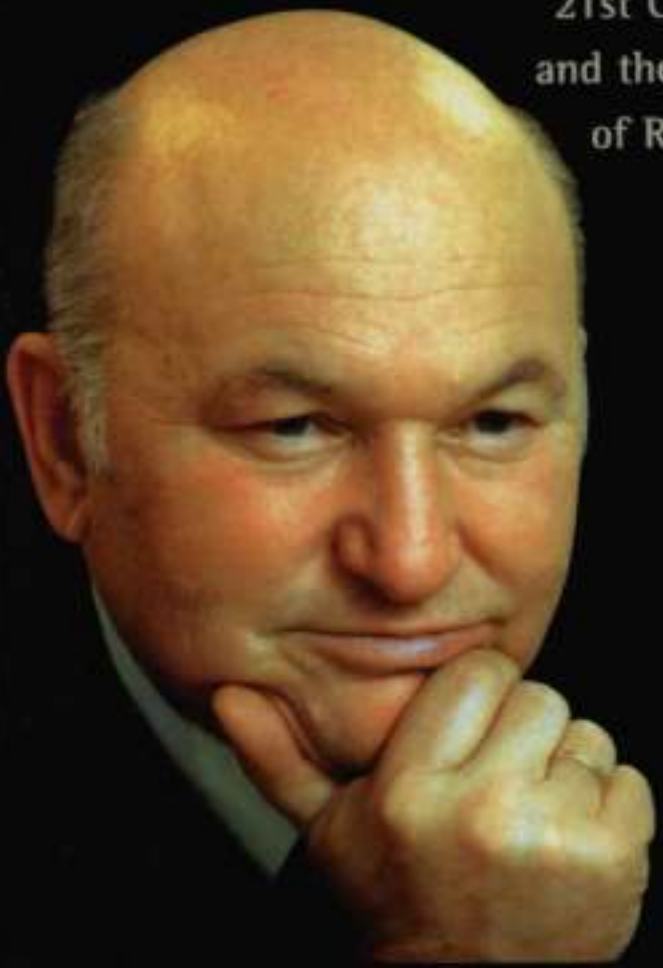
THE RENEWAL OF HISTORY

Mankind in the 21st Century and the Future of Russia



Yuri M. Luzhkov

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Foreword

I am very grateful to Stacey International Publishers for giving me the opportunity to present the English-language edition of my book, which sets out to analyse the problems currently facing the civilised world and to suggest ways of effectively solving them.

The 21st century has brought with it new challenges and dangers. Does the civilised world, and Planet Earth, really have a future? That is the principal question we are asking about the future. The world is about to embark on a qualitatively new phase of its development. The tensions within the historical processes today arise from the radical character of these changes. The world is evolving, and we must all be ready for it.

In this book, I have naturally focused mainly on my own country's development issues and position in this changing new world. It is not only Russia, though, that is now searching for its new place in the world: Europe and Asia are, too.

In my conclusions I am not aspiring to the truth, but attempting to engage the reader in a lively, in-depth discussion of issues such as globalisation, state evolution, democracy and the ever-expanding world of information.

I have a high opinion of English culture and tremendous admiration for that great humanist William Shakespeare, whose works in the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages reflected the profound social contradictions of the time and the urgent need for a complex moral choice in a time of change.

I would like to extend my heartfelt best wishes to your nation which I regard with sincere respect. I wish you all peace and harmony, happiness and well-being.

Yuri M. Luzhkov
Mayor of Moscow

The present as a new turning point in world history

Creating the world is not the work of a moment,
but of eternity.

Immanuel Kant

As the new millennium begins to take shape and the younger generations embark on their own independent lives, there is a tendency to imagine that the 21st century will follow on from the 20th with the same predictability that the 20th followed the 19th. Those of my own generation, however, can cast their minds back 40 years to a time when our rendezvous with this new century seemed far from inevitable. In the early years of the 1960s, many people believed that politicians were incapable of averting a nuclear catastrophe. Scientists frequently calculated how many times mankind might be destroyed by the warheads that the nuclear powers had accumulated, and what the consequences would be for human health and our reproductive capacity, of the atomic material that was being released into the world's atmosphere. And yet in the event mankind has managed, so far, to ensure the survival of civilisation.

The fact that the 21st century is here at all is a fact for which we must thank our parents' generation. To overlook this, and to imagine that things would automatically turn out as they did, would be as rash as it would be ungrateful. I say rash, because such a mistake could well be followed by a second – with fatal consequences. Given what we have already seen of this new century, the belief that the 22nd century will automatically succeed the 21st is not something we can take for granted.

Although the events of 11 September 2001 in the United States are often described as an historical turning-point, for many people the turning-point actually arrived earlier, and for

others, both in Russia and in other countries, it was yet to come. 'Black October' in Moscow in 2002, and the events which followed it, provided appalling confirmation of that. The new century is emerging with harshness and cruelty; it is already throwing down new challenges to world civilisation which affect our view of ethical problems, global economics, technology, ecology, demography and cultural issues. The emergence of terrorism on to the world stage has become a symbolic focus of all the challenges the world now faces.

The 11 September incident in the United States and the events of 23 to 26 October 2002 in Russia will be remembered not so much as the opening of a new epoch, as the exhausted conclusion of the world that preceded it.

We can never again be what we were: history has changed. For the considerable section of the world which is called 'civilised', a new countdown has begun. This historical renewal has destroyed the illusion that the global civilisation which emerged at the end of the 1980s with the defeat of the Communist system can somehow complete a process of successful evolution.

The upset in the balance of forces which had defined the development of the two world systems for almost the whole of the 20th century gave rise to a euphoric belief that victory could be achieved without the use of force. The West embarked on a policy of self-sufficiency which led it to disregard the international institutions, norms and restraints which had sustained the old bipolar system. In the new circumstances these came to be regarded as superfluous.

The 'End of History' doctrine proclaimed that the Western world, with the market-led economy upon which the global political system has been erected, is the highest form of civilisation. Sooner or later, the countries and systems on the outside must somehow be drawn into the process of globalisation, in the course of which they will 'catch up' with the West and follow in its footsteps. At the same time, those cultures and civilisations which remain outside the globalisation process,

either through their own choice or through that of the West itself, will deteriorate and fail to be 'selected' by the processes of historical evolution.

Humanity's future has been transformed from a tense search for different development models into a mechanical process in which countries, peoples and cultures are reshaped to the point where only some can aspire to the 'yawning heights' of the consumer society promoted by contemporary Western society. The West has fulfilled the role of the Demiurge, who not only creates the world, but has already become its future.

According such status and value to its own development has made it possible for the West to leave the rest of the world out of its calculations. At the same time, it has created essentially new approaches to the management of international relations which one might call 'global egoism': the right to interfere in any situation anywhere in the world on the basis of 'humanitarian' concerns and the values connected with the pursuit of progress.

This attempt to put an end to history has turned out to be no more than an illusion. History may have been renewed, but we have no idea where it may now be heading, by what routes or towards which horizons. The world is becoming considerably less predictable and its development more arbitrary, because of the new and uncontrollable forces and tendencies within it.

The future of the world has again been brought into question. Throughout the 20th century, the debate about the future of the world related to its form and the best way of shaping it. Now we need to know whether civilisation has any future at all.

The state of the world at present seems most closely to resemble that of the middle of the first millennium BC. This is considered to be a crucial turning point, a time during which the fundamental principles were laid down for the contemporary civilisations of both east and west, in the fields of philosophy, culture, world religion and a logical basis for historical development across the globe. This came about as a response to impending catastrophe: for the first time, mankind found itself on the threshold of self-destruction. Rapid growth and technical

innovations in weaponry threatened to destroy a world which was incapable of comprehending its own true nature, its problems or the goals it should pursue.

It was a revolution in self-awareness that made man what he is today. This breakthrough enabled civilisation to overcome the global crisis which might have led to a premature collapse of the whole historical process.

Just as we were one thousand years ago, we are once again standing on the threshold of a major turning point, a new revolution in self-awareness. Without it, humanity will be unable to respond to the challenges that threaten our very existence, and to overcome the obvious difficulties in coping with the interconnected issues of society and the economy and dealing with demographic, ecological and political problems.

The world is in the process of a new kind of development. And it is precisely because of the changes involved that there is such tension in current historical trends. The world is changing and will inevitably go on doing so. This change will occur, whether mankind is involved in it or not. We do not know how individuals, or humankind as a whole, will change. But we will only survive if we learn how to transform ourselves. This may seem at first sight to be simple and obvious, but the development of civilisation absolutely depends upon it.

It is essential for mankind to learn not only how to manage current conditions within society, but also future trends. The world must establish a new basis upon which to construct a civilised order.

In the current fragile state of the world, the only method of management that will preserve it is that which derives from our understanding of the future. The future is not separated from the present by some sort of iron curtain. Whatever image of the future we may have, it inevitably finds its way into our system of social communication and has a cumulative effect on the way we behave. The 'self-fulfilling prophecies' so often described by psychologists defeat imagination itself: people who unconsciously nudge events towards a preordained result – even

when the result is disadvantageous to them – are capable, for no obvious reason, either of being physically destroyed, or of surviving, quite independently of the views that have been instilled into their consciousness.

It is precisely for this reason that the world must make a decisive choice. It should do this rationally, with a clear awareness of the scale of the problems it has to confront, and the threats that may emerge from the further development of events. We must make a conscious effort to formulate our development strategy. This strategy has to provide the answers to those questions of history which face us now, and which bear witness to the decline of the old order.

Part 1: The Decline of the Old World: A critique of the Present

The world has come up against a challenge which represents something quite new in both scale and content. What this amounts to is a general crisis in our civilisation, which affects its very institutional and cultural foundations.

For the old world this an impasse; mankind has found itself in its present situation by consistently pushing to their logical limits all those trends and principles of development by which our history in the new era has been defined. The dominant factors in the history of the modern world which have brought civilisation to the brink can be set out as follows: the idea that there is such a thing as progress; the method of managing the economy over recent centuries which we call capitalism; the organisation of the world on the basis of the nation state; a particular idea of democracy, and scientific and technological progress, underlined by the evolution of mankind's moral and ideological principles.

The principles upon which economic, societal, institutional and political systems are currently organised, the management of the world economy, together with the structures, functions and principles which govern international institutions and super-national levers of power, are all inexorably becoming a forecast of what is increasingly an actual reality. The demand for a 'new world' and the 'renewal of history' has evolved from an academic idea into a demand for concrete action in the here and now.

The primary task is to change the terminology we use. We must realise that, hidden behind the beautiful words and elegant conceptions about the development of human civilisation, there is chaos in the real understanding and awareness of where we are and what is happening to us. Our world will collapse if causes are confused with effects, black with white, values with vain appearances.

The Impasse in the Development of the Contemporary World

1.1 The idea of progress in crisis

Fundamental to the idea the civilised world has of its past, its present and its future, is the great idea of progress and development from a worse state to a better one.

This really is a great idea; in terms of its influence on the contemporary world there is really nothing to which it can be compared. It contains the triumph of the concept of a better future, of mankind's unlimited possibilities and of human civilisation. At some point, progress became a fundamental law of history; its underlying sense and its justification.

The idea of progress harks back to the Enlightenment era. At that time it was thought that the human race was travelling along a straight historical path from the simple to the complex, from ignorance to knowledge, and from moral blindness to the heights of moral behaviour. Any movement forward and upwards was perceived to represent progress. Furthermore the concept of progress came to be identified with the idea that history has a trajectory from one place to the next, which must proceed from the lower to the higher, from the bad to the better, from the primitive to the contemporary.

This was a seductive idea, one whose simplicity and clarity have retained their appeal to this very day. If this movement takes us in only one direction – preferably a much better one – everything that happened to mankind before must by definition be worse. And to the extent that progress is inevitable, what is worse must inevitably die away. Three apparently self-evident conclusions flow from this. The first is that everything that happened earlier will sooner or later disappear from the scene, giving way to something which is a priori more progressive. Secondly, if the former social structures are doomed to disappear, why not help them on their way and speed the march

of history, thus enabling the advance of progress. And thirdly, those countries and peoples who have retained social and political forms which from the outside appear out-moded, are by definition 'backward' or 'less developed', and it must therefore be the duty of progressive mankind to assist their breakthrough.

The way I have presented the idea of progress is no doubt somewhat over-simplified, but I do this deliberately, since it is this approach that has guided men's actions, even though more developed ideas of progress emerged subsequently.

The experience of the past century has shown all too clearly that the problem with progress is its costs; particularly the failed attempts to create an Utopia, which we are inclined to include in the idea of progress or the paths which lead to it. History, furthermore, has ceased to be seen as some sort of straight line leading from the dark to the light; it has become all too apparent that the line can make surprising zigzags. It has become clear that to take as absolute any particular definition of progress is to cause the inevitable destruction of the system as a whole. To choose one particular path in the search for progress is to invite the inevitable degradation of society and individual identity.

The last third of the 20th century was a period of deep crisis for this idea of progress. The roots of the crisis lie in the exhaustion of the industrial culture and the underlying rationale which lays down absolute ideals of freedom, happiness, and material well-being. The reverse side of the coin is violence and aggression towards nature and men themselves.

And yet we do not want, at any cost, to turn away from the idea of progress in itself. To overthrow it would mean abandoning the very possibility of constructing a society on the basis of reason, morality and humane ideals. What's more, it would mean doing so at the very moment of mankind's confrontation with unprecedented problems and challenges, which call for new levels of thought and social action.

Furthermore, if we decide that progress is impossible in principle and amounts to no more than one of many illusions,

we are justifying irresponsibility, egoism, barbarism, unscrupulousness and disdain for the entire human race. Creativity within society would lose its historic justification. What would happen if the visions of progress which once seemed to reflect an objective reality were revealed as being no more than self-delusion, conditioned by the particular circumstances of our psyche and our historical development?

Material civilisation in the 20th century provided humanity, for the first time in history, with the means to build dreams on powerful foundations. In exchange it demanded that the dreams be brought down to earth. If an ideal society is unattainable, at least within a realistic time scale, the practical alternative cannot mean giving up dreams and ideals altogether.

The vision of alternative paths to progress which has emerged at the start of the 21st century is different from that of even half a century ago. To make a complete break and to construct an ideal model of society and economy on empty ground would be the most difficult path to take. Moreover, there would be no way to guarantee the quality of the end result. After all, missionaries and the colonial powers were quite sincere in the belief that they were bringing the light of truth and civilisation into all corners of the world. The consequence has been that two-thirds of mankind is still attempting to catch up with the positions established for them by permanent outsiders.

To leave things as they are and allow global development to take its natural path without correction is not an option; it is too late for that. The world has become a single, interdependent whole. The most varied and powerful forces clash within it, accumulating risks and problems of the greatest seriousness. In these conditions, what emerges at the end of the process may well have nothing to do with progress.

Here we confront yet another dilemma when formulating our views and goals for the development of humanity. Progress is neither inevitable, nor necessarily essential. And we are not dealing here with a competition between different, progressive road maps. We have, instead, a confrontation on a considerably

larger scale. The idea of returning mankind to nature and to the 'age of innocence' enjoys increasing support worldwide. It commends itself alike to ecologists, the opponents of capitalism and globalisation, and to those who hanker after a world built on exclusively moral or religious principles. The history of mankind has acquired a grand new idea: that of the self-limitation of civilised development. It is presented as a panacea for survival and a basic principle for social justice on a global scale.

Is that really the point? No one disputes that the West is the most developed and advanced area of the contemporary world in economic and technological terms. But another question arises which poses a much greater threat to civilised mankind. We are being invited to reject everything which represents our very essence and its pride: our developed economy, our science, and technological advances. That is the price of turning one's back on progress.

The Islamic fundamentalism which inspired the terrorist operations of 11 September 2001 and 23-26 October 2002 is by its very nature a denial of the idea of progress. The correct path is not that which leads forward in a new, unknown direction. Rather it is the path which leads back to an appreciation of the norms and rules, assumptions and actions which prevailed in the period in which Islam itself arose. The Taliban's Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was a project which was opposed to progress. It demonstrates with great clarity what was on offer to the peoples of the Islamic world, and not just to them, but to the rest of mankind. It is a rejection of everything considered superfluous and unforeseen by the Sharia, a legal system established in 7th century Arabia.

On the other hand, if the idea of further progress can be questioned even in the most advanced countries of the world, one can hardly expect the others not to do likewise. But for them to eliminate or at least limit the negative consequences of progress carries a risk of something considerably worse – in the shape of continuing backwardness, poverty and hopelessness.

When applied to the West, the call to limit progress often sounds like an invitation to forswear self-indulgence and dangerous ventures; to the rest of the world the same call may have a different resonance, that of refusing to accept development which is actually essential.

In the event that roughly equal levels of economic and social development could be observed in the various countries and regions of the world, the action of simply putting voluntary limits on progress would be seen as both attractive and effective. But the situation is not like that. The 'golden billion' people in the so-called civilised world must be taken alongside the billion who are undernourished, the billion who are ill, the billion who are illiterate and the billion whom fate appears to have abandoned.

If the root of the problem could be tackled in that way, we would simply have to limit progress and over-distribution in such a way as to benefit the less developed parts of the world. This proposal sounds unreal, in that it takes no account of the technical and moral complications involved in putting any such 'ideal schemes' into effect, nor does it allow for the realities of the capitalist system and its principles of economic management.

At the heart of the difficulty lies the fact that the 'backwardness' of most of the world's population has always been seen as a corollary of progress in the 'advanced' part of mankind. In itself the emergence of a united world during the colonial era demonstrated the economic interaction that existed between the metropolitan powers and the colonies themselves. The latter provided the resources for development and modernisation and ensured greater social integration in the metropolitan powers, along with access to new markets.

Western civilisation did indeed provide some answers to questions about the causes of poverty and backwardness and the way to respond to them; but the questions themselves are not very productive.

This situation is usually regarded as both regrettable and inevitable: where everything is determined by the market and

the freedom of social choices, there will always be some who succeed and some who will suffer. Of course the latter will need help, within the limits of what society and the state can provide; and this will be done partly from humanitarian considerations and partly from the need to preserve stability and peace. The aid given will not change the overall situation in itself, nor indeed should it be expected to. The presence in society of those who do succeed obliges everyone else to catch up with them. That is the motivation which powers social development. This being the case, if there are profound differences in quality of life and levels of development, something is required to keep the world as a whole moving forward, provided that disparities in income do not become excessive.

A model of this kind however, provides no solution to the problems of relations within society. There are many people who live on less than one US dollar per day, and there are those who earn thousands or tens of thousands of dollars over the same period. The comparison of states according to their average gross domestic product shows discrepancies of 60 to 1, which is far greater than the discrepancy between income groups in the majority of the world's countries. Necessary and useful though it is, the assistance provided to the Third World over the past 40 years or more by the UN and other international organisations, as well as by the developed countries, does not resolve the central problem; the gulf between the poorest countries and the richest has continued to increase.

Neither can we really expect an increase in the volume of aid to the least developed countries to resolve the problem, since the essence of the problem is one of quality rather than quantity. If development aid on a substantial scale is provided without precise targets and obligations on the part of the recipient countries, the eventual consequence is that both the élite and the ordinary population become dependent. This in turn further undermines their development and increases disproportion and instability. Attempts to prescribe conditions for the provision of aid to such countries, and thus to stimulate their development,

generally fails to put them on the high road to progress. On the contrary, what is proposed – openly or otherwise – is intended to secure the stability of the developed countries and the creation of new markets and economic possibilities. Even if the less developed world does embark on a path to progress, it remains on the sidelines, or does no more than lay down a surface on the road to the future.

1.2 The problem of 'stable development'

There is yet another aspect of the problems of poverty and backwardness. Many experts in the field have long doubted whether the earth has sufficient natural resources to increase the industrial capacity and infrastructure needed to raise the standards and quality of life of the majority of the world's population, even to the lowest standards enjoyed by the developed countries, and to do this with the technologies currently available.

Few nowadays would quarrel with the following two propositions. The first is that the ecological situation is catastrophic and threatens the world with as yet undefined consequences and dangers; secondly that the physical exhaustion of natural resources is a reality that must be faced. The distinguished biologist V.G. Gorshkov has calculated that the world's population can draw on up to one per cent of the world's biological resources without risking irreparable damage to the biosphere. But current levels have already exceeded ten per cent, and are rising.

To this there is one hypothetical response: the idea of sustainable development, designed so as to satisfy current needs without affecting the quality of life, and indeed the survival, of later generations. The obligation we face is to hand on to our children and grandchildren not a lifeless desert, plundered and filled with trash, but a planet capable of providing a worthwhile and healthy life for its inhabitants. Such a world must provide not just for the human race but for all the other forms of life it sustains.

This idea has gained wide support. It was endorsed in 1987 in a vote at the United Nations, and a whole series of international agreements were signed in the 1990s designed to develop it and to put it into effect. Many countries, including Russia and the United States, have adopted national blueprints for sustainable development.

But what has been done in practice? Has the natural world become more healthy, and is our air and water any cleaner? If so, it can only be to a very small degree. We should note, however, two significant economic changes in the world over the past decade. In the first place there is now a rapidly developing market in what are termed ecologically sound goods and services. Necessary as these may be, they have created a new barrier to the export of goods from developing to developed countries – yet another means of economic and political influence on the internal situation of many less developed nations. It is a new barrier between the rich and the poor, the developed and the less developed.

A parallel phenomenon has been the emergence of amarket for the trade in quotas for harmful emissions into the atmosphere. Agreements provide each participating country with the right to a given level of emissions proportionate to the size of its economy. Any countries which, for whatever reason, do not take up their full quota, such as Russia, whose industry to a significant degree simply stagnated in the 1990s, can sell a part of it to those who need it.

Progress in protecting the natural world has been minimal. The most developed countries generally use a higher proportion of their resources than the less developed, and emit correspondingly higher levels of pollution. The result is that the more backward countries are becoming not only a resource base and market for the advanced ones, but are also providing an ecological lever for the advocates of progress.

Another consequence is that ecological stratification is becoming as strongly marked as the economic differences between countries. It is unlikely that the consequences of

demarcating people according to their 'ecological well-being' would be as simple as demarcating them by their social class.

It is quite possible that events will develop according to a completely new scenario. In terms of living standards, populations in the most developed countries – and the ruling élites in all states – already enjoy lifestyles which are, from the ecological point of view, excellent, with access to pure drinking water and ecologically sound foodstuffs, goods and services. This would seem to resolve the problems of at least a part of the world's population, even if it is confined to the 'golden billion'. But this is where the problem of principle arises. The lion's share of expenditure and consumption comes from the developed countries: the average US citizen uses 150 times more energy than an inhabitant of Bolivia or Bangladesh. This demonstrates the irreversible march of international competition, and points to the possibility of a new global conflict over clean water, air and access to land.

Present-day Western societies tend to think of the ecological crisis as a matter of upholding an existing quality of life. But this is a fundamentally damaging approach, since the essence of the ecological crisis is to devise restrictions on mankind's existing means of survival. So any strategy whose purpose is to preserve an existing quality of life in the midst of an ecological crisis are not just irrational, but fundamentally amoral.

The possibility of ecological catastrophe, furthermore, resembles the nuclear one. If the expenditure of effort and the necessary means can still protect us from its visible and immediate effects, neither great wealth nor the attitude society adopts towards it will help us to escape its long-term consequences.

The destruction of the natural world presents us with threats and dangers of a new type. Pollution is spreading across the whole planet. It is accumulating in plant life and in living organisms, and contaminating human food supplies, often in the most complicated and fantastic ways. Different types of pollution, not highly dangerous in themselves, can combine into

new forms which are stronger and more unpredictable in their effects on man and the environment than when taken individually. Escape from the consequences of these is either impossible or extremely complicated.

The last decades of the past century have already brought with them a phenomenon which is fairly new. Nature, in the form of microbe or man, is starting to change in response to its altered environment, reacting in its own way to the degradation which is occurring. Medical data suggests, for example, that in Moscow only two per cent of children can be regarded as being in good health at the moment of birth. This is just one example of the latest form of interaction between the environment and human biology. The scientific consensus is that the direction in which such changes are going is still unclear. It is not even understood whether they may be a response to a single set of circumstances or whether they will lead eventually to a qualitative collapse of the environment as a whole. It is not entirely clear whether human activity and its impact on the environment is having any deep, long-term effect on the world's climate, but if it eventually transpires that this is the case, counteracting the effects will demand enormous resources and internationally-agreed measures and forms of cooperation that are as yet undecided.

We must at this stage acknowledge that all forecasts of this kind rest on extrapolations of current ecological and demographic trends. Such extrapolations suggest that the energy and other resources of the planet are being gradually exhausted, and that the eventual overloading of the biosphere's capacities will lead to its irreversible degradation.

Suggestions of a fundamental break in current development trends are no less unsatisfactory. For example, it has been suggested that consumption of natural resources should be limited by cutting back on individuals' requirements – the philosopher Panarin asserted that 'poverty should once again be perceived as a virtue' – or that the population of the planet should be forcibly reduced, since it has exceeded biologically permissible levels.

But just how realistic and acceptable are scenarios like these? I think it is clear that even the mildest limitations on the expenditure of resources, even when such expenditures cannot be rationally justified, would upset a significant number of people – and understandably so. They would also require difficult lifestyle adjustments and changes to the running of the economy. Poverty could not be transformed into a virtue by administrative fiat; it would entail a revolution in human awareness and in the entire structure of economic life.

Even trying to limit the consumption of resources would not guarantee a sufficiency for the population of the planet at the rate it is now increasing. The world's population is expected to reach 12 to 14 billion or even, according to more extreme estimates, between 15 and 25 billion. Such progressive growth over the next 30 to 50 years puts a real question mark above the actual survival of the planet, since its resources could not cope with the requirements of so many people within the current technological, economic and political frameworks.

It is equally apparent that if the inequalities in the development of the different regions of the world are to be evened out so as to provide better diet and health care, the demographic problems can only increase. Greater life expectancy and improved standards of living which the West now enjoys will become available to other regions, with the resulting reduction in infant mortality, fatal epidemics and the like.

