

## Panel II

# How the Belt and Road Initiative Is Changing Africa: The Only Human Solution to the Refugee Crisis

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HUSSEIN ASKARY

## Opening Remarks

*Hussein Askary, Southwest Asia Coordinator for the Schiller Institute, introduced Panel II of the Schiller Institute conference on June 20.*

Thank you very much, Claudio. I'm pleased and honored to be opening this esteemed and very interesting panel.

My name is Hussein Askary; I am an Iraqi Swedish citizen. I'm the Southwest Asia Coordinator for the Schiller Institute. I've been working with the Schiller Institute for the last 23 years. I'm also the co-author of the Schiller Institute Special Report, *Extending the New Silk Road to West Asia and Africa*, which was released in November 2017 at a conference here, in this same place. This report, of which we have copies—everybody should get copies—is a wonderful expression of the optimism that has been sparked by Africa's joining the New Paradigm, defined by the Belt and Road Initiative of 2013



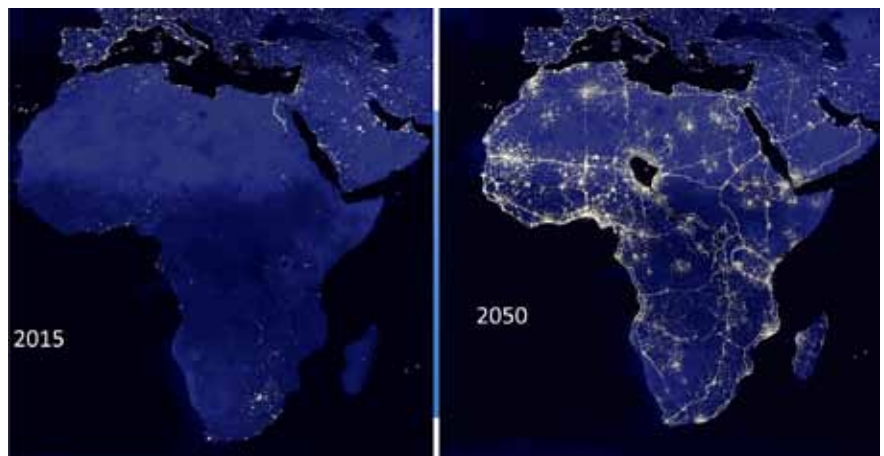
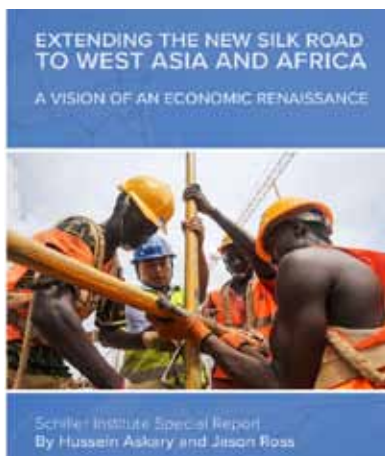
*Hussein Askary*

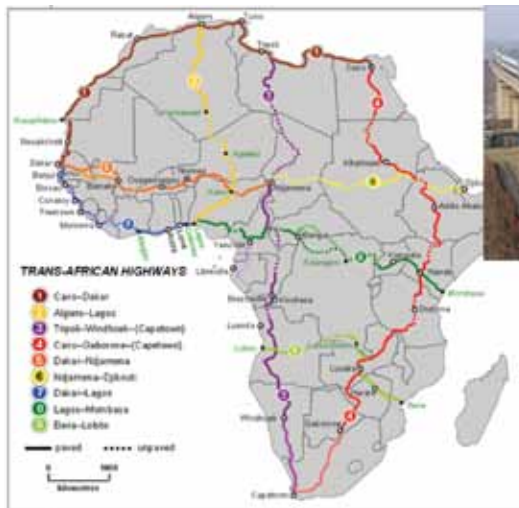
presented by China, and by the BRICS nations' Fortaleza Declaration of 2014.

Most African nations are working intensively now on real development plans with China and the other nations of the BRICS and their friends. This report is also a road map for the bright future that is awaiting the coming generations of Africans and the people of Southwest Asia, the so-called "Middle East." Middle East is the wrong term—it's called Southwest Asia.

### **Africa Is a Wonderful Continent**

This is Africa by night. We have a true image of Africa by night, taken by NASA satellites, and you see a continent shrouded in darkness, because there is simply no electricity. The image of Africa in 2050 is an image drawn from my instructions, by our friend and member, Chance McGee, of how we envision Africa to





Trans-African High-Speed Rail Network.

this is the lesson we are learning from China's involvement in Africa.

I'm not going to describe this report in detail, because I did so last year, and people should just get a copy of the report. Some of the projects described in this report are already completed, some are under construction or being seriously negotiated. As some of our honorable speakers will testify, enormous progress is taking place. At least one nation in

look by night in 2050.

By 2030, Southwest Asia and Africa will have jointly contributed the greatest population growth, of all world regions, reaching an estimated 1.9 billion by 2030, with an amazing median age of only 23 years. By 2050, the bulk of the world's population growth will take place in Africa. Of an additional 2.4 billion people projected to be born between 2015 and 2050, 1.3 billion will be added in Africa. While people who have been brainwashed by British propaganda believe this is a catastrophe, and a problem, we believe this is a fantastic challenge and a great opportunity.

And I think this is the same view that China holds of Africa. If we listen to speeches by President Xi Jinping in the China-Africa summits, he sees Africa as a great opportunity. What is required, as Helga Zepp-LaRouche said this morning, is that to get to the New Paradigm, for Europe to join the New Paradigm, it's not only that they will participate in building railways in Africa—we have to change our view of humans, and our attitudes, for example, towards Africa! Because Africa, in European minds and in the United States, is associated with problems, because that's the only thing being reported. So instead, we have to get a change in the mind of the European policymakers, and in the population in the United States, that Africa is not a problem: Africa is a great challenge, but it is a great opportunity. I think

Africa, Ethiopia, is now nicknamed a “double-digit growth nation.” And many others will soon join the club.

There are no limits to what can be achieved on this wonderful continent, and therefore, our level of ambition and visions, and our plans, have to be at the same level as the challenge itself. This is a map of the trans-African high-speed railway we envision. This plan has existed in the African Union for many, many years, but it is represented as highways that have never been built. But now the rail is being developed piece by piece.

Like the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railway that was completed in 2017, with the help of China, we have the Mombasa-Nairobi railway, which was also completed last year. These projects are breaking all previous records—on construction, speed, efficiency, and cost. So these are some of the projects.

The plan that the African Union has been dreaming

Mombasa-Nairobi Railway and East African Master Plan



of and planning for, is now being implemented on the ground. The proverbial shovel is already in the ground. This is not something that is going to happen sometime in the future.

Our panel, titled “How the Belt and Road Initiative Is Changing Africa: The Only Human Solution to the Refugee Crisis,” could not come together at a more crucial time than this. As the old paradigm unfortunately continues to wreak havoc in many nations, such as in Syria and Yemen, the consequences of at least forty years of misguided and intentionally destructive policies imposed on these nations are still being felt through widespread poverty, epidemics, food shortages, and lack of basic services, and also in the mass refugee crisis.

