

should look, under the much more favorable conditions of a new financial system. If we look to the future optimistically, and begin from the assumption that the renaissance connected to the development of the New Silk Road will be successful, in the next 50 years, thousands of new cities, with 300,000 to 1 million people each, will have to be built. Many of these cities should be nuplexes, in which inherently safe HTR [high-temperature reactor] nuclear plants produce electricity and process heat for regional industry and agriculture.

As these cities are planned, completely new and conceptualized in their entirety, the whole infrastructure can be built underground, in modular form. City-building is not only oriented to potential expansion, but also so that the best traditions of the cultural diversity of Eurasia, can be expressed in their architecture. Many of these new cities should be "science cities," which serve multidisciplinary, fundamental research and teaching.

In the Renaissance ahead of us, the thinking that, through non-proliferation treaties, so-called "dual use technologies" will be kept from the majority of the world's people, will be an issue of the past. We can only positively create the future of the one human species, if we think at least as modernly, as Nicolaus of Cusa, the founder of natural science, thought in the fifteenth century. This great universal thinker was convinced that every scientific invention was so precious for all humanity, that all nations must have immediate access to it, so that no one's development would be held back. He proposed a "science pool," in which all discoveries should be collected for universal benefit. The new science cities in Eurasia could realize this ideal.

If we meet the historic challenge before us, then let us remember that growing markets and growing purchasing power for all, are in the interests of all involved, because the source of general wealth, is not the possession of raw materials and the right to "buy cheap, sell dear." The only source of wealth is the creative reason of the individual, which enables each to make new discoveries, and therefore to make scientific and technological progress. The resulting increase in productivity of the workforce is what creates wealth.

We have to decide, how we ourselves want to be regarded by future generations. Do we wish that they look upon us with contempt, because we did not leave behind anything but an "every man for himself" society, the manifestations of limitless personal greed, and a world in chaos? Or, do we want that our grandchildren and great-grandchildren, proudly and lovingly remember us, because in the face of humanity's crisis of existence, we brought together everything that universal history has brought about that is great and noble, to win out of it the inspiration for a new renaissance? Then, perhaps, our next generations will say about us: Yes, they were like the people of the Italian Renaissance and the Sung dynasty. Yes, perhaps they will even say, they even were a little better.

## History of the new continental bridge

by Ma Hong

*The following introduction to the book, A Study on the Strategic Significance of the New Euro-Asian Continental Bridge, was written by one of China's most famous economists.*

### An epoch-making choice

While the Northern Xinjiang Railway was under construction, I put forward a proposal in 1985 that the Northern Xinjiang Railway connect the New Euro-Asian Continental Bridge. At a symposium on economic development of the zones around the New Euro-Asian Continental Bridge, I predicted that, "This Bridge would not only be a railway for transportation, but also an economic belt that would have bright prospects, greatly promote commodities circulation, and converge and blend east-west economic development." The past ten years saw the realization of our long-cherished ideal, for a series of major events were recorded in the annals of the Euro-Asian Continental Bridge.

- On Sept. 12, 1990, our Northern Xinjiang Railway connected the Tuxi Railway of the former U.S.S.R., which marked completion of the 11 kilometer-long New Euro-Asian Continental Bridge. CPC General Secretary Jiang Zemin cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony.

- On Dec. 1, 1992, the New Euro-Asian Continental Bridge was opened to containerized transit traffic, marking the start of trial operations of the Euro-Asian Continental Bridge.

- During the 11 years from 1985 to 1996, our enormous investments were put in for renovation of railways in connection with the Euro-Asian Continental Bridge. The 2,000-plus kilometer-long Lanzhou-Xinjiang Railway was double-tracked and the 500 kilometer-long Baoji-Zhongwei Railway started operations. . . .

- In 1994, Premier Li Peng visited four Central Asian countries. During his visit, Premier Li Peng and leaders of the four countries reached a consensus of opinion with regard to connecting the New Euro-Asian Continental Bridge and constructing a modern Silk Road.

- With the Houma-Yueshan Railway completed on Nov. 20, 1994, a new transportation artery of the Rizhao-Xi'an Railway came into existence that runs parallel with the Longhai Railway. Thus, a railway artery in parallel with the eastern part of the New Euro-Asian Continental Bridge, with Rizhao and Lianyungang as terminuses, came into existence. On Dec. 26, 1994, the Houma-Yueshan Railway started trial operations.

