and adopt them. Although the ethnic constituting and their languages have evolved with the development of the history, their languages were collectively referred to as “Turkic language branch” which belongs to “Altaic language family”. Current Turkic language group includes countries such as Turkey, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan, as well as ethnic groups in China such as Uygur, Kazak, Kirgiz, Uzbek and Tatar.. Except for Turkey, other countries and ethnic groups no longer call themselves Turks although languages of them belong to Turkic language. As a geographical concept, Turks usually refers to Turkistan. The suffix “-stan” was derived from Persian, meaning areas or regions. “Turkistan” means lands of Turks. Ancient Turks had no fixed land. Hence, “Turkistan” was just a vague geographical concept. In eyes of Iran-Tajiks in Central Asia, it refers to the living areas of their northern neighbors whose language was totally different. According to research, this concept can be dated back to Arabic geographical works in A.D. 9th century, referring to the Syr Darya area in Central Asia and eastern areas adjoining. European geographers began to use this word in 10th century (Xiao, 2003: 23). After Mongolia’s occupation in Central Asia in 13th century, this concept was replaced by Moghulistan. Till 19th century, scholars from the Soviet once again used “Turkistan” to refer to the vast areas between Central Asia and Tarim Basin at the south of Tianshan Mountains. At that time, Central Asia was a part of Russia and Tianshan area was ruled by China’s Qing Dynasty. Hence, Central Asia has also been called “Russian Turkistan” or “West Turkistan” and Tarim Basin area at the south of Tianshan Mountains has been called “Chinese Turkistan” or “East Turkistan”. During the period between late 19th century and early 20th century, some foreign colonialists intentionally call Chinese Xinjiang as “East Turkistan” and call Central Asia as “West Turkistan”, spreading rumors that “East Turkistan” is an independent country (State Council Information Office of PRC). Influenced by pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism, “East Turkistan” has been politicized. In early days, pan-Islamism and

pan-Turkism were of progressive significance to fight against Western colonial rule and Russia's national oppression. However, its strong religious and ethnic value that beyond countries, ethnic groups and classes has deviated from its original intention of fighting against colonial oppression and seeking for national development. It promoted the deconstruction of the countries in its spreading. For instance, in 1933, although the "Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan" has only survived for three months, it set a negative precedent for dismembering China and made "East Turkistan" as the synonym of separatism. Hereafter, almost all people advocating Xinjiang separate and independent adopt the term "East Turkistan", making this term transform from a vague geographical term to a political terms referring to separatism. There are two potential meanings in the context of this term: Firstly, xenophobic. The "Islamic Republic of Eastern Turkestan" has stated that "East Turkistan" meant the land of "East Turkistan" people; East Turkistan people would no longer use others' languages or names. Secondly, out of the concept of pan-Turkism, they believe that they were located at the east of the ethnic groups who speak Turkic language (mainly locate in areas between Turkey and Chinese Xinjiang). Thirdly, separatist forces hold that their living style were quite different from it of peoples who live in Tarim Basin and northern Xinjiang (mainly refers to areas such as Ili). So they used "East Turkistan" to differ themselves from those people. Fourthly, "East Turkistan" is an existing word that had been once used to describe Tarim Basin. Fifthly, "East Turkistan" meets the advocating of their father figure. Muhammad Amin Bughra published a book *Sharkiy Turkestan Tarihi (East Turkistan History)*, declaring that "Our ethnic group is Turkistan, our country is East Turkistan, and our religion is Islam" and alienating "East Turkistan" as the synonym of separatist regime. Against such backdrops, almost all people who advocate separatism in Xinjiang call China's western regions or Xinjiang as "East Turkistan" in history and carry out their activities under the banner of the establishment of "a country of East Turkistan". Besides, they fabricate the views of history of "East Turkistan" based on the historical views of pan-Turkism, which becomes one of the

theoretical sources of the separatism of “East Turkistan” (Li, 2014: March 3).

Based on the analysis above, it can be found that although the cultural ties between China and Turkey originated from the Silk Road had a long history, “East Turkistan” problem and conflicts between the two during the Korean War still limit and influence the Sino-Turkish relationship. It can be seen in two aspects: the trade deficit in Sino-Turkish economic ties and the spillover of the “East Turkistan” problem in political, cultural and security relationship between the two. Therefore, it is the key to the development of the Sino-Turkish relationship that how to deepen the cultural ties between the two countries.

