

The Health Silk Road

by Ulf Sandmark and Hussein Askary

April 30—An extraordinary webinar, “The Health Silk Road—Key to the Global Fight against COVID-19,” was held in Stockholm on April 29 by the Belt and Road Institute in Sweden (BRIX), bringing together ambassadors, healthcare specialists, economists, and think-tankers from 12 countries, to discuss the roles of the Health Silk Road, and Belt and Road, in building a global healthcare front line against the COVID-19 pandemic and other epidemics and diseases.

The speakers included Helga Zepp-LaRouche and the ambassadors to Sweden from China, Serbia, and Malaysia. The Deputy Head of Mission from Pakistan also spoke. One of the most prominent Chinese virologists, Prof. Dr. Wang Gui-Qiang, Director of Infectious Diseases at the Peking University First Hospital, spoke, as did Prof. Göran Tomson, Professor of International Health Systems Research at the Karolinska Institute, the most important health research institution in Sweden. Other speakers were co-founder of the ICHI Foundation in Norway, Thore Vestby, a former member of parliament; the Director of the OBOR Institute in Italy, Michele De Gasperis; Ulf Sandmark, Chairman of the BRIX; and Ms. Isabelle Hannouche, a young entrepreneur from Senegal working in Shanghai. Hussein Askary introduced the webinar and was the moderator. Forty-nine attended the webinar, including diplomats from 11 countries.

The webinar started with an opening statement by the moderator of the event, Hussein Askary, Board



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Hussein Askary

member of BRIX, in which he reviewed the effects of the Corona Pandemic on the world, and the importance of the Health Silk Road to create a global front line against it. He reviewed the history of the Health Silk Road and its relationship to the Belt and Road Initiative, emphasizing that developing adequate physical infrastructure, education, and scientific research are the three main components of a global healthcare system envisioned

for the Health Silk Road in an international conference in Beijing in August 2017.

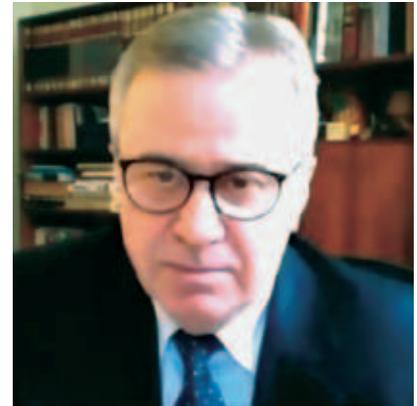
Diplomatic Reports

Speaking first on panel one, “Why International Co-



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Amb. Gui Congyou



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Amb. Dragan Momcilovic

operation is Indispensable in the Fight Against the COVID-19 Pandemic,” was the Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China, Gui Congyou, who thanked BRIX “for providing this online platform where we join each other for timely communication on battling COVID-19 and improving cooperation.” He emphasized that,

From a historical angle, a pandemic could happen at any corner of the world, and the history of humanity is a history of battles against various plagues and prevailing over them. We are confident that COVID-19 is another that will be defeated. The Chinese government, despite facing a challenging situation itself, has been providing assistance with medical supplies to over 150 countries and international organizations, including the World Health Organization and the African Union.

Serbia's Ambassador, Dragan Momcilovic, said that the COVID-19 pandemic had been largely controlled in his country because China came to the rescue, not only with protective gear but also with ventilators and most importantly, Chinese doctors

Mr. Irfan Ahmad from the Embassy of Pakistan said "COVID-19 proves indeed that the world now is a global village and, whether we like it or not, individual countries cannot stay isolated from each other anymore."

