

To Play the Unique Role of Think Tank Join Hands to Build the “Belt and Road Initiative”

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Held in Madrid, Spain, “2015 Annual Conference of Silk Road International Forum” gathers the governments, think tanks, business representatives and heads of international organizations and renowned scholars from more than 40 countries and regions along the “Belt & Road”, holding open communication, and jointly advance the construction of the “Belt and Road Initiative”, which has important practical significance.

I. “Belt and Road Initiative” is the road to achieve win-win cooperation and common prosperity

Over 2000 years ago, the industrious and brave Chinese people, together with people in countries along the Silk Road, opened up trade and cultural communication channel connecting Asia, Europe and Africa with their wisdom and courage. For thousands of years, in the spirit of “Peaceful cooperation, openness and tolerance, mutual learning, mutual benefit and win-win”, Silk Road has passed the torch from generation to generation, which has created a splendid ancient Silk Road, and promoted the progress of human civilization. The ancient Silk Road used to be the main carrier of Eastern and Western political, economic and cultural exchanges, and now has become global-shared historical and cultural heritage.

Two years ago, Chinese President Xi Jinping put forward a major initiative to build the 21st Century Silk Road economic belt and the Maritime Silk Road. It is an initiative that complies with the trend of the times, fits the theme of peaceful development of the times, and facilitates global development and cooperation; a blueprint that runs through ancient and modern time; integrates the land and sea; faces the whole world, which has gained high attention from the international community and positive responses from a growing number of countries.

On the one end of the “Belt and Road” is the active east Asia economic circle, on the other the

developed European economic circle, and in the middle the hinterland countries with huge potential for development, which involve more than 60 countries and regions along the belt and road, covering 4.4 billion people and about \$22 trillion of total economy volume, accounting for 63% and 30% in the world respectively“. A single flower does not make the spring, colorful garden with various splendid flowers does“. The construction of “Belt and Road Initiative” is not closed, but open and inclusive; it is not to protect the interests of certain countries, but to promote mutual benefits and win-win of countries along the belt & road and even all countries in the world; it is not a Chinese solo, but the chorus of all countries along the belt & road. It has brought opportunities to the world, and is a great cause for the benefit of people of all countries in the world.

“Belt and Road Initiative” is a road of mutual respect and trust, a road of win-win cooperation and civilized mutual learning. The construction of “Belt and Road Initiative” insists on shared business, co-construction and shared principles, with policy communication as important safeguard, the connection of facilities as the priority area, the smooth trade flow as focused content, the accommodation of fund as important support, the public communication as social foundation, to promote the cooperation in all fields. Currently, the construction of “Belt and Road Initiative” has developed from initiative to action, from blueprint to reality, from the concept of communication to the new stage of pragmatic cooperation. As can be expected, the construction of “Belt and Road Initiative” will definitely promote the common development and prosperity of the countries and regions along the belt and road.

II. Fujian Province is actively promoting the construction of the core area of the Maritime Silk Road

Fujian is located in the southeast coast of China, with a land area of 124,000 square kilometers, sea area of 136,000 square kilometers, and a population of more than 38 million. Adjacent to Hong Kong and Macao, facing Taiwan across the sea, Fujian is the necessary north-south path of the Pacific west coast route, with a unique position and advantage in promoting the construction of the Maritime Silk Road.

Fujian is the important starting point of the ancient maritime Silk Road, the Maritime Silk Road in Fujian has never been broken off, from the Tang and Song to the Qing Dynasty until modern times, Fujian has always been the most important participant and witness of the Maritime Silk Road. In Song and Yuan Dynasty, Quanzhou Port was known as the “Biggest Oriental Port”; in the early Ming Dynasty, Zheng He’s seven voyages to the west started from Fuzhou; in the middle and late Ming Dynasty, Zhangzhou Yue Gang Port was the largest foreign trade port in China at that time; and in Modern China, Fuzhou and Xiamen are two of the five ports with open commercial trading.

Since ancient times, Fujian people has had the good tradition of friendly exchanges with peoples around the world, and has composed a nice legend of communication and exchange with people in countries and regions along the Maritime Silk Road. From ancient times until the present, group after group, Fujian people went abroad through the Maritime Silk Road, which has not only realized the trade exchanges with countries and regions along the road, but also played an important role in promoting the economic development and cultural prosperity. There are more than 15.8 million Fujian Overseas people, the vast majority of which are in the countries and regions along the “Maritime Silk Road”, as the area with the second largest number of overseas Chinese people. The majority of overseas Chinese people has inherited and promoted the qualities of “Patriotic, tolerant to diversity, generosity, dare to fight to win” of Fujian people, in harmonious co-existence with the local people, and has made

important contributions to the economic and social development of the resident country, and has built a bridge for the promotion of exchanges and cooperation between Fujian and all countries in the world. People in some countries and regions come to Fujian through the Maritime Silk Road, where a number of Southeast Asian and Arab descent thrive, which has promoted the blending of different nationalities, cultures and civilizations.

