

Bering Strait Project Featured in Russia

by Rachel Douglas

Forum International, a Moscow-based publication, has released a special issue on the project to link Eurasian and American infrastructure networks via a tunnel under the Bering Strait. The contents of the 80-page, color-illustrated magazine, which came out on June 6, are centered on the proceedings of the April 24 international conference on “Megaprojects of Russia’s East: An Intercontinental Eurasia-America Transport Link via the Bering Strait” (*EIR*, May 4 and 11, 2007). The transcripts and articles are provided in both Russian and English.

Forum International appeared as the G-8 summit opened in Heiligendamm, Germany, amid persistent reports that Russia would raise the Bering Strait rail-road-energy project there. The magazine’s opening spread is the text of an Appeal from the April 24 conference participants, addressed to the heads of state of Russia, the U.S.A., Canada, China, Korea, Japan, and the EU member countries, asking them to put the project on the G-8 agenda and to push ahead with funding for its feasibility studies.

Like the April 24 conference, this issue of *Forum International* has been sponsored by Council for the Study of Productive Forces, a Russian state research organization known by its Russian acronym, SOPS. It is a joint organization of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, and is headed by Academician Alexander G. Granberg.

Included in this issue of *Forum International* is *EIR* founder Lyndon LaRouche’s contribution to the SOPS conference, titled “The World’s Political Map Changes: Mendeleyev Would Have Agreed.” It previously came out in *EIR* of May 4, 2007. LaRouche calls the Bering Strait project “the navel of a birth of a new world economy,” as against the “impulse towards new world wars.”

The theme of collaboration on great, mutually beneficial infrastructure projects as a means of war-avoidance runs throughout the special issue. It comes into focus in Schiller Institute founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche’s testimony to June 2001 Russian State Duma hearings on “Measures To Ensure the Development of Russia’s Economy Under Conditions of Global Financial Destabilization,” which is included in *Forum International*. Presenting the link between economic depressions and war, Zepp-LaRouche developed for her Russian audience, how the implementation of German economist Dr.



The cover of Forum International shows a photo of the Bering Strait as seen from space, with the prospective rail line between Alaska and Russia’s Chukotka Region sketched in.

Wilhelm Lautenbach’s program for productive employment could have ended the Depression and prevented the Nazis’ rise to power, had it been adopted in 1931. The Eurasian Land-Bridge today, she concluded, gives the world’s people a vision of hope that the 21st Century will be better than the 20th.

Former Alaska Gov. Walter J. Hickel’s April 24 speech is published in *Forum International* under the headline “Mega Projects Would Be an Alternative to War.”

Academician Granberg, in his contribution to the magazine, says that “multilateral infrastructure megaprojects are the only real alternative to confrontation, including military confrontation, between nations and peoples.” He calls the Bering Strait scheme “a project that may change the world, a project of joining creative energies, replacing missile defense systems with a territory of international cooperation.” Granberg is Russia’s leading expert on regional development in northern latitudes, such as those of Siberia and the Russian Far East. His call to complete the Bering Strait connection by 2027, made during recent Moscow festivities to mark Prof. Stanislav Menshikov’s 80th birthday, was published in the June 1, 2007 *EIR*.

Boris Lapidus, senior vice-president of the state-owned company Russian Railways, writing about the job-creating potential of the trans-Bering Strait railway, says in his article, “The mutual benefit for Russia, the EU, and the Asia-Pacific countries is the basis for cooperation in setting up transit corridors and makes it possible to combine national interests for the common good.”

Other contributors of articles and interviews in the special issue include board members of the non-profit Interhemispheric Bering Strait Rail and Tunnel Group, formed in 1991 to promote the project; Russian hydroelectric power executives who want to develop new capacities on Siberia’s rivers; and members of the governments of several eastern Russian regions.