### **I Was a Refugee, Myself**

I was myself a refugee, and suffered enormously with my family when we had to flee Iraq in 1991, from the Kurdish city of Sulaymaniyah in Iraq, as a consequence of the Gulf War—Desert Storm—which Colonel Scholz was talking about [see Panel 1], launched by George Bush, Sr. We had to walk, my family and I, for six days and nights, in the very harsh mountain climate; it was raining and even snowing in some cases. We had nothing with us, except small bags of dried fruit, until we reached the Iranian border, and then we ended up in huge tent camps in Iran.

When we reached these refugee camps, it was a terrible situation for morale. The physical conditions were terrible, but we managed to dust off our clothes and rise—my family and I, my sisters, especially—and we started working with the international aid organizations, the Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders. One year later, I managed to come to Norway. I was the featured person in a 1994 documentary film in Norway about the refugee crisis. It was a documentary series, called “Sightseeing in Reality: One of the Lucky Ones,” referring to me. I was 23 years old at the time.

As Helga said today, you know, when you look at refugees, they’re not objects on the TV screen. When you look at refugees, they are real human beings—many of them have aspirations, they have a mission in their lives, and they’re not just a number.

Two years later, after I reached Norway in 1992, I



*Refugees fleeing in 1991 during Operation Desert Storm from Sulaymaniyah, Iraq, through a very harsh mountain climate, to a camp in Iran.*

met the Schiller Institute in Oslo. So I have a firsthand sense of what it means to suffer as a refugee, and to leave everything behind and risk your life to get to where you believe is a safer place, or where you can live with dignity.

However, I was convinced that the solution to all the many refugee crises was not by relieving the symptoms, by simply providing aid to the refugees—which should be done, anyway, you should help refugees—but by dealing with the causes of all these crises at the core. That could and will only be dealt with, through creating a new and just world economic order, and political order.

So, it was all very natural for me to join the Schiller Institute in 1994, and dedicate my time and energy to contribute to creating this new paradigm, with Helga and Lyndon LaRouche and all the wonderful people I have met and worked with all these years.

So, whether you are a refugee, a native, a citizen, a resident of Europe or the United States or anywhere, you should join the Schiller Institute: Because this is the only way, as I have experienced, to make a change in the world that has an impact on every living being on the planet.

So, now, with the World Land-Bridge we are many. We have whole nations also joining the New Paradigm, and we can all see that the prospect for a prosperous and beautiful future for all nations is within reach. Therefore, I urge every one of you, that in the midst of the worst suffering, we always have to have our eyes, not on the mud under our feet, but directed toward the bright stars above.

Thank you very much.

WANG HAO

# A Role for Europe in The Belt and Road Initiative

*Wang Hao, in the Embassy of the People's Republic of China to the Federal Republic of Germany, is First Secretary for Economy and Trade. He spoke on Panel II of the Schiller Institute conference, on June 30, 2018.*

Good afternoon, everybody! It's a great honor to be invited to attend today's meeting. First of all, I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to the Schiller Institute, which has put a lot of effort and passion—in German, we say *Leidenschaft*—into organizing today's conference.

My topic is “A Role for Europe in the Belt and Road Initiative.” This is a topic which the organizers gave me. I found it a difficult, but a meaningful one. Difficult because, as a diplomat it is hard for me to tell Europe how it should engage in the Belt and Road Initiative. But, on the other hand, it is meaningful that, as the largest trade partner of China, the European Union should participate in this initiative.

European entrepreneurs have also shown their interest. So today, I would like to have a discussion with you regarding this topic.

## Why the Belt and Road Initiative?

First, I would like to share with you why China put forward the Belt and Road Initiative. The spirit of the Silk Road was the connectivity of different peoples. In the age of globalization, this spirit still has its meaning. One of the preconditions to connecting people is infrastructure, such as roads and railways. China has learned from the imperialists how important transport facilities are for the development of the economy.

I would like to tell you a story of my own. When I was a kid, I often went to see my grandparents, who lived in the provincial capital, which was less than 200



*Wang Hao*

km away, but travel took almost a whole day, due to the bad road conditions at that time. It was not only a waste of time, but also reflected the inefficiency of the economy. Nowadays, the two cities are connected by a highway, just like most other Chinese cities, and the journey takes less than two hours. We Chinese have a saying: “To get rich, you must build a road first.”

Today, China is the second largest economy in the world, and building an advanced infrastructure network has made an important contribution to that. Presently, China

has 136,000 km of expressways, and 25,000 km of high-speed railway, which accounts for two-thirds of the world's total. Seven of the ten biggest seaports worldwide are located in China. Both passenger and cargo rail are rapidly developing in China. All of which has changed people's lives, as well as laying a solid foundation for the rapid development of China's economy.

In the age of globalization, there are still many places around the world which are underdeveloped and lacking basic infrastructure. The needs in these areas are enormous. According to the Asian Development Bank, Asia alone will need to invest \$1 trillion every year from 2017 to 2030 in infrastructure, in order to maintain its growth momentum.

As you might know, facilities connectivity is one of the five priorities of the Belt and Road Initiative. Here, facilities refers not only to transport facilities, but also includes oil and gas pipelines, grids, and cross-border cable construction. The aim is to expand road and rail links, and eliminate traffic bottlenecks to facilitate international transport and trade; and the improvement of ports and Asian infrastructure, oil and gas pipelines, grids, and cable networks.

We believe that proper transportation infrastructure is the basis for economic development. That is one of the reasons why China put forward the Belt and Road Initiative.

I would like to emphasize here that the Belt and Road is not a strategy, but an initiative. Every nation can participate and benefit from it. The Belt and Road Initiative is a public good that China offers to the world: It is a fast train to prosperity that is ready to take everybody along. It's also a massive, long-term project, not just for short-term profit.

### **Europe Is Already Benefitting**

China is a country with limited resources and capabilities that depends on the active participation of other partners, including Germany and Europe: Here is how Europe can make a contribution and benefit from it. Actually, 19 European countries, including Germany, Great Britain, and France are members of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which provides solid financial support for the Silk Road initiative. Germany is represented as the largest non-regional partner in the AIIB. Deutsche Bank belongs to the first group of non-regional financial service providers for the Silk Road initiative.

European companies also participate in projects within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, with their technology, capital, products, and know-how. I would like to emphasize that in order to participate in Belt and Road, European enterprises should take initiative themselves, instead of waiting for projects to come to them. They should look for the opportunities. In this area, the chambers of commerce of Europe in the countries along the routes can play an important role.

Ladies and Gentlemen: By cooperation along the Belt and Road, China and Europe both benefit economically and give the states along the routes improvement in both economic development and living conditions, which will further provide new opportunities for busi-



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*China-to-Europe rail freight. There were more than 3,000 fast-train trips between China and Europe in 2017.*

ness and improve Europe's internal and external security.

We already have some visible achievements, such as the more than 3,000 fast trains that have operated between China and Europe in 2017—forty-eight of them between China and Germany. The fast train has become a symbol of the initiative in Europe. Duisburg and Hamburg are two important destinations in Europe and have benefitted a lot from it. Other cities, such as Mannheim, Rostock and Bremen have also shown great interest in operating fast trains. We encourage more European companies to use fast trains to export their goods to China and other Asian countries, in order to save time and lower costs.

Last but not least, I sincerely hope that Europe and China will go along with the trend of the times, engage in open and win-win cooperation, embrace reform and innovation, and seize the historical opportunity of the Belt and Road Initiative.

I must apologize for leaving early, and cannot participate in the panel discussion although I am eager to do so, but my colleague and I have to catch the train to go back to Berlin, because our prime minister will be visiting Germany in a week. So, there is a lot of work waiting for us.

