

# China's New Silk Road Policy Is the Solution to the Refugee Crisis!

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Jan. 23—Whereas on the public side of this year's World Economic Forum in Davos, the well-heeled Establishment held forth as usual on an eclectic array of topics, and private conversations behind-the-scenes were dominated chiefly by panic over the escalating financial crash of the trans/Atlantic sector, Chinese President Xi Jinping did something much more important: With a spectacular trip to Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Iran, he laid the basis for the integration of Southwest Asia into the New Silk Road, and thereby created the prerequisite for ending the conflict between Shi'a and Sunni in the region. With the perspective for reconstruction and development offered by China, the concrete opportunity suddenly arises to overcome the refugee crisis by rebuilding the migrants' devastated home countries.

But there was also a surprise at Davos: In the panel titled "The Future of Europe," German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble suddenly advocated a Marshall Plan for the Middle East and Africa. In an inversion of George W. Bush's phrase, he called for "a coalition of the willing," that is, of countries that are willing to invest billions in those regions from which the refugees come. And in a further reversal, Schäuble agreed with Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, who

was sitting at the same dais, that it would be disgraceful to attempt to turn Europe into a fortress, and that pressure on the external borders of the European Union should rather be reduced by such a development perspective.

What are we to make of this? Has Schäuble, of all people—the super-EU European and the bankers' man, the one who demands discipline from Greece, the Troika's spokesman for austerity—suddenly discovered that he has a soft spot for the development of these countries? In any case, France's King Henry IV believed long ago that, for the sake of a good cause, everyone need not be motivated by the highest ideal; some people won't achieve a goal until they feel their own shirts burning. Because Schäuble knows: Without Schengen—the agreement to abolish border controls within the EU—there is no euro, and without the euro there is no EU. Since there is no solidarity in the EU, then it's better not to exert pressure, which only makes the failure of the EU's Lisbon Treaty more obvious, but just count on "the willing."



*A medieval European rendition of travel on the ancient Silk Road.*

## Xi Jinping Brings ‘Win-Win’ Policy to Arab Capitals

But it was Xi Jinping, with his groundbreaking trip to the most populous countries of the Shi’a and Sunni denominations, who created the opening for such a shift. Before his trip, a Chinese Foreign Ministry position paper on China’s policy towards the Arab world explicitly referred to the 2,000-year friendship between China and the Arab states from the time of the ancient Silk Road, as the basis for a new model of cooperation for mutual progress. Xi stressed the same principles in his speech to the Arab League in Cairo, in which he emphasized dialogue as the means to settle conflicts and called for respect for the decisions of the peoples of this region, instead of attempting to impose solutions from the outside. All problems, he said, can be overcome only if the happiness of the local people is promoted.

In addition to dozens of agreements with the three countries he visited, worth a total of around \$55 billion (!) in the areas of infrastructure, transport, energy, and high technology, as subcomponents of the expansion of the New Silk Road (“One Belt, One Road”), the Chinese President also advanced the entirely new concept of international relations that his China defends. His arrival was preceded by the publication of an article signed by him in the daily newspapers of the respective countries, in which he referred to the best traditions in the culture of that country, such as the interchanges between the Han dynasty and Alexandria in Egypt 2,000 years ago, and the cooperation of Prime Minister Zhou Enlai and President Gamal Abdel Nasser at the Bandung Conference in the struggle against colonialism and hegemony. In his article in an Iranian newspaper, he emphasized the friendly welcome of Chinese emissaries during the Han, Song, and Tang dynasties, as well as the unforgettable journey of the Persian poet Saadi to Kashgar.

A comment in the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram* by Mohamed Fayez Farahat makes it clear that people in these countries understand the totally new quality of the New Silk Road policy. It is one of the largest and most important projects that has ever been proposed in human history, he wrote. In contrast to projects proposed by the West, “which either ended in nothing or projects that unevenly distribute revenues from global



World Economic Forum/swiss-image.ch/Valeriano Di Domenico

*German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble at the “Future of Europe” session of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.*

economic and financial transactions in favor of economically developed countries,” and in contrast to all of the Western attempts at exporting democracy, which have completely failed, the Chinese policy is focused on the broadest inclusion of all regions. Thus it is not oriented toward geopolitics, but toward the economic development of the cooperating states, while also making the financing available. Therefore, the New Silk Road very quickly found willingness to cooperate on the part of 60 nations, the Egyptian journalist wrote.

China’s proposal for inclusive “win-win” cooperation of all nations on this Earth—on the basis of absolute respect for the sovereignty of all countries and for their chosen political, social, and economic models—with the aim of overcoming the poverty of all, of cooperation in high-technology areas and of cultural exchanges, emphasizing the high points of one another’s culture, provides a revolutionary model for the cooperation of mankind, which excludes war as a means of conflict resolution.

This new concept of relations among nations embodies the same higher level of *coincidentia oppositorum*, the coincidence of opposites, expressed in Nicholas of Cusa’s work *De Pace Fidei* (*On the Peace of Faith*), which he wrote in response to the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The idea is that there is a higher plane and a higher truth in the order of Creation, through

which differences can be overcome. This thinking is reflected in China in the idea of the “mandate of heaven” and Confucian philosophy, while in European humanist philosophy, it is expressed in the idea of natural law: that there are natural laws which ultimately are also efficient in the affairs of mankind, and which people must abide by to ensure their continued existence in the long term.

### Time Is Running Out

The Chinese model embodies the overcoming of geopolitics, the main cause of two world wars in the Twentieth Century, and the acute danger of a third one—this time the last, because today it would be a thermonuclear world war. Schäuble is right when he says that time is running out—but not only with regard to the refugee crisis, the cohesion of the EU, and the continued existence of the Merkel government. William White, the chairman of the Review Committee of the OECD and former chief economist of the Bank of International Settlements (BIS), also warned dramatically on the eve of the Davos conference, in an interview with the *Daily Telegraph*, that the debt accumulated worldwide over the last eight years is so great that

it can no longer be serviced or repaid, “and this will be uncomfortable for a lot of people who think they own assets that are worth something.” The only question is whether these debts will be written off in an orderly fashion or go under in chaos, he said.

Of course Schäuble knows that, as Finance Minister. If he is really serious about the Marshall Plan for Southwest Asia and Africa, then he must immediately initiate the Glass-Steagall two-tier banking system throughout Europe, as the only way to write down the banks’ toxic paper in an orderly way, and in place of the casino economy, put in place a credit system for development of the real economy, in Southwest Asia and Africa as well as in Germany and the rest of Europe. This is the test of whether his Damascus Road conversion is real.

Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang has just spoke with Chancellor Merkel by telephone, and according to the Chinese press agency Xinhua, the two reaffirmed their intention to cooperate in the attempt to overcome the Syrian humanitarian crisis. China is holding out its hand, and we must grasp it now, in order to give the Germans confidence once again and give those in Southwest Asia and Africa an existence and a future.



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