

EIRFeature

Lincoln's Railroad And the Eurasian Land-Bridge Today

by Jeffrey Steinberg

This presentation was given to a West Coast cadre school of the LaRouche Youth Movement on Feb. 1. Steinberg's class was introduced by the LaRouche campaign's West Coast spokesman, Harley Schlanger, as "an example of how you look at history, to understand what we have to do in our battles today."

We are facing an absolutely unique and immediate challenge, here in the United States, which came up in a number of the questions to Lyn [LaRouche] this morning: Namely, that there are many important things that the LaRouche movement is doing in many different parts of the world, that all have great strategic importance. But the fact of the matter is, that world history in the next period, is going to be defined largely by what we accomplish here in the United States.

One of the fundamental issues which I want to discuss in some historical depth this afternoon, is our mission to win the United States—the institutions of the Presidency, of the Congress, other political institutions, and the population—over to the idea, that the Eurasian Land-Bridge policy is in the vital strategic interests of the United States and the world.

We have had a lot of experience on this issue, during the Clinton period, and more recently under President Bush, where we've run into two monumental expressions of stupidity among some of the highest-ranking people in the government; among people whom I would not put in the category that Lyn developed today—of the Al Gore/Dick Cheney vice presidency syndrome; the people who are really hard-core utopian lunatic fascists—but among people who are actually, by and large, well-meaning; including people at the level of Cabinet appointees. The tendency has been to say, when presented with the whole idea of the Eurasian Land-Bridge, "Can't you give us something easier to sell? Something more close to home? Something a little bit more practical? Why are we doing this for Europe and Asia? What can we do for ourselves instead?" That's from the intelligent people in Washington. From the other types, what we began hearing aggressively,



The United States was the first to span a continent with a “land-bridge,” a railroad, and accomplished this national mission after only 80 years of Constitutional existence as a nation. The Golden Spike completing the railroad was laid at Promontory Point on May 10, 1869. It was no “local event,” but part of an international land-bridge development strategy spearheaded by American republican leaders.

beginning particularly around 1998, was the idea that any alliance between Russia and China and India—which is a special project that LaRouche has been running for years—represents a strategic threat to the United States.

Problem of the ‘Imperial’ Axiom

Now that statement alone is about the clearest indication that you can get, that somebody is thinking within the geometry of this lunatic utopian faction. The idea that economic and scientific cooperation between Russia, China, and India threatens the United States, simply means that the person who said that, has the idea that the United States has to be the new global empire; and that anything that poses any kind of challenge—militarily, politically, economically—to the undisputed power of that empire, somehow represents a threat.

It happens that the National Security Doctrine that was presented by the Bush Administration in September 2002—this idea of pre-emptive warfare—is precisely that view. When the Chinese saw this particular presentation of Bush Administration policy—particularly after the “axis of evil” State of the Union Speech in January 2002—they realized that the countries that were being talked about were not Iraq, or Iran, or North Korea, but what was really being discussed was China, and the potential for this China-Russia-India strategic partnership, that other people in the United States have already told LaRouche that they fully support, and want him to be the leading unofficial diplomat of the United States organizing this Russia-China-India cooperation.

So this is a big fight, and it’s an issue that is on all of our plates to actually accomplish.

You see the kind of narrow-minded thinking among state

FIGURE 1
U.S. Transcontinental Railroad Link-Up, 1869



Source: EIRNS.

elected officials when we’ve done the lobbying up in Sacramento, and in Austin and in other state capitals; and I can assure you that the only difference between what you run into in the state capitals, and what you run into in Washington, is that in Washington, most people are subject to even greater financial and personal sorts of blackmail, and are even more compromised and corrupted. So it’s a big fight, but it’s an essential fight. I’m convinced that if we don’t win this fight for the Eurasian Land-Bridge, then there will be a dark age;

there will be a world war.

This issue has been the fundamental question on the table for more than the last 150 years. It has been, in effect, the unfulfilled mission of the American Revolution. And it was a self-conscious policy of Lincoln, and later of Franklin Roosevelt, to achieve what Lyn has revived today in the call for the Eurasian Land-Bridge. I want to go back over the history, because it's essential, for us to be effective in organizing this victory, that people know very clearly what it is that we're actually dealing with from a policy standpoint.

It goes back, really, to the period of the American Revolution, and then developed into a second critical phase, during and immediately after the Civil War.

American Revolution in Europe

The American Revolution was an international event of the greatest strategic importance in centuries, perhaps ever in history. It could never have been achieved without the support of certain allies in Europe; in some cases, people who were actually imbued with these republican ideas; in other cases, people who were operating under more pragmatic issues, such as certain factions among the French and the Spanish and other continental European powers liking the idea of delivering a bloody nose to the British, who were considered to be their strategic rivals.

This is the reason why Benjamin Franklin, the leading figure in the American Revolution—in a sense, the Lyndon LaRouche of the early part of the 18th Century—spent most of the period of the Revolutionary War in Europe. He was organizing what he understood to be absolutely indispensable European assistance for the American War of Independence. And people are familiar with the fact that we got certain material and political support from France. But in fact, the single most important ally of the United States, in making the American Revolution, was Russia—because of what Russia represented as a political and military power in Europe. And also, because there had been several generations of critical political work in Russia, centered around the efforts of Leibniz and a number of his successors and collaborators, to build up within the court of Catherine the Great a certain republican-scientific outlook, and networks of people in and around the power structures in Russia, who were predisposed to these republican ideas.

You had the Russian Academy of Science in St. Petersburg, which had been founded by Leibniz and some of his Russian collaborators. This was the main institution to which Franklin appealed. There was extensive correspondence between Franklin and other members of the American Philosophical Society, and leading figures in the Russian Academy of Sciences, during the period of the American Revolution. The critical thing that came out of that was the League of Armed Neutrality. Basically what Russia said, was that any attempt by the British to prevent European supply ships from going to North America to provide crucial equipment to the

American revolutionaries, would be considered an act of war.

And so, as the result of the League of Armed Neutrality, there were significant limits on what the British would dare politically to get away with. We had a continuing supply of critical military equipment and other things coming in from Europe, unchallenged, by and large, because there was a threat of Russia coming into the war on the side of the American colonists were the British to cross the line.

