

# **Silk Route – Issues and Options**

Dr. Muhammad Ashraf

**Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR)**

**July 21, 2016**

# Silk Route

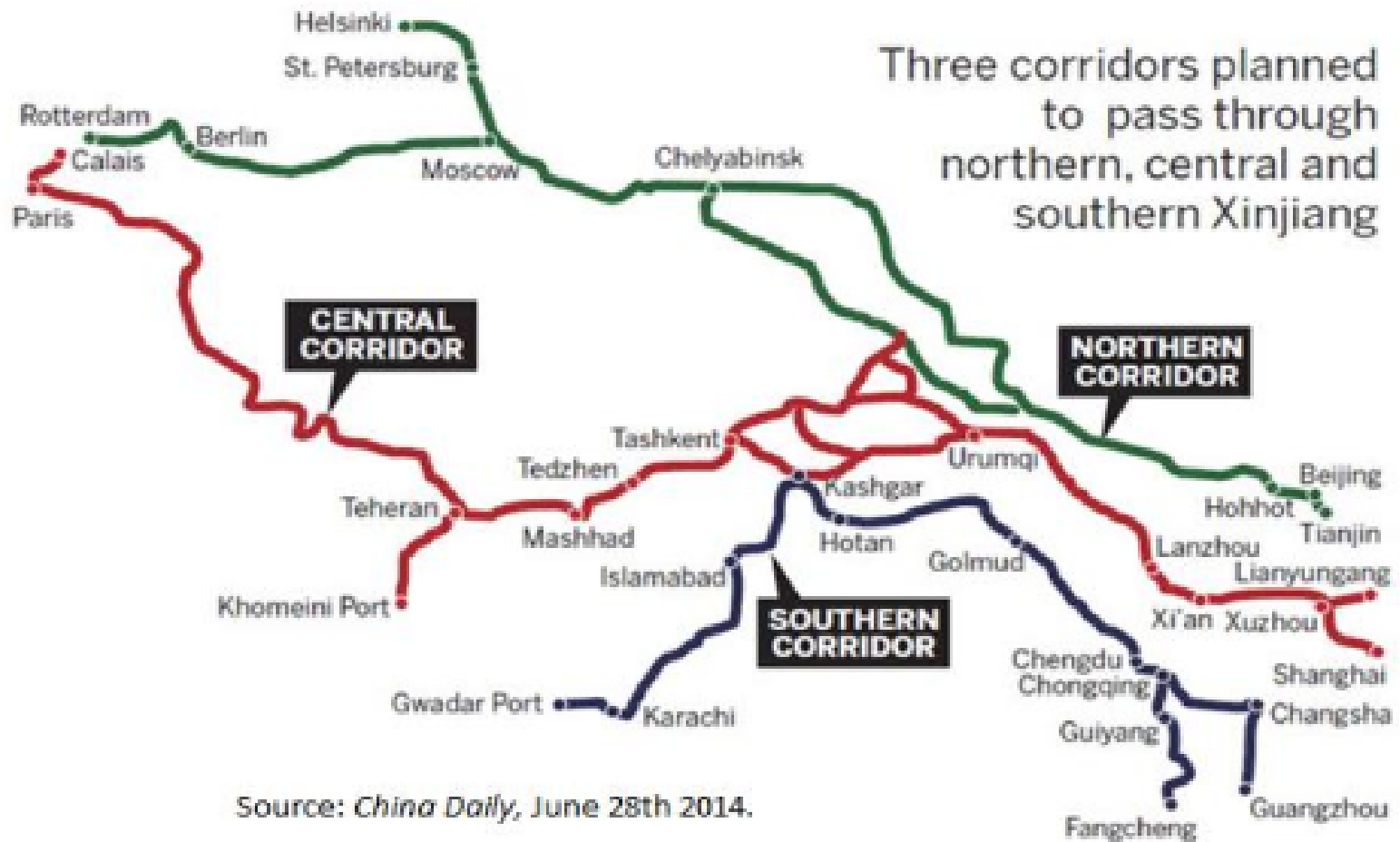


# The Silk Route

- The **Silk Route** or **Silk Road** refers to a network of ancient trade routes connecting Asia, Europe and Africa.
- The southern branch of the Silk Road runs down paths “towards Karakorum region, opening a passage for trade to the Indo-Gangetic plains.
- These paths originated in Khotan, Qargalik or Yarkand from where they followed several passages to reach the present Chitral, Hunza and Gilgit.
- Two routes leading to Hunza, Gilgit, Chitral and Chilas from the Chinese towns.
- The first route crossed the Muztagh River and passed through Shimshal to reach the main channel of Hunza River.
- The second branch extended towards the present Tashkurgan, the border town between China and Pakistan.

# China Pakistan Economic Corridor

*The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor*



# China Pakistan Economic Corridor

- **CPEC** is a comprehensive development program that entails the linking of Gwadar Port to China's northwestern region of Xinjiang through highways, railways, oil and gas pipelines, and an optical fiber link.
- Major physical infrastructure to be built includes 2,700 km highway stretching from Kashgar to Gwadar through Khunjrab, railways links for freight trains between Gwadar and Khunjrab linking to China.
- The project will also undertake the revival and extension of the Karakorum Highway that links Xinjiang with Pakistan's northern region Gilgit–Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- Besides physical links connecting Pakistan and China, the project also envisages establishing several economic zones along the corridor.

# Major Issues along the Silk Route

- Natural resource degradation (land, water and ecology)
- Non-exploitation of natural resource
- Weak service delivery system and limited infrastructure
- High level of poverty and widening social and economic disparities
- Lack of investment and industrialization
- Poor human resource development and opportunities
- Weak institutional infrastructure
- Lack of data/information

# Way Forward

- An integrated resources and vulnerability assessment, and ecosystem management plan
- Agricultural Water, Energy and Hazard Management for Improved Livelihood in the Silk Route Region
- Strengthening regional level monitoring network and data sharing
- Study and mitigate the impact of climate change on the ecosystem in the Silk Route Region
- Regional Silk Road Conference on Sustainable Development Goals
- Establishment of Science and Technology Silk Park
- Safeguarding heritage across the corridors like Karezes in Balochistan
- Institutional capacity building and human resource development

# Thank you

[www.pcrwr.gov.pk](http://www.pcrwr.gov.pk)

[muhammad\\_ashraf63@yahoo.com](mailto:muhammad_ashraf63@yahoo.com)