I wish the conference success, and wish all of you a nice day. Thank you.

# After the Transaqua Breakthrough, Nigeria Comes to the Fore

*H.E. Ambassador Yusuf Maitama Tuggar, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to Germany, spoke on Panel II of the Schiller Institute conference, on June 30, 2018.*

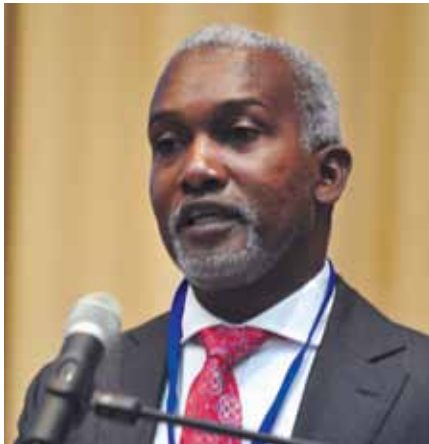
Thank you very much! Let me begin by commending the organizers, the Schiller Institute, for hosting such a conference, which seeks to discuss something that the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and I in particular, hold dear to our hearts, which is the inter-basin water transfer from the Congo Basin to the Lake Chad Basin.

When I was first invited, it was to a panel discussion, so I focused on simply having a discussion. The topic was to be, “After the Transaqua Breakthrough, Nigeria Comes to the Fore.” I decided, instead of preparing a speech, to just stick to my discussion, which is what I’m going to do while I stand here, so I hope you will not mind that.

## **Inter-Basin Water Transfer to Save Lake Chad**

The inter-basin water transfer, like I said, seeks to transfer about 100 million cubic meters of water per year from the Congo Basin to the Lake Chad Basin, and in particular to Lake Chad itself, which has been shrinking over the years. It has been the subject of international discussion, because it underscores what most of us are concerned about, which is climate change, desertification, conflicts, because it happens that the Sahara region, and the Lake Chad Basin area in particular, is an area where a lot of these issues are coming together. So it’s the nexus for conflict, for migration, and for hydrocarbon exploration, because oil and gas have been discovered in Niger Republic, and in Chad. There are pipelines being built.

And of course, everyone knows about the Boko Haram conflict that was going on there. Thank God, it has been surmounted by the requisite collaboration between African countries, because the region happens to



*Ambassador Yusuf Maitama Tuggar*

be in one of the most complex cross-border areas in Africa, if not *the* most complex, where four countries meet: Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Nigeria. One of the reasons why there was a lag or delay in tackling the Boko Haram problem was that there was a failure to define it the way it is, which is a cross-border conflict, and to use the collaboration of the countries in the region to solve the problem.

Now this, thankfully, changed when the current President, Muhammadu Buhari, was sworn in, in 2015. Five days after his swearing in, he

embarked on a visit to Niger, to Cameroon, to Chad, and essentially said, “Look guys, we have to come together. We have to collaborate and solve this problem.”

Now this was no fluke, because he happened to also be a former governor of Borno State, which was ground zero for this conflict, so he understood the region very well. And he knew that historically, going back to tackle such problems, such as the case of Rabih Zubayr in 1897, and other such cases, you needed the collaboration of all the countries. At least since 1964, there’s always been an organ to tackle this sort of problem.

The water transfer issue is being spearheaded at the moment by the Lake Chad Basin Commission. Thank God, the foremost expert on this water transfer happens to be part of the panel, so I was happy to see his name there: Mr. Mohammed Bila. In fact, truth be told, he ought to have spoken before me so that I can just cruise after that, but be that as it may, I will do my best. But the technical details, the deeper insights into what is to be achieved, I’m sure he will explain.

## **China, Europe in African Development**

I don’t want us to look at this project, or indeed, other developmental projects that are going on in Africa, and in Nigeria in particular, through the binary lens of China versus Europe—the sort of binary approach that is perhaps some sort of Cold War lag, where we think that if



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The Council of Ministers of the Lake Chad Basin Commission conference, February 2018.

China is playing, then Europe is out, or if Europe is playing, China is out. We need the cooperation, the collaboration of all three, because it's not just Europe and China either; Africa is also at the table and there is a need to ensure that Africa is always represented, and is part of the discussion that develops any solutions, be they infrastructure, development, migration, what-have-you, Africa needs to be a part of it.

One of the reasons why, with the Lake Chad issue, we need the full collaboration and participation of Europe, and not just China, is because this will be a part of the One Road, One Belt Initiative, which fits in *perfectly* with the concept of globalization, because it's about interconnectivity, which is the way we look at the world. This is what has happened over the course of human history. We have to redefine the map of the world, or the part of the world that we know, as we did before we even discovered that the whole world was a globe. So, we've gone from Terra Rugariana, the Idrisi map which was actually upside down. He looked at it differently. So we also need to start looking at globalization, that connectivity.

We need to perhaps lay more emphasis on maps that highlight infrastructure lines, rail lines, transmission lines for electricity, roads, and so on and so forth, as opposed to more of the Halford Mackinder type of approach, which is to have a Eurasian World Island and then everything else beyond that is a Rim Land, it's a Shatterbelt; it's all of that. We need that collaboration, and the only way you can achieve these sorts of developmental and infrastructure leap-frogging initiatives in Africa is when you utilize the existing knowledge, the existing database.

And this is where Europe has a critical role to play, because, I have to say, it is for me, it's perhaps *kismet* that we happen to be holding this gathering in no less a place than Germany. Because some of the earliest irregular migrants that were received in the Lake Chad Basin area happened to be from Germany! It was Heinrich Barth in the 1850s, it was Gustav Nachtigal; it was his nephew (I forget his name now), a priest who did a lot of extensive studies of the flora and fauna, the culture and much more about the Lake Chad area. Perhaps there is a need to tap into all that knowledge and data that was gathered, to be able to transfer huge volumes of water from the Congo Basin to Lake Chad, which would completely transform the sub-region, if not the entire continent. With such a feat, you would generate elec-

tricity, you would provide water for irrigation, provide transportation and fishing activities—so much. Work would be provided for the teeming youth, who are always looking to make that desert crossing—so the issue of irregular migration would also be touched by such a project.

Quite a bit of ground has been covered. I remember when the President of Nigeria was sworn in. Shortly after that, I had a meeting with him, and I was emphasizing the need for the current administration to make progress on water transfer. I talked to him about the 1990s, when some of these efforts were initiated, and 2000, when on the legislative side in Nigeria, a committee was created that was meant to be a regional committee for the Lake Chad, to tackle some of the funding issues, some of the sensitive issues, so each member country would have two legislators representing them on the Lake Chad Basin Commission. He told me, "Look, I became involved in this and took up interest in this in the 1970s." This was when he was Petroleum Minister, when he flew with then President Obasanjo, and the Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Garba, to meet with Ahmadou Ahidjo in Cameroon.

So you see, it goes all the way back. It's something that needs to be done. These are the sorts of transformative projects that we need to be able to achieve what we keep mentioning, sustainable development. Sustainable development is not going to be achieved by simply listing goals. We need to identify these sorts of transformative projects, to fund them, support them, see them through to fruition. The only way that we will be able to achieve that is if we all put our hands together—hands and heads. So it's China, it's Europe, it's Africa.

Thank you very much.