This was a critical event in history, and one that was widely recognized by the American Founding Fathers. In 1788, almost immediately after the successful American Revolution—as we were in the process of going through the Constitutional Convention and ratification—one of the leading American naval heroes, John Paul Jones, was sent over to Russia. And among the things he brought with him, were the blueprints of the entire American navy. He wound up becoming, in effect, the chief strategist for the Russian navy, for a period of about a decade, during which time Russia went through a major technological revolution and built up a very formidable navy.

In about 1806, for about five or six years, the leading protégé of Benjamin Franklin, future American President John Quincy Adams, was sent to St. Petersburg as a member of the American legation there. Among the things that he brought with him, were all of the writings of [Alexander] Hamilton and the other leading figures within the American school of political economy. And all of those books were translated into Russian. And so you had what became known as the Russian system of political economy, developing as a direct outgrowth of the American System of political economy: of Alexander Hamilton; of Mathew and Henry Carey; of Henry Clay, and the others.

The Pursuit of Happiness

If you just look on a map, there's a certain obvious affinity that becomes clear, between the United States and Russia. Especially at that time, they were both very big, very wealthy in potential, in terms of strategic raw materials, and very, very underpopulated. There was a paradox in this. The United States had just gone through a republican revolution, in which the most profound ideas—dating back to Socrates and Plato in the “first international youth movement,” founded by Plato with the Academy in Athens—those ideas were put into concrete practice for the first time in human history, self-consciously, with the idea, from the Declaration of Independence, of “certain inalienable rights, among them Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.” Not the pursuit of property; not the pursuit of whatever you want to rub on your body to make yourself feel good for the moment; but the pursuit of happiness.

And the Founding Fathers definitely did not mean grovelling in the mud, when they used the word “Happiness.” Leibniz had written extensively on the subject; and the most concise definition that he ever came up with for the term,

“happiness,” was that happiness is the science of wisdom. It was a purely Platonic concept that was embedded into our Declaration of Independence; and then it was carried forward with the General Welfare Clause of the Constitution.

That was the United States’ declared mission. And yet, in the case of Russia, you had what Lyn described earlier as a “Tsarist oligarchy,” which had very large elements of classic old-European feudal society. You had an Orthodox Church that was much less inclined than the Western Christian church to hold up this idea of the sanctity of the individual soul. It was a very collectivist phenomenon. But you also had this Leibniz current operating in Russia, particularly in St. Petersburg; and so this affinity existed.

And this relationship developed and was a point of continuing contact, particularly during those rare and blessed moments when you had a decent President in the United States coinciding with a benign Tsar in Russia.

Russia-America and ‘the British Problem’

From the negative side as well, the threat represented by this U.S.-Russian partnership was very well understood by the British. They did everything conceivable to try to bust it up. There was a British faction in the court of Catherine the Great, and of the other subsequent Tsars of Russia, and they were continuously trying to undermine the efforts of the “American” and Leibnizian faction. This became an important factor over a period of time.

The British strategy was always, simultaneously, to break up the United States, and break up Russia. There was a certain sense that there was always a potential for the alliance that won the American Revolution around the League of Armed Neutrality, to resurface; and this was something that really had to be stopped at all costs.

In the 1840s—it’s interesting that one of our new members from Montreal asked the question about Canada becoming a nation-state. One of the big subjects of American-Russian dialogue in the first half of the 19th Century dealt with the question of Canada. You had a whole colonization of Quebec from immigrants from France. And in what was called Western Canada, the overwhelming population were people who came up from the United States, and brought all of the ideas of the American System to bear in that part of Canada.

In 1845, the Russian government made a proposal to the United States. They offered to sell “Russian North America”—today known as Alaska—to the United States. But only with the understanding that the United States would simultaneously annex Western Canada. The population in Western Canada was completely “up” for this. There was extensive discussion in the media at the time. Unfortunately, the President of the United States during that period, James J. Polk, was, at best, a disaster, and at worst a British agent. So it didn’t happen then. It occurred later, under somewhat different circumstances. But just to give you an idea of this

continuing Russian-American discussion about how we deal with the British problem.

The American Tories

The other significant factor in the U.S.-Russian relationship during this period was railroad development. Shortly after the invention of the locomotive—which only happened in 1829—the railroad issue became fundamental in the United States; and I’ll get into that in some detail a bit later. But it also became, obviously, a fundamental issue for Russia. Just look at the physical geography, the massive territory of Russia, and you get an idea of what that represented. Just on a scale: East Coast to West Coast of the United States is 3,000 miles; Russia runs at least three times that distance. So this was a fundamental question.

And there were American military engineers from West Point who were sent over to Russia as early as the 1840s, to begin working on the design of the first railroad in Russia, which went from St. Petersburg to Moscow. In fact, the person who ran that expedition from West Point was a guy named Colonel Whistler—and I think his mother is rather famous from a 19th-Century painting.

The British strategy, as I say, was to destroy Russia; to destroy the United States; and to make sure that no possibility for a continuing alliance could be realized. In the 1850s, between 1853-56, Britain and France—which really was Britain’s poodle by this point under Napoleon III—provoked the Crimean War against Russia. And from that point on, there was a continuing effort to Balkanize Russia—in other words, break it up into many little, warring principalities. And of course, the same was definitely the case in terms of British policy towards the United States.

There really never was anything called the Civil War. What actually happened was a British-launched effort to Balkanize and destroy the Union. As Lyn has described it on many occasions, in the United States on the very founding days, in addition to the republican currents among the Founding Fathers, you had other elements—what Franklin Roosevelt later would call the “American Tories”; the American British agents. They tended to be largely clustered in three places: on Wall Street; in Boston with some of the big banking and shipping interests which were most notorious for being junior partners with the British in the opium trade in the Far East; and third and most critical were the southern slaveholders. These three elements were more British than the Queen, and were feverishly committed to looking for the first opportunity to destroy the Union.

That issue became paramount as the election of 1860 approached, and it became clear that Abraham Lincoln was going to be elected President of the United States. And in fact, the day after the election of Abraham Lincoln, the legislature of South Carolina announced that they would be convening a Secessionist congress in December of 1860. And in fact, Ft. Sumter broke out in early 1861, and the whole effort was on.



