

years from now you'll all look back on that as one of the most important things that happened this year," he said.

And yet, the initiative remains extremely problematic. With Brzezinski and his geopolitical co-thinker, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, intent on using the new relationships in Central Asia and the Caucasus to form a new "arc of crisis" targetting Russia and Iran, the project threatens to become a cat's-paw against stable U.S.-Russian relations. The determined rejection of a shorter and more economical pipeline route through Iran, in an attempt to isolate that important country, could prove to be very troublesome down the road.

The commercial viability of the project also remains to be seen. Many of the oil companies, although eager to cash in on the Caspian "bonanza," are very skittish about bearing the costs of this enormous undertaking, when alternative routes already exist. There is also a great deal of skepticism with regard to the amount of oil that can be profitably extracted from the Caspian region. If the present estimates prove to be significantly over, it will be difficult to make headway on the project, with its \$2.4 billion construction cost.

When presented with the numerous difficulties this project might encounter, a senior administration official admitted that there would be many obstacles to getting the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline up and running by 2004. "The scope of this project is very ambitious. There are many ways that the process could be detoured," he said.

The Silk Road Strategy Act

Brownback's bill is a geopolitical hoax

by Suzanne Rose

Portions of Sen. Sam Brownback's (R-Kan.) "Silk Road Strategy Act" (S. 579) passed Congress on Nov. 17, as part of the Omnibus Budget Bill. Originally introduced in 1997, it was reintroduced, in a watered-down version, as an amendment to the Senate Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill on June 30. It passed the Senate the same day.

When Brownback originally introduced his bill two years ago, it followed—and opposed—the worldwide campaign led by Lyndon LaRouche and Helga Zepp-LaRouche in support of the Eurasian Land-Bridge. In 1991, Lyndon LaRouche had developed a perspective for rebuilding the Eurasian continent after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The

plan, known as the Paris-Berlin-Vienna Productive Triangle, called for utilizing investments and skilled labor in Europe to build transportation corridors linking Europe and Russia. Its Asian counterpart, known as the Eurasian Land-Bridge, was based on the idea of modernizing the old Silk Road transportation routes between China and Europe, to become corridors for economic development.

When this perspective was taken up by the Chinese government, Zepp-LaRouche campaigned for it around the world. She participated in a symposium in Beijing in May 1996 on "The Development of the Nations Along the Eurasian Land-Bridge," delivering a speech there titled "Building the Silk Road Land-Bridge: The Basis for the Mutual Security Interests of Asia and Europe." She told American audiences that it is in the interest of the United States to support the ambitious infrastructure program initiated by the Chinese government to modernize the old Silk Road routes, and that it would become the engine for growth in Eurasia. Railroads would drive the economic development of backward areas, particularly western China and Central Asia, by becoming corridors for agro-industrial infrastructure development of the land areas on either side, creating an export boom for the West, and ensuring economic development, and therefore peace, in the region.

The response of the British geopoliticians and their allies, was to counter this campaign with a strategy, developed at various forums and sponsored by such Conservative Revolution outposts as the Heritage Foundation, and in Congress, to equate "U.S. interests" in the region with various schemes to control and loot its valuable oil, gas, and mineral reserves. Senator Brownback's bill was one focus of their efforts, introduced first in 1997, and revived in March 1999.

A scheme for looting and control

In his remarks to the Senate in June, prior to introducing the Brownback Amendment (an abbreviated version of his bill), Brownback left no doubt that his intention was to assert control over the region—on behalf of the British-American-Commonwealth faction of the establishment and multinational corporations—in order to prevent, as he said, Russia, China, and Iran from dominating it. The area covered by his bill includes eight nations: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Both S. 579, and the amended version which was ultimately passed by Congress, would lay the groundwork for U.S. interventions in the South Caucasus and Central Asia on the basis of "democracy building, free market policies, and human rights"—the same approach which led to the ill-starred intervention in the Balkans by the British-controlled NATO leadership. These circles are seeking confrontation with Russia, as they move to increase control over raw materials, in the Caucasus and Central Asia, among the wealthiest

mineral areas in the world.

