

from Aarhus. But the question is, why should we keep the [Danish] crown?

A: First, right now, there is a discussion within the Eurozone, about disbanding the euro, because there is a common currency, but not a common economic policy, and that presents problems. Second, there is an advantage to having your own currency, because you can make your own decisions. In the case of Northern Rock, the European Central Bank disagreed with the English central bank's intervention to save the bank. If you have a crisis, like a bank crisis, as a sovereign nation you want to be able to solve the crisis, but the ECB has no such consideration, and does not allow you to make decisions based on what is good for your nation, but sticks to its arbitrary judgments.

The following two questions were asked by two members jointly:

Q: Your infrastructure proposal is captivating, but to call for tripling the infrastructure budget is something hard to fathom, also in light of our European relations. Where are you going to get the money from? I'm also worried about an overheating of our economy.

Why should we keep the crown, when we are obliged to do what the euro nations do? What degree of freedom do we have?

A: As to the first question, we have the money. We actually have a budget surplus. The big problem is, how do you take a temporary surplus, and invest it in such a way that the money doesn't just disappear, but you have a long-term benefit. Of course, you can pay back debt, which is the current government policy, or you can invest in long-term infrastructure projects, which, over 30-100 years, pay back a yearly bonus to the physical economy. That is so important, that even if you don't have the money, it still pays to borrow the money to invest in infrastructure, as we do with the current user-paid big bridge projects. Right now, we have a lack of labor in Denmark, but that can change very quickly. In the United States, we see a collapse of the physical economy. The dollar is already low, and if it collapses further, it will have devastating consequences for the exporting nations in Europe.

Q: How can we uphold our treaty obligations and agreements?

A: It's not true that we have to follow the policy of the others. Right now we have chosen to do so, but we have the right to change our policy. That is important in these dramatic times. You don't put up your umbrella when the Sun is shining, but you need it when it begins to rain. Then it's good that you have an umbrella.

Imagine that you have a change in U.S. policy. The physical economy is breaking down. Hillary Clinton has made the economy the biggest issue in her campaign. We have to be ready to collaborate with a new economic policy.

Eurasian Land-Bridge Enters a New Era

by Mary Burdman

China is leading six nations in taking the Eurasian Land-Bridge into a new era. For the first time since the "Euro-Asian Second Continental Bridge" was opened by finally linking of the Chinese and Kazakstan railways in 1992, a direct, regular train service is being established between China and Europe's biggest industrial nation, Germany, with the cooperation of Russia, Kazakstan, Belarus, Poland, and Mongolia. All six nations have signed an agreement to ensure that the China-Europe land-bridge really works (the first continental bridge in Eurasia is the Russian Trans-Siberian Railroad). On Jan. 9, a pilot container train, flying flags in traditional Chinese style, left Beijing for Hamburg, Germany's leading port, an epic trip 9,780 kilometers long. Before this new agreement was signed, Chinese rail connections to Russia and Central Asia had been greatly expanded, but the critical connection to western Europe has barely functioned, due to long cross-border customs delays, different rail gauges, and other barriers which severely slowed transport.

Two months earlier, the land-bridge connection to western Russia was finally opened. On Oct. 23, 2007, the first direct container train from Lianyungang, Jiangsu province, the "eastern terminus of the continental bridge" on China's east coast, reached Moscow, 8,310 km away, after 15 days transit. Lianyungang has opened integrated sea-railway container connections from the U.S. Pacific coast, all the way by rail to Russia and Europe. This was the first "real operation of the whole Eurasian railway since the land-bridge opened in 1992," the Lianyungang port authorities announced. The western terminus of this land-bridge is Rotterdam, which is the biggest port in Europe. Now, the bridge will reach Germany as well.

The railway authorities of the six land-bridge nations have formally agreed to deal with all the blockages, and make regular container train service a reality. The pilot train should reach Hamburg in 18 days, as compared to at least 40 days by ship; it is also a big improvement in current rail transport time. As late as 2006, rail transport time from the Chinese coast just to Moscow was estimated at 30 days.