An alliance of Abraham Lincoln's Union and Tsar Alexander's Russia, against imperial Britain, was critical in the Civil War. New York newspapers in September-October 1863 reported the stationing of defending Russian fleets in New York and San Francisco. American engineers were thoroughly involved in the railroads crossing Canada and then Russia later in the 19th Century, and the telegraph connection from Washington to St. Petersburg.

This was never some kind of “southern rights,” states’ rights, or even rights-to-hold-slaves issue. This was always a British operation intended to destroy the Union. And the *casus belli* event was the election of Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States, because of what the British knew about Lincoln. They know very similar things about Lyndon LaRouche: that he is somebody who represents a very, very dangerous republican adversary.

Civil War and British Operations

The battle of Ft. Sumter occurred in the early Spring of 1861, within a few weeks of Lincoln’s inauguration. And six weeks later, a revolt broke out in Poland, led by a bunch of similar British assets—Lyn mentioned earlier the Young Europe movement; this was the continuation, worldwide, of the British-created Jacobin revolution which destroyed France and paved the way for Napoleon to take power. A revolt was simultaneously initiated in Russia, with the aim of Balkanizing and weakening Russia; and in the United States as well.

Fortunately, there was a very strong republican faction in the United States that understood the paramount importance of this Russian-American collaboration—particularly after the collapse of France within a generation of the American Revolution, through the Jacobin Terror and the destruction of the whole republican movement in France. Within all of Europe, the United States had nothing but enemies, with the

sole exception of Russia. And there, again, it was a tricky factional situation, because you had a Tsarist oligarchy, not a true republican government there.

But the importance of this relationship was such, that one of the very first things that Lincoln did, when he was inaugurated as President, was to send one of his most trusted associates over to be the American Ambassador to Russia. He also happened to be the nephew of Henry Clay; his name was Cassius Clay. There was extensive correspondence back and forth between the Russian Foreign Minister, Gorchakov, and Lincoln, through Clay and others, about the fact that what was going on was not a Civil War in the United States and a revolt of Poland in Russia; what was going on was a global British destabilization against the republican forces in the United States and their one potential strategic ally at that moment, in Russia.

As part of this collaboration, Russia sent their top military intelligence officer over to the United States, Col. Charles Dinard, who immediately went to the South, and presented himself as a Russian military officer, not as a spy for the Union. But basically, in a very short period of time, he smoked out what the entire Confederate military strategy was.

The fact of the matter was that the Confederacy did not stand a chance, in the long term, of winning the war. The North had the entire industrial base of the economy. And so, to a certain extent, the outcome of the war, if it lasted very long, was a foregone conclusion. The whole idea was that the

Confederacy was to launch a very quick, blitzkrieg series of military operations into the West—into Kentucky, Tennessee, and that area—score a few big victories, and then have Britain and France step in and petition for an armistice and a cease-fire, so that a negotiated settlement could be reached with the permanent separation of the South. That was the strategy. It wasn't a military strategy. It was a political strategy that was tied to the fact that this whole deal was a made-in-London operation in the first place.

What Dinard was able to do was get ahold of the Confederate strategy, and convey it to the Governor of Tennessee, who immediately alerted Washington. And General Grant was able to get his forces in place for a critical battle at Paducah, Kentucky, about six hours before the Confederate forces arrived. So literally by a period of six hours, history could have gone a very different way. You get an idea of the strategic importance of this relationship.

By September of 1862, the British and French had reached the point where they were openly preparing to intervene to force an armistice, and then the permanent break-up of the Union. And the only outstanding question on their minds, was "What would Russia do?" And so delegates were sent from France and England to St. Petersburg, to discuss with the Russian Tsar and find out what Russia's policy would be. And the Russian answer was, that if France and Britain attempted this armistice, this would be considered a *casus belli*, an act of war, and Russia would go to war against Britain and France on the side of the Union.

Within a period of months—in fact, by Sept. 24, 1863—as a way of demonstrating how serious Russia was about this strategic partnership with the United States, the entire Russian fleet arrived at port in New York and San Francisco. These are some of the headlines from the *New York Tribune* from September 1863 (see photo). That's a photograph, on the right, of some of the navy sailors and officers in Brooklyn Harbor. This was a major event. It was the number-one news event in the United States. It was so significant that if it had happened today, even CNN couldn't cover it up. It was a decisive factor in determining the outcome of the Civil War. And it later came out that the commanders of the Russian fleet in San Francisco and New York had field orders that if Britain or France were to attempt this armistice, or to declare themselves on the side of the Confederacy, then the entire Russian navy was put under Lincoln's command.

As I say, the American Revolution and the Civil War were not localized events in North America. This was global strategic politics and warfare at the highest level in that period. And were it not for this particular strategic partnership—you can't, obviously, predict the outcome of history—but it would have been a far more difficult task, even for Lincoln, to have succeeded in defeating the combined forces of England, France, the Austro-Hungarian Empire (which was by that point the "second poodle" of the British), and those American Tory forces in the South, in New York, in

Boston, in other places.

Leave it to the British, though, not to give up. Prior to the arrival of the Russian fleet in the United States, the British and French went to Lincoln, and asked him to sign a petition, agreeing to intervene, along with Britain, France, and Austria, in the Polish affair, to secure the independence of Poland from Russia. And Lincoln sent a message back, that was identical to the Tsar's message on the [American] armistice question: That this would be considered a *casus belli*.

These were absolutely critical events that determined the survival of the American republic. The Russian fleet remained in New York and San Francisco until April of 1864. (By the way, when the Russian ships arrived, the American naval personnel were completely astonished, because the Russian ships were identical to the American ships. And in fact, by 1862, under the initiative of the U.S. Ambassador, Cassius Clay, the Russians had gone into production of these ironclad ships, which were the newest generation of war-fighting ships. And so, by the end of the Civil War, the Russians had the second-largest fleet of ironclads after the United States—again, through this intensive collaboration in economic policy, as well as in this strategic-military realm.)

