

For Peace in Korea, Put ‘Economy First’

by Kathy Wolfe

The Eurasian Land-Bridge, also known as the “New Silk Road” concept of infrastructure “great projects,” should be used in a specific way to ensure against military conflict in Korea, and promote the success of the Six-Power Talks, U.S. Presidential candidate and *EIR* Founding Editor Lyndon LaRouche advised recently. LaRouche is the conceptual “grandfather” of the New Silk Road.

In a new “economy first” approach, the Eurasian Land-Bridge/New Silk Road should be placed directly on the table at the Six-Power Talks for negotiation, he advised participating nations (China, Russia, Japan, the two Koreas, and the United States). This means the immediate construction of the Trans-Korean Railway and broader, regional projects. LaRouche noted that, if faced with initial resistance from Washington, the Eurasian nations might capture the imagination of the American public with such a “grand design”; most Americans would support such a policy if it were properly explained as being in the tradition of JFK’s Apollo Moon landing program and FDR’s New Deal.

The New Silk Road is vital to the fundamental national security and national interest of Russia, China, Japan, and the United States—as well as Korea. This is a plan to build up the western interior of China, until now so dangerously weak. It is a plan to rebuild the economy of Siberia, a vast area severely underutilized, which has been destroyed by the International Monetary Fund even beyond the damage done by communism.

This is a plan to rescue Japan’s economy from the “lost decade” of industrial failure and bank crashes, due to lack of exports. It even creates an urgently needed new export market for the United States.

Large infrastructure projects demanding next-generation technologies—such as JFK’s Apollo Moon Project—were the best way to spark a real recovery—by upgrading the industrial base. The Apollo Project created the computer chip, the laser, and many other technologies the OECD nations live off today. The OECD has had no technological revolution since, and badly needs one now. If we extend new technologies such as high-speed trains, from “Tokyo to Busan to Paris,” it will force an upgrade of the industrial base in Japan, South Korea, and every other participating nation; for they must introduce a wide array of next-generation technologies to build such a large project.

This is a plan for billions of people, LaRouche says. It can’t be rejected as “a handout for North Korea.” We don’t

propose “handouts” (a little oil, a little rice). We propose to revolutionize the industrial base of Japan, South Korea, China, and Russia, with cutting-edge technologies. North Korea will need to go along and modernize, since they are en route. Voices demanding nuclear weapons will grow weaker.

The 50-Year Proof

LaRouche has proposed the “economy first” approach to the solution of the Israel-Palestine conflict, for 20 years. The idea is simple: Treaties on “paper only” are often broken; but build up the economy together, so that peoples have higher living standards overall, and cooperation will last.

Israel and Palestine need water. Had they built water projects and greened the desert, as the United States did in California from the 1930s, there would be more arable land available, and political problems would be given their grounds for solution.

But for 50 years, Israel and the PLO have failed to reach any durable agreement, by putting paper treaties first, and economic development afterwards. Every “paper only” treaty has been broken, and the Mideast region remains at worsening war.

For 50 years since a cease-fire ended the Korean War, the result of “paper first” is little better on the Korean Peninsula.

Now, the Six-Power Talks on North Korea are in danger, due to the failure to put economy first. As South Korean Foreign Minister Yoon Young-Kwan said in April 2003: “Nuclear weapons are not the beginning and the end of all global foreign and economic policy.”

Dr. Ra Jong-yil, South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun’s National Security Adviser, also explained the idea of “economy first” in a May 13, 2003 *International Herald Tribune* column, “Engagement with the North: Step by Step to One Korea.” Seoul should promote “economic engagement” with Pyongyang now, Dr. Ra wrote—and worry about “grand agendas” for treaties later. “The principle is simple,” he explained: “To move unilaterally toward reconciliation with North Korea, gradually expanding the areas of common concern. . . . This approach deviates sharply from that prevalent last century. In place of pursuing a grand agenda in the name of national glory or ideology, rather the policy of engagement is aimed at addressing the basic necessities: better food, medical care, education and a wider range of choices for everyone. . . .”

“We want to avoid the fate,” the national security expert concluded, “of great political achievements that were initially welcomed with enthusiasm, but did little to improve the conditions of life, and instead led to enormous suffering and misery.”

‘Run the Trains Now’

To break the “failure chain” in Korea, consider broadening the Six-Power Talks, to the economic needs of all participating countries, LaRouche suggests.

And the Eurasian Land-Bridge is not “just trains.” It is a

Transportation Corridors in Northeast Asia



The major Northeast Asian railroad corridors which will connect the Tokyo-to-Paris high-speed Eurasian Land-Bridge, with Trans-Korean rail corridors as the key.

comprehensive vision for a world renaissance. The “backbone” is a plan to build high-speed bullet trains, from Tokyo to Busan to Pyongyang to Beijing to Paris. Wherever possible in the course of this corridor development, we should utilize new technologies such as magnetic levitation—as already begun in the technology-sharing between Germany and China around Shanghai—to create new industries and employ more people, at higher skill levels and better living standards.

The Eurasian Land-Bridge is also a plan to build oil and gas pipelines 2,500 kilometers from Lake Baikal in Siberia, to Pyongyang, Seoul, Busan, and Tokyo. It’s a plan to build new electric power lines and grids, new modern power plants. It’s a plan to build large water development projects, to stop floods in the south of China, and to green the deserts in the north of China—and Russia and Central Asia.

Along the rail lines, we propose to build new cities, new agricultural projects, and new industrial areas, as a 10-mile band of “development zones.”

So far, the D.P.R.K. (North Korea) has adopted a “go slow” approach on the Trans-Korean Railway, and has put its emphasis on the need for a bilateral security treaty with Washington. This is due, not only to threats from Washington, but also to Pyongyang’s internal problems and fears of opening up to full cooperation with the South.

It might be explained to the D.P.R.K. that it is as pointless

to insist on “paper-only treaties” with no substance in Korea, as it is in the Middle East. A paper treaty may look prestigious, but it guarantees nothing. Witness the fate of the Oslo Accords, and the 1994 U.S.-D.P.R.K. Framework Accords. Without a serious economic component which the two sides actually intended to push through and fulfill, these agreements were simply ripped up.

“Run the trains now” from Busan to Pyongyang—that is the only real insurance policy against war. If the world sees that Koreans are running trains every day, like a normal nation, then the worst extremists in Washington will think twice before starting a war. If the Five Eurasian powers create an alliance to build this project—China, Russia, the two Koreas, and Japan—that creates a new “Super-Power for Peace,” which no one will dare attack. The only guarantee is economic strength.

When the eyes of the world see South and North Korean engineers working together, shoulder to shoulder, in the greatest project of modern times, then Korea will truly have the prestige of the greatest powers on Earth. Prestige comes from the use of the human mind, to improve life for the population.

It is also within the independent, sovereign power of the two Koreas, and their Eurasian allies, to take this route now, by the power of their own hands, without waiting for approval from other capitals.