# Looking Ahead: Will Africa Become the New China?

*Mohammed Bila is an Expert Modeler at the Lake Chad Basin Observatory, Lake Chad Basin Commission. He spoke to the conference on behalf of the Commission.*

**Claudio Celani:** So, now it's over to you, Mohammed. Mohammed Bila—we have known each other for three years now, and he is also a Nigerian. Don't think that Nigeria is over-represented here, because he represents the eight countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission.



*Mohammed Bila*

**Mohammed Bila:** Thank you, Claudio. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the Lake Chad Basin Commission is delighted to be given this opportunity to interact with the Schiller Institute. I have to convey the apologies of our Executive Secretary. Due to some constraints, he could not come. That is why he sent me to portray the viewpoints of the Lake Chad Basin Commission to the participants of this conference.

I am a modeler for the Lake Chad Basin Commission; I have been there since 2002. So, all the developments that have been going on, even before 2002 within Nigeria,—I have seen the impact of the drying of Lake Chad. I have seen the attempts made by the different governments to solve the problem. I have seen the support that the international community has been giving to the Lake Chad Basin and the member states. But as of 2012, we had a totally different, new challenge, that is, an open conflict with people who feel they must change everybody. This problem, if we had looked for a solution 30 years ago, probably would not have reached this state.

The Congo-Lake Chad Inter-Basin Water Transfer became a solution to the problem of the drying up of Lake Chad, when the Eighth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), held in Abuja in March 1994, launched an international campaign to save Lake Chad. With the election

of President Muhammadu Buhari in 2015 in Nigeria, and his appeal to the international community to help in recharging Lake Chad, to revive economic activities and reduce terrorism, the LCBC decided to look at one of the oldest proposals we had, which was called the Transaqua proposal. The proposal was developed in the 1980s as a comprehensive solution to the longest Sahel drought on record. It started in 1973, but in the 1980s, we still had this drought.

## **The Abuja Declaration of 2018**

In March 2018, under the leadership of President Buhari, eight African heads of state and government came to Abuja to attend the International Conference to Save Lake Chad. Those eight heads of state, based on the proceedings and discussions in the workshops, chose the Transaqua project as the most viable option to save Lake Chad, but also to transform Africa.

In this meeting, we had the heads of state from the LCBC countries, five of them, and then we had a representative from the government of Libya, and also President Ali Bongo Ondimba of the Central African Republic of Gabon. We also had the affirmation of the proceedings of the conference by Denis Sassou Nguesso, the President of Congo Brazzaville; he called during the conference and said, "I give all my blessings to whatever comes out of this conference." So, this was the first time the African leaders came together and tried to look for a common solution that will solve the problem.

The Transaqua proposal consists of a 2,400 km waterway, to transfer between 30 to 50 billion cubic meters of water. The initial proposal that was done in the 1980s by the Italian engineer Marcello Vichi, thought we could get 100,000 billion cubic meters and move it to Lake Chad. But from then to now, we have been having a consistent drought, so the general thinking is that we might not get 100,000 billion cubic meters, but we can



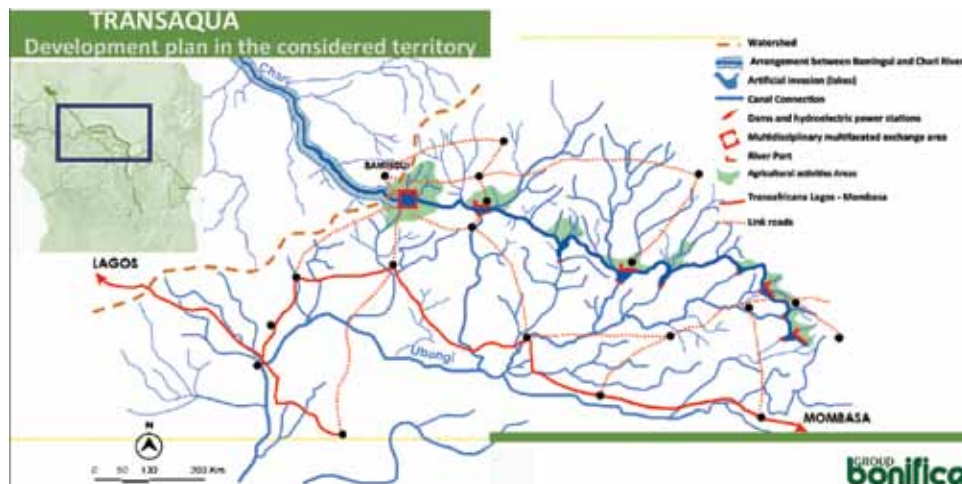
FIGURE 1



get between 30 to 50 billion cubic meters taken from the right-side tributaries of the Congo River transferred to Lake Chad. The project is expected to bring economic development to seven African countries and indirect benefits to five more countries associated with the Congo and Lake Chad basins.

At the end of the conference, the Abuja Declaration was endorsed by the Heads of State, in which they noted that the drying up of Lake Chad and the loss of sources of livelihood in the Sahel are affecting human security through southward migration and conflict towards Central Africa and Congo; insecurity of lives and property in the Sahel, the Lake Chad region, and West Africa in

FIGURE 2



general; and negating the stability of Central Africa in the long term. So, this is a gradual thing.

Since 1973, those who have assets, that is, those who have cattle, have been moving away from the Sahel; they have been going towards the center of Africa. That is where the grass is green. They are trying to protect what little assets they have by moving southward. This migration is taking them to a new region where they meet people with different cultures, with different languages. This is the main cause of the problem in the Central African Republic. So, we have concluded that if we don't revive the situation, this southward migration within Africa will cause more problems in the regions that are already experiencing internal conflicts. Also, this loss of livelihood is costing the young in the Sahel region to move up north through Libya to Europe.

The Abuja declaration endorsed the Transaqua Inter-Basin Water Transfer initiative as a pan-African project necessary to restore Lake Chad for peace and security in the Lake Chad region, and for the promotion of navigation, economic development, and industrialization in the whole Congo basin. The African Development Bank was mandated to facilitate the creation of the Lake Chad Fund of U.S. \$50 billion. The funding sources shall include a social component, funded through public sources from African states, and an economic component, funded using public funds and loans and donations by Africa's development partners.

