

Sudan Inaugurates Continental Railway

by Hussein Askary

Jan. 14—As three of the “Four Powers” (Russia, China, and India, with the United States lagging behind) are working intensively to shape the new world economic order as prescribed by Lyndon LaRouche, through national credits for financing large national and international infrastructure, scientific, industrial, and agricultural projects, African nations have vowed to join that new order. That intention was pronounced at the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit in December 2009, when African participants joined China and India in defying their former colonial powers and the current U.S. Administration. This is being backed by a real physical economic plan for development of a large part of the continent. While governments and political elites on both sides of the Atlantic are signing a suicide pact through their commitment to unscientific “climate change criteria,” by putting a limit to their industrial development, Eurasia and Africa want real economic development, similar to that which was prevalent in the United States and Europe before the 1968 countercultural revolution and reborn British imperial “globalization and free trade.”

African nations, with the Republic of Sudan taking a leading role, have given life to the project of connecting and integrating West and East Africa through a modern railway network. The dreams of a Dakar-Djibouti railway and a Cairo-Cape Town line, were born more than a hundred years ago, but colonialism and imperial schemes to divide and conquer Africa have prevented them from being realized. Now, the time has come for their renaissance.

A conference of the transport ministers of member-states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) was held in Khartoum, Sudan, Dec. 10-12, 2009, to discuss launching what is officially known now as the Dakar-Port Sudan Railway Line. The OIC is an assembly of 57 predominantly Muslim nations, extending from Asia through the Middle East to Africa.

FIGURE 1

Proposed Dakar to Port Sudan Railroad

(Sketch)



The rail line between Dakar and Port Sudan is a strategic, transcontinental transport and infrastructure network linking Sudan, Chad, Niger, Mali, and Senegal, as the countries of the main east-west line. The main line will be connected north-south through additional branches to Djibouti, Libya, Uganda, Cameroon, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Guinea. When the Cairo-Khartoum and Rabat-Dakar lines are completed, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Atlantic and Indian oceans will be connected by land, forming an integrated economic strategic unit for economic development and defense of the continent.

The project was presented by Sudan to the 2005

OIC summit, and was adopted unanimously by the OIC summit held in Dakar, Senegal in May 2008. The railway network will extend for about 14,000 kilometers, and is estimated to cost around \$6 billion. If combined with water and agriculture projects that have been advocated by LaRouche and *EIR* over three decades, such as the Transaqua project to transfer water from the Congo River to Lake Chad through a network of modern canal systems, and nuclear-powered water desalination projects to green the African deserts, Africa will become a major economic factor in the 21st Century.

Sudanese President Bashir's Role

Sudan President Omar Hasan al-Bashir took personal interest in the project, addressing both the ministerial meeting and the meeting of the expert groups finalizing the technical aspects of the project. Keynoting the OIC transport ministers meeting on Dec. 10, he stressed "the socio-cultural, economic, and commercial importance of the project" for economic integration among OIC members and other African nations. He stated that "the project could enhance

the free movement of peoples, goods, and services to the Americas through Senegal, to Europe through Gibraltar, and to the Far East through Port Sudan," and emphasized the "importance of the project in promoting peace, security, and stability within the OIC member states and international community at large."

Al-Bashir announced that Sudan would host the headquarters of the project, and will be the driving force for realizing the project.

Sudanese Transport Minister Philip Thon Leek addressed the conference too, saying that "the whole world will benefit from this project." Leek briefed the

FIGURE 2

Planned Expansion of Sudan's Railroads

(Sketch of New Routes)



ministers on Sudan's plans to connect the country to its neighbors, urging the "African nations to exert their utmost efforts in building railways due to the importance of railways in achieving development and stability."

OIC Secretary General Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, who attended the conference, expressed his gratitude for Sudan's efforts in organizing the conference, and stressed the willingness of the OIC member states to implement the ten-year development plans agreed upon in 2005, and to face the financial crisis and the effects of globalization. He called upon OIC leaders to rally support for accomplishing this project.

Addressing the expert groups' meeting, Mabrouk Mubarak Selim, State Minister in the Sudanese Transport Ministry, stated that, "The project is aiming at connecting the African deserts through the rail line, bringing the depth of Africa in contact with both the Atlantic

Ocean and the Red Sea through 10,000 km of rail lines."

Engineer Hamza Omar al-Fadhelabi, director of Sudan's Railway Authority, said that "the project will have a main corridor with an 8,000-km trunk line, 4,000 km of which are already connected but need rehabilitation and overhaul. The other 4,000 are connections extending to the capitals of some member states." Al-Fadhelabi added that "nations that are not crossed by the main trunk line, such as Libya, Uganda, and Djibouti, will also be connected to the project." He explained that the railroad "will make possible the passing directly from East Africa to its West, in order to connect the Americas to Asia and Europe." He emphasized that the project "represents a major transformation process for the African continent in economic, political, and touristic aspects."