The very idea of reducing the size of the world's population also leads to some alarming ideas and proposals. Who will pay for such a reduction to be brought about? Attempts to propose quotas for the optimal population size in individual countries are naturally met with protests from the political leaders concerned, not to mention courteous counter-proposals from their scientific advisers. Discussions about how to depopulate other countries are bound to provoke confrontation. In rhetorical terms war is recognised to be an unacceptable solution, and in any case not even sufficiently effective. The idea

of 'persuading' billions of people to stop breeding is self-evidently utopian: to pursue a successful depopulation policy they would have to stop altogether rather than accept limitations. Even in a totalitarian power with an unusually compliant population such as China, the limitations imposed have only led to slower growth, rather than an actual contraction in numbers.

These extreme interpretations of 'stable development' employ the authority of science to suppress xenophobia, ethnic suspicions and intolerance (some time ago people in Europe began to talk about 'eco-fascism'). The concept of the 'golden billion' risks acquiring a new and completely sinister meaning, implying the number to which the population of the planet should be reduced in order to arrive at a harmonious balance with the natural world.

It is evident that the civilised world cannot put forward a proposal to halt the growth of the world's population, or even to reduce it. The whole of our social history has developed in opposition to the theory of natural selection. Nor can we realistically advocate demographic control on a planet-wide scale without falling into the temptation of totalitarianism and the fog of a new racism.

There is one other theory which might give us some help at this point. It is the proposition that mankind is still very far from exhausting the possibilities of development through technological or scientific innovation. This could greatly widen the horizons of civilisation and free up new resources for development, to the benefit of everyone on earth, and not just the golden billion. The proponents of this view doubt that the resources of the planet will limit human development for the foreseeable future. They believe that the population could increase several times over without lowering living standards, on the basis of contemporary levels of technology and volumes of production. The planet's resources really are limited, and they must be drawn upon intelligently; but this does not mean that we should lock them in a trunk and throw away the key. It is

only by developing the economy that we can reduce the use of the Earth's natural riches, but it is only possible to bring about such development by expending them.

However well presented the arguments in favour of this view may be put, our present predicament is too far removed from this picture of happiness and good fortune based on a technological breakthrough. Scientific and technological progress is a fact of life, but at the same time, ecological problems have persisted, as well as disproportions in the development of various countries, while the backwardness of the global majority grows greater as the advanced Western countries progress even further.

At this stage we should stop for reflection and conclude that the method of economic management adopted throughout the world lies at the heart of the impasse in which progress has become stuck. It is the basis of global poverty and the limitations to stable development. In itself, scientific and technical progress can do little to resolve the global problems we face unless it is underpinned by progress in technology for organising economic and social life itself.

1.3 The religion of economic growth and the 'spirit of capitalism'

We have arrived at the question which really lies at the heart of our discussion about the meaning of progress: what are the signs and criteria by which it can be recognised, and what are the ways in which progress can be measured?

Both the theory and practice of present-day Western economics is to focus first on economic growth along with technological development. The cult of economic growth, together with that of science and technology, has become almost a religion. Economic growth is seen nowadays as the chief prerequisite for social growth and stability. The pace of it is used to assess the competitiveness of a society and the economy overall. Its cumulative results are used as the main criteria for assessing all aspects of a country's development, from the

unofficial figures to those provided for UN statistics. Everyone from politicians and businessmen to economic gurus and ordinary people want to know what the growth will be; the rest can take care of itself.

This 'positivism of existence' in the words of Auguste Conte has replaced the religious and metaphysical period of man's history, replacing the question of mankind's moral perfectibility and the quest for the meaning of life with material manifestations of personal progress that can actually be quantified.

The market, with its inherent laws of competition, continually divides those who take part in the economic process into those who succeed and those who do not. The division affects everybody: entrepreneurs, from the big league players to the smaller fish, and salaried workers, from the unskilled to the highly-qualified specialist or manager. Sometimes the division is justified by what people actually do, more often it is fortuitous, and quite often it is insultingly superficial and unjustified. But division it is.

Developed states with a sense of responsibility do make attempts to provide correctives by means of social assistance to the poorest in society and, periodically, by intervening to rescue from bankruptcy the largest corporations that play an important role in the economy of the country and provide jobs on a large scale. This is a corrective mechanism, which within certain limits can put right the most negative consequences of economic processes without abolishing them outright.

The function of the market as a filter is one of its side-effects, and is also an important social and economic mechanism. It is the market which lays down the basis for the individual's social motivation, whether he or she is an entrepreneur or a wage-owner. And this intense market competition, which divides the first from the last, is becoming harsher and more unrelenting. But motivation is all the more powerful when it is precise. The presence on each step of the social and economic ladder of a 'pool of the unsuccessful' also fulfils another important function. It is the source of employment for those who are

prepared to take jobs which are unpleasant but socially essential. Those who undertake unglamorous jobs requiring few qualifications, or to run businesses which are relatively unprofitable or involve high risks are essentially dwelling on the margins of the economy. People who are prepared to work for relatively low wages provide, by their very existence, one of the main prerequisites for the formation of areas from which, over time, competitiveness can be derived. In a similar way, dynamism can spread to the whole economy and its separate branches and sectors.

Putting together all these factors, however, it can be seen that in market conditions, relative backwardness in certain areas cannot be wholly overcome in principle. Nor should it be overcome altogether, since the market has to be preserved, along with its capacity for flexibility, dynamism and sensitivity to changing conditions. It does not matter whether such a market is an internal one, international or operating on a global scale.

Similar considerations apply to our ideas of how mankind manages its economic activities and how it functions in that role. It seems that a similar view of capitalism is deprived of any perspective and of any assumptions about the possibilities of progress in the forms of organisation that our society currently employs. It would not be out of place to enquire how far present ideas about the actual functioning of the capitalist system corresponds to the concepts which gave rise to it.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the currently-accepted principles by which the world economy and management systems are run, actually contradict the fundaments of the economic and social structures which constitute capitalism.

Historically speaking, capitalism did not begin with economic growth (this last comes from the Western model of economic management) but from the revolution in the areas of ethics and religion which Mark Weber called the 'spirit of capitalism'. Capitalism was born not as an economic system but as an ethical and religious one.

The problem for the West today is the dominance of the consumerist society, the hedonistic rejection of the 'Moloch of History', the desire to cut oneself off from the burden of labour 'in the sweat of thy brow' and the struggle for a worthy life. The economics of the West is increasingly becoming an economy for the production of artificial needs, constantly forcing people to desire something new, and to remove the various pressures of life.

There is no doubt that this creates a comfortable background for existence and permits the growth of economic services, but it deprives the civilised world not only of the 'will to live' but also the understanding of core values for the development of man and mankind. For people of this consumer society, work turns from a source of life into a mere camouflage for ever-increasing possibilities for consumption and pleasure.

But the biggest paradox and problem the 'New World' faces is that in discussing the whole issue of post-modern problems in the development of the individual man and mankind in general, we have to understand that the vast majority of the world's population not only do not face problems of this kind, but are basically concerned with far more simple and quotidian problems. These do not relate to the post-modern era, but to the era in which contemporary societies were first established.

Here we encounter the social problems of this new era. Different countries, peoples and societies find themselves at different stages of development, in different epochs and with differing agendas. And it is precisely these differences which become critical, since they are not quantitive – resulting from development which has come about in stages, as largely happened earlier – but result from changes in quality.

The kind of progress which results from a conscious move forward, and derives from man's goals and values, turns into an elemental interaction between forces either unknown or moving in different directions. The resulting Brownian movement can be described as progress, albeit with a considerable stretching of the usual definition.

It would seem strange to assert that growth is not necessary, or that its significance is actually of a secondary order. But the more stable, wealthy and varied the underlying material, the better, fuller and more rewarding the other aspects of an individual's life, or that of the society he lives in, is likely to be. At the same time it would be wrong to deny that in our contemporary world the need for economic growth is very great.

It is founded, however, on a different understanding of the objectives and tasks involved in developing a global civilisation. The reason for this is that poverty and backwardness emerged from the dark corners of the world, and have become a global problem. What is required is not simply economic growth, but a return to the 'spirit of capitalism' for the successful solution of social problems. These are completely different mechanisms, and extend not just to social, administrative, political and legal issues, but also to the economy itself.

The market has to guarantee growth not simply in a general sense, throughout the world economy, and not only in the most developed and generally advanced nations. It must fulfil its role wherever the need takes it and wherever there are needs to be satisfied for which finance is not readily available. At the start of the 20th century, economic growth led the economies of the most developed countries to break from the mass of other states. Now the objective of growth must turn to the less fortunate and more problematic countries and regions.

Growth should be directed at achieving a broad range of social change, and should not be pursued for its own sake. In the meantime we are still employing a growth model which has evolved over time and was designed, from a practical point of view, primarily to satisfy the requirements of the developed countries: above all their need for economic growth. There is a paradox here, for while there is undoubtedly growth, it is of the traditional type and the traditional technologies it employs have the effect not of reducing, but of exacerbating, the problems of mankind in our contemporary world.

It is questionable whether the world in the 21st century will remain stable if it confines itself to reducing expenditure to a minimum for growth of the traditional type, while preserving the essentials of the former models of progress, and if it continues to rely on an exhausted model of capitalist economic management.

1.4 The post-industrial world

When we address the problem of securing a fairer system of development and growth for all the world's population and not just for a part of it, we might assume that the system we currently have for developing our political and economic system is not actually developing. But is this really the case?

The western world has moved to a new stage of development which is often called 'post-industrial'. This expression is used primarily to describe the current economic activity, which has effectively been reorganised on a global scale into a technology- and knowledge-based system with capital resources managed by means of 'virtual' information.

The way this is organised and operated is already very different from the traditional practice in industrial societies. The possibilities opening up are also very promising. It is worth asking whether this is the route we should follow, given the increasingly obvious limitations on traditional development.

Scientific and technical progress and the information-based sciences, which will define the quality of life in our society, are of great interest in this context. In its post-industrial, post-modern system of economic management, the West clearly feels the need to find ways of organising the economy which reach beyond traditional methods. To use the economic phraseology of Marxism, one might define post-industrialism as an attempt to overcome economic dependence on the fundamental levers of power on which development has hitherto depended – that is to say, natural resources, physical labour and productive capital.

The new economy stimulates and exploits other forces, above all those derived from scientific knowledge and increasingly sophisticated information technology. In consequence the face of economics itself is changing. Economic power as represented by vast industrial enterprises, is giving way to the power that the individual can derive from using computer technology and the World Wide Web.

The result of this may have a direct effect on the way we overcome the constraints on progress and adopt new approaches which allow progress to occur, while limiting the consumption of natural and other resources. Perhaps this new economics will show us how to overcome backwardness on a global scale by establishing a unified information network and releasing the creative potential of even the most underdeveloped societies.

To the extent that the ethos of post-industrialism is linked above all to man's creative potential, labour itself can recover a sense of value and a moral dimension. This will not be the same as the values of Christianity in the early capitalist period, but will instead entail a basic understanding of the world in general and an appreciation of man's place in the world.

For economic and social progress to be possible alongside individuals' personal development, new technologies, knowledge and scientific discovery will be required. It is through the creation of ground-breaking technology and the products to go with it, that emergence into the post-industrial world will depend. However, the new criteria for development continue to exist within the logic of the old ideas about economic practice, while previous norms of international and global interaction are also still adhered to.

Western civilisation has one particular fundamental resource in its adoption and control of advanced development techniques; its economic dominance and its strategy for superiority derive from its ability to monopolise the new technological frontiers and thus to make the whole world dependent on it.

The benefits of this 'super-knowledge' cannot be removed from those who created it. Consequently individuals, corporations and states become dependent on them. Great polarisation and inequality go hand in hand with such dependence.

Moreover, the West sells only the results of its intellectual and technological superiority to the rest of the world, but not the superiority itself. And even when other countries acquire technological and scientific knowledge from the West, they lack the technological and intellectual resources to reproduce them. The notorious 'brain-drain' is a fundamental problem for many countries, in that it involves the loss of both productive and inventive potential.

At the same time there is a new global financial system emerging. Through it, both nation states and a wide variety of private interest groups can draw off excess profits from the funds accumulated through stock-market speculation and debt management. This second side to the post-industrial age militates against mankind's discovery of his true potential and belief in the value of creative labour.

This new financial economy is not remotely productive, since it is in essence a virtual system for the self-reproduction of profit – money for money's sake. The money involved is no longer connected to the production and labour resources which gave rise to it. Instead it has become an informational fetish – bare figures in computers, within a global information system intended to ensure the West's continuing domination.

This system has long since lost any connection between the real economy and the financial instruments which derive from it. It is a mechanism designed not just to postpone the bankruptcy of the global economy but also, quite simply, to consume our very future. The new economy increasingly relies on financial pyramid schemes. The governing motive for such schemes is either a clear understanding that you can win if you are on the top of the pyramid, or a simple belief that you will get your own reward from it, while those lower down will lose

out. Added to this is the determination of the world's leaders to preserve the backwardness of the rest of the world – essential for the well-being of a system which is becoming increasingly globalised.

Political and economic processes are evolving more and more within the framework of a political space comprising inflows of financial and organisational information, and of symbolic resources and knowledge. The development by the West of the post-industrial economy is turning the world into societies which are moving further and further away from the productive and labour relations of the past.

A new kind of 'dependent' development is becoming established throughout the world. What defines this is not just dependence on resources – from which the West itself could suffer – or financial dependence, vital for a country such as Russia for example, when external debt and investment shortages are involved. It is rather the dependence on sources of information and other technology, essential for the latest forms of development.

The West alone possesses these resources and can permit or deny to particular countries the capacity to catch up with the post-industrial world and to interact with it. To achieve this objective a country would need both investment and an agreement to export the technology, which amounts to a greater exercise of influence by the West.

The key to normalising the global situation must lie in the use of technology in order to break out of the vicious circle which current trends of development have created. Historically speaking, such crises in the system have always provided a spur to technological effort and have been overcome as a result of it. It is pure utopianism to adopt the romantic notion that one can put a stop to development by creating new archaic forms in the likeness of the original natural world.

But avoiding developmental dead ends through a dash towards technology calls for completely new levels of consciousness. It will be difficult to control certain groups who

might be tempted to exercise domination over the whole world. Scientific and technological progress, and the transformation of the principal instruments of economic organisation in the post-industrial period give rise to a whole series of new and dangerous processes. The future technologies which we can envisage today might be regarded as a means of resolving the demographic, ecological and social problems which could either open up new horizons for us, or confront us with the destruction of mankind.

The great specialist in nanotechnology[1] Bill Joy, who is a co-founder and leading researcher of Sun Microsystems, has written an article which puts forward an unexpected and frankly shocking concept. While the 20th century gave us weapons of mass destruction, our new century will give us what he calls 'knowledge of mass destruction'[2].

Let us suppose that the construction of an atomic bomb requires enormous resources: financial, material and other, which in the 20th century only a few very powerful countries could afford. The use of such a weapon and everything connected with it, the scientific and technical documentation, the carrying out of tests, and so forth, has been kept under strict controls by the authorities, on the basis of agreements between responsible governments who are conscious of their responsibilities to their own people and to the world community.

Footnotes:

1. A nanometre is one billionth of a metre, the size of an atom or simple molecule. Elements of these dimensions make it possible to record information with a density of one 'bit' per molecule. On this basis calculators can acquire effectively unlimited memory and speed of operation, the only limitation being the time the signal takes to pass through the equipment.

2. B Joy: 'Why the future doesn't need us', *Wired*, April 2000.

The development of nanotechnology, however, and of genetic engineering and robotic technology, carries with it not just enormous benefits to society, but also new means of mutual extermination which are incomparably less expensive to produce. These technologies are already slipping out of governmental control and falling into the hands of wealthy corporations. In future, separate, smaller groups could gain access to them.

The development of a global economy with 'virtual' money, together with these new technologies, may well have a depressing effect on economic activity and hasten the emergence of a shadowy criminal economy that would bring terror to the world. Increasingly sophisticated forms of political terrorism also call in question the security of atomic power stations, chemical factories and military depots. Atomic 'micro-bombs' may well become feasible in the near future, along with other unknown surprises.

Computing power is expected to increase a million times by 2030, and the dependence of all social processes on information systems will have gone so deep that the destruction of this 'virtual' information would carry with it the complete collapse of all vital activity in society. Computers will be capable of begetting nano-viruses (which unlike virtual ones will have a material substance), capable of generating people with particular genotypes at the whim of the programmer.

Most frightening of all is the fact that the manufacture of such weapons will become both cheap and accessible to all. Neither states nor commercial corporations will be able to control this, and they may well fall into the hands of small groups of computer-literate maniacs.

Bill Joy does not exclude the possibility that a simple error on someone's part could lead to nano-viruses escaping from human control. Being tinier, more potent and more aggressive than living organisms, such viruses would be capable of destroying every albuminous molecule on the face of the earth in a matter of days.

Technological development also gives rise to a large number of contentious ecological and philosophical issues. One of these is how to manage food supplies on a global scale. It will be impossible to satisfy the dietary needs of a growing world population by using traditional agricultural methods. The only solution may lie with gene technology, by developing the production of genetically-modified foodstuffs. Furthermore, it may only be possible to ensure the health and well-being of the population of a deteriorating economy by providing replacement organs through cloning technology. Either by this means, or by the further development of virtual and information technology, we may soon be faced with the problems of dealing with people who can live for ever. One does not have to be a prophet to see that the possibility of eternal life, or of the indefinite extension of life-span for certain individuals, would immediately cause great social and racial divisions within society.

These are of course completely unprecedented threats, for which mankind's previous historical experience has no adequate response. It is clear that the widespread use of such technologies and their consequences simply cannot be grasped at this stage.

Globalisation Interrupted?

The more we talk about the constraints on economic development in today's world, the more we see that they all derive in one way or another from internal confrontations which have arisen because mankind already occupies the whole of its surface area. This is how globalisation proceeds. It begins with the attempt to open up the world, gradually occupying and widening the area under civilised control, to the point when the possibilities for resolving problems by taking over more territory and resources have become exhausted. The 'limits to development' thus coincide with the physical limitations of the world itself.

Globalisation then becomes bound up with economic development and the establishment of a system of international relations, combined with organisation on a global scale of political, social and cultural processes – all of them with their own logical and dynamic processes. In these we can perceive the problems of the post-modern world, including the fact that the world's resources may be insufficient to overcome the obstacles which stand in the way of economic development on a global scale.

It is evident that resistance to the homogenisation of social, political and cultural structures is much more substantial than resistance to similar processes in the economic field or in politico-military relations. It is here that we can expect to see, and do actually observe, signs of a reaction against globalising trends, as different societies and cultures become increasingly aware of themselves, and as their views extend not just to their own prospects for development but also to global evolution itself.

This is how a single globalised system comes into existence: the idea of development extending across the world to other areas besides those of the economy combined with competition between individual societies to assert and define their own futures.

2.1 Globalisation and Westernisation: a single world or the 'privatisation of the future?'

Throughout the development of contemporary western society there has been a great temptation on the part of 'civilised mankind' to tackle its strategies for progress only on its own account. This might be called the 'privatisation of the future'. The so-called civilised world has for some time been trying to strike a balance between its own needs and ambitions, and its instinct for self-preservation. The growth of well-being and technological power in the West creates an illusion of overwhelming power, because the populations of Western countries and their ruling élites seemingly have no clear sense of the limitations and dangers to which their kind of development is subject.

This was the case not only for Western countries but, in its day, for the communist world as well. For all its opposition to contemporary Western civilisation, the communist idea was actually derived from the West, and can be understood only as part of that culture. Communism proclaimed the values of progress no less – indeed more insistently – than the Western world itself. The communist Utopia, the 'Kingdom of God on Earth' was not all that different in principle from that of the 'golden billion'. It was, then, fundamentally a dispute within the western world, a choice that had to be made from within the varied ranks of the 'elect'.

Once the 'second world', the communist alternative, had collapsed, the West was left with the possibility of unlimited domination, and world conflict came to be seen increasingly as the struggle for resources and survival, as globalisation expanded. The loss of the Soviet Union as a global rival for control of the whole world's population also deprived the West of any real motivation to 'save' the rest of the world, preferring as it did to concentrate on building the future only for itself.

The present stage in the process of globalisation is unfolding at a time when one state within the international system, the

United States, has hugely outstripped all the others – its closest competitors, its friends and its rivals. It has pushed far ahead of them in all the indicators used to define the power and quality of development in a modern country; economic and military potential, financial resources, levels of scientific and technological achievement, and much else besides. And the Western world as a whole has similarly outstripped the rest of mankind.

This provokes the inevitable debate: will globalisation become the latest form of neo-colonialism, in this case from America? How will the changes the world is experiencing work out over the coming decades in the light of the American factor? It is not a question of whether the countries of the West desire such an outcome; there are some in favour of it and others who see potential dangers.

The Western strategy of shedding its global undertakings, retreating into its shell and of 'privatising the future' has brought about a dangerous avoidance of the tasks of developing the world as a whole. The rest of the world has been left to itself, though with an invitation from the West to compete within itself for the right to join the 'golden billion'.

At the beginning of the 1990s Samuel Huntington expounded the doctrine of the 'clash of civilisations'. This is now regarded as a message from the past, since it preserves the main postulate of Western self-awareness, the inequality of the different civilised systems and the identification of the West with opposition to other types of social and cultural systems. His approach turns out to be no more than a variation on the theme of the 'End of History', which is postponed but not discarded. The West remains the most modern civilisation, and the present embodiment of the universal future.

This is a striking example of the way yesterday's agenda, or even that of the day-before-yesterday, is suddenly put forward as that of the present, while the real problems of today and tomorrow receive no attention.

Is the West justified in proclaiming itself to be the leader of

world civilisation? It was not long ago that the majority of European and American intellectuals thought quite the opposite: that Western civilisation was in deep crisis and was confronting profound changes: 'A crisis is simultaneously weighing down almost the whole of western culture and society and its main institutions. There is a crisis in the arts and science, in philosophy and religion, in law and morality, and in its way of life. There is a crisis in the forms of social, political and economic organisation, including marriage and the family. In brief, there is a crisis in almost all the life, thought and behaviour of western society. To be more precise, this crisis can be seen in the collapse of the basic forms of Western culture and the society of the last four centuries.'

These are the words of the distinguished philosopher and sociologist Peterim Sorokin. He is not alone: throughout the whole of the 20th century we heard from western thinkers about the dead ends into which the new European civilisation has floundered.

It has recently become clear that the ideas of development and progress upon which western civilisation is built are undergoing a profound crisis. They cannot cope with the gulf in values and meaning, on the one hand, of the unchecked development of technology and world population, and, on the other, the eventual exhaustion of the planet's resources, uneven development, and the widening of the gulf between rich and poor.

The painful problems connected with the 'consumer society' seem to have dropped out of the argument. Discussion and research relating to the values which enhance human existence, and the illusions inherent in the consumerist way of life, have mysteriously disappeared into an alarming vacuum. But the conflicts and problems to which such questions give rise have very little to do with the 'End of History'. How can anyone regard a model as essential for understanding the whole world when it requires so much change and adjustment?

The humanitarian achievements of Western thought have also

been strangely forgotten. For over a century, strenuous efforts have been devoted to overcoming the attitudes underlying the Eurocentric map of the world. The universal values of the Enlightenment, the rational beliefs underlying evolutionary and modernist ideas were all subjected to careful analysis and counter-argument by writers, philosophers and scholars. They demonstrated that the technological, military and financial power of Western countries and the comforts and convenience of everyday existence have obscured the exhaustion that lies at the heart of the new European civilisation. But suddenly, after hundreds of books had been written, and even more said on the subject, the Western-centred view has been revived, like the corpse in a thriller.

The unhappiest fate is that which has befallen what was the main achievement of humanism: its view of the unity of mankind and the absolute equality of rights. Of course this was no more than a postulate, yet it was for a time respected. The developed countries considered it an absolute duty to concern themselves with the weak, simply because they were all fellow human beings. They were concerned about the poor, the illiterate and the hungry. They declared that such people should be raised to the same level as those in developed countries and helped to flourish. They not only said this, but genuinely tried to achieve it. How much time and effort was spent on this goal, how many volumes of resolutions and treaties were written on the subject, how much scientific research was devoted to it. But things got no further than grandiloquent rhetoric and bureaucratic paralysis. No longer is there any sense of responsibility for the poor and the hungry: now the view is that it's their own choice and their own fault as well, and so we reduce aid to non-Western countries to the minimum, providing it only when the failure to do so could directly threaten the interests of the West.

The world which, not so long ago, was united by humanitarian effort has suddenly begun to divide on strategic principles. On one side are those who fall into the zone of Western interests while on the other are those who do not, who

are not needed, and above all who are not dangerous. These latter do not deserve any attention at all.

In addition, the West has fallen into the trap of concentrating its strategies for progress on its own people, on the future of the 'golden billion'. During the industrial age, the west had an interest in integrating other societies into their economic, social and political model since this was seen as an essential part of their own development. Today however, in the post-industrial period, such integration creates additional internal problems for Western societies and in any case is no longer essential for their longer-term development.

Nature abhors a vacuum, and other alternatives have appeared quite quickly. The formation of a pan-Islamic movement, with a promise of an Islamic globalisation, now attracts huge numbers across the globe, and clearly demonstrates that the idea of 'privatising the future' is attractive not just to the West, but also to its adversaries.

The thinking behind this is simple. 'If planetary resources are limited and not everyone can expect to survive, why should it be Western civilisation, rather than any other?' The West might try to argue that it should receive priority because its achievements in the development of science and technology were largely created in the West, but in the rest of the world this would simply not be understood.

The opponents of the 'civilised world' would argue that they are speaking on behalf of the absolute – and oppressed – majority of mankind. Secondly, references to a Western intellectual and technological leadership which can alone ensure mankind's progress are likely to be countered with claims that it is just this divorce from the natural world, this intellectual arrogance, this science and technology as creations of the Devil, that are responsible for the problems which mankind faces. To take the logic further, the opponents of the Western world would argue that humanity is more likely to survive by turning its back on progress, removing its present leaders from the vessel of history, and returning to nature and God-fearing traditions.

