

Schiller Institute Issues Call for 'Women's Committee for the New Silk Road'

The following text was drafted by Helga Zepp LaRouche in the hours before President Clinton had called off the air strikes against Iraq on Nov. 14, 1998. Unfortunately, President Clinton was subsequently manipulated to go ahead with the air strikes against Iraq. As a result, the world has been thrown into a deep strategic crisis, which makes the following initiative all the more urgent. It has been signed by hundreds of prominent individuals.

Peace Commission Working Group, Women's Committee for the New Silk Road

When the first Gulf War was about to be launched in 1991, Pope John Paul II warned that this would be a war "from which humanity could not return." In this war, the largest industrial potential of the region was destroyed, when Iraq was "bombed back to the Stone Age," and many countries suffered severe economic consequences. **Through the combined effort of the destruction of infrastructure, and the embargo of seven years' duration, well over 1 million Iraqi children have already died; one child is dying every eight minutes.** The living standard in Iraq has collapsed to the level of sub-Saharan countries. A new war against Iraq, this time in the context of the ongoing global financial crisis, would throw the whole region into the apocalypse.

Just preventing this war is not enough; we must prevent the reasons it is looming before us now. The very idea of a new crisis around Iraq represents, in itself, a complete and utter diversion from the efforts on the part of world leaders to find an urgent solution to the world financial and economic crisis.

The world is presently in an accelerating global financial crisis, one that is throwing more and more parts of the world into deep depression of the physical economy. Entire countries and even continents are disintegrating. Starvation threatens the lives of millions of people in Africa, as in Indonesia, Russia, and other areas around the globe.

Many regions have been so weakened by decades of austerity imposed by the International Monetary Fund and others, that hurricanes and similar natural disasters have sunk them in the abyss of disintegration virtually overnight, as happened recently in the case of Central America—which shows the speed with which nations can find themselves thrust into a New Dark Age.

What we need is a real perspective of peace through development. Only if the world returns to real economic growth, can there be any hope of stabilizing the many crisis spots that exist today.

Governments throughout the world should immediately decide to establish a New Bretton Woods System, which must replace the old, bankrupt financial system. The majority of the foreign debt of most countries is unpayable and should be written off, or reorganized. There must be a system of fixed exchange rates, capital and exchange controls, and generation of new credits for production in industry, agriculture, and infrastructure through sovereign nation-states.

The obvious way to start the reconstruction of the world economy is the beautiful project of the New Silk Road, otherwise called the Eurasian Land-Bridge. This project,

started by China and already supported by many countries, integrates the Eurasian countries through infrastructure development corridors, and then expands this program to Africa and Latin America. Through the Land-Bridge conception, the disadvantages of the landlocked areas of the world can be overcome for the first time in history, and the basis for a just world economic order can be found.

Obviously, Iraq is one of the central countries in the New Silk Road. If one wishes to change the dynamic of the entire Gulf, Middle and Near East region, and eliminate for good the looming danger to the world, there is no better way than to build the southern-tier extension of the New Silk Road, from China through Central Asia, to Iran, Iraq, to the Near East, and, from there, branching out to Africa on one side, and the Balkans on the other. In the other direction, the southern tier of the New Silk Road must go from Iran to India and, from there, integrate all of Southeast Asia.

We, the working committee of the Women's Committee for the New Silk Road, pledge that we will, by working to bring the plans of the New Silk Road to fruition as quickly as possible, make our governments the instruments to end the misery of so many people in the world. Perhaps we had to go to the verge of the abyss, in the case of the threat of the war against Iraq, to realize that we cannot go on like this any more. We appeal to governments throughout the world to join us. We issue this appeal with burning hearts, speaking for the billions of poor and the innocent children of the world.