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Across Asia, if done on the cheap

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Introduction

Many of the best years of my working life have been spent between Kathmandu and Istanbul. Those adventures began over 40 years ago, when I went on the first of many “Asian Overlands” – mainly 10–13-week hotel and camping coach tours between Kathmandu and London. My job was to look after the passengers (mainly young professionals), which included explaining the sights and cultures along the way through Nepal, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Syria and Turkey, and from there through Europe to London. The “bible” for that trip for the thousands of hippies that were our fellow travellers along the overland was a book called “Across Asia on the Cheap,” the foundational work for the Lonely Planet publishing empire.

Two thousand years before then, the world’s economic centre of gravity lay near the centre of that road, where the spice roads from India and beyond met the Silk Road from China in what is now Northern Afghanistan. Now, the world’s economic centre of gravity is heading back there from its trek westwards over the millennia, and it is being facilitated by the New Silk Road – the China-led One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative (Figures 3.1 and 3.2).

Over the last 10 years, I have been back to several of the countries along Asian Overland and/or the Old Silk Road, but this time as a land policy, institutional, legal and valuation adviser and facilitator, with a strong emphasis on land acquisition and valuation processes in the countries along the way. To research this chapter’s identification of major contemporary issues across Asia in this context, I have examined those processes in Nepal, India, Pakistan, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and Turkey, and drawn lessons from them.

Many of these countries could benefit greatly from this huge OBOR initiative. As regards the many countries signed up for OBOR – 68 are currently engaged – note that the term “OBOR” is misleading. Just as the Old Silk Road changed directions depending on peace, politics, pestilences and payments (the four Ps), plus the Romans and the Chinese looking to get to one another around the Parthian Empire, so it will be with the New Silk Road. The Chinese are well aware of this, and OBOR is in reality many belts, many roads, many oil and
gas pipelines and the major maritime routes linking to them. A more recent terminology, the belt and road initiative, is therefore more accurate, but for now “OBOR” is more widely understood. Whatever rubric is used, if all or even most of the proposed developments come to pass, it will be the largest infrastructure project that the world has ever seen.

However, if land acquisition and valuation principles and practices do not meet international best practices, the dream could become a nightmare. In fact, even if they do meet those standards, there could still be unintended consequences. I emphasise that international best practices are not there just to be nice. They are as tried and true as generally practicable, and are there to ensure that as many unnecessary difficulties as possible can be avoided, allowing more time and treasure to be devoted to the necessary ones. Sadly, it would appear that the pain of many of the hard-earned lessons often has to be gone through anew by those who think they know better.

Therefore, this chapter is based on researches of acquisition and compensation principles and practices of some countries now along the routes of the old Asian Overlands and Silk Roads that may be affected by OBOR. It then reports on general issues these studies and my own experience have identified. They indicate that just as those routes chopped and changed...
Across Asia, if done on the cheap according to conditions, so do acquisition and compensation practices. But there are now normative principles available for them to enact the most skilful means available. These have been developed worldwide, often at great cost, through long experience and countless cases. Many of these are now linked together in the policy and practice documents of international donors, but there is still a long journey ahead of us to achieve the objective of the “before and after” principle of resettlement and compensation: that at worst the dispossessed persons should be no worse off after the expropriations than they were before. Hereinafter, I will refer to this as the “Principle.” In this framing, that means providing compensation across Asia that is neither on the cheap nor extravagant, but is just, and which can be seen to be just.

To set the scene for the reader, as a result of my lived experience the following review provides a travelogue: two paragraphs for every country I have researched for this chapter. The first paragraph is about the country 2,000 years ago, when the Old Silk Road was in the first of its heydays and the world’s economic centre of gravity was along it. Even though it is now so long ago, a depth of historical understanding may be developed from it which could, in turn, provide insights into current international sensibilities and potentialities. The second concerns its forthcoming role along the New Silk Road (OBOR) where the world’s economic centre of gravity is returning. This return is subject to many provisos, one possibly being that the resettlement and compensation processes required do not cause destructive riots, civil disturbances and the like.

As much of it is from lived experience and all of it is high level and only by way of introduction, I do not include reference to sources in the travelogue text, but refer the reader to Peter Frankopan’s The Silk Road: A New History of the World (2015) as an overall reference source, and because it contains references to other excellent sources. The next section of the
chapter then addresses the general problems and issues across Asia identified by my researches either in or of those countries. Finally, the chapter draws its own conclusions, preparatory to the final chapter of this book. Both these later sections contain reference to the sources.

The Silk Road travelogue

Nepal

The Old Silk Road

Two thousand years ago, what is now Nepal was already included in the network of commercial relations of what is now India. The mighty Himalayas were the trade barriers to the north, and impenetrable jungles and other barriers were the trade barriers to the east. At that time Buddhism was prominent from northern India to Afghanistan. Buddhism entered China via the junction of the Silk Road from India to that from China at Balkh, in modern Afghanistan. Buddha’s birthplace is in what is now Nepal, and he traversed these trade routes at least as far as Varanasi during his process towards enlightenment. Centuries later, at this time of 2,000 years ago, a strong pilgrimage tradition had been established in Buddhism. By this time, spiritual motives motivated travellers to Nepal from afar, as well as any commercial ones.

The New Silk Road

On 12 May 2017, Nepal signed an agreement to be part of the OBOR agreement. The economic, geopolitical and other consequences of this are yet to be determined, but as India is ambivalent about OBOR they could be serious.

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![Map of the Silk Roads](https://i.imgur.com/3Q5Q5.png)

Figure 3.3 The lands of the Old and New Silk Roads from Georgia to China

Source: Central Asia Map by Cacahuate, Wikipedia Commons.
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India

The Old Silk Road

At that time, India had the world’s largest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with about 40 per cent of the total; China had about 30 per cent, and the rest of Eurasia had about 30 per cent. India’s network of commercial relations already extended from western Europe to the Spice Islands (now in Indonesia). That network linked with the Old Silk Road through what are now Pakistan and Afghanistan. An integral part of that network was what later became known as the Grand Trunk Road, which runs from Bangladesh to Kabul, Afghanistan, and which we used to travel along on the Asian Overlands.