But if civilisations other than the one which is at present

trying to assert its hegemony are not ready to give in, to be levelled down or to depart from their chosen path, there is nothing to prevent the advanced from punishing the backward and unaware. This is likely to increase the militarisation of the planet, to promote the rapid over-development of secret services and the development and stockpiling of every kind of weaponry.

Eventually the fundamentalism of the 'Elect of the West' will come up against the fundamentalism of its opponents. In such a dispute there will be no victors, because neither side will be willing to give in to the other.

The result is that the predicted 'clash of civilisations' risks becoming a new Middle Ages, with everyone struggling against everyone else to the point of mutual obliteration. This is even more likely in view of the fact that present levels of technological development make such destruction seem much more probable than that the world will actually survive. In this scenario, the world's complete self-destruction is no more than a matter of time, and one not so far removed from where we stand at present.

2.2 Geopolitics and the 'geo-economy' of the 'New World'

The problem of globalisation should be understood in terms of the way it unifies and transforms the world, and particularly as part of the process by which the West is establishing its domination of the whole world. Seen from the perspective of history this is no more than a passing phase. It is true that it encounters heated discussion and even political and social opposition, but the direction in which the processes of globalisation is heading will not prevent the establishment of a single world, squeezed and twisted into a single interdependent system. And since this process is absolutely objective there are no means by which our efforts can put a stop to it.

The world is in the process of becoming a new world in which new structures are coming into view. These will form a new

political map, or even create something entirely different, once it emerges that the previous territorial, administrative and national boundaries make no sense as this new world takes shape.

The world as we see it at present is neither uni- nor multi-polar. It has an undefined number of different polarities, and it is unclear what precisely they represent, how they are organised and what their qualities are. Different situations will determine how they evolve.

The concept of a 'geo-economy' extending to the whole globe is now becoming increasingly well established. This reflects the trend connected with the primary and immediate formation of world-wide economic unity and the defining significance of the given factors in the further transformation of mankind.

The global geo-economy stands before us as a new system for organising the world order. It is linked to global specialisation and division of labour between the different regions of the world, and to the regulatory and administrative role not only of the transnational corporations but also the previously mentioned 'virtual' financial economy, which also extends across the globe. These geo-economic relations form a parallel system of world organisation which states must take account of, and position themselves within.

The transnational corporations have established almost complete independence from national states. The authorities often find themselves powerless in the presence of the representatives of international capital, who do not allow inspection of their activities, who can transfer funds at the speed of light, who can make deposits in different corners of the planet, and who can hide their financial gain in tax-free zones outside the reach of state authorities.

It is as if there were two parallel worlds. In the first one are the nation states, with frontier and international obligations; in the second, nothing of that kind exists. In one, constitutions, laws and the principle of the separation of powers prevail. In the other, there is nothing but the free play of capital movements,

which resembles a game with no rules. Both worlds exist within the same space and are often represented by exactly the same people.

The first world is relatively stable. Decisions are taken after passing through proper bureaucratic processes, are made publicly available and are subject to the necessary controls. The second operates instantaneously and in secret: individuals have pseudonyms, appear from nowhere and dematerialise no less rapidly.

The first world is the one in which we live. It is something we can see and understand. The second is hidden and difficult to imagine. Everything is done in secret, the water is murky. We do not know the laws which govern its construction. This is a world of pseudonyms, a world in which the defence of liberal values is as much of a preoccupation as the holy war of the Taliban.

The global geo-economy has its hierarchies of advanced and relatively backward sectors which enjoy a relationship of interdependence with particular countries and inter-state coalitions. Thus the United States and the West as a whole exercise control over a nexus of financial, infrastructural and hi-tech interests, and of the industrial sectors of the global economy, while the Asia-Pacific region, with its many factories, is gradually becoming the world's new industrial centre. On the lower levels of the hierarchy are to be found the producers of raw materials, which to an increasing degree, include Russia itself.

Objectively speaking, the logic of global development is that its economy is formed by states, regions, corporations and the 'pirates' of global finance, all competing for dominance over the most important and financially rewarding levels of this development pyramid. Alongside this, the information age has made globalisation real by creating a single, information-related communications entity which has led to the creation of a global administration system in real time, over and above national and state borders.

Just as with the spread of telephones in the last century, the widespread penetration of information networks such as the Internet, with its accessibility and ease of access to individuals regardless of where they may be situated, has made it unnecessary for close contact to be dependent on physical proximity. This is likely to prove a powerful factor in freeing human contact from geopolitical and ideological limitations, a trend that will be reinforced by the development of cheaper and better transport systems and the relaxation of barriers to travel.

In a simultaneous development, much of the cost of manufacturing is progressively shifting from its material and energy-related components to its information component. This is bound to have an effect on the work of the customs and frontier services, who will increasingly have to move from operating in one geographical location to the areas occupied by 'virtual' information.

As physical space loses its defining role, political and information space will take over the role of global management. Political processes are already operating less within physical space than in the virtual arena of information and financial flows, and symbolic resources and knowledge. In this sense there are many states today which do not control even their own national territory. Nor indeed can they exercise influence in other world regions, by initiating decisions and supporting processes which are likely to have global consequences.

2.3 'After the state': the crisis in the classical model of the state and the system of limited sovereignty

The principle of national sovereignty, which lies at the basis of the system of national states, is being destroyed by a powerful trend in the development of the modern world. It is already possible to assert with considerable assurance that only a handful of states can exercise complete national sovereignty and self-sufficiency in the world today. We might mention the United States, China, India and Russia. Beyond that, there must be doubts even about key states within the European Union.

There is no place in the new century for the concept of unlimited and unshakable state sovereignty such as prevailed in the second half of the last century. In future, the structure of nation-states that the world has known hitherto is bound to change. This may come about as a result of what will amount to a new form of colonialism, in which weaker states will be swallowed up by stronger ones. Otherwise we may see super-federations forming on the pattern of the European Union. More likely, perhaps, we shall see a combination of these two, depending on whether groups of countries are relatively stronger or weaker within the geo-economic system.

The limited electoral legitimacy of states within the new system of international relations may reflect the perception that the state itself has lost its status as the basic institution capable of building systems within the context of its international relations. We may also be seeing a trend towards a new configuration of powers within a globalised world. In this post-industrial situation, where power rests with the most advanced technology, states may find not just their legitimacy being questioned, but might also face the prospect of losing their power in the information field, and their symbolic and economic power.

In the period of the 'post-classical state' local communities created according to differing criteria may find horizontal organisation and interaction becoming much more important. The traditional political atlas and the system of super-national institutions is being eroded by the worldwide information network which is beyond their control. The political space is being squeezed and flattened, destroying with it what used to be called the national political process.

National frontiers, legal systems, language, political institutions and communications, not to mention distance and time, were all at one time defended and defined by the political control exercised within societies and nation states; now there is no protection from political interaction which extends across the globe.

Politics is also to an increasing degree subject to the influence of the transnationals, and not only the business corporations which were formerly, for the most part, acting on behalf of developed countries as they sought global expansion. Nowadays it is not only national leaders in individual countries who are subject to political processes, but also the representatives of other states, peoples and religious organisations, of international capital and of a variety of social movements across the world. Some of these may not enjoy full legal status, representing instead the rather shady political interests of the international criminal community. The world is being filled with new, not always understandable and often extremely dangerous elements.

The insufficient development of international political institutions strengthens the need within international political processes of extra-institutional and extra-legal technologies. This new 'horizontal' organisation of society poses a certain threat to the current globalisation model, which is connected with the problem of Western domination.

Some time ago, the process of setting up a new world with connections to electronic networks involved the developing countries and new national states, and this formed part of the expansion of the West. Now the 'external', global factor in organising a national political process is increasingly felt by the developed and most powerful countries of the world. The new global actors on the political stage are acquiring such strength and potential influence that it is proving a complicated task for them to withstand not only the most stable states but also the politico-military and economic associations established by these states.

International terrorism, or perhaps to be more precise, diversionary warfare under the guise of terrorism, is not exactly an external phenomenon so far as the civilised world is concerned. The use of television to display its power is only the most obvious aspect. Every day the 'world underground'

employs the communications systems, financial systems and democratic institutions of many countries across the world. The attacks of 11 September 2001 owed their powerful impact to the fact that the United States, the most powerful country of the present age, watched its sovereignty exposed to doubt. The dismal conclusion that the average person could reach, that in this new world both territory and sovereign control are ephemeral and of secondary importance, came to be widely felt, and indeed seemed to be emerging as a reality.

The weaknesses to which the national state is exposed has now become the main problem facing the West. For it was on the basis of the state that the global domination of 'civilised humanity' came about, and made possible the control and organisation of its varied interests. In a certain sense present-day approaches to the development of international relations reflect this. Attempts by the West to preserve the state-based system throughout the world by employing concepts like 'soft sovereignty' 'the external administration of states' and 'humanitarian intervention' are all too evident. The objective is to establish a new state-based system which will allow the civilised world to guide the rest of the international community.

But it is doubtful whether the process, once started, can now be halted. The worldwide anti-globalisation movement, which is only partly to be seen as a manifestation of civic societies, and widely-held ideas about the connection between international terrorism and the World Wide Web are evidence for a new kind of world, a world of 'global self-government'. It is difficult, particularly for the West, to struggle against this, using the forces of an international system based only on the nation-state. The process of establishing this web-based world is turning not only into a form of opposition to the West's ideas of civilisation; it is also clearly acquiring the features of an alternative globalisation, with different and extremely dangerous approaches and consequences.

2.4 The phenomenon of shattered civilisation and the next 'New World'

The world map drawn up with a particular view of progress, based on demands for globalisation, the West-centred view of the world and the idea of developing civilisation as a linear process: all this represents an entirely inadequate response to the current situation and the trends of development. The present age is becoming a competitive arena in which different models of development come into conflict and have to be selected accordingly.

The peculiarity of the situation can be seen in the fact that the process of integration, as part of globalisation, conflicts head on with the phenomenon of 'shattered civilisation'. The most developed countries of the post-industrial West are quite capable in principle of living independently of other countries; even if one takes into account their current dependence on external resources, technology would permit this dependence to be shortened and overcome. The West's possession of the fundamental information resource and of productive sectors whose sophistication belongs to the post-industrial period means that it could become independent of the production and development of other countries and systems.

At the same time the developing world and the traditional and industrial societies are perfectly capable of organising a relatively high level of existence without the help of Western countries, even if these levels do not quite compare with the standards of today. The cost of survival will be higher than at present but it is still possible. In this way the two worlds, the post-industrial, post-modern world on the one hand, and that of the basic mass of mankind on the other, can certainly exist without each other. But they cannot exist quite independently of one another, or without paying some attention to one another, since they are both part of the contemporary world.

When we think of this new era as a victorious march by the West, we should not forget that over the next 50 years, global trends will squeeze the West into a steadily dwindling minority position, for all its political and economic expansion. The history of mankind will no longer be the history of Western civilisation and the northern regions of our planet. When our population constituted over half the entire population of the earth, we could still say that the history of the world amounted to the same as the history of the West. We cannot do that now.

Perhaps therefore, we are witnessing the beginning of the end of the great New World of the West, experiencing the rise before the fall. We shall grow old and disappear into the past without, by historical standards, having ever really started. The actual 'New World' will be something altogether different, of which we know very little, although the silent majority already surrounds us on all sides. Slowly but steadily it is becoming part of the fabric from which our contemporary world is being fashioned.

The New Phenomena of History

The key problem with globalisation can be summed up by asking to what extent the world can actually be managed, and what form a more just and universal model of management would actually take. The question of how to manage the development of society becomes key, because the world in the form it is developing at present is likely to come to an end before very long. The costs of allowing the world's development to proceed spontaneously, as it is doing at present, are just too high. If the quality of management is assumed to be the most important aspect of development, then it is vital to understand more about the nature and quality of those taking on this task.

Much depends on this question. The political will of those in charge of management is critically important for the state of the whole system. In principle, however, it is wrong to ask how the development of society would be managed by any one person or group, regardless of the quality and results such management would attain. The task is not to seek an optimal model for the international institutions which would do this, or to look for the right way to organise a world government. The issue is rather to implement a global system which would contain within itself a self-administering political and social mechanism. In order to understand how this would work, we must grasp the essence of the new trends in the development of our civilisation. There are already a number of processes which oblige us to address the mechanisms and trends of global development.

3.1 The future of democracy and the threat of global civil war

The social expectations of the populations of Western Europe are being affected by the threat of their societies eroding from within, a threat which is no longer on a generally abstract, strictly local level nor is it confined to the small scattered multi-ethnic communities that have developed in Western societies over the past decades. The ethnic and religious minorities

gradually filling the countries of the West have settled in well, despite originally being designated specific places to live in, away from the rest of society. What's more, they have now expanded to critical proportions, having adopted an active strategy of integrating into Western societies or, more precisely, 'modifying' them to fit with their own values and interests. Paradoxically, this strategy is being financed by the Western countries themselves, and with every passing year these ethnic-minority communities are consuming a more sizeable proportion of the social welfare budget and putting an increasing strain on social funds and the infrastructure.

However, Western ideologists have always considered the integration of immigrants as an option, envisaging their gradual transformation into members of a given state's single political nation whose identity would be defined by cultural values, not ethnic make-up. However, this particular idea, with its roots in what was, from a historical perspective, the relatively successful experience of the formation of the American nation, has definite shortcomings in other European societies, where patriarchal traditions and values remain unshakably strong.

Even the USA, once a model of the so-called 'melting-pot' type of society in which all the various nations and peoples, ethnic communities, cultures and religions blended into a single 'great American nation', is no longer able to maintain social stability. The increase, both in size and strength, of the minorities' subcultures, coupled with the demands of political correctness, have resulted in American mainstream culture steadily becoming that of a minority – if not in percentage terms (for the time being), then in terms of its being able to influence and determine the trends in the development of its own country.

The key immigration issue confronting Western countries is that civilised societies can no longer do without the influx of human resources from abroad, so great is the need to maintain the indigenous population's standard of living and quality of life and alleviate the problem of filling lower-skilled job vacancies. A pressing problem in the West today, and one increasingly appreciated by the citizens of Russia, is how to reconcile the

contradictions of a consumerist society which is intent on protecting itself from the hardships of labour, while at the same time increasing its creature comforts. Everything has to be paid for however, and it is precisely the mounting aggression towards migrants and the possibility of a swing to the right in European politics that cast doubt on all the West's social gains, which form the basis of the majority view today. In conditions such as these, it is no wonder then that social demands are gaining strength in the countries of the West and becoming the political catchphrases of the recent electoral campaigns in many European countries. The West is about to undergo a radical re-think of the principles of liberal democracy, which place so much emphasis on individual rights and liberties.

This situation reveals how paradoxically similar are the interests of the majority of the population of the Western countries and the global élites who are also eroding democracy everywhere. The latter believe in the power of money, public relations, spin-doctors and other methods of reducing the masses to a zombie-like state, far more than in the ideals of a democratic society. They try to determine the outcome of presidential and parliamentary elections, to buy members of government, to infiltrate state structures and to privatise state concerns. Totally lacking in old-fashioned patriotism and with no sense of responsibility, these new key world players wish to use the services of the state as an institution whose tasks and aims they determine themselves.

Unlike legally-elected authorities, however, these global élites are bound by neither political programme promises, nor norms of universal human morality, nor national treaties nor public opinion. Free from all responsibility for the social consequences of their actions, and stopping at nothing, they attack national economies, thrust their interests on governments and show a total disregard for laws and other people.

We can see two layers, as it were, in the power structure. On the surface everything seems normal: there are appointments by election, and there is clarity, accountability and control. There are however, other hidden agendas lurking behind every

strategically important decision. This is a modern-day post-democracy – a structure in which an invisible élite takes on all the work involved in hypnotising the masses and guaranteeing the authorities' stability. For their part, the authorities lobby the interests of the new élite and force economically-dependent countries to open their borders to the global market.

As a result, what we are seeing is not a classical type of democracy which has suffered erosion as a result of the uncontrollable actions of 'cell networks', but a new social order. Policies are made not only by state leaders but also by the representatives of international capital for whom borders, cultures and humanitarian basic principles mean nothing.

These élites also now have the unexpected pleasure of selecting the privileged 'golden billion' who are to survive on earth, and who, regardless of their nationality or citizenship, will become members of the global élite, made up of the ruling classes of the world's major countries. In any case, 20th century society, in which an individual's opinion at least counted for something, is steadily changing into a zombie-like biomass governed by a ruling élite caste.

In the future we may also possibly see the formation of a meritocratic system of government consisting of people selected on the basis of their knowledge and information. A global qualification-based democracy will take shape in which rights and influence will only be given to the societies, states and corporations with sufficient property capital and successful track records in political correctness and human rights. It will be a new global class society which will one day have to undergo its own great 'bourgeois' anti-class revolutions.

We can therefore see two different principles of political world structure in co-existence today. The first principle stands for a comprehensible world, a national state and traditional values, while the second has to do with a concealed world, globalisation plans and other factors which have yet to be deciphered.

So, what next? Does a globalisation project really exist? And how can one imagine the various ways in which events may

unfold in the future? Let us put forward three hypotheses. The first belongs to the anti-globalisation campaigners, who argue that the goal of the new rulers of the planet is to create a world government, an élite club of international bureaucrats, and an oligarchy that is not answerable to any national authority. According to this forecast, a new class comprising selected members of the international bureaucracy and transnational corporations already exists but without a definite structure yet, and for the time being it is simply using the USA as a plough to loosen up the soil. When everything is finally ready, the superpower will be toppled and its power resources taken over. And in its place there will be a restructured supranational organisation similar to NATO which will no longer be answerable to any state. Pure fantasy? Perhaps!

The second hypothesis is more interesting. It suggests that the parallel world has no plan to disclose itself, and the oligarchs have no intention of changing the power structures of national states. In their present form, the states are suitable to be used by the oligarchs as their own institutions with the governments acting as managers. It is namely in this guise that the effectiveness of the world élite is guaranteed. A shadowy existence suits its needs. No matter how paradoxical this notion may seem, it is still more plausible than the first.

And there is one other hypothesis which hardly bears thinking about, although it has already gained credibility after the rehearsals we saw at the Austrian, and then more recently at the French, elections. It concerns the threat of authoritarian and despotic regimes. It is not only the financial giants who want to build a new world order with another type of power structure. Different trends are making themselves felt in our globalised world today, including blatantly anti-democratic ones. The new world order needs stabilising just as much as liberalising. Revolutions and coups appear to be things of the past. It is better for the world élite to have dealings with corrupted despotic regimes than unpredictable, wilful democracies.

For the time being the major obstacle in the way of

authoritarian regimes is simply their economic ineffectiveness. Someone only has to build a new type of corporative despotic regime which demolishes this premise, and democracy may crumble under popular pressure.

3.2 The problem of terrorism and the moral issues of mass terror

In his relatively recent and much discussed article entitled 'The Spirit of Terrorism', the well-known French philosopher Jean Baudrilliard declared that a war of terror was being waged against terror in the world today and that: 'the energy which nurtures terror has no reason and cannot be understood within the parameters of any ideology'. Terror does not want to change the world, but tries to destroy it 'to make it more radical by offering a sacrifice'.

Such a heroic and romantic perception of terrorism and the consequences it engenders is of no use to us here. The greatest problem arising from the events of September 11th 2001 and those of 23rd-26th October 2002 is their moral dimension. The need to respond to this issue does not depend on the version of the events we adhere to, or whom we consider inspired these dreadful actions or what we consider caused it.

Such terrorist acts are made possible from a moral point of view by placing a certain group of people beyond the bounds of humanity, outside moral codes. The targets of a terrorist act are not regarded as guilty criminals and supposedly responsible individuals as Archduke Ferdinand or Piotr Stolypin once were. As far as modern-day terrorists are concerned, the would-be victims of a terrorist act are not people but beings of a lower order, lumps of flesh without souls or individuality, to whom the codes of human morality and the first Commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' do not apply. As Vladimir Putin rightly said of the terrorists: 'We're just worthless dust to them.' It is precisely in such a way that the enemy is redefined in times of war, when the very fact of his being in the opposite camp justifies his annihilation.

Another reason for such terrorism lies in the vague and unarticulated notion that certain humans bear collective responsibility for history – the Crusades for example, or colonisation, or participation in certain past wars or revolutions. Stripped of their humanity, these human beings become the targets of avenging global history.

Finally, the terrorists, finding themselves in a position to define morality and decide who to regard as a person and who not to, and who to spare and who to execute, adopt the prerogatives of a transcendental source of morality and act in the name of God, confident that after death they will find shelter among the righteous and not be condemned to hell as murderers.

Everything that is known about the perpetrators and direct organisers of the terrorist acts of September 11th and October 23rd-26th points to this being the type of terrorism we are dealing with. According to the terrorists, 'infidels' are not people but 'the offspring of pigs and monkeys'. They deserve to die simply because they are representatives of the evil West and none of them is innocent. The terrorists regard themselves as bearers of God's will and fighters of the universal jihad and believe that they are guaranteed a place in paradise. Thus, as far as the terrorists are concerned, the terrorist acts are morally justifiable.

The big question is: who gave them the right to act in the name of Divine Justice which, by its very nature defies comprehension? And are they guided by certain Islamic principles or are they, more likely, followers of an extreme sect, which we could call 'Osamism' after Osama bin Laden, whose religious authority is acknowledged by members of al-Qaida.

However, we cannot leave this subject here if we want to understand what is presently happening to humanity. Could it be that the West's global activity throughout history is in some way similar to the terrorists' attitude to morality? Has not the West granted itself the illegitimate right to act as a transcendental source and 'distributor' of morality? Hasn't it

transformed 'non-Western' reality to fit its own stereotypes and supposed that the homogenous, 'backward' and 'stray' nations of the rest of the world should live exactly like them? Isn't it rather similar to the lobster recipe which claims that lobsters like to be boiled alive?

The mutual 'moral annihilation' of two worlds is taking place in terms of values, religious and quasi-religious teachings. Moreover, the historical circumstances at the turn of the 21st century, a period marked by a new turning point in history, have unfolded in such a way that the split between nations is not between the West and the non-West. We can see the West spreading east to the Asia-Pacific region, for example, and thus affirming its strength as a civilisation. The split now is primarily between the Islamic and the non-Islamic world. And it is the centres of power in the so-called 'Islamic world' which are putting forward an alternative globalisation project.

The most important thing to understand is the system of values which enables a person to sacrifice his or her own life in order to kill other people. Any religion or philosophy is, after all, also an attempt to solve the two interconnected questions of the meaning of life and the meaning of death. It is this initial impulse that triggers a whole range of ideological questions.

The well-known definition of terrorism as being the revenge of the weak, and being bound up with the poverty and despair of some parts of the world, is an ideological issue. How do they see us? Their situation is such, perhaps, that they do not regard the civilised world as a world of people and this is what enables them to take an entirely different view of the grief and suffering experienced by the people who lost their lives or were injured in New York and Moscow. What are we to do now that there are peoples and civilisations in the world who have simply no idea of what a global world war is like and, furthermore, regard war as a blessing? And surely it is our own world outlook and a vague notion of values that enable us calmly to live every day of our lives, enjoying all the fruits of civilisation, in the full knowledge that somewhere or other there are people dying of

exhaustion, famine and disease, with not even a tiny fraction of the opportunities afforded to us?

On the one hand, 'civilised consciousness' preaches the intrinsic value of each and every human individual, and the significance and importance of every individual's liberty and life. And yet here we are now rejecting morality and values in politics with increasing consistency, relying instead on formal procedures, legal codes, implemented policies, and a balance of interests. Our view of the value of human life tends to depend on how well we know the human in question. There is a classic phrase which in many ways sums up the political style of the world's leading states: 'We don't have constant enemies and friends, we only have only constant interests.'

The new leaders in world politics are seen, however, to be aspiring to put values back on the political agenda and change the face of social integration. As a system organising and expressing the interests of various groups of the population, it remains to be seen whether civil society is able to withstand pressure of this kind.

The opponents of the civilised world are using both the atavistic fanaticism and the technological opportunities open to them in Russia and the West to their own ends, creating a highly powerful effect which owes its success partly to their being an enigma to 'civilised consciousness'. Its impact is like that of a virus on a weakened organism which has no natural immunity any more, an organism nurtured in civilised, comfortable greenhouse conditions which is suddenly thrust out into wild nature. The most vulnerable part of the individual and society of the I.T. age is being targeted: mass consciousness. This 'civilised organism' turns out not to be prepared for its own inventions of 'information domination' and 'cultural expansion' suddenly to be used against it. A road with a one-way traffic system suddenly finds it has vehicles coming in the opposite direction but still no road markings, signs or signals.

3.3. The revenge of values and response to the future in the language of meanings

Having regained its place in history, ideology is now aspiring to refute the West's proclaimed belief in the universality of the laws governing the development of a 'market-oriented civilisation'. The world today is having to confront a threat posed not by states or armies, nor the latest warfare or state-of-the-art technology, but by a much more powerful and deadly force, namely ruthless will-power and fanatical faith. The 'revenge of values' which the world community is having to deal with today is a challenge to the illusion of the superiority of reason and pragmatism in politics.

Some political scholars are attempting to analyse what the future will hold for the 'religious renaissance' which has been observed over the past few decades. Their conclusions are quite different. While some welcome a new Middle Ages, others regard them as sadly inevitable. The latter position was succinctly expressed in an article by the American scientist Samuel Huntington which went on to become a popular-science bestseller in 1994.

Huntingdon is convinced that the political future of the world community is to see the world divided into seven or eight regional 'civilisations' which are internally integrated according to religious creed, and in a state of constant conflict with each other. Of particular significance is the fact that such a scenario is presented as the only one possible, and not just one of many.

It is sometimes argued that frightening predictions of this kind are exaggerated, that wars have been waged throughout history and religions have always provided them with firm ideological foundations by dividing people into friend and foe, and preserving society from chaotic violence by conveying upon war a 'sublime purpose'. All this has not, however, spelled disaster for humanity. But this argument ignores one crucial circumstance.

