

Dialogue on Eurasian Land-Bridge Projects

Here are selections from the discussion that closed the Sept. 15 evening conference panel on “Projects for the Eurasian Land-Bridge.”

Q: This bridge across the Strait of Messina and then to Tunisia: How long is the bridge from Italy to Messina, to Sicily? And then how long is it to Africa, in kilometers?

Nino Galloni: From the west of Sicily, Marzara del Vallo to Capo Bona, Tunisia, is 138 km of sea. Messina is 270 km, that’s the east of Sicily. The bridge over Messina is less than 3 km. I used to swim that, when I was younger, between Messina and the Reggio Calabria.

The southern tunnel is 138 km. Yes, its submarine and sub-terrain is 150 km, about 100 miles, because the tunnel surfaces near the four artificial islands we spoke about before.

Q: What is the maximum depth of the water?

Galloni: The depth is almost 60 meters, it’s not very deep.

Q: It’s very similar in some respects to the Bering Strait. You have a longer connection, similar depth of water, and a double track railroad tunnel—that’s what you plan to build?

Galloni: Yes, yes.

On the Ground in Canada

Q: Hi, I’m Rob Ainsworth from the Canadian LaRouche Youth Movement, and we just finished a trip into Alberta, to organize the Westerners around this Bering Strait Tunnel project, so I thought I’d just add a couple of things in terms of intelligence from the ground, on what Canadians are thinking about this. Well, the Canadian government’s standpoint on the Bering Strait Tunnel is that it doesn’t exist. So, we’ll just get that out of the way—but that’s to be expected from what we’ve got in power right now.

However, there are openings within the population, and what we found was that the people are extremely excited about this. For the first time, they see something that can unite the entire country around a common mission.

At the same time, in Alberta, they are planning to build two 1,100-MW reactors in northern Alberta, that Hal Cooper mentioned earlier. They’re also now considering a high-speed rail network between Edmonton and Calgary, which

are the two main cities in this province, so of course that line would connect right into the Bering Strait Tunnel and the related railroads. So, that’s the situation there.

And you’re seeing a whole change across the country toward nuclear power right now. They’re building eight new reactors in Ontario; they’re building some out on the East Coast as well.

So, in terms of what we see here, and how this would connect into the rest of Canada, what are your thoughts in terms of the work that you’ve done in Canada, and what you think on this? Because there’s another option to build a railroad right across to Churchill—maybe we could rename it Roosevelt in the future.

Hal Cooper: In my feasibility study, I actually look at that corridor, coming from The Pas, just inside Manitoba, over south of Fort McMurray. With all of the development that’s going on there, that’s a significant corridor. And in addition to that, the extension of the tar sands, the heavy oil deposits, actually goes down along the border of Alberta and Saskatchewan into Montana.

I’m glad that that nuclear reactor idea is going forward, because there isn’t going to be enough natural gas. And you didn’t say anything about what your prognosis is about the pipeline from the MacKenzie River delta, but would you like to offer one?

Ainsworth: Pipeline for natural gas?

Cooper: Yes, from MacKenzie River down to Fort McMurray: Is that going to happen, or not?

Ainsworth: We’re going to have to see. I don’t know, really.

Cooper: My understanding is that the First Nations up in the Delta area are very much in favor of the gas, and ones south of them have said, “You’re going to build it over our dead bodies.” And they can’t come to a resolution. And the feeling that I’m getting from there, is: Don’t count on that pipeline being built at all! Unless you go through the Yukon. Is that yours, too?

Ainsworth: Yes, well, we’re going to have to address some definite cultural issues, as Mr. LaRouche was saying earlier, in terms of what’s been done to the aboriginal peoples, the ideology. And just the general environmental ideology in Canada.

Cooper: Imperial Oil, as you probably will agree, is acting like “imperial oil”!

Ainsworth: But anyway, things are very positive, at least in the population, they’re much further ahead. And the interesting thing about Albertans is that they have a sense that they’re building something.

Cooper: Oh, no doubt about it. If you could find a way to get those revenues that they’re getting, to put some of those projects together, they’ll get built, because Alberta—I’m sure it’s your experience as well as mine—it’s just one big boom-

town. You know, believe it or not, they now have air service every morning, to fly people from Edmonton to Fort McMurray, and back in the evening, who work there! They commute by air. Because there's no housing in Fort McMurray to speak of.