The New Silk Road

At the time of writing, India opposes the OBOR initiative and is countering it with several other initiatives. It realises that it has missed the boat so far with central Asian trade and intends to rectify that. One such initiative is with Japan, and they look together towards establishing an Asia–Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC). One reason is that OBOR involves major infrastructural development in Pakistan, including over territory that India claims as its own. India’s overland routes are effectively blocked off by Pakistan to the west and China to the north, and means to circumvent this are by an International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC). As well as India itself, member states of this proposal are Russia, Iran, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria (observer status), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Oman, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey and Ukraine. The proposal is that from ports along India’s western shore, ships will transport goods to Bandar Abbas in Iran, then head north through Iran to Moscow and St. Petersburg before looping back down by sea again along the western coast of Europe to the Mediterranean, and then through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea to the Arabian Sea, back to India. Rather like the Old Silk Road had routes both north and south of the Taklimakan desert, so with the New Silk Road routes are planned or being considered for the western and eastern sides of the Caspian Sea. The western side would traverse Azerbaijan, and the eastern side would link with the Iran–Turkmenistan–Kazakhstan railway. Feasibility studies indicate that these routes for the North–South Transport Corridor would be much cheaper than current ones, cut the transportation time in half and could thereby substantially improve India–Russia trade. Moreover, with less land to be acquired its establishment costs in terms of expropriation, resettlement and compensation could be significantly lower than some proposed alternatives (a cost factor routinely underestimated in such projects, often resulting in unjustly low compensation for the powerless).

India is also expediting plans for a South Asian Sub-Regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) road, which focuses on improving connectivity between Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and India. SASEC itself also enforels the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Myanmar, and the road is to form part of the Great Asian Highway, a 32-nation initiative under the aegis of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). It starts in Japan and connects South Korea, China, Hong Kong, Southeast Asia, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. From there it goes to the border between Turkey and Bulgaria, west of Istanbul, where it joins with European route E80. The Grand Trunk Road will maintain its prominence from before the time of the Old Silk Road to form part of that highway.
Pakistan

The Old Silk Road

The lands now within Pakistan were of major importance to trade of the time, the aforementioned network of commercial relations including the Indus River, at the mouth of which, near modern Karachi, lay the trading post called Barbarikon in Greek (which was the lingua franca of the time along the Silk Road, together with Aramaic) and the port city of Minnagara. This trade route went right up north to connect with the Grand Trunk Road, and to great ancient centres such as Taxila. Exports from there to the Roman Empire included aromatics; herbs and spices; indigo; semi-precious stones; and cloths, including silk.

The New Silk Road

Pakistan is to be a major participant in the New Silk Road, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) being the “flagship” initiative of the whole OBOR, not only reviving aforementioned feeder routes of the Old Silk Road, but creating new ones. The possibility of the Chinese establishing a naval base in the vicinity of Karachi, not to mention other military support for OBOR infrastructure, dismays the Indians and others. The geopolitical importance of the area to China is clear. The potential sites are close to those globally strategically vital areas, the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

Mongolia

The Old Silk Road

Sitting north of China and south of Siberia, Mongolia’s role in the Silk Road was at its height over a thousand years after the time examined here. Some consider that much of the terrible destruction wrought on the great cities of the Old Silk Road was inflicted to ensure the permanency of Mongol dominance over the trade. The invading Mongols reopened the Silk Road in time for travellers like Marco Polo to traverse it.

The New Silk Road

Mongolia is central to the China-Mongolia-Russia corridor of OBOR, and copper from its vast Oyu Tolgoi copper mine is transported along it to China, Russia and Europe. Again, however, there are many geopolitical obstacles that must be overcome. One relates back to the travel of religions along the Old Silk Road. Mongolia’s form of Buddhism revered the Dalai Lama, and his visit there greatly upset the Chinese.

Afghanistan

The Old Silk Road

Here, we arrive at the fulcrum of the Old Silk Road, where the commercial networks from what are now Nepal, India and Pakistan, which extended as far south as modern Indonesia, met the Old Silk Road from China in what is now in northern Afghanistan near Balkh, the Mother of Cities, seat of the Greek Bactrian Kingdom established by one of Alexander the Great’s generals. The area remained Greek-ruled for centuries, but by this time they had been
Across Asia, if done on the cheap

conquered. However, their Hellenistic influence remained (Mairs 2011). That is, Balkh was
the link point of the three regions – India, China and the rest of Eurasia – which produced
almost all the world’s GDP at the time. Alexander’s wife, Roxana, came from the region.
It was also the major western city within the Kushan Empire. Under Ashoka the Great, it
supported Buddhism in its Empire, which stretched back down to Barbikon in the south, up
to the major Silk Road city of Fergana in the north and across the north of India to the east
of Mathura, just north of Agra, the eastern capital of the Empire and the legendary birthplace
of Lord Krishna. Balkh was razed to the ground by the Mongols, and it never recovered.

The New Silk Road

Due to geopolitical matters – the “Great Game” narrative – in particular those following
upon the Saur Revolution in 1978 (which I witnessed from my hotel balcony), Afghanistan
is in danger of losing its historic role at the pivot of the great Eurasian trade routes. Fur-
thermore, the combination of its rich mineral resources, serious difficulties in governance
and other factors make it a classic candidate for the infliction of a “resource curse.”3 Even
so, their spirit is not broken. As mentioned later, under the heading Tajikistan, acquisitions
and other works are under way to link northern Afghanistan to OBOR, and work continues
on the roads from Pakistan’s Khyber Pass to Jalalabad, Kabul, Kandahar and Herat, and a
memorandum of understanding has been signed between Iran and Afghanistan for a railway
between Kafir in Iran and Herat in Afghanistan. Moreover, Uzbekistan is looking to con-
tinue that line from Herat to Mazar-i-Sharif, the modern successor to the nearby ruins of
Balkh. Thereby, Uzbekistan could gain access to the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas. The US
and India are reviving a “New Silk Road” plan announced by Hilary Clinton in 2011, which
means to restore Afghanistan’s historic central position for trans-Asian trade. The Chinese,
too, recognise the core importance of Afghanistan to trans-Asian trade; the first-ever rail
connection between the two countries – albeit not directly (for example, via the Wakan
corridor) but indirectly via Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan – arrived in 2016. However, as long
as the war there lasts Afghanistan’s role will remain diminished, and when the infrastructure
bypassing Afghanistan is completed, the diminishing of Afghanistan’s role from its centrality
of 2,000 years ago may become permanent. With many more fighters entering Afghanistan
following their losses in Iraq and Syria, the prospect of peace seems ever more distant.