Lincoln and the Railroad

In this context, I want to talk a bit about Lincoln. I think that it's really incumbent upon everybody here, who hasn't already done it, to go out of your way to get to know some of your best American friends. Read what they had to say. Read Lincoln's writings. If you want to understand somebody who made Shakespeare's life worth living, it's Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln's closest ally—even though he had some outstanding allies among people like Grant, Sherman, and others during the war—his greatest ally and source of strength was Shakespeare, whom he mastered. And he used Shakespeare's tragedies and histories to understand how to actually navigate through the shark-invested waters of his own Cabinet. Because he had a number of people in the Union Army command and in his own Cabinet who were complete traitors. And in his writings, you'll see that he had a profound appreciation of Shakespeare's insight; and used it as a way of staying one step ahead of things throughout the war.

Lincoln was born in 1809. He was 20 years old when the first successful test of a locomotive on a railroad was accomplished, in England. And within a few short years of that, by 1832, at the age of 22-23, Lincoln was running for the state legislature in Illinois, on a platform of building a transcontinental railroad.

What Lincoln understood was that to defeat the power of oligarchism—particularly the British with their various French and Hapsburg allies—required that the entire continental republic had to be consolidated. When he campaigned for the state legislature on this idea of a transcontinental railroad, Abraham Lincoln had never seen a railroad, never ridden on one. There were a few beginning to be constructed on



President Abraham Lincoln's commitment to the mission of the transcontinental was so strong, that he first campaigned for it in the 1830s, within a decade of the invention of the rail locomotive; and he fought through the Congressional legislation for it in the midst of the Civil War.

the East Coast of the United States. But nothing as far out into the western part of the colonized United States as Illinois. Talk about not being stuck in sense-certainty! Nevertheless, he understood a concept that provided an absolutely unique solution to a grave crisis, which was that the Union was in jeopardy.

After the John Quincy Adams Presidency, 1824-28, we had a real string of losers, starting with Andrew Jackson, then Martin van Buren, and then Buchanan and Polk; and really, the political parties in the United States, by the time that the Republican Party was founded in the early 1850s, was as bad, maybe even worse than the situation right now. Total corruption, complete irrelevance. And so Lincoln was the great man of vision of this period. And he understood that the railroad issue was absolutely fundamental to everything.

Four years later, he ran for state legislature and actually was elected, and again, made the issue of railroads a major factor. In fact, what he proposed was a Federal law that would grant Federally-owned land to the states, so that the states

could sell the land, or use it otherwise, to begin launching major railroad projects. He proposed the creation of quasi-public corporations to actually build these railroads. And it's a measure of the success of Lincoln's policy—along with many other people—that by 1856, the Illinois Central Railroad was the largest railroad in the world, and one of the largest corporations. And Lincoln made sure that there were regulations and other legislation that made this all possible. This was one of the important test cases of the American System of political economy.

By 1853, this railroad issue had reached the point that, by Act of Congress, a survey was commissioned to figure out the best route for a transcontinental railroad. The thing you've got to realize, is that at the time that this was happening (see **Figure 1**)—there's Omaha, Nebraska. That was the furthest-west point of development of the United States. Nebraska was not even a state at that point. But Omaha was on one side of the Missouri River; Cedar Bluffs, Iowa was on the other side; and that was it. The next city of the United States, which was the only city between Omaha and Sacramento, California, was Salt Lake City. All of the rest of the western portion of the United States, out to the California coast and Central Valley, was completely underdeveloped, untapped. You had had, in 1803, the Lewis and Clark expedition to go out and start looking into these areas of the country. But there was nothing out there.

A Continental Republic

So here you are, talking about a transcontinental railroad, which first and foremost, involves undertaking a massive survey of, approximately, the western two-thirds of the United States. Because ultimately, the distance from the beginning to the end of the transcontinental railroad would be a little over 2,000 miles. You had a massive survey operation that was conducted over a period of years, in which, for the first time, that whole western part of the United States was mapped out and visited. These were areas which hadn't even really been broken through with very many trails.

When you had the discovery of gold in California in the late 1840s, and the Gold Rush commenced, generally speaking, to get from the East Coast to California, you had three alternative routes that you could take. You could go overland, which was a pretty daunting task; you had about a 50% survival rate if you were really in good health, 18-25 years old, and it took six months. You could take trains, by that point, somewhat into the Midwest. But from there on, it was a long walk; or with carriages and horses; it wasn't a very easy route. You had a second option, which was to go by boat to Panama; and there was no Panama Canal then, but the Isthmus was pretty narrow; and if you could avoid dying of malaria or smallpox, or other diseases, and you could get out to the Pacific Coast of Panama, and then be lucky enough not to have to wait for months to catch a boat, you could catch a boat on from there up to San Francisco. And that also took—if you

were lucky, and made a very good connection between the boats—about six months. The third, safest option, was to go by boat from ports on the East Coast, all the way around [Cape Horn]. If you were lucky—and if you could afford it—that usually took between 200 and 220 days. And again, the prospects of making it in one piece were not all that great. This was not the Carnival Cruise Lines.

In other words, the idea that we had a continental republic that was a single, unified political entity, was just not true. Yet Lincoln, and Henry Clay, and Henry Carey and the other key Whig figures, republicans, understood that without that continental republic being consolidated, the United States was finished. And this whole experiment in republican government, which was a global mission, would not survive.

Here you've got a situation where the United States is targeted for destruction by the British. This is not something that began the day that Lincoln was elected. It had been building up for a very long time.

So one of the things that happened when this massive land survey occurred—and it was done under the War Department; the Secretary of War at the time was a guy named Jefferson Davis, who would later become the President of the Confederacy, so you get an idea that there were some political complications here—various routes came back; and Davis recommended that the route that should be chosen, ran through the southern states. It should run from the Louisiana Purchase, through Texas, through the New Mexico and Arizona areas, and out to California through that route. There was no way that the republican faction, the American System faction, was going to let that happen.

So the issue was under consideration, but was dead because of the politics in Washington, until Lincoln was elected. But there was a paradox. Because within days after Lincoln's election, the southern war of secession started. You have to really take in the situation that Lincoln took in, because Lincoln was, remember, for more than 20 years, convinced that the survival of the United States was tied to the transcontinental railroad project. And he understood that this was not merely an American project; this was a model for use in many other parts of the world. And we were already actively helping to build up plans and actually build up the rail infrastructure in Russia at the same time.

