

# Conference Directs Appeal For Bering Strait Link To G-8 Summit

*This communique was issued April 25, as an "Appeal from the participants of the international conference on an Intercontinental Eurasia-America Transport Link via the Bering Strait, to the heads of state and governments of Russia, the U.S.A., Canada, South Korea, Japan, China, and the EU member-states." Along with the Appeal, the participants at the April Moscow conference sent a draft Memorandum of Cooperation, proposing that those nations endorse the project and consider financing feasibility studies for the Bering Strait project at the June 6-8 summit of the G-8 in Heiligendamm, Germany. The studies could be completed by 2010, the communique stated.*

*Subheads have been added.*

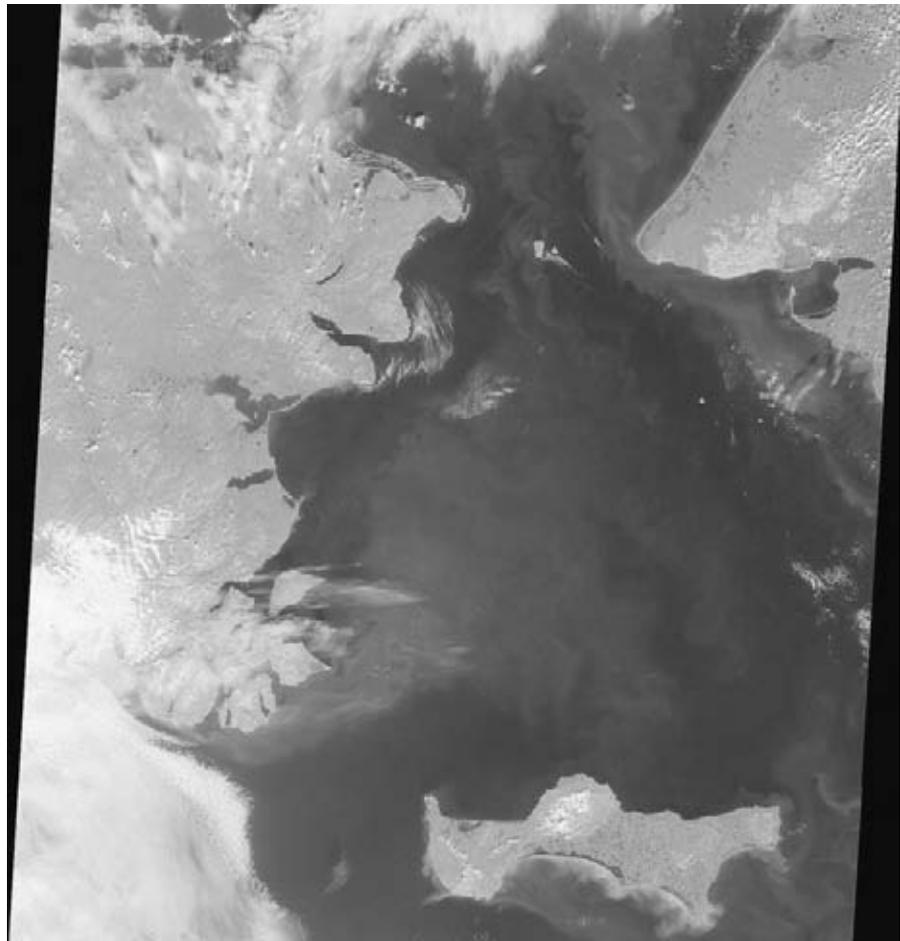
**T**he idea of creation of a global land transportation system connecting four out of six continents (Eurasia, North and South America, and Africa) has occupied the minds of mankind for centuries.

The issues of economic growth and global energy security, strengthening political and trade ties, containing and preventing wars and civil conflicts, and cultural interaction are directly related to the global community's ability to clear the hurdles in the way of solving global problems and ensuring constructive cooperation in all spheres of the world economy.

Today, on the agenda, are expansion and diversification of trade ties between countries, combining their energy, transport, and information resources for developing uncultivated territories and exploiting their natural resources. Now is the time to pay most serious attention to projects aimed at peace and creation; it's time to revisit humankind's great ideas.

## **Continuing Great Projects**

The past 150 years were marked by numerous ambitious projects. These are the 9,000-kilometer-long Trans-Siberian Railroad, the Transcontinental Railroad in the U.S.A., the tunnel between the Japanese islands of Honshu and Hokkaido,



NASA

*With the Seward Peninsula of Alaska to the east, and Chukotskiy Poluostrov of Siberia to the west, the Bering Strait separates the United States and the Russian Federation by only 90 kilometers*

the Great Belt Fixed Link in Denmark, the Eurotunnel, and many others.

The 21st Century will see the construction of tunnels underneath the Straits of Gibraltar and the Bosphorus, a tunnel under the Yangtze River, tunnels between the Russian mainland, Sakhalin, and Japan, and a tunnel between Newfoundland and Labrador Peninsula in Canada.