For thousands of years, battles have been fought with spears, swords, mortars, guns, cannons and tanks. Nuclear warheads

and ballistic missiles have radically changed the situation and designs for ever-more sophisticated weaponry are on the drawing board. Add to this the phenomenon of religious thought as 'sanctified' intolerance and a hatred of infidels, and you get the most devastating concoction.

In this context, the hope of forming a single 'world religion' for all people is hardly constructive. The essence of any religion is to join people together by setting them off against other people. In its deep conceptual and psychological foundations, religious thought is therefore divisive. Since time immemorial it has divided people into believers and non-believers, into friends and foes, and used images of the foe and the sword in its iconography. History has shown that, whenever significant numbers of people have embraced a religious doctrine, they have soon become divided into true and false followers; a whole succession of prophets have called up the implacable faith for help; and selfless heroes (along with countless innocent victims) have given up their lives in holy wars, repressions and bloody pogroms.

One should also add that it is not only scholars but also the most sagacious religious philosophers who have drawn attention to the incompatibility of a theosophical world outlook and changing reality. The influential Christian thinker Gilbert Chesterton, for instance, suggested that future religions would start relying on a highly developed sense of humour (would the quality of religion be maintained?) and in so doing would rid themselves of age-old aggression. And in his famous 'Letters' from a Nazi prison camp, the German priest and humanist Dietrich Bonheffer insisted that 'the world which had come of age' would find a way to refute the 'hypothesis of God', and grow out of its fear of God and its need for external protection. Once it had become 'absolutely non-religious', it would draw closer to God.

One has every reason to believe that the denouement of the religious renaissance, the new Middle Ages and the 'collision of civilisations' equipped with all the modern technology would not be like that of some harmless farce: the crusades, jihads and

other campaigns motivated by religion would this time put an end to human society. If events continue to develop along the same lines, it is highly likely that the 21st century will come to an abrupt end.

A break with past traditions is sometimes interpreted, as is only to be expected, as the rejection of traditional concepts and values in favour of market-oriented pragmatism and the ephemeral information environment of the new world. However, this perception of the development and modernisation processes being responsible for the diminishing influence of ideology and morality in the life of society is no less dangerous than the conflicts forecasted in connection with the emergence of a 'religious renaissance'.

In such a context, attention is usually drawn to the inadmissibility and extreme danger of religious fanaticism in view of the present-day globalisation of political processes, the availability of weapons of mass destruction and growing competition for all types of resources. However, the problem does not lie in articulating the need to oppose the 'world-wide' jihad with new 'crusades', as the world's political community is sometimes inclined to think. The religious, moral renaissance of values means, on the contrary, that there is a need for an adequate response to the advent of a new unified global world and the emergence of a new cultural existence, human interrelations and a new organisation of society.

And if we ask ourselves how we can change the way things are and whether another kind of civilisation is possible, sooner or later we shall come to the same conclusion that it must be a civilisation built on other principles, linked to another system of values. Perhaps, one day in the future, we shall see a global reformation of all world religions, resulting possibly in the emergence of a new 'principle of God'.

World civilisation is standing on the brink of a new global revolution of values. The response to the challenge of life today must be given in the language of meanings.

Part II: Towards a New World: is it Possible?

A Vision of the Future and Mechanisms for Overcoming the Crisis of Contemporary Civilisation

The new century is often envisaged as being dominated by the chaos of uncertainty and fraught with catastrophic consequences for civilisation. The global system is equally likely to develop in a number of different directions, some of which may end in disaster. There is, however, a baffling lack of agreement in the assessments of the kind of scenarios which will lead to catastrophe and of other more favourable or safe ones. And it is completely unclear what transitional steps are needed in order to embark upon a favourable course of development.

Should society return to a 'natural' state, or distance itself even further from it? In both cases what does this mean in practice? Do we need to fight for a compulsory reduction in the human population, for the retention of a fixed population, or for population growth? Should we be aspiring to a further rise, a lowering or a levelling of our material standard of living? Should we encourage the development of tribal, ethnic, religious and other customs, or implant 'universal human values' everywhere?

A review of the various trends and possible scenarios draws the most pessimistic conclusion, namely that we will not make it to the end of the 21st century. People killing each other through religious frenzy or in conflicts for vanishing resources, a global economic collapse, genetic degeneration ('naturally' occurring or caused by the arbitrariness of genetic engineers), a confrontation between people and robots – all these are capable of ending social history and biological evolution on our planet. It's now a question of waiting to see which of the given examples

plays a decisive role. As a result, in a hundred years' time it is possible that only the most backward tribes will still be alive on earth, and they will already be doomed to extinction, having no idea that they are living in the 22nd century according to the Christian calendar (or the 15th according to the Muslim one).

However, linear extrapolations are only the simplest vision of the future. There is little point in a highly accurate forecast of the development of already existing dangerous trends and of the final stage of human civilisation. Is it possible to interfere in the course of events in a purposeful manner and lead them in a more favourable direction? If so, what are the changes and what are the losses necessary on the way? Finally, how exactly should one act to transform a 'bad' future into a more or less 'good' one?

Most importantly, we must understand that even in times of instability, it is impossible for 'absolutely anything' to happen to a complex system such as contemporary civilisation. The number of possible scenarios in each case is not infinite. However, once we have set out on one of these courses of development, we cannot retrace our steps and embark on another: we have no choice but to go all the way.

Since there is always a limited number of realistic scenarios, we are able both to study the future and to construct it. We really do have a choice here, and this must surely be one of humanity's main hopes. We must select and clearly plot a scenario for the future which is most acceptable to humanity, forestalling the dangers lurking on the way and doing everything in our power to direct the civilisation of this planet on to the right course of development.

Civilisation Before a Crisis: What History Teaches Us

4.1 The syndrome of pre-crisis development

Paradoxical though it may seem, we still know very little about man, society and the world. For the most part of history man possessed a very limited amount of knowledge which he mostly acquired from everyday experience. The study of inanimate matter began in antiquity but only some two thousand years later, in the 20th century, would this natural scientific knowledge channel itself into real achievements of scientific and technological theory. It was only against the background of these achievements, and as a result of the new practical and cognitive opportunities that these achievements opened up, that we began to realise how little we still knew in comparison even with our everyday needs and how much we still had to discover, study and understand. Truly, 'I know that I know nothing'.

The situation regarding the life sciences is much more complex. Biology, genetics and a series of other major sciences in this area only began to develop at the turn of the 20th century or even later. Scientific studies of society and man have only been carried out on a modern empirical and instrumental basis since the 1950s. This means that in their study of macrosocial historical processes, in which empirical information is amassed slowly and research methods and the conjectures they give rise to are assessed at length and in a particularly diverse manner, the social sciences have relied so far on what are virtually hypotheses. In most cases they still are relying on them.

Nowadays the notion of man being an element of the biosphere is hopelessly outdated. There are some who insist that the 'biosphere' is no more than a historical concept reflecting something that existed tens of thousands of years ago. Since then people have consistently changed and 'humanised' nature (with all the various positive and negative effects for both sides), adapted it to their altered needs and thus, according to V.I.

Vernadsky, turned it into the 'anthroposphere' or 'noeosphere'. Now a living thing is no longer an independent closed formation, a subsystem of planetary civilisation.

The word 'anthroposphere' means the 'sphere of man' and 'noeosphere', the 'sphere of reason'. Man and his reason, like nature, have both creative and destructive elements. The issue is therefore not whether the anthroposphere is 'better' or 'worse' than the wild biosphere. What is important is that it is another formation of a more complex character with a greater number of dimensions, a scale of standards and causal relationships. This is why it is subject to more complex natural laws.

It is man who creates and moulds the system of relationships between society and nature. The laws of nature are such that any creative process is bound to incur destructive effects (as is clearly charted in the pre-human history of the biosphere). In certain periods, the destructive elements begin to prevail over the creative. It is therefore not a case of simply writing off the whole of human history, but of revealing the conditions and circumstances that must be in place for such a warp to occur, and of learning to forestall and prevent them.

In their analysis of the critical episodes of history, both recent and past, scholars have noted the extraordinary similarity in the thought processes and conduct of people on the brink of crises. This is extraordinary, because the times, continents and cultures in question are so diverse it would seem that they could have absolutely nothing in common. Nevertheless, it was discovered that when people acquired new weapons, technologies and ways of impacting on nature or other people, they lost their heads, so to speak. In this respect, there is not much that separates educated Europeans from their ancient forbears.

The crisis of the Upper Palaeolithic Age for example, was one of the most significant 'global' crises of human history. The number of hunter-gatherers in that period reached its ecologically permissible limit. But this was not the main cause of the crisis. The rise in population was itself caused by the unprecedented development of hunting weapons. People

invented bows and arrows, spears, darts, spear-carriers and other hunting tools and learnt to dig and disguise pit traps. This brought about an ecological Bacchanalia, traces of which are now being revealed to researchers. The psychological stereotypes which remained intact after the Palaeolithic age ceased to be relevant to the new, more productive hunting technologies, and retribution was not long in coming. People, especially those in the middle bands of Eurasia, used up their forage reserves, intensifying the rivalry between tribes. Time and time again their numbers were reduced in all the most populated and technologically advanced regions of the planet.

The next 'challenge' of evolution, just like most of the others that came before and afterwards, turned out to be the result of humankind's own short-sightedness and the disparity between 'technology' and 'psychology'. The reaction to this was that certain tribes began to work together with nature by taking up agriculture and cattle-breeding. This experiment quickly spread over wide tracts of land. The technological revolution of the Neolithic Age was accompanied by a revolution in thinking in the relations between tribes. Farmers and cattle-breeders were forced to see the links between cause and effect in a much larger range of situations than the primitive hunter-gatherers.

Such a logical sequence of events has occurred time and time again in the course of history. With the invention of steel weaponry, which was much lighter, tougher and cheaper to make than bronze, a people's volunteer corps took up the duties of professional armies. Meanwhile values and stereotypes remained unchanged. Military leaders, transported by their newly-acquired political strength, started bragging about the numbers of slain enemies and burnt-out towns. Prisoners of war were killed and the indigenous population was ruled exclusively by means of terror and fear. The loss of life on the battlefield increased to an unprecedented degree. The existence of the most developed states, from the Near East and Greece to India and China, found itself under threat.

The response to the next 'challenge' of technological development came in the form of a revolution at a pivotal time in history. This revolution was to be of fundamental importance to contemporary civilisation. Over the course of a few centuries, a radical transformation of political values took place across the vast territories occupied by the civilised countries. It was only this revolution in people's consciousness that has made human beings what they are today.

It is possible to discover historical analogues of other global problems of present-day civilisation. Europe experienced a grave ecological crisis over several centuries in the second millennium A.D., for example. The invention of increasingly productive agricultural machinery encouraged population growth, the felling of forests to provide land for crops, and a growing concentration of people in towns. Rubbish-heaps grew at an uncontrollable rate and became constant sources of epidemics while the tanning industry and other trades turned rivers into sewage canals. The development of agricultural machinery became yet another evolutionary impasse, just as the development of hunting technology had long before.

The way out of the impasse was in many ways connected with the Industrial Revolution, which not only fundamentally increased the specific productivity of industry but also demanded a restructuring of values and world outlook, the formation of a new cultural world which the American sociologist Alvin Toffler called 'indust-reality'. Such a reality gave rise to another way of perceiving time and space, and the idea of linear progress and humanism – the positive transformation of the divine world by man – and of the pre-eminence of reason as a prerequisite of free human choice. However, of greatest importance were the notions of natural law and the common essence of all people regardless of their religious beliefs, and the discarding of clan morality which had featured in pre-industrial ideologies.

There is no need here to re-examine the events of other anthropogenic crises of a localized or global nature. Specific

research shows that they all mainly followed a similar scenario and were preceded by a mind-set known as the 'syndrome of pre-crisis development'. (For more details of this see the works of A.A. Grigoriev, A.P. Nazaretian, A.D. Armand and D.I. Luria).

The syndrome develops in periods of social life when the new technological potentialities of management are of a significantly higher quality than the previous ones, which had been adapted to less effective technologies and were therefore hopelessly outdated mechanisms of social and cultural self-regulation. An upset in the inner balance gives rise to a surge of ecological and/or geopolitical aggression.

A period of extensive development is accompanied by corresponding moods of mass euphoria and a sense of total freedom and impunity. The world seems limitless, a passive object waiting to be subjugated, and its resources seem inexhaustible. The flush of success is intoxicating. There is an expectation of yet more successes and victories, and that means the quests for moderately-resisting enemies become an end in themselves, both irrational and mounting.

A series of specific natural laws of human psychology then come into effect. It is worth discussing them here in only the broadest outline. A rise in consumption stimulates an increase in demands and expectations (Marxism referred to this as the 'law of increasing demands'), and the proximity of set targets increases the motivation to search for what are simple but, as a rule, also destructive, means of achieving them. When people's thinking is coloured by emotions it becomes simplified; their picture of the world is sketchier and more primitive. Problematic situations seem elementary although, with the growth of technological capabilities the task of preserving the social system in fact becomes more complex. This growing schism between strength and wisdom reduces society's inner stability.

Similar crises in the relations between society and nature can result in the destruction or degradation of the social organism

which is incapable of adapting to the new conditions of existence. However, if this were the only possible version of what might happen, it is unlikely we would be even discussing such problems today, since humanity would simply not have been able to survive to this moment in time.

It was always episodes of another kind that became major turning-points in history: when the crisis was solved by a radical re-organisation of technological, organisational and psychological structures. As a result, instead of returning to a more 'natural', wild condition, society and the natural environment moved even further away from it.

To be convinced of this, one only has to compare hunting and gathering with cattle-breeding and agriculture, the agricultural age with the industrial age, and the industrial age with the information age. In general the system of relations between society and nature became increasingly 'cultural' and there was also an increase in the specific weight of the artificial intellectual factors of management and control.

Research shows that all these were adaptations to changes brought about by society's economic activity and not to random changes in the natural environment. This economic activity was always accompanied by destructive side effects. With the passing of time these effects grew and quantity was transformed into quality. As a result, the social organism could no longer live as before. It either became degraded and perished or found a new, hitherto untouched living environment. Alternatively, if it had managed to amass a sufficient store of cultural diversity, it developed more productive modes of activity which were environmentally less destructive.

The system of relations between society and nature reorganised itself, and humanity's ecological niche expanded in width and depth. Subsequently, however, came frequent increases in the population and in industrial and social demands. These gradually led to the next round of friction.

The history of humanity and the biosphere contains a whole series of clearly-defined vectors indicating successive changes. These vectors, or directions of development, seem highly

paradoxical: the biosphere and society has changed from the most probable conditions to the least probable conditions with astonishing continuity. It is as though an invisible hand has pulled the world off balance and taken away its uniformity and simplicity, making it increasingly more unbalanced and complex.

All these 'transitional phases' have been preceded by worsening crises caused by the system having exhausted all its means of existing in its previous state. Here, too, lies a paradox: the increased tension was reduced by the system moving to a higher level of imbalance fraught with even more tension, and not by returning to a primitive, balanced state.

This is a simplified version of events and it only gives an initial representation of the influence of the anthropogenic crises (that is, those caused through human activity) on the course of history. However, it will help us to study the mechanisms behind the worsening and subsequent overcoming of civilisation's crises in the past, and to gain a better understanding of the global problems of today – and the prospects for overcoming them.

4.2. The cult of violence as a fundamental problem of social and political organisation

Nearly all written history is concerned not only with wars and conflicts and the devastating damage inflicted by the prevailing cult of violence, but also with the search for ways of solving one of the most fundamental contradictions of development.

No matter how great the power and extent of violence has been in the past, never before has it had the potential to wipe the entire population from the face of the earth. We have no other choice: either we eradicate violence as a dominant stereotype of behaviour, or violence will eradicate humanity as the dominant life form on Earth.

The history of humanity shows that, as a rule, the advantages of violence are transient and quickly fade. The resources wasted on violence, together with the losses suffered by those committing and withstanding the violence, are so great that it

would be more profitable for society to redistribute wealth by way of its social services than for it to do so by violent means. Let us turn to the history of wars and other conflicts. The human losses from continuing a policy by military means, as Bismarck once remarked, are incomparable with the losses from all the natural cataclysms of the past two thousand years. This issue is a constant topic of discussion among specialists. We shall only cite the most staggering data here.

First, it should be stressed that a stable trend has been traced in the growth of the material requirements of war. There has also been a constant increase in the requirements of arms and military equipment. Expenditure on their manufacture has increased from one war to the next.

As a result of the increased role and quantities of equipment, and the improved rate of fire of rifles and artillery, arms expenditure in World War I far exceeded the amount spent on previous wars, and constituted 60 per cent of the total expenditure on war. Arms and military equipment expenditure in World War II rose to 70-75 per cent. It is also worth considering that actual expenditure in World War II was approximately four to five times greater than in World War I. Arms expenditure and the costs of maintaining the armed forces went on rising after World War II, because the army's technical equipment, fire power and manoeuvrability were all increasing and therefore required more material means.

Cultivating a philosophy of tolerance towards violence and military opposition leads to a significant rise in arms production even in peacetime. For instance, by the end of the 1960s, arms production in the USA was 40 times greater than it had been before the war. By the beginning of the 1970s, nearly one-third of American industry was involved directly or indirectly in military production. According to estimates of the US Ministry of Defence, in 1983, no fewer than 62 branches of industry were supplying directly to the Pentagon.

As post-war experience shows, huge resources are required to manufacture modern arms. At the start of the 1980s for

example, approximately 15 per cent of all smelted aluminium and as much as 40 per cent of titanium was used for military purposes in the developed capitalist countries. These materials are of course, the main construction materials in the air-missile industry. According to the UN's calculations, at the end of the 1970s the arms industry was devouring 15-16 per cent of copper production, and as much as 10 per cent of tin, nickel, pig-iron and zinc. There has been a steady increase in the capital expenditure to develop the infrastructure of military operations, the construction of roads, aerodromes, ports, rocket launch pads, testing areas, barracks, command posts, warehouses and so on.

The total material cost of preparing and conducting the wars which took place in the first half of the 20th century (including World War II) and on eliminating the consequences of these wars came to 4 trillion, 700 billion US dollars. Most of this truly astronomical sum was spent on World War II. The total cost of valuables destroyed in all the warring countries exceeded 316 billion US dollars and over 110 million people were mobilized to the armed forces. There was also a sharp rise in civilian casualties.

In the second half of the 20th century, none of the main military powers fought a war among themselves and yet peacetime military expenditure continued to rise. After World War II the US spent over 6000 billion dollars (in the figures of 1975) directly on the arms race – nearly as much as the GNP of the entire world in 1975. Even the poorest countries, whose annual per capita income was less than 200 US dollars (usually these are countries whose military expenditure is modest compared to their GNP), on average spend almost as much on the military as they do on agricultural investments.

Despite its obviously false claims, a myth has been circulating ever since the period before World War II when Germany was re-arming. According to this myth, large military budgets are a protection against unemployment – or at least reduce the consequences of unemployment. Objective figures say otherwise.

According to US government figures, 1 billion dollars of military expenditure creates 76,000 jobs. However, if the same sum were to be spent on civilian programmes, over 100,000 jobs would be created on average, and many more jobs would be created if these funds were invested in particularly labour-intensive types of activity. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to obtain similar data on Russia and other countries.

It is important to make sense of the enormous expenditure on preparing for and waging war, and repairing the damage caused by war, in the first half of the 20th century. As we have already mentioned, this sum exceeded 4 trillion, 700 billion US dollars (in those days). If this sum is divided by the number of dead in these wars, it turns out that every victim 'cost' an average of nearly 100,000 US dollars. It is hard to overstate the benefit these funds would have brought the peoples of Europe if they had been invested in civil industries instead. They would have solved the problem of the housing shortage all over Europe and provided the entire population with free food for several years.

These facts and figures are mind-boggling evidence of the gigantic losses humanity has suffered on account of its continued cultivation of violence. One might have hoped that the senselessness – or at least poor returns – of this expenditure might long ago have served as a reason for reassessing the structure of state budgets. If it had been possible to annihilate the arms supplies equally on both sides and reinvest the funds in large-scale civil projects, a new type of civilisation might have been created.

Many psychologists at home and abroad are of the opinion that the reason war has persisted for thousands of years has to do not so much with people's tangible needs as with their functional (and spiritual) requirements. This versatile complex comprises ambition and spontaneous aggression and such 'altruistic' motives as self-sacrifice, affiliation (belonging to a group), the meaning of life and so on.

Scientists of various disciplines are aware of this paradoxical characteristic of permanently-unbalanced systems. On the one hand, the organism seeks to preserve the permanent state. On

the other, a prolonged state of well-being engenders fatigue, creates inner tension and stimulates aimless proactive searching, leading to instabilities and conflicts. Experiments and observations show that in animals this quality is proportional to the level of their physical and psychological organisation. It is most clearly evident in humans, as they are the most unbalanced specimens known to science.

Psychologists point to the different methods which have been developed by culture to sublimate, ritualise, dramatise and purge this age-old attraction for conflict and conquest. They have been forced to admit that all these methods have produced a desirable effect only in the short term and on a limited basis. Sooner or later, 'harmless' conflicts grow tedious, intensifying the craving for 'real' emotional experiences.

In a sense, military conflicts were always the bane of human life –although, of course, they were certainly not viewed as such by everyone. What's more, in the past they not only satisfied people's deep psychological requirements but frequently helped to promote social development – depending on the extent to which the power of a weapon acquired cultural value – as well as helping to reject social organisms unfit for life. It is appropriate, however, to mention again that times are changing and in the foreseeable future the most crucial issue will be that civilisation has either to annihilate war or face being annihilated by it.

The fundamental conclusion to this is important: no matter how much we improve the objective conditions of people's lives, we will not succeed in overcoming the inertia of military history until we have developed adequate intervening mechanisms to satisfy people's functional needs.

The arrival of the information age and the vast amount of information available will eventually result in there being an ever-increasing number of feelings, images, events and thoughts in people's lives experienced through an interaction with an information source rather than physical contact with the world around and with other people. One of the ways of overcoming violence in human history and relations may be to virtualise it.

One should not rule out the possibility that it may one day be necessary to design and show a Fourth 'Virtual' World War programme to the whole of humanity, using powerful virtual images and set in real time or as close to it as possible. Now that the world has seen live television coverage of the war in the Gulf, the bombing of Yugoslavia, explosions in New York, the war in Afghanistan, hostage-taking in Moscow and this most recent conflict in Iraq in 2003, the next edifying step needs to be taken. Every society, state and individual needs to be shown what they are destined to experience if the world continues to develop in the way it is today.

4.3. The laws of survival: how humanity overcomes itself

The arguments in favour of humanity's overcoming of the crises in its development lead to a discussion of the laws involved in civilisation's evolution.

A rise in technological capability brings increased external stability to a society, that is, increased independence from the vacillations of the natural environment. At the same time, however, there is an increase in its dependence on inner vacillations – the psychological state of the masses, political decisions and actions, and the complexities of the social system. The greater the might of the industrial and military machine, the better the deterrents to aggression have to be in order to safeguard society.

To put it another way, society is more dependent on mistakes and wrong decisions and the random forces of social self-organisation. It often takes just one trifling event to undermine the precarious state of a social structure which is already experiencing an imbalance between the increase in its technological capability and the slower development of the social and political technologies adopted by people.

If the increase in technological power is not compensated by an improvement in the regulators (the culture of self-restraint, morality, public opinion, the law-enforcement bodies and so on), the inner stability and vital capacity of society are then

reduced. In that case, society becomes a victim of its own might, because it has not been balanced with a commensurate culture of self-restraint.

This natural law, which is crucial for understanding present-day problems, has very deep historical, anthropological and even biological roots. Natural aggression, which is one of the intrinsic characteristics of a living creature, is restrained in nature by external and internal regulators. These include what the eminent Austrian zoological psychologist Conrad Lorenz referred to as the 'balance of power' and 'natural morality'. The more powerful the natural protective arms of a species of animal, the stronger the instinct preventing it from killing others of a similar species. For instance, per head of population, lions and other powerful predators kill similar species more often than people do with their tanks and bombs.

While developing this idea, Lorenz expressed the interesting proposition that wars played such a significant role in human history because humans originated from the biologically harmless hominid *Australopithecus afarensis*. If we had originated from lions, say, nature would have equipped us with a much stronger instinct for deterring us from aggression.

Since primordial times, people have had hardly any natural weaponry and, consequently, do not have a particularly strong natural instinct that would halt their aggressive impulses. Having been put in a virtually hopeless position, our distant ancestors were forced to look for unusual ways of existing. To save themselves from terror and famine, they made up for not having natural, protective arms by using sticks, stones and bones in a purposeful manner and, with the passing of time, learned to make sharper and more effective weapons. Even so, the artificial methods of attack worked much better than the natural ones of defence and, more importantly, the weak instinct stopping them from being aggressive with their own kind.

Humans succeeded in surviving this most crucial crisis of essential and moral development only by elaborating new regulators of aggression which were no longer linked to nature or natural instincts, but had to do with the development of an

intellect and rationality, cultural and moral norms.

A venting of aggression on nature and other alien human communities marked the start of this process and became its underlying principle. In such a way, people learned to control their aggression and avoid killing members of their own society.

Unlike natural selection, this form of selection had some fundamental characteristics. The communities with better organised internal relations thrived. while other communities which allowed equal access to food and the reproductive processes produced physically weak individuals but, to make up for it, they had more sophisticated nervous systems. The latter often turned out to be more skilled at making weapons, keeping a fire going, teaching youngsters and performing other activities that did not require any particular individual adaptation during the natural selection process. Thus, inner diversity, which was to become a decisive factor in the intensified rivalry between neighbours old and new, gradually began to develop.

Technologies, social organisations and people's ideas and interrelations underwent gradual re-structuring throughout history. Crude forms of pressure and terror were subsequently replaced by milder, more sophisticated ones, the scale of group identity expanded and the methods of finding compromises between groups improved.