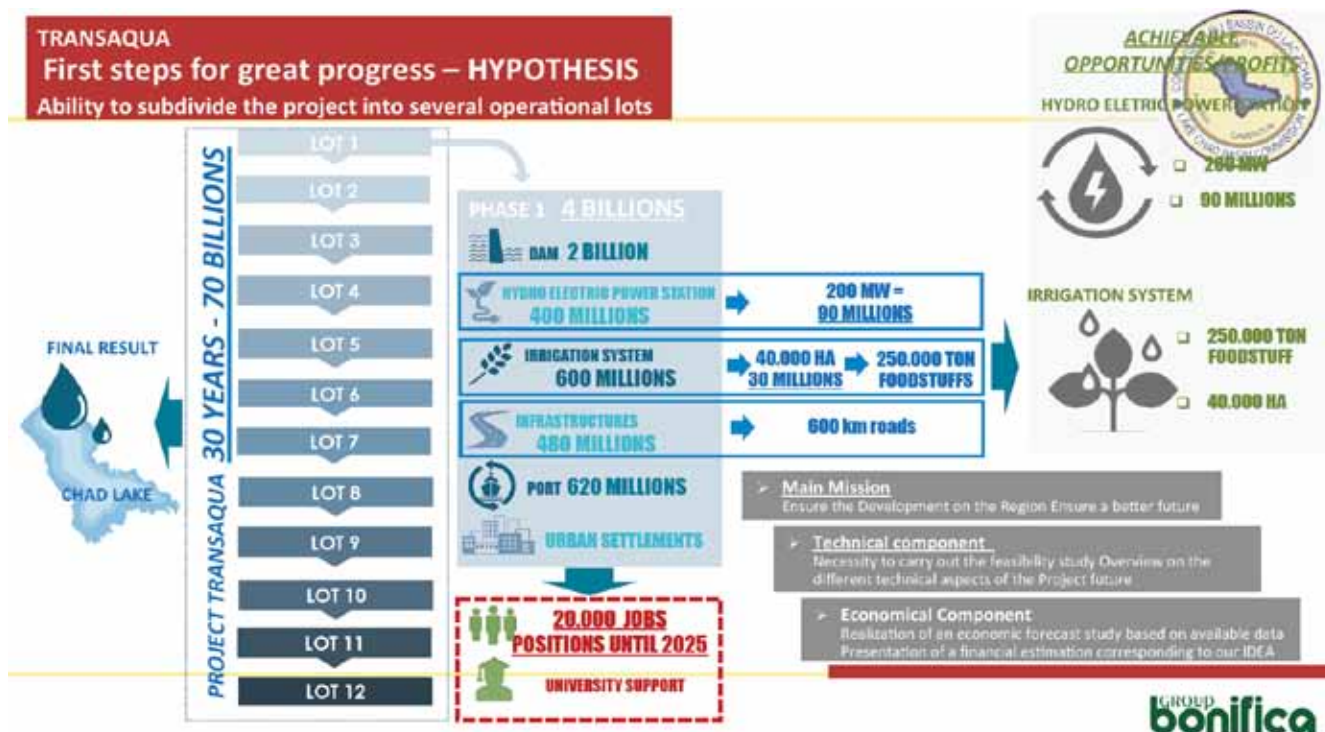
### DR Congo Will Be First to Benefit

This picture of the Transaqua project [Figure 1] shows the rail links needed to create the infrastructure [being built with help from China, independent of Transaqua]. The blue in the center is the Transaqua

Water Navigation Canal, which will start in the south of the Lake Victoria area, the Lake Kivu region, which goes along the crest by gravity, reaching the Central African Republic, where we expect to develop an industrial zone. This canal will drop its water into the Chari River, which will gradually recharge the Lake Chad.

These are the regions that will be impacted by this Transaqua Project. [Figure 2] You can see that the first

FIGURE 3



beneficiary will be the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), because the water will be generated from that basin. We need new concepts to describe what is happening. The traditional concept is, you take water and allocate it to a country or to a group of users. But with the new concept of having a benefit sharing, win-win situation, we cannot go with the traditional concept. So here, we foresee a certain stock of water, which has one value, taken from the Congo River, moving along the canal. It's adding value in transportation of goods; it's adding value by replenishment of that canal. This water goes into the Central African Republic.

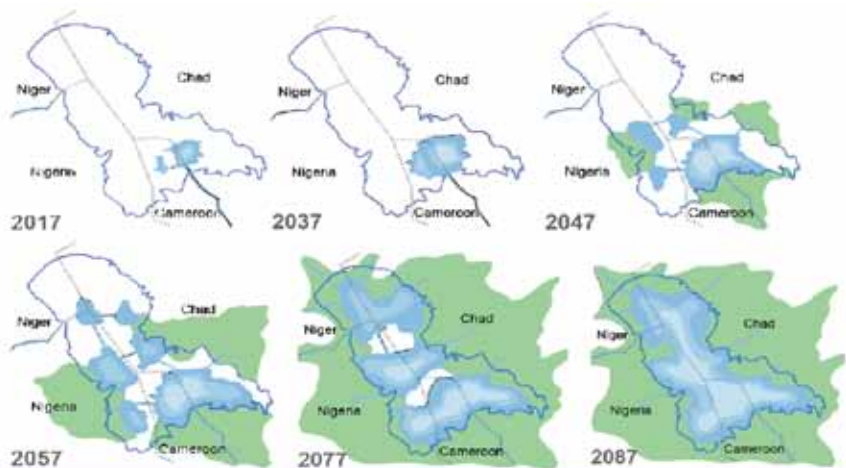
When this stock of water moves, dams will be created. We have identified that at the tributaries, dams will be created. These dams will generate electricity; so this is another added value from this stock of water. And as it moves to the Central African Republic, the hydroelectricity could be used, and the water could be used for irrigation. This same stock of water will move into the Lake Chad basin across the divide. Cameroon can use the water for irrigation, the electricity already generated can be shared by Cameroon, can be shared by Chad, because these are all regions where we don't

have electricity. So these are all benefits that come out from this project.

Eventually, this water will go into Lake Chad. Niger is going to benefit from irrigation and whatever else they want to develop the water for. So, this is a big opportunity for movement of goods and services from central Africa to the Sahel, from the new irrigation projects. Instead of Africa *importing* billions of tons of rice every year, this project will be capable of generating that quantity of rice *within* Africa. The industrial areas, the container terminals that will be set up along this navigable canal, will bring in new economic development.

This stock of water will also revive biodiversity; most especially in the Congo Basin, where they have large protected areas—parks. When you bring more water into those areas, you enhance the multiplication of biodiversity in these protected areas. So this project will not only develop Africa, but it will also help us to revive biodiversity, protect the Central African Republic, and at the same time also revive biodiversity in the Lake Chad. It will boost regional trade, create new economic infrastructures, such as river ports, container terminals, agro-industrial zones and new

FIGURE 4



roads. There are areas where there are no roads. In the DRC, if you move from one town to the other, if it is not on the Congo River it is a hell of a challenge for the people. They have to go either on a bicycle or a motorcycle. These projects will definitely build new roads.

### Financial Return from the Beginning

The project doesn't need to be implemented all at once. The company that we have been working with, the Bonifica group of Italy, makes simulations. Their simulation says we can break it down into as many as twelve phases. From the first "operational lot" [phase], we can generate economic goods; and from the money generated by selling those goods, we can proceed to the next phase, the next lot. So, gradually, the African countries will even have the capacity to plan it in such a way that they can call whichever partner they want to participate in developing the different lots.

The simulation says that generating financial returns immediately when we start the first phase, is capable of providing stable growth for the next 30 years—the expected duration to really complete the project. So, you have a constant inflow of capital, a constant financial result, which is taken into the next lot of the project. So, gradually the project will provide financial sustainability right from the beginning.

The first lot of the project, which Bonifica has simulated, is building a dam in the Central African Republic capable of generating 200 MW of hydroelectricity; development of four irrigation systems covering an area

of more than 40,000 hectares; construction of up to 600 km of roads; building several new urban settlements; and building an industrial and logistical complex with the creation of the direct employment of at least 20,000 people and approximately the same number of jobs created indirectly. This is based on an investment of just about 4 billion euro. This result can be achieved by 2025.

### Nkrumah Had This Dream

So, if I can go back to the question, "Will Africa become the next China?" The answer is yes, if we make this investment in the Central

African Republic, and we go ahead over the next 50 years—this partnership between Africa, Europe, and China. In 2016, China pledged to President Muhammadu Buhari to invest in this project. You are the first people who started the feasibility study to do it. Later on, we were so happy when Italy decided to join. During the conference in Abuja, Italy donated 2.5 million euro to the feasibility study. So, China has already invested \$1.8 million, and now Italy has joined with 2.5 million euro. So we now have the ability to do a comprehensive study for the Transaqua project. It's much more than just a water transfer project; it's a transformation project for economic growth in Africa.

