

China and the 'New Silk Road'

In 1992, Lyndon LaRouche extended his concept of the European "Productive Triangle" for high-speed rail, to the entire Eurasian and African land mass. Early that same year, China completed its first direct rail connection to Kazakhstan, thereby opening what is sometimes called a "New Silk Road," also known as the "second Eurasian land bridge" (the first "land bridge" is the Russian Trans-Siberian Railroad, see **Map 1**). In July 1992, the first passenger trains crossed the new "second Eurasian land bridge" from Urumqi, the capital of the Xinjiang region of China, to Alma Alta in Kazakhstan (**Map 13**).

The proposals elaborated by LaRouche's collaborators featured three basic east-west rail bridges from China to Europe. The first runs from Beijing north through Mongolia to join the Trans-Siberian Railway in Russia, and runs through Russia all the way to Moscow and on to Europe. The second proposed line, which closely follows the route of the second Eurasian land bridge, runs west across northern China from Lianyungang on the Pacific coast, through Urumqi to Alma Ata in Kazakhstan, turning southwest via Tashkent into Iran, and through the Caucasus to Kiev, Dresden, and Frankfurt. In Kazakhstan, there is a branch running northward to meet the Trans-Siberian Railroad. A third main route runs south from China into Bangladesh, across India and Pakistan to the trunk line in Iran. One branch of this runs from Nanjing to Nanning, and west through the mountains to Kunming near Myanmar (Burma), then to Dhaka in Bangladesh. The other branch runs through Southeast Asia (**Map 1**).

The government of China has been focusing on the central of the east-west lines, the northern branch of the Silk Road. At a conference on the "International Coordination along the Second Eurasian Land Bridge" at Lanzhou University on Aug. 5-8, a spokesman for China's Development Research Council, the main economic planners in Beijing, stated that the State Council (cabinet) has given a mandate for "strategic exploratory work" on the line. A continuous rail line now exists along this route, but improvement is essential. Much of it is single-track and steam-drawn. There are two unmechanized rail gauge changes along the route, one between China and Kazakhstan and the second on the Poland-Belarus border, which can cause serious bottlenecks. Since the beginning of this year, some nations have been pushing up tariff barriers, a problem which will hopefully be alleviated as the result of high-level negotiations in October in Beijing among China, Russia, Kazakhstan, and other Central Asian Republics.

In any case, the entire route must be drastically upgraded to modern high-speed rail, to be followed as soon as possible by the installation of magnetic levitation (maglev) systems.

In China overall, another problem is that the existing lines tend to run east-west with relatively fewer north-south connectors, while, secondly, rails are sparse in the vast inland areas. For example, the existing north-south routes serving the East China corridor of 90 million people, are severely overloaded. China has just completed a Hangzhou-Shangqiu line to supplement the existing Beijing-Guangzhou and Beijing-Shanghai lines, and the Railway Ministry is on a crash program to finish construction of a new Beijing-Kowloon line by the end of 1995.

"The transportation technology of high-speed railway as a main technological project of the Eighth Year Plan of China has been included in the 10-year planning of the national economy," Hui Yongzhen, vice minister of the State Science and Technology Commission of China, reported to *EIR* on May 27. "The high-speed railway between Beijing and Shanghai, whose speed can reach more than 200 kilometers per hour, has been approved."

In his book *The International Development of China*, Dr. Sun Yat-sen had proposed a dense rail network covering especially northern and western China, to develop these areas up to the density of infrastructure of the coastal provinces. Much of this work remains to be done. China today has about 33,000 route miles of railroads—one-third of what Dr. Sun Yat-sen proposed over 70 years ago. Of that, only 6,300 miles is double-tracked and less than 1,200 miles have been electrified.

Major upgrades of all lines running north and south across China and Mongolia must especially be made, to create rapid connections between all three east-west lines.

As the history of the development of the United States proved, and as Dr. Sun Yat-sen understood from that history, rail lines not only function as the circulatory system for a national and global economy, but are the backbone for internal development. LaRouche's proposal emphasizes the key role of infrastructural *development corridors*—areas centered on main railroad trunk lines and inland waterways, within which the density of population and modern infrastructure reaches levels suitable for a rapid process of industrialization.

In terms of Eurasia as a whole, the 100-kilometer-wide bands of territory extending 50 kilometers on each side of the main lines proposed by LaRouche's collaborators, already encompass 800-900 million people—about 25% of the entire population of Eurasia and more than 50% of its industrial workforce.