However, the societies which proved unable to adapt their culture of self-control to their increased technological capability were sooner or later rejected from the historical process. While directing ever more powerful forces of nature and growing in numbers, humans learnt how to control their aggressive impulses more effectively, predict with greater accuracy the deferred consequences of their actions and manage more efficiently the relations between society and nature as well as internal social affairs. This explains why civilisation is still alive today.

Notwithstanding the fact that the destructive power of weapons has progressively increased and the population has grown, the number of victims of social violence has not risen as a percentage of the general population for many thousands of years. It is a well-known fact that more people lost their lives in

the wars of the 20th century than in a thousand years of recorded history. However, it turns out that if one counts relative numbers rather than absolute ones, as is sociologically more correct, not only has the amount of social violence not increased in parallel with technological might during the course of history, it has even declined[1].

All we know for certain about the destiny of human civilisation is that it still exists. Will there be more technogenic incidents of heightened tension in the future and if so, will civilisation be able to endure them for long? And if not, what measures can be taken to change the situation in a decisive manner? It is already fairly obvious today that humanity has reached a qualitatively new fork in the road to development when a system of limiting aggression which was elaborated in the past is no longer totally suited to the new conditions.

People are now devoting so much energy to destroying and transforming nature that the damage they are causing may well exceed their potential for self-annihilation. It is obvious that we are increasingly experiencing the consequences of this violence to nature and in the foreseeable future we are quite capable of 'fixing things' in such a way that the ruined biosphere destroys us along with itself, either as the result of a global ecological crisis or the triggering of an uncontrollable process which destroys the human species.

On the other hand, the strategy of removing aggression loses all sense when the human world itself is shrinking and changing from a system of local and relatively isolated communities into a single and mutually dependent system. Besides, the means of destruction which people now possess are now of such a kind

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Footnote:

1. The calculations of Russian scientist A.P. Nazaretian show that the number of war dead as a percentage of the population remained approximately the same from one century to the next (with the exception of the particularly bloody 16th and 17th centuries) but, judging by indirect data, the percentage of victims of everyday violence in the past was higher.

that it is impossible to limit the consequences of using them. The fundamental difference between a gun and a nuclear warhead is not so much that when used they have a different potential for destroying the enemy but that nuclear and other sorts of weapons of mass destruction inevitably kill and destroy not only the enemy but also the people launching them.

Sooner or later our civilisation will have to develop new principles and mechanisms for limiting aggression, and find a way to perceive all humanity as a single community which, first and foremost, must not exploit nature or be opposed to 'other' people. It must fight the 'cult of violence' and the 'syndrome of self-annihilation' within itself. If such potential does exist, one way or another it must already be present in modern society – perhaps insignificant, perhaps totally forgotten or not fully recognised, but there nonetheless. The logic of such an argument is prompted by the principles of development and evolution of all complex systems, especially social ones.

In an attempt to reveal the conditions upon which the prospects of a social organism in an aggravated crisis depend, we always come up against the concept of inner diversity. In a calm period a system does not usually need great diversity. And if it grows, as a rule it does so 'randomly', without any obvious benefit to itself, simply because a system is sufficiently 'liberal' not to reject every mutation or deviation from the standard model. However, in a rapid change of circumstances the exhausted models increasingly fall out of step and produce opposite effects. The fate of the system is then determined by whether it has managed to accumulate enough baggage before picking up unnecessary, superfluous, functionally-useless elements and models of behaviour.

If not, the system which has proved incapable of substantial restructuring is destroyed, and remains in the past along with the environment and conditions which were supporting it. If, however, it has managed to accumulate enough baggage, it is reborn, losing something and gaining something else but continuing steadily to develop. And the elements which used to

be superfluous and peripheral now occupy a central place, and a new structure starts organising itself around them.

A careful analysis shows that qualitatively new types of biological organisms, technological methods and modes of vital activity, artistic images, religious teachings, scientific and technological ideas, as a rule came into being much earlier than they were evolutionally called for. Such a rule of non-functional or even superfluous development is one of the consequences of the universal law discovered in the 1950s by the English mathematician and biologist William Ross Ashby: the law of essential diversity which states that the stability and evolutionary potential of a system is proportional to its inner diversity.

However, if diversity is an unconditional value, should political aggression and terror be condemned, should criminals be punished, should all citizens be required to abide by the law, and should grammatical mistakes even be corrected? By attempting to get people to follow the same rules and codes of behaviour, are we not restricting diversity's natural growth?

I am posing questions which philosophers, moralists, law scholars, economists and political historians have contemplated for centuries, in a somewhat simplified form. But they are becoming increasingly topical in view of the current process of globalisation. The need to preserve the originality of each and every nation and unique culture comes into insoluble conflict with the idea of universal values and one set of human rights for all the people of the earth. The traditional values, norms of behaviour, notions of human rights and duties of most of the peoples of the world differ so greatly from those which developed in Western culture towards the end of the 20th century, that any mention of unifying these traditional values is regarded as 'imperial interference'. It is also naturally objected to by national and religious fundamentalists who often enjoy the broadest support of the masses.

This contradiction is fundamental to the theory and very significant in practical terms. Of particular importance is the

addition to Ashby's law expounded by the Russian scientist E.A. Sedov in his law of hierarchical compensations. This law is comparable to Ashby's in its universal application (it, too, covers processes taking place in society, in organic and inorganic nature) and is a valuable addition. It states that the increase in diversity at the upper hierarchical level of a complex system is guaranteed by the limited diversity on its previous levels and, on the contrary, an increase in diversity at the lower level destroys the upper level of the hierarchical organisation.

In other words, for a complex system to function normally, it is absolutely essential to limit the freedom of each of its elements. However, this limitation is subject to a strict logic. The system will develop stability and evolutionary potential when its inner diversity is of a 'high quality' and linked, first and foremost, with the diversity and corresponding freedom at its 'upper levels', that is, in its most significant and important component parts. On the contrary, an excessive increase in the diversity of primitive, criminal or even anti-social practices in the 'basement' of the system not only will not enable it to develop, but will undermine the very foundations of the system as a whole and ruin its best models.

A knowledge of Ashby's and Sedov's laws, both fundamental discoveries of system theories, helps us understand a great many things: in particular, how a subsequent increase in diversity will correlate with the prospective spread of a single set of values and norms of mutual relations for the entire world community.

5. Man of the 'New World'

When we speak of the possibility of a New World, what we should have in mind is not only the possibility of a new social organisation and system of international institutions. At the forefront is the question of man in the New World or, to be more precise, man of the New World.

It is important to understand whether man is actually developing, or whether he has an immutable and limited nature. Will humanity's development in the most diverse directions result in the emergence of a new type of man who is 'different from us'; the arrival of 'Homo post-sapiens' who will take our place?

Man may change from being the subject of the transformation to being its object. We cannot say for sure, but we are justified in presupposing that all the many changes that have occurred – man's separation from nature and the increase in information and culture – will eventually reach a threshold beyond which humanity will no longer be capable of controlling and digesting all the mass of new information and social phenomena which it has created.

There are two closely interconnected aspects to this question. On the one hand, there is moral progress and the possibility of a new ideology and religion of humanity. On the other, there is technological progress which may lead to the emergence of a super-human new form of life which will emerge after humanity.

5.1 Is *'homo post-sapiens'* about to emerge?

In Europe during the Middle Ages, only two or three, on average, of every ten babies born went on to produce the next generation; in other words, up to 80 per cent of the 'biological' material was wasted. According to S.P. Kapitsa's estimates, the average life expectancy throughout Europe at the time was no more than 20 years. Over the past century this figure has

doubled and an increase of some kind or other has been seen in all the countries of the world without exception. (In Russia, for instance, the average life expectancy at the end of the 19th century was no more than 30 years.)

This is due, of course, not only to the advances of medicine and pharmacology and the rise in the standard and quality of life. An important role has also been played by a change in values. Never before in history has the human individual been valued so highly as in the 20th century. In the advanced countries, child mortality rates are no longer calculated in percentages but in deaths per million newly-born infants. People with the gravest forms of congenital disease, whose lives could never have been saved before, are now living longer and longer.

The fact that society has virtually succeeded in blocking out the crudest forms of natural selection is one of the greatest achievements of humanitarian culture. However, it cannot afford not to deal with the global costs incurred.

The fact is that by significantly weakening the natural mechanisms of genetic stability and of sifting unfavourable mutations, humanity is exposing itself to the risk of uncontrollably accumulating hereditary deviations. Each successive generation is turning out to be biologically less capable of sustaining life than the previous one, and people's lives are increasingly dependent on an artificial environment. Some scientists have concluded that by the mid-21st century this may result in the biological degradation of the population of the developed countries and this degradation will, first and foremost, affect people's brains.

What sort of measures could be taken to prevent this? It goes without saying that people's quality of life should be enhanced, and that means towns planted with trees and parks, more public sports and leisure centres, a greater range of food outlets, and better living and working conditions. However, it would be naïve to expect that all these more or less traditional elements could compensate for the accumulated genetic burden. A cardinal solution to the problem may be supplied by genetic engineering.

As always though, the solution of one problem causes an avalanche of others of an even more complex nature. It is terrible to imagine the mistakes and abuses resulting from an artificial intrusion into the most intimate recesses of human existence. Again, it is a question of whether society will succeed in developing sufficiently-effective regulatory mechanisms, both moral and legal, to avert irreparable consequences.

However, even this is not the most nightmarish threat confronting humanity in the 21st century. As automated information processes and increasingly complex artificial intelligence systems continue to accelerate, the human brain will eventually also become more intricate. It is hardly likely that in such conditions the computer will go on being just a 'machine', a passive tool of the human will. When cybernetics was still in its infancy, the distinguished mathematician John von Neman warned that if the operational speed of computers increased, sooner or later their power and quality were bound to as well. In the 1980s scientists were already noting signs of the progressive isolation of an electronic intellect.

It is only possible now to imagine in the sketchiest of outlines the consequences which inevitably lie ahead. The development of nano- and biotechnology (protein molecules known as biochips, designed for insertion in computer networks, are being developed in special laboratories), programme imitations of people's requirements and aims and emotional control of results, are all bound to result in a self-reproducing and self-instructing intellect with its own subjective qualities.

The specialists who warn of such an outcome mostly predict not just rivalry but a downright confrontation between human and electronic intellects which man is doomed to lose. Some describe such a prospect with horror, others with a kind of masochistic glee. Whatever the case, it is assumed that the artificial intellect will be hostile to man as a useless being who has outlived his time, and will be insensitive to human interests. The idea of taking precautionary measures and inserting moral prohibitions in its intellect which would prevent it from doing

harm to people (as in 'the three laws of robot technology' developed by the science fiction writer Aizek Azimov) is regarded as pure fantasy.

The specialists who predict that the power and quality of information systems will increase as they become more complex regard artificial intellect as hostile to humanity and believe that once it has finally gained autonomy, it will no longer keep on respectful terms with the representatives of an 'ancient' form of intellect. In so far as there seems to be no way of implanting philanthropic algorithms in the robot's consciousness (according to Azimov) it is considered as a matter of course that robots or 'nanobots' will behave in a selfish and ruthless manner in keeping with the Darwinian laws of natural selection.

Notwithstanding all its new qualities, however, this new intellect is still a sequel in artificial material form to that of the Homo sapiens which has developed throughout the course of history. This highly dramatic history, punctuated with grave crises, is a single continuous process. There are no grounds to consider that an intellect transferred to a non-protein (or not exclusively protein) material carrier would forget its history.

Consequently, in keeping with the inner logic of intellectual development, the electronic intellect which possesses an unprecedented technological capacity is bound also to improve the mechanisms of moral self-regulation which have developed throughout history. Otherwise, it will end up destroying itself as humanity would have done long ago if its technological development had not been compensated by an improvement in its more slowly developing culture.

One may agree with the psychologists who suggest that in such an interaction the main danger will come from man who, ever since the Stone Age, has displayed an ambivalent feeling of fear and hatred for doubles, strangers, and human-like aliens. This may manifest itself in neo-Luddite moods and aggressive actions in respect of the electronic systems, programmes and their creators. It is difficult to imagine the consequences: even without any opposition, society's dependence on information

systems is becoming so great that in a few decades, if a system was to go down even for a short while, it would probably bring all public life to a halt, with dire consequences.

The best possible scenario would be for events to develop not along the lines of conflict, but towards a deepening symbiosis strengthened by the two trends moving towards each other. On the one hand, the artificial intellect will acquire evident 'life-like', 'psyche-like' and 'anthropomorphic' characteristics. On the other, the human organism will move further and further away from its 'natural' biological predestination, and by enriching itself with secondary artificial features and human thinking will acquire 'compatibility' with its electronic partner. This is capable of resulting in the logical integration and symbiosis of the human-machine.

Interestingly, just because human thinking is compatible with a computer's, it does not mean that it is becoming 'mechanised'. On the contrary, thinking is ceasing to be linear in the way it was shaped by the 'book' age, and is gaining increasingly evident mosaic-like qualities. With such thinking patterns, man is less vulnerable to the charms of the holy writings and the one and only Truth and becomes intellectually more adept, tolerant and sensitive to the idea of mutual complementarity. It is here, perhaps, that the resource will be found for man's transition to new stages of his development and a new level of moral progress. As a result, the history of the Universe will organically transfer to the next 'post-human' era.

The relationship between the artificial and the natural in all its different guises will pose a key problem of the 21st century. This has always been the case in history. A radical solution to man-made crises was usually achieved by the system of relations between society and nature moving yet further away from its natural, essential state. An unparalleled turn away from nature will be needed to preserve planetary civilisation in the new century.

The prospects of military conflicts only taking place in the virtual reality of cyberspace or only being fought by robots,

though not very obvious, are still quite attractive for humanity. If people are drawn into virtual reality, they may be able to experience the really strong emotions needed to relieve mass mental tensions.

Giving flight to fantasy, one can imagine virtual wars in which millions of people seated in front of their computer screens at home in the latest head-sets will start battling to solve political arguments. And they will also take part in dangerous armed battles waged under a single command, experiencing pain, fear, mental and muscle tension, fatigue and exhaustion, displaying keen wits and courage and overcoming the resistance of exceedingly shrewd enemies. They will also be aware that this is not just a game, that the outcome of the battle will decide in whose favour the problem is solved. All the attributes of previous wars may be present in such battles, except perhaps the 'petty details' like the bloodshed and loss of life, the devastation and destruction of towns and countryside, the poisoning of the atmosphere, and so on.

Of course, this is all fantasy for the time being. I only wish to stress that, unless similar methods of substituting 'material' war are devised, civilisation will perish. True, if such methods are devised, national states, and states in general as historically-determined forms of social organisation, will lose practically their last 'objective' function, namely that of defending citizens and territory. Then they will either remain in the past or be transformed ('virtualised') to such an extent that they will cease to correspond to our usual idea of a state.

Generally speaking, technological development itself entails such new problems that the big question is whether humanity will succeed in finding the best solution to them and, no less importantly, whether psychologically it will accept the absolute need for such decisions. The problem of 'virtualising' the state is only one example of this.

The technological breakthrough is fraught with exceptionally high risks and dangers. The technologies of the future which can already be imagined today, and which in principle may be

regarded as a solution to the most pressing demographical, ecological and social problems, are capable of both pushing back the boundaries of life and, equally, turning the annihilation of humanity into a burning issue.

It is not difficult for us to suppose, for instance, that man's final victory over incurable diseases is simply impossible within the pattern of thinking which presently defines our existence and actions and within the logical development of science and medicine. We are aspiring to find ways of defending humanity from various diseases such as cancer and AIDS but we cannot entertain the thought that they may be invincible within the framework of human nature, and that the only way to cure these diseases is not to wipe them out but to change man himself. It is possible that if one were to change the nature of the human organism, the characteristics of the disease might change as well.

The technologies of the future also create a great many new political and philosophical problems. As it has already been noted, for example, the problem of safeguarding health and the quality of life in deteriorating ecological conditions may be fundamentally solved only by cloning organs or making use of the future developments in the virtual and information technologies. As a result, individual immortality will become a real issue.

In its attempt to oppose the 'New World', the West may try to use its technological superiority to carry though a most important project which entails creating a new internal demographic explosion through cloning and the production of artificial people.

The West's present strategy is that of a minority. Its conscious intention is to position itself in the New World as a self-sufficient, powerful minority in possession of a unique technological resource enabling it not only to retain its position of domination and power on the planet but also, if necessary, to leave it, and guarantee personal and collective immortality to its people.

Thus, the challenge is to develop post-human and post-earthly forms of life organisations, starting with, perhaps, strictly

artificial forms of intellect and life organisations and ending with the departure of humanity, or its most developed part, from the earth. These conjectures only seem fantastic at first. After all, every time in history humanity took a step forward in its development, it transformed nature and 'abandoned' it. Today it is apparently ready to take another consistent and logical step forward beyond its own bounds and those of Planet Earth.

Essentially, what we have here is a principal change in the quality of civilisation and its bearer. The psychological difficulties connected with man's break from his habitual ethnic, state, religious and other large social identification groups pale in comparison with his rejection of specific self-identification. All this is bound to give rise to psychological stresses of a hitherto unprecedented scale and intensity. An immense amount of work has to be carried out by scientists, politicians, teachers and all of society's so-called élite if people are to succeed in coping with these stresses without giving way to mass frustration and outbursts of hysterical aggression.

5.2 The progress of moral tasks

As it has been noted before, history charts humanity's progress in moral tasks. It is namely by these new gains in people's thinking, and not by their achievements, that we should judge the true evolution of nature and our society.

Today our civilisation is again standing on the threshold of a great new 'revolution of consciousness', without which humanity will be unable to respond to the challenges of its own existence and overcome an obviously limited potential for extensive development, or cope, within the framework of the existing system and trends of development, with the present complex set of socio-economic, demographic, ecological and political problems.

In spite of everything, the morality, ethics and ideology forming the foundations of politics and law are still the most important mechanisms of society's consciousness, instruments of

control over its own development and its means of directing and controlling these processes. Top of the agenda today is the issue of the controllability of development and our interpretation of the directions it may take.

Humanity has to begin to govern the trends of its development and adopt new principles and fundamentals of social engineering and civilisation-building. However, in order for this to happen, we first have to develop a strategy for development in the language of meanings and in the language of values and morality. Humanity's moral progress is becoming one of history's basic issues and its main requirement.

It is in the interests of humanity's survival and self-preservation that, first and foremost, an investigation be carried out into the foundations of its moral solidarity and the principles and values by which global social agreement, transcending national, religious and civilisation boundaries, may be achieved.

Liberal tradition lies behind the breakdown of morality in the modern world, for within this tradition's framework highly lauded notions of the individual, private interest and the benefits and advantages of personal well-being ultimately acquire fundamental significance. But it is precisely the awareness of man and his actions as not being isolated entities, and of the mutual links between people and their mutual dependence on each other, that constitutes a fundamental problem of morality.

Economic liberalism, and the scientific and technological rationalisation connected with it, turn these principles into practical pointers for the social and state activity which focused on achieving progress and maximising advantage. It is exactly the capacity to think in terms of 'minimising costs' and 'maximising advantages' that constitutes the traditional theory of the foundations of a rational type of behaviour which does not encroach upon the sphere of morality. Morality in the latter case is able to modify a notion and appraisal of losses and gains, when the main gain for a particular person is possibly a clear conscience.

The concept of the market, which is central to modern Western societies, gives a certain value-orientated meaning to the logic of chaotic economic interactions, which gives rise to the notion of an objective 'invisible hand' guiding all countries, nations and individual people towards prosperity, well-being and mutual harmony. According to this logic, universal prosperity and well-being, universal harmony and order, are seen purely as the result of an interaction of private interests.

What's more, the main paradox here is that whatever their motivation, these private interests and actions, which are devoid of morality, when taken as a whole are supposed to ultimately create the most just and free environment for social life. What is called upon to guarantee this is none other than the logic of market social self-regulation, along with a social contract which, as far as liberals are concerned, is always based on the theory that guaranteeing everyone an equal 'initial potential' for survival is a just condition.

The identification of a common good combining the private gains of a maximum number of people on the basis of some social agreement or contract truly beggars belief. To put it very simply, such a notion is based on the totally unfounded belief that 'everything will be all right' and that separate individuals' wonderful aspirations for happiness, prosperity and gain cannot possibly have catastrophic consequences, and results in our 'best of possible worlds'. The only basis for such a conviction is our desire to have better lives, along with our belief that one day we will succeed in creating a wonderful world of harmony, if not for everyone, then at least for ourselves. The liberal view of the world in this sense differs little from the utopian pictures of 'God's Kingdom on Earth'.

However, the present condition of the world hardly gives cause for such an optimistic outlook, for we are simply forced to proceed from the premise that the natural harmony of our civilisation, if ever it really existed, is now defunct. It is hard for people to admit that the future may be catastrophic, or make everything we are doing now meaningless.

A global apocalypse, demolishing the notion of any benefit or

good coming from everyday life, is no longer implausible or even far-off. Just as in ordinary life we prefer not to give meaning to any of our actions, reckoning that all of us are only human, after all, so, too, humanity not only does not think of itself in such terms but simply refuses to consider the possibility of its own destruction or self-destruction.

Unfortunately, such is the logic of the contemporary world that, just before the destruction of the universe or even at the split second a global catastrophe takes place, there is bound to be someone who completely epitomizes the way the world works today and exploits the situation to maximum effect.

However, we can hardly expect a traditional conservative outlook based on ideas such as self-limiting development, strong traditions, 'healthy nationalism', national roots and religious self-awareness to be any use either in solving global problems.

After all, conservative thinking embraces the idea of rejecting the very problem and challenges of globalisation. In response to them or, more precisely, in an attempt to reject an interpretation of the problems of development at such a level, comes the notion of a need for a return to the soil and for development viewed solely, or mostly, in terms of local communities and communes or, if absolutely necessary, individual states and peoples.

Such a 'micro-history' of integrated local communities sharing a common culture, traditions and an innate sense of unity and purpose is becoming the 'isolationist' ideal of conservatives. And in this sense, the problem of global development and of solving problems virtually loses its meaning, for the development, life and goal of society should not be conceived in such terms.

The idea of a need for a 'religious renaissance' and call for a strengthening of the national state as the main institute of the 'old order', both very much part of conservative thinking, become almost dangerous in the context of the modern world.

Conservatives conceive the world and its development as, essentially, a fairly simple matter which consists of adhering to time-hallowed tradition and morality or, at worst, ensuring a return to them.

However, the romantic suggestion of limiting development and creating a 'new antiquity' in the form and likeness of primordial nature also sounds like make-believe. And one reason for this is that an entirely different level of consciousness will be needed for humanity to restrict its development voluntarily, and it will be extremely difficult to prevent various groups from being tempted to reject these self-imposed restrictions in order to gain dominance and world power over humanity.

Another of the main problems of traditional morality and religion is that the fundamental idea of salvation and having a duty to lead a virtuous life no longer guarantees the survival of humanity. Only by thinking and acting in an enlightened manner and all together, as a single entity, and by observing the prerequisites for survival and acting with moral rectitude, can humanity safeguard the future today.

Here, too, is one of the main intellectual and value-orientated problems of our time. It can be seen in the contradictory way a person perceives his place in the world. It is extremely hard to expect a person to have a rational perception of global problems through the prism of his or her own experiences of life. Such is the nature of global problems that they exist in vast dimensions of time and space and affect individual people's lives in an oblique, unobvious and vague manner.

The very concept of everyday life contains a contradiction with the demands of a globalising world. People's way of life and basic interests are nearly always of a local nature and connected as closely as possible with their everyday existence. While going about their daily business, people are hardly likely to ask questions of a global nature, and their perception of time in their life prevents them, as a rule, from regarding problems which will affect the future as having a direct impact on their lives and those of everyone else.

As far as the concept of 'minimising losses and maximising gains' is concerned, people usually perceive reality, if not in terms of everyday functional decisions, then at best within the

limits of 30-50 years, that is, within their own life span and that of their children. Modern-day global problems, therefore, figure in people's daily lives and ethics in an extremely curtailed form, if at all.

It is true to say that individuals and society as a whole now have a fairly consistent, clear idea of the dangers of a nuclear war and the destruction of humanity. This problem is perceived as real because it has been repeatedly proved both mathematically and theoretically that the likelihood of humanity's actual destruction in a matter of a few hours or even minutes is absolutely genuine.

However, transforming this knowledge into public opinion and then into an element of daily culture and ethics took several decades, because of the fierce resistance of various states which kept wrangling fiercely among themselves over cultural and ideological matters. It is worth bearing in mind that as this resistance weakened and the 'Cold War' came to an end, the stereotypes and ethical postulates which had taken root in contemporary societies began to die out fairly quickly. As acquired rather than natural reflexes, these notions and pieces of knowledge are not handed down from one generation to the next, and today they are of little significance for most societies.

However, humanity is also facing other problems and threats of an equally acute nature. They are not so obvious or 'explosive' and will only come into effect sometime in the future. Ordinary people often have no awareness of what these problems really entail, as they do not figure even fleetingly in the system of cultural codes and everyday moral and behavioural stereotypes. It suffices here to cite ecological disasters and demographic problems as examples. It is only when these problems intrude upon the everyday lives of contemporary societies, as was the case, for instance, with the recent floods in Europe and the south of Russia, that global problems acquire real topical significance for ordinary people. However, this is still a vague process and only lasts until the rivers and life get back to normal.

What's more, none of the global problems facing humanity today is supported by as much data, intellectual argument and propaganda as the problem of nuclear war and the destruction of humanity was during the 'Cold War'. It is even worse when certain global problems cease to have a direct impact on some societies and are regarded as extraneous and as somehow abstract grounds for concluding that they are better off than others. Such is the case, for instance, with the problems of poverty in most countries of the world, the fatal diseases ravaging whole countries and continents and the precarious existence of states and peoples on the brink of life and death.

