

The Supply of Safety Public Goods in Central Asia and its Surrounding Areas under the Background of "One Belt and One Road"

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Abstract: One of the problems facing China's "One Belt One Road" initiative is the growing demand of safety public goods in and around central Asia. According to non-traditional security theories, central Asia and its surrounding areas are mainly faced with threats of terrorism, drug abuse, economic security and energy security. When providing regional security public goods, Central Asia and its neighboring countries are faced with the challenges as follows: the contradiction between responsibility and interest distribution of the supply of security public goods, the lack of regional identity for participant countries, interferences from international forces outside the region, etc. China should strengthen cooperation with Central Asia, proactively assume the responsibility in accordance with its role as a regional major country and the champion of the Belt and Road Initiative, objectively treat the possible negative effects of the One Belt and One Road Initiative and perform well in communication and coordination with stakeholders. China should join hands with Central Asian countries to promote economic development and alleviate poverty in that area, so as to mitigate security risks in Central Asia and its neighboring areas, appropriately reduce the pressure on the supply of safety public goods in the region, then create a sound environment where the countries in the region can jointly undertake and benefit from safety public goods in the region.

1. Introduction

In a word, public goods refer to products that are produced at one time and benefit the general public. It is impossible for a person or a department's consumption to reduce the interests of others [1]. Regional public goods ("regional international public goods") was originally a compound concept derived from public goods theory of public economics and international political economics, and that is an extension of the concept of "public goods" in the study of the international relations.

Scholars used the theory of international public goods to explain the "hegemonic stability theory" in the early stage when the main provider of international public goods was hegemon. Charles p. Kindleberger, one of the first scholars to introduce the theory of public goods into the study of international relations, stressed in his book that a country must take on the public costs to guarantee the stable operation of the international economic system [2]. Robert Gilpin proposed that the providers of international public goods should be hegemon responsible for providing international public goods and bear all the costs with their economic surplus [3].

While economic globalization has brought huge economic benefits to all countries, it indeed brings threats to national development as well. Economic integration promotes the regionalization and collectivization of the international community, because closed development mode cannot meet the needs of the current national economic development and the traditional ways that national security maintenance only depends on hegemon have not worked as they used to. As economic ties between countries in the region have been strengthened, cooperation between different countries on specific issues has become increasingly important. Collaboration among countries of the region promotes the emergence of regional public goods in which an organization, a group, a system, a

guarantee or even a contract can find expression. China provided with "The Belt and Road Initiative" to neighboring countries and even the world. Central Asia holds the key to that initiative. Central Asia and its surrounding areas are faced with serious security problems due to their special political, economic, religious, cultural and other factors. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, these security problems can be classified as non-traditional security problems. The One Belt And One Road initiative has strengthened the relationships between central Asian countries and China, and their fates were united. Therefore, China, the initiator and leading country of One Belt And One Road, needs to join hands with neighboring countries to provide new public goods for regional security in view of non-traditional security.

2. Challenges in the Supply of Safety Public Goods in Central Asia and its Surrounding Areas

First of all, as the second largest economy in the world, China boasts a huge domestic market, abundant foreign exchange reserves and rich experience in infrastructure construction. That is why China is capable of creating new development opportunities for countries along the route, including the five Central Asian countries. But in Central Asia, China is still not capable enough to provide all security public goods for the region. According to the principle of "beneficiary pays" in the financing of public goods, safety public goods benefit Central Asia and its neighboring countries as a whole when using them. Therefore, safe public goods should be provided by all relevant countries to cater to the common needs of Central Asia and its neighboring countries. However, the big gap in economic development between Central Asia and its neighboring countries results in unclear use and benefits of safe public goods, so "free riding" is common in the supply of global public goods. As some countries can't provide safety public goods effectively, the shortage of the supply (such as: the actual number of sending troops in anti-terrorism cooperation is less than needed. In transnational trade, a country does not undertake its corresponding transportation liability, etc.) is predictable. That will not only impinge on the economic development and security of Central Asia and its neighboring countries, but also lead to the discredit of the countries and affect the further development of the overall regional cooperative relations.

Second, although China and Central Asian countries have a profound historical relationship, they have not established a sense of cultural identity. On the contrary, the differences in the political system further widened the differences, and even there are varied degrees of anti-China phenomenon. People in Central Asian countries reject China's economy to a certain extent, which affects the provision of security public goods in central Asia and its surrounding areas.

