



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/53/396
17 September 1998
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

Fifty-third session
Agenda items 31, 56, 71 and 93

CULTURE OF PEACE

LAUNCHING OF GLOBAL NEGOTIATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Letter dated 15 September 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Kyrgyzstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the foreign-policy conceptual basis of the doctrine of the President of Kyrgyzstan, Mr. A. Akayev, "Diplomacy of the Silk Road" (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly at its fifty-third session, under agenda items 31, 56, 71 and 93.

(Signed) Zamira ESHMAMBETOVA
Permanent Representative of Kyrgyzstan
to the United Nations

Annex

Diplomacy of the Silk Road

(A foreign policy doctrine)

The past and present of the Great Silk Road

The Great Silk Road, which in ancient times joined East with West, and to some extent North with South, by means of trade and economic, cultural-humanitarian and also political and diplomatic ties, has a history stretching back several thousand years. At various phases of its existence the content and significance, directions and scale of contacts varied, but one thing remained unchanged: throughout that long period, the Great Silk Road played the role of a connecting bridge between countries and civilizations.

It served as a channel for trade, which became the catalyst for the development of crafts. Travellers and explorers studied the countries and peoples of the lands along the entire length of the Road, thus making an enormous contribution to the development of knowledge.

The world became acquainted with the ideas and work of the greatest philosophers, scholars and statesmen. Intensive mutual enrichment of cultures took place, and there was an active exchange of knowledge and of spiritual and philosophical concepts and views. Thanks to the Road, outstanding epics and legends became the property of all mankind.

Via the Great Silk Road, syncretic and monotheistic religious ideas were disseminated. Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam and Christianity all found their adherents along the Great Silk Road.

The Great Silk Road was also of immeasurable significance in the establishment and maintenance of diplomatic relations among the centres of political life, the major States of Europe and Asia. Many historical sources bear witness to the active nature and high level of official contacts and the exchange of diplomatic missions, particularly between Byzantium and China, powers which played a significant role in the international life of that era.

The intensive and multidirectional process of inter-civilizational communication on various levels went on for centuries.

Despite a number of changes of direction, by the will of historical fate the main arteries of the Great Silk Road passed through the territory of Kyrgyzstan.

On the eve of the new third millennium, the idea of a revival of the Great Silk Road has met with broad international support and an extremely warm response, largely as a result of the existence of two interdependent trends that characterize the development of the modern world.

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The first of these involves the steady intensification of the processes of interdependence and globalization, the phenomenally rapid development and introduction of the latest technologies, communication systems and computer networks and the acceleration on an unprecedented scale of information and capital flows that "erode" national boundaries.

The second trend reflects the high level of integration at the regional and subregional levels.

The current steady and dynamic development of political, trade and economic relations would be unthinkable without the strengthening of fraternal, trusting and mutually advantageous relations of partnership between all States of the Silk Road region.

The geography of the Great Silk Road has no bounds or limitations. Its expansion by those countries which intend to develop cooperation with the countries in the Great Silk Road region is naturally and objectively determined by the entire course of historical development.

The arms race, local conflicts, extremism and terrorism, the unlawful manufacture, distribution and consumption of narcotic substances, natural disasters and those brought about by technology or by man, and crying social needs are problems that lead to recognition of the natural and objective need for a revival of the Great Silk Road on a qualitatively new basis.

While in the past the Great Silk Road played the role of a connecting bridge, now, in a situation of globalization, the destiny of the Road extends far beyond the framework of this dimension alone. The cosmic and the planetary appear as a single whole, implying an organic combination of present-day progress with the development of human civilization itself.

The renaissance of the Great Silk Road under the new historical circumstances refutes the ideas that were current in the past, which at times artificially contrasted the ways in which the East and the West perceived and viewed the world as totally incompatible with one another. Fortunately, ideas of planet-wide significance and scale are now predominant in the minds and hearts of the peoples inhabiting the region of the Road.

The ideas of humanism, tolerance and the revival of spirituality are gaining ground in their tenacious struggle against age-old prejudices and intolerance of different ways of thinking.

Kyrgyzstan, lying at the very centre of the Eurasian continent, at the junction of several civilizations, having taken in and absorbed a multiplicity of cultures and ways of looking at the world, possesses under present circumstances the necessary prerequisites for becoming a bridge of friendship and cooperation between all the countries within the Great Silk Road region.

Kyrgyzstan - an inseparable part of the Great Silk Road

The country known as "Kyrgyzstan"

After regaining its State independence, Kyrgyzstan set out on a qualitatively new road of its development, the road of political and socio-economic transformations.

Such concepts as "democratization", "civil freedoms" and "supremacy of the law" have become firmly embedded in everyday practice. The principle of separation of powers and the system of "checks and balances" in the interrelations between them have clearly demonstrated their effectiveness.

Favourable conditions have been created for encouraging initiatives and activity by citizens at the local level and for the comprehensive development of local self-government as the foundation for the life of the State.