The Government of Pakistan looks at the pandemic as a challenge but also as an opportunity to mitigate health problems in third world countries. Pakistan's Prime Minister has called for a global initiative for debt relief and in consultation with the UN, will call together a group to look for a comprehensive solution to the debt problems resulting from the COVID-19 situation. Domestically Pakistan has launched a nine-month program to build up its health system and has launched a very large program to aid poor and marginalized people with financial support. Eighteen hundred three- and four-star hotels in the country have been turned into



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Amb. Datin Paduka
Nur Ashikin Mohd Taib



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Irfan Ahmad



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Prof. Wang Gui-Qiang

came to Serbia with advice on how to handle the virus. Ambassador Momcilovic also emphasized the importance of the role of the Belt and Road Initiative and China's transport, power, and industrial projects, in reviving the economies of the eastern European countries. He also urged the EU and the U.S. to join hands with China to build the world economy and help fight pandemics.

Malaysia's Ambassador, Mrs. Datin Paduka Nur Ashikin Mohd Taib, stressed the importance of international cooperation to handle the virus, as it is a global phenomenon. "On the bilateral level Malaysia has received a lot of help from China in terms of equipment and experts," she said. She concluded her remarks by saying, "It is time for cooperation and definitely not for competition. We have to find ways to come through this as a global community."

quarantine centers for COVID-19 patients. Two thousand hospital beds have been created in railroad sleeper-cars. The international cooperation with China in line with the Health Silk Road is strong.

Learning About COVID-19 from China

Prof. Wang Gui-Qiang is one of the absolutely top experts on COVID-19 in China as a member of the medical treatment expert group of the National Health Commission, and in his participation in the compilation of, and updates to the Chinese COVID-19 diagnosis and treatment protocols. He reported the latest from China on the diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19, covering many issues not sufficiently clarified among international experts.

Swedish Prof. Göran Tomson made a strong appeal for cooperation among all countries against the virus.

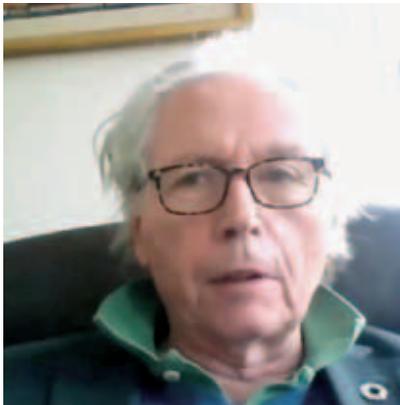
He sharply rejected, in the name of science, the politicization dividing nations in the struggle, pointing out the importance of the existing cooperation within the World Health Organization (WHO), to which he is an advisor. and to the many cooperative initiatives being taken by the Karolinska Institute. Especially significant for the promotion of the Health Silk Road is the work on the UN [Agenda 2030](#) by the President of the Karolinska Institute, to which he is a counsellor. Also important is international cooperation to minimize emergencies and limit resistance to antibiotics. Dr. Tomson was one of the founders of the ReAct Network on antimicrobial resistance, INRUD (the International Network for Rational Use of Drugs), and IMPACT, a Sino-Swedish integrated multi-sectoral partnership for antibiotic resistance containment.

The second panel, “The Role of the Belt and Road in Building a Global Health Front Line,” was keynoted by

some observations from one of Sweden’s neighboring countries, which has followed a different pathway in fighting the COVID-19. He pointed to the statement by Norway’s Foreign Minister at the Norwegian Atlantic Committee in early February, saying that China is an indispensable partner. Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg has taken the lead and has received unanimous support from the parliament. She told CNN, “Global problems have to be solved by global solutions.” Norway is supporting and closely cooperating with the WHO and has sent a medical team to support Italy’s Lombardy region. Now the situation has turned around and Norway is receiving a lot of help from the Health Silk Road.

Opportunities for Advanced Research

Also on the panel was a think-tank expert from Pakistan, Shakeel Ramay, Director of the Asia and China Study Center at the Sustainable Development Policy



Prof. Göran Tomson

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Helga Zepp-LaRouche

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Thore Vestby

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Mrs. Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder and president of the international Schiller Institute, who took up the background to the threat of global pandemics and how to turn around the situation by establishing a new paradigm among nations.

