

Mike Billington

Mike Billington, who spoke towards the end, and had heard the repeated calls for “inclusion” and “human rights,” began by insisting that he agreed with Lyndon LaRouche that geopolitics had to be rejected, and that any talk about a future for Afghanistan, or any other war-torn nation, must begin with development as the first agenda item, to address the actual self interest of all sides. Otherwise, the calls for inclusion and human rights would fail. His prepared statement (see below), asked if the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan truly marked the end of the “endless wars,” or whether it was only a repositioning of NATO forces in order to better confront China and Russia.

Billington reported on the important, but limited, cooperation which had taken place over the past three years between the U.S., Russia and China, through the “Extended Troika” with Pakistan, to find a way forward

for peace through development in Afghanistan in the context of China’s Belt and Road Initiative.

Ed Corcoran

The moderator of that panel, Ed Corcoran, a retired U.S. Army Lt. Colonel and a member of the U.S.-Afghan Chamber of Commerce (and a promoter of rebuilding U.S.-Russian cooperation) had introduced Billington by asking him about China’s Belt and Road, and how China had transformed itself. He said at the end, “Thanks, Mike, for emphasizing peace through development, which we clearly need.”

Despite the weaknesses of some of the speakers, the event was precisely what is needed, everywhere, to focus the world’s attention on the critical nature of the resolution of the Afghan situation as a phase change in history, for good or for ill, and the crucial role of The LaRouche Organization and the Schiller Institute in making sure the right decisions are made.

The Land of a Thousand Cities

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

Helga Zepp-LaRouche is the founder and President of the Schiller Institute. This is an edited transcript of her prepared opening statement to a virtual conference of the Afghanistan diaspora on September 30, 2021, “The Road from War to Peace,” sponsored by the Grand National Movement of Afghanistan (GNMA) and the Council on Global Relations (CGR). Her presentation, as delivered, was somewhat different due to circumstances at the event.

When President Joe Biden announced that the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan would signify the “end of an era” of U.S. interventionist wars, an end of attempts to impose the western model of democracy on other cultures, the big concern for many was whether or not this shift simply meant leaving the theater in the Middle East in order to free up forces to concentrate on the containment of China, to refocus on the Indo-Pacific. The creation of the new military alliance of AUKUS (Australia, the U.S., and the UK) has answered that question in the meantime.

But this shows, all the more, that the “ending of the endless wars” must be seen as the chance to draw the obvious conclusion: that these wars, causing the death

of over one million people, making 70 million refugees, at the cost of \$8 trillion, cannot be won. The urgent reconstruction of Afghanistan presents the unique chance to stop the geopolitical confrontation and instead join hands among all the neighboring countries—the Central Asian Republics, Russia, China, Pakistan, Iran and India, but also the U.S. and European nations—to build up the economy of Afghanistan in earnest.

In the weeks after the final withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops from Kabul, it has become clear how unbelievably huge the humanitarian crisis is in this country. According to the World Food Program, 93% of the population does not have enough to eat, and no money to buy any food, with rapidly rising prices. Of those, more than half have acute hunger. According to the former Acting Minister of Health, Dr. Walid Majrooh, after the donor countries cut off the money flows, more than 90% of the population is now without medical care, among them pregnant women and malnourished children. There are now 664,000 newly internally displaced people since January, bringing the total number of internally displaced persons to 3.5 million. As the Norwegian Refugee Council Secretary General, Jan Egeland, stated on September 27th from Kabul:

Winter is coming. Hundreds of thousands of displaced people need immediate shelter, warm clothes and food to survive. Afghanistan's economy is on the brink of collapse. Families are surviving on tea, leftovers, and stale bread. Donors must focus on facilitating quick and effective solutions to deliver emergency care to children, women and men, who simply can't wait any longer.... We are now in a race against the winter, soon it will be minus 10 degrees Celsius [14 degrees Fahrenheit].... Teachers, nurses, doctors are not paid.

We therefore need two things: First, there has to be an instant humanitarian emergency mobilization of unprecedented dimensions to save the lives of 16 million people from starvation and freezing in the next weeks. And second, the presently nonexistent economy must be built, starting with basic infrastructure.

The neighbor countries are committed to integrate Afghanistan into the projects of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the precursor for which is the detailed [program](#), "The New Silk Road Becomes the World Land-Bridge," a program on which the Schiller Institute has been working since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

There is already an agreement between Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan to build a rail connection

from Tashkent, via Mazar-i-Sharif and Kabul to Peshawar, and a highway between Peshawar, Kabul and Dushanbe—the so-called Khyber Pass Economic Corridor (KPEC)—which can become an extension of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Other such corridors must be built, with massive investment in energy production—Afghanistan presently has only 600 MW of energy production, the equivalent of the energy used by a medium-to-large firm in the U.S., and there needs to be a massive investment in water projects.

Given the COVID-19 pandemic, it is indispensable to start with the construction of a modern health system, modern hospitals, the education of doctors, nurses and nursing auxiliaries. If the West is really concerned about women in Afghanistan, that is what women, children and especially pregnant women need.

The Committee for the Coincidence of Opposites is mobilizing presently to get the U.S. and European nations to join hands with Afghanistan's neighboring countries to solve both the urgent humanitarian catastrophe as well as begin the real economic development of Afghanistan and the entire region, which was once called "The Land of a Thousand Cities," which it can become again.

If we succeed in doing that—and I am asking all of you to help in this effort—then the reconstruction of Afghanistan can become the beginning of a new paradigm in international relations and the beginning of a new era of mankind!

Unite the World for the Development of Afghanistan on the New Silk Road

by Mike Billington

Mike Billington is a Co-Editor and Director of Asia Intelligence of EIR magazine. This is an edited transcript of his prepared opening statement to a virtual conference of the Afghanistan diaspora on September 30, 2021, "The Road from War to Peace," sponsored by the Grand National Movement of Afghanistan (GNMA) and the Council on Global Relations (CGR).

Several speakers here today have made geopolitical statements implying the impossibility of bringing all the nations in the region together for the economic development of Afghanistan. I stand with Lyndon LaRouche in rejecting these geopolitical assumptions. Central to this is the primary importance of develop-

ment. In any meeting about Afghanistan's future—or about any other of the nations destroyed by the "endless wars," issues like "inclusive governments" and "human rights" are important, but if economic development is not the first item on the agenda, addressing the common interest of all sections of society, then the efforts for achieving other human rights will fail.

The fundamental issue before us, and the world, today is: Did the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan mark the end of the era of colonial "regime change" wars, endless wars, or was it only a plan to reposition U.S. and NATO forces for a military confrontation with China and Russia, as desired by the British, who are attempting to restore their military role in the Empire