The fact that these problems exist is acknowledged sporadically by civilised society, and gives it an opportunity to test its morality and feelings of compassion in practice, by way of various charitable funds and international aid organisations. Such a system even allows people to revel in their knowledge of the problems. You only have to give a contribution to a charitable fund or donate your old things to help the victims of yet another epidemic or inter-ethnic conflict in Africa to ease your conscience and feel you have done your best; then you can blithely forget all about the problem and, most importantly, what caused it in the first place.

All this enables one to assert that the idea of development will remain valid in modern society only if it includes the essentially new moral dictate of humanity's self-preservation, and finds a way for everyone in their everyday lives to understand this dictate on an entirely new level.

The idea of humanity's self-preservation, survival and development is the only criterion of progress which should be considered in terms of adaptation and not growth, and in terms of the creation of a qualitatively new social and political environment and not as quantitative accumulation. If the idea of self-preservation and survival is recognised by modern science as a fundamental reason for the actions of all living things, including people, then it is just as important to pinpoint and find this 'instinct' as a tool for the survival of all humanity.

Scientific, technological and 'positivist' progress must be replaced by moral social progress, whose main sense and purpose must be to improve the quality of the world's social and political organisation until it reaches the same heights as those achieved by humanity in science and technology. This is the only type of development involving 'catching up' which is not only justified but also absolutely necessary.

The term 'world culture' is increasingly cropping up in scientific works, journals and newspapers, postcards and even street advertisements. At last the most powerful resource of well-being available to humanity is being set in action. This resource is the organisation of relations between all the people on earth and between all the organisations and associations of people, including states, on the principles of mutual respect, mutual benefit and the common long-term interests of mankind.

Part III: The Russian Way

Russia's Place in the Changing World and the New Tasks of Constructing the State

Defining the 'Russian Path' is one of the oldest and most contentious topics in the history of the country's social and political life. Whether we are talking about Russian philosophy, historiography, political thought or sociology over the last two centuries, everything comes down to one and the same question: who are we, where do we come from, and why?

It is difficult to think of another people or state in which the concepts of national development and questions about how best to shape the future have taken on such a significant, even fateful resonance. P. Chaadayev was the first in his own time to give such a clear and challenging expression to the painful spiritual and intellectual search this entails when he announced that 'we are being called to resolve the bulk of problems relating to the social order, to bring to a conclusion most of the ideas which have arisen in the old societies, and to answer the most important questions which mankind has to face'.

This quest for a Russian 'philosopher's stone' has at times required so much energy on the part of thinkers and statesmen that it has left less and less room for the simple demands of life and everyday work. It cannot be an accident that through some decree of fate Russia is obliged, as it stands on the threshold of the New World, to renew the search for its own identity and in the process to complete its process of state-building. We are stepping into the New World with the weight of the past on our backs, and yet at the same time we are free of baggage because of all the things we have broken up, surrendered, or cast aside. In the course of the last century alone, Russia has twice been

through a process of demolition which penetrated to the deepest strata of our society. Entire social classes, habits and traditions have been mercilessly rooted out, smashed up and demolished.

Russia is now trying to find a structure for the state which can match the new trends across the globe, one which looks to the future rather than to models from the past. This is a very intense process. It has nothing to do with the notorious prescriptions for a 'third way' or any other particular structure to suit Russian conditions. Its realisation depends on the logic of a new system that is not held back by obsolete mechanisms.

The effects of globalisation have influenced literally everything. No problem can be resolved outside this context, whether ecological, demographic or geopolitical. Our objective must not be to freeze out or reverse the process of globalisation; what we can and must do is to make it fairer, more sensible and perhaps more easy to regulate.

It is important for us to understand not just that we have to change, but to know what it is that we have to do, and how. One of the main problems, if not the most fundamental, is that we are facing a crisis of world leadership. It is as if the world is living in the future but does not have the social structures adequate to cope with globalisation itself. The social institutions, the political, ideological and ethical norms, are all derived from the past.

The world needs a new leadership which can provide political initiative on a global scale. Such leadership cannot rely on power or technology, even if it may draw on them for tactical purposes. On the strategic level, what is required is on the one hand the necessary volition, and on the other the intellectual capacity to work out how, and to what purpose, to direct our energies and to make best use of our knowledge and skills. Also essential is the use of technology in a social context so as to respond to the challenges posed by a world civilisation. The response must therefore have a universal character and be both comprehensible and acceptable to the world community. It is only in these circumstances that we can say that saving the world is practicable.

It is here that a new place has to be found for Russia in the world's historical flow, where there is a new global system of forces which are as yet undetermined; where ideology is being resurrected; where the masses are making themselves felt in history; and new types of development are gaining strength. We used to talk too often about Russia's particular path and mission; perhaps the moment has now arrived for our society to come together and let the world know how we view the future and what hopes we have for it.

Any pretensions we may have to think up particular ideas and goals which have a specifically Russian character are by their very nature inherently confrontational, whether directly or indirectly. I believe that our intellectual and political elite should now be most concerned to find ways of curing our outmoded inferiority complex, which manages to combine an instinct for self-destruction with messianic delusions. We should then take a sober look at the realities of our situation and decide which roles and pretensions are adequate to it.

Russia at the present time not only lacks ideas and ideological leadership; we refuse to make any effort to acquire them. Our society is absolutely reactionary in that we respond only to external irritants.

The task which confronts our society and our political élite is extremely serious: how do we respond to these national and global challenges? It is only by doing so, rather than by talking about it, that we will confirm our status as a world power and acquire the ability to create our own future.

Russia in the Post-Modern Era: Yet Again the Problem of Modernisation

6.1 'What is Russia?' – the most important question for our future

What kind of country is Russia in this changed and changing world and what can it hope to achieve? What choice do we have? Either we join the world global order presently being established by the US and the transnational corporations, or we fight against globalism.

What is Russia's role now in world economics and what will it be in the decades to come? Will we become a raw-materials appendage of the post-industrial world, or will we claim our place in it or in the group of leading industrialised countries which are now forming the basis of the post-industrial world? What demands are the present and future making of us and state development and the organisation of society?

There is a vast range of questions like these being widely discussed today. And we don't have the answer to any of them. It is not even a question of our proving incapable of forecasting and analysing the prospects of global processes. The main problem and challenge facing us in the New World is that we do not know the answer to the question: what is Russia?

And it is not just about reassessing and understanding what resources and potential we have left after decades of 'troubled times'. It is more complicated than that. We need to understand how we actually perceive Russia: do we see it only as a territory, vast and rich perhaps, but nothing more, or do we infuse this concept with another, deeper meaning? And there is another question we still cannot answer: who are the Russian people? Do we even have an image of the people of Russia? That leads us to the question of whether we can find a real basis for unifying Russian society. The line of Mandelshtam's poem, 'We live unaware of the land beneath us', is very relevant today.

One is inclined to agree with those who consider that the discussions in Russia in the 1990s did not amount to much. The main topics discussed were our country's role in the world and the aims and contents of our domestic and foreign policy, the means of giving the people of Russia a national and state identity, and, finally, the 'Russian idea'. Essentially, they can all be summed up by the poet Tiutchev's famous, infuriatingly baffling verse: 'Russia cannot be understood with the intellect...' It leaves itself open to a very many interpretations ranging from a reference to national egocentrism to being about national sadomasochism; from meaning 'a treasure-house of world spirituality' to 'a country of fools'.

These days everyone is talking about 'the state position' and national interests. But what does this really mean? It is frequently being announced that Russia is about to enjoy a period of prosperity. But what really lies behind this political hype? Many people are again inclined to prescribe simple and universal formulae for the country which will help to sort out all the problems swiftly, ruthlessly and decisively. But is it really possible for Russia's problems, which have developed over many centuries, to be solved by the *Sturm und Drang* method?

Do we understand the aim of our development, and are the slogans raucously shouted out during elections and in periods of economic crisis really about this aim? Nowadays conversations about the 'challenges' to the country's development are so popular that during the course of them one loses track of exactly what is meant by it all.

Of course, we are facing a huge number of problems. If we take an honest and candid look at the situation, we can see that there is only one real challenge facing Russia, but it is the most terrifying one of all: how to prevent the country's deterioration and self-destruction. The threat facing Russia today is that it may 'slip' from its future, and from its development process.

We really may cease to exist in our present form, and within the boundaries we have occupied for hundreds of years, in the country we honour and consider our homeland. The main

challenge today has to do with the real possibility of losing the historical and cultural heritage which cements the structure of the Russian state and Russian society.

We must decide whether we are all to share a common fate and a common future or within a matter of a few decades just drift off in different directions and lose sight of each other. We would also lose our country and our home and turn into an amorphous, abstract 'Russian world' of people scattered all over the planet, forever on the move, and not the Russian world which many people are now dreaming about.

The issue of Russia's future is concerned, first and foremost, with identifying aims and values. We need new approaches to state construction, and new social and political technologies which will enable us to respond to the challenges of world civilisation and those of our existence.

An issue which over the past decade has turned into a popular topic and the butt of political anecdotes, namely the national idea of development and understanding one's role in the future, is now more serious than ever before. In order to preserve ourselves and Russia, we have to make a fundamental choice. The only national idea today is in this rallying call to save Russia.

The main task is to give the country back its faith in itself. If this course of action, known in Russia as the 'Russian choice', does not enable people to believe in a future for their children, then it will lead to the country's gradual deterioration and decline. The first and most important stage in Russia's self-affirmation consists of convincing its own citizens to have faith in their children's future, then encouraging them to work hard and take initiatives in their private and social lives to safeguard this future and improve their chances of survival.

Development in Russia can only be achieved if people consolidate their energies and ambitions, and it has to coincide with the main aims of the overwhelming majority. Just now, however, there is not only an evident split in society between the authorities and the people, but also between different strata and

groups of the population. And these people have different aims and aspirations as well as different standards of living.

I believe that the main reason for this is that they do not understand how false the idea of building a flourishing and prosperous Russia is, and how false this national slogan is. Only certain social groups and strata can be working on this task at present and setting their sights on achieving it. But the passwords of the task facing the rest of society are self-preservation, mobilisation, initiative, self-discipline and hard work, all for the sake of the future.

Too often in our history we have wanted everything all at once and achieved little as a result, wasting valuable resources in the process. What we need now is not new revolutions but work: hard, fastidious work, every single day and as much as we can manage, and in the name of the future.

No abstract programme or slogan will help here. The lack of cohesion in society cannot be overcome by political will and good intentions alone. We must come to an understanding of our common cause and our common goal. We must find a basis for joining together which will allow our hearts to beat in unison again. No 'social contract' will help us unless it contains a value-orientated choice and a moral clean-up of the powers-that-be. Otherwise, such a contract is doomed to failure from the very outset. What we need today is a common-cause philosophy for all the country's citizens. This is the only way for the breakthrough programme to work.

6.2 The impasse of 'catching up' development and the problem of 'dependent development'

Several main methods of approach have become evident in the numerous discussions over the past decade about Russia's place in the world.

Possibly the most important approach proceeds from the fact that in the foreseeable future Russia is to join the community of

leading 'civilised' states on equal grounds. Achieving such a goal is certainly splendid but what does 'on equal grounds' mean? Being admitted into the circle of these states? For some time now Russia has nominally had a partner relationship with them and taken part in 'Big Eight' meetings, held discussions with the EU and NATO, and discussed joining the World Trade Organisation. Achieving the same level of social and economic development as them? This is the real question: how can this really be done?

What role can Russia have in the world today? Should we adopt the strategy of 'catching up' with post-industrial development or should we be an industrial country that has adopted a co-operation strategy with the post-industrial world and become its production workshop and resource base? Or perhaps we should adopt other schemes, bringing other competitive advantages apart from the economy and manufacturing technology to the forefront of our development programme, advantages which in the future may possibly determine development and ensure we are functioning most efficiently?

Sooner or later we shall have to answer all these questions. The only problem is, we still haven't made up our minds to do so. More often than not, we devote all our energies to understanding the features and trends of the Western economy, political organisation, standard of living and way of life.

We must answer another very important question too: do we want to live like the West, with a good standard of living, sufficient funds and a clean environment, or do we wish to become like people in the West, and think along the same lines, share common values, ideas and goals? These are two totally different things. There are various ways of achieving prosperity, through hard work or through criminal activity. Either way, you share common values and ideals in principle, even if you have completely different life styles.

The West has become what it is in the world today not only as a result of certain historical circumstances but also because of

certain characteristics of its mental attitude. A variety of cause-and-effect relations have developed over the centuries and increasingly acquired a specific character. When we demand the same standard of living as the countries of the West, we ignore the fact that this has been achieved over time and as the result of a particular kind of cultural and ideological development, and is in many ways based on the exploitation of the rest of the world.

A profound source of many of contemporary Russia's troubles is its conformist stance (always coupled with a non-conformist one) on Western Europe which has developed in Russian culture over the past two hundred years. This constant checking-up on Europe and strong urge to either emulate it or 'catch up and overtake' it have given people an inferiority complex, a lack of self-esteem and a feeling of ambivalence towards their own unique existence.

There is a great temptation here to run to the other extreme and start expounding a theory, which enjoys tremendous popularity in Russia, about the special way Russia develops. In some sense, we now find ourselves in the same situation, at least from an intellectual point of view, as Russian socio-political thought of the latter half of the 19th century. Then, too, the idea of Russia's transition to advanced targets of development and socialism, bypassing the advanced stages of capitalism and supported by the traditional institutions and values of Russian society, appeared (at least to some thinkers of a socialist inclination) to be the most appealing and miraculous means of outstripping progress. Today there is an equally great temptation to speak in similar terms about Russia's development being capable of overstepping various stages of progress and finding its own path to the future. The idea seems dubious but, whatever the case we must still comprehend the detrimental effects of the impasse we now see looming more and more clearly before us, an impasse in 'catching up' development.

In this context, though, it should also be mentioned that among the anti-globalists in Russia there is a fairly marginal view which is still making its presence felt here, that Russia's

special development goal is to become a bridge between the 'South' and Europe. The paradigm of Russia's development as a civilisation is defined as 'a transfer of the South's values to the West'. The 'neo-Euro-Asians' are urging Russia to open itself up to the Islamic 'South' and create a European-Islamic synthesis of civilisations – if only so as not to become dependent on the West as a civilisation. If this is not the direct lobbying of the Islamic centres of power (in Iran and Saudi Arabia), then this project is about 'catching up' development but with even greater forfeits involved.[1]

Finding ways of organising and regulating society is of key importance. Therefore, the criteria of the elements we need to adopt from the West are also different. What a political democracy, the market and the production of cars, televisions and rockets all have in common is that they are all essentially technologies. Only manufacturing technologies are used to make cars and refrigerators, and public sector organisations are involved in policy-making and the economy.

If we want to move our social environment in that direction and in such a way that our people felt willing and able to build relations with society, the economy and the state in the same

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[1]In terms of its development as a civilisation the 'Islamic world' is exceptionally backward. According to information issued by Abdul Aziz at-Tueidjeri, the head of ISESKO, the Islamic organisation on educational, scientific and cultural issues, all the Islamic countries as a whole have contributed less to modern world science than a single small European country such as Belgium. According to at-Tuedjeri, in recent decades the 55 Islamic countries covering vast areas from Indonesia to Morocco and with an estimated population of 1 billion 'have not achieved any appreciable progress' in research into ways and means of developing and protecting the environment or in the area of training scientists. According to his information, the scientists of the Islamic states make up less than 4 per cent of numbers worldwide and just over 1 per cent of the specialists involved in life-long scientific research. He also stated that in all the countries of the 'Islamic world' there are 3000 times fewer students annually graduating with science degrees per million of the population than in the industrially-developed countries. 60-70 per cent of the population of the 'Islamic world' are illiterate.

way as they do when they live in the West, then we need to synchronise our actions in relation to our environment and population.

What we must borrow from the West is a willingness and capacity to take charge of our own destiny, and a sense of responsibility, not only in our everyday lives but in a broader historical sense. A special place in our national and state consciousness is occupied by a sense of being an empire. The illustrious Russian historian Vasily Kliuchevsky, defined the process of colonising land as a basic factor in the formation of the Russian state system. What's more, he considered that the Russian people were a leading force, but not the only one, in creating the empire.

A feature of British rule in India was that the administration kept itself totally detached and there was absolutely no similarity between the lifestyles of the foreign residents and the local population, whereas in Russia, the situation was quite the reverse. The renowned Russophobe, the Marquis de Custine, was astonished when, after asking to be introduced to St Petersburg's nobility, he met very few hereditary Russian nobles. Slightly later, according to the authentic data of the 1897 census, only 53 per cent of the hereditary nobles named Russian as their mother tongue. Nearly half the nobility consisted of descendants of the Polish gentry, Ukrainian Cossack chieftains, Baltic knights, Georgian princes, Muslim khans and lords. Approximately the same percentage ratio existed among the traders and merchants, and in the lower classes. Russian peasants and Ukrainian Cossacks ploughed the land side by side in newly-founded Russia, and Russian hunters hunted in the Siberian *taiga* alongside the local indigenous people from Altai and Yakutya.

The integration of the Russian territory was based on a state idea, not an ethnic one. In the days of the empire it was a monarchist idea guaranteeing the defence of all the Tsar's subjects. Monarchism was replaced in the USSR by the Communist idea of joining up all regions by making them participate in the construction of a new type of society. And

although this process of state construction in Russia was by no means trouble-free, nevertheless, through living together and mixing at work and socially, and then later on working in an integrated economic and social environment, the peoples of the country gradually became aware of the common bond linking their histories together.

One must not forget either about Russia's natural conditions. For instance, according to calculations taking account of our country's climate, we would have to use three times more energy than Germany to achieve the average standard of life enjoyed in Central Europe. This situation may change radically when totally new technology has been installed, and the underdeveloped land in the Russian north is also bound to become a most valuable resource of global significance. However, since we are fully aware of the need to improve the economy and, along with it, the Russian people's standard of life as much as possible, we have to reconcile ourselves to the fact that in the near future the average standard of living in Russia is not going to reach the level of the most prosperous countries.

But there is another more difficult and important issue confronting us. It is this unquestioning acceptance of Western forms and methods that really constitutes the well-known 'catching up' type of development. Of course, it is moving us forward but the West is not standing still either.

So, we have to ask ourselves if the West we are intending to catch up with is the West of yesterday, today or tomorrow. What is particularly problematic for Russia is that we are in fact striving to catch up with the West at a time when the West itself is already at an impasse in its development. In theory, it is much simpler and easier to catch up with someone in an impasse who doesn't know how to get out than try and catch someone up who is racing ahead in an open space. However, the idea of the 'chase' is still not totally clear.

One also has to take into account that a new type of 'dependent development' is taking shape in the world today. It is not resource dependence, which the West could, in fact, suffer

from, nor is it financial dependence, which in terms of foreign debt and inadequate investment could apply to a country like Russia. The most important type of dependence is increasingly that of information and technology, resulting from the emergence of a new quality of development.

This dependence is increased by the fact that the structure of a post-industrial economy and society cannot be planned and developed in the same way as the draft of a state policy. The formation of such a society is fundamentally the result of an evolutionary process and society's self-development.

Dependent development is also evident in the fact that only the West has the resources to decide which countries are allowed to catch it up and collaborate with the post-industrial world. It also consists of agreeing to export technology and make investments. In scope, this influence on the development of others is far more effective as a means of control than actual direct control.

In such conditions the actual strategy of 'catching up' development becomes meaningless in so far as the situation begins to resemble a labour of Sisyphus: no matter how many times you roll the rock up the mountain and no matter how near you get to the top, the advanced countries of the world will always be able to decide whether you deserve to make it to the top. If they decide you don't, they'll push you right back down again.

6.3 A choice of strategy: a 'burgher state' or a 'modernisation breakthrough'?

For some time now the Russian élite has been looking at countries with average economies as ideal models of development. The argument goes something like this: Russia today is a country with quite limited material and other practical potential. So the best, most appropriate, though hardly achievable, target for it in the foreseeable future would be to rank among the top 20 or 30 countries with the best quality of

life, life expectancy, per capita GDP and income levels. If all it manages to do is halt the decline of its population, it will have achieved something.

All the rest – foreign policy activity, the defence budget, the state's role in the international system and so on – must evolve from this strategic goal and from the real potential of the Russian state and economy. Such an approach works as follows: one minimises all the different kinds of risks while at the same time maximizing the social and economic efficiency of development.

The ideology of 'burgher development' contains a core of good sense. Russia's social and economic place in the world today is hard to reconcile with claims of being special and great unless, of course, one interprets 'special' as referring to our present state of affairs. And the problem here is that, though an energetic rise up the social and economic ladder is long overdue, it is simply unrealisable for the time being. In terms of our future prospects, it is also the main way of guaranteeing Russia's status as a great power in practice as well as theory.

So, while recognising the need to catch the West up, we are setting our sights on achieving the development level of Portugal and the other less-developed Western European countries – a pragmatic decision which in economic terms, makes sense. Its logic is confirmed by numerous authenticated facts and figures.

However, one also has to ask two other questions: to what extent is such a development target really essential for Russia and to what extent does it provide the solution to the tasks facing Russia in the changing world? Development must have worthwhile targets and must be based on a clear understanding of our identity and requirements.

Guaranteeing economic growth has never been a development target of the world's leading countries. Such an index can define specific situations which arise in the course of events, but never targets. One must not forget that capitalism was conceived not as an economic system but as an ethical and religious labour code.

The fabled 'American dream' is not the dream of a highly-developed, diversified and effective post-industrial economy. It is

expressed in the American Declaration of Independence which states that man is born free and equal and has the right to aspire towards happiness. The latter euphemism may be just another way of expressing the right to ownership, but it uses another means of expression which is more appropriate to the task of achieving this dream – the language of meanings and ideals.

The objective target of Russia's development today is namely to attempt a transition to a post-industrial type of development, a 'modernisation breakthrough' to post-industrialism.

This task has been facing the country for at least the past 20 years. In its time the USSR failed to respond to the challenge of modernisation. The reasons for this had to do with the particular character of the political system and the calibre of the ruling élite who were incapable of carrying through this essential type of transformation. It also had to do with the particular character of the country itself: the implementation of the systematic task of transferring to a post-industrial type of development was impeded by various factors such as the industrialization process being incomplete in some of the territories, the profoundly disproportionate level of development in the various republics and territories, their cultural heterogeneity and different levels of development conditions.

The resulting disintegration of the country proved that it was impossible to go about modernisation within the framework of the former political and social system, and signalled the fragmented system's transition to a strategy of shedding unnecessary inner complexities and levelling out into more homogenous parts.

This does not remove the actual task of modernisation from the various parts of the former USSR. Neither does it exclude the subsequent partial reintegration of the post-Soviet area into the framework of a unified state, although such a course of events is possible only after the conclusion of the modernisation process of its separate parts, that is, the present states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Russia may now embark on a modernisation breakthrough. On the one hand, it is no longer responsible for a number of

development projects in the territories of Central Asia and the Trancaucasian countries but, on the other, it has lost the cultural and economic potential of, say, the Baltic countries and Ukraine. Just as before, however, the state still has to spend considerable resources on maintaining its position in the post-Soviet territories, although it has considerably fewer resources available now than it needed to develop the various territories in the days of the USSR.

Even in its present state, Russia is still an exceptionally complex, heterogeneous system when it comes to implementing modernisation programmes of the post-industrial period. In a certain sense, Russia has retained the features of the USSR in miniature, in so far as it has to solve other problems besides post-industrial modernisation, such as encouraging progress in the backward territories, maintaining the north, maintaining global strategic military positions, and so on.

We find ourselves once again in the position of setting an odd example to the whole world by being a paradoxical combination of all sorts of very different elements. Firstly, we have the development problems of a post-industrial, post-economic consumer society system living in extremely large metropolitan areas. Secondly, we have a limited industrial strategy within a temporarily-halted resource- and export-orientated economy. Thirdly, we could potentially plummet to the lower rungs of the modern world if our model of forced industrialisation is destroyed. We may also see society developing archaic tendencies and witness the emergence of criminal economic and social practices.

There is still external pressure being exerted on the system, in different directions, and it is set to increase. Strategists in neighbouring countries are setting their sights on the partial integration of various regions of Russia into areas currently being developed by them although this development is at times questionable.

The attempt to build a 'burgher state' today, or retrace the steps of the Eastern Asiatic tiger economies, cannot succeed. The

trouble is that conducting a second wave of industrialisation will make it possible to head towards the frontiers of post-industrial development, but will cause an upset in the balance of the economy and the accumulation of national resources by major corporations for this purpose. The problem of modernisation cannot be solved within a set framework of social and economic formulae. A 'self-defeating' type of economy has developed in Russia today, incapable of supporting redevelopment not only on an extended scale but even on a small one.

A fundamental problem of national economic policy, namely the limited ambition of its targets, which is presently a much discussed subject at the highest level, is certainly not reflected in the government's unwillingness to fix the growth rate at 8 per cent per annum instead of 3-4 per cent. Strictly speaking, there is virtually no difference between growth rates of 3-8 per cent except in terms of setting strategic development targets.

If national resources are spent on the élite's sizeable requirements and not on development targets, then economic growth is meaningless. If at times when oil prices are favourable and there is a constant flow of capital abroad personnel in the country's financial institutions are still not being paid their miserable wages, then discussions of Russia's greatness not only lose all their meaning but all their moral justification as well: this is a degrading and sham sort of greatness achieved at its own people's expense.

Thanks to its extremely rich resource base and developed industry Russia is objectively still one of the world's leading economic forces for future post-industrial civilisation. The development of these resources, which today provide us with our main incomes, cannot possibly be halted or restricted. However, the temporary closing-down of the raw-material export-oriented economic model and the growth in raw materials in our economy over the past few years do nothing but increase our backwardness.

Things will continue in this vein until we understand that global competitiveness and a high degree of economic

effectiveness can only be secured if the policy of relying on cheap resources as our 'competition advantages' is completely rejected. In fact, we still have to develop and create these competition advantages because a potential to create unique technologies and products which the world wants opens the door to a post-industrial world. So, if we really want to guarantee our place in the future, we should at least look around and designate several directions of the technological breakthrough as national priorities. This is particularly worth doing because Russia has serious potential in at least two or three key 'zones of technological development' – nano-technology, biotechnology and thermonuclear technology – which are going to play crucial roles in civilisation's progress over the next few decades. As well as developing a post-industrial sector we must invest in the 'creation' of new social groups who will oversee Russia's development in this sphere.

