

# THE NEW SILK ROADS – INCLUDING ART?

“Checkpoint Ilgen #13” – Sept/Oct 2017

Berlin, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017

- Idea:** Fré Ilgen, “Checkpoint Ilgen”, Berlin, Germany, [www.freilgen.com](http://www.freilgen.com)
- Collaboration:** interested partners are searched;
- Probably incl.:** Parag Khanna, author “Connectography”, global strategist on infrastructure developments and politics, World Economic Forum Davos, [www.paragkhanna.com](http://www.paragkhanna.com)
- Target group:** everyone with economic or cultural interests beyond the local

## MOTIVATION

The development of art and the possibilities for artists always have been related to economic developments; artists and art thrive in times of large-scale economic growth. For the past few years it has become clear that the trend to evaluate artworks solely as financial investments has run its course. In many different cultures, across history, art has been admired and acquired for its visual quality, and exhibited for diplomatic and business strategic purposes: this is a forgotten tradition of long term intercultural friendliness based on aesthetic appreciation and opening the doors to commercial relationships.

## The New Silk Roads

The New Silk Roads, running since 2012, relink East Asia with Eurasia by train tracks and allow cargo to be delivered in much shorter time than by ship. Plans exist to upgrade these over land connections with more and with fast track railways. Part of this major project is initiated by China and undoubtedly will have a tremendous effect on East Asia, the whole of Central Asia, the Middle East as well as on Europe and Russia, and is noticed in the rest of the world, including the USA. See the maps on the next page.

# 2012 showed some 7500 containers transported in this way, it is estimated that by 2020 this will be 7.5 million.

## ART

Though economy and profit drive the completion of the New Silk Roads, these connective routes also offer an opportunity to consider if and how artworks express individual life, and how social and intercultural interaction could play a role again in the economic strategies of corporations and countries. The New Silk Roads could establish long-term business friendships in many countries with different cultures. Visual artworks with their power to engage people directly can become a component in the exchange and gifts of art that have always worked at a personal level to support business transactions. The benefits and cultural exchange through the historical Silk Road inspired some aspects of Renaissance and Baroque cultural life in Europe.

## MISSION: NOT ABOUT POLITICS, NOT FOR ALL ART

This discussion of business and art does not aim to criticize the commercial basis, the political, environmental or social consequences of the New Silk Roads. To be able to be of interest to business objectives, the art to be considered should speak for and by itself, offering anyone from any other culture a genuine visual experience, therefore, should not carry a political agenda. The leading theme could be “Contemporary Classic” in art, as this resonates in the West, Middle East and East Asia, offering works rooted in long cultural traditions and accessible to larger audiences, and incorporates both figurative and abstract art.

## PROPOSED CONCEPT

Phase I: A small meeting of representatives of business and art, brainstorming on mutual interests.

Phase II: Open and moderated discussion in style “Checkpoint Ilgen”, including main guest(s) and a limited audience.

## LITERATURE

Parag Khanna, *Connectography: Mapping the Future of Global Civilization* (Random House: 2016).

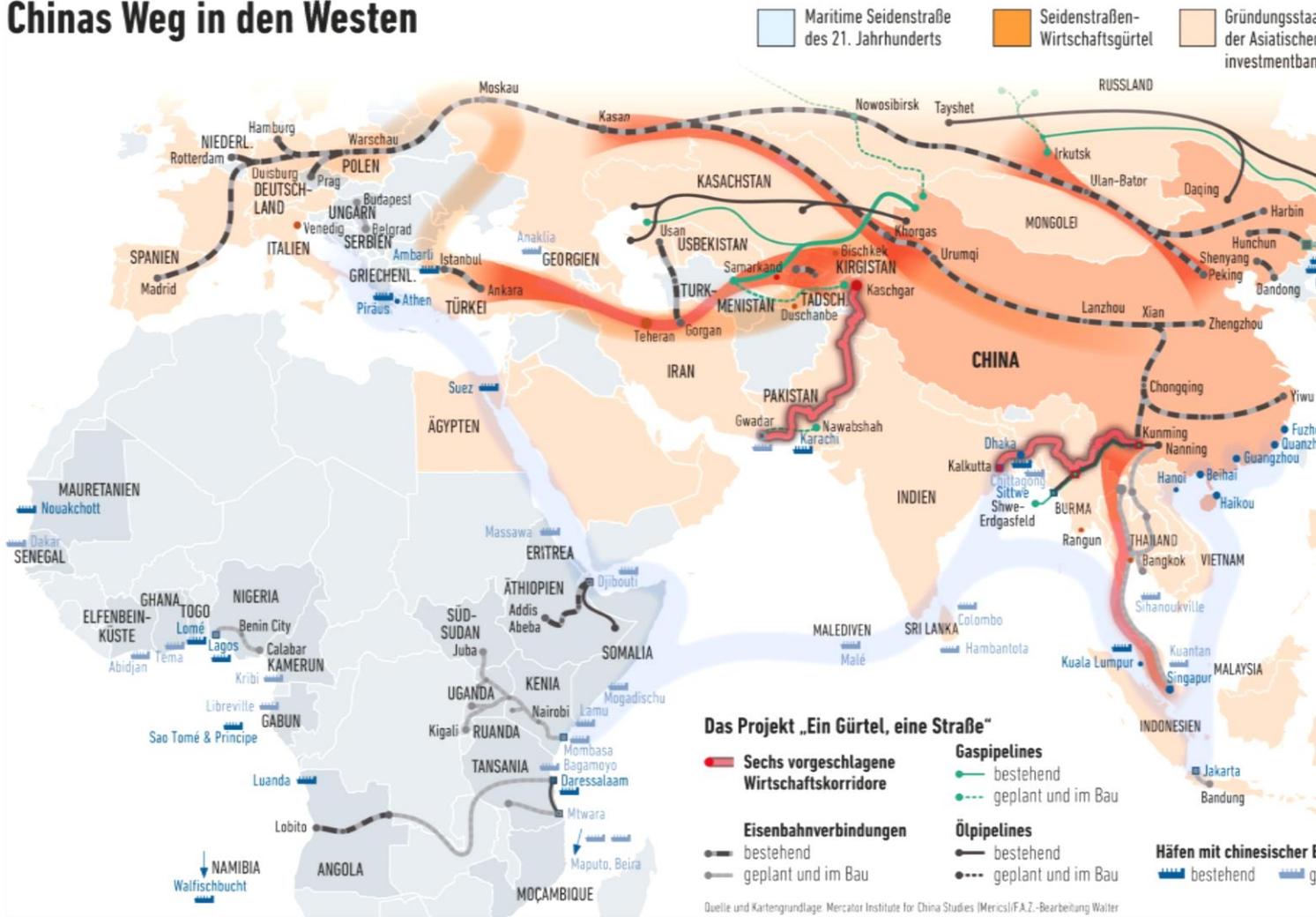
Peter Frankopan, *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World* (Knopf: 2016) an extensive historical overview of the original Silk Roads up to today, building on published research from sources in the West, Middle East and East Asia.