II. “Sino-Turkish” Culture Years Bring the Bilateral Relationship a Honeymoon

Both Chinese and Turkish cultures are of strong inclusiveness and innovation, which provided direction and dynamics to the cultural exchanges between the two. Prior to the cultural years, the cultural exchanges between two countries had already developed increasingly close from officials to ordinary people. For example, on November 22, 2006, the “Chinese week” activity was carried out in Ankara, capital of Turkey, during which Mehmet Ali Sahin, former Turkish deputy prime minister, cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony of this activity, and watched the first performance of the Muqam Art Troupe of Xinjiang. After viewing the performance, Mehmet Ali Sahin also received joint interview of CCTV, Xinjiang TV and *Xinjiang Daily*. Also, In December 2008, a delegation of Chinese writers paid a visit to Turkey for the first time, during which artists from both sides had friendly discussion. An aged Turkish writer was very friendly to Chinese people. He had investigated the Uyghur Karezes at his own expense and published a book named *A Voyage to the Uyghur Karez* in 2006 in which he introduced the unity and progress made by people from various ethnic groups in Xinjiang. Therefore, both Chinese and Turkish artists have realized that translation and introduction of the

books written by the other side are of great significance to promote cultural exchanges and bilateral friendship (Xin, 2009: January 3).

Holding “cultural years” activities is an important consensus achieved by leaders of the two sides. It has been written in the “The People Republic of China and the Republic of Turkey Joint Statement on Establishing and Developing Strategic Cooperative Relations”. The year 2012 has been proclaimed as “Year of Chinese Culture in Turkey” and the year 2013 has been proclaimed as “Year of Turkish Culture in China” with a “Memorandum of Understanding” which was signed by Ertuğrul Günay, former Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey and Cai Wu, Chinese Minister of Culture on 16 June, 2010. Prior to his official visit to Turkey, then Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping received interview of Turkish newspaper and expressed that cultural years are aimed to promote Sino-Turkish communication, enhance traditional friendship and create a new important platform for cultural exchanges between two countries as well as a opportunity for people of the two to understand culture and history of the other. The Chinese side attached great importance to the year of Chinese culture in Turkish in 2012. It prepared dozens of cultural programs in areas including music, dancing, theater, literature, film and forums, so as to show the spirit of Chinese culture to Turks. Chinese side expected brilliant Turkish culture and arts in the year of Turkish culture in China and believed that the “cultural years” activities will contribute to the deepening of the bilateral relationship. “Year of Chinese culture in Turkey 2012” started on December 12, 2011 and smoothly ended on December 4, 2012. According to the statistical data of Chinese embassy to Turkey, under the framework of the “year of Chinese culture in Turkey”, 87 programs and groups related to Chinese culture went to Turkey; say 1700 Chinese tourists visited Turkey; almost 400 exhibitions and art performances had been shown in Turkey. The exchanges programs cover many areas including acrobatics, film, education, dancing, music, theater, exhibitions, youth exchanges, food, book publishing, media, religion, think tanks and animation. As many as 240,000 Turkish people attended relative activities covering more than 40 Turkish cities

including Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir and Antalya. The “Chinese year in Turkey 2012” with the theme of “Source of Silk Road – Charming China” has successful ended in Turkey. In March 2013, “year of Turkish culture in China 2013” kicked off in Beijing with the theme of “Turkey is right here 2013”. Turkish artists from different fields, including theater, film, ballet, folk dancing, handicrafts, painting, traditional and classical music, showed Chinese people Turkish splendid ancient civilization and excellent modern artworks. Activities in “year of Turkish culture” included performances of visual arts, music, dancing, opera, as well as literature works, movies and TV shows. In addition, artists from both sides have carried out mutual communications on new media and public service activities. The activities of the “Turkish cultural year” were as follows (Table 1):