The realization of the Transaqua infrastructure project with the support and partnership of Europe and China will surely launch Africa on the road to economic growth, human security, industrialization, peace, development, and the attainment of the dreams of pan-African leaders such as Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. Nkrumah had this dream in 1964. If we start investing in this partnership now, in the next 50 years, Africa will become the New China.

We have mapped out the roads that will be created in just the first lot, in the Central African Republic, and what we expect Lake Chad to be in 2087 with the lake no longer broken into the different pools we have now. We will have a single body of water. We have mapped the potential area to be irrigated along and around Lake Chad in all the countries. We have the strong belief that this will transform Africa.

Thank you for your attention.

# What Pan-Africanism on the Silk Road?

*Dr. Amzat Boukary-Yabara, African historian, is General Secretary of the Pan-African League--UMOJA. He is the author of Africa Unite! Une histoire du panafricanisme (Paris, 2014).*

Ladies and gentlemen,

I thank the organizers and the speakers at this international conference of the Schiller Institute, and Solidarité & Progrès, who asked me to intervene. This is the second time that I have the opportunity to speak with you here, in Germany.

I'm a historian and I intervene as Secretary General of the Pan-African League—UMOJA. Umoja means “unity” in the African language of Swahili. We are a political party, active in some 15 African countries, most notably in Congo, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, and Senegal. We are active also in the Diaspora: France, Belgium, England, Switzerland, and North America, and we have sympathizers in China and in Russia. The headquarters of our movement is in Cotonou, in Benin.

Our political orientation is the tradition of the “Prime Combat,” the model for the United States of Africa,<sup>1</sup> which is aimed at making Africa self-reliant in realizing its development by its own means. We aspire to restore to ourselves our own local and national governing aspirations. Our political program starts from the recognition that Africa is at the crossroads of globalization and of balkanization, and it must free itself through the following three steps: the conquest of power at the local and presidential level by progressive and pan-Africanist forces, the construction of a politically integrated Africa with its own values, and finally, the creation of international alliances collaborating with us in assuring that Africa will no longer be the playground of world disorder.

Each one of these three stages must effectively investigate the necessity to search effectively for a new paradigm within international relations, because of challenges



*Dr. Amzat Boukary-Yabara*

which present themselves today in different forms such as, for example, the emancipation of women, which is a great African project, the ecological question, the demographical problem, the digital revolution, and the new domain of bio-technology, and in what we are very concerned about, us Africans, what I call the second phase of decolonization—because there has been a first phase during the 1960's generally, which was definitely not sufficient.

## **One China, One Africa**

My intervention, therefore, is on the resolution of the equation posed by China to Africa: *What Pan-Africanism on the Silk Road?*

First of all, China is not a new actor in Africa. Around 1415, Chinese admiral Zheng He reached the coasts of East Africa during a period when the new silk road was about to be replaced by the Great discoveries and the route to the Americas. During more than five centuries, Africa was forced to open itself to all human and economic predations, in the context of slavery and of colonization.

China, on its side, shut itself off to the outside world before suffering the European and Japanese foreign occupations. In order to recover its own destiny, China first worked towards its political reunification with Mao's Revolution of 1949. The Bandung conference in 1955, the support for African national liberation movements and for the building of the Tanzania-Zambia railroad, showed that China, despite its geographical distance and the difficulties of linguistic communication, didn't wait to become a great power before coming to the help of the Africans during that first period of decolonization.

In the 1960's, several African countries recognized the People's Republic of China, including some French colonies before France did, for example, and supported China's return to the United Nations. Rather than looking to Europe and the United States for support, China engaged in South-South cooperation with the Group of 77 or with the BRICS, and even contested some of the rules of the WTO. Finally, China has no connection to

1. The idea of The United States of Africa (USA) was first coined by Marcus Garvey in his 1924 poem, “Hail, United States of Africa”.

the structural adjustment policies which caused the collapse of all of the African states and economies in the last forty years. To develop herself, China never followed the Washington consensus or the IMF or World Bank directives.

However, the project for a New Silk Road policy in Africa brings responses, but also poses new questions concerning the Chinese presence. Let us be clear: China defends its interests and will develop its new Silk Road whether the West or Africans like it or not. Africa is the last frontier in that road, and the criticism espoused by the Western media against the Chinese presence in Africa is more motivated by the decline of the Euro-American influence in markets which they thought were going to be theirs forever, than by a real interest on the future of Africans for whom the question is not whether a new colonialism will replace a former one, but how to recuperate our sovereignty.

The first answer to those questions for Africa is that no development is possible without undergoing liberation and a revolution. We consider Pan-Africanism to be the movement which organizes African liberation and revolution. It's a political, economic, cultural, and scientific revolution, in which development is not an ideology but a paradigm—the paradigm of unity. Since Chou Enlai, Chinese diplomacy opened spaces in Africa relative to this paradigm of unity. A last example of this is that of Burkina Faso which just broke diplomatic relationships with Taiwan and announced that all projects previously entrusted to Taiwan have been taken over by Beijing. Indeed, the major condition that China poses in its partnership is that of recognizing the principle of One China. Pan-Africanism is also based on the principle of a “One Africa.” One China, One Africa.

### **After Humiliation, Reparations and Reconstruction**

In the present state of affairs, relations between China and Africa are not equal since China is a State-Continent and Africa is a continent of some fifty states of which none is equal to China, in spite of the potentialities of the territories like Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo. When China, or another actor, negotiates with an African country, the Africans must negotiate with the general interest of all of Africa in mind. For that, every country must have a national policy which is complementary to a continental policy. In theory, it is up to the African Union (AU) to enable a collective response, but this institution, whose headquarters is located in Addis Ababa and which was built by

China, has no supranational authority. The African Union has structural weaknesses such as its financing by the West, and the fact that it does emanate from the sovereignty of the African people. Nor is it in phase with the real political aspirations of Africa. If China, like Europe and the U.S.S., has an African policy within the context of the Forum for the Chinese Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), Africa has no Chinese policy nor a European or American policy. Africa has no solid relations, either people to people, company to company, civil society to civil society, or political parties to political parties. Only Pan-Africanism can therefore fill that gap.

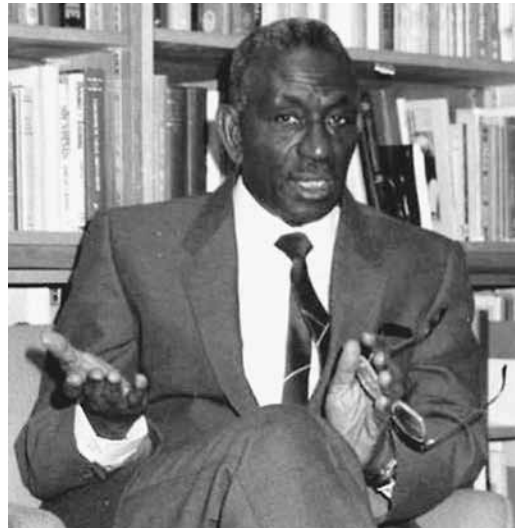
The second point touches upon the question of reparations, a struggle carried out relentlessly by Africa, in vain, towards those political, military, financial, and religious actors who enriched themselves through the centuries of slavery and colonization. China is also demanding reparations from Japan for the massacres committed during the 1937-1945 occupation: the rape of Nanjing, the bacteriological experiments on civilians, the Chinese women violated by the Japanese soldiers. . . . So long as China was weak, Japan refused to face its own criminal past. Today, China has become strong, and imposes on to Japanese historians the necessary revision of their national history as a precondition to all negotiations, including the lifting by the Chinese of their veto against Japan's demand to have a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

The Chinese and the Africans alike suffered from occupation and colonial humiliation. The Western museums are full of objects stolen from Africa as well as from China, and they have also invaded the African art market. For example, the Japanese sanctuary of Yasukuni is to Chinese-Japanese relations, the equivalent of the Island of Gorée to Euro-African relations. Last month, the Senegalese authorities renovated, with financial help of the European Union, the Europe Plaza in Gorée, an island which was a European slave herding center during several centuries. Not a single word was mentioned about this past slavery. The example of China towards Japan shows that the honor of a people lies in the defense of its history and its national heritage. The refusal to admit facts which are certain and duly established, because of quibbling, is contrary to true history. This is why Africa must be intransigent with historical truth.