The idea of "Kyrgyzstan - our common home" has become the recognized basis for enhancing and strengthening inter-ethnic harmony and creating the conditions for a life in dignity for all citizens of the country. In Kyrgyzstan, which has absorbed in equal measure the spiritual heritage and rich traditions of the East and the West, representatives of many ethnic groups and religious faiths live together in peace and harmony.

Kyrgyzstan has created the conditions for the establishment of an open society with a developed market economy, successfully solved the problem of macroeconomic stabilization and entered the stage of economic growth.

A national information structure is being created in Kyrgyzstan with access to worldwide computer networks.

Currently, the most important goals facing society as a whole are to intensify the positive trends in the economy and make them stable, to encourage and support national entrepreneurship, especially on the part of small and medium-sized businesses, to attract direct investment and to make extensive use of new technology.

An attractive investment climate has been created in Kyrgyzstan, and a legislative base has been established which affords foreign investors the necessary guarantees and privileges.

The stable political system and the open and democratic nature of Kyrgyzstan's economy create favourable conditions for the development of mutually advantageous international cooperation.

Kyrgyzstan has entered the era of democracy and renewal.

Kyrgyzstan and the countries of the Great Silk Road region

The conception of Kyrgyzstan's foreign policy with regard to bilateral cooperation excludes in principle the use of the prefix "anti-". This is the

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outcome of the entire course of Kyrgyzstan's historical development as an independent State and of the fact that our country pursues a peace-loving foreign policy and builds its relations with the outside world on the basis of the universally accepted principles and norms of international law.

Kyrgyzstan, as a consistent advocate of broad and multifaceted international cooperation for the joint solution of global international problems, takes up "anti-drug", "anti-extremism" and "anti-terrorism" positions. It is an implacable opponent of unlawful arms trading and distribution of arms and strives to achieve stability, progress and economic stability not only in the region, but throughout the world.

Our country is deeply convinced that along the entire length of the modern-day Great Silk Road, no serious problems or contradictions of an antagonistic nature are to be found between the countries falling within its orbit.

Among the participants in international relations, awareness is growing of the need to resolve chronic problems by peaceful means, at the negotiating table. In this connection, the example of Tajikistan, whose history is inseparable from the history of the Great Silk Road, is instructive. The political will and desire to seek compromise and mutually acceptable solutions that have been demonstrated by the leaders of the parties that were previously in conflict, combined with the mediating efforts and good will of neighbouring countries, including Kyrgyzstan, give grounds for hoping that the processes of peace and national reconciliation in that country are irreversible.

Kyrgyzstan's initiative in relation to the conduct of a peace conference on Afghanistan has been widely acknowledged. The joint efforts and cooperation of all the countries falling within the orbit of the Great Silk Road can and must lead to the long-awaited peace in that long-suffering land and turn forever a sombre page in the history of the region.

The creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, cessation of the arms race and the conversion of military production, and the creation of conditions for the stable development of all countries of the Great Silk Road without exception afford grounds for assuming that at the beginning of the third millennium the region of the Road, which possesses vast potential and resources, will become one of the most flourishing and prosperous in the world, in that problems affecting the interests of all the countries will be resolved jointly and all obstacles to the free movement of goods, capital, services and manpower along the entire length of the Road will be removed.

Kyrgyzstan is making purposeful efforts to develop cooperation with all the countries of the Great Silk Road region. In view of its geographical location, our country has a favourable opportunity of simultaneously developing fruitful relations in such directions as "Kyrgyzstan-neighbouring countries", "Kyrgyzstan-Europe" and "Kyrgyzstan-East and South-East Asia".

"Kyrgyzstan-neighbouring countries" - our country is working steadily to intensify various forms of cooperation with neighbouring countries and to expand political, trade and economic and cultural and humanitarian relations.

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The existence of common historical, political, economic and cultural and humanitarian links with countries which in the past formed a single whole necessitates the maintenance and development of relations through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Kyrgyzstan is attentively following the dynamics of and collectively participating in the multilateral integration processes in countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and making its contribution to the strengthening and intensification of regional and subregional integration.

Acknowledging the important role of a favourable external environment for subsequent development, Kyrgyzstan is working consistently and fruitfully to strengthen security along the State borders with all neighbouring countries. Together with other countries of the region, it has signed a number of important agreements aimed at strengthening confidence-building measures in the military sphere and reducing the armed forces in the border region, and this has made it possible to settle almost completely the border disputes that still remain from the past.

Kyrgyzstan is geographically and historically close to the Muslim States of the Great Silk Road region, which possess considerable investment, industrial and raw material potential.

"Kyrgyzstan-Europe". The significance of this direction for Kyrgyzstan is determined by the following main factors: the need for and benefits of cooperation with developed European countries; the desirability of further developing links with the Eastern European States; and participation in the European affairs of the States bordering on Kyrgyzstan. In developing its relations with European countries, Kyrgyzstan will, alongside efforts on the bilateral level, step up its activity in the field of multilateral diplomacy, taking advantage of the unique opportunity to participate in the work of the European institutions dealing with issues of security (including in the Central Asian region), economic cooperation and the development of democratic institutions.

