

EU Announces Funding for Global Gateway to Rival China BRI

This week, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced €300 billion funding for the Global Gateway programme that is the EU's response to China's Belt and Road Initiative. The EC President said, *"We will support smart investments in quality infrastructure, respecting the highest social and environmental standards, in line with the EU's democratic values and international norms and standards. The Global Gateway Strategy is a template for how Europe can build more resilient connections with the world."* This year America also announced an international infrastructure initiative, named Build Back Better World, but has yet to provide concrete details or funding commitments. The massive Chinese BRI scheme was announced in 2013 to invest up to \$1 trillion in infrastructure in almost 70 countries and international organisations and has since then been expanding even further. The EU initiative is smaller and much less ambitious. According to *The Economist*, *'The €300bn is mainly a mixture of existing commitments, loan guarantees and heroic assumptions about the ability of the club to "crowd in" private investment, rather than actual new spending.'*

The West fails to rival China's tremendous economic potential. By adopting the Capitalist economic system, the West has actually destroyed its own economic capability. When Capitalism is initially implemented, it generates massive economic growth, as entrepreneurs and businessmen are liberated from constraints against wealth generation. But by failing to properly distribute wealth, Capitalist economics ultimately impoverishes and emaciates any society in which it is implemented. Wealth is concentrated in the hands of the rich and powerful, mainly circulating amongst them only, thus forming a parallel economy of artificial financial instruments and luxury goods and services, while the general public are largely starved of much needed capital and resources for indigenous entrepreneurship and productivity. If Western society continues to appear more prosperous than the rest of the world, this is due to the West's imperialist exploitation of global resources and wealth, and not because of its own domestic economic output. Indeed, America is not alarmed by Chinese productivity, but seeks to exploit it for its own benefit, just as America sought to benefit from German and Japanese economic productivity in the past. If America fears China, it is not because of its economics but because of its politics and its rapidly growing military strength, which stands in contrast to the pacifist policies imposed on Germany and Japan during America's post-World War II occupation of them.

If Muslims seek genuine revival, then it will not come from copying Western ideas and norms that are ultimately self-defeating. The Muslim Ummah has within it a far superior source of guidance for this world, which is the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah, and the thoughts, rules and systems it provides that made Islam the dominant world civilisation for over a thousand years. If we lost that status before, it was not because of our adoption of Islam but because we failed to properly adhere to it. However, with Allah's permission, the Muslim Ummah is now returning to its Deen, and shall soon re-establish **the Islamic Khilafah (Caliphate) State on the method of the Prophet (saw)** that shall unify all Muslim lands, liberate her occupied territories, implement the Islamic Sharia, restore the Islamic way of life and carry the call of Islam to the entire world.

Western Economic Imperialism and Afghan Women

Western efforts to pursue economic imperialism are also witnessed in Afghanistan. Although America was forced to withdraw its military from Afghanistan in accordance with larger geopolitical concerns, the West continues to try by all other means possible to impose control over this land. The people of Afghanistan have been engaged in war for decades, and know how to maintain their own independent economic activity with little external support. Furthermore, Afghanistan is rich in resource wealth and represents an important crossroads of great trading significance between West Asia, Central Asia and South Asia. However, the West is highlighting the plight of those in the cities who became dependent in one way or another on Western funding during their occupation, while at the same time cutting off the Afghanistan government's access to foreign funds. This week, the United Nations released a report attempting to link Afghanistan's economics to another favourite Western critique, which is regarding the treatment of women. According to a report at *Bloomberg*, *"The Taliban's move to restrict women from working could immediately cost the Afghan economy up to \$1bn, or 5% of GDP, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) said in a report as the militant group seeks global help to avert a deepening crisis."* The report further says, *"The UN report painted a grim picture of Afghanistan's economy, which is under strain with soaring inflation and an ongoing cash crunch. Women account for 20% of the country's workforce and preventing them from working could shave half-a-billion dollars alone from household consumption, it said."*

Islam fully permits women to work and to engage in economic and commercial activities. But this is not to boost 'GDP', which is a crude, ill-designed and misleading measure of a country's economic activity. Islam doesn't need to monetise efforts to give them value. By pushing women out to work, the West has severely weakened families and households, thereby generating widespread economic and social dependency that overburdens Western governments unable to adequately care for all despite their massive 'social' spending and vast education and health services. In Islam, far more minimalist government was able to achieve much more equitable and prosperous society through strong families and communities, which could not exist without the powerful roles of women at their centre. Such efforts receive full acknowledgement and honour in Muslim society. According to one narration, **جَاءَ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَقَالَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَرَدْتُ أَنْ أَعْرُزَ وَقَدْ جِئْتُ أَسْتَشِيرُكَ. فَقَالَ: «هَلْ لَكَ مِنْ أُمٍّ». قَالَ: نَعَمْ. قَالَ: «فَأَنْزَمَهَا فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ تَحْتَ رِجْلِهَا»** a man came to Allah's Messenger (saw) and said: **"O Messenger of Allah! I want to go out and fight (in Jihad) and I have come to ask your advice."** He (PBUH) said: **"Do you have a mother?"** He said: **"Yes."** The Prophet (saw) said: **"Then stay with her, for Paradise is beneath her feet."** [an-Nasai]

With Allah's permission, Afghanistan will soon be strengthened and supported by becoming part of the re-established **Islamic Khilafah State** that shall enter the ranks of the world's predominant great powers on account of its overwhelming size, population, resources, geopolitics and ideology, thus fully capable to oppose further Western imperialism over Muslim lands, whether economic or otherwise.