

South Korea's President, In Europe, Promotes Eurasian 'Iron Silk Road'

by Kathy Wolfe

South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, speaking to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France on Dec. 11, made a strong call for development of the Eurasian Land-Bridge: "the construction of the 'Iron Silk Road,' directly linking Korea with Europe by land." Kim called it "a project that would greatly promote exchanges between Europe and Asia." He stressed, "For this project, one task has to be carried out without fail; the linking of the railway between South and North Korea. This railway has been cut off for 50 years at the Demilitarized Zone. On the occasion of the historic inter-Korean summit last year, the South and North agreed to re-link the railway and a highway. South Korea and Europe could be connected if we link only 14 kilometers of rail."

President Kim's extraordinary speech summed up his Dec. 2-12 European tour of Britain, Norway, Hungary and France. Aides said the trip would generate \$6.5 billion in Korean export orders in construction, industrial plants, shipping and information technology (IT), and \$3.5 billion in European investment in Korea. Kim and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban agreed Dec. 10 on a \$12 billion plan for "redevelopment of the Balkans."

Korea could become the gateway to the Pacific for Europe, via this Eurasian Land-Bridge, Kim said. "When the Trans-Korean railway is linked with the Trans-China or Trans-Siberian railway, a train leaving London could reach Seoul and Pusan via Paris, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Siberia or China. Then, the goods could be shipped to all Pacific regions from Pusan, the third largest container port in the world. Transportation costs would be cut by 30% and time shortened by two-thirds."

War Of Ideas

President Kim, his aides, and Seoul officials involved have all been personally presented with *EIR's* 300-page 1997 report, *The Eurasian Land-Bridge: 'New Silk Road' – Locomotive for Worldwide Economic Development*, which includes an important article by Founding Editor Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. "We are well aware of Mr. LaRouche's warning that the U.S. import market of 'last resort' is not bouncing back," one Seoul official told *EIR*. "However, it is taking us time to shift our marketing to Asia. Korea has such a large trade with Europe that the concept of 'Eurasia' is very useful."

Other officials report a "war of ideas" in Seoul over implications of the Eurasian Land-Bridge, which LaRouche em-

phasizes as a means to achieve "full-set" industrialization for all countries along the route. Each sovereign nation is to develop *modern technological and physical means of production*: This has been posed by LaRouche in opposition to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) policy of "globalization," in which one or two imperial centers dominate production.

Korea, a major exporter of heavy construction and transport equipment, has suffered under a brutal IMF "shock therapy" program since 1998. This badly damaged the banking system, making it dependent on foreign investment. Officials say the Seoul IMF team, some of President Kim's advisers — including speculator George Soros, bankers from Morgan and Goldman Sachs, and British Prime Minister Tony Blair — are lobbying hard for globalization, and for phasing out industry in favor of "information technology." President Kim has announced many "IT initiatives."

President Kim's Strasbourg speech also prominently featured this "IT globalization" view, in a doomed effort to satisfy both sides of the debate. "The 21st Century is witnessing a great revolution in knowledge, information, and globalization," he said. "Two hundred years after the industrial revolution, the final curtain has come down on the age of industrialization. Even poor nations and poor individuals will now be able to create wealth if they can make the best use of a computer." Kim praised the "Cyber Silk Road" high-speed data lines now being built linking Asia and Europe.

Eurasia And Korean Unification

President Kim is also well aware that only by promoting the "greater good" of Eurasian development, can he keep North and South Korea on the road to unification. This concept is spreading in Seoul. "Perhaps the creation of a direct railroad connection between the two Koreas and Russia, the Iron Silk Road, offers the greatest promise for future inter-Korean relations," wrote one professor in a recent article on "Current Inter-Korean Relations and the Iron Silk Road." To move North-South relations out of deadlock, Prof. Kim Young-jeh of Konkuk University wrote in *U.S.-Korea Tomorrow* magazine, Russian President Vladimir Putin will soon host a meeting with the two Koreas. The agenda will be rebuilding the rail link from Seoul to Wonsan in the North, to Vladivostok and on to Moscow. "The Russian Ministry of Railway Transport estimated the Trans-Siberian Trans-Korean route would generate over \$100 million in revenue for



South Korea's President Kim Dae-jung on Dec. 11 called for the building of the Eurasia-spanning rail corridors, the "Iron Silk Road," and for continuous high-speed rail connection bridging the 7,000 miles from Seoul to Paris. South-North Korean railroads must be linked to do this.