'It's the 42nd Parallel'

There was a famous incident in Lincoln's life, where, in 1859, he was visiting Cedar Bluffs, Iowa—in fact, he was giving a campaign speech. He was introduced by a mutual friend, to a guy named Grenville Dodge, who was the number-one railroad builder in the United States; he was an engineer. Dodge had been directly involved in some of the survey projects into the Western states. In fact, Dodge's teacher, his engineering instructor, had just come back from doing major exploration out in the Puget Sound [area], and had actually just completed one of these six-month journeys, mapping out



Union Gen. Grenville Dodge epitomized the Civil War veteran officers whose military experience made the transcontinental railroad possible; he was the nation's pre-eminent railroad engineer, and the real progress of the railroad's construction had to await his relief from active duty after the War's end.

the land routes potentially usable for the transcontinental railroad.

So Lincoln had a chance in 1859, in this chance encounter with Dodge, to sit down with him; and he just asked him one question: What's the best route out to the Pacific Coast for the railroad? And Dodge had the maps right there in hand, and he said, "It's the 42nd Parallel."

This was all going on as the war clouds were brewing over the United States. Dodge went to Chicago, to the Republican Party nominating convention, and was one of Lincoln's delegates. Shortly after that, he went to Washington to meet with Lincoln, who, even though he understood that war was about to break out, knew that the United States had to launch the transcontinental railroad project *at that very moment*.

There were a lot of things involved in this. There was the fundamental issue in Lincoln's mind—and Lyn has discussed this concept over and over again—that the key to warfare is winning the peace. If you have to go to war, you've already failed in the mission of keeping the peace; but if you have to go to war, from the very outset you have to define war-winning objectives, objectives that will enable you to win the war and secure a better condition of life to both the victors and the vanquished; so that you actually succeed in laying the foundations for a durable peace. And for Lincoln, the issue was the transcontinental railroad.

He had some friends and allies in this. And this process, as exciting as it was, was very messy. The American population, during this period, were not exclusively saints. There were people who profited. There were people who did all sorts of things that, in some cases, landed them in jail. But it's how real economics works. These things are not neat and clean. They're not theoretical. Above all else, the key question is leadership. Because under the right leadership, you can force people, even against their worst intentions, to contribute to the good. And you will see that that was the organizing principle that Lincoln used in this whole transcontinental railroad project.

You had a bunch of people who had gone out to California in the Gold Rush of 1849; it was actually their accounts of their travels, which gave this picture of what it was like, going from New York or Boston to San Francisco in the period before the transcontinental railroad was completed. It was absolutely hell. So you had this bunch of people who became leading investors in the railroad. But the most important of the bunch who went out to California, was a guy named (at the time Lieutenant) William Tecumseh Sherman. He had just graduated from West Point, Class of 1840, and was sent out to California during the Mexican War on a military assignment. After the Mexican War, he left the military and became a prominent banker and leading political figure in San Francisco; and also became one of the most important boosters of the transcontinental railroad.

To give all of you Californians an idea of what the demographics of California looked like at this time: 1850 is when California reached a large enough population to win statehood. At that point, there were 94,000 people living in the entire state—of which 7,000 were female. It was rough. By 1860, the population was 433,000. So you get an idea of the phenomenal population growth, even before the railroad was completed. And by the way, by 1860, the population of California included 53,000 Chinese, who came over here, not as slave labor, but because the opportunity to get decent wages were greater than anything available in China. There were a lot of problems; there was racism; there were all sorts of terrible things done; but this was basically not a new kind of slavery. And you'll see that the Chinese played an absolutely indispensable role in the whole transcontinental railroad.

Railroad To Win the Peace

The fight for the railroad coincided with the outbreak of the Civil War. But nevertheless, Lincoln was absolutely committed to the idea of launching this project even as the war was going on; and in some cases, even in the very darkest days of the Civil War.

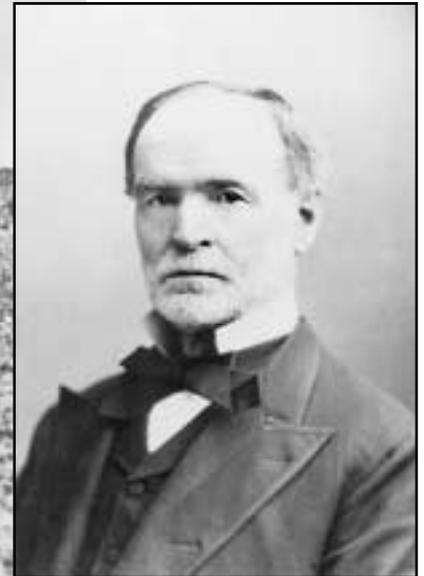
By May 6, 1862, the House of Representatives passed the Pacific Railroad Bill; and about a month and a half later, on June 20, it was passed by the Senate. Because of the demands of the war, the idea of the railroad being built as a government project *per se* was out of the question. Nevertheless, it gives you an idea of the different means by which the government could play an absolutely pivotal role in directing this kind of great national project.

Under the original 1862 law, provision was made for creating two quasi-public corporations. One, was the Central Pacific Railroad; and the other was the Union Pacific Railroad. The Central Pacific was already in the works. And among the people who were involved in it were William T. Sherman and Leland Stanford, who was a Lincoln Republican and became Governor of California in 1860. These were among the wealthiest people in the state, and were among the investors in the original Central Pacific Railroad project. The Union Pacific was set up by a group of people back East; but the provision was that these two rail lines would be built with the Central Pacific starting out in Sacramento, and working eastward; and the Union Pacific starting out in Omaha and working westward. The idea was that they would meet up in some point in between, and Congress was very careful not to predetermine where that point would be.

