

NYHEDSORIENTERING NOVEMBER 2021:

Schiller Instituttets internationale videokonference:

**Alle menneskehedens moralske
ressourcer skal samles:**

**Menneskeheden må være den
udødelige art!**

Indhold:

Resumé af Schiller Instituttets internationale videokonference
den 13.-14. november 2021

Helga Zepp-LaRouches hovedtale: En frygtelig afslutning eller
et nyt paradigme?

Fhv. dansk diplomat, Friis Arne Petersen, opfordrer Europa til
at slutte sig til Bælte- og Vej-Initiativet og lære om
infrastrukturøkonomi fra Kina

Åbent brev til virologer og eksperter indenfor lægevidenskaben
rundt om i verden for at tage hånd om COVID-19 pandemien, af
Dr. Joycelyn Elders, tidligere chef for USA's militærs
sundhedskorps

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Forhenværende dansk diplomat, Friis Arne Petersen, opfordrer Europa til at slutte sig til Bælte- og Vej-Initiativet og lære om infrastrukturøkonomi fra Kina

There is an English version below.

København, 10. november (EIRNS) – Den tidligere danske ambassadør Friis Arne Petersen holdt en yderst vigtig tale i går, hvor han opfordrede Europa til at slutte sig til Bælte- og Vej-Initiativet (BRI), og udfordrede Europa og USA til at lære fra Kina, hvordan man skaber økonomisk vækst ved hjælp af investeringer i storstilet, højteknologisk infrastruktur. Hans konklusion var, at vi bliver nødt til at forstå infrastrukturens rolle i at skabe økonomisk vækst. Hvis vi sørger for vandforsyning, energi og transport, så vil der være vækst, fordi mennesker er kreative.

Friis Arne Petersen var dansk ambassadør til USA, Kina og Tyskland (5 år i hvert land fra 2005 til 2020), såvel som tidligere direktør for det danske udenrigsministerium. Før dette var han direktør for udenrigsministeriets russiske og østeuropæiske afdeling. Han er også økonom.

Konferencen »Geoøkonomi eller Geopolitik«, som både fandt sted fysisk og blev live-streamet, blev afholdt på Dansk Institut

for Internationale Studier (DIIS), den førende udenrigspolitiske tænketank som er tilknyttet det danske udenrigsministerium. Den kan ses på engelsk ovenover eller her: <http://www.diis.dk/en/event/geoeconomics-or-geopolitics>

En repræsentant for Schiller Instituttet uddelte konferenceindbydelser til alle deltagere og stillede to spørgsmål (ved 1 time 54 minutter). Se nedenfor.

Først forklarede Lars Erslev Andersen, en DIIS-forsker, Halford Mackinders idé om britisk geopolitik og det eurasiske kerneland (11:50 minutter inde). Han stillede spørgsmålet, hvad det betyder for Europa, at Kina investerer i det centralasiatiske kerneland – er det geopolitik eller geoøkonomi?

Her er højdepunkterne fra Friis Arne Petersens tale, som havde titlen »Er Bælte- og Vej-Initiativet geoøkonomi eller geopolitik?« (begynder 30 minutter inde).

Lær af Kina: Vi koncentrerer os ikke nok om, hvordan Kina skabte deres succesfulde økonomiske udvikling. Hvorfor er infrastruktur så vigtigt for Kina, både indenfor og udenfor landets grænser?

Finansiel udvikling: Kineserne var utilfredse med Den internationale Valutafond (IMF) og Verdensbanken, så de oprettede Den asiatiske infrastruktur- og Investeringsbank (AIIB). Til trods for opposition fra USA, efter at Storbritannien tilsluttede sig, og dernæst Frankrig og Tyskland, ringede Friis Arne Petersen til København og sagde, at vi bliver nødt til at varetage nationale interesser og tilslutte os.

Infrastruktur for en forenet nation: Udfordringen for Kina var ikke blot ulighed, men nationens samhørighed. Det vestlige Kina måtte udvikles. Det har også en global indvirkning. De opbyggede industrierne for at forsyne infrastrukturen med

goder. De forsøgte at udvikle de bedste, billigste teknologier og i deres målrettethed forårsagede de en overproduktion, hvilket BRI hjælper dem af med.

