
II. National Infrastructure

GULLIVER TRAVELS TO MANHATTAN

Only LaRouche's Four Laws And China's BRI Can Solve Manhattan Infrastructure Crisis

by Diane Sare

June 14—Today “top experts” on New York City infrastructure were assembled to participate on two panels at the [Crain's 2017 Real Estate Conference](#), ironically titled “Don’t just think big. Build big.” There was nothing big about what was presented there, except the gap between what was projected by the speakers and what reality is likely to be.

While admitting that the one-hundred-year-old rail, water, and other infrastructure is now being subjected to the stress of supporting many more people than it was originally built for and is reaching the end of its reasonable life expectancy, no one spoke of the potential looming chaos coming as early as July 10 when Penn Station tracks will be undergoing urgently needed repairs. Nor did anyone say what everyone knows: Since the entire transportation grid is already over capacity, there is no redundancy to allow for rerouting the

number of passengers who need to get into the city. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo is frantically trying to speed up needed repairs on the region’s bridges and highways, in anticipation of a surge in automobile traffic resulting from closed rail lines, which could exacerbate the already hazardous condition of the crumbling roadways.

Because about 1.5 million people travel into Manhattan to work every weekday, the disintegration of the transportation grid is merely the most obvious of the crises. Look deeper, and one will find water mains that are the same age, or older than the subway tunnels, rats scampering merrily across neighborhood streets, record numbers of homeless people being placed in substandard housing, literally killing them, and many other crises. New York City has been looted by Wall Street and London, literally to the breaking point, where clos-



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Left: A New York City subway platform under normal conditions. Right: Vehicle traffic on bridges into and out of Manhattan will increase greatly as parts of the aged rail network are shut down for maintenance.

ing anything for maintenance or repair threatens to collapse something else.

The first thing that is required, is to face this harsh reality and dispense with the foolhardy notion that just creating new glitzy buildings with bigger windows will allow human beings to survive. While not all of the speakers at the aptly named “real estate” conference were narrowly focussed on big windows, one left the conference with the distinct impression of having witnessed a group of supposedly well-educated grown ups playing in a sandbox where they made up their own rules and the outside world was not to be considered.

It is also necessary to recognize how the world has changed, even in the past four years, with China’s Belt and Road Initiative, which is transforming large regions of the planet by increasing connectivity, and elevating the standard of living for billions of people, with high speed rail and water transportation corridors, among other great projects.

For example, a proposal was made by Jamie Torres Springer, Senior Principal, HR&A Advisors, to convert Rikers Island into more space for the already overloaded LaGuardia Airport. It wasn’t clear from his remarks if the shortfall of “75 flight operations per hour” was the current statistic, or a projection for the year 2030, when 30 million more passengers are projected to be flying into New York, but whichever it is, converting Rikers Island from a “penal colony,” as he aptly called it, into runways, would only add 30 more flight operations per hour—i.e. less than half of the demand. Springer also correctly stated that the waste-water treatment facilities in the region are over 100 years old and that billions of gallons of raw waste overflow annually. He proposed modern waste-water treatment facilities for this location as well. He closed by summing up the cost of this initiative: \$22 billion, which he calculated could be covered largely by private investments and increased airline revenue, leaving about \$5 billion to be covered with public funds, although he didn’t express it exactly in that way.

He was followed by Chris Ward, Senior Vice President and Chief Executive, Metro New York, of the American multi-national engineering firm, AECOM, who spoke about the potential for development in the Red Hook area of Brooklyn. Ward showed a shocking photograph of the damage suffered in that area from



Marc A Hermann/MTA New York City Transit

Work on the Greenpoint underwater tubes of the New York subway system on Aug. 9, 2013, repairing damage from Hurricane Sandy on Oct. 29, 2012. These tunnels were flooded to a height of 15 feet. After emergency repairs got the line running, there were numerous shutdowns to replace damaged or destroyed equipment.

Hurricane Sandy, but only spoke about addressing the threat of future super storms from the limited standpoint of Brooklyn and Brooklyn’s shore-front property.

It was not mentioned that in 2009 the American Society of Civil Engineers had dedicated a conference to discussing four possible storm barrier options for the New York City Harbor area, and not one of them was built, which would have greatly alleviated this disaster, and, obviously, a sane leader would be moving to get one or a combination of them built immediately.

All of the other speakers were at best similarly limited, or at worst completely delusional, expressing wild-eyed fantasies about glorious modern glass towers, and the money that can be made by renting them out to other similarly fantasy-ridden tenants, apparently whether or not one is even able to travel to them, or there is a basic sewage and water treatment plan in place to handle the new towers.

There are two major factors which have led to this sorry state of affairs, where generally well-intended adults were reduced to making sandbox-sized plans. First, the legacy of Bertrand Russell and the destruction of science over the last century, which has replaced actually scientific creative thought with linear deductive methods, which have nothing to do with an actually developing universe, as best understood and explained in the writings of Lyndon LaRouche.

Second, the problem that Glass-Steagal has not yet been reinstated, and the [Four Laws](#) of Lyndon La-

Rouche, namely establishment of a national bank and a system of Hamiltonian credit to fund those activities, such as fusion research and development, which will allow the American people to make a leap to a new platform of physical economy. Therefore, everyone starts his projection based on what he or she thinks can be paid for by the very practices which have already caused one big crash in 2008, and are about to cause another one any minute.