The original version of Brownback's bill contained explicit provisions that would have prepared the ground for Western-led military intervention in the region. It contained a call for NATO expansion in this most sensitive region, bordering Russia, by calling on the United States to "encourage and assist the development of regional military cooperation among the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia through programs such as the Central Asian Battalion and the Partnership for Peace of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization." The original version also said that the United States should, where appropriate, support the establishment of neutral, multinational peacekeeping forces to implement peace agreements reached between belligerents in the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia. These formulations echo Zbigniew Brzezinski's provocative demands that "issues of national sovereignty" be set aside in the interest of security of the raw material booty of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The version of the bill which passed Congress in November calls on the United States to embrace all the usual fraudulent buzzwords used by the British and their allies as a cover for subversion of national sovereignty, including "democratic government" and "respect for internationally recognized human rights," "NGOs," "independent media," and "transparency in political practice and commercial transactions, and open markets."

The original bill had 19 co-sponsors in the Senate, including Republican heavyweights Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), Trent Lott (R-Miss.), and Richard Shelby (R-Ala.).

It is difficult to escape the irony that Brownback is promoting his anti-China alliances for these countries supposedly so they can link up with the "stable, market-oriented economies of the West," at the very time when the markets in the West are showing signs of collapsing under the weight of rising unemployment, as in Europe, and collapsing industry, as in the United States, whereas China has maintained stable growth, because it has maintained protection against speculation, and has promoted infrastructure investment.

The statement of policy in the original bill (S. 579) calls for the United States "to assist actively in the resolution of regional conflicts," to facilitate the removal of impediments to cross-border commerce, and "to assist in the development of infrastructure . . . on an East-West axis in order to build strong international relations and commerce between those countries and the stable, democratic, and market-oriented countries of the Euro-Atlantic Community."

The nice-sounding words in the Brownback Amendment must not be confused with the Eurasian Land-Bridge policy of the LaRouches. Brownback's references to "infrastructure" deal exclusively with the pipelines and other instruments required for the efficient looting of the raw material wealth of the vast Central Asian region—not the high-tech develop-

ment corridors presented by Helga Zepp-LaRouche in Beijing, and in a comprehensive *EIR* study published in January 1997.

Brownback's pedigree

Brownback has a long record of support for British-crafted geopolitical schemes. The one-term Senator (first elected in 1997 to fulfill the remaining term of Bob Dole, who had resigned to run for President, and then re-elected to a full term in 1998) has influence far out of proportion to his seniority, or expertise in foreign relations—he was the agriculture commissioner of Kansas for six years, prior to winning a seat in Congress during the Conservative Revolution sweep of 1994.

It appears from Senate documents and press coverage, that Brownback is the paid-for asset of Koch Industries, a Kansas-based company, which is the second-largest privately held and family-run company in the United States, after Cargill. The company is involved internationally in oil and natural gas refinement and extraction, as well as pipelines, which is primarily what is at issue in the British-led energy grab in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Brownback's close election victory over Democrat Jill Docketing was virtually paid for by Charles Koch, according to Senate documents and news accounts. Koch was one of a number of wealthy conservative revolutionists who set up foundations, trusts, and shells to pump money anonymously into the 1996 elections, circumventing campaign finance laws.

One such company was Triad Management, Inc., which, according to records of a Senate investigating committee, existed for the sole purpose of influencing Federal elections, and was involved in a scheme to launder money into campaigns from contributors who had already given their legal limit. Triad operated two shell corporations, one of them called Economic Education Trust, which was solely financed by Charles and David Koch, owners of Koch Industries, albeit disguised through yet another trust. Economic Education Trust had no corporate function except to launder money into election campaigns.

In addition to funneling money from the Koches into Triad to channel into various political action committees and then into election campaigns, Economic Education Trust pumped funds into campaign attack ads in the final weeks of the Senate election, against Brownback's opponent Jill Docketing, and in contravention of election laws. Such ads, supposedly sponsored by groups not coordinating with the candidate, which want to express themselves on "issues" involved in the campaign, are not regulated by the Federal Election Commission. They are not supposed to be attack ads airing through fronts of wealthy contributors. News reports credit this extremely well-financed blitz against Docketing, in the final days of the campaign, with securing Brownback's startling victory.