Manglen på strategiske visioner indenfor infrastruktur i USA og Europa: Han kritiserede USA's program med kvantitative lempelser, siden Obama og fremefter, for ikke at investere i de nyeste transportteknologier ligesom Kina, der byggede et højhastighedstognet på tusindvis af kilometer. Han henviste til Los Angeles' forældede havn og transportinfrastruktur som den medvirkende årsag til den nuværende forsyningskrise.

Europa: Friis Arne Petersen fortalte en historie om den tid, da SF's formand, transportminister Pia Olsen Dyhr, mødtes med den kinesiske transportminister, imens Friis Arne Petersen var ambassadør. Den kinesiske minister spurgte hende om den nyligt forhandlede (meget uambitiøse) danske togfond og bemærkede, »Tja, det er en begyndelse, men vi eksperimenterer allerede med tog, der kan køre 500 km/t«. De skaber forskningsbaseret innovation. Den danske ambassade i Kina begyndte gradvist at forstå transportøkonomi. Tyskland var et negativt eksempel ved at nægte at hjælpe Danmark med at bygge Femern Bælt-forbindelsen (mellem Danmark og Tyskland).

Tilbagevisningen af beskyldningen om gældsdiplomati: Friis Arne Petersen citerede en rapport fra forskere fra Johns Hopkins University og Harvard Business School, »Kinesiske banker er villige til at omstrukturere betingelserne for de eksisterende lån, og har faktisk aldrig beslaglagt et andet lands aktiver, mindst af alt havnen i Hambantota [i Sri Lanka]«. Han sagde også, at landene langs BRI har en større gæld til vestlige kreditorer, end til Kina. (Den tredje taler ved begivenheden, DIIS-forsker Yang Jiang, satte også spørgsmålstegn ved beskyldningen om gældsdiplomati.)

Den tredje tale, »Centralasien: Konkurrencen om Kernelandet«, givet af Yang Jiang, omhandlede forskellige asiatiske landes, samt Tyrkiets, investeringer i Centralasien.

Spørgerunden: Efter at have identificeret sig selv, takkede en repræsentant for Schiller Instituttet, Michelle Rasmussen, Friis Arne Petersen for hans vigtige tale og sagde, at Schiller Instituttet har kørt en kampagne for at Danmark, Europa og USA tilslutter sig BRI, frem for at betragte det som en trussel. Hun henviste til sin uddeling af flyveblade og sagde, at videokonferencen denne uge vil besvare nogle af disse spørgsmål.

Hun stillede to relaterede spørgsmål. Det første var, hvordan vi kan få USA og Europa til at holde op med at betragte Kina, og særligt BRI, som en trussel, og i stedet se fordelene ved et økonomisk samarbejde. Vores motto er Fred gennem økonomisk udvikling, fordi fortsættelsen af at betragte Kina og Rusland som trusler, og forfølgelsen af en konfrontationspolitik, fører til faren for krig.

Det andet spørgsmål var, hvad han mente om at integrere Afghanistan med BRI – kineserne er beredte på at gøre dette. Ville det ikke være vigtigt for USA og Europa – særligt de lande der var engagerede i krigen – at håndtere denne skrækkelige økonomiske krise i Afghanistan gennem et samarbejde med Kina?

Friis Arne Petersen svarede, at der er for mange opdelinger, snak om rivalisering eller de mange usikkerheder, som findes i forbindelse med Asiens fremgang. På samme tid som der er en vækst i den vestlige handel med Asien, for eksempel USA's køb af mange kinesiske produkter nu efter pandemien, er vi fuldstændig besat af ideen om politisk konfrontation og systemiske udfordringer.

Jeg betragter verdensordenen gennem økonomi. Fremskridtet i retningen af FN's udviklingsmål, takket være Asiens

økonomiske præstation, giver mig en optimisme mht., at disse alarmister og folk, som ønsker at politisere og se farer og militære modstandere overalt, vil tabe. Vi bliver nødt til at betragte vores nationers samlede interesser.

På den ene side har Kina, med sine 14 nabolande, en større strategisk udfordring end USA, men Kina ser altid disse nabolande som muligheder, ligesom det som BRI for eksempel kunne opnå i Afghanistan. USA og Vesten har en meget klar interesse i at Afghanistans naboer, som for eksempel Kina, Pakistan og Indien, forsøger at tage vare på deres region, fordi de muligvis kan gøre dette bedre, end vi gjorde det i løbet af de sidste 20 år.