Kyrgyzstan

The Old Silk Road

The Silk Road began after the second century B.C. Han Dynasty Chinese Emperor Wudi
heard of the sacred horses of Fergana, magnificent steeds immortalised in a Han Dynasty
statue from the period from the Fergana Valley, which now stretches through Kyrgyzstan,
Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Some say the superstitious Emperor thought these sacred horses
may be able to take him to the Tortoise Mountain of Xi Wangmu, Royal Mother of the
West, who would then be able to bestow on him the peaches of immortality. Immortality
in prospect, and the horses’ potential as cavalry horses as well! Wudi could not resist the
temptation. He sent off a diplomat called Zhang Qian who, after many adventures, returned
to his Emperor who then asked the Ferganese for the horses. When they refused, Wudi put
together a huge army, got the horses he wanted and opened up the Old Silk Road. To this
day, Zhang Qian is remembered as a hero for his 25 years of exploration and adventure in
opening the Silk Road, including years as a prisoner of the Huns (who later conquered to the
gates of Rome itself). Zhang Qian should also be renowned at the global scale as a pioneer
of our global village.

The New Silk Road

China has over 120 projects planned for Kyrgyzstan, many of which will involve resettle-
ment and compensation issues. Furthermore, a rail link between Uzbekistan and China is
mooted – a massive engineering challenge through those formidable mountains; there are
both wavering political commitments and alternative routes under consideration, but once
again any such development might involve resettlement and compensation issues.

Tajikistan

The Old Silk Road

The Old Silk Road contained many perils. Amongst the most arduous would have been the
traversing of the Taklamakan desert and the passes through the Pamirs, one of the massive
mountain ranges of the Central Asian Knot. Once accomplished, one could descend into
the beautiful country of Tajikistan. Tajikistan has six sites designated by the United Nations
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 2014 as World Heritage
status because of their role along the Chang’an-Tian Shan corridor of the Silk Road between Kashgar and Samarkand. Another route through the Pamirs went through Tajikistan between Kashgar and Balkh. The furthest of the many cities Alexander the Great founded, Alexander Eschate, is in Tajikistan’s part of the Fergana Valley. Scholars generally believe that it is this city that the Chinese received the horses from.

The New Silk Road

Tajikistan retains its geographic centrality along the Silk Road, but not a monopoly of the
network. Geopolitical issues get in the way of realising that potential. There is a partly built
Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan railway to go underneath Uzbekistan. If successful,
the line will also link to the Iranian and Turkish networks to link to Europe to the west, the
Arabian Sea to the south and South Asia to the east. However, Tajikistan has suspended its
construction pending peace in Afghanistan.

Turkmenistan

The Old Silk Road

One of the great centres of Greco-Buddhist learning, the city known as Merv, was renamed
Margiana after Alexander the Great’s visit. It grew to be one of the largest cities in the world
a thousand years ago, but, like Balkh, it was destroyed by Genghis Khan. Its ruins are now
a UNESCO World Heritage site. Nisa, another ancient Silk Road city in Turkmenistan,
flourished under the Parthian Empire (the great rival Empire to the Romans at this time) but
was destroyed forever by an earthquake at about the time of this Old Silk Road narrative, 2,000 years ago.
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The New Silk Road

China has about 154 infrastructure projects planned for Turkmenistan. Also, Turkmenistan’s part of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Tajikistan railway has already entered Afghanistan. Moreover, negotiations have begun to link Russia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to Iran, and its seaport of Bandar Abbas – a north-south corridor to complement the east-west OBOR. While I have not included Iran in this travelogue I have traversed it north to south and east to west many times; its potential trade logistics benefits to India are profound. If OBOR, this north-south corridor, and other links are established, Iran’s historic role along the Silk Road may even be surpassed to the benefit of Turkmenistan.

Kazakhstan

The Old Silk Road

As mentioned earlier, the umbrella term the “Silk Road” was in fact a number of trade routes carrying many items. I know of no evidence of Kazakhstan’s trade routes being dominant in the 2,000 years-ago period we are referring to here: I believe that came centuries after, with the establishment of Turkish Khanates in the region.

The New Silk Road

Kazakhstan is vast: the largest landlocked country in the world, and the ninth-largest overall. It is also large economically; except for Russia, its GDP is bigger than any other former Soviet country. It is now an upper-middle-income country courted by many countries, and received over $20 billion in Foreign Direct Investment in 2016. Called “the buckle of the belt” of OBOR, it looks forward to being a major component of OBOR, both in terms of its infrastructure and its trade. Benefits to Kazakhstan will include access to the Pacific Ocean via Chinese ports. OBOR fits together well with Kazakhstan’s own Nurly Zhol (Bright Path) initiative, which looks to link such transport and logistics matters with broader socio-economic concerns in Kazakhstan – manufacturing and industry, social infrastructure, small and medium enterprise development, energy supply, public utilities and home ownership.

Uzbekistan

The Old Silk Road

The city of Fergana, the valley of which extends as mentioned to both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, is in modern Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan also has other fabled cities along the Silk Road of that time, such as Khiva, Bukhara and Tashkent (then called Chash). Another of these is Samarkand, over a millennium later the seat of the Empire of Tamerlane. His descendant, Babur, occupied and was expelled from both cities before conquering India and founding the Mughal Empire there. In turn, Babur’s direct descendant, Shah Jahan, built the Taj Mahal. James Elroy Flecker’s famous poem, The Golden Road to Samarkand, reminds us that not only silk but many other high-value portable items were traded along the Silk Road and that the main road extended southwards from there in that period, going into the heartlands of Parthia (modern Iran) via Mashhad and Teheran (then called Rey) to Baghdad, the departure point for Samarkand in Flecker’s poem. From Baghdad they would head west
to the coast of the eastern Mediterranean such as Antioch, Tyre, Sidon Akko (Acre) and Caesarea via a network of trade routes already ancient then, parts of which were dominated at different times by the Nabateans of Petra and later (in the third century) Queen Zenobia of Palmyra, along such routes as the Kings Highway and the Via Maris, before sailing to Alexandria, Rome, Ephesus, Byzantium and other cities of the Roman Empire. By the time Silk reached the Roman Empire, with all the tolls and trading along the way, it was literally worth its weight in gold. These days, however, rather than revenue from tolls, the value added to the transit countries will arrive (as it did with the pioneering railroads in nineteenth-century US) in terms of added opportunities for exports of produce and the increases of the value of land around the stops along the routes.

