

Eurasian Economic Forum Unites East Asia for Global Peace and Development

by Mike Billington

Sept. 23—This past month, two events in Asia have ushered in a new phase in the emergence of a new paradigm for mankind, uniting nations around the world in a common mission to end poverty and war—what Chinese President Xi Jinping calls “building a human community with shared destiny.”

On Sept. 3-4, China hosted the summit of the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), with every African nation represented (with one exception), in nearly every case by the head of state, in an enthusiastic demonstration of the optimism bursting forth across the formerly colonized nations, that ending poverty and achieving the status of modern industrial nations is finally a realistic dream, with China as the model demonstrating its feasibility.

Despite a growing chorus of attacks from the West describing the Belt and Road Initiative as a devious imperial plot to indebt nations and eventually take them over, the spirit of the New Silk Road is recognized across Africa, Ibero-America and Asia as the first opportunity for the so-called “developing nations” to finally and forever break free of neo-colonial backwardness through infrastructure and industrialization.

Then, on Sept. 11-12, Russian President Vladimir Putin sponsored the Fourth Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) in Vladivostok—an annual event since 2015—to bring together nations from around the world to participate in the development of the Russian Far East, which can be rightfully considered one of the last remaining “new frontiers” for mankind on Earth. The vast region, from Lake Baikal to the Pacific Ocean, comprises over 6 million square kilometers, but with a population of only about 6 million, leaving a population density of less than one person per square km. The population is



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Russian President Vladimir Putin addresses the 4th Annual Eastern Economic Forum, bringing together nations from around the world to participate in the development of Russia's Far East. Vladivostok, Russia, Sept. 11-12, 2018.

concentrated in the southern areas, leaving most of the region totally unoccupied. Much of the land is mountainous or tundra, with difficult living conditions. Yet, through the use of technology, much of the territory can become productive in agriculture, mining and industry.

This year's EEF brought together over 6,000 participants from 60 countries, as well as more than 1,300 journalists. More than 220 investment agreements totaling

Russian Far East





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Participants at the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, Russia, on Sept. 12, 2018.

over \$42 billion were signed. About half of the participants were Russian, with more than 1,000 from China, 570 from Japan, and 335 from South Korea. The six East Asian countries—Russia, China, Mongolia, Japan, and the two Koreas—were all represented. Presidents and prime ministers in attendance included Putin, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Mongolian President Khaltmaa Battulga, South Korean Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon, and President Xi Jinping, who was attending his first EEF. Both North and South Korea had high level delegations, but President Moon Jae-in and Chairman Kim Jong-un stayed behind, preparing for their third summit, which took place in Pyongyang on September 18-20, making dramatic progress towards denuclearization and peaceful development of the region.

Just as the FOCAC summit demonstrated the unity of the African nations in the spirit of the New Silk Road, so the EEF offered proof that all of Asia, and other nations as well, see the extension of the Belt and Road Initiative through North Korea and into the Russian Far East as a basis for hope for peaceful cooperation in a great undertaking for the benefit of all nations.

Those who follow only the mainstream media in the United States have no way of knowing that the world has changed, dramatically, as a result of these two international events. In the mindset of the Anglo-American oligarchy, that which does not fit into the zero-sum, geopolitical framework of western superiority simply does not exist.

Connectivity Throughout Eurasia

Zhang Zongyan is the CEO of China Railway, which runs China's rail system across Asia, as well as New Silk Road lines from China to fifteen European

cities, while actively building over a dozen rail lines in Africa. He reported to Xinhua on Sept. 17 that he had negotiated a plan during the EEF with the Russian Ministries of Transport and Development of the Far East, saying:

China Railway is looking at the Far East as one of the most important destination markets for extending its principal activity. Chinese enterprises are ready to deploy their own advanced technology, equipment, and engineering to take part in the construction

of infrastructure in the Far East. This will contribute to the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative and the development of cooperation between northeastern China and the Russian Far East.

This will include participation in the building of Primorye-1 and Primorye-2 transport corridors, connecting the Chinese provinces of Heilongjiang and Jilin with the Russian ports on the Pacific coast. (See *The New Silk Road Becomes the World Land-Bridge, Vol. 2*, pp. 95-105.)

Speaking at the EEF, North Korean Deputy Railways Minister Kim Yun Hyok announced a plan to reconnect North and South Korea by rail:

At the moment we are determined to connect the railways of North and South Korea. This is a fundamentally important project and it is necessary to provide the best possible conditions for this project to be finally implemented.