Water development

Existing water development in China is grossly inadequate for its 1 billion-plus population. Physical economy shows that the highest rates of water utilization per capita

and per square kilometer correlate with the highest output in agriculture and industry. A rapid increase in water delivery is the first of several factors needed to increase the productivity of agriculture, thereby freeing more of the labor force for industrial forms of employment.

Proposed water project routes, including new canals, have languished on the drawing boards for years. However, work is now beginning on the massive, three-channel South-North Water Diversion Project, to bring water from the upper reaches of the Yangtze River to the Huang He (Yellow River). Shown in Map 14 are selected proposed projects to transfer water from the frequently flooded south to the dry north. Especially necessary are expansion and modernization of the Grand Canal from Tianjin to Shanghai (blue line at right), and construction of a new canal from Beijing to Yichang on the Yangtze River (blue line at left). Water artery improvement is also crucial to facilitate transport, the lack of which is a key factor in hampering distribution of food. These and several other major rivers must be made fully navigable for shipping far upstream.

Much of western China is either non-arable or minimally arable land. This region includes the Tibetan plateau, the Taklamakan Desert, the Gobi Desert, and the grasslands of Inner Mongolia. LaRouche has also proposed a study of diverting some of the water from the huge Siberian rivers, to make water which now runs off into the Arctic Ocean, available for use in agriculture in Siberia and western China.

National integration

Major population dislocations are occurring across China today as a blind flow of perhaps 200 million persons, unemployed because China has not yet made the transformation from a rural (80% peasant) to an industrial economy. These unemployed peasants, mostly from the interior provinces, are crowding into the provincial capitals and into the already densely populated eastern provinces seeking work. This contributes to the "centrifugal" tendencies growing within the country.

It should be recalled that since the Opium Wars in the 1840s, Britain has sought to balkanize and break up China; today, London is trying to encourage the richer coastal provinces to break with Beijing.

Infrastructure upgrades are thus urgent to raise output and living standards in the depressed interior to maintain the very integrity of the nation.

Development of infrastructure in China's interior is also important in order to bring large quantities of sea-going freight traffic inland, to integrate China's interior with the rest of the Pacific Basin economy for efficient trade and cultural exchanges. The creation of an inland rail and water system which opens up the interior would allow China as a whole to function the most efficiently with respect to its relatively smaller coastal area, and to become a maritime power again.

Combined, the achievement of the proposed rail and waterways would greatly facilitate China's internal trade, drastically increasing the productivity of the entire economy. By "bundling" modern transport, energy, water, and other infrastructure within the corridors with "Great Projects" for river control, irrigation, and power generation, the productivity of the Eurasian continent as a whole will take a gigantic leap forward (see Map 15).

Population density

China is part of that area of the world in which the greatest number of human beings are underutilized, as LaRouche said recently. "Therefore, if I can make available to the people of China, India, and Southeast Asia, a peasant population still living a marginal existence, modern technology to improve productivity, education and living standards," LaRouche said, "we have the greatest growth in rate of total world production possible—simply by concentrating on Eurasia." Most of China's huge population is concentrated in eastern provinces, the termini of the proposed infrastructure trunks (Map 16).

China's railways and waterways should also be considered not simply as lines linking one point to another, but should be seen as corridors of infrastructure development, around which are arrayed power complexes and technologies for industrialization. LaRouche's proposal is to build 1,000 such nuclear-powered new cities throughout China.

In an exemplary case, an infrastructure corridor might feature a river or canal, flanked by both main trunk lines, and secondary rail lines for local traffic. Arrayed on either side of the main artery are nuclear-powered, urban-industrial complexes—nuplexes.

Surrounding these nuplex cities there will be areas of intensive agriculture, based on high-level inputs of fresh water, fertilizer, and machinery. Equipment, fertilizer, and so forth will be produced at high efficiency by the nuclear-powered industrial complexes of the cities. Dispersed on the outer edges of the corridor are new modernized towns.

The city center is a cultural center and place of learning and training to build a new labor force. This is not training to teach peasants how to carry out the same type of manual labor their great-great-grandfathers carried out, nor only training for some particular new, high-technology skill. These centers of learning will concentrate on teaching the method of creativity, whereby the individuals are able to assimilate entire new arrays of technological skills on a continuous basis, and to teach them to others.

It should be clear from this concept of infrastructure corridors, that any attempt to develop and urbanize the country without such a basis is doomed to failure. Such an approach of laying down infrastructural corridors as the gridlines for new cities, supplies the answer to the unemployment problem and, simultaneously, with on-site educational facilities, upgrades the entire workforce for entry into the industrial age.