We shall achieve nothing unless we transfer to a course of development of this kind, unless we understand the real way in which post-industrial economics will function. The main obstacle to such development is the calibre of the state administration and economic élite. The relative prosperity of these economic oligarchs, and the state institutions which have grown up along with them, is derived from their monopoly control of the raw-material branches of the economy and their reproduction of a conforming model of economic development. It is also the result of their spreading their influence and gaining control of other branches of the economy and creating an imbalance in the economy.

However, this entire structure and the control of separate branches of it are based on the use of 'obsolete technologies' of development. A change in the general pattern of the country's economic development, the development and strengthening of separate new sectors of the national economy and even the transfer of individual branches to more progressive technologies, are creating a threat for these élites, as they are in danger of losing their privileged positions and opportunities to force their will upon society.

The resulting problem is that the majority of the élite is not interested in the policy of sweeping social modernisation and the profound transformation of society, aimed at forming a critical number of innovatory social groups. They are often happier with the idea of entering the post-industrial world themselves, without Russia, and with only the section of the country's population who will be needed to extract the raw materials and transport them to the West.

The 21st century no longer only belongs to us, however, and we must do everything we can to ensure that the new generation, our children and grandchildren and the new Russia, will profit by the fruits and experiences of both our successes and our failures. That is why the actual development programme must be based on a moral choice: either we rob ourselves and our children, and deprive our country of its future, or we head for a breakthrough in our philosophy of development and in 15 to 20 years transform the country anew.

Essentially, this is about whether the whole of Russia, its entire population and all the citizens of Russia, or only a small fraction of them, will be allowed access to the future.

New Challenges and Tasks for Russia in Constructing the State

7.1 Unassimilated Russia – the main threat to national security

The advocates of another approach to evaluating the prospects and strategies for Russia's development, usually referred to as the 'geopolitical method', proceed from the necessity to give Russia back its power, fully re-establish its international position and ability to conduct an independent foreign policy, and guarantee its autonomy in the sphere of its main foreign interests.

It goes without saying that a state's power and strength has been, and evidently always will be, the main prerequisite and foundation of all its other resources and potential achievements. But power and strength to do what, to what ends? Power and strength are essential as a guarantee of the country's competitiveness, independence, as a basis for its security from threats of a traditional or new kind. However, power and strength as ends in themselves or for a new confrontation with the West would simply be a repetition of history. In any case, it appears that the threat to Russia is from the South, not the West. Some are inclined to view this threat as a blessing, regarding Russia's conversion to Islam as its salvation from the West.

According to the above method, the development of man and society is replaced by other criteria and aims such as the creation of new forms and means of resistance, and everything that is needed to develop, produce and serve them. Man and society as a whole ceases to be of the greatest value and turns into cheap disposable material.

Of course, this is also development of a kind, transforming the country in its own way and even moving forwards. In certain conditions and circumstances such development may be imposed from outside or caused by a chain of events in

international life. The aphorism, 'it's better to die standing than live on one's knees', was coined centuries ago. However, if one does not live by scenarios of universal catastrophe and a geopolitical apocalypse, the strategy of neo-imperial restoration is incompatible with the aims and tasks of Russia's social and economic development and can bring nothing but new difficulties. What matters here is only the state. All that concerns geopoliticians is getting the state firmly established, essentially, by force. Society and people are merely the means of doing so. The main problem with this 'geopolitical viewpoint' of the history of Russia and its future is that we start thinking about our development in the visual language of some kind of computer game with different coloured stickers, little arrows and three lives left before knock-out.

Not only is this approach defective, for we obviously do not have 'three lives left', but the real foundations of any geopolicy are also ignored or not understood. If we are to speak of state policy in spatial terms, it is, first and foremost, an aptitude for assimilating space. In a broader sense, it means an aptitude for colonisation, cultivation and development. It's all about getting there first. Preserving a country's integrity in the modern world also has to do with a society's aptitude for assimilating its country and managing its riches in an efficient manner.

In his time, Vasily Kliuchevsky spoke of the Russian state as being colonisable and regarded this as a basic principle and fundamental strategy for its development.

Another reasonable viewpoint formulated in historical science argues that the basic reason for Europe's successful intensive development lies specifically in its limited territory which forced it to develop its economy, social structures and relations between people who had to live in fairly close proximity in order to get more from what they had.

The Russian Federation is one of the largest and most unstable states of the modern world. Its instability is determined by its geographical scale, and its vast natural, climactic and, in certain outlying parts, cultural diversity. The west, east, north

and south are all interwoven into a Russia whose civilisation is unique and precious.

As a civilisation we are coming up against external geopolitical pressure from various directions, which are by no means identical. For instance, in view of China's increasing global influence, the Russian Far East region needs, first and foremost, to iron out the problems of establishing relations with the rapidly growing Asia-Pacific region. The south is primarily an area of conflict with the so-called Islamic world. And on our western borders we are solving issues particularly concerned with setting up relations and integrating with the European Union. No other state has to deal simultaneously with such a level and diversity of external challenges both on a national and regional scale. That's not to mention the specific challenge of governing territories like Chechnya or the Kaliningrad district.

We have to find better solutions to the problems linked with the great diversity of peoples and nationalities living in Russia. New approaches must be introduced for the development of the Russian Federation which, depending on how skilfully we act, may become the key to the success of state transformation – or the source of yet more problems.

The Federation is essential to Russia. One reason why the Soviet Union collapsed was that there were no theoretical or practical means of governing such a huge and unwieldy social and economic machine stretching over eight time zones. The centre proved incapable of managing the vast number of onerous tasks and problems which it kept landing itself with. At the beginning of the 20th century the issue of controllability also proved too much for the Russian Empire when it came up against the contradictions of industrialisation and proved incapable of responding to them.

The conclusion is, therefore, that there are scarcely perceptible but still quite definite administrative limits not only on the effectiveness of a unitary state but also on its very existence. This is not to suggest that the centre should be weakened: Russia needs a strong centre more than any other

state, otherwise, there is too great a risk of the country disintegrating. Nonetheless, there is still a need for a new interpretation of the criteria of the centre's power and role.

One of these criteria is that the individual regions comprising the Federation have the motives, will and practical means to develop independently. In order to simplify the problem somewhat, the relations between the centre and the rest of the Federation should be formed in such a way that it is advantageous for a region not just to stay within the Federation but also to increase its economic potential, and thus strengthen the federal budget and Russia as a whole.

In view of the population explosion worldwide, Russia's declining population has become a growing cause for concern. Within the next few decades it runs the risk of turning into a 'desert', coming up against huge 'demographic pressure' and possibly being targeted by other countries needing to expand. We must work out how to safeguard state integrity in these new conditions.

The considerable influx of immigrants which is almost bound to occur, as they are so badly needed, may in time tilt the ethnic and political scales in a totally unexpected way. Russia needs controllable mass immigration over a long period of time. This is the only way we shall get the needed tens of millions of able-bodied people to be assimilated into the country. However, there are considerable differences between the state migration policy in Moscow, the south of Russia and the Russian far east.

The objectives of the state economic policy regarding the regions of Central Russia and Siberia are entirely different. The regions with strong economies must become engines of development for the whole country, and the potential of the leading regions must, first and foremost, be increased and used for the common good.

The problems with agricultural turnover and the state land policy in general cannot, and should not be identical in the Central Chornoziom and Ryazan region; and that includes the entirely special land policy issue in urban areas.

Among the tasks of state social policy are optimising the pension system and regulating labour migration. Issues of demographic policy in the 'old' regions of central, southern and northern Russia cover a very wide range of problems. Then there is the minimum living wage which, depending on the region, can be ten or even more times higher or lower.

All these problems must be solved. If Russia proves incapable of preserving the effective unity of its territory, a most critical situation will arise with repercussions far exceeding Russia's borders. In fact, the disintegration of the Russian Federation will cause a new chain reaction of geopolitical redivision in neighbouring and far-off continents, more resounding than the one caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union, and yet another unravelling of the territories with nuclear and chemical weapons.

Today we devote too little thought and attention to assimilating and developing this vast territory, and yet so often refer to it with a bizarre sort of pride as being one eighth of the world's land mass. What is the use of possessing such wealth if we sweat and sigh over it like the penny-pinching knight in the folktale but do nothing to turn it into a place where people can lead normal worthwhile lives? Even now, part of Russia's territory consists of make-shift 'pioneer' settlements with temporary populations who have no incentive to settle there. As any geopolitician knows, a large, prosperous and flourishing population is the best and most effective means of territory control, but the population of Russia is constantly shrinking and we are now also faced with a serious decline in the other countries, civilisations and peoples using our unassimilated territories as Lebensraum.

We are not prepared to admit that the future is by no means guaranteed and is in fact looking extremely doubtful. We have no time for unsettling questions about the directions our development is taking. This explains why delusions of grandeur and restored former glory are becoming so tenacious and are hampering our movement forwards.

7.2 Does the state have a future?

What demands do the present and future make of us regarding the development of the state and organisation of society today? A particular difficulty is the obvious paradox of reconciling the task of consolidating the state with the scenario that envisages the disappearance or cardinal regeneration of the state in the 21st century.

If world political processes continue to develop in keeping with current trends, by the turn of the 22nd century concepts such as the 'Russian Federation', 'United States of America', 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland', 'Chinese People's Republic', 'Republic of Zimbabwe', 'Sultanate of Brunei' and so on may, at least in their present form, belong to the past.

With its vast expanses, natural diversity and multinational population unevenly distributed across the country, Russia has to be exceedingly attentive to what is known worldwide as 'the state institution crisis'. There has been talk of this crisis ever since the state first emerged. Globalisation, however, is exacerbating the new outward contradiction between the traditional state institution which is indissolubly linked with a given territory and population, and transnational business which crosses all borders in the course of its activity.

Outwardly, the advantages are on the side of business: for a long time now the major transnational corporations have had turnovers equal to or higher than the GDP of average states. The turnovers of each of the top-ranking 30 corporations are higher than the GDP of approximately 100 average, small (but not lowest-ranking) states.

At the beginning of the 1970s it seemed a 'foregone' conclusion that the state would eventually be broken up by these transnational corporations and other key players in world politics. What it would be replaced by was anyone's guess. However, the state crisis is still here with us, which means it must be simply a product of the times.

The state institution is here to stay. Besides, the world has no other institutions compatible with states which could shoulder the political responsibility and carry out political tasks. The national state system of international relations are undoubtedly still the principal political institutions of the world, at least while the state has a monopoly on legitimate coercion and guarantees the security of its citizens' living environment. After all, if economic life is in many ways already organised above and beyond state-level, and policies remain primarily in the national and state domain, then, strictly speaking, social life, the life of society and of the individual continues, in principle, to be developed on a national, state, local and territorial level.

The state crisis lies essentially in the fact that the state is integrating, even against its own wishes, into a new global matrix of political, economic and social relations. The more organic this integration is, the greater the opportunities for the state to develop on a national level. Over the past few decades the economic power of the transnational corporations and banks has increased many times over. This has not, however, caused any major state to cease to exist or grow noticeably weaker.

At the same time, we can also see the phenomenon of 'failure states' developing in the modern world. The reasons for this are much more complex, and illustrate not so much the likelihood of the world's national and state system collapsing as the fact that this system is increasingly being transformed and integrated into a new global political reality on the level of the leading world powers' level. The nature and form of states' activity are being modified and often becoming increasingly similar to global corporations. Failure states or another phenomenon of our time – the so-called 'rogue states' – are very often the very same states who were left behind when the institutions were undergoing transformation in keeping with the new global logic.

In this sense, the problem of backwardness is part of a more important issue concerning the unevenness and irregularities evident in different states' development, their introduction to

globalisation, and their cultural and social preparedness for the various processes they have to undertake.

That is why the structural crisis of the future state concerns, first and foremost, the fact that the structure and function of traditional 'classic' states are not compatible with the demands of national development. Problems arise when the state ceases to be the mechanism ensuring nations' development and growth and becomes an impeding infrastructure.

The present challenge in the domain of state construction may be formulated thus: it is imperative for Russia to restructure its state institution within a reasonable length of time and in such a way that it is able not only to defend itself effectively from real and potential threats from without but also to guarantee its security and territorial integrity. However, it also has to be able to compete just as effectively within the framework of the globalising economy, retain its essential freedom to manoeuvre both economically and politically, and stimulate industrial and social initiative within the country.

Russia has very little time and very few resources to achieve all this. And that means the traditional means of state-construction which involve a gradual process and considerable resources will not help solve the tasks facing Russia, but may actually make them more complex. Innovatory and controversial approaches and solutions must be sought.

Every state in the modern world is gradually integrating into an increasingly complex system of legal and administrative global relations and ties. Consequently, the state must transform itself into a kind of corporation, also with transnational potential. And it has to prepare itself for a long purposeful struggle to achieve worldwide recognition of its right as a state to take advantage of the economic freedom on an equal footing with the other participating countries of the free market.

If there can be corporations – joint-stock societies with millions of rank-and-file shareholders (and there have been companies like this for a long time now) – why can't there be tens of millions of shareholders? If there are diversified

corporate bodies using all their legal rights to work at one and the same time in several, or even multiple, branches of the economy, then why shouldn't a state have equal rights to manage its territory and population as a unified system like a corporation?

It is a question of introducing substantial amendments to the concept of the state and the philosophy of its activity. In history, the state was the power machinery of the military and police, called upon to safeguard the unity of the people and territory from without, and subsequently, from within. As such, it first created the power apparatus for collecting the funds it needed in the form of taxes from the population. Although this role and these functions and practices were objectively essential and unavoidable, over many centuries they corrupted the state and failed to teach it how to count properly and, more importantly, earn money and make sure it was used effectively and strategically in society. These qualities of the state are now becoming crucial in the global world with its extremely tough, primarily economic competition.

This is still not a full picture of the state's new role in the modern world, however. Granted, the state is attempting to conform to the logic of globalisation as being, first and foremost, economic, and acquiring an increasingly economic profile itself, turning into a corperation-state, competing with the transnational corporations and acting in the global economy as its citizens' agent. But depending on the extent to which the new age is post-industrial, that is, an age with an economy based on knowledge and human capital, the public services sector, which forms the basis of the social or welfare state, naturally acquires increasing importance in state politics.

The greatest progress in the global world is being made by countries with the best track records in science, education and economics. And the most socially stable societies are holding their ground. A society's stability depends on how advanced its systems are for motivating the strong and supporting the weak. This is precisely the direction in which the priorities of state

policy should be heading, with the principle of a strong social state as its main pivotal force. This concept by no means relates only to the policy of subsidising the neediest in society and introducing state pledges of a minimum living wage. The social state seeks to ensure the welfare of all its citizens. And it is exactly in creating opportunities for each and every individual and each and every region to fulfil their potential, and in providing them with a worthwhile and valuable life, that the *raison d'être* of politics lies.

Finally, our state must learn to defend its citizens' interests in practice and not just in theory. It must crack down every time an infringement takes place. As the main 'capital' of the post-industrial age, the defence of the individual is becoming one of the main functions of the state.

This logic of the state's evolution contradicts its development as an economy and, in this context, its adherence to a neo-liberal economic doctrine which advocates a reduction in state expenditure, the tax burden and social obligations and an increase in the strictly economic effectiveness of the state, to be run along business lines.

The main criterion of a state's effectiveness, therefore, is its authorities' ability to find the best balance between the given trends and demands of state development. To put it another way, it provides the main answer to the question regarding the state's future. If a state is unable to learn, does not wish to change, or cannot meet the demands of the time, it will lose out, and not only when competing with others. It cannot be ruled out that this economic and social inaptitude will result in the population of such a state rejecting it as a legitimate institute. And such a rejection may easily be used by foreign forces in their own interests. If a state is unable, or, worse still, unwilling to carry all this through, or is incapable of doing so, it turns into the greatest security threat to its own society. Only when the achievement of high living standards for its people and the defence of every citizen's interests are acknowledged as the most important aims of state policy, will social and economic

development be assured, and will Russia become a society where the welfare of all its citizens is provided for.

7.3 Sovereignty in the 'New World'

One of the main guarantees of success in the future is an ability to live by one's intellect. When applied to the state, this refers to its intellectual sovereignty. Strictly speaking, there is nothing fundamentally new here, except that for the first time in history this notion is being applied to the state. What is also new is that, in the global world as it is today, this notion is not only about improving the quality of life but about a most acute and urgent need. In the modern world it is impossible to do really well and succeed in a fiercely competitive environment unless one is thoroughly informed of all the latest breakthroughs in science.

When applied to the state, this notion becomes a call for the state's intellectual sovereignty, and for institutions and not individuals, while defining state strategy on a routine basis, to work to the best of their ability on the level of the most advanced thinking of the day. While an individual's intellect depends, first and foremost, on his or her personal abilities, a state's intellectual sovereignty is ensured over a long period of time by a most complex set of measures, including continuous education and science on all levels, and the presence of modern information and communication technology as well as a specific human resources policy.

Over the past few centuries, Russia's misfortune has been that for various reasons, sometimes through poverty, and on account of ideological restrictions in the 20th century, it has not fulfilled these conditions as a state. There always have been and, God willing, always will be, brilliant intellects in Russia. However, the state has not always made the best use of them and has frequently forced them to emigrate or to cease working and keep silent.

However, the fact remains that the industrial and particularly the scientific, technological and information revolutions have been based on the achievements, first and foremost, of the

human intellect. If a state's potential and role in the modern world are defined by a complex set of criteria including the strength of its economics, science and technology, finances, education and culture, defence capabilities and quality of life, then it follows that the potential and role of a country in the world was originally defined by the scope and quality of the intellectual thought which the state was able to put to the service of their interests and aims.

The noeosphere which was once enthusiastically predicted by the Russian scientist Vernadsky has imperceptibly become a reality. One may follow its evolution, one may resist it with varying degrees of anger, and one may also participate in its future development. And, probably, it is only in the latter case that one may rightfully speak of total or comparative intellectual sovereignty.

Most developed countries became what they are today through a combination of historical events and spontaneous happenings. Nowadays we cannot rely on the course of history, as it might take us in the wrong direction. One needs to be creative but one also needs to have the most profound understanding of the difference between practical solutions and one's mere desires and fantasies.

In this context we should mention the problem of placing the subject of strategic planning within an institutional framework. Modern society needs institutions – 'think tanks' – to deliberate over the country's prospects for the next 20-50 years.

Forms of organisation must conform to the complexities of a given society. Most likely, such institutions should include a state centre for strategic planning or something similar, functioning autonomously in relation to the President and government (rather like the present position of the Bank of Russia). A similar centre working independently but in close co-operation could be set up in the academic community, bringing academics together from the Russian Academy of Sciences and the universities. The public sector could also have a similar centre of its own. The material they produced, though not official directives, would at least provide a considered opinion

of the country's potential and its prospective problems, which would then be discussed by the public and specialists in order to identify the development priorities requested by society.

Such para-state institutions – what matters here is the actual idea and not the name or organisation specifications – are effective only if they have access to a 'state reflexion' system, that is, reliable and well-functioning sources of primary information and systems of processing, storing and presenting it to users. The problem today is that information is sometimes unreliable and frequently inaccessible not only to specialists but to state structures as well. At the same time the extremely high risk of various kinds of 'leaks' and the unsanctioned and even malevolent use of available information could damage the country's intellectual sovereignty.

One of the most complex tasks will be the setting up and running of a state and public system effectively to use people's suggestions and intellectual ideas. Democracy without intellectual thought is senseless mob law. Politics without intellectual thought is an immoral and dangerous venture.

The struggle for intellectual sovereignty will be as hard and long as it once was for political sovereignty. It is the basis for any competitiveness. Copyright law is not just about protecting the inventors and designers' rights to gain as much financial reward from their inventions as possible. If it were, the most developed countries' state machinery would never have kicked up such a fuss protecting such laws. Copyright protection involves putting almost insurmountable obstacles in the way of new centres interested in publishing the works of world science, technologies and social and political ideas of cultural importance.

Intellectual sovereignty is also the ability to reply clearly and honestly to the question: who are we and what do we want? It is the basis for any competitiveness. The West imposes its standards of education, its vision of the world and its textbooks in such a ruthless way because it understands that once someone has actually adopted these standards, whether he realises it or

not, he is bound to come under the influence of Western intellectual thought. In so doing he will condemn himself to a perpetual state of backwardness and intellectual dependence, and, consequently, economic and political dependence too. 'Living by one's intellect' may soon mean the same as purely and simply 'living'.

7.4 In search of a subject for development

The question of whether most of Russia's development tasks can be solved depends on who undertakes this difficult programme. Is it even possible to discern who in Russia today might take on the new modernisation programme?

Russia has been through a process of industrialisation, but as it was carried out on authoritarian state impetus it has reached an impasse as far as the tasks of the new modernisation programme are concerned. It will take much more than the state's efforts, will-power and policies to enter the new phase of development: modernisation cannot possibly be achieved unless it is based on a new work ethic and culture.

We are about to embark on a transitional phase towards post-economic development. We have to take into account the development impasses of the modern world caused by the dominating method of management and the concealed potential of post-industrial economics, a system based not only on knowledge but also on the products of the intellect and creativity.

However, as the basis for development in the modern world is provided by knowledge, the intellect and the new potential generated by them, this obviously means that investing in people and in the development of Russia's human potential is of paramount importance.

Producing creative people of a different calibre for the New World is becoming a crucial resource and capital for development. Those most likely to succeed are the ones who

understand the priority of developing creative human capital and who can direct their energies into following this course towards the post-economic future.

However, when speaking of human capital and human development as basic potential for the future, we simply have to look in a fundamentally different way at a whole series of problems and issues which, when applied to Russia's prospects and difficulties, are being discussed in a fairly formal and apathetic manner and from absolutely outmoded viewpoints.

If we try to look at the situation from the perspective of the future, or at least relying on a vision of the future, and if we try and direct development from the future, we shall see that demographic, education, scientific, migratory, and health policies take on an entirely new meaning and resonance.

What gives genuine cause for alarm is not even the evident tendency in social policies to make pronouncements for effect but the obvious lack of understanding of the importance of human capital in the world of the future. Social policy is the pledge and expression of society's competitiveness. Modern society cannot develop itself in economic terms alone: it has to be provided with all the necessary equipment for development.

In modern society health, education and science are not additional irritants to the tasks of economic development or the forced price society has to pay out of its own pocket: they are a condition of effective development, an engine of change, a guarantee of moral health. They give hope that Russia will occupy a worthy place in the 21st-century world.

The rapid development of industrial civilisation, with its characteristic orientation towards consuming the maximum quantities of natural resources, has caused an alarming rift between society and nature. As a potential force of civilisation, 'nature's productive force' has increasingly lost its elasticity. And although in the course of the scientific and technological revolution production capacity of resources is being steadily reduced, the planet's limited amount of natural resources inevitably raises the issue of adopting new economic models and

forms of society, and a new spiritual and moral pattern of behaviour which would make it possible to slacken consumer civilisation's grip on the biosphere.

Our country will manage to meet the demands of the new age only if culture, science, education, and public health cease to be regarded by society and the authorities as issues of secondary importance that can be swept aside for the time being, while other more pressing problems are dealt with. It is time to reassess their importance, for in the long-term only they can drive development forward and give it a genuine meaning and purpose.

Increasing competition in the world markets, and primarily those of science-based products and the constant upgrading of technologies are forcing the political and economic élites of all the more or less developed countries to keep increasing their expenditure on scientific research and development. Capital investments in science are producing some of the best returns. The main national long-term programmes of most of the developed countries for the past few decades have been absolutely consistent in their main priorities of supporting the necessary expenditure on fundamental science, and increasing the budget allocations to applied scientific research.

The destiny of Russia as a state competing in the world market depends greatly, if not completely, on the prospects of its scientific potential. Commercially usurious and depressingly provincial, Russia's present economic policy will go on 'accumulating resources' for adequate investments in science for the next 50 years. However, the issue of the 'brain drain' abroad has already become one of national security. Many schools of science are on the verge of collapse. Human resources in the technological sciences are aging particularly quickly.

The condition and problems of science are inseparable from those in the field of education. The theory of 'human capital' based on the post-war reconstruction of West Germany emerged in Europe about 30 years ago. German scientists calculated the following astonishing statistics: if a country's manufacturing

potential is totally destroyed but its education system and school and university teachers are left intact, a country has four times as many chances of making good the destruction than if it were the other way round. This is why priority was given in Germany to improving the quality of human resources by means of an effective education policy.

If the future is to consist, first and foremost, of a science-based society, we really do need a new age of Enlightenment and Renaissance of science, education and social behaviour to survive in it.

When discussing Russia's modernisation, we have to remember that we cannot solve the task of producing a certain economic model and the parameters for it without first having solved another task, namely, whether the social structure is adequate for it. Modernisation requires either an innovatory Western or other social structure that meets the demands of post-industrialism. The issue is whether such a social structure exists here, whether it affects all the strata of society and all aspects of society's organisation or whether we only have a superficial level of consumer culture and a narrow class of so-called 'adapters'.

Wherever there has been development, it has been directed by the ascending middle strata of the day. It was they who provided all kinds of creative intellectual stimuli and work, and as a whole, a growing consumer market as well. If there isn't such a class in Russia, there won't be development either, or it will be uneven and extremely limited in time scale.

The innovatory culture in this country consists of a minority Westernised strata who are mostly 'middle class' and earn their living through work, whereas the bulk of capital is still mostly unearned in origin. It is impossible to solve the tasks related to the formation of the economy and society of a new age while a quarter of the population is living in poverty and destitution, while most of the rest are living in semi-poverty at subsistence level, and while the population is stratified socially and economically in the most extraordinary way and the élite is in

the grips of consumer exhibitionism. By reproducing a course of development of an innovatory type, as previously mentioned, we will create a dangerous tension inside Russian society and seriously aggravate the controversial issues that exist between the post-industrial groups of the population and its majority who are forced to solve issues concerned primarily with survival. There is also a danger of these controversial issues creating a potential tension of equal proportions to the one that destroyed the modernising Russian Empire a hundred years ago.