The plan is to have Russia, North Korea and South Korea jointly build the railroad on the Korean East Coast, reaching Rason Port in North Korea near the Russian border. Russia has already reconstructed the rail line from Vladivostok to Rason, and had been transporting Russian coal to Rason, then on to South Korea via Hyundai Merchant Marine ships to South Korea, where it was loaded onto South Korean KORAIL rail cars and shipped to South Korean POSCO steel plants. This consortium between Russia, North Korea, and the three mentioned South Korean companies was a model for "peace through development" on the Korean penin-

North-South Korea Rail Connections



sula, until the previous South Korean government of President Park Geun-hye, under pressure from Obama to cut all relations with North Korea, did exactly that in February 2016.

It is only the active cooperation between Presidents Trump and current South Korean President Moon Jae-in, with full support from Russia and China, which has made possible an historic opening for peace and development in Korea, creating the current conditions for unity across all of Asia, as demonstrated at the EEF.

China is also fully engaged in the opening up of Korea's rail infrastructure. China's Liaoning Province, which borders North Korea, issued a plan coming out of the EEF for China to reconstruct the west coast rail line in North Korea, connecting Seoul with Pyongyang, then continuing on to Sinuiju on the Chinese border, and across the Yalu River on the Sino-Korean Friendship Bridge to Dandong in Liaoning Province. Plans for a new bridge, and a North Korea-China economic zone on Hwanggumpyeong Island in the Yalu River between China and North Korea, are also in the plan.

Liaoning is setting up a group that "shares a common destiny in Northeast Asia by converging economic corridors that connect China, Russia, and Mongolia with a framework called the China-Japan-South Korea + X Model," linking all six East Asian nations via development corridors.

President Trump, in the video he presented to Chairman Kim Jong-un during their historic summit in Singapore on June 12, included visions of U.S., Chinese and Russian investments in North Korea, bringing the

"Hermit Kingdom," as it was known, into the emerging Asian economic dynamo. U.S. involvement in this effort is crucial, but Trump's freedom of action has been severely restricted by the ongoing British-instigated "Russiagate" coup attempt against him. The entire network of British and Obama Administration operatives running the coup attempt are now themselves being exposed for their crimes—which can, and must, free Trump to restore his commitment to friendly relations with Putin and Xi Jinping, and bring the United States into the New Silk Road development process internationally.

Asked about North Korea during the Q&A session of the EEF plenum, President Putin said: "Indeed, President Trump has shown an innovative approach to dealing with North Korea. I agree, this actually shows a certain amount of courage, political courage, and an innovative approach." He suggested that North Korea's need for security guarantees in order to give up its nuclear weapons was not only a U.S. concern:

We have the format of the six-party talks. The international community can give such guarantees, including those secured by the presence of nuclear powers in these agreements. China and Russia are parties to these talks... If North Korea is satisfied with U.S. guarantees alone, that is fine with us, but it is probably unlikely to happen. International guarantees would be more relevant in this case.

There could be no clearer example of the reality that Trump's commitment to friendly relations with Russia and China is on behalf of the crucial combination needed to bring peace and development to the world, and that those who are trying to bring him down are intent on war to preserve the dying British Empire.

Russia-China-Japan

There are two critical relationships in the new Asian dynamic: that between Putin and Xi, and that between Japanese Prime Minister Abe with both Russia and China. Putin and Xi held their third bilateral summit this year on the sidelines of the EEF, where they asserted that "regardless of the changes in the international situation, China and Russia will unswervingly promote their ties and steadfastly safeguard world peace and stability," as reported by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They pledged to further solidify

the ties between the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Russia's Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), in the fields of energy, agriculture, scientific and technological innovation, and finance, including conducting their growing trade in local currencies rather than the U.S. dollar.

They also agreed to further expand "local cooperation" agreements, including between China's Northeast and Russia's Far East (as in the Liaoning rail plan discussed above), and between the Yangtze River basin and the Volga River basin.

Both leaders addressed the tense global strategic situation. Putin said, "Our relations are critical not only for our countries, but for the world as well." Xi remarked that the China-Russia partnership "allows us to jointly neutralize the external risks and challenges, and to assist in joint development."

Putin accepted Xi's invitation to attend the second Belt and Road Forum in China, planned for 2019. In his speech to the EEF, Putin described the BRI as "a civilization-wide project for the future of mankind."

