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AFGHANISTAN IS A BIG OPPORTUNITY FOR PEACE THROUGH DEVELOPMENT

August 17—Contrary to President Joe Biden’s self-justification today—“Our mission has never been nation-building” in Afghanistan—there is no conceivable reason for the military and military engineering forces of a major nation to stay in an underdeveloped country for such a long period of time unless they are on a mission to help build that nation, help it industrialize with the infrastructure for sustained economic development. What did the United States military forces under General MacArthur do for a decade and a half in Japan after World War II, if not to at least assist in relaunching the modern industrialization of that country after the disaster of war? What about assistance in South Korea’s building itself as an industrial power after war?

Those times are long past when the United States was almost unique in being capable of providing such assistance. Now it must be done in cooperation with the other major economic and technological powers; and an Eurasian effort is already underway, China’s Belt and Road Initiative with projects in scores of countries.

And the United States, until now, clearly has not been in Afghanistan to help build up a nation. The U.S. withdrawal is not the defeat of a campaign “for democracy,” which the NATO occupation never was. No, it is an opportunity which must be taken, with whatever government has popular backing, to foster the building of power, modern healthcare, water systems, transportation corridors—“TVA”-type development—in a country whose collapsed economy holds back the connectivity and development of an entire region.

The Schiller Institute, led by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, organized a day-long conference just two weeks ago on exactly this subject, “Afghanistan: A Turning Point in History after the Failed Regime-Change Era,” with panels of real experts and representatives of other Asian nations who knew the country. The best of it was previewed in a special offprint report from Executive Intelligence Review, “Will Afghanistan Trigger a Paradigm Change?”

The Schiller Institute will now be bringing many of the same experts and representatives back together to update their discussion of economic development in light of the new circumstances. One of them, Hussein Askary, today said on his Twitter feed, “It is fully possible to reach peace and stability in Afghanistan by integrating it into the Belt and Road Initiative. The regional and global context today is different from 1994” when the Taliban had previously taken power.

This is already very much the approach that China and the Central Asian nations around Afghanistan are taking, and the approach Russia will take.

The British may wax hysterical, as some of their Tory Parliament leaders did today, about sending Her Majesty’s very colonialist forces back into Afghanistan on their own to put things back in order! The British UN Ambassador may lament, as he did in today’s UN Security Council special session, that “what is happening in Afghanistan is a tragedy.” Shaken European ambassadors from the Irish to the Dane may have echoed him, but they are all clinging, sadly, to the beaten remains of a geopolitical policy of British origin which has been a disaster to the United States and the world.

It is a good thing that the policy of regime-change wars is ending. It is that policy only which has failed, and it was never in the interest of the United States. As Helga Zepp-LaRouche stressed today, what is in American interest is to “join hands and go for reconstruction.

The NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan is a situation full of opportunity to do just that. The Schiller Institute’s July 31 conference on peace through development in the Central Asian region is now the vehicle for a drive to organize that development through joint offers by nations capable of exporting high-technology capital goods and substituting Afghanistan’s opium traffic. And the Institute will now update that vehicle for the greater opportunity which now exists.