

# Worse than ‘Fake News’: The Forced Conformity of the Media!

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Aug. 4—We should have learned from the 1920s and 1930s that the spread of cultural pessimism throughout the population has fatal consequences. But such pessimism is spreading today in many Western societies, and especially in Germany, in the face of uncertain future options, with the result that more and more citizens have completely given up the hope of being able to make a difference through their own participation, or they are joining right-wing parties that provide an outlet for anger but offer no solutions. The culprit in this development is not least the political establishment, which leads us to accept a “TINA” politics—TINA is the acronym for “there is no alternative”—and the forced conformity of the mainstream media, which suppress all messages that point to alternatives.

We are living through what is probably the greatest strategic change of all time. Under the leadership of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), the majority of the developing countries are currently focussing on close win-win cooperation, with the aim of achieving the leap to the status of industrialized nations, and a good standard of living for their entire populations as quickly as possible. The 10th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg July 25-27 included some of the largest and most important international organizations of developing countries, such as the Group of 77, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Mercosur, and the African Union, which were there to join forces with the BRICS in what might be called the Global South initiative.

## **The New Silk Road Is Changing Everything**

China’s Belt and Road Initiative, and the idea that relations are no longer based on geopolitical confrontation but on mutual benefit, have changed the political climate in many regions of the world in a completely

positive way. For example, the election victory of newly designated Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has created for the first time the potential to settle the conflict between India and Pakistan. Khan promised to ensure that his country takes two steps toward India for every step that India takes towards Pakistan. The cooperation between the BRICS countries also has its impact on Pakistan; China has traditionally good relations with Pakistan, and just now the Russian and Pakistani navies had a high-level meeting, after the first-ever joint manoeuvres of Russian and Pakistani ground troops took place just one year ago.

The Horn of Africa is also embraced by the new spirit of cooperation. There the hitherto mutually hostile states of Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea and Ethiopia are massively expanding their mutual diplomatic and economic relations, largely thanks to Chinese investment, such as in the construction of the railway from Djibouti to Addis Abeba.

And, in contrast to the consistently negative media coverage of the progress of negotiations between North and South Korea and the United States, this process is on a good track, with the option that a leading North Korean government official may speak in New York before the upcoming UN General Assembly in September.

Meanwhile, the Syrian government has begun the economic reconstruction of the province of Aleppo. The first part of a three-phase program is the reconstruction of the infrastructure, the second step is the specific provisioning of each individual family, and the third phase is the return of people to a safe environment, as the Deputy Governor of the province, Hamid Kenno, stressed. At the same time, the Russian military has helped create a refugee center in Syria that will welcome refugees returning from Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, and assist them in their return to their homes. An inter-ministerial coordination committee of the Russian Foreign and Defense Ministries has taken over the orderly repatriation of the refugees.

## **EDITORIAL**

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## You Aren't Hearing the Good News

One might assume that these developments would dominate headlines, immediately bringing hope to all clear-thinking people that world peace has become more secure, poverty can be overcome, and the refugee crisis can be resolved in a human way. Instead, the media do not say a word about the “Global South” initiative. An article in the German national daily, *Die Welt*, furnished with much geopolitical spin, cites Xi Jinping’s speech at the BRICS Summit: “Africa has more development potential than any other region in the world.” And what does the author conclude? That “China is working to build its empire” and the upcoming summit between China and the African nations in Beijing this September is just Xi Jinping’s “charm offensive.”

Of course, this censorship of good news has the purpose of depicting the politics of the old neo-liberal paradigm as having no alternative. If China—incidentally, along with India, Russia and Japan—now demonstrates that Africa can indeed be industrialized, and if that were truthfully reported, then someone might think to ask why the African continent, after centuries of colonialism and decades of the IMF’s notorious credit conditionalities, is in its current precarious state, and whether this is not a major cause of the refugee crisis.

Instead of responding to China’s repeated offer to work together with the African states on their industrialization in the context of the New Silk Road, the German government is blocking Chinese investments in Germany, such as the recent acquisition of the precision machinery manufacturer Leifeld Metal Spinning, although various surveys confirm that Chinese investors have always taken care to increase the number of jobs and raise wages. Where was the government’s veto when, in recent years, dozens of American and British hedge funds have taken everything from mid-sized companies to housing companies and infrastructure, carved out the choicest portions to sell, and closed down the rest as socially unacceptable?

It is an absurd idea to think that one could halt the rise of emerging and developing countries—India and China alone account for 2.6 billion people—and impose the neo-liberal model of geopolitics as the only possible option on the rest of the world. Blair’s and Obama’s policies of converting the whole world to Western democracy through regime change and “humanitarian” interventions, as a sort of modern crusade, have clearly failed. Neither China nor Russia wants this model, and more and more developing countries see the Chinese model as the model for their own development.

The reason is that the BRICS offer a form of cooperation that focuses on mutual development, while “the West” prefers the neo-liberal model of profit maximization for the few at the expense of the many. It is also not overlooked in the rest of the world that the EU is slipping into more and more disagreement between its member states, whether in dealing with the refugee crisis; in choosing between greater integration versus emphasis on sovereignty; or in relations with China, Russia and the United States.

Looking at the world through Eurocentric glasses obscures the view that the greater part of humanity, represented by the BRICS and Global South, has drawn from the neo-liberal policies of the West the conclusion that a revision of the current system of global governance is urgently needed, and that this reorganization cannot be left to the West.

Instead of arrogantly continuing to sit on the high horse of egoism in their supposed superiority and soon landing their own populations on the margins of history, the nations of Europe, and the United States, should look to the offers from China and Russia for cooperation and co-creation of the New Paradigm. Despite the punitive tariffs imposed by Trump, China continues to offer cooperation with the United States in order to overcome the trade deficit through joint ventures in third countries. A spokeswoman for China’s Ministry of Commerce has just said, “We always believe that bad things can be turned into good ones and challenges can be turned into opportunities.”

And at the just-ended ASEAN Summit in Singapore, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov recalled Putin’s words at the 2016 Russia-ASEAN Summit in Sochi, where he called on partner-countries to be aware of the huge geopolitical and geo-economic potential of the Eurasian continent, where the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) complement each other. Lavrov stressed that the door remains open to the EU, and no one should doubt that the EU should be interested in it purely for pragmatic economic and business interests.

But one could also find reasons for such cooperation that go beyond the pragmatic. If Europe does not want to completely forget, and lose, its humanistic and classical culture, then we could revive the ideas of Nicholas of Cusa, Leibniz and Schiller, and make our contribution to the development of humanity. You certainly will not read about it in the mainstream media. But you can read it here.

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