Table 1: List of activities in “Turkish cultural year in China”^①

Date	Location	Activity
December 1, 2013 - December 31, 2013	Beijing/Tianjin	Closing Ceremony
November 1, 2013 - February 28, 2014	Shanghai	Exhibition of Anatolian Civilization
October 1, 2013 - October 31, 2013	Nanchang	Performances of Ottoman military bands
October 1, 2013 - November 31, 2013	Beijing	Exhibition of Turkish Painting From the Collection Of The Central Bank of Turkey
October 1, 2013 - October 31, 2013	Shanghai	Dance Drama “Barbaros”
October 1, 2013 - October 31, 2013	Shanghai	Turkish Contemporary Artists Exhibition
October 1, 2013 - October 31, 2013	Jiangsu (Nanjing, Lianyungang)	<i>Harem</i>

^① source: Official Tourism Portal of Turkey,
<http://2013turkishculturalyear.goturkey.com.cn>

October 1, 2013 - October 31, 2013	Beijing/Shanghai	Turkish classical music
September 18, 2013 - September 30, 2013	Beijing/Yichang	Sound of Anatolian
September 1, 2013 - September 30, 2013	Zhang Jiajie in Hunan Province	EMRE Band
July 21, 2013 – July 26, 2013	Xinjiang	Modern ballet “Rose Garden”
July 13, 2013 – July 31, 2013	Beijing	Children’s drama
June 15, 2013 – June 23, 2013	Chengdu	Exhibition of Turkish traditional handicrafts
May 21, 2013 – May 26, 2013	Shenzhen	Shenzhen Culture Expo
May 1, 2013 – May 5, 2013	Beijing	Abduction from the Seraglio
May 1, 2013 – May 30, 2013	Beijing	Exhibition of Turkish Photos
April 1, 2013 – May 30, 2013	Guangzhou/Shenzhen	Presidential Symphony Orchestra Concert
April 1, 2013	Beijing/Shanghai/Xi’an	Exhibition of Turkish traditional handicrafts
March 21, 2013 – March 26, 2013	Beijing Poly Theater / Shanghai Oriental Art Center	Opening ceremony of Turkish cultural year in China
March 12, 2013	Beijing	Press conference of Turkish cultural year in China
March 5, 2013	Hong Kong	Bosphorus photo exhibition
March 3, 2013 – March 9, 2013	Hong Kong	Turkish Film Festival

Mutually holding cultural years activities have been the activities between the two with the largest scale, longest time, most programs, various categories, highest level and widest covering regions. China and Turkey, connected by famous Silk Road, once again have been linked together by cultural years. Especially that the Chinese Islamic cultural pageant made the activities more in-depth.

According to the Memorandum of Cooperation signed by religious departments of China and Turkey in June 2011, both sides carried out activities of China-Turkey Islamic cultural pageant from August 31 to September 6, 2012 in Istanbul. China sent religious, performing and studying groups with more than 100 people to attend the activity. Activities in the pageant include exhibition of Chinese Islamic photos, exhibition of cultural relics, exhibition of Muslims' living supplies, exhibition of Muslim calligraphy, exhibition of Islamic scriptures, Islam information exchanges meeting, *Koran* reading and theatrical performances. Among them, photo exhibition is the key content, which can be further divided into 10 parts: Chinese Islamic history, overview of Chinese Muslims, *Koran* in China, Chinese mosques, Islamic education in China, religious life of Chinese Muslim, social life of Chinese Muslims, friendly exchanges of Chinese Muslim, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region part and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region part. In the exhibits, a jade sculpture *Koran* excerpts written by Guangyuan, Grand Imam of China as well as the president of the Islamic Association of China, and a 208-meter long, 75-kilogram weight *Koran* paper cut aroused strong repercussions in Turkish Muslims. Mehmet Görmez, head of the Religious Affairs Directorate, holds that this cultural pageant shows the world that Islam was preached to China peacefully, and current Islamic preaching in China is still peaceful. Today, China brings peaceful Islamic culture to Turkey in turn. Through the *Koran* on stones, on silks, on paper cut, non-Muslims in China, and even the whole world can realize that Islamic culture has already been an indivisible part of Chinese culture. It also reflects the high degree of confidence of Chinese culture because only nations with high degree of confidence would do this. In fact, the seven days of the cultural pageant are of