The New Silk Road

Uzbekistan marks a differentiation between the Old and New Silk Roads. While 2,000 years ago the Old Silk Road, as mentioned, went south from what is now Uzbekistan to the latitudes of Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Syria, the New Silk Road sets a straighter course, across Asia to Turkey. For now, instability afflicts many of the countries the Old Silk Road passed through from Uzbekistan, and once the infrastructure is in place those countries will not regain that role. They will surely link into the network when able. However, one belt of OBOR, a railroad north of all the countries mentioned here, goes through Russia from China’s network, and loops back down into Europe south to Spain. Skillfully managed, Uzbekistan itself can look forward to a similar centrality concerning road transport to that it had in ancient times and is looking to rail transport corridors additional to the Russian one mentioned earlier.

Azerbaijan

The Old Silk Road

One of the routes of the Silk Road went from Kashgar, Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva to the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea, where the products could be shipped to the other side, to modern Azerbaijan. This route could be competitive with the land routes to the south because the sea route often had several advantages, including usually being cheaper. As the Bay of Baku is the best harbour on the western side of the Caspian, it is likely that Baku would have been the port there. However, while there are Greco-Roman artefacts from around this time in the area, there are, as the ruins of Ephesus show, seas that have shifted their shores quite markedly over the millennia, and there is little known of the history of Baku at that time. If such a route existed 2,000 years ago, as it definitely did later, it could have resumed its westerly overland trail from Baku via Colchis and Iberia to the Black Sea, and from thence or its coastline to Byzantium. It is thought that such a route was used by the two unnamed smugglers, possibly Nestorian Christian monks, who presented live silkworms to Justinian I (A.D. 527–565) in Byzantium, by then called Constantinople, and started silk production in the west.

The New Silk Road

The importance of Azerbaijan to OBOR has already been alluded to in the section on Turkmenistan. However, there are other relevant initiatives, such as the Baku (Azerbaijan)–Tbilisi...
(Georgia)-Kars (Turkey) line. In Kars, it will connect with Turkey’s high-speed Ankara-
Erzurum-Kars railway and once again integrate with other networks. Those networks include
not only OBOR, but also the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR), rail and
sea routes linking Azerbaijan to the rest of Eurasia as far east as China and west as Ukraine.

Georgia

The Old Silk Road

The aforementioned Colchis and Iberia were the areas where, centuries before, the legend-
ary Jason had gone with his Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece and the land of the
Amazon. By this time it was a restive border of the Roman Empire, fought over between
Pontus, Rome and the locals (including between themselves), the Iberians being particularly
loyal to Rome at the time. Legend has it that Jesus’s disciple Saint Andrew preached in what
is now Georgia, doubtless travelling the Silk Road to get there.

The New Silk Road

Georgia was not included in the original plans for OBOR; however, the developing Anaklia
Black Sea Deep Water Port Project, the Kars-Tbilisi-Baku railway, which is intended to
complete a transport corridor linking Azerbaijan to Turkey, Georgia’s strong trade links to
the EU and imminent free trade agreement with China hold promise of even improving its
historic importance along the Old Silk Road (Figure 3.3). Linking already existing and with
planned transport corridors will bring Chinese produce to Europe and vice versa along the
straightest path, and about twice as fast as ships can. Once again though, geopolitics could
play a pernicious part.

Armenia

The Old Silk Road

Two thousand years ago, Armenia occupied a much larger area than it does today. The
Romans gradually defeated the Armenian Artaxiad Dynasty in the first century B.C. At one
stage, Mark Antony installed his and Cleopatra’s six-year-old son on its throne. Armenia
was finally overthrown by the Romans in A.D. 12. Only a few decades before then, its
Empire had stretched from the Caspian to the Mediterranean Seas, and as such Silk Roads
would have traversed Armenian territory on their treks westward. In 18 A.D. Marc Antony’s
great-grandson Zeno was installed to rule, and a peaceful period ensued until his death in 35
A.D. Later that century an Arsacid Dynasty took over, and remained until the fifth century.
China and Armenia definitely knew of each other by that time, and there is evidence of
direct relations between Armenia and China from 1,000 years ago.

The New Silk Road

As with Georgia, Armenia’s somewhat parlous geopolitical situation has made welcome the
possibility of participation in OBOR. However, it also acts as a deterrent to infrastructure
investment. Azerbaijan and Armenia are still at loggerheads over Nagorno-Karabakh, and
Armenia’s historic conflicts with Turkey remain. However, Armenia is a member of the
Eurasian Economic Union, and its fellow members include Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus and Kazakhstan – powerful and influential friends to have in the region. Even so, again, once infrastructure is in place more geographically efficient opportunities may never be realised.

**Turkey**

**The Old Silk Road**

Antioch, the capital of Roman Syria, was one of the great entrepots of the Roman Empire, and 2,000 years ago probably the major Western terminus of the Old Silk Road, as well as the major city of the Via Maris, and, boasting a population of over half a million, the third-largest city in the Roman Empire. From there, the produce could be shipped to the two larger cities, Rome and Alexandria, and other great cities of the Empire, including Ephesus, also in modern Turkey. Some would also have sailed to Byzantium, an independent city state prospering under the Pax Romana, thanks to its extraordinary location and an easily fortified position, both of which allowed it to become the greatest city in Europe for almost a thousand years, until it fell to the Turks on one of the most important dates in history, the 29 May 1453. It then became the capital of the massive Ottoman Empire for almost 500 years. Today, it is again one of the great cities of the world.

Within the Roman Empire, all roads led to Rome. That included the Silk Road, but it led to China as well. Whether or not anyone could traverse the whole span of the Silk Road – and there were many reasons why not – 2,000 years ago people from Petra to Capernaum to Antioch to Ephesus to Byzantium could step on roads that led all the way from Rome to China. And as China’s sage Lao Tzu had said centuries before, the longest journey begins with a single step, and the way that can be known is not the way; perhaps such travellers did exist. After all, we only know of Marco Polo’s travels because he was imprisoned and found an amanuensis in a fellow prisoner.

**The New Silk Road**

Turkey is a founder member of OBOR. As mentioned earlier, the OBOR should cut delivery times between Europe and China in half; between Turkey itself, however, and China, the time cut will be even more dramatic – perhaps to one-third the time or even less. The major obstacles in the way of achieving this vision are unquestionably geopolitical, and there is little doubt that powers that do not want it to happen will try to stir up trouble in the hope of delaying or even destroying the initiative. Attention to this aspect is a likely strategy, thereby making the adherence to international best practices as far as is possible in the relevant domain even more important.