Development Concept

That it has taken 15 years from closing the last big gap in the rail links between China and western Europe, to reach a political agreement which can make the land-bridge economically viable, is hardly surprising. The whole question of the development of Eurasia—in which this land-bridge

plays a critical role—has been one of the most fundamental political battles of the last two centuries, between nation-builders in the United States, Russia, China, and Europe, and the geopoliticians of the Anglo-Dutch financial empire.

What is on one level an important rail agreement, is on another, a big step showing determination by Eurasian nations to cooperate, as Lyndon LaRouche immediately recognized. In May 1996, Schiller Institute head Helga Zepp-LaRouche delivered a speech to one of the workshops at the Beijing International Symposium on Economic Development of the Regions along the New Euro-Asia Continental Bridge. She laid out the necessity to build a land-bridge of advanced technology “development corridors,” as the key to economic reconstruction of Eurasia, and the only way to overcome the ravages of “free-market” globalization let loose on Russia, Africa, Ibero-America, and other regions. LaRouche representatives had brought his Eurasian policy, which he had enunciated a year before the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, directly to China already in 1994, and this played a key role in shaping the agenda of the Symposium, which was attended by 450 leading officials from Asia and Europe. Mrs. LaRouche’s presentation, demonstrating the need for a renaissance to make it possible to realize projects on the scale of the Eurasian land-bridge, was greeted for its impact, in the final plenary session of the meeting.

Cooperation Breakthrough

Zheng Mingli, chairman and president of China Railway Container Transport, announced on Jan. 9 in Beijing that the agreement “can be seen as a breakthrough in our cooperation. Today railway officials from six countries are here to witness this event. This is very important for the development of the Asia-Europe continental bridge. This means of transportation has great potential for the countries involved.”

The international rail officials posed before a big map of Eurasia, which showed the entire rail line from Beijing to Hamburg, with the caption “Sketch Map of Eurasian Land-bridge Corridor” printed in Russian, English, and Chinese. Zheng said that the “goal is to open a scheduled railway container service between the six countries. Barring any complications, a scheduled container train should be shuttling between China and Germany in a year’s time.” It will take about that long to ensure that transit time for the freight containers is reduced to just 15 days, which Deutsche Bahn—the initiator of this project with the Chinese Railway Ministry two years ago—considers necessary to make it commercially workable.

The International Union of Railways praised the project on Jan. 15, when UIC head Luc Aliadière said from Paris that “China is the workhouse of the world—the potential is enormous. . . . It’s like a new [high-speed] TGV line coming

into play, and now it’s becoming real.” His assessment is that “export transport costs taking goods from China to Europe are worth some 3 billion euros per day.” Aliadière noted that more and more Chinese manufacturing is moving into the interior, away from the Pacific coast ports like Shanghai; this also favors increasing direct rail transport to Europe.

China itself—which has, with the United States, the most rail freight traffic in the world—will build and put into operation 15,000 km of new railways just in the next three years. China’s total rail system will expand to 120,000 km by 2020, including 20 new big projects to link the most important economic regions in eastern China—on the Bohai Sea, the Yangtse valley, and the Pearl River delta—with the interior. These will be high-speed rail lines, using Chinese technology for passenger trains that can travel as fast as 300 km per hour. In 2008 alone, there would be 1.4 billion passenger rail trips in China, and cargo transport would be more than 3.3 billion tons, generating revenue worth 361 billion yuan (\$49.5 billion). China is also building 18 new, strategically placed rail container terminals in the next five years.

A new “southern route” of the land-bridge is also on the agenda. In Shenzhen, on China’s southeast coast, the authorities are proposing building a third continental bridge, to link Shenzhen to Rotterdam. This route between South China and Europe—15,150 km long—would go through 21 countries, including Myanmar, India, and Turkey, the Academy of Social Sciences of Kunming, Yunnan province (one of the stations on the route) announced in October 2007.

THE EURASIAN LAND-BRIDGE ‘The New Silk Road’— locomotive for worldwide economic development

(1997) 260 pages \$100
(EIR 96-007)

Available from

EIR News Service

P.O. Box 17390 Washington, D.C. 20041-0390

Phone: 1-800-278-3135

or www.larouchepub.com