

Peace Through Development— The Unity of East and West

by Michael O. Billington

My associate Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder of the international Schiller Institutes, warned in her presentation to this conference that the world is threatened with global war, even thermonuclear war, for no legitimate reason. She emphasized that the combination of the New Silk Road initiative and the recent creation of new international financial institutions associated with the BRICS, the SCO, and others, aimed at facilitating large-scale infrastructure projects around the world, was the necessary precondition for cooperation among all the world's nations, including the western nations, towards meeting the common aims of mankind.

But we are living through perhaps the greatest crisis of the global financial system in modern history, with the trans-Atlantic financial system experiencing repeated convulsions, while governments choose to bail out huge quantities of speculative debt, and implement greater and greater levels of austerity on their populations, rather than reorganizing that debt in the manner carried out by Franklin Roosevelt in 1933: i.e., writing off the worthless speculative portion of that debt and directing new federal credit into real physical development and employment.

Many of these western leaders look at the development of the Silk Road and the new financial institutions centered in Asia not as an opportunity for cooperation, but as a threat to the West's access to the raw materials and labor power in the developing sector of the world, without providing the basic infrastructure required by these nations in return, as the Silk Road process does. This is the underlying conflict which is fueling the drive for war, which must be overcome.

Encircling the World

Pope Paul VI, in his 1967 Encyclical, *Populorum Progressio*, Development of Peoples, stated that “the new name for peace is development.” In fact this is not really so new. Gottfried Leibniz, the great Seventeenth

and Eighteenth Century philosopher and statesman who is properly considered the founder of the science of physical economy, in his journal *Novissima Sinica, News from China*, reporting to the European people on the extraordinary philosophic and social traditions and the economic developments taking place in China at that time, which were being conveyed to him by the Jesuit missionaries in China, said the following:

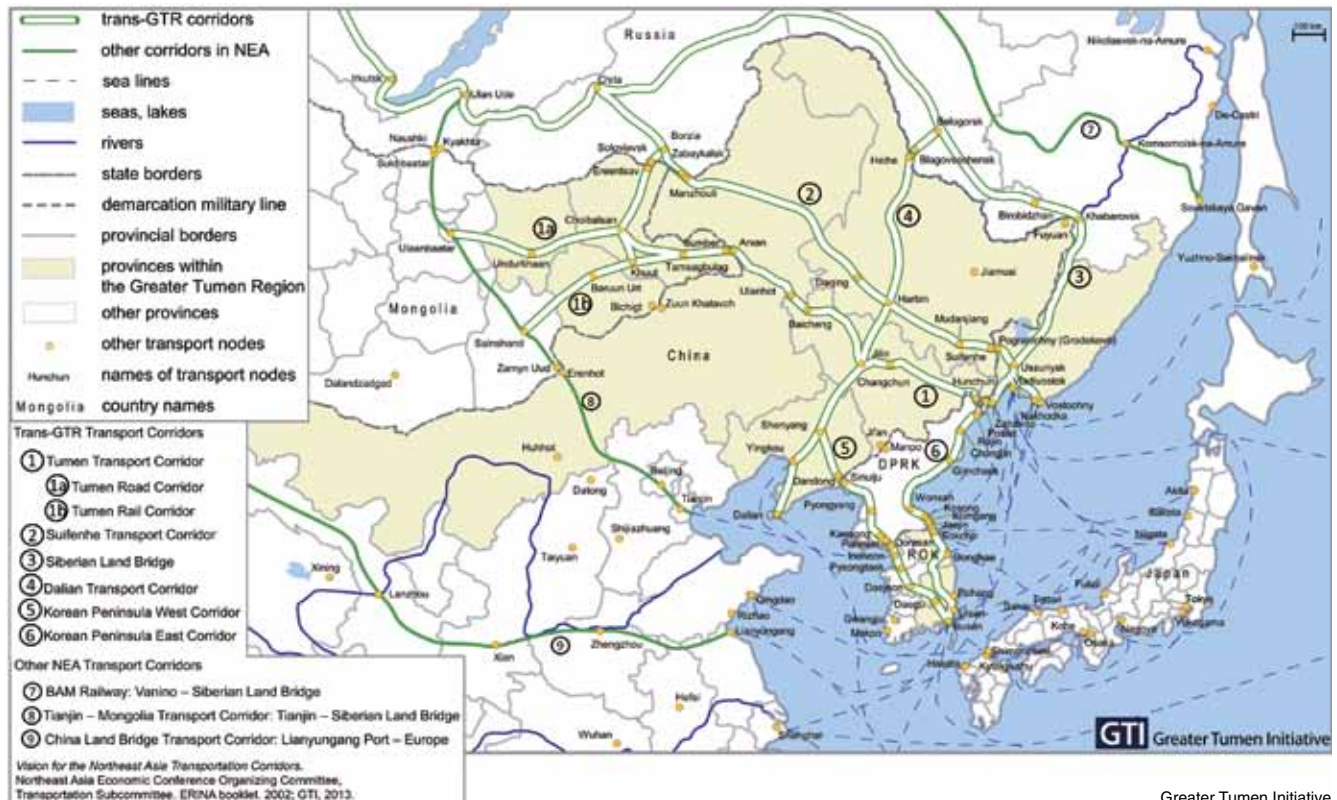
I consider it a singular plan of the fates that human cultivation and refinement should today be concentrated, as it were, in the two extremes of our continent, in Europe and in China, which adorns the Orient as Europe does the opposite edge of the Earth. Perhaps Supreme Providence has ordained such an arrangement, so that, as the most cultivated and distant peoples stretch out their arms to each other, those in between may gradually be brought to a better way of life.