historical significance: it marks the first time of the pragmatic cooperation of the religious department between China and Turkey, the first in-depth exchange between Islamic circles of China and Turkey, the first time prayers exchange their ideas on a same stage and the first time Chinese Islamic culture has been comprehensively displayed in Turkey, etc. Just because of the importance of the cultural pageant, it has been attached great attention by media from both sides. As many as 40 media, including Media from China, such as Xinhua News Agency, CCTV, *Guangming Daily*, China Radio International, China News Agency, *China Daily* and Phoenix TV, as well as media from Turkey, such as Turkish Radio and Television Corporation, Anadolu Agency, Dogan Media Group and Istanbul News Agency, followed the pageant and praised it as a pioneering undertaking to promote religious and cultural exchanges between two countries. It conveys peaceful messages and creates a new chapter for communication and cooperation of Islamic culture in China and Turkey (Min, 2012; He, 2012). In September 2013, the China-Turkey Islamic cultural pageant, which has lasted for six days, closed in Yinchuan, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. Deputy Head of the Department for Religious Affairs Mehmet Emin Ozafshar believes that religious culture is the bridge connecting the two countries. Through this bridge, we can carry out cooperation with brighter future.

Driven by the “cultural years” activities, exchanges and cooperation between China and Turkey in fields of politics, economics, culture and security have been further promoted and deepened. It marks that the Sino-Turkish relationship has entered a honeymoon.

III. Silk Road Strategy Brings New Opportunity to Cultural Exchanges between China and Turkey

On September 7, 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed to build a Silk Road Economic Belt in his speech at Kazakhstan's Nazarbayev University. On September 13, 2013, President Xi communicated with members of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) on this idea which may benefit 3 billion people, and received

positive responses. President Xi pointed out that the 2,000-plus-year history of exchanges had proved that countries with differences in race, belief and cultural background can absolutely share peace and development as long as they persist in unity and mutual trust, equality and mutual benefit, mutual tolerance and learning from each other, as well as cooperation and win-win outcomes. He expressed that six SCO members and five observers locate along the Silk Road, therefore, we have the responsibility to carry forward the spirit of Silk Road. Xi's words conveyed messages of seeking common stability and development. He also proposed the roadmap of the building of the economic belt – enhancing communication on politics, transportation, trade, currency and ordinary people, stressing on promoting regional cooperation from point to line and then from line to area, highlighting the leading role of people-to-people exchanges, and transforming the SCO from energy and security cooperation to energy, security, and cultural full-range cooperation.

On October 3, 2013, President Xi delivered a speech in Indonesian parliament, expressing that China would build a maritime Silk Road together with Southeast Asian countries. He stressed the importance of insisting heart-to-heart communication, tolerance and opening, and clarified that China would like to build closer economic contacts based on mutual benefit with Southeast countries and carried the traditional friendly contacts originated from Zheng He's voyages forward to modern economic and trade exchanges (China National Radio, 2013: October 4). Therefore, topics, such as maritime Silk Road, Zheng He culture, traditional friendship between China and ASEAN, should be attached more importance, so as to look for new ideas, methods and ways of China's good neighbor policies to improve the cooperation between China and ASEAN members.

On October 24-25, 2013, periphery diplomacy conference was held in Beijing. It's an important meeting for the Party's Central Committee to improve periphery diplomatic works against the new situation. Strategic objectives, basic principles and overall layout in next five to 10 years have been ensured and work plans and implementation schemes to resolve important problems ahead of China's periphery

diplomacy have been clarified. President Xi stressed that we should insist good neighbor policies, promote full ranged culture communication, and carry out depth development of friendly exchanges on tourism, science, education and cooperation at local level. We should well introduce our domestic and foreign policies, connecting the Chinese dream and the good wills of the people in neighboring countries and regional development together. Let the sense of community deeply root in China's neighboring countries (Xi, 2013: October 25). This conference marks the official birth of China's "Silk Road strategy".