President al-Bashir had earlier affirmed his personal support for the rehabilitation and development of Sudan's railway system, which had been neglected for decades due to civil war and economic sanctions. He stressed, in a meeting with Sudan's State Minister for Transport and the chairman of the Sudan Railway Corp., in November 2009, the importance of making Sudan's railways "compatible with the international progress in the railways field." Al-Bashir said that the government will give priority in its plans and budgets to enhancement of the Railways Corp. He referred to the importance of the railways in providing low-cost domestic transportation of people and commodities, as well as exports and imports.

The Railway Corp. announced the completion of the first stage in rehabilitating the railway between Port Sudan and Khartoum, and that between Babanousa and Aweil, which will be extended to Wau (in South Sudan) next December. The statement said the corporation's officials discussed with President al-Bashir the project for establishing a new, parallel railway between Port Sudan and Khartoum, and extending it to Sennar (south of the capital, Khartoum). The latter project will be carried out by Indian companies, as part of an agreement between India and Sudan, signed in March 2009. The statement also referred to the agreement between the government of Sudan, the government of South Sudan, and the government of Uganda for construction of a rail

FIGURE 3
Existing Railroads in Africa



FIGURE 4
Proposed Railroads for Africa



EIRNS/Fusion Energy Foundation, 1980

line between Juba and Uganda.

OIC, Turkey, Russia, China, and India—Plus Africa!

The constellation of forces rallied around this strategic development is a sign of the new arrangement of economic and strategic power in the world, following the collapse of the current imperial financial system.

The announcement that the project will be launched was made on Jan. 2, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in a meeting of the foreign ministers of Turkey and Egypt, with the attendance of OIC Secretary General Ihsanoglu. The three discussed the Darfur crisis “donors’ conference” to be held in March under the auspices of the OIC, not the discredited and untrustworthy United Nations. The March conference will discuss financing of the railway project involving the OIC member states and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB).

Support from Russia

What is even more interesting was the statement made by Ihsanoglu that the Dakar-Port Sudan railway project is “supported enthusiastically by Russia and China.” The Khartoum conference in December was attended by Russian Transport Ministry representatives,

in Russia’s capacity as an observer in the OIC.

The rapidly developing relations between Turkey and Russia on the one hand, and China and African nations on the other, have tipped upside down the British geopolitical games and other destabilization efforts coming from the United States. Efforts by Anglo-American oil and gas interest to create a rivalry between Turkey and Russia over the routes of gas pipelines from Central Asia to southern Europe have failed. On Jan. 12, agreements were signed between Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, to work jointly on the South Stream gas pipeline, in addition to other trade agreements and an agreement to build four commercial nuclear power plants in Turkey.

Turkey, the OIC, and Russia have had discussions over the past year on important strategic issues such as Afghanistan and the Caucasus. OIC Secretary General Ihsanoglu, who is a Turkish citizen but was born and educated in Egypt as an engineer and scientist, met with Russian President Dmitri Medvedev on March 27, 2009, on the sidelines of a conference arranged by Russia to discuss the crisis in Afghanistan, and a solution within the context of collaboration between the OIC nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). This is a very interesting strategic initiative, fully in conformity with recommendations made

by LaRouche to engage the neighboring major powers in stabilizing Afghanistan and ensuring the withdrawal of American, British, and NATO forces. The SCO, which is oriented to security and economic development, includes Russia, China, Central Asian nations, and Iran.

In his meeting with President Medvedev, Ihsanoglu stated: "I think the idea of the special meeting on Afghanistan within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization is an excellent idea, and the way I have seen the configuration today, I hope that will be conducive to solving many problems. And the approach, which is a comprehensive approach, I would say, is an identical approach to what we believe should be the solution for Afghanistan. This is why, in my statement, I explicitly and openly expressed our support to the statement and the outcome of the meeting."

After that meeting, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was invited to the OIC foreign ministers meeting in Damascus on May 23, 2009. Lavrov explained Russia's strategic perspective in his speech there, focusing on the case of Sudan and Darfur, where the British and their supporters in the U.S. have attempted to make a peaceful political solution to the Darfur crisis impossible, by raising charges of genocide against President al-Bashir through the fake International Criminal Court (ICC). Lavrov said: "We share the stance of the OIC in favor of a political settlement to the existing problems in Sudan with respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We presume that the conflict in Darfur can only be solved at the negotiating table with constructive cooperation by Khartoum with the UN, the African Union, and other international mediators. In the context of relations between North and South Sudan, we advocate further unobstructed implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement."

He reiterated the agreement made between President Medvedev and Professor Ihsanoglu on Afghanistan. "We welcome the recently apparent striving to employ more fully the regional factor in Afghan settlement. The participants of the Special Conference, convened under the aegis of the SCO on March 27 in Moscow, spoke for a more active role of Afghanistan's neighbors. The documents adopted at it contain specific arrangements for stronger counteraction against terrorism, drug trafficking, and organized crime. We invite concerned countries and international organizations to take part in the realization of the relevant projects," said

Lavrov.