**The Silk Road travelogue conclusion**

To progress the world’s economic centre of gravity back towards its position 2,000 years ago, OBOR and the many other development initiatives across Asia will require a significant percentage of total global expropriation over the coming years. As with most of the planet, land is a sensitive issue across Asia, and often at all scales, from personal and households to national and international. As chaos theory confirms, and as do recent political events such as the trigger of the Arab Spring and that of the destruction of the British Empire, under some circumstances large events can snowball from little injustices. The trigger for the
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Arab Spring was the self-immolation of the Tunisian trader Mohamed Bouazizi in protest over his treatment by a petty corrupt official. The trigger for the destruction of the British Empire was another petty bureaucrat, a South African railway ticket inspector, ejecting an insignificant-looking little man from a train, despite his holding a first-class ticket. The puny little nobody was a lawyer by the name of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. While clearly in each case, those little injustices were not the cause any more than the silk bolt that broke the camel’s back, wise governance will attempt to minimise potential for any such grievances to occur in the first place. That is best achieved by justice being done and being seen to be done: no more, no less.

Major contemporary issues in expropriation across Asia

Introduction

One needs a lodestar to comment on major contemporary issues in expropriation across Asia. I have already provided that in the main introduction: the Principle that at worst the dispossessed persons should be no worse off after the expropriations than they were before. While simple to state, in practice achieving the two main required goals – the Principle both being achieved, and being seen to have been achieved – can be fiendishly difficult. Moreover, such difficulties may emerge at all the just scales mentioned earlier – scales from personal and households to national and international.

It gets worse. Problems caused at one scale can have major impacts at other scales. For example, policies and legislation at national and international scales can have major consequences at personal and household scales. If they are perceived as inequitable, regardless of whether or not they really are, those perceived injustices can then cause major blowbacks at national and international scales. Whether or not the grievances are legitimate, blowback can be orchestrated by those operating at any scale who may consider it is in their best interests to delay or destroy the project concerned (Roosevelt 1979). Looking at what is at stake along OBOR, it would be unwise to dismiss the possibility of agent provocateurs in this context.

Moreover, on the global scale, the government instrumentalities that must implement these processes, such as land administration and police forces, are often amongst the most corrupt of all forms of governance (Quan 2016).

We are therefore entering a world of potentially wicked problems:

A wicked problem is a complex issue that defies complete definition, for which there can be no final solution, since any resolution generates further issues, and where solutions are not true or false or good or bad, but the best than can be done at the time. Such problems are not morally wicked, but diabolical in that they resist all the usual attempts to resolve them.

(Brown, Deane, Harris and Russell in Brown, Harris and Russell 2010, p. 4)

While therefore not always sufficient, the aforementioned lodestar being achieved and being seen to have been achieved can be amongst the most robust defences against such occurrences. In turn, transparent and accountable adherence to international best principles and practices can be the optimal means of achieving that result. There are several expressions of these principles and practices, but when commenting later, I am primarily relying upon the Asian Development Bank’s Safeguard Policy Statement (ADB 2009).
I therefore proceed by examining three topics with major issues along the Silk Roads in particular, and then provide an overall summary of issues in general. The three major topic headings are legal, procedural and valuational.

**Legal**

The relevant current legislation across Asia dates from 1894 to 2017. Sadly, it cannot be concluded that the age of the legislation is a reliable guide to its compatibility with internationally recognised best practice standards.

In his 50-country desktop survey of the status of the legislation relating to valuation for expropriation, Tagliarino (2017) includes six countries reviewed here – Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, India, Nepal and Pakistan – and the source of the Old Silk Road, China itself. While only a desktop review, and only of the legislation, it provides a practical analytical framework by interrogating the legislation by using the following ten questions (Table 3.1):

The answers to those questions were then placed within three categories: yes, partial or no. The countries whose laws were examined by both this and Tagliarino’s study are Nepal, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Kazakhstan. To the nearest whole number, those countries averaged four yes, two partial and four no: not a promising situation.

Another major concern is for what purposes properties can be compulsorily acquired. Generalities such as “in the national interest,” “national security” and the like can prove to be open doorways to abuse, including corruption and exploitation. It is clear that an articulation of the uses for which properties can be expropriated provides at least some protection against such behaviour. However, even when articulations are made, they may still be illegally extended. For instance, in one of these countries such a list of specific permissible

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does the law allow for assessors to follow an alternative approach (e.g., “replacement cost” approach) instead of a “fair market value approach” to calculating compensation in cases where land markets are weak or non-existent?</td>
<td>Yes, Partial or No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does the law provide compensation for unregistered customary tenure rights held by Indigenous Peoples and local communities?</td>
<td>Yes, Partial or No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does the law establish special protections for women landholders regarding compensation entitlements?</td>
<td>Yes, Partial or No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Does the law require assessors to take into account the loss of business and other economic activities?</td>
<td>Yes, Partial or No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Does the law require assessors to take into account the improvements (i.e., attached and unattached assets on the land [e.g., crops, buildings]) made on the land?</td>
<td>Yes, Partial or No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Does the law require assessors to take into account intangible land values (e.g., cultural, social, historical land values)?</td>
<td>Yes, Partial or No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Does the law provide affected populations with the right to opt for alternative land instead of compensation in cash?</td>
<td>Yes, Partial or No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Does the law provide affected populations with the right to negotiate the amount of compensation?</td>
<td>Yes, Partial or No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Does the law require that compensation must be paid prior to the taking of possession of the land or within a specified timeframe thereafter?</td>
<td>Yes, Partial or No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Are affected populations granted the right to appeal decisions on the amount of compensation in court or before a tribunal?</td>
<td>Yes, Partial or No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Across Asia, if done on the cheap

uses was provided in the legislation, but one for the provision of parklands, a use often quite clearly in the public interest, was omitted. The government officials concerned just went ahead and did it anyway.

Procedural

A valuer from one of these countries told me that when he was negotiating for compensation under the relevant Act he was told by the official concerned that they had a budget, and the official had no authority to expend beyond it. So even though what the valuer told him made sense, the valuer’s client would have to accept the budgeted amount. That is, the valuer’s assertion, if confirmed, would mean that the official concerned rated the authority of the budget over that official’s legal responsibility to obey the law!

