

Report Launch

Corridors of Power: How China Creates Economic, Social, and Network Ties to Exert Influence Along the Silk Road

Date: 14 December 2021, 14:00 – 17:30

Venue: OSCE Academy and Zoom Webinar

Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/99603048082>; **ID:** 996 0304 8082

Registration: <https://forms.gle/mSbc3acNDiqcLTds8>

Language: English/Russian (Russian option is provided for Zoom participants only)

Organizers: OSCE Academy, Kyrgyzstan and AidData, William & Mary, United States

Description

China has long viewed South and Central Asian countries as a strategic priority, where building relationships and winning goodwill are vital to securing its economic, geopolitical, and security interests. This event features a presentation and panel discussion related to an extensive new study on Chinese public diplomacy efforts in the region, ranging from financing and education to culture and social media. Participants will get an in-depth look at how Beijing has used a broad and diverse toolkit to cultivate economic and soft power influence in South and Central Asia over the last two decades. The event aims to spark a discussion of what this means moving forward for countries in the region and rival powers such as India, Russia, and the United States.

The OSCE Academy and AidData, a research lab at William & Mary (a US-based university), invites researchers, policymakers, practitioners, journalists, and all interested parties to attend the launch event and panel discussion “Corridors of Power: How China Creates Economic, Social, and Network Ties to Exert Influence in South and Central Asia” on December 14th, 2021. The event offers both in-person and online participation options for those who RSVP in advance.

14:00 - 14:05 *Opening remarks*

Dr. Alexander Wolters (in person)
Director, OSCE Academy in Bishkek

14:05 - 15:35

Report Presentation – Corridors of Power: How does Beijing Exert Influence Along the Silk Road

Samantha Custer (online)

Director of Policy Analysis, AidData, College of William & Mary, United States

Justin Schon (online)

Senior Research Analyst, AidData, College of William & Mary, United States

Ana Horigoshi (online)

Senior Research Analyst, AidData, College of William & Mary, United States

Divya Mathew (online)

Policy Specialist, AidData, College of William & Mary, United States

Q&A Session

15:35 - 16:15

Coffee break

16:15 - 17:30

Panel discussion: “Reflection on Report Findings”

Moderator:

Niva Yau (in person)

Senior Researcher, OSCE Academy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Discussants:

Temur Umarov (in person)

Research Consultant, Carnegie Moscow Center, Russia

Anton Bugayenko (in person)

Head of Asian Studies Program, Eurasian Association for International Studies, former Head Expert of Chinese and Asian studies at Institute of World Economics and Politics (IWEP), Kazakhstan

Raffaello Pantucci (online)

Senior Fellow, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Singapore, Senior Associate Fellow, Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), United Kingdom

Q&A Session

About Organizers & Speakers

Samantha Custer directs AidData's Policy Analysis Unit (PAU). Her research examines the influence of development investments and public diplomacy efforts, with a focus on open data and the experiences of decision-makers in low- and middle-income countries. She holds a dual masters in Foreign Service and Public Policy from Georgetown University and has a 20-year track record of leading teams and supporting evidence-based decision-making as an international relations scholar-practitioner.

Justin Schon is a Senior Research Analyst for AidData's Policy Analysis Unit (PAU). As part of the PAU, Dr. Schon conducts quantitative analysis and contributes to the framing, writing, and interpretations of study findings.

Ana Horigoshi is a Senior Research Analyst in AidData's Policy Analysis Unit (PAU), where she conducts policy-oriented quantitative analysis of a number of development topics. Her primary research interests are governance, political economy, and development financing.

Divya Mathew is a Policy Specialist at AidData where she conducts research and analysis on various projects. She primarily works on tracking foreign influence in the civic space in Eastern Europe and Eurasia and examining China's public diplomacy in South and Central Asia.

Niva Yau is a Senior Researcher at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek and a Fellow at the Eurasia Program of the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia. Her research focuses on China affairs, particularly on China's foreign policy, trade policy and security in its western neighbourhood, including Central Asia and Afghanistan.

Anton Bugayenko directs the Asian Studies Program at the Eurasian Association for International Studies. He holds degrees in international policy from Fudan University and is an alumnus of Peking University's Dongfang Program. From 2016 to 2021, he was a chief expert at the Institute of World Economy and Policy (IWEP) under the Nursultan Nazarbayev Foundation.

Temur Umarov is a research consultant at the Carnegie Moscow Center. A native of Uzbekistan, he has degrees in China studies and international relations from the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, and the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO). He is also an alumnus of the Carnegie-Tsinghua Center's Young Ambassadors and the Carnegie Endowment's Central Asian Futures programs.

Raffaello Pantucci is a Senior Fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) in Singapore and a Senior Associate Fellow at Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in the United Kingdom. He is an expert with over 10 years of experience studying Chinese affairs in Central Asia, and has travelled widely throughout the region. His book *Sinostan: China's Inadvertent Empire* documents China's growing influence in Central Asia and is due to be published in April 2022 by Oxford University Press.

OSCE Academy in Bishkek (<https://www.osce-academy.net/>) is a public foundation, established in 2002 between the Kyrgyz Government and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Academy promotes the principles and values of the OSCE through post-graduate education, professional training and intellectual exchange. Moreover, the Academy hosts Research Fellowships, as well as publishes articles, policy briefs, and research papers on questions relevant to the Academy's mission.

The College of William & Mary (<https://www.wm.edu/>) is a US-based public research university founded in 1693. Boasting a rich pedigree in intellectual output and having trained several American presidents, the college currently hosts the research lab AidData. AidData equips policymakers and practitioners with better evidence to improve how foreign policy investments are targeted, monitored, and evaluated. AidData lab uses rigorous methods, cutting-edge tools, and granular data to answer the question: who is doing what, where, for whom, and to what effect? AidData's China research began a decade ago, focused initially on shedding light on China's state-backed overseas development financing. Nowadays, AidData systematically quantifies key dimensions of Chinese public diplomacy and influence with foreign leaders and publics. AidData's data and research has contributed to more than 250 publications that have been cited over 4,000 times in academic literature and over 450 times by leading journalists.