### **Africans Must Decide**

China is also part of the African Development Bank and of the Caribbean development bank. However, the priority for Africans and Caribbeans is to establish a Pan-

African Bank for reparations and reconstruction. That Bank must be built upon a revolution of the present financial system. In that system, the dollar and the European currencies which are backed by the Euro-American military industrial complex, which is engaged in a fight against the CFA [two currencies in the former French colonial sector which are guaranteed by the French Treasury] front, are dominant. Africa cannot, therefore, involve itself in a project which includes Europe and the United States under such conditions. This is why within the Pan-African milieu we believe, in all modesty,



*Senegalese scholar and scientist Cheikh Anta Diop in 1960 called for industrialization, nuclear power, and the highest levels of education.*

that the New Silk road should not include Europe in its neo-liberal and neo-colonial form. It would be unconceivable for the African civil societies to have to participate in an alternative project with forces which have dominated them historically. China is building corridors for its own development. The Westerners control areas for their own stability, and the Africans have less and less maneuvering room even if opportunities could be numerous. A Silk Road along which Africa sells its resources to China who resells them back to Africa as manufactured products, is not an equal to equal system, or is not a win-win partnership. It's the reproduction of a colonial mechanism with the Chinese multinationals replacing the Euro-American multinationals.

In that context, what are the real markets that Africans can keep in Africa and look forward to gaining in China? I don't see any, so long as we do not write in our constitutions our commitment to the transformation in Africa of raw materials into manufactured products in order to build an internal market which will meet its own needs. The point is for us to decide what goods we intend to put into circulation on the highways and on the railroads and which will be delivered across the integrity of the African continent. So long as Africa will not have made its economic revolution, it will never be an equal to equal partner of China, of Europe, or of the United States. We defend a pan-Africanist political economy where the rates of growth would correspond to real opportunities for the African people. China's capacity to mobilize its diaspora in order to avoid depending on foreign aid must inspire Africa to mobilize its

own diaspora for its own financing. To achieve that, we recommend a strong approach to development for Africans and by Africans and not the sentimental approach of charity. Development is a question of interest which does not allow any room for capriciousness.

### **The Purpose of Infrastructure**

The infrastructure projects financed by China are not projects initially conceptualized by the Chinese, but by the Africans. Since the 1960's, several African countries had plans to develop based on infrastructures construction, roads, bridges, hydro electrical dams, and factories of production. At the continental level, for example, we can talk about the Action of the Lagos Plan of 1980. The African countries were also competing between East and West to get material or financial support. Ideology was then a tool for development. When the West was conditioning aid to liberal governance criteria, China was showing that the liberal democracy model was not necessary to develop and invest in Africa. Starting in the year 2000, China invested in Africa, responding mainly to the requirements of African governments and of the AU concerning great infrastructure projects.

In reality, Chinese investments in Africa are very weak compared to Chinese investments in the rest of Asia or even in Europe, but they are sufficient to transform the situation. The moment China invests in a territory or in a sector which appears insignificant, they give it a real importance. Laying out a red carpet treatment, China values even the weakest. The African tours of Chinese officials enhance the African leaders while those of the French President are mainly humiliation sessions. [applause] A development plan cannot be reduced to financing infrastructure projects, but it is up to the Africans to put the content into the envelope. Do we want infrastructure at the service of the people or people at the service of infrastructure? What are we going to put on the Silk Road all across the African continent?

**Cheikh Anta Diop Institutes**

The question of language, science, technologies and environment is also central. The development of Con-

fucius Institutes throughout Africa calls for a pan-African response via the Cheikh Anta Diop Institutes, named after that wise Senegalese who, starting from philology and anthropology, demonstrated the unity of African civilizations which goes back to Ancient Egypt, and who, in a book originally published in 1960 entitled *The Economic and Cultural Basis for a Federated State*,<sup>2</sup> presented an overall plan for the economic development of Africa and called for the teaching of an African language throughout the continent. The objective is to create a work language for Africa as a whole such that, for example, the work language between China and Africa would be neither English or French, but a language from Africa and one of China. This is a fundamental requirement. The working languages at the Organization of Shanghai Cooperation are Russian and Chinese. China has also been able to modernize its own economy and its international relations while keeping cultural elements which are part of its long history. Africa must also maintain this same sort of cultural requirement. [applause]

On the question of technology, China supported the access of Nigeria to space through the financing and launching of its communications satellites. In exchange, Beijing bought a share in Nigcomsat, the Nigerian federal communications company. For China, it's a matter of competing with the U.S.A. and Israel in the communications sector of Africa. For Nigeria, which is the first African power, it's a question of forming and training high level technicians which could make of that country the first African space power.

This is a vision which must be extended to the whole of the African continent, according to African interests, with the introduction of a true scientific program at the African Universities. In the 1980s, Burkina Faso president, Thomas Sankara, asked the USSR to train two Burkinaban scientists in order to enable the country to participate in the space adventure, which is the great adventure of mankind. Very much ahead of his time, Thomas Sankara was also preoccupied about the impact that space debris could have on the climate of a country like Burkina Faso, struck by draught and desertification. He had already observed a link between demography and the agricultural question, especially concerning the access to arable land around which there is today

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2. Cheikh Anta Diop, *The Economic and Cultural Basis for a Federated State* (Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill, 1974).

a new world competition on the African continent.

## **A Federal African State**

The Pan-African development project takes into account both the necessary industrialization of Africa and the preservation of its environment, in the framework of achieving food self-sufficiency. Capitalism is no response to environmental challenges and thus the Paris agreement on climate is not an agreement for Africa. The principle of peace through environmental cooperation (environmental space building) would be a means to rethink the question of resources and of natural spaces which are, in general, across borders.<sup>3</sup>

Numerous African countries have launched emergency plans for the 2025-2030 horizon picking up on neoliberal and foreign recipes which have failed since forty years. This predictable failure of those emergency plans can only favor a process of re-colonization of Africa, so long as the struggles remain politically divided or absorbed by a system which maintains the illusion of a possible reform. An organized and disciplined revolution with demographic support cannot be avoided.

For the Pan-African League—UMOJA, the construction of a Federal African State must constitute the major objective of the African and Progressive organizations convinced of the odious character and the lack of future perspective of the world system now in place. China will probably dominate the world through its New Silk Road, and in that context the African resources will be more important for China than U.S. treasury bonds. Africa is thus the last border of world competition, but it can become—and this is our wish before the end of the century—the first world power if it works through its unity project in a sovereign way.