- From Oct. 26 to Oct. 28, 1994, a meeting was held in

Beijing attended by ministers of railway transportation from seven countries concerned. At the meeting, Minutes of Talks on Developing International Railway Passenger and Freight Transportation were signed, that paved the way for transportation by the New Euro-Asian Continental Bridge. On Sept. 8, 1995, railway experts from the seven countries concerned signed an agreement on opening the Alatau Pass-Druzhba (Friendship) international passage.

- In 1995, the first and second phase of the world's greatest ecological systems engineering—three northern shelter forest belts—were brought to completion. These forest belts prevent 10% of moving deserts and 40% of loess erosion, which created favorable conditions for the railway artery that passes through northwestern China.

- In 1995, the laying of the Chinese section of Euro-Asian telecommunications cable was completed.

- In July 1995, the State Scientific and Technological Commission, the State Planning Commission, and the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation formally approved in a document, Rizhao of Shandong Province and Lianyungang of Jiangsu Province as the eastern terminus of the New Euro-Asian Continental Bridge.

- In January 1996, the Xi'an-Baoji Expressway was opened to traffic, and the first phase of electrifying the Houma-Yueshan Railway was completed, which was a key construction project in the Eighth Five-Year Plan (1985-1990). The railway has started trial operations.

In recent years, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council have adopted a series of strategic measures to promote developing and opening the New Euro-Asian Continental Bridge. In the international arena, they proposed that a modern Silk Road be jointly constructed and exchanges between Europe and Asia be expanded. They received positive responses from the countries concerned. Domestically, the Fifth Plenary Session of the Fourteenth CPC Central Committee ranked the Euro-Asian Continental Bridge economic zones as one of five economic zones for key construction and development, following the inclusion of [the statement] "zones around the Chinese section of the New Euro-Asian Continental Bridge will develop sustainedly" in "China Program of Priority Projects on Agenda 21." In May 1996, the two State Commissions and the Ministry aforementioned will jointly sponsor an International Symposium on Economic Development of Zones around the New Euro-Asian Continental Bridge.

That large-scale development and opening up of the zones around the Euro-Asian Continental Bridge have been placed on the agenda of our times, is of strategic significance in transforming the situation, in which the vast central plain and western and northern China are relatively lagging behind in development and opening, in promoting sustained and coordinated development of southern and northern China, eastern and central and western China, narrowing gaps in economic development between different regions, enhancing solidarity between nationalities and in maintaining long-

term peace and stability. . . .

As the world is approaching toward the twenty-first century, developing relations between Asia and Europe are necessitated by world peace and economic development. In October 1994, Singaporean Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong proposed convening a meeting for Asian and European heads of state to discuss cooperation between Asia and Europe, and received positive responses. After serious preparations for a year, the first Asia-Europe Meeting was just convened in Bangkok, Thailand, March 1-2, 1996, which was attended by leaders from seven Asian countries, China, Japan, R.O.K., 15 European Union countries and the European Council. Chinese Premier Li Peng attended the grand meeting and delivered an important speech at the meeting. The meeting will serve as an important bridge for promoting cooperation between Asia and Europe, usher in a new epoch of Euro-Asia cooperation, greatly promote economic and prosperity between Asia and Europe, and provide a historical opportunity for developing the New Euro-Asian Continental Bridge. With more than a decade's efforts made, the Chinese section of the New Euro-Asian Continental Bridge has entered a new stage as whole, and developing the zones around the Euro-Asian Continental Bridge is getting in gear. . . .

I am firmly convinced that with long-term efforts made before and beyond 2000, the New Euro-Asian Continental Bridge will become an international economic and trade corridor, that will have the glory the Silk Road enjoyed in ancient times.

## Maglev for the future

*The authors of A Study on the Strategic Significance of the New Euro-Asian Continental Bridge, advocate the use of the most advanced technologies to build the New Euro-Asian Continental Bridge economy, including magnetic levitation (maglev). Here is the relevant passage:*

The modernization and rapidity of transport means will give an unestimable impetus to the continental-bridge transportation. The rapid progress in science and technology promotes the modernization and rapidity of all the transport means, including the railway, automobiles, airplanes, and ships. Particularly, the success in the trial operation of the magnetic suspension train which travels at a speed of over 500 km per hour, will usher in a new era for railway transportation. It will exert an unmeasurable promotion on the continental-bridge transportation which takes railway as its chief means. . . .