North Korea and \$400 million for Russia.”

President Kim ended his Strasbourg speech with a call to develop the entire Eurasian land-mass as an economic unit. “On the day when the construction of the ‘Cyber Silk Road’ and the ‘Iron Silk Road’ are both completed, Asia and Europe will practically become one land-mass,” Kim said. “From the 5th and 6th Centuries on, a large number of people and goods have travelled by land over the Silk Road. . . . The cultures of the two regions have contributed considerably to each other’s development.

“In modern times, the West’s democratic system, the industrial revolution and cultural achievements have exerted great influence on the politics, economy and culture of Asia. . . . Asia, as the source of the Tigris-Euphrates, Indus, and Yellow River civilizations as well as the spiritual cultures of Confucianism and Buddhism, greatly influenced the entire world, including Europe. Asia taught Europe how to make gunpowder and paper. . . .

“Three-fourths of the world’s populations live in these two regions. Economically, they produce half the world’s products. It is very important for Asia and Europe to deepen mutual understanding and cooperate further, not only for the development and prosperity of the two regions, but also for the peace and prosperity of the world. . . .

“The room for expansion of trade and investment between Korea and the EU is boundless. Korea is located in the middle of the huge markets of the United States, Japan, China and Russia. . . . I hope that the EU and Korea will continue to expand their cooperative partnership in the huge markets of East Asia, including Japan and China.”

East Asian Economic Cooperation

EIR was provided on Dec. 7 with official Korean comments on President Kim’s proposal for an East Asian Community. They cohere with his Strasbourg speech on the necessity to develop Eurasia as a whole. (see *EIR*, Dec. 14, 2001 on the East Asia Vision Group). “From its inception the ASEAN+3 process has taken up measures for expanding and deepening East Asian cooperation that transcends the distinction be-

tween Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia,” the statement says, speaking of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations plus China, Japan, and Korea. “Korea has taken the leading role in the efforts for East Asian Cooperation. In 1998, at the initiative of President Kim Dae-jung, an East Asia Vision Group (EAVG), of 26 eminent persons in the region, was set up to prepare a comprehensive report on the future prospect for East Asian cooperation.”

This EAVG report by 26 private scholars, the comments note, has now gone to an “inter-governmental” group of ruling officials, for the governments’ implementation:

At the ASEAN+3 Singapore Summit last year, “13 leaders of East Asia, again at the initiative of President Kim, also agreed to establish an inter-governmental East Asia Study Group (EASG) as a Track I approach to East Asian cooperation. . . . It will not only assess the recommendations in the final report of the EAVG, and prepare a comprehensive list of concrete measures for East Asian cooperation, but also explore the idea and implications of an East Asia Summit,” as a permanent organization of the 13 countries.

“The main topic among ASEAN+3 leaders at [their Nov. 5-6, 2001] Brunei Summit meeting was the final report of the EAVG, which was officially introduced by President Kim. The report put forward ‘an East Asian community of peace, prosperity and progress’ as the ultimate vision. . . . By zeroing in on open, gradual and durable regional integration, the vision in the report will bring about formidable change not only to East Asia, but also to the future of mankind. . . .

“In order to accelerate the process . . . President Kim proposed to focus on the following three areas . . . of the report:

“First, . . . transforming the current ASEAN+3 Summit into an East Asia Summit. He emphasized that the launching of an East Asia Summit will play a catalytic role in breeding a regional identity and ultimately achieving establishment of an East Asian Community.

“Second, with a view to providing intellectual as well as practical assistance . . . in regional integration, and . . . a wide range of exchange and cooperation among East Asian peoples, President Kim proposed the establishment of an East Asia Forum, which will consist of both government and non-government representatives from each country.

“Lastly, President Kim proposed . . . the study of an East Asian Free Trade Area. . . .

“The leaders at the Brunei Summit thanked President Kim for the EAVG initiative in 1998 and the follow-up proposals. They urged the EASG to assess the proposals and produce its final report to the Cambodia [ASEAN+3] Summit next year. . . .

“We believe that the Brunei Summit marks an important milestone in the efforts for East Asian cooperation, by advancing the discussion toward a clearer goal for the future of East Asia, and the means to achieve it.

Prime Minister Mahathir of Malaysia proposed to establish an ASEAN+3 Secretariat to reinforce efforts for cooperation in the East Asian region. . . .”