

Bering Strait Tunnel and Inter-Continental Railway as Steps Toward Peace

William Selig
June 17, 2021



Yekaterinburg, Russia -- UPF International co-sponsored a webinar about a railway project that promises to become the Panama Canal of the 21st century.

The online event on June 17, 2021, held jointly with proponents of the Inter-Continental Railway, featured a preview of "The Strait Guys -- a Documentary on the Proposed Bering Strait Tunnel."

The theme proved particularly popular. Between UPF International and UPF-Russia livestreaming the event with translation, more than 8,000 viewers watched it on social media in more than 40 countries.

UPF International Chair **Dr. Thomas G. Walsh** introduced filmmaker Rick Minnich, who has spent the past eleven years documenting the efforts of the "Strait Guys" to gain support for the Inter-Continental Railway. The film is scheduled for release in autumn 2021. UPF has been a longtime advocate for a Bering Strait tunnel as part of an intercontinental "Peace Road" proposed by UPF founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon in 1981.



Rick Minnich, an American who has spent many years in Germany, showed a 4-minute clip from the film (vimeo.com/181050918). The 5,500-mile long Inter-Continental Railway would link the existing systems that are in North America through Canada into Alaska, then pass through a 70-mile long tunnel under the Bering Strait into Russia, and then connect with existing rail systems to China, Europe, Mexico, the Korean Peninsula, and Japan.

Interviewed in the film, **George Koumal**, a Czech-born mining engineer and founder of the Inter-Continental Railway Project, emphasized the goodwill that could be generated. "I hope to see that we are actually friends, not enemies; that we have much more in common than what separates us. It's important that Russia and the U.S. join each other and maintain the peace in the world. And if anybody thinks how crazy an idea it is, please consider it was first mentioned and agreed upon by President Lincoln."

Webinar: Sneak Preview of "The Strait Guys", a documentary on the proposed Bering Strait Tunnel

InterContinental Railway Next Steps

- ✦ Get the ICR onto the agenda of the next US-Russia summit
- ✦ InterContinental Railway Treaty between US, Canada, Russia and China
- ✦ \$100 million for ICR Dev. Com.
- ✦ Phase 1 Alaska to Alberta Railway (A2A): connect Alaska to lower 48 states via Canada by July 4, 2026



From an engineering perspective the project is doable, according to Mr. Koumal. The challenges are more political, he said. "I believe if our presidents will make a decision about the project, we can build it very fast. The main problem is to reach a political decision."

Mr. Minnich introduced the international team involved in the filming, including units in the United States, Russia and Germany. Their immediate goal is to get in touch with individuals and organizations who would be willing to host a viewing. Already partners have been lined up in Germany, Finland and Canada. The film will come out sometime in 2022 on video, online and on Blu-ray.

(Tax-deductible donations are welcome. Send to: From the Heart Productions, 6934 Harmon Dr., Ventura CA 93003 or donate online: tinyurl.com/52yk5s72.)

The second speaker, **Scott R. Spencer**, the chief project advisor of the Inter-Continental Railway, also highlighted the goodwill that would be generated: "This project is another way of uniting the world. ... It will be a game-changer in terms of global cooperation, global economic activity and provide a foundation for peace."

The cost of the railway is estimated at \$100 billion. A comparable project is the International Space Station, Mr. Spencer explained, where nations have been working together for the world's common good. However, while the space station is a temporary infrastructure and will be deorbited later this decade, the railway can serve for at least a hundred years. From that perspective, "it's a remarkable bargain," he said.

The focus is to secure financing and to get the project on the agenda for a U.S.-Russia summit. Mr. Spencer was an intern for President Biden many years ago, and he is working through channels to make sure the president is aware of the project's value both politically and economically. He is also in touch with contacts in the U.S. State Department.

The third speaker was **Victor Razbegin**, one of the leading rail industry consultants in the Russian Federation and co-founder of the Inter-Continental Railway Project. He has been involved with this project for more than a quarter of a century. When he first heard the idea presented at a conference in Washington, D.C., organized by Mr. Koumal, he thought it was "fantasy," but after a careful study of the plans and studies his opinion changed and he accepted the project's great potential.

Mr. Razbegin said he's pleased with the film. "Rick's film is a good step in the right direction for the promotion of the project. The main idea underlining this project is that it's not just a railroad project which links point A to point B. This project will join the people and the economies not only of Russia and United States, but people around the world through the railway systems."

Maria Nazarova, the president of UPF-Russia, served as moderator for the discussion and question-and-answer session. The first questioner congratulated the organizers for hosting the event, particularly during a time of tension between the United States and Russia. His question dealt with tolls and the cost to use

the Inter-Continental Railway. Mr. Razbegin said the price would be comparable to, if not less than, the cost of shipping by sea or air and that the project is expected to pay for itself within 15 years.

Another person asked, "Does the Inter-Continental Railway include Africa" Mr. Razbegin explained that after the railway is built, all railway systems around the world will be connected.

Dr. Walsh added that the African Union has a committee dedicated to transport and communications and has been working on pan-African transportation systems for a long time. Dr. Walsh said that recently he was in Cape Town, South Africa, with Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, wife of Reverend Moon. Dr. Moon went to Cape Town because, in the vision that they have advocated going back to 1981, Cape Town is a central point for extending this international system. Dr. Walsh emphasized that within the UPF vision and Peace Road, Africa plays a central role. The railway has the potential to transform Africa and open those markets dramatically, he said.



Mr. Spencer pointed out that "the Inter-Continental Railway is the backbone that is setting up a network that can unite the world." Once the central railway is created, extensions will be constructed to Africa, Central and South America, and the Korean Peninsula.

Another question dealt with the role of partner organizations not directly connected to the Bering Strait or Peace Road projects. The project, according to Dr. Walsh, is not only the Bering Strait project but also part of a global vision and an infrastructure for global harmony and interconnectivity. The Inter-Continental Railway is in line with UPF's core principles of interdependence, mutual prosperity and universal values, he said.

Mr. Minnich responded to a question regarding the languages into which the film will be translated and plans about the film's distribution. The film will be translated into many languages, he said. They will work with a professional sales company for worldwide distribution. He said that one of the benefits of the pandemic is that it has become possible to do events and reach a lot of people in a very direct way that is not possible if participants have to fly, which costs a lot of money and negatively affects the environment.

In reflecting on his motivation for making the film, Mr. Minnich choked up when he described his time living in Russia and interacting with the people. "It was a real eye-opening and heartwarming experience. I felt very much at home." He repeated the example of the International Space Station, and said that the Inter-Continental Railway project would be like an "International Space Station on the ground, and a very tangible demonstration of international cooperation and goodwill."

For more information:

Film trailer (4 min.): vimeo.com/181050918

Host a screening: tinyurl.com/3fdwfj5b

Make a tax-deductible donation: tinyurl.com/52yk5s72

Film website: www.rickfilms.de/film/the-strait-guys/

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