

Helga Zepp LaRouche speaks at Nigerian economic summit

Mrs. Helga Zepp LaRouche, representing EIR, delivered a presentation on "The Success of the Chinese Economic Reform and Its Significance for Nigeria: Africa's Secret Weapon for Peace!" to the Fourth Nigerian Economic Summit on Nov. 19, in the capital, Abuja. Mrs. LaRouche was introduced immediately following the formal seating of Nigeria's Head of State, Gen. Sani Abacha. The speaker following her was Prof. Paul Collier, the director of Oxford University's Center for the Study of African Economics, who departed from his text, to warn the gathering that "they should be very careful about those who peddle prosperity." He went on to present his view of the world's "model" economies for the developing world: Indonesia, and Britain's puppet regime of Uganda.

Gen. Sani Abacha spoke next, emphasizing that Nigeria was making progress in her drive for stability.

What follows is the prepared text of Mrs. LaRouche's remarks. Subheads have been added.

Your Excellency, the Head of State and Commander in Chief, honorable members of the Government, honorable members of the diplomatic community, ladies and gentlemen:

After the earthquake which gripped all of the world's stock markets and currency exchanges, beginning with Southeast Asia, no competent person any longer doubts the collapse of the world financial system. The only illusions are that it might be only a 40-50% "adjustment" of the stock market prices, or that the crisis manifests parallels to the world economic crisis of 1929-31.

The reality is instead, that we find ourselves in the middle of a systemic crisis, whose potential civilizational consequences threaten to overshadow those of the collapse of the Soviet Union. While the International Monetary Fund was still praising Malaysia, for example, at the beginning of this year, as a success model for the developing countries, all of

Lyndon LaRouche's warnings have been confirmed in the meantime, who warned that the Malaysia model was not based on sound economic principles, and that a new Mexico crisis was imminent in all of Southeast Asia.

But the monetary and stock market collapses there, are only the regional expression of the global collapse. The banking crisis in Japan is intimately related to that crisis, which has the potential alone to unleash an international chain reaction. There are further dramatic crises in Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina, and also in eastern Europe, especially in the Czech Republic (another IMF showcase), Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, and especially Russia, of course.

The most dangerous situation is in the area of derivatives speculation, where the payments of some \$100 trillion due in the coming months surpasses the GNP of all nations on Earth several times. The same is true for the debt of nations. In other words, the international financial system is irretrievably bankrupt, and there is no national economy in the world which can survive this situation, without carrying out a formal bankruptcy proceeding for the entire international financial system.

China's reform

Fortunately, in contrast to the collapse of the financial system associated with the IMF and the World Bank, which is the result of 30 years of mistaken neo-liberal policies, there is a completely different dynamic in the world. The Chinese government has taken the initiative for the development of the so-called "Eurasian Land-Bridge," and major steps in that project have already successfully been carried out. In the process, the industrial centers of Europe are to be joined together with the population centers of East, Southeast, and South Asia by means of infrastructure corridors, and thus introduce, as the Chinese government says, "a new era of mankind."



Helga Zepp LaRouche addressed the Nigerian Economic Summit in Abuja on Nov. 19, on "The Success of China's Economic Reform Policy and Its Significance for Nigeria and Africa." She is shown here speaking in Virginia on Oct. 11.

For the first time in the history of mankind, the geographical situation of a country will no longer decide that country's economic conditions, but rather, infrastructure corridors will bring industrial and agricultural development into the landlocked regions. Around so-called transportation arteries, i.e., railways and high-speed magnetic levitation trains, highways, developed waterways, pipelines, electricity grids, and so forth, there will emerge corridors (which are approximately 100 kilometers wide), where new cities and industrial plants, and the rapid development of agriculture, will blossom.

Over the past 15 years already, China, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, focussed on the development of large industrial projects, as well as scientific and technological progress, and, today, it is the only country experiencing an unprecedented economic boom. Since 1990 alone, the average annual growth of GNP was approximately 12%, while the living standard of the urban population improved annually by 7.5% and that of the rural population by 5.7%.

China has placed the development of the Eurasian Land-Bridge in its strategic long-term planning up to the year 2010, and the country wants to bring the economic level of its internal regions, as quickly as possible, up to that of the developed coastal and southern regions, and, by the year 2050, all of China is to be brought up to world levels.

To indicate the orders of magnitude, somewhat: The railway network will be extended by the year 2000 by 11,000 km, and by the year 2010 it will have 90,000 km of track, almost double what exists today. The Chinese road

networks will be expanded by 12,000 km in the coming years; 14 large Chinese cities will obtain subway systems, and in the next 5 to 10 years, 100 airports will be expanded or built completely anew, and just as many maritime and internal ports will be built. For the next 20-30 years, 200 cities with a population of 1 million each are planned, since the estimate is that there will be a growth of population by 200 million in that time, which will have to be appropriately housed. In order to cover the requirements of the 1.2 billion Chinese population today for energy and food, China's water reserves will be mobilized, and that on a grand scale. On the one hand, a whole series of gigantic hydroelectric power plants will be built, and there will also be huge canalization and irrigation projects in order to redirect water from the water-rich south into the arid north.

Four new nuclear power plants will be connected to the Chinese electricity grid in the coming years, and, at present, the only future-oriented high-temperature reactor, an inherently safe reactor model, is being built in China, and it has a solid position in the planning for the energy supply for the 21st century. One of the most exciting projects is the just-begun Three Gorges Dam in the central section of the Yangtze, which is planned for completion by the year 2010. This dam will not only protect 15 million people, who were hit with flood catastrophes in the past, in which often several hundred thousand people died, but hydroelectric power plants of the project will provide 17,620 megawatts of electrical power, which corresponds to about 13 nuclear power plants of the types that are used in Europe. At the same time, the Yangtze will be made navigable over a stretch of 700 km, with a five-level lock system, and water will be brought from the source region of the Yangtze, via a system of canals, into the north, where, among other things, it will make the Gobi Desert flourish.