Ainsworth: Yes, you've got people at McDonald's making \$30 an hour.

Maghreb Development and the British

Q: Yes, I'm from Germany here, and I would like to ask a question to Dr. Galloni. You've been talking about the bridge between Sicily and Tunisia, about the bridge between Spain and Morocco. I would like to ask, how do you see the problem of the West Sahara conflict and the Polisario, affecting the development of the Maghreb region?

Galloni: I have to remember to think of my family, to respond to you. Because when my grandfather died, the only song my grandfather, who had the same name as I do, Antonino, went to Cairo to study with relatives. And he was walking along the streets of Cairo, at the beginning of the last century, and he was very angry over the English colonialists who had fought the people, going with [tanks] into the roads, and fought the people.

So, in my family, for a century there has been an anti-English sentiment because of this thing my grandfather mentioned in his lifetime.

Think how many people are being embattled, martyred, injured by worse—not coming from good things, because worse always comes from bad things. But at the same time, we have had centuries of cooperation between the Mediterranean area and Italy, and especially Sicily and the North of Africa. For example, Arab people say, "Sicily is the only Islamic land without war." It's a joke, but there are the roots to think toward cooperation, fraternity. We have the goal to put in front of our lives, solidarity, fraternity, and economic, cultural, and social cooperation.

Of course, both solutions are possible: war in all manners—I mean, economic, military, physical, nuclear, or what you want—or cooperation and a peaceful program and goals. This is my answer to your question.

Economic Schizophrenia

Q: What is the status, if any, of the proposal to build a tunnel under the Strait of Gibraltar between Spain and Morocco? Is there anything going on with that, because I know feasibility studies have been done.

Galloni: The status of the project is that it has been approved by the Spanish government, but in the beginning phases. The problem of these infrastructures—I mean the bridge over Messina, the tunnel between west Sicily and Tunisia, and the Morocco bridge or tunnel, and so on—is the financial means: If we don't understand that it's possible today to have these means, projecting the revenues coming

from works in operation, then it is impossible to raise these funds.

Because we are in a schizophrenic economy: We have on the one hand, the derivatives, financial speculation—worth 60 times the world production. On the other side, we haven't the money when we need something to make good investments or to have the money to buy the bread for people. This is the schizophrenia of our economy.

Q: You have spoken now about the major lines. How do these concepts of transport come down to the local level, to the regional level? How is this being organized? You have the major arteries, the development corridors, but then, how is it organized to go down to the local level, and really reach the ground, the villages?

Markku Heiskanen: It's everyday business. In the case of Finland, I told you that the major part of the Trans-Siberian Corridor to the west, came to Finland, and we have very big delivery stations there, a number of companies.

There are Finnish companies, of course; there are South Korean companies, there are Chinese companies, which take care of cargo. So that most often when a container—let's say for instance, from Samsung, one of the big customers—when their TVs, computers and so on, arrive in a city called Kuopio, or nowadays by ship to the Finnish harbors, it's only a few hours before they are loaded onto the trucks, and the trucks take them then to Russia and also of course to their Finnish destinations. So that it's working, it's working very well.

The volume has gone down for a while, as far as railways are concerned. But as I told you, according to the logistical laws, when the tariffs on sea lanes were lower, the same products come from South Korea and China, to the Russia market, through the Finnish ports.

Elke Fimmen, Moderator: Today, you have heard a lot of very necessary concepts to be realized. And obviously not all the projects which are necessary, which are already in discussion, could be presented. I would just like to mention the campaign of the Schiller Institute in Denmark, on the question of the Kattegat Link via magnetic levitation trains, where we have really created a huge political discussion.

But I think, what also became clear today, is that what we need is a political fight, to use this period where the financial system is breaking down, to create and build a new future on the level of the physical economy, which has at its center, the idea of increase of productivity, but also the idea of the image of man, which is really the most important resource in the economy.

So, this idea that technological progress and the culture renaissance really must go together, is what is guiding our conference, as you have seen today. . . .