

China's President Addresses 3rd Belt and Road Forum BRI Cooperation Is on the Right Side of History

by Daniel Platt and Dennis Small

Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered the keynote address to the opening session of the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF) on October 18 in Beijing. Speaking to a gathering in the Great Hall of the People of some 4,000 leaders from 140 countries around the world—including 23 heads of state or government—Xi presented what can only be described as a totally Westphalian concept of man and solutions to the crises facing mankind:



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Xi Jinping, President of China.

Noting the 10-year anniversary of the formal founding of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Xi catalogued some of its successes:

Belt and Road cooperation has extended from the Eurasian continent to Africa and Latin America. More than 150 countries and over 30 international organizations have signed Belt and Road cooperation documents. We have held two sessions of the BRF before, and have established over 20 specialized multilateral cooperation platforms under the BRI.

We should all treat each other as friends and partners, respect and support each other, and help each other succeed. Helping others is also helping oneself.

This event was a hopeful moment, during a week when the world seemed to be staring into the abyss.

Xi demonstrated that the project has fully assimilated Lyndon LaRouche's concept of "development corridors," telling the throng of participants:

Over these 10 years, we have endeavored to



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More than 4,000 leaders from 140 countries, including 23 heads of state or government, attended the Third Belt and Road Forum. Pictured here is host Xi Jinping (center) and his wife, Peng Liyuan, with a number of distinguished guests in the Great Hall of the People, Beijing, Oct. 17, 2023.

build a global network of connectivity consisting of economic corridors, international transportation routes and information highways as well as railways, roads, airports, ports, pipelines and power grids. Covering the land, the ocean, the sky and the internet, this network has boosted the flow of goods, capital, technologies and human resources among countries involved and injected fresh vitality into the millennia-old Silk Road in the new era.

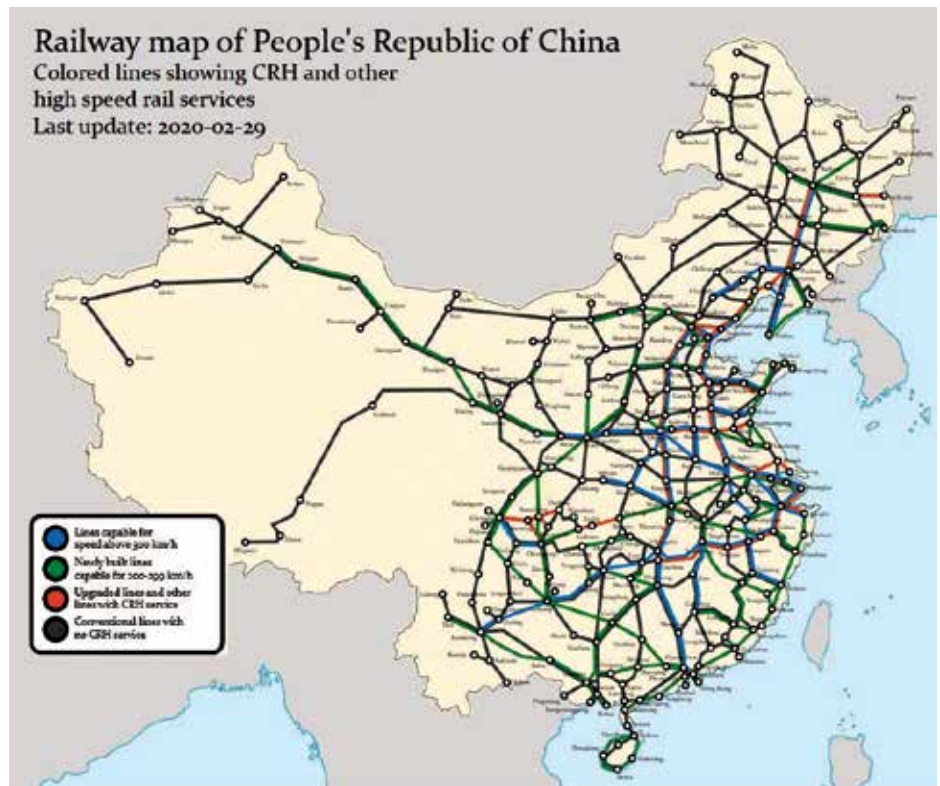
Xi also acknowledged the cultural dimension of the BRI:

Rich and colorful cultural years, art festivals, expos and exhibitions, Luban Workshops, people-to-people exchange programs like the Silk Road Community Building Initiative and the Brightness Action program, and deepening exchanges between non-governmental organizations, think tanks, media organizations, and the youth—all these flourishing activities have composed a symphony of friendship in the new era.