Moreover, that incident occurred in a country with one of the most enlightened pieces of legislation concerning expropriation – “enlightened” not only in comparison with other countries along the Silk Road, but on a global scale. This serves to highlight a major procedural difficulty: the implementation of legal frameworks can involve suites of wicked problems, including but not limited to the valuational ones such as those described later. Under such circumstances, abuses can occur not only by corrupt officials, but also by honest and dedicated officials who have no ability to address the grievances of the dispossessed within the timeframes and budgets demanded of them.

Such procedural difficulties extend well beyond the aforementioned example. In contrast, I have been advised by concerned valuers in another of the aforementioned countries that in one instance the costs of the property acquisitions exceeded the budget for the entire project, which ran into hundreds of millions of dollars. In yet another country mentioned earlier, government officials urged the affected parties to surrender their properties to the state as a patriotic act. However, they remained silent about whether they would provide their own properties as compensation to the affected parties on similarly patriotic grounds.

Lacking both the procedural protocols and adequate training, protocols, information and guidance to effect the relevant policies’ principles and laws, even the best officials may find such policies and laws unimplementable, and yet the project must go ahead. What are they to do? In many cases, their natural goodwill evaporates as they are forced to act as bulldozers, not out of malice but from their perspective out of necessity. After all, even when valuations in accordance with international best practices are provided they can differ wildly, with few if any procedures in place to qualitatively assess the valuations towards arriving at a figure in accordance with the relevant policies and laws.

Lack of procedural rigour also results in phantom properties being placed on lists for acquisition (ghost land and buildings or large jury-built premises built when so-called “valuation tables” are used to compensate for buildings on a flat rate per square metre for building types, disregarding their quality), with some or all the compensation going to corrupt officials or related parties. Such are but some examples of the many procedural dilemmas put before officials attempting to perform their roles, presented to be comprehensive but indicative of the procedural difficulties that may be encountered even with the most enlightened policies and laws in place.

Valuational

In its commentary on the transition economies of Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, the International Valuation Standards Council (IVSC) identified
several unique economic, legal and institutional characteristics in those countries’ property markets. These included:

- A poor or inadequate legal framework that does not allow for the efficient functioning of the property market.
- The lack of published information or difficulty in obtaining information regarding transactional and other data needed for proper valuation.
- Greater volatility of property markets.
- Lack of adequately trained professional valuers.
- Outdated national valuation standards.
- External pressure.
- Excessive or insufficient government intervention (IVSC 2001).

In my experience, these difficulties are hardly unique. They remain endemic within developing countries across Asia, but significant progress has been made on several of these fronts. One of the problems that has to be addressed in opaque markets is the corruption of the valuation process. A valuer from one of the aforementioned countries told me of discovering collaboration between another valuer and the client to defraud the acquiring authority by means of overvaluation, the valuer then getting a cut from the previously agreed figure between the valuer and the client, and the amount the valuer achieved in negotiations with the acquiring authority. Similarly, when compensations are too generous, land invaders such as speculative squatters or legitimate purchasers may intervene to milk the system, with or without collusion by corrupt officials or valuers. In another country, an official claimed that everyone knows what the market value is, so why is it necessary to provide evidence? In still another country, it was alleged that valuers collude with others to provide inflated values and take a cut of the fraudulent profits acquired thereby. When it is difficult to read the market, it is difficult to discern which valuation is honest and which is fraudulent.

The most effective remedy for this is institutionalising not only governmental supervision of valuers but also peer supervision to provide both peer punishment and co-evolutionary mechanisms (Ohdaira 2017). Peer supervision is particularly important for valuers, as one bad valuer can damage the credibility of them all, and credibility is fundamental to a valuer’s existence.

In the case of property professionals such as valuers, peer supervision can be enacted by means of establishing institutes of valuers (for example, the Chamber of Appraisers in Azerbaijan). In general these are best established at national level, and in early stages at least, they are checked by government to ensure the high ethical and other professional standards required to elevate valuers to the levels required for court recognition as experts are achieved and sustained. Particularly in this context of compensation for expropriation, it should be noted that it was this need for valuers to be recognised as expert witnesses in courts that required that status in the first place. Already, there are both national and transnational institutes of valuers at varied stages of establishment and activity in the region: for example the Eurasian Association of Appraisers. The largest such transnational institute globally is the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), which has established boards such as the North Asia Valuation Board to seed this process.

**Summary**

Across Asia, major deficiencies can be identified almost everywhere in the context of achieving the Principle.
Across Asia, if done on the cheap

We valuers observe that the highest and best legal use of a property may change when the surrounding environment does. For example, there may be a need for one shopping centre, or one hotel, in a locality. In such a case, once that hotel or shopping centre is developed, there will be no demand for another. When there is no demand, there is no need to supply, and the value of the unused properties reverts to a lower highest and best use, and thereby a lower value. That is, the first out of the blocks in such circumstances wins the race.

While matters are never that simple, they often are almost that simple, as the term “initial advantage” describes in complexity economics: that could well be the case here. Once habits are ingrained, agreements signed, transport corridors established, they are hard, albeit not impossible, to change. Again in valuation, we call that the “ant trail” when it comes to siting shops and offices. Once a critical level of momentum is gained, it may become practically unstoppable.

Given both the international rivalries and consequent urgency of gaining the initial advantage, the authorities may find the temptation to damn those in the way and go full speed ahead too great to resist. However, that would be unwise, as it would seed the ground with legitimate resentments such as those of Mohamed Bouazizi and Mahatma Gandhi mentioned earlier. Again from complexity and chaos theories, this is termed “the butterfly effect,” from the observation that a flap of a butterfly’s wings may, when the circumstances are right, trigger a cyclone.

The butterfly effect is a universal phenomenon, not confined to butterflies’ wings. That is, counter-intuitively though it may be, stupendous consequences result from seemingly trivial causes. Moreover, exploiting internal resentments to gain international advantage is a game as old as empires (for example, see Roosevelt 1979), so the wiser strategy is to minimise such resentments via policies, laws, ethical and transparent principles and practices so that the aforementioned Principle is both achieved and seen to be achieved.

Even then, there may be such blowbacks: the point is to minimise them, thereby minimising the very real dangers they could present to such projects.

