

Lake Chad, Transaqua Basis for New Africa

Below is the speech given by EIR Africa specialist Freeman at the inaugural meeting of the International Scientific Committee of the Lake Chad Basin Commission in N'Djamena, Chad, Nov. 17, 2014. Freeman entitled his remarks "Implications for Saving Lake Chad in the New Strategic Dynamic."

1. During the last 14 months, there has emerged in the world a new paradigm of thinking among a growing number of nations for cooperation in promoting long overdue economic development driven by large-scale infrastructure projects for energy, rail transportation, and water management. Highlights of this process are:

September 2013: China's President Xi Jinping announced the New Silk Road Economic Belt.

July 15-16, 2014: The Sixth Summit of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) announced the creation of a New Development Bank.

October 2014: Twenty-two nations joined the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Nov. 8, 2014: China announces the formation of the Silk Road Fund, in the run-up to the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) conference in Beijing.

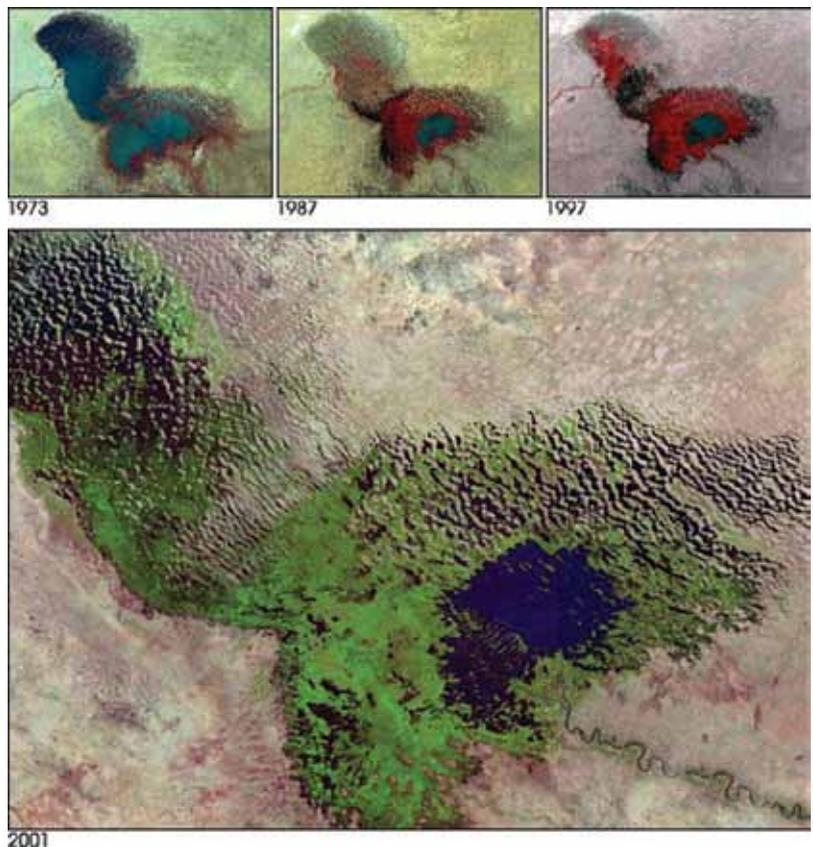
These initiatives exemplify an alternative to the heretofore hegemonic global financial system dominated by the monetarist banking centers of Wall Street, the City of London, and Paris. These developments taken together, and related activities and initiatives in this direction, signify a fundamental change in the world.

What we might call the BRICS/New Silk Road geometry correctly focuses on fostering real economic growth derived from massive investment in infrastructure

projects, contrary to the Western policy of finding new exotic financial mechanisms to maintain the "too big to fail" banks, that are dying under the weight of \$1.75 trillion in worthless derivatives.