There were a lot of things that went into this project, particularly at the point the War ended. But the point is, that this thing started while the Civil War was going on. This was something quite extraordinary: that Lincoln had this vision of what it would take to win the peace; and he knew that there could be no compromise, no armistice, that the Confederacy, this British insurrection, had to be absolutely defeated; but that at the same time, there had to be a great national mission and project that would define the war-winning objective, and would be an instrumentality for healing the terrible wounds of the Civil War. You'll see that that's precisely what happened, even though most of the work was done after Lincoln himself was assassinated.

By the way, there was an attempted assassination of Tsar Alexander II, exactly one year and one day after Lincoln was assassinated. Bear in the back of your minds this Russian-American business, at all times.

The project was launched. The Union Pacific recognized that to do this thing right, the person that they had to have in charge as the chief engineer, was Grenville Dodge. Except by this point, Dodge was a general in the Union Army, and there was no way he was going to resign his commission to go to work building a railroad, until the insurrection had been defeated. In fact, he was one of the most important figures in



Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, as a businessman in California after the Civil War, became both an investor in, and leading organizer of the completion of the transcontinental. Another Lincoln Republican, Leland Stanford, led the railroad construction east from Sacramento. Here, the “Jupiter” carries Stanford to the Golden Spike ceremony in Utah.

the Union Army. He was the general serving immediately under William T. Sherman; and headed up the engineering division under Sherman, and played a critical role in the flanking maneuver that ultimately led to the march and sacking of Atlanta, a critical turning point in the Civil War. What Dodge did during the War was real on-the-job training for what was done with the transcontinental railroad; because his main mission was building rail lines, repairing lines that had been sabotaged by fleeing Confederate forces, and building bridges over rivers, that had been destroyed, again, by retreating Confederate forces.

So one obstacle was that the person singularly most qualified to do the job was occupied—justifiably so, but occupied—until the Spring of 1866.

There were a lot of challenges. I don't know how many of you have had a chance to explore around the Sierra Nevada Mountains. It's enormous walls of granite. To actually create a rail line linking up Sacramento and San Francisco, you had to figure out some way to get through the Sierra Nevada Mountains. And at this point, the technology available was extremely primitive. This was one of the ways that the Chinese played a very extraordinary role.

The first phase of the construction work was doing a lot of the surveying of land that had really never been surveyed before. The question was, how are we going to build rail lines through granite mountains? What are we going to do about

the bridging technology to get very heavy track and very heavy trains going over river beds, through these mountain gorges, which in some cases were very high up and spanned fairly substantial distances? The person who had invented the bridge-and-trestle system was Leonardo da Vinci. And the next major technological advances were made on the construction of the transcontinental railroad.

The Chinese were instrumental because back in China, over many centuries, there had been experience with, for example, building roadbeds along the Yangtze River, with mountainous cliffs on the side. To give you an idea of how they did this: The crews that had to cut through major tunnels in the Sierra Nevada Mountains—once they had even figured out where to do it with the most efficient routes—you had these crews starting on both sides of the mountain. One question, not an inconsequential engineering issue, was whether or not the two sides were going eventually to converge, or waste a lot of time and miss the route. These were, not necessarily Brunelleschi's Dome, but these were very serious engineering challenges.

The way it actually worked, was that at the peak of building of these tunnels, they would have three crews working 24 hours a day, 8-hour shifts; Chinese workers, basically with hammers and drill bits, would hammer holes into the granite, and initially, they would basically stuff the hole with black powder explosives. They'd light the fuses, step



Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, after the Civil War and before his Presidency, organized army support and protection of the transcontinental's construction. This land-bridge mission was the primary post-War "great employment project," employing 30,000 men at a time, many thousands of them veterans from both North and South.

back; then they'd have to lug away whatever rock was blown. And on the average, on a good day, taking the whole face of the tunnel, they'd get somewhere between 6 and 12 inches a day. So you're talking about colossal engineering tasks here. And it took quite a number of months to do. Eventually, this became the first project where dynamite black powder was replaced by the use of nitroglycerine, which significantly sped up, in the latter phases of the project, the tunnelling aspects.

These were engineering feats that had never been achieved before. From the point that the Civil War actually ended in 1865, this project became the number-one nation-building, nation-healing high-paying job for the tens of thousands of Civil War veterans—generally 18- to 20-year-old kids who had fought on either the Union or the Confederate side—this project defined a national mission that helped reunify the country after the Civil War, and after all of the scars of the War. It was a national project that everyone took pride in, and it was an opportunity for people who would have been in much worse shape if you didn't have this kind of major jobs program going on.

This was the project under which many, many Chinese people came to the United States, and immediately had access to among the highest-paying jobs in the country. And they did an absolutely extraordinary job, principally working on the Central Pacific line coming east from California. Most of the workers on the west-bound line were Civil War veterans, some from the South, a lot from the North; a lot of Irish. And at the peak point, on any given day there were 30,000 people working full-time on the construction of the railroad. It was done, eventually, after Dodge retired from the Union Army. And his last assignment was under Sherman in the whole Western territories of Mississippi and Missouri, where they also had to do a lot of negotiating with the Indians, in order to be able to secure these projects as they were going forward. Very tricky, very messy.

Financing and City-Building

The way that the Federal government funded this project, as a national project, was that the two corporations—the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific—were pledged a certain amount of money in low-interest Federal bonds for every mile of track that they completed, and which was certified as having been constructed up to par, by government inspectors. And they received, usually, \$12,000 per mile for flat track, \$36,000 per mile for graded track, and \$48,000 per mile for these specially challenging areas, up through the mountains and things like that. They were also given land grants. The Federal government owned most of the land in the area. So the railroad companies were given land grants for the land adjacent to the rail line.

But the most important thing, is that—imagine the situation, say, for the Union Pacific line going westbound from Omaha. There's nothing ahead of you until you hit the Salt Lake in Utah; and it was at the Salt Lake where the two lines actually met and the Golden Spike was laid.

So, really, you're going through an area where there is not so much as a village along the way. So, in a sense, you're using the same kind of military logistics that you would use to move an army forward. Because you're bringing all of your supplies behind you, and as you're moving the track forward, you're bringing all of that along. And at certain critical points, they designated areas where they would build cities, because they needed to be building more rolling stock, railroad cars, locomotives. So in other words, the major cities along the route of the transcontinental railroad were built as part of the project itself.