Finally, since the end of the cold war, central Asian countries have strengthened their relations with international organizations for power to ensure the security of the region. After 9/11, Central Asia has become an important military area for the United States to enter Afghanistan and Pakistan from north to south. With the gradually prominent energy and geographical advantages of Central Asia, Russia, the United States and the European Union all started several rounds of competition in Central Asia for a place in Central Asia.

The proposal and practice of " Belt and Road" make it likely to integrate the interests of great powers and Central Asia. But China and NATO have long been in ideological conflict, and NATO countries want to maximize their own interests in Central Asia. Such conflicts will hinder the supply of regional security public goods and the overall development of the region in central Asia and its surrounding countries.

3. Countermeasures

Early January 2019 marked the 27th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and five central Asian countries [4]. B&R epitomizes the new era where China is building a common interesting group and seeking to develop together. B&R aims to provide safety public goods in central Asia and its surrounding areas, so the cooperation between China and central Asian countries can be deepened. The author makes three proposals: deepening the collaboration

between China and central Asian countries; when it comes to global governance, we should encourage major countries outside the region to play an active role; solving the problem of poverty from its root.

3.1. China and Central Asian Countries should Enhance Political Mutual Trust and Deepen Cooperation in the Region

The provision of security public goods in central Asia and its surrounding areas is different from the "bestowal" behavior in ancient China's tributary trade. Regional security public goods aim to promote the common development of regional countries including their own countries. If there has been conflict in history, which makes individuals unwilling to cooperate with outsiders, it may cause the whole society to suffer substantial loss of efficiency. On the other hand, a shared experience of conflict may enhance cooperation among members. [5]. Therefore, the cooperation and development between China and central Asia is China's option to bear the responsibility as a regional major country in the overall interest of promoting regional development. In security cooperation such as joint law enforcement and military drills in Central Asia, China can assume the responsibility as a leading country, adhere to the principle of mutual benefit and win-win results, benefit other countries in the system through cooperation mechanisms, and further deepen and upgrade regional cooperation. Following the establishment of the diplomatic ties, the bilateral relations between China and the Central Asian countries have been drive by two wheels-- security and energy cooperation. For China and central Asia, much of China's domestic natural gas comes from Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan has not only profited from gas exports to China, but also broken its pattern of sending gas solely to Russia and Iran. As a consequence, the economies of China and central Asia are highly complementary and the space for cooperation is enormous.

3.2. When it Comes to Global Governance, we will Encourage Major Countries Outside the Region to Play a Positive Role

Although regional public goods are confined to a certain region, they may have positive or negative externalities to countries outside the region. The Belt and Road Initiative was initially misinterpreted by some media as China's "Marshall plan" to expand its influence in Central Asia. This has created an unfavorable environment for China's economic activities in Central Asia. China should take an objective view of the possible negative impact of B&R, take the initiative to release positive voices and carry out communication and coordination with countries concerned. In view of the supply of security public goods in Central Asia and its surrounding countries, it can be incorporated into the framework of non-traditional security governance cooperation to ensure regional security in Central Asia. At the same time, on the issue of counter-terrorism, we can selectively invite major powers. For example, the United States and Russia are also taking actions against terrorists in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Central Asia is their key entry to Afghanistan.

3.3. Promoting Economic Development

The multiple non-traditional security risks faced by central Asia and its neighboring countries are still rooted in poverty. B&R aims to bring vital benefits that people in the region can feel, so they will also actively serve to build the initiative on the economic front and contribute to safeguarding regional security along the route. As Central Asia and its surrounding countries enjoy the huge benefits brought by B&R, they will be more active in the supply of regional public goods and act as the provider of regional public goods. This will effectively solve the disputes between relevant countries on the issue of "provision" and "benefit" of regional public goods, and create conditions for better provision of regional public goods. At the same time, the solution to poverty problem can mitigate the security risks in central Asia and its surrounding areas, and appropriately reduce the pressure on supply of regional safety public goods.

4. Conclusion

B&R is facing many challenges. China should deepen its cooperation with Central Asia and its neighboring countries, take an objective view of the possible negative influence of the Initiative, proactively respond to doubts through positive voices, and carry out communication and coordination with stakeholders.

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