In the conclusion to his master’s thesis (Section 5.1), Christopher De Gruben, MRICS, also a practising valuer, provided insights into the situation in Mongolia which I consider to be applicable to varying degrees to most of the countries along that span of the New Silk Road being addressed here:

Capacity building, lack of verifiable and credible data, a poor regulatory environment, unwillingness to pay for high quality valuations, lack of client education all play their role as barriers to the optimum application of IVS.

(De Gruben 2017)

Both De Gruben and I share the view of many such valuation practitioners, including those interviewed for his thesis.

An Asian Development Bank Report (ADB 2014) supplied a frame to summarise the major difficulties in Azerbaijan, which I here employ as it is useful for this high-level summary. As this chapter engages at the high level and does not drill down into the situation in particular countries, I will not drill down to specific overall gradings, as Tagliarino (2017) has performed in the legal context. Suffice to say that across Asia I have encountered the best (in the legislative sphere) and the worst (in all spheres) in my experience.

Institutional and technical capacity

One common problem is that even when expropriation laws approach international best practices, the legal framework to enact them – the rules and regulations to implement those
laws – still require framing. The saying that “there is many a slip between cup and lip” is particularly appropriate in this space: it’s one thing to say what should be done; discerning what can be done, and how, is often a far more complex task.

Moreover, while the lack of valuation capacity mentioned earlier is endemic, there are other disciplines lacking as well. For example, officials who have not been given the training to embark upon such sensitive procedures can be required to expropriate properties, and while they may have the temperament to excel in bureaucratic procedures, they may lack the character required to engage in the process in the firm but fair way such procedures require. Therefore, those tasked with resettlement and compensation procedures must have trans-technical capacities, including empathy and understanding, to competently implement the Principle. As Lewis Mumford put it, here we have reached a:

point at which we utilize the completest developments in science and technics to approach once more the organic. But here again: our capacity to go beyond the machine rests upon our power to assimilate the machine. Until we have absorbed the lessons of objectivity, impersonality, neutrality, the lessons of the mechanical realm, we cannot go further in our development toward the more richly organic, the more profoundly human.

(Mumford 1934, p. 363)

That also goes for resettlement and compensation competencies. Under such circumstances, manuals can assist in the implementation of the Principle only with those with the right personal qualities for their respective tasks, such as honesty, emotional intelligence and appropriate temperament, when it comes to resettlement officers, and being able to provide well-researched and articulated valuations without fear or favour, or other corrupt practises, when it comes to valuers. However, like any skill sets, the ones the manuals require take time to achieve expertise in, and costly mistakes involving too little or too generous resettlement and compensation terms can result even with the most competent but particularly with merely mechanical application. Mumford again:

Those parts of reality that can be reduced to patent order, law, quantitative statement are no more real or ultimate than those parts which remain obscure and illusive. Indeed, when applied at the wrong moment or in the wrong place or in a false context the exactness of the description may increase the error of interpretation.

(ibid, p. 370)

Therefore, there will be situations involving doubts that no manual can address, except for people who are capable of more than mere machine thinking. If it is to be one or the other, much international common law directs that the benefit of such doubts should go to those to whom resettlement and compensation is due, not to the acquiring authority. However, over-generous compensation can open up a new can of worms, the prey-to-predator effect, whereby the affected parties mistake consideration for weakness, and exploit the situation for their own enrichment at the expense of the public purse.

Such a manual should set out how to generally best implement the requirements in the relevant legal domain and, if that domain has accepted donor or other recommendations towards international best practices, how these are to be achieved within such laws. These manuals should be individually produced for each such domain and level of governance, and include what is to be done, how it is to be done and in what order. They should include but
Across Asia, if done on the cheap not be limited to the relevant surveys, not only spatial and tenurial but also social surveys such as censuses of affected parties and their affected properties (including how they and their properties are affected – impact assessment surveys and the like), and identification of vulnerable groups and any others likely to require special concern. Public consolation protocols and procedures should also be included and grievance redress mechanisms established. In many countries courts have years of backlog in their cases, and such local circumstances require addressing the cases at the local level. Remedies may include, but not be limited to, established international alternative dispute resolution procedures, mediation and the like.

Valuation

There are different levels of acceptable valuation accuracy for different purposes. Methodologies such as mass appraisals and valuation tables are generally appropriate for rating and taxing purposes. However, as upheld in common law within legal domains mentioned herein, they are plainly negligent in cases of expropriation. Consequently, if losses occur to either the affected parties or the acquiring authority as a result of such negligence, such losses should be recoverable from the negligent party concerned. This includes cases where the expropriating officers hold themselves out to be professional valuers when they are not. In this context, unless refused access, individual inspection and valuation of each property being acquired is a necessary but insufficient precondition to avoid a charge of negligence. Similarly, a speaking valuation (one leaving the reader apprised of both the evidence and the reasoning of the valuation) is necessary but insufficient. In cases of refused access, it would be recorded in the valuation, and, as in other standard assumptions, disclaimers and qualifications should be mentioned in a speaking valuation so that the reader is able to better assess the valuation on its merits.

In several countries, in the absence of any valuers of a professional status in the kind of property being acquired, values are determined by panels of government officials, despite the clear conflict of interests involved, sometimes with a token representative or two from the affected parties and sometimes not. Such panels may actually achieve a fair and reasonable result, and justice would thereby be done. However, such a panel is hardly the right look for justice being seen to done, which under these circumstances is also highly important. Consequently, value juries may be developed in the domain concerned in such circumstances, which are more likely to both achieve fair and reasonable results, and be perceived as doing so.

As with complying with a manual, even when the valuation complies with the prescribed protocols, that does not mean the valuer should be accepted as an expert. That depends on experience and training. This field is not one for inexperienced valuers; only the best should be engaged – a problem when there are few if any valuers in the domain concerned.

As well as land and buildings, to achieve the Principle there are other properties which may need to be separately compensated for in the domain concerned – crops and trees, businesses and the like. In some cultures, for example, a person can own trees and their produce on another’s property. The main heads of compensation over and above that for the land and buildings – severance, disturbance, injurious affection and solatium – may require competencies beyond those of a professional real estate valuer to assess. Once again, to achieve the Principle such matters must be taken into account.

Vulnerable groups

The elderly, infirm and other socio-economic groups (for example, single mothers) may require special care for the Principle to be achieved. This is to be accomplished via the head
of compensation known as disturbance. Disturbance compensation is to cover all the costs of the relocation, including those of legal, valuational and other advice if required, stamp duties and other imposts that would otherwise not arise, loss of business income and the like. Like the valuations themselves and all other heads of compensation, such costs will vary on a case by case basis.