Is this not a perfect reflection of the noble purpose of the Silk Road today?

You can compare that to the British Empire apologist Rudyard Kipling, who famously said that “East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.” I would argue that this is not an observation, but a statement of policy intent, to keep the world divided.

In America, the concept of the “common aims of mankind” was the bedrock of our best leaders, who were unfortunately few and far between. Alexander Hamilton, our first Treasury Secretary, created national banking institutions not unlike the AIIB and the BRICS New Development Bank, based on extending federal credit for “internal improvements,” the term at that time for infrastructure. The great Lafayette called America the “beacon of hope and the temple of liberty” for all mankind.

FIGURE 1

Trans-Greater Tumen Region Transport Corridors

Greater Tumen Initiative

The development of the port of Rason (shown here as Rajin, in the northeast corner of North Korea) is paradigmatic of “peace through development,” in this case through cooperation between China, Russia, South Korea, and North Korea.

In the time of Lincoln, while he was building the Trans-continental Railroad, linking the Atlantic and the Pacific by rail, just as the Eurasian Landbridge today links these two great oceans across the Eurasian continent, Lincoln’s economist Henry Carey and his friends promoted “encircling the world with iron,” through rail projects connecting the entire world—including a bridge over the Bering Strait connecting Russia and the American continent. This project is now supported by both Russia and China, and only lacks the will on the American side to join hands for the development of all. President Putin identified the Bering Strait Bridge project as a “war avoidance” policy, capturing the concept of “Peace through Development.”

At the end of World War II, President Roosevelt envisioned the use of the astonishing productive power in the United States, built to defeat fascism and militarism, put to the use of building the formerly colonized

world, together with Russia and China, our wartime allies.

But Roosevelt died too soon, his weak successor Truman aided the return of the European powers to their colonies, and instead of development, we saw the continuation of colonial wars. Now, rather than joint development, we see NATO forces moving to the Russian borders in Europe, a “pivot” to Asia with the intention of bringing more U.S. warships to the Pacific, massive U.S. military power deployed into an ASEAN country, including on Palawan Island in the South China Sea, THAAD high-altitude missiles in a ring around China and the Russian Far East. Meanwhile both Russia and China, although remaining within their immediate geographic regions, are building up their military and conducting huge military exercises themselves, warning that any utopian dream of “winning” a nuclear war is pure madness, that the entire world would be destroyed.

Asian Opportunities

Yet the solution to this threat to civilization is before us here today: Xi Jinping's offer to President Obama at the 2014 APEC meeting for the United States to join in the Silk Road process, both in Eurasia and, as Helga LaRouche has proposed, in building a World Land-Bridge.

