

## BOOK REVIEWS

### ONE BELT ONE ROAD, UNA STRATEGIA DI SVILUPPO GLOBALE

ANTONIETTA IVONA

WIP Edizioni Publishing House, Bari, Italy, 2020, 232 pp.  
ISBN 978-88-8459-571-3

**Reviewed by** DONATELLA PRIVITERA,  
University of Catania, Italy



The book “One Belt One Road, Una Strategia di Sviluppo Globale” is prepared as a response and a deepening to the promotion of New Silk Road, also called the Belt and Road Initiative (OBOR). The plan of development of this new growing project was initiated by Xi Jinping, President of the People’s Republic of China, in 2013. It focuses on investment

for railway, highway and port construction and links countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa together and promote global cooperation and economic development. It also representing the interests of China for geopolitical and strategic influence.

The New Silk Road is a continuation of previous initiatives, such as the Going out policy, promulgated at the end of the Nineties to support, through a liberalization of the regulations, outgoing foreign direct investments of Chinese companies, in particular state-owned enterprises, for the purpose to improve international competitiveness and protect the labor market from industrial conflicts. The result has been a progressive internationalization of Chinese public companies and also private but still under the auspices of the Chinese state. The OBOR, now renamed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is the pillar of Chinese foreign policy, on the basis of which the Chinese government intends to build a future world order that will have its reference point in the People’s Republic of China. The BRI is as a platform for promoting trade.

This book explores and quantifies parts of the BRI strategy, the impact on other BRI participating economies and some of the implications for emerging and developing economies countries. The new project will eventually cost more than one trillion dollars and will involve over seventy countries, where three quarters of the planet’s energy resources are present and represent almost a third of the global gross domestic product.

In 2014, the Xinhua State Press Agency made the Project known to the international community by publishing the official map of the junctions of the

New Terrestrial Silk Road, and those of the New Maritime Silk Road. Since the early stages of the OBOR project and with the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), businesses have once again been encouraged to invest in the global economy, even though they were experiencing strong resistance and widespread criticism abroad. To definitively sanction the importance of the project, the New Silk Road strategy was included in the Chinese Constitution in 2017, together with the abolition, the following year, of the limit of mandates for the current President Xi Jinping.

The book is organized into three parts, corresponding to the main and actual geopolitical theme on New Silk Road. The first part includes the historical background of the Silk Road, with a reference to the past when the silk routes were many as there were many types of goods transported outside and inside the country. On the other hand, to understand the current strategy it is necessary to retrace the historical excursus that led China, in almost forty years, to weave a dense network of alliances and infrastructures that have allowed geo-economic and geostrategic alliances with at least one hundred and forty countries.

The articulation of the Chinese strategy is explained in the second chapter, which refers to the six land corridors and the two seafarers, cornerstones of the entire OBOR structure. A detailed description of the funding allows the understanding of the realization of this project built over time and certainly not improvised. In fact, this initiative is implemented today through strategies already planned by the government and implemented with the tenth Five-Year Plan. It is based on the need to stimulate Chinese state-owned companies to make investments in foreign countries and within the country by locating industrial plants in the different regions and generating a multiplier effect on the internal economy. The Chinese economic and political commitment can be explained for at least two reasons: commercial relations will also be able to sanction political ones, ensuring access to raw materials for the first Asian economic power (e.g.

oil and new markets); the consolidation of existing markets as in the case of relations with Europe.

A second northern junction of the Maritime Silk Road was recently announced; across the Arctic Ocean, it will allow for a faster connection between China and northern European destinations.

Finally, the great economic strategies that in almost forty years have built and defined the characteristics of today's China and which, above all, explain the definition of the OBOR strategy, have been studied in detail, with minuteness and precision, in the last chapter. The long-term end goal of this Chinese government policy is to increase its influence in the international community. Its antecedent was the planning and implementation of various strategies to attract foreign capital, which allowed China to grow rapidly and sustainably. Today the People's Republic of China has the economic and political capacity to make investments abroad more than in the past.

Reading the book suggests that the author confirms the success and effectiveness of the Chinese strategy of a policy oriented mainly to global markets but also with neighbouring countries at least in a double sense: as a strategy for improving internal GDP of the country and, more generally, for the expansion of political and commercial relations with the supplier countries of raw materials (of which China had and has a great need to maintain its level of economic and social development), and with the Countries that buy its finished products. The attempt of the Antonietta Ivona is certainly worthy, also in virtue of the void that tightens the Italian culture when it comes to reflecting from an epistemological, theoretical and empirical point of view on such a burning and current geopolitical theme. Furthermore, openness towards the global scientific panorama is certainly a source of pride, capable of both hosting international literature and making reflections freely usable. A useful and worthy of attention book that allows us, through the lens of an international project, to have a greater understanding of Chinese society. It also allows the reader a complex but coherent picture of the phenomenon investigated.