I can not mention all of the multiplicity of the other planned projects in China, for time reasons. As an example, I would like to mention that there will be 3,600 infrastructure projects in the Bohai Region alone, in the next 15 years, of which the construction of a 57 km-long bridge over the Bohai Bay is the most spectacular.

Now, since the great success of the historic summit meeting between President Clinton and President Jiang Zemin, the center of gravity of the political relationships in the world has shifted from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Both President Clinton, as well as the Chinese government, saw in the strategic relationship of the two countries — between the presently only remaining superpower and the country which will soon be the greatest economic power in the world — the indispensable precondition for a peaceful development of the world in the 21st century. With this partnership, the potential for the reorganization of the bankrupt old financial system and the creation of a new, just Bretton Woods II System has been created.

The development of Africa

The key for the development of Africa lies in this dynamic of the Eurasian Land-Bridge and the strategic partnership between the U.S.A. and China. It will be decisive to show the countries which participate in the development of the Eurasian Land-Bridge that the development of Africa is their own essential strategic security interest.

For, the greatest immediate economic potential of Africa lies in its role as the potential breadbasket of the world.

Ten years ago, the FAO [UN Food and Agriculture Organization] reported that only one-third of the world's population are well fed, one-third have sufficient food, but because of deficiencies still suffer from mental and physical disabilities, and one-third are continuously in hunger. This distribution has shifted in the meantime to the disadvantage of the second segment.

Practically the entire area of the former Soviet Union has degenerated from the first to the second segment, and countries such as Bulgaria, Romania, and the Asiatic part of Russia have plunged into the third segment.

Given the extraordinary fertility of the African soil, where two-thirds of the agriculturally usable land has the highest soil quality, Africa could very quickly become a major breadbasket for the world. Africa presently is using only one-fourth of the land which could be used for agriculture. China, on the other hand, has 22% of the world population, but only 7% of the agriculturally usable land worldwide. Africa could very easily produce half of the world's grain production

Only if Africa is developed infrastructurally, can this continent play a decisive role in overcoming hunger everywhere in the world; it can also guarantee the provision of all people on this planet with food at a level worthy of being called human. This requires, of course, that food is produced in the necessary quality and quantity, that it is processed and transported, and this is only possible if the remnants of colonialism are overcome in Africa and the scandalous lack of infrastructure, of ports, railways from the north to the south, from the east to the west, roads, waterways, irrigation facilities, energy production and distribution, is overcome.

Under the present conditions in the world, Africa has only one chance to overcome its underdevelopment: All of this can happen over the short term, only if the Eurasian Land-Bridge is extended over the Middle East and the Strait of Gibraltar to Africa, and this continent is opened up by means of infrastructure corridors in the same way as this is already occurring for Eurasia, moving outward from China.

A moment of opportunity

It is most advantageous that the political leadership of Nigeria wants to shape the future through a "Vision for the Year 2010." There is nothing more important in a world, in which all of the old institutions are collapsing, than to think big; than to have a grand vision for how Africa can overcome the underdevelopment—for which it bears no fault—within

a relatively short period of time. For, the moment of the great crisis of the old system is at once an enormous opportunity for a completely new beginning!

Now the moment has come to realize the many programs which have either been begun, or are still only on the drawing boards! The construction of a railway line from Dakar to Port Sudan is the necessary central-line of a development corridor, which can then be joined through Sudan and Egypt with the international network of the Eurasian Land-Bridge. At the same time, of course, many new maritime ports, roads, and railway lines must be built.

Of the many obvious infrastructure projects, I would only like to briefly mention the Transaqua Project, where the main idea is to bring approximately 100,000 million cubic meters per year of fresh water from the basin of the Zaire River, through a canal system and the Bamingui and Chari river management system, into the Sahel zone and to Lake Chad, a project which would draw off only 5% of the water flowing in the river, and would not even be felt in the water-rich south, but it would be of tremendous benefit in the Sahel region.

In this region of the Sahel, which is presently undergoing progressive desertification, some 12-17 million acres are estimated for agricultural usage by means of intensive and semi-intensive irrigation. For purposes of comparison, it is pointed out that 40 million Egyptians live in an irrigated area of under 7 million acres, although this area is cultivated very intensively.

This "water transportation" must, of course, be seen in the context of the larger international transportation system of Africa, i.e., the planned trans-African highway from Lagos to Mombasa, which connects the Indian Ocean with the Atlantic over 6,000 km, and the highway from Lagos to Algiers, which can practically already be used, once it is fully built, which makes a rapid connection between the Gulf of Guinea and the Mediterranean possible.

The realization of the Transaqua and similar large projects can turn the economic dynamic of Africa around in a relatively short period of time, and Africa will soon no longer be the target of wars of imperialist forces, which want to exploit its cheap raw materials, but Africa can become the largest food exporter of the world, and so develop the economic resources in order to be able to process its own raw materials and build up its own industries as quickly as possible.

It has often happened in the past, that entire cultures and civilizations collapsed in one part of the world, while other regions experienced flourishing periods of economic and cultural progress. For the first time in human history, we are now all sitting in the same boat. That means a great danger if we do not act, and sink into chaos, instead. But it also means a wonderful opportunity, to overcome the "childhood illnesses of mankind," oligarchism and colonialism, once and for all, and to establish a just, new world economic order!