## LINKS (for many articles, search the internet for “New Silk Roads, China”)

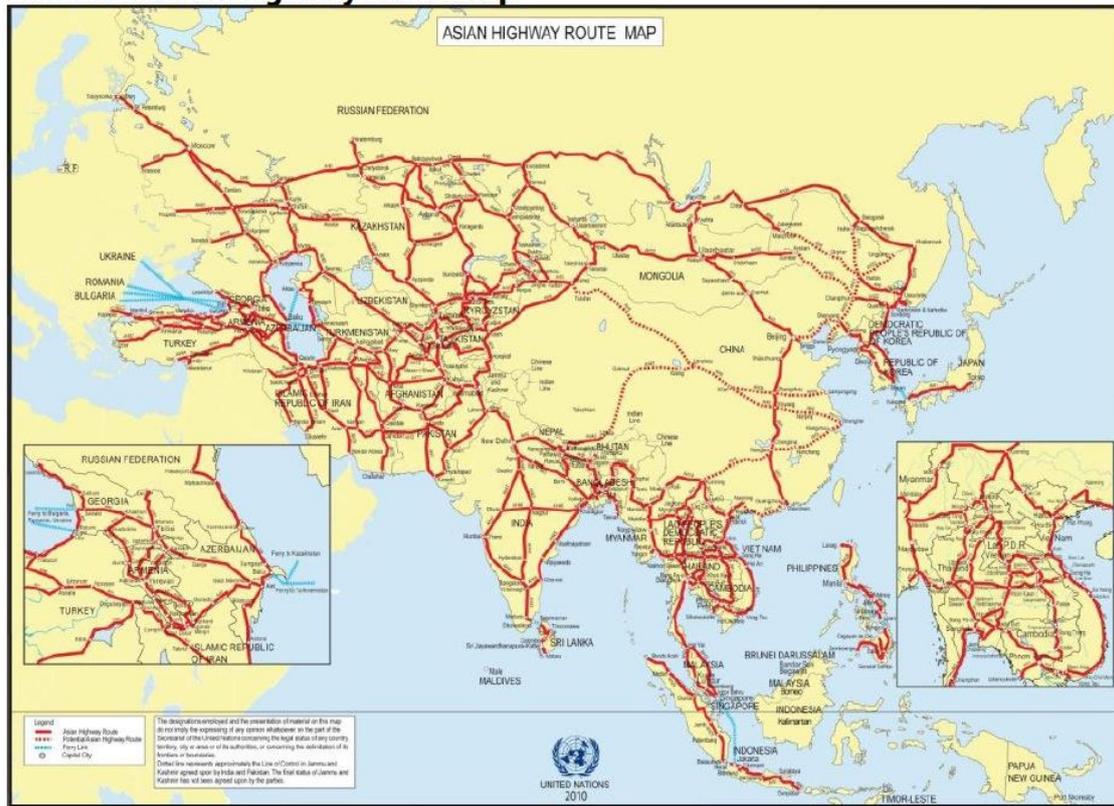
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/wadeshepard/2016/12/28/5-upheavals-to-expect-from-the-new-silk-road-in-2017/#564358cec9b1>

<http://www.faz.net/aktuell/wirtschaft/handelswege-der-zukunft-chinas-neue-seidenstrasse-14593210.html>

# Chinas Weg in den Westen



**Exhibit 1: Asian highway route map**



Source: United Nations, Jefferies