As two core countries at the two ends of the Silk Road, it is the top priority in Sino-Turkish relationship that how to establish strategic cooperative partnership between the two in the framework of "Silk Road strategy". Based on this, the suggestions are follows:

First, enhance mutual trust and mutual help politically. As to high-level visits between China and Turkey, China has stressed for times that both sides should have mutual respect and support on the other's issues of core concerns. It is the reflection of the political mutual trust between the two countries as well as the cornerstone of the healthy development of Sino-Turkish strategic cooperation. Although leaders from Turkish side also express clearly that they will not permit activities that may undermine China's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within Turkish territory, there are many "East Turkistan" organizations in Turkey that have been officially registered, such as Eastern Turkistan Foundation, East Turkistan Immigrants Association, East Turkistan Education and Mutual Assistance Association, Eastern Turkistan Youth League and Eastern Turkistan Culture and Solidarity Association. It is the result of sympathy of ordinary people and sheltering of NGOs caused by the dual character of Turkish government on "Xinjiang Independence" problem. Therefore, on "East Turkistan" problem, Turkish government's attitude has transformed from acquiesced to ambiguous, and even evade this problem. Such attitude, coupled with its impulsive attitude on "July 5" Xinjiang riot, has greatly hurt the Sino-Turkish relationship. However, we cannot just evade this

problem because Turkish government's anti-terrorism position after "October 28" and "March 1" violent terrorism incidents was conducive to the deepening of the bilateral relationship and could help to contain Kurdish separatist forces.

Second, enhance complementarity and mutual benefit economically. Chinese government has attached great importance to the development and improvement of livelihood in Xinjiang. It has put most efforts in promoting leapfrog development of Xinjiang economic and maintaining Xinjiang stability. Currently, Xinjiang is in a golden period in which economic society is rapidly developing, people's livelihood is increasing greatly and people from different ethnic groups are coexisting peacefully. Chinese leaders appeal that there are great potential in Sino-Turkish cooperation. Hence, China would like to enhance its cooperation with Turkey in areas including economy, trade, aviation, railway, tourism and engineering contracting, and take the chance brought by the new platform of China-Asia-Europe expo to promote communication and cooperation in economy and trade between China and Turkey. By this mean, China encourages Turkish entrepreneurs invest in Xinjiang and contribute to development of Xinjiang. Especially, China and Turkey should make full use of the Silk Road period of strategic opportunities to promote policy-level communication based on transportation, trade and currency communication, so as to provide material basis and institutional guarantee to people-to-people communication between the two. Guided by the balance between morality and profit, both sides should further reduce the trade deficit and improve the bilateral relationship.

Third, enhance consensus and cooperation in security relationship. To some extent, "East Turkistan" could be a catalyst to the consensus on anti-terrorism and substantive cooperation to China and Turkey. In recent years, with the increasingly solid of status of Turkish Justice and Development Party (AKP) with Islamic background, Turkey has a tendency toward pan-Islamism and put more efforts in intervening regional and international hotspots such as Syria crisis, Israeli-Palestinian conflict ad the Iranian nuclear issue. The Islamic

tendency of the AKP reflects that post-war Turkey is repositioning itself; it also shows that the neo-Ottomanism diplomatic policies become growing clear in Turkey. The recent changes in Turkey will inevitably affect the attitude of “East Turkistan” (Zan, 2009). In fact, people in both China and Turkey suffer from the violent terrorism incidents along the Silk Road driven by thoughts of terrorism, separatism and international Jihadism. Anti-terrorism becomes an increasingly important topic in Silk Road zone. Although cooperation between China and Turkey has increased in areas of justice, police, anti-terrorism intelligence communication in recent years, areas of intelligence sharing, institution building and anti-terrorism collaboration still call for further pragmatic cooperation. Both sides should try to build the Sino-Turkish security relationship based cooperation and jointly keep a lookout eye on the negative impact of terrorists from “East Turkistan” on bilateral relationship.

Fourth, enhance pragmatic innovation on cultural exchanges. In recent years, cultural exchanges between China and Turkey have become increasingly closer; forms and content of the exchanges have been more diversified; achievements have been made in areas of culture, education, tourism, media, health and sports. For instance, after Turkey’s being ensured as the destination of Chinese tourists in 2001, Chinese tourists to Turkey has increased by 50% per year. Turkish tourists to China have also grown. Also, up to the year of 2013, China has opened two Confucius institutes respectively in Turkish Middle East Technical University and Boğaziçi University. Institutes of five universities in Turkey – Department of Oriental Languages and Literature in Ankara University, Chinese Language and Literature Department in Erciyes University, Chinese Language and Literature Department in Fatih University, Department of Translation Studies in Okan University and Faculty of Arts and Sciences in Istanbul University – teach Chinese language. Besides, 15 middle schools and primary schools in Turkey have carried out Chinese language teaching. It is also worth noting that China and Turkey have made 14 pairs of sister cities (See Table 2). There sister cities have made consensus and cooperate in fields of textiles, commerce, culture, education, tourism