Russia's involvement as an economic and strategic partner will have a major impact on the speed and safety of that development.

China Forges Ahead

Besides Russia, China has already taken major steps in establishing an extremely productive relationship with many African nations, especially Sudan. As reported by this author in *EIR*, April 24, 2009, following a visit to Sudan with other *EIR* and LaRouche Youth Movement Representatives, China has completed the construction of Sudan's Merowe Dam, the largest ongoing hydropower and agriculture project in Africa, and is involved in building roads, bridges, and electric power lines in northern Sudan.

China is also involved in dam-building projects in Ethiopia, Ghana, railway projects in Nigeria and Kenya, and numerous infrastructure projects in other African nations. The Chinese cooperation with Africa to provide infrastructure in return for imports of raw materials and agricultural crops, is unprecedented in Africa's modern history, where colonial powers have been looting the continent's natural resources in exchange for weapons, civil wars, epidemics, and famines.

In recent months, a media slander campaign has been directed by British, continental European, and American media against China for this constructive engagement in Africa, especially in formerly British colonies, such as Sudan, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and Kenya. However, this has not deterred China or the African nations.

On Jan. 5, Kenya announced that China will finance the building of a second port, in Lamu; a transport corridor; and the upgrading of a railroad linking the Kenyan port of Mombasa and the Ugandan capital. The railway could be extended northward to South Sudan.

A very interesting aspect of this project is that it replaces a previous agreement, whereby the port was to be financed by Qatar, under a deal to lease large areas of Kenyan arable land to be planted with crops for ethanol production—a genocidal policy that would deprive Africa of its best land, to fuel a policy based on the global warming lie, instead of feeding Africans.

Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki, who met with China's Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi in Kenya, "welcomed the commitment that the government of the People's Republic of China has shown in the development



Russian Presidential Press and Information Office

Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conference, with Russian President Dmitri Medvedev in Moscow last year. Ihsanoglu attended the recent Khartoum meeting on the Dakar-Port Sudan railway project, and said that the project was “enthusiastically supported” by both Russia and China.

of a second port at Lamu,” according to his office.

“For Africa to further take off, it is very important to build up the infrastructure so that African countries can conduct intra-regional trade on a massive scale,” Yang told reporters.

Regional Integration

Nations of East Africa are realizing the importance of the integration of infrastructure in the region for the economic development process. According to *News-time Africa*, East African countries stand to benefit from enhanced regional trade, once the East African Community (EAC) Railway system is rolled out. The master plan is in advanced stages and will link Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Egypt, and Southern Sudan. Sources say that if implemented, it will be the first time the region, with more than 126 million people, has developed a joint infrastructural project. The sole current rail line, the Kenya-Uganda railway, was laid by colonial governments in the last century.

Plans are still at a conceptual level, and when ministers meet in Arusha, Tanzania during March and April, they will tackle the remaining requirements, according to Rashi Kibowa of the Ministry of East African Community Affairs. Each member country will be required to contribute \$1.5 million for the feasibility study and \$10 million for construction of the railway, which is expected to be completed in five years. The East African Railways Master Plan was a directive of the EAC from the April 2004 heads of state summit, to link the

neighbor countries for efficient trade.

The LaRouche Plan

After the long night of British imperialism, poverty, civil wars, and famine, Africa can potentially rise at the dawn of a new world order, to realize the great potentials of the continent, which have been prevented for so long. The only strategy that is powerful enough to secure this development is LaRouche’s plan for a Four-Power alliance to launch a new world credit system.

Projects for infrastructure development have been gathering dust on the shelves for a very long time. Now that there is a new reality in the world, and brave nations in Africa that are defying the old colonial masters, now gone bankrupt, there is hope for Africa.

When this author presented detailed development plans for Africa, as developed by the LaRouche Youth Movement Basement Team, at the April 2009 Conference for International Justice, which challenged the British-created International Criminal Court, the ideas were received enthusiastically by the attending Sudanese students and government officials. While the conference was focused on the Darfur crisis and exposing the lies of the ICC, the LaRouche Plan was presented as the weapon Sudan and other African nations can use to build the strategic defense to fend off such criminal attempts against the sovereignty and welfare of African nations. The late Pope Paul VI’s maxim (1967), that “The new name for peace is development,” is now a widely recognized principle in Sudan and many other nations in Africa, the more so because LaRouche personally has emphasized this in dialogue with African leaders for three decades, visiting Sudan twice in the 1990s.

The Port Sudan-Dakar railway will necessarily pass through Darfur to Chad. The peace negotiations with Darfurian rebel groups have been advancing, with interesting backing from responsible American diplomats, such as special envoy Scott Gration. Agreement with Chad, which has been hosting the Darfur rebels and in a state of conflict with Sudan for the past five years, is reaching an advanced stage. This is the first time in African affairs that an economic project is forcing the belligerent parties to recognize that their interests actually lie in “the benefit of the other.” This is the most important principle of international relations, expressed by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, following decades of religious wars that devastated Europe. This