English:

COPENHAGEN, Nov. 10 (EIRNS) – Former Danish ambassador Friis Arne Petersen gave an extremely important speech yesterday calling for Europe to join the Belt and Road Initiative, and challenging Europe and the U.S. to learn from China how to generate economic development through large scale, high-technology infrastructure investment. His conclusion was we have to understand the role of infrastructure in growth economics. If we ensure water, power and transportation, there will be growth, because humans are creative.

Friis Arne Petersen was the Danish ambassador to the U.S., China and Germany (5 years in each country from 2005-2020), as well as the former director of the Danish Foreign Ministry, and, before that, director for the Foreign Ministry's Russia/Eastern Europe division. He is also an economist.

The event, "Goeconomics or geopolitics," both on-site and streamed, was held at the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), the leading foreign policy think tank, affiliated with the Danish Foreign Ministry. See it, in English,

here. (www.diis.dk/en/event/geoeconomics-or-geopolitics)

A Schiller Institute representative distributed conference invitations to all attendees, and asked two questions (at 1 hour 54 minutes), see below.

First, Lars Erslev Andersen, a DIIS researcher, explained Halford Macinder's idea of British geopolitics and the Eurasian heartland (at 11:50 minutes). He posed the question, what does it mean for Europe, that China is investing in the Central Asian heartland, is it geopolitics or geoeconomics?

Here are highlights from Friis Arne Petersen's speech, entitled, "Is the Belt and Road Initiative geoeconomics or geopolitics?," (at 30 minutes).

Learn from China: We are not concentrating enough on how China created their successful economic development. Why is infrastructure so important for China, both inside and outside the country?

Financing development: The Chinese were dissatisfied with the IMF and World Bank, so they created the AIIB. Despite opposition from the U.S., after the UK joined, then France and Germany, Friis Arne Petersen called Copenhagen and said that we have to take care of our national interest and join.

Infrastructure for a unified nation: The challenge for China was not just inequality, but the cohesion of the nation. Western China had to be developed. It also has global impact. They simultaneously built up the industries to provide the products for the infrastructure, trying to develop the best, cheapest technologies, and in their zeal, causing overproduction, which the BRI helps alleviate.

Lack of strategic infrastructure vision in the U.S. and Europe: The U.S.: He attacked the U.S. stimulus programs from Obama onwards, for not investing in the newest transportation technologies, like China, which built thousands of miles of

high-speed rail. He referenced the Los Angeles port's antiquated harbor and transportation infrastructure as the contributing cause for the current bottleneck.

Europe: Friis Arne Petersen told an anecdote about the time SF's chairman Pia Olsen Dyhr met with the Chinese transportation minister while Friis Arne Petersen was ambassador. The Chinese minister asked her about the newly negotiated (very unambitious) Danish train plan, and he replied, "Well, that's a beginning, but we are experimenting with trains that can run 5-600 miles per hour." The Danish Embassy in China gradually started to understand transportation economics. Germany was a negative example for refusing to help Denmark build the Fehmarnbelt tunnel (between Denmark and Germany).

Debunking the debt diplomacy accusation: Friis Arne Petersen cited a report from researchers from Johns Hopkins University and Harvard Business School, "Chinese banks are willing to restructure the terms of existing loans and have never actually seized an asset from any country, much less the port of Hambantota [Sri Lanka]." He also said that BRI countries owe much more to Western lenders, than China. (The third speaker at the event, DIIS researcher Yang Jiang, also challenged the debt diplomacy accusation.)

The third speech was "Central Asia: competing for the Heartland," about investment in Central Asia by different Asian countries and Turkey by Yang Jiang.

Q&A: After identification, Schiller Institute organizer Michelle Rasmussen thanked Friis Arne Petersen for his important speech, and said that the Schiller Institute has been campaigning for Denmark, Europe, and the U.S. to join the BRI, instead of looking at it as a threat. She referenced her leaflet distribution, and said that our video conference this weekend will answer some of these questions.

She posed two related questions. One is, how can we get the U.S. and Europe to stop looking at China, and specifically the BRI, as a threat, and to see the advantages of economic cooperation? Our slogan is peace through development, because if we continue to regard China and Russia as threats, and pursue a confrontation policy, we are threatened with war.

The other question is what you think about integrating Afghanistan into the BRI – the Chinese are ready to do that. Wouldn't it be important for the U.S. and Europe, especially the countries in the war, to deal with this terrible economic crisis in Afghanistan, through cooperating with China?