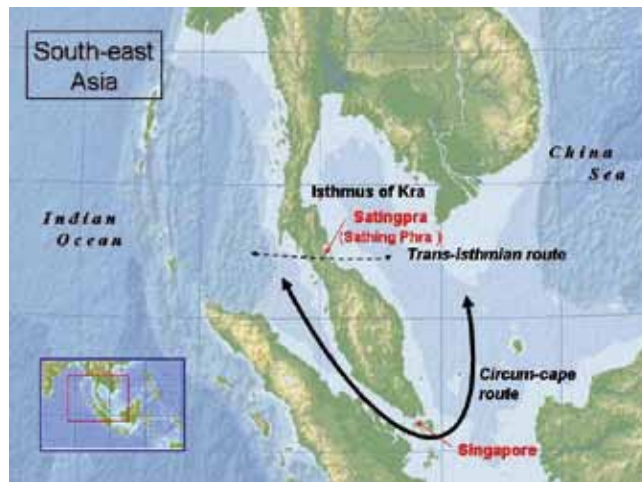
Look at Asia's leading hot spots: North Korea, the South China Sea, and the extension of Mideast terrorism into the region. In Korea, even as tensions swell and wane—and you all know that tensions are at a high point today—an extraordinary development is taking place. Three leading South Korean corporations, Hyundai Marine, POSCO, and KORAIL, have formed a joint venture with Russia and North Korea around the North Korean port of Rason (aka Rajin). Both the Russians and Chinese have built new port facilities there over the past year, with new road and rail connections to China and to Vladivostok.

Russian coal is being transported to this new port in North Korea, shipped on Hyundai ships to South Korea, then by KORAIL to POSCO steel plants. The South Korean government is also rebuilding the rail lines that lead to the border, with the intention of eventually linking South Korea to the trans-Siberian Railway through North Korea, completing the vision of the Eurasian Land-Bridge “from Pusan to Rotterdam.” Only by giving the North such a stake in the transformation of all of Asia through the Silk Road process is there a chance to end the conflict peacefully.

So also in the South China Sea. China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi, speaking at the ASEAN Regional Forum in Malaysia this month, posed a “win-win” solution as part of the New Maritime Silk Road sponsored by President Xi Jinping. Minister Wang announced that the building of the new artificial islands had been completed, and that the next step is to “build facilities primarily used for public purposes, including lighthouses, maritime emergency rescue, weather stations, and marine scientific research, as well as medical and first-aid buildings. Once the construction is completed,” he said, “China is willing to open these facilities to countries in the region.

As the largest coastal country in the South China Sea, China has the ability and obligation to provide these maritime public goods to countries in the region.” Again, peace through development, if the world chooses it rather than war. It is of note that the western press entirely blacked out this portion of Wang Yi's speech.

FIGURE 2



EIRNS

The proposed site of the Kra Canal

Another major project on the agenda of the New Maritime Silk Road—one which was conceived long before the building of the Panama Canal or the Suez Canal—is the Kra Canal across the Isthmus of Kra in southern Thailand. Lyndon and Helga LaRouche, in 1983 and 1984, co-sponsored with the Thai government, two symposia in Bangkok on the tremendous potential for the entire Pacific-Indian Ocean Basin of building a canal and a trade hub in southern Thailand, which would shorten the travel time in the world's busiest sea lanes, and avoid the imminent overcrowding of the Malacca Strait, while providing development to the Muslim population in the region who face economic exclusion and relative poverty, which has fed the growth of terrorist movements in the region.

Similarly, the Silk Road Economic Belt is already bringing massive development to western China and Central Asia, as a necessary precondition for ending the poverty, drugs, and isolation, which feed terrorist recruitment among the youth. The Schiller Institute has circulated a petition calling on the U.S. and Europe to reject geopolitics in favor of “win-win” co-operation with the BRICS in the New Silk Road and the Global Land-Bridge. The task facing mankind today is to see the current crisis as an opportunity for human creativity and cooperation as the necessary means to finally put war behind us, as truly impossible in the age of thermonuclear weapons, and embrace peace through development based on the common aims of mankind.