and personnel exchanges. Firstly, due to the Turkey's transcontinental location and its relationship with the Europe Union, Chinese cities can export their products to Turkish market and then enter the Middle East and European market. Turkish cities can also enjoy the advantage of resources and market in Asia Pacific through making friends with Chinese cities. Secondly, cultural exchanges and personnel training will be easier to carried out among sister cities, cooperation will be more convenient in sister cities in areas of education, tourism, culture and health. Thirdly, cooperation fields can be widened by cooperative talks among sister cities.

Table 2 List of sister cities between China and Turkey^①

Date of agreement signing	Chinese city	Turkish city
1989.10.23	Shanghai	Istanbul
1990.06.20	Beijing	Ankara
1991.09.25	Tianjin	Izmir
1991.12.13	Rizhao, Shandong Province	Trabzon
1996	Xi'an	Konya
1996.11.14	Zhangjiang, Jiangsu Province	Izmit
2004	Shantou	Tekirdağ
2005.11.27	Anqing, Anhui Province	Kütahya
2009.09.27	Changzhou, Jiangsu Province	Eskişehir
2010.04.02	Harbin	Erzurum
2011.09.19	Jinan, Shandong Province	Marmaris
2012.07	Guangzhou	Istanbul

^① Sources: compiled by Wang Chang, postgraduate of Middle East Studies Institute at Shanghai International Studies University.

2012.12.	Suining, Sichuan Province	Kırklareli
2013.08.15	Zhangzhou, Fujian Province	Pertek

Among the four kinds of relationships mentioned above, cultural relationship is the key factor as well as the foundation. The cultural ties between China and Turkey also include the spirit of Silk Road constituted by reciprocal economic concepts, inclusive humanistic concepts and cooperative security concepts. It can also provide an example to multi-ethnic and multi-religious integration issues in global governance. The Sino-Turkish cultural ties shoulder the missions of enhancing value communication, mutual trust and consensus against terrorism, which adds new connotation and new methods for China and Turkey, two powers at the ends of the Silk Road, to further deepen the bilateral relationship. China's Silk Road strategy has created new opportunities to the cultural ties between China and Turkey, which is conducive to promote the relationship between China and the Arab-Islamic world and expand China's influence in the Europe so as to promote the relationship between China and the West. A new mode of the Sino-Turkish Silk Road strategic cooperation can be established based on the Silk Road which connects Europe and Asia.

Conclusion

After contributing to the world with the public good of Silk Road, the Communist Party of China Central Committee also raised the strategic proposal of jointly building the new Silk Road. During his visit to Central Asia and Southeast Asia, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed of establishing Silk Road economic belt and the maritime Silk Road in the 21st century, which has been written in relative official regulations and been upgraded to national strategy. China's Silk Road strategy, with the Asia Pacific economic zone in the east and European economic zone in the west, connects the Europe and Asia, and covers

more than 3 billion people from more than 40 countries. These regions have great potential and rich resources. Therefore, some important countries should be attached more importance in the implementation of the strategy. Among the countries, Turkey is our top priority. Firstly, China should make full use of Turkey's geographical advantage to promote exchanges and cooperation between European and Asian economic zones. Turkey should take opportunity brought by the Silk Road strategy to deepen its relationship with China. Both countries should work together in promoting the "five communication" policies and benefit from them. By these means, the Silk Road strategy makes China and Turkey a community of destiny and safeguards their common interests. Secondly, from China's perspective, Central Asia has been a frontier to fight against "three evil forces" including "East Turkistan" separatists and maintain stability in geopolitics. However, due to the similarity in traditions and languages between Central Asia and Turkey, pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism thoughts are also quite influential in Central Asia. Both Turkey's strategic vision of building Turkic community and US Great Central Asian strategy are aimed to contain the influence of China and Russia in Central Asia. For this reason, in its promoting the Silk Road economic belt, China should not only enhance its cooperation with SCO and European Union, but also pay attention to its bilateral relationships with countries such as Turkey and take their geographical interests and energy interests into account. Thirdly, China and Turkey should prevent the "East Turkistan" from causing more harm to bilateral relationship. Generally, there are several social forces show sympathy and support to "East Turkistan" organizations in Turkey: The first forces are some political religious forces. Some "moderate" religious organizations even help "East Turkistan" terrorists to found organizations directly. The second forces are the traditional pan-Turkism forces that support and take part in "East Turkistan" separatists' anti-China activities, such as radicals from National Action Party or Great Union Party. The third forces are some civil organizations, such as the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (Qiu, 2013: July 4). These three