Friis Arne Petersen said that there are too many division lines, talk of rivalry, or the many uncertainties that lie in the advance of Asia. At the same time that there is an increase of western trade with Asia, for example, the U.S. buying so many Chinese products now after the pandemic, we are totally obsessive about political confrontation, and systemic challenges.

I approach the world order through economy. The progress towards the UN development goals due to the economic performance of Asia makes me optimistic that these alarmists, and people who want to politicize and see danger and military adversaries everywhere, will lose. We have to look at the total interests of our nations.

On the one hand, China, with its 14 neighboring countries, is more strategically challenged than the U.S., but China always sees the neighboring countries as opportunities, like what the BRI will do in Afghanistan. The U.S. and the West have a very clear interest in having Afghanistan's neighbors, like China, Pakistan and India, try to manage their region, because they, possibly, can do that better than we did during the last 20 years.

Geo-økonomiens æra bryder frem: udvidelse af Bælte- og Vejinitiativet til Afghanistan

af Hussein Askary, bestyrelsesmedlem af Belt and Road Institute in Sweden (BRIS) og Schiller Instituttets Sydvestasien Koordinator.

På engelsk:

The hasty withdrawal of U.S., British and other North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troops from Afghanistan after 20 years of failed "war on terrorism" can potentially become an inflection point towards a new era in world politics. The comparisons with the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Saigon, Vietnam in 1975 is somewhat inaccurate. There is now a new mechanism and constellation of regional and global powers willing to bring peace, stability, and economic development to Afghanistan with well-defined plans along the Belt and Road Initiative. The comparison should rather be with the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, which means that a terrible era is potentially ending and a new one is ushered into world politics, overturning decades and centuries of destructive zero-sum geopolitics, "great games" and wars.

If calmly and wisely approached, this new situation has the potential of reaching peace through economic development and win-win cooperation. The key to this new policy is the integration of Afghanistan into the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). While there are great risks embedded in the chaotic situation left by NATO in Afghanistan, any peace and

reconciliation initiative should contain the reconstruction of the economy as the main item on the agenda.

Following 20 years of military operation by the U.S., Britain and their allies, and with at least 71,000 civilians killed in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, these forces were hastily withdrawn in July and August of this year. The Taliban, the purported target of the Afghanistan war and main antagonists of NATO and the Western-backed government, expanded their control over every part of the country. While Western mass media was filled with panicked reporting about the rapid onslaught of the Taliban in many parts of the country, cooler heads in China, Russia, Pakistan, Iran and many Central Asian and even India were busy arranging a flurry of diplomatic moves to both contain the situation and get the Taliban and the Afghani government in Kabul to talk peace and reconciliation.

The Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Affairs Minister Wang Yi visited several Central Asian capitals in July already to discuss the situation. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which includes all the above nations plus other Eurasian nations, held a meeting of its foreign ministers on Afghanistan on July 14 in Dushanbe, capital of Tajikistan. Wang Yi said at the meeting, that due to the hasty withdrawal of the U.S. and NATO troops, "Afghanistan is once again faced with the grave challenge of moving toward war or peace, chaos or stability". He proposed a five-point initiative, the third point of which was to "working together to boost a reconciliation process to ensure that no-civil war scenario develops. In line with the principle of "Afghan-led and Afghan-owned". All neighboring countries of Afghanistan have a stake in this situation and have influence on certain Afghani factions and groups, making them a suitable broker of peace and reconciliation. Point five urged the SCO to contribute to peace and reconstruction in Afghanistan. The SCO should make active use of existing cooperation mechanisms in economy,

trade, culture and other fields to support Afghanistan in enhancing its capacity for independent development and achieving genuine and sustainable development. Integrating Afghanistan into regional economic development plans and structures will insure durable peace.

No peace without development

It is this this latter point, which was neglected in the past 20 year, while the focus was placed only on the use of military and security measures that have had devastating consequences on the nation and. According to certain estimates, an incredible US\$ 2.2 trillion was spent on this war, while the overall cost of the U.S. wars since 9/11, 2001, has reached US\$ 6.4 trillion. Almost none of that was used to build infrastructure, housing, hospitals, schools, power or water management systems. This is 6 times the amount China invested in the BRI since 2013. But China has built thousands of kilometers of railways and roads, power plants, ports, airports, water management systems, across Eurasia and Africa. It is for this reason the current case of Afghanistan could become an inflection point in current history concerning the philosophy and achievement of peace through economic development rather than military force.