Saving Lives and Reversing Desertification

2. The two largest bodies of water in the Sahel are the In-Land Mali Delta, and Lake Chad, both of which, if developed, can yield increased food from farming and fishing, required to feed almost 25 million Africans who exist in the Sahel at varying levels of food insecurity. Preventing the disappearance of Lake Chad and refurbishing it to its 1963 level of 25,000 square kilometers, is not just of great importance to the nations of the Sahel and the rest of Africa, but is strategically important to the planet. If we would realize the full potential of the Mali In-Land Delta on the Niger River and restore Lake Chad, we would not only save tens of millions of lives, but also begin the process of reversing the southward march of the desert.



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EIRNS/Danielle DeToy

Author Lawrence Freeman (right front) on Lake Chad with LCBC geologist Mohammed Bila, Nov. 14.

Large-scale water projects along with east-west and north-south high-speed railroads, and the generation of hundreds of thousands of additional megawatts of electrical power (including large-scale use of nuclear energy), are not fanciful dreams. They are vitally necessary endeavors for the development of the African continent to provide for its future population of 2.4 billion, which is anticipated to occur in less than two generations.

3. The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) must take the lead among African institutions for the mission to refurbish Lake Chad. Water transfer is urgent and essential. There has been attention to plans for transferring water from the Obangui River through construction of a dam at Palambo and a canal to feed into the Chari River, the largest tributary to Lake Chad. This water transfer would restore a percentage of Lake Chad, preventing its disappearance at current trends. But that will not return it to its earlier size, which should be the ultimate goal of the LCBC. This project should not be neglected. However, to restore Lake Chad and expand the productivity and output of the countries encompassed by the LCBC, and as well the Great Lakes Region, requires the implementation of the Transaqua water transfer project.

The broad outlines are the construction of a 2,400-km-kilometer canal using 5% (100 billion cubic

meters) of the Congo River's 1.9 trillion cubic meters of water that pours out unused into the Atlantic Ocean each year, and sending it north to supply the Chari River, which flows into Lake Chad. Transaqua is not just a water project; it is transformative, a great project that will alter fundamentally the economic processes and lives of all the nations of the LCBC and Great Lakes, thus transforming the African continent.

There should be nothing astonishing about human beings intervening to move large amounts of water from a super-moist basin to an arid basin, thus improving the biosphere for the benefit of mankind. The key to the successful improvement of an economy/society is the ability of a people to increase the output of physical wealth (not money) produced from one production cycle to the next by increasing the productive powers of its people. Technologically advanced infrastructure supplies a crucial ingredient to increasing the productivity of a society. Transaqua would create a corridor of development from the southeast portion of the Democratic Republic of Congo all the way to the Sahel.

Producing Real Wealth, Not Fictitious Money

4. Money is not wealth. All true wealth that has enabled civilization to progress since man's discovery of fire a million or so years ago, is a product of the unique human quality of creativity. The great Russian/Ukrainian scientist Vladimir Vernadsky proved that mankind transforms the "biosphere" into the "noosphere" (the noetic), through the power of his creative intervention. There is no steady state equilibrium of sustainable development. The physical universe is coherent with the human creative principle and history demonstrates that its intention is for continued growth and development. Physicists would call this an "anti-entropic" principle. Thus implementing the Transaqua project is nothing more than intervening to improve "mother nature," if you will, for the benefit of mankind's existence, of which the universe happily approves.

5. Africa is not over-populated, but rather severely underdeveloped. Now is the time to act to improve conditions of life for Africans by realizing the full potential of Africa's enormous natural wealth. Africa has been kept backward by the extreme deficit in infrastructure, as witnessed in the outbreak of the Ebola virus.

Now is the time for Africa take advantage of the

new BRICS/New Silk Road approach to investing in real economic growth, which is spreading to nations comprising over half the population on the planet. Leaders with a vision of what the future of Africa can be, should enumerate identifiable prioritized transformative infrastructure projects that must be accomplished in the next 10-20 years to secure the future of the continent. We need to ensure that saving Lake Chad and Transaqua are foremost on such a list.