The construction of the intercontinental link uniting Eurasia and America, Intercontinental Link (ICL)-World Link, could become a crucial contribution to the creation of the Global Transportation System (GTS) as it pulls together global experience in implementing international projects.

Today, the main deterrent to a multimodal GTS and the actual linking of the two continents is the absence of a connection between Eurasia's and America's transportation and energy systems.

In order to overcome this hurdle, it is necessary to build 6,000 kilometers of railroad from Yakutsk, Russia to the North American railway network via Magadan, Chukotka, the Bering Strait, and Alaska incorporated in a single corridor with a power transmission line and fiber-optic lines.

The project's feasibility has raised no doubts among the international engineering community.

The necessary target investment in the project is estimated at \$65 billion. Providing financing for the project as of 2008 would ensure that the feasibility study is completed by 2010. The approximate cost of the feasibility study, including all necessary research and an ecological assessment, is estimated at \$120 million and may be divided among the countries participating in the project. A major portion of the Russian share of joint financing will be disbursed under the program for development of the Russian railway transportation system, which was approved at a government meeting held on April 10, 2007.

Economic efficiency of the project is ensured by large volumes of cargo to be shipped (400-500 billion tons/kilometers per year), synergies between hydro- and tidal-power generation systems, and the effects of competitive exploitation of the plentiful natural resources in the area covered by the ICL-World Link.

However, the project's geopolitical significance appears to be even greater, as it unites continents and creates conditions for multifaceted and fruitful cooperation among the peoples of many countries.

In just 15 to 20 years, the new multimodal transport artery will change the world. Humankind will gain access to new energy and natural resources. The ICL-World Link will provide access to territories colossal both in physical dimensions and economic potential.

To implement the international research program and coordination of efforts to prepare and realize the project, the international nonprofit organization Interhemispheric Bering Strait Tunnel & Railroad Group (IBSTRG) was created in 1992.

As of today, the basic technical and economic characteristics of the link, and the possibilities and ways of hooking it up to Russia's and America's transport routes, have been defined, and the preliminary analysis of the economic and social effects of the project has been completed.

### **Creating Economic Potential**

We, the participants of the International Conference on an Intercontinental Eurasia-America Link via the Bering Strait, which took place in Moscow on April 24, 2007, having discussed the prerequisites, opportunities and the expected effects of the project, and appreciating:

- the unquestionable economic potential of creating a global transport, energy, and telecommunications system with the key element being a land link between the continents of Eurasia and America;
- the urgency of combining efforts to implement the project;

- the advisability of further research pertaining to the project;

- the necessity for the participants of the project, and members of the political and business communities of all countries involved, to coordinate their activities,

- hereby put forward this proposal to the governments of Russia, the U.S.A., Canada, Japan, China, Korea, and the EU member states:

1. We propose that the countries assess the merits of the project for building the ICL-World Link, at the level of ministries and agencies responsible for this area, and its inclusion in their respective strategies of economic development on the macroeconomic and industry levels.

2. Provided that the construction of the ICL-World Link is deemed advisable, we propose that the governments appoint their representatives for participation in further elaboration of the project, and discussion of different options of the countries' involvement in construction and operation of the ICL-World Link.

3. We propose that the governments consider the financing of feasibility studies for constructing the ICL-World Link at the highest international level in June 2007 within the framework of the G-8 meeting. We propose that they pass a memorandum outlining the governments' positions on developing the global transportation network, and the feasibility of building the ICL-World Link as a key element of providing intercontinental energy and infrastructural ties.

4. We propose that a working group be created for further elaboration and promotion of the project. We think it advisable for the sources and amount of financing to be defined at this stage.

5. We propose that the governments consider the appointment of the international nonprofit organization IBSTRG as the authorized international project coordinator for the duration of the feasibility study of the ICL-World Link. All participating governments will have representation on the IBSTRG Board of Directors.

### **Signed:**

- Alexander Grigoryevich Granberg, chairman of the Council for Studies of Productive Forces at the [Russian] Ministry of Economic Development and Trade and the Academy of Sciences;

- Viktor Nikolayevich Razbegin, deputy chairman of the Council for Studies of Productive Forces at the [Russian] Ministry of Economic Development and Trade and the Academy of Sciences, vice president of the international corporation IBSTRG;

- George Koumal, president of the international corporation IBSTRG;

- Alexander Yuryevich Sergeev, member of the managing board, HydroOGK company;

- Joseph R. Henry, general counsel of the IBSTRG;

- E. Yamaguchi, president of Aikyo International Consultant Co., Ltd.;

- Louis T. Cerny, railroad consultant, track and bridge specialist;

- Craig Burroughs, chairman of BXB Corporation, director and treasurer of the IBSTRG.