For example, as this author asked the panel, what impact would the development of high-speed rail have on the New York Metropolitan area? If Boston is a 40 minute train ride away, and Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia also? That is, if you can go from Washington, D.C. to midtown Manhattan quicker than you can currently travel from Fort Lee (New Jersey), to Fort Washington, New York, over the George Washington Bridge? And this is *not* even a bold future projection, since such trains already exist, over tens of thousands of miles of them, in China. We should be thinking about the next breakthrough beyond that. No one had an answer.

However, since such high speed rail could be built to service the busy east coast corridor of the United States, this does allow us to consider what would otherwise perhaps be unthinkable: maybe the only way to actually recreate New York City is to move a portion of the city to a nearby location. That is, build a new city. For example, the New Jersey Pine Barrens take up 22% of the entire land mass of that state. Even only a fraction of that, could sustain a new city of a million people or more. On a magnetically levitated high-speed train, they could travel to work in Manhattan in 15 minutes. One of the speakers proposed a “Staten Island City” of 300,000. Why not? Given the terrible overload on all of New York City’s infrastructure, leaving no redundancy for shifting anything, it might actually not be possible to build what is needed without, at least temporarily, relocating part of the population elsewhere. People could have the option of returning to the modernized city later, or more likely, many of them might prefer their new location.

What Planet Are You On

Just about a mile away from this conference, another conference was being held at the Asia Society, entitled, “China and the U.S.: One Belt, One Road, and a 100-Day Plan” which was co-sponsored by the Asia Society Policy Institute and the China Center for international Economic Exchanges. The panel of very high level Chinese guests, including Chinese Ambassador to



Transrapid

The maglev from Shanghai to its airport.

the United States Cui Tiankai, was introduced by a somewhat transformed former Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, who had obviously been positively affected by his own participation in the Beijing Belt and Road Conference one month ago.

The first Chinese speaker, The Honorable Tung Chee Hwa, gave a short history of U.S.-China relations beginning with Nixon’s 1972 visit. He closed by graphically citing the transformation of China from Oct. 1, 1949 when life expectancy was 35 years, and only 20% of the population was literate, to today, 68 years later, with 600 million Chinese lifted out of poverty, life expectancy is now 76 years, and literacy is over 95%. Both Tung and Ambassador Cui emphasized the importance of U.S.-China relations, not only in economic terms, but also that win-win collaboration creates the basis for peace and war avoidance, even in difficult cases, like that of North Korea.

China has not only self-transformed itself, but is in the process of transforming the entire Eurasian and Afri-

can Continents. Ultimately, the Belt and Road Initiative will be successful only if the North American continent becomes part of it. Otherwise, imagine a great ocean liner, now finally able to access Port Elizabeth through the recently elevated bridge at Bayonne, only to be unable to unload or load precious cargo because the rail connection to Detroit has broken down. It is obviously in the mutual self interest of both China and the United States that the horrendous breakdown of our physical economy be quickly addressed.

The China Investment Corporation has relocated from Toronto to Manhattan. It estimates that the United States needs about \$8 trillion in infrastructure spending. They have already expressed an intent to invest \$50 billion. But how? If we had a national banking system, that money could go into the bank and be lent out for great projects, with a multiplier effect.

How would the Chinese look at the Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York City, Boston corridor? With high-speed rail, these cities are not isolated fiefdoms, but part of one powerful region of the United States. From that standpoint, how should this area be developed? That would give us the proper perspective on how to solve the transportation disaster which is going to hit New York and New Jersey within the next three weeks. No smaller a perspective than that should even be considered.

What the participants at the Crain's conference put forward would cost about \$45 billion. Imagine spending \$45 billion on infrastructure whose function would be obsolete by the time it was completed!

What Universe Are You In?

In a recently republished 2010 paper, entitled, *What Your Accountant Never Understood: The Secret Economy*, Lyndon LaRouche addresses exactly what New Yorkers, and all Americans, for that matter, urgently need to consider, if they wish to survive: that Money per se not only has no value, but is not the metric of



CC/Ken Lund

The combined Port Newark and Elizabeth Marine Terminal in New Jersey constitute the principal container ship facility for goods entering and leaving New York metropolitan area and the northeastern quadrant of North America. It is the largest container port on the East Coast of the United States, and the third largest in the nation.

anything, except as a “medium of assigning uttered credit at a fair approximation of anticipated net physical cost (including a charge, over incurred direct cost, for sustaining a justified rate of margin for progress of the physical economy as a whole.)”

The point is that the progress of mankind, as measured by potential relative population density (how many people could be comfortably sustained per given area) and increasing energy-flux-density (which is what allows for increasing population growth with a higher and higher standard of living, as measured in physical terms).

What defines human economy is the anti-entropic nature of the universe, and the role of human creativity as part of that. That is why it is natural for human beings to wish to colonize space, and “do the other things,” as President Kennedy said, “because they are hard.” These things challenge us to become better than we are, and when we each become better, mankind becomes better. This is why an ambitious space program, and a crash program to develop thermo-nuclear fusion as a reliable source of power are so important to the successful survival and development of our species. It is also why participation in Classical music performance, Classical drama and beautiful (as distinct from ugly, violent or pornographic) art must be a significant part of our society.

Let us imagine Gulliver returning to his home in a manned colony on a distant planet, after travelling to present day Manhattan. How would he describe us? How would we rather be known?