social forces not only contain Turkish government's position and attitude in "East Turkistan" problem, but also urge Turkish leaders to accuse Chinese government's "genocide" and "assimilation" out of the consideration of "Turkic national complex" after "July 5" 2009 Urumqi riots. That's why there were many protests supporting "East Turkistan" forces in areas including Istanbul. Toward this, China further clarified the harmfulness of Turkish attitude to the general situation and development future of bilateral relationship, which caused profound reflection in Turkish political circle. In August 2009, Caglayan, State Minister of Turkey, was sent to China to repair the bilateral relationship. In fact, the relationship between the "East Turkistan" problem and Sino-Turkish relations can be reflected as a law: when the bilateral relationship is improving, the influence of "East Turkistan" is declining, vice versa. Hence, both sides should enhance consensus and cooperation on anti-terrorism, so as to meet the challenge brought by "East Turkistan" problem on bilateral relationship and the security environment of the Silk Road strategy. Finally, cultural diplomacy will play a basic and leading role in specific practices of establishing Silk Road strategy cooperation between China and Turkey. Both China and Turkey have aged civilization and long history, which gave birth to rich cultural resources. Silk Road has long been the link that connects the two civilizations for thousand years. Hence, China and Turkey should strongly promote the education and tourism along the Silk Road. For instance, more and more schools in Turkey want to start up Chinese language lessons to meet demands of Turks to understand Chinese culture. China has already opened two Confucius institutes in Turkey. It should establish more Confucius institutes, Confucius classes and Chinese cultural centers. Also, Turkey has been made the destination of Chinese tourists. Chinese tourists to Turkey has increased by 50% per year. Turkish tourists to China have already increased in recent years. Therefore, cultural exchanges, including education cooperation and tourism, will further enhance the public foundation of the Sino-Turkish relationship and play a role in establishing Sino-Turkish strategic cooperative partnership.

Reference

- China National Radio (2013: October 4). *President Xi Jinping delivered speech in Southeast Asia for the first time, three stories unfold maritime Silk Road.*
- Ding, G. (2010: October 9). Premier Wen Jiabao talks with Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan, *People's Daily*.
- He, C. (2012). Charming China and Sino-Turkish friendship, *China Religion*, No.9.
- Li, S. (2014: March 3). History of "East Turkistan" separatists is not a problem on policy level, Ifeng.com.
- Min, J. (2012). Documentary of China-Turkey Islamic cultural performance, *Chinese Muslims*, No.5.
- Qiu, Y. (2013: July 4). Who helps riots in Xinjiang? Support and connivance of the US, Japan and Turkey, *Global Times* (Chinese edition).
- State Council Information Office of PRC, *White Paper of History and Development of Xinjiang: Origin of "East Turkistan"*, Retrieved October 30, 2013, from http://www.btmz.gov.cn/Article_Show.asp?ArticleID=167&ArticlePage=3.
- Wang, S. (2000). Historical survey on pan-Turkism, *World Ethno-National Studies*, No.2.
- Xi, J. (2013: October 25). Let the Sense of Community of Common Destiny Take Deep Root in Neighbouring Countries, Retrieved October 31, 2013 from http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/wjbz_663308/activities_663312/t1093870.shtml.
- Xiao, J. (2003). Origin and history of "East Turkistan" problem, *Wenshi Chunqiu*, No.3.
- Xin, W. (2009: January 3). Chinese writers' delegation visit Turkey, *Journal of Literature and Art*.
- Zan, T. (2009). "Indissoluble bond" between Turkey and "East Turkistan", *China Economic Journal*, No.83.
- Zan, T. (2010). Sino-Turkish relations and Turkey's perception to China, *Arab World Studies*, No.4.