Zepp-LaRouche pointed to the need to implement an economic policy of the Four Laws of Lyndon LaRouche and a New Bretton Woods. She called for a top meeting of the four major powers—United States, Russia, China, and India—to challenge the power of the dying and deadly system of Wall Street and the City of London, in order to implement that economic policy. She referred to the recent Schiller Institute [conference](#) of April 15-26.

Thore Vestby, a former Member of Parliament and co-founder of ICHI Foundation in Norway, contributed

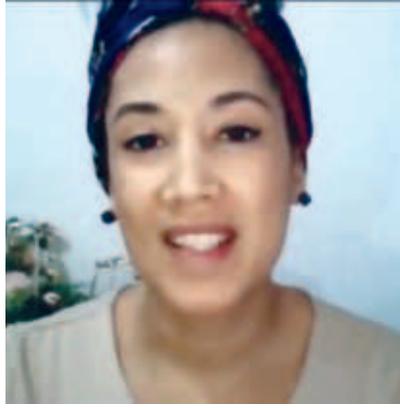
Institute, who made a presentation on infrastructure development as one of the keys to building a real Health Silk Road. He explained the necessity of creating a multi-layered economic development model based on joint efforts by private business and state institutions, emphasizing that ultimately the responsibility for ensuring the resilience and sustainability of the development process must be shouldered by the state.

Michele De Gasperis presented the impressive activities of the OBOR Institute of Italy in involving Italian and Chinese business in international cooperation along the One Belt One Road/BRI. With seven offices, two in Italy and five in China, the OBOR Institute is coordinating an international network of think-tanks and chambers of commerce in developing the business opportunities of the Belt and Road Initiative.



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Michele De Gasperis



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Isabelle Hannouche



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Ulf Sandmark

Businesswoman Isabelle Hannouche from Senegal works as a China-Africa trade expert in Shanghai. She has been active in directing Chinese aid for the coronavirus fight in her homeland. The lack of ventilators in Senegal and the high prices have prompted entrepreneurs there to start producing a ventilator at the cost only US \$60 per unit, she told the conference.

The final speaker, Ulf Sandmark, reported on the cooperation between China and Sweden in very advanced research in coronavirus diagnostics and test-

ing. A special cargo plane has brought robots for automated analysis of mass testing from China to the Karolinska Institute/SciLifeLab. This is a model of using innovation to leapfrog the methods of fighting COVID-19, he said, along the lines of the Chinese strategy for using innovation as the core of the BRI development policy and bringing the world together on the basis of science.

All conference videos, including a [link](#) to Professor Wang's presentation, are available [here](#).

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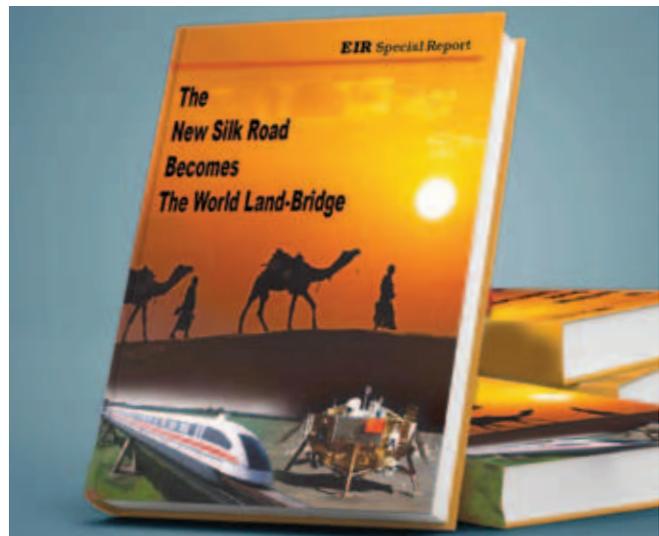
Includes:

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