

Eurasian Land-Bridge: Build Our Way Out Of The World Depression

The world is not in recession, but in a deepening economic depression—but an alternative is taking shape, in the form of the building of the “Eurasian Land-Bridge.” Actually a conception of several rail-corridor land-bridges across Eurasia, this idea is giving rise to a large number of “Great Projects” of power, communications, and water management as well. Its guiding idea came ten years ago from Lyndon LaRouche, when the fall of communism opened up the potential for an economic reconstruction drive “from the Atlantic to the Urals,” and at the same time west from China, Southeast Asia, and India. It projects the development of the vast undeveloped and underpopulated areas of central Eurasia—the “inner space of the planet”—as the economic locomotive of recovery from depression for the world as a whole.

Helga Zepp-LaRouche told the Labor Day, 2001 Schiller Institute conference, “It is no longer just a program, but the Eurasian Land-Bridge . . . is shaping up at a very rapid speed.” Land-Bridge construction is already creating infrastructure corridors, and can create “development corridors,” across Eurasia from the Atlantic to the Pacific and Indian Ocean coasts, and potentially over the Bering Strait into North America.

EIR presents here an up-to-date review, written by Jonathan Tennenbaum with maps prepared by John Sigerson, of the Eurasian Land-Bridge as a work in progress. Tennenbaum’s review updates *EIR*’s 1997 Special Report on the Land-Bridge.

Corridors Of Economic Development

Addressing a conference in Germany on May 5, LaRouche explained: “There is a great potential market under the proper conditions in Asia: in China, in India, other countries, which represent the largest portion of the human population. In a great area of particularly Central and North Asia, which is one of the great frontiers of growth of all humanity, an area of tundras and deserts and general underdevelopment. Through the mediation of Russia, which has the peculiarity, historically, of being a Eurasian nation per se, as a result of the aftermath of the Mongol occupation—through that mediation, it is possible for Europe to unite with Russia and nations in Asia to set up a long-term system under which, instead of consumer



Magnetically levitated train lines (inset) best meet the requirements of rail-centered “development corridors.” Shanghai will soon have a maglev rail connection, with technology developed in Germany, to the Shanghai airport, and then to other Chinese cities.

goods markets and investments for these countries, you set up long-term development of the productive powers of labor in these nations.

“So, you’re talking about a generation or more. That means a system of long-term credit issued by those nations which are producing the greater part of the technology, to the nations which need that supplement in order to get out of the mess they’re in. This means a system of long-term credit, interest rates of the order of 1% per annum, simple interest, no compound interest, long-term agreements under which the great markets in South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia, now come into a partnership with Europe, with Russia, with Japan, in order to create a great economic boom with some of the same features used to rebuild Western Europe in the immediate postwar period, through the Marshall Plan and other plans.

“A program for a generation of recovery, a generation of progress, a generation of development. In order to make this work, as has been understood for more than a century, almost a century and a half, the only way this could work, was to develop a system of infrastructural development which would effectively link the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean across Eurasia. This is not railroads, this is not Silk Roads, these are corridors of development, which run a range of, let’s say, up to 100 kilometers in width, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, going in various directions. Along these routes, as we did in the United States with the transcontinental railroad, the area on either side of the transportation axis becomes immediately, in and of itself, a sustainable area of economic development. By that means, you can branch out from the main corridors into subsidiary corridors of development and capture the area.

If we can make that kind of link, one interesting kind of change occurs immediately. . . .

“Take transportation alone. People who don’t think, think that ocean freight is the cheapest way to move freight. That is not true. The cheapest way is across land, but not by truck; trucks running up and down the highway tell you that the economy is being dismantled. It costs too much, it’s intrinsically bad. Railways are much better. Integrated transport systems, featuring railways, especially magnetic levitation systems, are excellent. Magnetic levitation systems move passengers more rapidly, but those same systems for moving freight, that is really a wonder. That’s where the payoff comes. If you can move freight from Rotterdam to Tokyo at an average rate of 300 kilometers per hour, without much stopping along the way, and if for every 100 km of motion across that route, you are generating the creation of wealth through production as a result of the existence of that corridor, then the cost of moving freight from Rotterdam to Tokyo is less than zero. What ocean freight can do that? Did you ever see a large supercargo ship producing wealth while travelling across the ocean? And at what speed?

“Therefore, we have come to a turning point in technology, where the development of the internal land-mass of the world and the great typical frontier is Central and North Asia. That is the greatest single opportunity before all mankind for development. This requires some revolutionary changes in the way we think about things. This means that we would be engaged in the greatest change in the environment in the history of mankind. . . .

“The object would be to bring the United States in to cooperate with that great venture.”