Afghanistan and the BRI

Contrary to its previous position as a buffer zone between the Russian and British Empires in the geopolitical Great Game, Afghanistan is perfectly positioned to become a bridge between northern Eurasia and South Asia, and between East Asia and West Asia. It is squeezed between two of the main BRI corridors; The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to the south of its border, and The China-Central Asia-Iran-Turkey New Silk Road Corridor to its north.

Afghanistan formally joined the BRI in May 2016 during a visit by Chief Executive of Afghanistan, Dr. Abdullah Abdullah to

China, in May 2016, in which the Afghan and Chinese Foreign Ministers signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation under the BRI. The Afghan Foreign Ministry stated then that “given its location at the crossroads of Central, South, and Southwest Asia, Afghanistan is well placed to partner with China and connect to the wider region via BRI.” Afghanistan also became a member in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), in 2017. However, due to the situation in the country, and obvious U.S.-China antagonism, no infrastructure or other projects were launched jointly.

Interestingly, China managed to include the BRI as part of the United Nations mission in Afghanistan, and article 34 of the 2017 UN Security Council Resolution 2344 states that it “welcomes and urges further efforts to strengthen the process of regional economic cooperation, including measures to facilitate regional connectivity, trade and transit, including through regional development initiatives such as the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road (the Belt and Road) Initiative, and regional development projects.”

Almost one year ahead of the U.S. and Nato withdrawal from Afghanistan, Wang Yi reached a nine-point consensus at the Inaugural China-Central Asian Countries Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on July 16, 2020. Of interest here are point three, which states that the parties will make more efforts to “synergize the Belt and Road Initiative and the development strategies of Central Asian countries, expand trade and provide more common ideas and concrete actions on the development of a Silk Road of Health and the Digital Silk Road”. Point eight, which concerns Afghanistan stated: “China and Central Asian countries all support the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan and stand ready to play a constructive role in promoting intra-Afghan negotiation, restoring peace and stability, advancing Afghan economic recovery and strengthening regional cooperation.”

In another important development, the joint statement of the

Fourth China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Dialogue in June 2021, stressed that "the three sides reaffirmed that they will deepen cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative, Regional Economic Cooperation Conference (RECCA), "Heart of Asia" Istanbul Process (HoA/IP) and other regional economic initiatives." Connectivity between the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Afghanistan was a key element in this dialog.

RECCA, which is mentioned in this joint statement, is an initiative launched by the Foreign Ministry of Afghanistan to agglomerate all the different connectivity and development corridors connecting Afghanistan to its neighbors and larger regions. It has published several studies on these corridors and how they will benefit Afghanistan and enhance stability and security in the country and the larger region.



Putting Afghanistan on the Belt and Road to Peace and Prosperity

So, the plan is to build a number of development corridors for transport, power, and oil and gas through Afghanistan. There are a number of the projects outlined by the RECCA. One of

them is the CASA-1000, the Central Asia South Asia regional electricity market. Turkmenistan is a natural gas-rich country. Iran, too, is a natural gas-rich country and both of them provide power to Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is dependent on its neighbor countries to provide its electricity, which has not been built in the past 20 years. CASA-1000 includes Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan as one electric grid. The TAP-500, another electric power line connecting Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan. There is the TAPI, the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline, which was backed allegedly by the United States and NATO, but this was used as a geopolitical tool to make sure that the Central Asian countries and the gas- and oil-rich countries avoid working with Russia and Iran and China to get their natural gas outside because they are landlocked countries.

So, the idea was to connect Turkmenistan directly to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, and get the natural gas from there. But this is, in itself, a very useful project, and it also helps to connect Pakistan and India through mutual interest. But it does not exclude building gas pipelines to Russia or to China or through Iran. But reality has its final say, and the Turkmenistan-Central Asia-China natural gas corridor has become one of the most vital gas supply lines in Asia. Iran, Pakistan and India also had their "Peace Pipeline" plans, which the Iranians built all the way to Zahedan on the border with Pakistan. But pressure from the United States did not allow Pakistan to pursue the project. In addition, the conflict between Pakistan and India stopped that project. So, there is no conflict between these different oil and gas pipelines if geopolitics are pushed aside and economic and social considerations are adopted instead.