It was even more difficult from the standpoint of the Central Pacific, because everything that they got had to come by boat, either around Cape Horn, or through the Panama Isthmus, so they had even more daunting costs and logistical challenges. Everything had to go to the West Coast, and then come back East.

At a certain point, in the Winter of 1866-67, and again in 1867-68, that whole area of the country experienced the worst

blizzards in recorded memory. And so, the decision was made by the Central Pacific, that the only way that they could move along fast on schedule, was by actually building sheds over the track. So that as they moved the track forward, they were actually building these wooden sheds, so that if there were avalanches of snow, they went off on the side, and they didn't destroy the track. What they built, as simply a temporary part of the construction logistics, was what was called the "biggest house in the world." One segment alone, was a single interrupted wooden structure that ran 29 miles long.

So there was a lot of innovation on this project as well. And there were also a lot of problems.

One problem originated the term "hell on wheels," because what happened is, that since this was the largest construction project, certainly in the history of North America, with tens of thousands of workers getting paid cash on the job, wherever the railroad was, there were these roving whorehouses, saloons, that literally were tents about the size of this room here, that would pop up overnight, and were gambling dens, prostitution houses; and so you had a whole sort of criminal apparatus that was parasitizing off this project. You know, you had young guys—as I said, in 1850, there were only 7,000 women in the entire state of California. I can assure you, there were none along the construction, other than these mobile crews, this "hell on wheels."

So, as I say, it was an imperfect phenomenon. Real people were doing it. But because there was a top-down sense of a national mission, and a certain commitment that the future of the country was at stake, and that there was a great precedent being set, even with all of these problems, things got done in a miraculous way.

You also had Wall Street swindlers, who made a killing on this. In fact, shortly after the completion of the transcontinental railroad, a number of the top executives of the Union Pacific went to jail. One of my favorites was a guy named Francis Train, who was a relative of John Train—one of the nasty Wall Street characters involved in the "railroad" trial of Lyndon LaRouche. Very important guy. But it was his family that set up a construction company called *Crédit Mobilier* of America, and they were convinced there was no money to be made in the railroads. They were convinced that the money to be made, was through skimming off of the government guarantees of bonds to cover the construction costs. So, some of the top executives of the Union Pacific set up, with Train, *Crédit Mobilier*, as a construction company that they hired to do all of the work on the project. And so there were points towards the end, where the workers were not getting their wages, but where the investors in *Crédit Mobilier* were getting 300% of their investments back in dividend payment. So this is the kind of thing you're dealing with.

There were government regulations, there were all sorts of provisions for the government money in the form of land grants and bonds, but it was done with a lot of imperfection. The kind of thing that you wouldn't allow to happen the next

time around; but again, the point is that all of this was still, nevertheless, vectored into this great project.

An International Project Mission

Another aspect of the transcontinental railroad project, was that, all along the way, attached to the rail crews, were the telegraph crews. So that for the first time in the United States history, and the first time probably in history of anywhere, telegraph lines were being built that would eventually connect the entire United States. And as part of the understandings that Lincoln had worked out with the Russians, the telegraph lines actually went uninterrupted, by the end of the Civil War, from Washington, D.C. to St. Petersburg. In other words, there were crews in Russia that were building the lines from San Francisco up the coast, over the Bering Straits, down to Vladivostok, and on to St. Petersburg. So that there was a U.S.-Russian integrated telegraph system. That also tells you very clearly, that the rail project was something that was not an American-only project; it was something that was intended to be part of a global revolution, that the American System republicans were carrying out.

We finally reach the point, in May of 1869, that the rail line was finished. And I think it's sort of interesting, the kind of final anecdote on the construction.

By this time, you had, really, an incredible engineering capability that had been developed, through the course of this seemingly impossible project. And in fact, much of the rapid development, the city-building, and massive expanded railroad construction that occurred after this, was done by the people who built the transcontinental railroad. They developed extraordinary engineering skills. Dodge, who lived until 1916, continued for the rest of his life—he never retired; he continued right up until his death building railroads, the last one being in Cuba.

But these crews became so proficient, that a week before the Golden Spike was drilled, one of the owners of the Central Pacific made a bet with one of the owners of the Union Pacific, that the Central Pacific crew could lay ten miles of track in one day. Which was a pretty extraordinary feat. And so, the guy took the bet, and basically this was one of the most extraordinary militarily precise operations, that anybody had ever seen up until that point. And they literally had an uninterrupted line, a moving line, of one thousand people on each side of where the track was being laid, moving at a rate of one mile an hour, laying railroad track; and, in fact, about a mile an hour, particularly through that kind of terrain, is about the maximum that you would be able to have an army march—never mind building a railroad. They took a long lunch break of about two hours, at about 1:30 in the afternoon. They started at dawn, and by that point, they knew they were going to achieve it, and then some. And they had back-up crews ready to replace them, and they said, "No, no, no, we're not going to even do it." And so, they completed the whole thing; they laid about 10 and a half miles of track in one day.

The guy who lost the bet, welched on it. He was one of the people who later went to jail for the financial swindles, but, as I say, there were a lot of warts in this project. This was not all done by saints floating on clouds, but it really was a question of leadership. And I think it's an important question of leadership for everybody here to think about today, since we confront continuously this paradox, of this great opportunity and great mission which we're all confronted with; and we look around and we see a population that's not really ready to fight. But you see that if you had leadership, and provided a certain sense of mission and purpose, that people who have enormous flaws, can change overnight. They may not become perfect citizens of a republic within 24 hours, but you can get a lot of good, healthy work out of them, and that that's exactly what happened on this project.

Transformation of the United States

So, what happened?

Walt Whitman had traveled West, partly on the transcontinental railroad, before it was completed, and then through stage coach and other things, and he wrote a famous book called *Passage to India*. And at the time, everybody thought that the great benefit of the transcontinental railroad was going to be trade with the Far East. But what happened is, that in 1869, the same year that the transcontinental railroad was completed, so was the Suez Canal, so this Western route proved not to be such an enormously important boost for American trade with the Far East.

