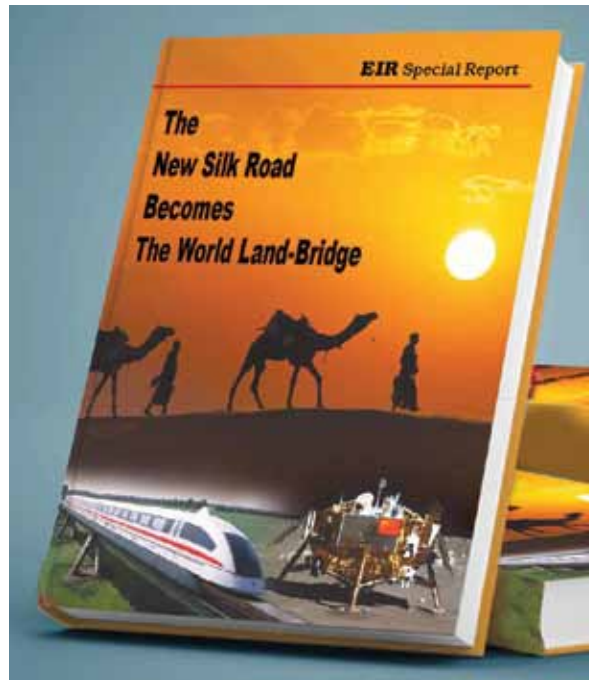


The Belt and Road Initiative and the Intercontinental Corridor of Infrastructure¹

Review of *The New Silk Road Becomes the World Land-Bridge*, EIR, 2014

by Shi Ze

Since its inception in 2013 when Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Central Asia and Southeast Asia, the Belt and Road Initiative, namely the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, has received much attention both at home and abroad. With the progress of the Initiative and the emergence of early harvests, planning and research for the Belt and Road Initiative are now high on the agenda in China in different sectors and areas. However, the Initiative is far from mature in terms of related policies, and its further advance is in urgent need of intellectual support. It is against this background that a report from Germany's Schiller Institute, *The New Silk Road Becomes the World Land-Bridge*, was published. Compared to most domestic reports that are still limited to introducing the situation and interpreting concepts, it is undoubtedly a weighty academic work of a type un-



common in recent years.

The report will make substantial contributions to research on the Belt and Road Initiative. With a preface by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the founder of the Schiller Institute, the report emphasizes the role that a “corridor of infrastructure” can play in driving national and regional economic development, and discusses the significance of initiatives such as the Belt and Road. With chapters written respectively by internationally prominent scholars and experts, the report analyzes the “corridors of infrastructure” of major countries and regions, and pro-

vides far-sighted and unique visions, which will be beneficial to the Belt and Road Initiative’s realization of regional connectivity.

Three features of this report are particularly noteworthy. First, it puts an emphasis on the importance of abandoning a geopolitical mentality. According to the report, traditional geopolitical thinking, characterized by a zero-sum mentality, is the root of wars, poverty, starvation and desperation, and has repeatedly brought human civilization to the brink of crisis. For the sake of sustaining our civilization, the international community must abandon this obsolete mentality and establish the principles of mutual benefit and win-win cooperation as the new guides for our thinking and behavior.

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On the one hand, by doing so, the sustainability of human beings, the only creative species on the globe, can be ensured. On the other hand, a healthy global atmosphere can be fostered to effectively tackle the common threats facing humankind.

Second, the large-scale construction of corridors of infrastructure is conducive to the creation of a new international economic order. From Lyndon LaRouche's criticism of free market-based monetarism, the report argues that this economic pattern, characterized by statistics and false algorithms, was the cause of the economic recession that has gripped the world since 2008. In response to the failure of this economic pattern, it is suggested that developing countries should enhance the construction of corridors of infrastructure, including railways, highways, waterways and aviation routes, in order to realize common development through the innovation of technology and the integration of resources both national and regional. Based on this understanding, the report specifically emphasizes that China's Belt and Road Initiative and reciprocal cooperation among BRICS countries are likely to shape a new international economic order, even a new developmental pattern beneficial to the sustainability of human civilization.

Third, the report explores in a concise way the intercontinental corridors with the potential for realizing connectivity. Promoting international and interregional connectivity of infrastructure is a critical part of the Belt and Road Initiative. In order to achieve this, besides clearly defining China's own current and planned infrastructure projects, it is necessary to understand comprehensively and deeply the related projects proposed by countries along the Belt and Road. So far, domestic academic and policymaking circles are still far behind in this respect, partly because the Initiative is still fresh and previous research inadequate. The publication of the report makes up for this. Displaying the current and planned corridors of infrastructure of major countries (China, Russia, the United States, and Germany, etc.) and regions (Eurasia, South and Central Asia, Southwest Asia, East and Southeast Asia, and Africa) through both text and illustrations, the report paves the way for further promotion of connectivity among the Belt and Road countries.

Besides these three features, it is commendable that the report reviews the introduction of the First and Second Eurasian Land Bridges, and discusses the position of major countries and regions within the net-

work of intercontinental corridors of infrastructure. The report also provides some to-the-point solutions for important challenges, such as the exhaustion of water resources and expansion of nuclear energy use; and it elaborates skillfully and accurately on several professional issues related to the corridors of infrastructure.

The keynote of the report is optimistic. This optimism is based on its confidence in humans as the only creative species on the globe. It is farsighted as it accords with the general trend of human societal evolution. From this understanding, the report urges countries to abandon their geopolitical mentality and reshape a new global economic order. However, whether this vision can be realized remains uncertain. As is indicated in the ongoing Ukraine Crisis and the rivalry between the West and Russia around it, as well as the increasingly complicated interaction in the Asia-Pacific between China and the United States, traditional geopolitical thinking is yet to fade into history and still brings inevitable trouble to international cooperation. Given this, the realization of the Belt and Road Initiative and the connectivity of multiple corridors of infrastructure are not just economic and development issues, but also concern about security and politics. Regrettably, this report does not throw much light on how to tackle and prevent the negative effects of political and security factors, and we look forward to additional elaboration on these issues when the report is reprinted.

Madam Helga Zepp-LaRouche is a famous social activist and an expert in international studies well-known in China. Her understanding and anticipation of China's strategies deeply impressed me. Under Madam LaRouche's leadership, the Schiller Institute has become one of the first academic institutions to conduct research on the New Silk Road issues. Her speech two decades ago at a symposium on the Eurasian Land Bridge clearly outlined a vision of the New Silk Road, and put forward thought-provoking ideas and arguments. Therefore, the Schiller Institute's report and research into Belt and Road issues is not an overnight effort, but one based on longtime endeavors and reflections.

Generally speaking, *The Silk Road Becomes the World Land-Bridge* is an informative report with unique perspectives and constructive arguments. As China is actively materializing the Belt and Road Initiative, the report's Chinese version also bears practical significance and deserves our careful and in-depth study.