Today, there is no contradiction between Pakistan benefiting from cooperating with both. The energy requirements of all countries, including India and China are so enormous, that it

takes more than one pipeline to meet.

There is also among these infrastructure projects the Five-Nation Railway (China-Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran), and the corridor from Peshawar (Pakistan) to Kabul and to Dushanbe. Another corridor goes from Peshawar to Kabul to Mazar-e-Sharif and into Turkmenistan. There are a number of railways which were built from the neighboring countries; like Iran, which just last year completed the railway from Khaf and Mashhad in Iran to Herat in the northwest of Afghanistan. A corridor should also extend from from Tajikistan to Kunduz. Many regional railways reach the border towns of Afghanistan from the neighboring countries but then stop there, because the missing links are all within Afghanistan itself. In 2016, a train, arrived from Xinjiang in China into Hairatan in northern Afghanistan passing through Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In 2019, a freight line was established along this route to China. Therefore, building the missing links inside Afghanistan should become the focus for the reconstruction plans.

In February of this year a strategic agreement between Pakistan, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan for building a 573 km railway from Mazar-e-Sharif, via Kabul to Peshawar, Pakistan, was signed. It will connect with the existing Termez, Uzbekistan – Mazar-e-Sharif cross-border line, which opened in January 2012. This line offers a direct link between Pakistan and the Uzbek capital of Tashkent. The three countries had jointly signed a proposal in December 2020 for plans to seek a \$US 4.8bn loan for the project from global financial institutions. Reportedly, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, Islamic Development Bank, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the International Finance Corporation have all expressed interest in the project. The line will also connect with the 112km Atamyrat, Turkmenistan, – Aqina – Andkhoy cross-border line,

linking Turkmenistan with Peshawar.

Surrounded by BRI projects

All the neighbors of Afghanistan are actively involved in the BRI. The CPEC, the flagship of the BRI and the most advanced of the BRI corridors is an important vehicle for bringing the BRI into Afghanistan.

China's relationship to Central Asia has been evolving into a positive direction, especially after the initiation of the BRI by President Xi Jinping in 2013. The Central Asia nations, three of which share borders with Afghanistan, have adapted their national development plans to the BRI. Not only their trade with China has grown massively, many infrastructural and agro-industrial projects are now integral to the BRI and cooperation with China. The SCO, which initially was a security organization, has evolved into an economic cooperation vehicle. The Joint Commission on Facilitation of International Road Transport is one of the important platforms of the SCO, especially on infrastructure matters. There are several China-Central Asian initiatives such as the Sino-Kyrgyz Regional Cooperation Plan (2015-2020), Kazakhstan's Bright Road Initiative, Tajikistan's national development strategy 2030 and Uzbekistan's new development strategy.

Concerning connectivity, China's Xinjiang (Uyghur Autonomous Region) is connected to three main Belt and Road Corridors. These are the CPEC, New Silk Road, and the Eurasian Corridor. But to have an effective connectivity, there is need to upgrade the transport and power infrastructure of China's neighbors to match the fast development of China's own economy and rapid increase in China-Europe trade.

Iran, which shares long borders with Afghanistan to the west, have also consolidated its relationship to China and the BRI for years, but most emphatically through signing the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership agreement in March 2021,

which is an unprecedented economic, trade and strategic cooperation framework extending for 25 years. Iran has also strong economic ties to Afghanistan, and as mentioned above, recently extended an important railway from Khaf in eastern Iran to Herat in Afghanistan.

Mineral wealth

Afghanistan is rich with rare-earth and other metals like lithium, beryllium and tantalum and others that are necessary for modern electronics and high-technology products. Afghanistan also has very large iron and copper mines.

One good thing the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) did, is a large-scale survey of almost the entirety of the Afghan territories to figure out the different deposits of special minerals and non-oil minerals. The study was completed in 2016 and has been updated several times since then.

The Mes Aynak copper deposit is one of the largest in Asia. A Chinese consortium (China Metallurgical Group) won the bid for developing this mine and producing copper in 2007. However, there were two major problems for pursuing the work. One was the security problem. The Chinese company sites were attacked by militant groups several times. The other problem concerns processing the copper, which required investing in building a 500-Megawatts coal-fired power plant, and a railway to bring coal from the northern part of the country and shipping the produced copper was also necessary. Lack of water, necessity for mining, was also another issue. That meant that the cost of the project as a result of such investments, would be higher than estimated. This meant that expected revenues both for the Chinese company and Afghan government were not as high as first estimated. This led to a dispute which is not resolved yet. But if the security situation is stabilized, and the development corridors are built, the power and transport will be available to utilize these mines more easily.