‘When China Does Well....’

Xi stressed that—

We have learned that humankind is a community with a shared future. China can only do well when the world is doing well. When China does well, the world will get even better.... The modernization we are pursuing is not for China alone, but for all developing countries through our joint efforts. Global modernization should be pursued to enhance peaceful development and mutually beneficial cooperation and bring prosperity to all.... Let us advance modernization of all countries, build an open, inclusive and interconnected world for common development, and jointly



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Upgrading and expanding China's railway network has connected previously remote areas, integrating them into the rapidly growing and modernizing nation. The Belt and Road Initiative is extending this concept to cooperating nations throughout the world.

build a community with a shared future for mankind.

Xi referred several times to the ancient Silk Road and the aura of cooperation surrounding it:

the pioneers of the ancient silk routes won their place in history not as conquerors with warships, guns, horses, or swords. Rather they are remembered as friendly emissaries leading camel caravans and sailing ships loaded with goods.

He declared that the BRI has moved “from physical connectivity to institutional connectivity,” creating a new standard for development.

Stepping back from the particulars, Xi considered the BRI from the vantage point of the mountaintop:

What has been achieved in the past 10 years demonstrates that Belt and Road cooperation is on the right side of history. It represents the advancing of our times, and it is the right path for-

ward. We need to remain clear-eyed and undisturbed in a volatile world, and we need to be keenly aware of our responsibility for history, for the people and for the world. We should jointly address various global risks and challenges, and deliver a bright future of peace, development, cooperation and mutual benefit for future generations.

Sighting the Path to Peace

In conclusion, Xi presented an eight-point proposal for the next stage of Belt and Road development, including extending it across the planet, deepening it with “small yet smart” projects, “advancing scientific and technological innovation,” and setting up a permanent Secretariat for the Belt and Road Forum to give it institutional structure and permanence.

Xi’s colleague and collaborator, Russian President Vladimir Putin, was the guest of honor at the forum, and spoke following Xi:

Mr. Xi advanced a truly important and global idea that is spearheaded into the future, towards creating a fairer multipolar world and system of relations. It is a global plan, without a doubt. I agree with the President of China that the Belt and Road idea ties in logically with multilateral efforts to promote creative and constructive interaction throughout the international community....

It also rhymes with our idea of creating a greater Eurasian partnership as an area of cooperation and interaction among like-minded nations and the alignment of various integration processes, such as the Belt and Road Initiative, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), which Russia is successfully developing with its post-Soviet partners....

Russia, which will assume the rotating chairmanship of the expanded BRICS next year, has advanced the initiative of establishing a permanent transport logistics commission within the framework of this group. This commission of BRICS members, partner countries, and other interested states, could focus on the development of the entire complex of international transport corridors.



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Abiy Ahmed Ali, Prime Minister of Ethiopia: Thanks to Belt and Road investments, Ethiopia is the fastest growing economy in Africa; peace and development are mutually reinforcing, and both are required for the planet.

Putin was followed by Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of Kazakhstan; Joko Widodo, President of Indonesia; Alberto Fernández, President of Argentina; Abiy Ahmed Ali, Prime Minister of Ethiopia; and UN Secretary-General António Guterres. Each emphasized the great help that China had provided to their countries, and noted specific joint projects they had launched.

Fernández made a point of stating that Argentina has joined the BRICS, and thanked China for its help in Argentina’s fight with the IMF. Abiy Ahmed proudly stated Ethiopia is the fastest growing economy in Africa, but also spoke for the whole continent and its 1.4 billion people and 2,000 years of Africa-China cooperation. He said peace and development are mutually reinforcing and both are required for the planet. Guterres noted the importance of infrastructure, such as that emphasized by the BRI, to bringing development and peace, and took the occasion to demand an immediate ceasefire in Southwest Asia, the release of all hostages, and establishing a humanitarian corridor into Gaza immediately.

Schiller Institute founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche, echoing both her late husband Lyndon LaRouche and Pope Paul VI, has also repeatedly insisted that the “name for peace is development.” In a world teetering on the precipice of a new global conflict, the Belt and Road Forum offers a glimpse of that yearned-for durable peace.