Livelihood restoration

As with the special needs of vulnerable groups, to achieve the Principle restoration of livelihoods will vary. This comes within the disturbance head of compensation (provided as always that it is allowed within the relevant legislation). It is often impossible to predict exactly how long a particular livelihood will require to be restored and whether or not a particular affected party will be diligent in restoring the livelihood, whether the compensation paid will be abused and a host of other contingencies; however, once the prospects are learnt in the relevant domain and livelihood through experience, a heuristic can be established. For example, generally fruit traders may only need three months to get their livelihoods back, others may need six months and others may perhaps never do so. Once again, general heuristics are acceptable as orienting generalisations, but special circumstances may require special compensation. Generally, skills in judgements of this nature may require expert input; not necessarily valuers, but accountants, other traders or similar capable of providing an opinion of expert status, and generally such skills are often lacking in the less-developed countries along the Silk Road.

Monitoring and evaluation

When we are placed in a bureaucratic role, it is a natural impulse to pay compensation and consider oneself rid of the affected parties. After all, they have been resettled, they have their compensation, so goodbye. However, even when short-term monitoring and evaluation protocols have been established and punctiliously followed over the project and the short-term thereafter, on many occasions that process has been shown not to have achieved the Principle over the long term. Sometimes socially devastating effects have emerged even when all seemed acceptable at the time. Much can be gained in this regard from the sharing of experiences by implementing agencies along the Silk Road and elsewhere, requiring long-term institutional and technical capacities, not just ad hoc ones for the life of the project.

Financial facilitation of the reconciliation of livelihood rehabilitation requirements

This facilitation is generally overlooked along the Silk Road, risking long-term pain for short-term gain. Once again, financial, institutional and technical capacities are recommended for all countries along the Silk Road to ensure the sustainability of fulfilling the Principle.

Simplification of the government approval mechanisms

Einstein’s observation that there is nothing more simple than complicating, and nothing more complicated than simplifying, is relevant here. Once again, costly lessons can be avoided by learning from international experiences, but costly lessons can be encountered by simply importing such mechanisms without duly diligent consideration of their local applicability, including the capacities of locals to implement them. Simplicity is only good
Across Asia, if done on the cheap when it emerges from complex understanding of local circumstances: then, it can be of great benefit to all concerned. Once again, improvements in this regard are recommended even in the most advanced countries along the Silk Road.

**Grievance redress mechanism**

The aforementioned methodologies include internationally accepted alternative dispute resolution procedures, such as the institution of a Land Acquisition Inspectorate for accepting and reviewing complaints or claims, mediation or the still relatively untried procedure of value juries. While cultural acceptability is vital in grievance redressing, and adjustments may be necessary to be acceptable, procedures to ensure that only the most contentious require the decisions of the courts are highly recommended. Once again, adaptation of international experiences should be considered to save unnecessary pain for all concerned; there will still be more than enough of that without it.

**Preparation of a country land acquisition and resettlement framework**

If not already prepared, this process is a vital one towards the implementation not only of OBOR but the many supplementary and competing plans currently on the table. There are potentially great improvements in human development along the Silk Road if such projects are skilfully planned and executed, that skill including the empowerment of as many persons in the countries concerned as possible. That objective must not exclude those parties whose properties are to be expropriated: the means must be worthy of the ends.

**Conclusion**

Those along the Old Silk Road did not only trade in silk and other goods. Of even greater importance to this day, they traded in “duty free” ideas – cultural exchanges by the fire at night, with stories and poems and song, and exchanges of religious, philosophical, artistic and technological knowledge, just as we did in our free-camps in the desert on our Asian Overlands around 40 years ago. Today, there is a new opportunity for those places to learn from one other on a personal basis, not merely via machinery.

However, both personal and mechanical communications, rather than isolated silos in each country having to address blunders that could have been easily avoided by such communication, are required across Asia. In addition to particular circumstances unique to each country, there are also general circumstances applicable in applying just laws concerning expropriation, resettlement and compensation. When it comes to policies concerning laws and their implementing protocols, those learnt from hard experience by international financial institutions can save a great deal of unnecessary conflict. While they may appear to be charitable by the mechanically minded in a hurry to get things done, they are not just that. Rather, they are far more practical than attempts to do things on the cheap. They are tried and tested as the best processes to resolve the aforementioned contemporary issues across Asia, and they have emerged as needed to implement the Principle: not just financially but overall. In implementing that Principle, not only are firmness and fairness essential, but they must be seen to be as such.

It is therefore wise for acquiring authorities to institutionalise engagement with one another, to brainstorm on what lessons they have learnt, and are still to learn, towards implementing the Principle. In so doing, they will do well to emphasise that a merely mechanistic approach simply will not achieve that Principle because they are dealing with human beings for whom, as
Alexander’s tutor Aristotle observed around the time of Alexander’s conquests along most of the routes that would become the Silk Road, the source of all enmity is the feeling of being slighted.9

If they can implement that Principle wisely, it will facilitate the return of the world’s economic centre of gravity back along the Silk Road towards where it resided 2,000 years ago, to the great benefit not only of those along the Silk Road but also, as with the Old Silk Road, to the ultimate benefit of us all. If they do not implement the Principle and try to do things on the cheap, Asia may become very cross indeed.

Notes

1 In some cases professionally in the countries concerned, in others only desktop researches.
6 One of the major roads of the latter from the Kings Highway passed through Capernaum. Jesus therefore preached along the Silk Road.
7 Tolls would simply increase the viability of the maritime routes over the land-based ones. Already, maritime transport in several contexts is around two to three times cheaper than rail, which is cheaper than road by a similar order. The blocking of the Silk Road through wars, with rewards for victory including such tolls and other taxes, led to the West’s discovery of the Americas, and ultimately the rise of the maritime powers, and thereby the British and American Empires.
8 There are plans to restore the historic route through Iran, Iraq and Syria to the Levant, but for now such prospects seem too distant for those countries to be considered in this chapter.
9 Aristotle’s Rhetoric, 1378–80, which is available online at: www.bocc.ubi.pt/pag/Aristotle-rhetoric.pdf. He further divides “slighted” into arising from perceptions of any of three feelings being directed at one: contempt, spite or insolence. Being treated as nothing but an object in the way is symptomatic of all three.

References