Water shortage

Afghanistan was a lush garden many centuries ago; but due to periodical long-term climate changes and also all the conflicts that engulfed Afghanistan and the lack of development much of Afghanistan is quite arid. In Afghanistan, only 67% of the population has access to drinking water, not necessarily tap water. Many have access to drinking water only through wells. The mortality rate in 2004 in Afghanistan for children below the age of five, was 25%, which is a tragically high level. But half of the mortality is related to waterborne disease—so, providing drinking water is a matter of life or death immediately for many, as well as being critical for economic development.

Afghanistan has a number of rivers like the Helmand River, the Amu Darya River, the Kabul River, the Logar and Panjshir, and several other small ones. Because they depend much on snow melting on the mountains, they have large seasonal fluctuations and some of them even dry up in the summer and fall of the year. The water budget of Afghanistan is estimated to be 55-75 billion cubic meters per year. This is approximately what the Egyptians get in the Nile River annually. But the Egyptians get it literally served on a platter. But in Afghanistan, however, to be able to utilize as much as possible of this water budget; that is, instead of it running off and evaporating, there is need to build a massive water management infrastructure system.

One important point in terms of food security is the problem of opium cultivation, which had disappeared under Taliban control prior to 2001, but which increased dramatically under U.S. and NATO control. Afghanistan has become the source of 80% of the opium and heroin in the whole world. It needs support to convert the opium production into food production. The Taliban, upon taking over the capital Kabul on August 17, declared that they will once again eradicate opium cultivation.

Human Resources

The population of Afghanistan is 39 million people, according to 2021 statistics, including three million refugees, mostly in Iran and Pakistan. But the amazing factor is that 46% of the population of Afghanistan are below the age of 15 years. And only 2.5% of the population of Afghanistan are above the age of 65. So, we have around 80% of the Afghani people are below 30 years of age, which is a very, very young population. And of course, it has enormous aspirations and demands. This population of 37 million is projected to double by 2050.

The concentration of the population in Afghanistan is to the south and to the north of the central mountain barrier. So, this has to be bridged through development corridors in order to connect all the different groups of Afghani population and resources—both water and other resources—together, to create one economic unit. This will naturally contribute to connecting it to the surrounding nations, to create an even larger economic unit.

What the initial support through the Belt and Road should be, is for the reconstruction of the infrastructure of Afghanistan to create the economic platform necessary to enable all those millions of young Afghans to increase improve their skills and their productivity to utilize the natural resources and land to gain profitability and be able to participate in international trade.

The way forward

On July 28, 2021, Wang Yi met with the visiting delegation led by head of the Afghan Taliban Political Commission Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar in Tianjin. While much of the discussion dealt with the future perspectives of reconciliation, peace, stability and preventing terrorist groups from using Afghanistan as a base to attack China and other neighbors, economic development and reconstruction were key elements of

the two sides discussions. Baradar emphasized that the Afghani side hopes that China will be more involved in Afghanistan's peace and reconciliation process and play a bigger role in future reconstruction and economic development. The Afghan Taliban will also make its own efforts toward fostering an enabling investment environment.

The irony here is that the same Afghanistan, which was a pivot of geopolitics, could suddenly become the springboard to a new era of win-win cooperation rather than zero-sum game politics. Economic cooperation is the gateway to both security and prosperity for all nations, especially Afghanistan the people of which have suffered incredibly in the past 40 years. It is the right time now to put Afghanistan on the Belt and Road to peace. This current crisis carries within it a great opportunity, exactly as the fall of the Berlin Wall presented an opportunity for a new and just world economic order. Unfortunately, that 1989 opportunity was squandered. The world cannot afford to lose another such a unique opportunity.

*In an international conference held on July 31st by the International Schiller Institute, this author and several current and former government officials and nongovernmental think-tank experts presented a wide range of possibilities for reconciliation and reconstruction option for Afghanistan in the context of the BRI.

Artiklen er fra BRIX's hjemmeside.