"Kyrgyzstan-South and South-East Asia". Kyrgyzstan's cooperation with the countries of East and South-East Asia is conducted both on the bilateral level and through international organizations. Despite the financial and economic difficulties some Asian countries have recently been experiencing, their economic potential will play a growing role in the international arena.

Taking into account the South-East Asia countries' great wealth of experience of activity, Kyrgyzstan will in future show great interest in participating actively in various regional forums of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, and also in the establishment of cooperation on a regional basis.

States are prompted by their national interests, set in the context of geostrategic and geopolitical realities. In this connection, Kyrgyzstan can succeed in developing relations with all the countries of the Great Silk Road region, bearing in mind the following factors:

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(a) In terms of economic indicators, Kyrgyzstan falls into the category of "developing countries" as used in international practice. This enables it to be a full participant in the leading organs of multilateral diplomacy of the countries of the South and defend their international economic and political interests collectively;

(b) Kyrgyzstan, as a country with a transition economy, is entitled to count on the cooperation of the developed countries and international financial and economic organizations in conducting its policy of reform;

(c) Kyrgyzstan also forms part of the group of landlocked countries. Located at the very centre of East-West and North-South transport and communication routes, it feels a natural need to link up with modern communication systems and ensure reliable access to maritime transport, and is also aware of the objective need to become a transit country. It is therefore working actively to develop all forms of communications, in particular transport and information, in the interests of all the Great Silk Road countries.

Principles of cooperation and establishment of the basis
for relations with the Great Silk Road countries

The conduct of the "Great Silk Road" policy is based on the following principles:

- Equitable partnership, friendship and cooperation with all Great Silk Road countries;
- Interdependence;
- Mutual advantage;
- The long-term perspective;
- Multifaceted development of international cooperation.

Equitable partnership, friendship and cooperation with all Great Silk Road countries are the most important components of a principle which is objective and universal in nature, relating equally to the hopes and aspirations of any country interested in creating a favourable environment along its national borders and in the context of bilateral and multilateral diplomacy. This principle is in full conformity with the universally acknowledged principles and norms of international law as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, including mutual respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders, non-interference in internal affairs, non-use of force, settlement of conflicts by peaceful means and equal and mutually advantageous cooperation.

Interdependence has become a completely new phenomenon of the end of the twentieth century. Globalization has led to an awareness of the unarguable fact that no country, however powerful it may be in military and economic terms, can

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face alone the challenges that call in question the survival of the whole of mankind.

The principle of mutual advantage is sufficiently obvious. The development of mutually advantageous international cooperation within the Great Silk Road region will allow all countries without exception to find answers to many questions and solve the problems they are at present contending with. The countries of the region are actively striving to create new and diversify existing transportation systems so as to ensure the shortest and best means of access to world communications; they are encouraging and developing international trade, both within the region and outside it; and they are intensifying and stepping up cultural and humanitarian, scientific and educational and tourism contacts between the nationals of all the countries of the region.

The principle of the long-term perspective is inseparably interrelated with the preceding principle. The entire historical experience of the development both of the Great Silk Road itself and of the countries drawn into its orbit over the course of many centuries, has convincingly demonstrated the importance of and vital need for the development of inter-State relations that address the long-term perspective.

Multifaceted development of international cooperation is a necessary condition for the creation of favourable prerequisites and possibilities for the conduct of a balanced, flexible and manoeuvrable policy on the international arena; it corresponds to Kyrgyzstan's long-term national interests and is determined by the entire complex of problems and issues that need to be solved in the future.

Prospects for the application of the "Great Silk Road"
foreign policy concept

The application of "Great Silk Road" diplomacy will have favourable long-term consequences for Kyrgyzstan and for all the other countries located in the Great Silk Road region.

The revival of the Great Silk Road at this juncture will make it possible to create all the necessary conditions for the transformation of the region into an area of stability, security, friendship, cooperation and equitable partnership.

The present-day Great Silk Road creates favourable prerequisites for the intensification of international cooperation in the joint solution of the global problems facing mankind on the threshold of the third millennium.

The expansion of the geography of the Great Silk Road will make it possible to make fuller use of the existing opportunities and rich potential for intensifying international trade and economic, cultural and humanitarian, scientific and technical and tourist contacts between all countries and peoples.

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There are sufficient grounds for thinking that all the Great Silk Road countries will make the maximum efforts to ensure that in the new millennium there emerge from the Road region, which constitutes a vast space crossing the entire Eurasian continent from East to West and uniting a diversity of cultures, traditions and historical fates, only positive impulses of solidarity, peace, progress and prosperity.

Kyrgyzstan is ready and able to act as a binding link between all the Great Silk Road countries.

For Kyrgyzstan, the interests and objectives of its foreign policy consist in ensuring to the fullest possible extent the strengthening, by political and diplomatic means, of international guarantees of its independence, sovereignty, economic self-sufficiency and territorial integrity.

To achieve these goals and objectives, Kyrgyzstan is full of resolve and will to comprehensively encourage and develop friendly, good-neighbourly relations of partnership with all the countries of the Great Silk Road region and to participate consistently and concretely in integration processes.

Askar AKAYEV
President of Kyrgyzstan