But it turned out, that was never going to be the situation anyway. The issue was, that you massively expanded the population of the entire Western half of the United States; you had city-building projects going on everywhere, massive internal trade, many other development projects that went on from there. And so what was really important—and this was really understood by Lincoln, and the Careys, and Clay, and others—was the transformation of the United States into the greatest industrial republic on the planet, in a very short period of time, through this extraordinary project, among other things.

Now, this is a fairly good representation of the world land-bridge (see **Figure 2**). People are familiar with the Eurasia part of it, but the idea of the Eurasian Land-Bridge was in fact implicit—and for many people, explicit—in the transcontinental railroad. There were large numbers of Russian military engineers who participated in the building of the transcontinental railroad, with the idea that they were going to go back to Russia, and do the same thing there, which you see. After doing this little pipsqueak 2,000-mile line through the middle of nowhere, now you were ready for a real challenge, in the Trans-Siberian Railroad. And it took one generation to complete it. Twenty-five years after the Transcontinental, the Trans-Siberian Railroad was finished; and not only were there American engineers in every phase of the project, but the first locomotive to ride across the Trans-Siberian Railroad was

built in Philadelphia by the Baldwin Engine Company.

So this was a global project, in the same way that Lyn talks about the Eurasian Land-Bridge. Nobody thinks about this as a particular project for one country, or one region. It's the mission of global development, and the idea of connecting the entire world, through these high-speed rail lines, which are not merely transportation routes, but development corridors. The only economic sense is, every step along the way, to take these barren areas, and turn them into areas of great economic development, using the most advanced technologies of the moment.

So, here we are, 150 years later, we're still talking about railroads. Thank God, we're talking about a whole new generation—really, two generations of technology later. But the principle is the same. So, when some idiot says to you, "What's in it for us? What's all this with these railroads in Asia? What do we need that for?" or says that this project represents a strategic threat to the United States, then you can just write down their name in the book of members of the Party of Treason, because that's what they are.

America and the Eurasian Land-Bridge

This Eurasian Land-Bridge that we are the organizers of, which Lyn and Helga launched, is the fulfillment of the Lincoln legacy. It's the American Revolution being carried forward, and the only way that I could conceive of that the American people can be organized to actually play the kind of role that they must play in this period ahead, is for them to come to understand, that when we talk about the Eurasian Land-Bridge, we are talking about fulfilling the still-unfulfilled mission of the United States, our Founding Fathers, and those in Europe who provided the inspiration and the original people who made the American Revolution.

So this is something fundamental. The American-Russian alliance, today as in that period, is fundamental. And I should say that the Russian situation was in one way unique, because of the military factor, both during the American Revolution, and then during the Civil War even more obviously. But this was not just a bilateral plan. The American System faction, as some of you undoubtedly know, deployed globally. They were on a missionary deployment for the Eurasian Land-Bridge. It was the cornerstone of American foreign policy in the post-Civil War period. We had already had had Friedrich List here in the United States, being trained in the American System methods, and List went back to Germany and was the founder of the modern German state, although it was only finally realized in the 1870s. List's economic writings on the national system of political economy were among the American System books that were shipped into Russia, and translated and widely circulated among government and intellectual circles there. And Lyn referenced this morning, the role of Mendeleyev, Vernadsky, Count Witte—who was the railroad minister of Russia—and who worked with the Americans on these projects.

FIGURE 2



The world land-bridge, as sketched out by transportation consultant H.A. Cooper. The development corridors of the Eurasian Land-Bridges and their extensions elsewhere in the world, is today's overall development mission, as the transcontinental was to Abraham Lincoln's United States.

We sent E. Peshine Smith to Japan, to the Meiji Court, in the last decades of the 19th Century, and he became the chief economic advisor to the Japanese, when they launched their industrial revolution and built railroads all over Japan.

Sun Yat-sen was trained by American missionaries in Hawaii, and developed the railroad plans for the integration of China, which are the basis on which the current projects are being conducted today. And of course, we had people all over Latin America.

Back in the 1840s the Russians wanted us to buy Alaska, so that the United States would annex Western Canada, so that these kinds of projects of rail and telegraph across the Bering Straits could be carried out. We had American Civil War rail engineers down in Peru, building the first major rail lines through the Andes during this same period. So this was the project.

And the British response to it was World War I. There's no other way to explain to me, why and how World War I happened. You had a lot of stupidity and complicity from the Tsar in Russia, by that point; from the Kaiser in Germany; from the Austro-Hungarians. A lot of people contributed their stupidity and malice towards making it happen. But from a strategic standpoint, this concept terrifies the British, who adopted from Venice the idea of a maritime imperial policy. Control over the strategic sea-lanes defines global power. There can never be serious economic development in Eurasia—just as the British tried to do everything in their power to stop this transcontinental project from going forward, with the insurrection of the Confederacy.

So, we are today reviving the American System foreign policy of the period leading up to World War I, which

prompted World War I. You want to understand why lunatics, like Bernard Lewis, and Samuel Huntington, and Brzezinski and Kissinger, are aggressively promoting the Clash of Civilizations. And, think about it. The Soviet Union collapsed between 1989 and 1991. Since that point, there have been, apart from perpetual wars of genocide in Africa, three major areas that have erupted into warfare, all instigated by the British, and by their stooges here in Washington: the balkans; the Middle East; and what's called the Great Game, the area of Central Asia round Afghanistan. Look at a map of Eurasia, and look at the critical routes for the Eurasian Land-Bridge, and it becomes crystal clear that this crazy Anglo-American oligarchy prefers to start a Clash of Civilizations religious war, worse than the century and a half of war from 1511-1648, all across Eurasia, rather than allow this process to go forward.

So, in a very real sense, the fate of this Eurasian Land-Bridge, and the issue of war and peace, is going to be determined by what we do over the immediate days, and weeks, and months and years ahead. We clearly have momentum building, in many nations of Eurasia, for this policy. It's the only way out of economic collapse and warfare. So our mission is to make sure that the United States, again, takes its rightful role as the leading promoter of this policy.

Much of the material presented was based on two invaluable sources:

1. Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nothing Like It In the World—The Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad 1863-1869* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

2. Konstantin George, "The U.S.-Russian Entente That Saved the Union," *The Campaigner*, July 1978.