Afghanistan er en gunstig lejlighed for fred gennem udvikling

16. august (EIRNS) – I modsætning til Præsident Joe Bidens selvretfærdiggørelse i dag – "Vores mission var aldrig national opbygning" i Afghanistan – er der ingen begribelig grund til, at en kæmpe nations militær og ingeniørtropper opholder sig i et underudviklet land i så lang tid, *medmindre* deres mission er den at hjælpe med at opbygge denne nation, hjælpe den med industrialisering og infrastruktur for varig økonomisk udvikling. Hvad udrettede USA's militærstyrker i halvandet årti under General MacArthur i Japan efter 2. verdenskrig, hvis ikke i det mindste at hjælpe med, at genstarte det lands moderne industrialisering ud af krigens katastrofe? Hvad med hjælpen til Sydkoreas selvudvikling til at blive en industriel magt efter krigen?

Den tid er længst forbi, hvor USA var næsten alene om at være i stand til at tilvejebringe en sådan hjælp. Nu må det gøres i samarbejde med andre økonomiske og teknologiske stormagter; og en eurasisk bestræbelse er allerede i gang – Kinas Bælte- og Vejinitiativ med projekter i mange lande.

Og USA har, indtil nu, tydeligvis *ikke* været i Afghanistan for at hjælpe med at opbygge en nation. USA's tilbagetrækning er ikke nederlaget for en kampagne "i demokratiets navn", hvilket NATO-besættelsen aldrig handlede om. Nej, det er en chance der må gribes sammen med hvilken som helst regering, som har befolkningens opbakning, for at fremme opbygning af energiproduktion, et moderne sundhedssystem, vandressourcer, transportkorridorer – i stil med USA's Tennessee Valley Authority – i et land, hvis sammenfaldne økonomi afholder en hel region fra

at forbindes og udvikles.

Schiller Instituttet, anført af Helga Zepp-LaRouche, organiserede en endags-konference for blot to uger siden med præcis dette tema – "Afghanistan: Et Vendepunkt i Historien efter den forfejlede æra med Regimeskift" – med paneler med egentlige eksperter og repræsentanter for andre asiatiske nationer, som kendte landet. Det vigtigste fra dette blev gennemgået i et særligt optryk af rapporten fra *Executive Intelligence Review*: "Vil Afghanistan udløse et Paradigmeskifte?" (https://larouchepub.com/eiw/public/2021/eirv48n29-20210723/eirv48n29-20210723_afghanistan-offprint.pdf). Schiller Instituttet vil bringe mange af disse eksperter og repræsentanter sammen igen for at opdatere deres diskussion om økonomisk udvikling i lyset af disse nye omstændigheder. En af dem, Hussein Askary, sagde i dag på sin Twitter-konto: "Det er fuldt ud muligt at opnå fred og stabilitet i Afghanistan ved at integrere det med Bælte og Vejinitiativet. Den regionale og globale baggrund er anderledes end i 1994", da Taliban sidste gang overtog magten.

Dette er allerede præcis den tilgang, som Kina og de centralasiatiske nationer rundt om Afghanistan tager, og den tilgang som Rusland vil tage.

Briterne vil muligvis te sig hysterisk, som nogle af deres konservative ledere i parlamentet gjorde i dag, om egenhændigt at sende Hendes Majestæts meget kolonialistiske styrker tilbage til Afghanistan for at bringe tingene i orden! Det kan godt være at den britiske FN-ambassadør beklager, som han gjorde i dag i FN's Sikkerhedsråds specialforsamling, at "det som sker i Afghanistan er en tragedie." Rystede europæiske ambassadører fra Irland til Danmark har muligvis gentaget dette, men de klamrer sig alle, desværre, til de slagte rester af en geopolitik med britisk ophav, som har været en katastrofe for USA og for resten af verden.

Det er en god ting, at krigene for regimeskifte nu ender. Det er kun denne politik som har slået fejl, og den var aldrig i USA's interesse. Som Helga Zepp-LaRouche understregede i dag, det som er i USA's interesse er at "samarbejde og påbegynde genopbygning."

NATO's tilbagetrækning fra Afghanistan skaber en situation fyldt med håb for at gøre præcis dette. Schiller Instituttets konference den 31. juli om fred gennem udvikling i den centralasiatiske region er nu midlet til at organisere denne udvikling gennem et fælles tilbud fra nationer, som er i stand til at eksportere højteknologiske kapitalgoder og udskifte Afghanistans opiumhandel. Og Instituttet vil nu ajourføre dette middel til den gunstigere lejlighed, som nu eksisterer.