The responsibility is a heavy one. The task will demand years of work to get the results, but we are already engaged in a number of electoral processes from 2019 to 2021. The Pan-African league—UMOJA is a political movement. Before thanking you, we invite all the organizations and personalities present who are willing to contribute to our work, to make contact with us. “Umoja ni Nguvu,” Unity makes strength. Thank you very much for your attention.

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3. In 2011, Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe created the Kavango-Zambesi cross border conservation area (KaZaTFCA), the largest cross borders conservation zone on the entire planet. That type of project can be adapted to the Lake Chad basin or the Sahel region.

# Challenges for Peace and Reconstruction in Yemen

*This is a summary of presentations in German by two representatives of the Yemeni Association Insan for Human Rights and Peace (Germany). In Arabic, “insan” means “the human being.” These presentations were a part of Panel II of the Schiller Institute conference, June 30, 2018.*

**Abdullatif Elwashali:** Yemen has a young population. Unemployment used to be 37%; it is now 50%. The percentage of Yemenis living under the poverty line used to be 54%; it’s now 85%. And these are not even up-to-date figures. There is a combination of epidemics, war and hunger. War: A coalition of 17 countries, led by the Saudis and the Emirates is attacking Yemen. The cause? To bring back the Saudi-backed President Hadi. After three years of war, our nation is destroyed, with 36,000 civilian casualties, including 14,000 deaths. Infrastructure is destroyed. We are under an air and sea blockade. Economic war is being waged against us.



*Aiman Al-Mansor*



*Abdullatif Elwashali*

Our financial situation is terrible. The health sector is destroyed, with 55% of medical facilities inoperable or destroyed; 1.25 million of our people are threatened by hunger and epidemics, and 896 of our schools have been completely destroyed. The hospital run by Doctors Without Borders was destroyed by air strikes in 2016, with dead and wounded, including the team of doctors. The worst case now is the port of Hodaidah. We are facing a humanitarian catastrophe, with 33 million people lacking even basic medical supplies. Food scarcity is the result of collapse of the financial situation. The ground water is collapsed. Humanitarian aid is not coming; the international community is reticent to help. The aggressors claim that they want to help, but no one here believes that.



*A classroom in Yemen.*

**Aiman Al-Mansor:** The Saudis claim that they are helping, but what they are doing has nothing to do with democracy. They have destroyed our education. This is the greatest humanitarian crisis of the 21st Century. They want to weaken the Yemeni military forces, to force us to cede political control to the Saudis, and indi-



rectly to the United States, as they have always done. They won't let the Yemenis decide. They want to use Yemen's geopolitical position to prevent win-win cooperation. Major economic interests are involved. The geographic importance of Yemen, is quite significant; it is now difficult to protect international commerce in the region. Before Yemen can be brought into the New Silk Road, we have to solve this grave humanitarian crisis. We need empathy from the international community. Saudi Arabia and the Emirates have to be convinced to leave Yemen alone. While the Chinese say,

“To get rich, build a road,” we say, “To participate in the international community, we have to end the catastrophe.” This is a challenge to all of mankind, who can't be onlookers. We waited too long in Syria. Yemen needs new governmental institutions, new elections, and a reconstruction plan. The BRICS, China and Russia have to play an important role, to build their own peace initiative. The media needs to publish independent information. We need schools, roads, medicine, and empathy. React quickly. Don't wait for the UN to react!

HUSSEIN ASKARY

## Operation Felix: Yemen's Reconstruction and Connection to the Belt and Road

*Hussein Askary is the Southwest Asia Coordinator for the Schiller Institute. His just-published report on Operation Felix, in Arabic, was [summarized in English](#) in the Executive Intelligence Review in its June 29 issue. Here we publish Askary's preliminary remarks before he turns to Operation Felix, as well as his conclusion, and we refer the reader to that written summary, rather than largely duplicate it with a transcript of the rest of his oral presentation.*

Yemen is, I think, the perfect case of turning tragedy into victory, a victory not only for Yemen or the Yemeni people, but for all mankind. And I will explain why.

For three and one-half years, as our friends have described, the Saudi war on Yemen, backed by Britain, the United States, France, and other countries, has brought with it many tragedies—but also many ironies. It showed that the apparently weak do not necessarily have to lose in the face of the mighty.



*Hussein Askary*

Yemenis, while admittedly being the poorest people in the region, have a deep sense of historical identity and a culture that goes back thousands of years into history. They are a proud people with a republican sense of freedom and a rough terrain that is very advantageous in defensive warfare. All these factors made them capable of resisting the Saudi coalition, backed by some of the most powerful military forces on the planet, for more than three years. But that was at a very, very high price, as we have seen.

Another irony is that right in the middle of the worst war and humanitarian crisis, some Yemenis—for the duration of the war—have been studying economics as defined by Lyndon LaRouche and the Schiller Institute, in order to find out how to build a modern economy and avoid the disasters of the past. They also have been studying the New Silk Road and want Yemen to join the Belt and Road Initiative and the BRICS. As I said in my opening remarks earlier, “to survive tragedy, you have to look toward the stars,” that is, toward the future, and derive inspiration and courage from them to survive the current fight and pave the way to solving the crisis.

*Here Askary presented a summary of Operation Felix. His concluding remarks follow.*

In conclusion I would like to say that, in a June 6

seminar in Sana’a, I proposed that the “government there adopt this plan as a key component in any peace and reconciliation talks between the different Yemeni belligerent parties,” and that this would be the mission of the future Yemeni government: That everybody agrees that this is what we want to do when we have peace.

As I say in the report, we don’t want to reconstruct Yemen to what it was before the war. Because before the war, as we remember, Yemen was “the poorest country in the region.” So, it’s not our intention to bring Yemen back to what it was: We want to transform Yemen into the future. (applause)

At the same time, it’s a means of motivating the international community to consider the absurdity of the continuation of this war. And it shows that the people controlling the government in Sana’a are not mere militias with power ambitions, but are statesmen with visions and knowledge. The responsibility to stop this genocidal war is upon every individual and every government in the world, today. The vision for launching a genuine reconstruction and development plan in Yemen is in harmony with the New Paradigm of cooperation in the world as expressed in this conference so far.

Thank you very much.

## Greeting from Michele Geraci

*Prof. Michele Geraci is currently Undersecretary of State in the Italian Ministry for Economic Development (Industry, Foreign Trade, Tourism and Fisheries). His greeting was introduced and read to the conference on June 30, 2018 by Claudio Celani.*

**Claudio Celani:** Prof. Michele Geraci has been teaching economics in Chinese universities for ten years and is a strong supporter of the Belt and Road Initiative. He was eager to come to our conference, but was then called to serve in the new Italian government. It is Italy’s—and the world’s—good fortune, but a misfortune for us today. Just a couple of days ago, he gave an interview in which he emphasized two matters. The second of these was that one of his priorities will be to promote Italian cooperation with China to develop

Africa as the only real solution to the migration crisis. (applause) His first was about the crisis of the Italian national airline company, Alitalia, which is facing bankruptcy. Lufthansa has offered to buy it. Geraci told his Italian audience that instead of selling it to our competitors, we should call in the Chinese as shareholders.

His message, which we received in Italian, is as follows:

**Prof. Michele Geraci:** I had been invited to the Schiller Institute conference before I was appointed to a government position, and I had been planning to participate. Unfortunately, government and institutional duties have prevented me from coming. Nevertheless, I wish you great success, and I am looking forward to receiving the proceedings of the conference.