Fujian is one of provinces with the best ecological environment in China, its forest coverage rate reaches 65.95%, ranking first in the country. Fujian is one of two provinces in China that were the earliest to opened up. For 30 years of reform and opening up, Fujian's economic and social development and opening-up undertaking has made great achievements. In 2014, the province's total economic output was nearly \$400 billion, GDP per capita was more than \$10,000, investment in fixed assets over \$300 billion, total import&export nearly \$200 billion, actually utilized foreign capital \$7.2 billion, and foreign investment also reaching \$2.8 billion, which has laid a solid foundation to better integrate the construction of "Belt and Road Initiative".

Since China's central government confirmed Fujian province as the core area of 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, Fujian gave rapid response and made positive effort to be a good backbone for the construction of "Belt and Road Initiative". Fujian has developed the implementation plan of constructing the core area of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, we will give full play to Fujian Maritime Silk Road in the 21st Century core area, as well as political advantages of ecological civilization pilot demonstration zone, free trade pilot zone, Pingtan comprehensive experimental zone, and Fuzhou new area; insist on strategy of combining bringing-in and going-global to speed up the interconnection of facilities; deepen the economic and trade pluralism exchanges; promote international cooperation in production capacity; strengthen maritime cooperation with close cultural exchanges; fully leverage the overseas power resources; collaborate with Fujian and Taiwan to expand the international cooperation; innovate and open cooperation mechanism; consolidate and expand the all-round "Belt and Road Initiative" exchanges and cooperation with countries and regions along the belt&road; and strive to build the frontier platform of the Maritime Silk Road as the important hub for trade and economic cooperation, pilot region institutional innovation; important link to cultural exchanges; and fully plays the role of leading demonstrating, gathering and radiating as the core area of the "Marine Silk Road".

III. Give full play to the unique role of think tank in advancing the "Belt and Road Initiative" construction

The collision of thought will ignite wisdom, to achieve the beautiful vision of "Belt and Road Initiative"; we need to pool the wisdom and strength of countries. After the proposing of "Belt and Road Initiative", the international communities have given active comment, while there are still doubts and misunderstandings. We believe that think tank as an important part of the national soft power can play the role of guidance, interpretation and promotion for the construction of "Belt and Road Initiative".

(I) To be a good guide to consolidate the consensus for Silk Road

The construction of "Belt and Road Initiative" is a huge project, and every task needs to go through full study. The think tank is features independence and detachment; a bridge between the government and the public, the policy and academic research, playing the role of guidance;

participates in government decision-making; leads social trend and guides public opinions. The new thoughts and new ideas of think tank can have an important impact on the formation of social consensus, and the “public communication” requires our efforts to enhance mutual understanding and trust; expand the “circle of friends” of Silk Road; gather more consensus; announce more good voice; inject more positive energy, and promote the formation of correct guidance for public opinions.

(II) To be a good interpreter to promote the spirit of the Silk Road

The construction of “Belt and Road Initiative” is open and inclusive, and as the interpreter, think tank is designed to make people aware of deep and rich connotation and lasting charm of the Silk Road spirit. We must uphold the vision of open and tolerant attitude, through forums, seminars, visits and other forms, to strengthen think tank exchanges among countries and regions, so that different civilizations and cultures can dialogue and eliminate cognitive errors, let culture exchanges and mutual learning become a bridge to promote friendship among the peoples, and become the engine to promote social progress of human being and the bond to maintain world peace. Meanwhile, the think tank should carry out targeted research and policy interpretation and advocacy work, improve the understanding and recognition of the people along the “Belt and Road” effectively, so as to lay the solid social foundation for advancing the construction of “Belt and Road Initiative”.

(III) To be a good facilitator to promote the Silk Road cooperation

We should take the annual meeting as an opportunity to further promote the communication and cooperation mechanism and normalization between think tanks, think tanks and governments, think tanks and businesses. We should be committed to the practical research, such as stepping up in the research of the regional cooperation and coordination mechanism of the “Belt and Road Initiative”; use research to drive the butting of the “Belt and Road Initiative” with Europe “Juncker investment plan” and other relevant development plans of countries along the belt & road; push to build a number of cooperation demonstration projects together.

We shall strengthen the policy communication between think tanks of countries along the belt & road; establish think tank research achievement communication, discussion and cooperation mechanism, through personnel exchanges to enhance mutual understanding; consolidate consensus of all parties, and find out the interests overlapping point. The Development and Research Center of the State Council is promoting the construction of “Silk Road International Network of Think Tanks”, which provides an important vehicle for the construction of “Belt and Road Initiative”. This work makes great sense, and we will actively participate in pursuing cooperation and promote development.

The famous Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes comments, “Pen is the tongue of thinking.” For think tanks, the pen is our “tongue”, and we can make our own voice via the pen, enhancing trust and eliminating doubts through exchanges, and play the role as a good guide, interpreter, and facilitator in the construction of “Belt and Road Initiative”.

There is a Chinese old saying that, “Those with the same ideals think nothing of a long and arduous journey” We come together from all over the world to realize the grand goal of common development, and we believe that through our joint efforts, all parties can find a new starting point for cooperation and win-win to let our due contributions turn the grand blueprint of “Belt and Road Initiative” into wonderful reality. At the same time, ladies and gentlemen, please pay more attention to Fujian, more attention to the construction of the core area of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Welcome to pay more visits to Fujian and look around to provide valuable advice to the development of Fujian.