The importance of the role being played by Prime Minister Abe in this emerging new paradigm can not be overstated. While Japan remains America's closest ally in Asia, and despite the anti-Russia and anti-China hysteria in the West, Abe has unhesitatingly defended his intention to restore close relations with Putin, to finally achieve a peace treaty between the two nations—unresolved since WWII—and to have Japanese industry play a leading role in the development of the Russian Far East. Putin and Abe are intent on reaching an agreement over the sovereignty of the islands contested by the two countries, and then sign a peace treaty, all in the near term.

Japan's relations with China have also taken a dramatic turn for the better, with Abe now openly committed to joint development projects of the two industrial superpowers in third countries along the New Silk Road. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang visited Japan in May—the first high-level visit in eight years—where he announced Japan's intention to join the Belt and Road Initiative. In Vladivostok, Abe and Xi met the press after a private summit. Xi praised Japan's role in helping China's reform and opening up process since the signing of the China-Japan Treaty of Peace and Friendship exactly 40 years ago, noting: "The Belt and Road Initiative has provided a new platform and ex-



Russian President Vladimir Putin (left) meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Nagato, Japan, Dec. 15, 2016.

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perimental field for China and Japan to deepen their mutually beneficial cooperation."

The first practical example of this cooperation emerged immediately after the EEF, when Thailand's Transport Minister Arkhom Termpittayapaisith announced on September 19 that Japan and China plan to jointly invest in Thailand's infrastructure projects, specifically a 176 kilometer high-speed rail connection from Bangkok to U-Tapao International Airport (the former U.S. B-52 airbase during the war on Indochina) on the eastern shore. This high-speed rail line will connect the capital with the rapidly developing industrial sites of the Eastern Seaboard Development Program, which has received significant Japanese support over the past decades.

Lyndon LaRouche and *EIR* have long proposed that the construction of the Kra Canal in southern Thailand would be the perfect project to bring China and Japan together for cooperation in development, given the huge benefit which the canal would bring to both countries, while solidifying peaceful relations between them. The joint, high-speed rail project should advance the needed cooperation, which could then move on to the Kra Canal in the near term.

Transforming Vladivostok

President Putin is implementing a major transformation plan for Vladivostok, the hub of the international development of the Russian Far East. Japanese business leaders attending the EEF emphasized the huge potential for large-scale development invest-



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The cable-stayed Russky Bridge in Vladivostok, Russia, completed in July 2012.

ments in the Far East, but noted that there are still significant problems to be resolved, such as poor infrastructure, high electricity costs, and the difficulty in securing human resources in the sparsely populated region.

Putin is addressing these problems. As he did with Sochi, where he was widely criticized for spending \$50 billion to prepare the region for the 2014 Olympics, Putin has allotted huge sums over the past six years for the development of Vladivostok. His intent in Sochi was to create a modern, year-round resort which would more than pay for the investment. Indeed, six and a half million people visited Sochi in 2017.

A similar process in Vladivostok began when Russia hosted the 24th APEC Summit in 2012 in this Far Eastern city. Two new bridges were constructed—one over Zolotoy Rog Bay in the middle of the city, and one to Russky Island, where the Summit was held. At 1,104 meters, the Russky Bridge is the longest cable-stayed bridge in the world. Vladivostok International

Airport was renovated and new tourist and business facilities were constructed both in Vladivostok proper and on Russky Island.

This year Putin took the next step. In his greeting to the EEF, he said:

We are meeting here on Russky Island at the Far Eastern Federal University, where we intend to start a world-class education and research center, and develop it further. This includes, of course, construction of a technology park and a mega-science research installation that will allow solving completely new fundamental science and applied science tasks in pharmaceuticals, materials science and other spheres.

He called on Russia's leading companies to "build their engineering facilities, research and development centers on Russky Island.

The Government and the top management of these corporations should consider this as direct instructions." He declared that the Far East will no longer be a backwater, but will be the "driving force of the national economy, innovations and culture."

Already, since 2016, Vladivostok has been the site of one of the world's greatest classical music festivals,



Poster for the 3rd International Far East Festival, 2016.

the International Mariinsky Far East Festival, at the Mariinsky Primorsky Theater, organized by the world-famous director of the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg, Valery Gergiev. The 2016 Festival was held in tandem with the EEF, with 27 operas and concerts over 12 days, with 300 international musicians and singers from 12 countries, and with over 20,000 visitors from around the world.

This captures the vision of the new paradigm—launching a scientific and cultural renaissance embracing all of mankind, while taking on the development of even the most desolate areas of the world, such as the Russian Far East and the Arctic, and, eventually, the Moon and Mars.