It is imperative to carry through the main reform: the reform in attitudes to people and their interests. It is also essential that we reform salaries and income policy as a whole. Undervalued labour is one of the fundamental obstacles to the country's development. This is an entirely new philosophy of our development which should at last lift state social and economic policy out of its macroeconomic daydreams and onto the firm soil of reality.

The present strategy of transforming our society in many ways involves conducting reforms from the top, with the support of the authorities and a narrow section of the élite, and attempting to integrate and include in the reforms certain social groups which should provide them with social support. The problem is, however, that it is extremely difficult to rely on both the people and the élite to solve this task. The authorities' estrangement from society has increased to the point where the majority of the population continues to be concerned only with matters of survival, organising their lives purely on a day-to-day basis and sending paternalistic petitions to the authorities asking for social guarantees and the provision of a minimum wage.

In these conditions the state lacks the potential to mobilise the majority of the public in order to solve the strategic tasks of developing the country – if one discounts the ineffective methods of openly using force. At the same time the estrangement of the ruling élite from society is also obvious and is of such a nature that it also prevents the authorities' understanding of essential goals and targets from being

converted into a specific and realisable programme of actions and solutions.

In spite of the economy's highly unstable state, the so-called élite continues to be concerned only with its own affairs and seeing to corporate interests. State institutions continue to use independent political groups and oligarchic groupings in their own selfish interests. The policy of strengthening the state has the opposite effect in these conditions and becomes merely a convenient cover for shady deals.

In Russian politics the endless bureaucratic 'political process' is replacing what really needs to be done, namely to conduct lively political discussions, to work out development directions and solve issues concerning the redistribution of national resources in order to achieve national goals of development. The political and economic élite's unwillingness to look into the future is typical of their way of thinking. Any long-term planning is limited to a three- to four-year period. This is what makes the Russian élite different from similar circles in other leading countries of the world, and why it is not only non-competitive, but essentially ineffective.

Our rulers still cannot look confidently into the future, not only because it turns out to be non-competitive on a global scale but also because there are considerable problems with its international legitimacy. A key problem is that, while members of the élite have been legitimising and legalising their own status, capital and property, there has been no similar constituting at an international level. Quite possibly, the Russian elite's status and legitimacy may come under the scrutiny of world public opinion and be challenged by the official structures of other states. These problems are connected primarily with the high level of institutionalised corruption in the Russian state system, and the equally high level of coalescence between positions of power and property, and the mutual links between the élite and organised crime.

In these conditions, modernisation risks becoming nothing more than stabilisation and the system looks likely to stagnate

and deteriorate in the very near future. Such a danger is acutely felt today, in so far as a fairly typical situation is developing at an accelerated rate, a situation which, from a historical perspective, is most dangerous for the state. The collective interests of the élite are all now aggressively aimed at preserving their positions. The next logical step is for most of the bureaucracy to draw up a political formation in their collective interests, consolidate their power and property and turn into a closed commanding class which, when the opportunity presents itself, integrates into the world's élite and is granted a legitimate status by them.

This is why the problem of the élite's loyalty is of particular significance in state construction today. It is not significant in the banal sense that political analysts mostly talk about (whether a given oligarch supports the President or not), nor in the manner of right- and left-wing radicals trying to decide if the élites are 'selling' their Motherland or not. It is significant in the sense of the élite's identifying itself and its work with its country and at the service of the country, and the interests and goals of the country's long-term ascending development.

The task of state power is to proceed in such a manner that any Russian business person or state official understands what needs to be done at every given stage for the development of the country in the conditions of the world as it is going to be over the next decades.

The Public Opinion Foundation recently conducted a poll in Russia, in which they asked people what the state actually meant for them. For 40 per cent of those asked it meant the people. For 30 per cent it was the country, and for a mere 20 per cent it was the authorities. In view of such results the most ordinary phrases in political usage such as 'the state must be strong' acquire a totally different meaning.

8. Russia's Strategy for the 'New World'

While concentrating on the tasks involved in our domestic development and modernisation we cannot, of course, dismiss or divert our attention from foreign problems. One of the main consequences of the modern process of globalisation is that the boundary between foreign policy and domestic development issues is being gradually erased. Now that we have joined the global political arena, we are virtually unable to choose an 'isolationist' strategy for ourselves, cut ourselves off from the outside world, or develop a separate plan of action independent of the processes occurring in the rest of the world. Such an approach used to be possible, and to some extent was repeatedly used both by Russia and other countries.

Today however, the situation is fundamentally different. It is not only that the actual national state system of the modern world is undergoing an important transformation, and that the domestic politics of any country are becoming increasingly accessible to the external influence of other states, international institutions, transnational corporations and other new participators in global politics. This is only half the story. Another important point is that it is extremely dangerous for any state to try and shut itself off from the course of history and stop moving with the flow of world development. One may get left hopelessly behind.

If we make an extraordinary effort, we could create something like an 'iron curtain' around Russia and develop some 'greenhouse' conditions for solving our domestic problems for the next 10-15 years. However, the results of such a policy will almost certainly be woeful. Even if we do solve some of our domestic problems in such conditions, we shall still slide back in a couple of decades to an entirely new and unfamiliar world. Having spent so many years in a warm aquarium-like atmosphere of self-imposed isolation, we will be totally unprepared for life's fierce storms. And what will our successes in modernising the state, society and economy amount to if, at

best, they are adequate for a situation that is 20 years old?

When considering our new challenges and tasks of state-construction today, we must give priority to foreign policy issues and the search for our place in this rapidly-changing world. A key criterion for evaluating the strength and effectiveness of state policy is Russia's competitiveness in the conditions of globalisation, where the rules of play are constantly changing. The tasks of state development and social and economic policy must be formulated with due regard for global trends. In the final count, the ability to 'develop' or at least use global political processes in one's own interests may turn into one of our main resources which will enable us to drag ourselves out of the quagmire of our domestic problems.

8.1 Russia's resources in the changing global world

At this point it is perhaps worth taking a slightly closer look at Russia's foreign policy resources, in order to understand its international identity. Foreign policy is a country's combined potential which may eventually be extrapolated to the foreign arena. Foreign policy resources may be both material (territorial, economic, military) and non-material (moral, psychological, ideological, information). They also include elements of the state structure, the political regime and the territorial organisation of power, all of which directly influence the formation and implementation of a country's foreign policy.

An examination of a country's foreign policy resources should also look at the conditions in which they may effectively be applied and what the foreign environment may be contrasted with.

Russia's territorial and geographical resources have suffered great losses compared to those the USSR used to possess. As a result of the formation of the new states, Russia found itself distanced from Western Europe, the regions of the Near and Middle East and Southern Asia. The number of its outlets to the Black, Mediterranean and Baltic Seas was also reduced. Yet we

remain, just as before, a Euro-Asiatic power whose territorial presence in both continents is considerable and indisputable.

In principle, the 'wedge' formed between Russia and distant foreign countries by the new independent states can be used in Russia's interests. In view of its weakened domestic economy, Russia would find direct control of these territories extremely problematic. Now, however, these countries provide an arena for international competition with deliberate odds in our favour, enabling Russia to make additional foreign policy manoeuvres.

The main threat to the geopolitical resources of Russia's foreign policy, paradoxical though it may seem, is caused by the character of the country's internal development. The uneven distribution in economic and population terms of the territory of Russia reduces the territorial resources' potential, particularly, in the long term.

There has been an increase in the level of a particular set of threats linked with Russia's entry into the sphere of various foreign states' geopolitical and geo-economic ambitions. For instance, the sphere of China's geo-economic interests has for a long time included the Russian regions of Primorye and Priamurye; the Vladivostok and Amur regions bordering China; and the same is true of Turkey's interests in the Black Sea coastal region and the Caucasus; and the Arab world's interests in the central Caucasus and the Volga Region republic, to name but a few. There is an increasing foreign presence in these regions and the stage is being set for the above-mentioned states to have a real cultural, demographic and political impact on local processes and situations. Ethnic communities, religious associations, and various foreign individuals are having a particular impact on the regions.

Demographic resources have suffered most. The threats being created by this domestic political issue have already been listed in the previous chapter (7.1). In our foreign policy planning we still have not come to terms with the fact that we now have the sixth, and no longer the third, largest population in the world (after China, India, the US, Indonesia and Brazil).

A review of demographic resource estimates is obviously needed, at least in the areas of military and economic planning and migratory policy. A comparison with demographic growth-rates in other countries with similar-sized populations indicates that by 2015 Russia's present population growth-rate may result in the country losing its place among the ten largest countries of the world and being overtaken by countries whose names many Russians have only heard of anecdotally, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Iran, Ethiopia and Zaire.

Strange as it may seem, such a significant loss of demographic potential will not have a direct impact on foreign policy in the short or medium term, as it is more of a long-term problem. The country's population is still sufficiently large to preserve and maintain its unity as a community controlling a significant territory. Apprehension, as was mentioned before, is caused by the regions in direct proximity with the overflowing 'demographic reservoir' of China.

If one looks 50 years ahead, one cannot fail to see the dangers of Russia either ceasing to exist within its present borders or acquiring entirely new features and principles as a state system. We do not yet have ways of preventing such a danger. After all, one cannot seriously imagine an instrument of geopolitical restraint such as a nuclear weapon possibly being used against one's own territory even if it was occupied by other peoples.

In the 1990s one other factor began to have an active, albeit spontaneous, impact on Russia's foreign policy: ethno-denominational rates. Contrary to popular opinion, changes in these occur not so much on account of an alteration in the percentage share of one or another ethno-denominational group but as the result of an alteration in the territorial organisation of power, the adoption of new rights and powers by the national republics and the groundless declaration of citizens of a whole series of different nationalities as Muslims.

It is also gratifying that Russia's characteristically autonomous foreign policy has so far resisted the national lobbying on a federal level that took place in the 1990s. The fact

that the republics are gaining more sovereignty, however, creates real potential for the foreign policy process to be split up horizontally.

The denominational aspects of the demographic potential in the 1990s was manifest, first and foremost, in political and ideological discussions which focussed on identifying foreign policy actions with Christian or Muslim traditions. On a federal level, as a rule, there was a noticeable trend towards the continuity of policy actions with Christian traditions, whereas in a series of republics, part of the élite borrowed separate elements of a 'Muslim picture' of the world. The lack of any noticeable rapprochement between these two tendencies may have serious consequences.

Economic resources for conducting an effective foreign policy are at present highly scarce. The state of the country's economy has to be viewed, just as before, with a fair amount of pessimism. Economic development is to a significant extent built on the primitive exploitation and consumption of resources. After 10-12 years of stagnation all over the country, during which time the main funds became outdated and technology development ground to a halt and is, at best, currently at the same level as in the early 1990s, Russia is about to undergo a series of changes in its economic and technological cycle. The extent of the losses brought about by these changes should only be relatively limited if there continue to be favourable conditions in the foreign economic and financial sectors. Now that primary sources of energy are virtually the only export resource, Russia's economy and its foreign policy sphere are in an extremely vulnerable condition.

As yet, Russia has few positive aspects for integrating into the world economic system. Its interaction with international financial and economic structures consists essentially of relations between a creditor and a not very solvent borrower. A two per cent share in the world economy does not allow Russia to exercise economic influence on international relations, an influence which is most substantial and effective in the world today.

As far as realising foreign policy interests is concerned, the Russian economy is only able to solve regional tasks within the territory of the former USSR, where the Russian Federation is still the most powerful economic power, as well as separate Europe-oriented tasks with its far eastern neighbours.

The interaction of business and foreign policy is another serious problem. Unfortunately, only the energy and raw-materials sectors of the Russia economy can really lay claim to the role of a world-class key player. The positions of business in foreign policy issues are, therefore, also unclear and sketchy. If the foreign sphere of our economy becomes further diversified and more complex, if people in key positions increase their control and expand into specialized markets, and institutionalised relations are established with the key players of the world economy – first and foremost the EC – then the position of Russian business in issues of foreign policy will become even more complicated, competing with each other in foreign policy activities.

In the present situation the slogan 'foreign policy economisation' which originated from the latter days of the USSR remains, generally speaking, an empty phrase: economisation can only take place objectively, and Russian business must, first and foremost, make it happen. When Russian business drums up interests of its own, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be there to help make the most of them.

Modern-day Russia's military resources, if projected to foreign policy, may be evaluated in two ways. Russia is still a leading nuclear power whose might can only be matched by the US. One should, however, bear in mind that in economic terms the US is much better able to maintain, modernise and increase its potential than Russia. For instance, the US's GDP is ten to 12 times greater than Russia's. The GDP of each of the three other 'old' nuclear powers – Great Britain, France and China – is also several times greater than Russia's. So, if present trends continue, we shall lose our military parity with the US in ten years' time.

Considering the passive role of the nuclear factor and the impossibility of using it in our foreign policy activity, it can be regarded only as a status resource enabling our country to maintain its designation as a great power.

It is obvious that in evaluating the role and place of nuclear weapons the prevailing view in our country is still based on 'central nuclear balance', that is, rivalry with the US and mutually-guaranteed destruction potential. Russian foreign policy has drawn up no clear scenarios, other than declarative ones, of its response in respect of all the other states on the nuclear map of the world. In this respect Russia's lack of a perspicuous reaction to the appearance of two official new members – Pakistan and India – to the nuclear club, was revealing.

The expansion of NATO and the war in Yugoslavia clearly highlighted this lack of resources and military and political influence on international events. The significant problems accompanying the reforms of the Armed Forces over the past few years, and the army's active service in the first and second Chechen campaigns also give rise to a number of questions whose answers do not present a favourable picture.

Among its tasks the North-Caucasian military district, which is responsible for a zone that covers Chechnya, is supposed to hold in check a NATO force attacking from the south. This force includes Turkey, whose armed forces are 650,000 strong. The war in Chechnya has clearly shown, however, that Russia does not have effective fighting capacity available in this area, even with armed (mostly with infantry weapons) detachments numbering 15-20,000.

In view of the fact that the armed forces are an instrument of restraint – that is, a kind of materialised image of state power – one has to say that this image is considerably worn. The paradox here is that ordinary armed forces cannot carry out their set role of restraining the enemy without the right image. If one continues this logic to its natural conclusion, the image can only be fully reinstated as the result of a successfully waged

military operation, which in turn cannot actually happen unless the Armed Forces are reformed.

In general, the role of the military in Russia's foreign policy is set far too high. The country's military resources, which are much easier to maintain for relatively short periods of time than other resources, have begun to dominate Russia's foreign policy now that other resources have degenerated. Paradoxical as it may seem, as global military threats have subsided, military problems have gained paramount significance in Russia's foreign policy.

The country's information, propaganda and socio-cultural resources cannot be considered effective either. Safeguarding the Russian Federation's information security is particularly important in view of the fact that as an 'information society', the policies, economics, defence and other components of its national security are for the most part conditioned by the nation's intellectual development and the value-orientated judgements of the policy-making community. What's more, in modern conditions the prospects of a state organisation depend directly on its ability to support and defend the national system of values. It is precisely the threats to Russia's security in these spheres that are most fundamental when it comes to the long-term strategic parameters within which the Russian state system will function and develop. Of paramount importance here are the tasks of preserving the state's unity and guaranteeing the stability of the constitutional system, Russia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and stable relations between its different peoples.

A most striking illustration of the country's political and cultural divisiveness can be seen in the different interpretation given to the same events by various ethnic and religious communities, separate territorial communities and social groups. The different aims being formulated at the same time make it harder to develop an integral economy, and threaten to destroy not only the Russian Federation's single social and cultural sphere, but its legal one as well.

A number of states are already implementing the ideas of information wars, which involve putting information and telecommunication systems out of action, and hacking into information resources.

Of the most fundamental significance in the cultural sphere are the value-oriented activities of international terrorist organisations and organisations providing international terrorism with a religious 'umbrella'.

Russian society's cultural and social aspects are becoming increasingly dependent on the global social and economic infrastructure, foreign information structures, international popular culture and the systems of values generated by them. The process of strengthening the Russian national identity has long since turned into a competition with foreign political, economic and other entities, a competition which we are so far mostly losing.

To a large extent, Russia is a target of intense information bombardment, rather than a participator in the world information system. The information system for propagating information abroad has remained at the same level as it was in the Soviet era. The unacceptable level of the Russian mass media's involvement in, and orientation towards, corporative, narrow-group interests is sharply reducing their effective role in foreign policy aims.

A particular danger is presented by the partial destruction of the national education system and fundamental and applied science, through an increase in the foreign impact on the modernisation and development processes of both the national education system and organisation of science. It can be seen both in the increasing 'brain drain' from Russia and in the attempts, at state policy level, to adopt foreign models for organising the education system and science, which are frequently at odds with the Russian tradition. The need to integrate Russian education and science into the world system, and their role in guaranteeing the competitiveness and potential of Russia's social and economic development, is provoking a

situation in which education and science are themselves becoming the focus of socio-cultural, information and value-orientated expansion and even aggression.

Russian institutional and diplomatic resources rate quite highly compared to other resources. Russia has a strong, professional foreign policy department. In the 1990s the Ministry of Foreign Affairs retained and increased its potential to a certain extent. The Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) which deals with accumulating and analysing foreign covert information, survived the break-up of the state security system quite well and has laid down new traditions in the activities of the Russian intelligence community.

In view of the strengthened foreign policy section of the work of the Ministry of Defence and General Staff, it has been possible to make a serious start on establishing Russia's military and political mutual co-operation with foreign countries and, first and foremost, the states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In the 1990s a number of departments – the Federal Security Bureau (FSB) , the Federal Border Service (FPS), the Federal Migratory Service (FMS), and the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MCS) – had to tackle problems of an international character, primarily in neighbouring countries. This enabled them to acquire the necessary experience and methods they had previously lacked.

In the last few decades a network of Russian foreign institutions were set up all over the world. Russia became a full member of most of the leading world and regional organisations, forums, and multilateral institutions. It should also be mentioned that in the early 1990s the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs picked up on the trend of organising sub-regional co-operation and our country began to take part in practically all the important sub-regional initiatives along it border perimeters.

However, in view of its objective features, Russia is unable to aspire to full participation in the multilateral elitist 'clubs' founded on common financial and economic interests. Its full

membership of the 'Big Eight' is obviously also a self-deceit.

For the time being, the only structures Russia still feels 'comfortable' with are the classical ones which were set up with the direct participation of the USSR, such as the United Nations and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. A number of successful new institutions have been set up including the Commonwealth of Independent States, a regional organisation in which Russia plays a dominant role, and other Russia-orientated and institutionalised formats of mutual cooperation in the post-Soviet territories.

This analysis is by no means complete and will undoubtedly be continued by our specialists in international relations. After all, foreign policy planning as a whole should always begin with an appraisal of one's own resources and not with a list of wishes one would like to see come true. Unfortunately, our country's foreign policy documents are based on brief outlines in which resources are not even mentioned. With such planning as this, the formulation of foreign policy interests and the setting of goals and targets acquire an instinctive, subjective character, and the interests, aims and targets become unrealistic and, therefore, unrealisable.

There is already enough evidence here to try and answer the question once more: what is Russia like in the world today? Anyone attempting a conceptual analysis of present-day international relations and foreign policy very often has to deal with sceptics who consider that on a historical scale a period of ten to 11 years is too short (which is all the time that has gone by since the virtual end of the Yalta-Potsdam system of international relations based on the bipolar predominance of the USSR and US). They consider that attempts to use it as a yard-stick to distinguish certain long-term trends and fundamental factors have produced few results.

This is not entirely true. If we look at the past experience of developing systems of international relations, we will see that the first ten years are, as a rule, the period in which the ideal model is transformed into a relatively stable and functional one.

True, this stage also very often causes disappointment to its organisers. So it was with international relations after World War I, and with the Yalta-Potsdam system.

Clearly, over the past decade, modern international relations have completed a transition from a confrontational model to one with new features, and the old bipolar structure is defunct. What's more, the existing world order inherited a significant share of international mechanisms from the Yalta-Potsdam system and, first and foremost, the UN's worldwide system, and a whole series of international principles of law, treaty commitments and so on. It is the co-existence of the traditional and the new that characterises international relations today. The paradox, then, is that when the political foundations of the Yalta-Potsdam world order were destroyed, the institutional and legal foundations of the old system were not brought down with them, for the latter, as it turned out, was more progressive than its political and ideological alter ego. This is also ensuring a peaceful transition from one system to another.

The change of eras has taken place without a large-scale conflict and with an equally impressive 'peace' and 'congress' consolidating the new world order. This is unique, if only in that there is no fixed 'standard' to start with which, strictly speaking, would have to be corrected and revised as it was in all the previous systems.

On the other hand, changes of such a kind may indicate that the world is actually moving towards a new paradigm of development, and an extensive conflict to remove the contradictions inside systems is no longer imperative. It is clear that the fate of the bipolar world was predetermined not only by the collapse of one of the superpowers but also by the emergence of new centres of power and the further complexity of the structure of international relations, which acquired an increasingly versatile character within the framework of the Yalta-Potsdam world order.

Domination in absolutely every sphere became problematic by the mid-1970s, even for superpowers. It is logical that such

domination is objectively impossible now if only because today's world is too complex and has an infinite quantity of mutually-conditioned dimensions. Indeed, the present world system is like a pyramid made up of a whole series of 'layers' and sectors, one on top of the other. Each of these sectors – economic, financial, technological, military and so on – has its own leading countries which are way ahead of the others.

Russia is at present virtually invisible in the economic sector but at the same time, with its status as a permanent member of the Security Council of the UN, acts as a 'magnetic pole' in the institutional and legal sector of the world system.

Russia also acts as a 'magnetic pole' in the military and strategic sector. If one considers the number of individual countries dominating various regions, one could come up with a whole list of candidates for similar roles. It is gratifying that Russia is making its presence felt here, too, by confidently leading the post-Soviet territories, playing a crucial role in the European direction, and becoming increasingly active in the Asia-Pacific region.

The modern world really is multipolar, but this multipolarity is not about hostile alignments, opposition to using force or nuclear parity. It is something more complicated. The modern world enables a whole series of countries to strive for an expansion of the sectors and regions where they, too, could become 'magnetic poles' some day. Russia definitely has such prospects.

With due regard for the resources and structures the country has available for its international relations today, its foreign policy profile may be formulated as follows: Russia is a leading regional power with territories in both Europe and Asia, and considerable potential for global influence on the world system, a potential based primarily on nuclear and institutional factors.

The current state of its foreign policy assets enables Russia to safeguard its vital interests and impact upon certain world processes of a strategic nature. The country's domestic potential, in theory, enables Russia to become one of the 'magnetic poles'

of the world economy and, consequently, to strengthen its international position as a whole.

It is actually better for us not to set our sights too high and avoid a definition of 'superpower'. Otherwise, unjustified optimism and false pride could result in an unrealistic foreign policy, and unrealisable goals and expectations.

8.2 Foreign policy ideology and possible orientations for Russia's foreign policy

A search for Russia's strategy of action in the new world must start with ideology. Foreign policy is not a self-sufficient and isolated area of state activity, and strategic aims must be translated into reality with due regard for all the aspects of the country's internal development.

Since the early 1990s, Russian society has been without a single set of criteria for assessing Foreign policy events. Assessments of the modern world have tended to be mainly eclectic, and it has become evident that not only society as a whole but separate individuals also have a great many contradictory aims. These aims come from ideas ranging from inherently traditional empiricism to a patently self-defeatist way of thinking. Russian society and the élite have still to grasp a whole range of subjects in international relations today. This is due partly to our society having being closed for a long period of time and partly to our excessive attention to domestic issues in the 1990s.

Having lost its old ideology, Russia no longer has a basis for new long-term global orientations, and apart from adhering to universal values, cannot come up with any new ideas. However, ideology may turn out to be a genuine resource for foreign policy and could provide an essential means of uniting the nation in a common understanding of their place in the world and the tasks for developing the country. Any society is bound to lose out against other competitors and fail to retain a decisive influence on global political processes, unless it presents the rest

of the world with some ideas on development and shares its values and ideals.

Only an ideology with truly unbiased international elements, which cuts across national borders, can become a resource in foreign policy. These include mega-ideologies such as liberalism and the religious ideas of Christianity and Islam. Communist ideology also belongs to this list.

By losing our national ideology, we have deprived ourselves of a very powerful and strictly functional resource. In the well-known 'mice' pattern used as a recruiting principle in intelligence, 'm' stands for 'money', 'c' for 'compromise', 'e' for 'ego' (a motivation connected with something in a person's private life) , and 'i' for 'ideology'. In my opinion, the Russian Security Service cannot count on this 'i' at all as it no longer exists.

A paradoxical situation has emerged in Russian politics today. The élite, and society at large, holds predominantly outmoded ideological notions which surfaced when the layer of communist ideology was removed. Take, for instance, the invented dilemma of 'who to be friends with' – the East or the West – which echoes the futile and mainly fabricated arguments of irreconcilable people. Then there is the popularity of a different sort of geopolitical idea with 'borderlands' and 'heartlands' dug out of the refuse heaps of history. This also comes from the lack of a modern vision of the world in the absence of the all-embracing communist idea.

Society and the élite have not succeeded in borrowing to any significant degree either Western liberalism or Western social democratic ideas. What we have instead are ideas about a 19th century model of a great power which, unlike communist and liberal ideologies, have nothing useful or practical for the sphere of foreign policy, and moreover, lack an international element. This element is highly favoured by the ruling élite, because it removes a whole series of political and psychological complexes which make foreign policy insufficiently manageable and therefore render it incompatible with the modern world.

Foreign policy ideology should not, however, aspire to replace the ideas of foreign policy. Its role consists of designating the long-term orientations and general scenarios for their achievement. Reflections about the future should be based on an adequate understanding of the present. Foreign policy ideology should not concern itself with vulgar futurology or the 'national idea'.

When conjuring a picture of international relations and Russia's place in it, we must focus not so much on an ideal, although it must undoubtedly figure in our ideas of the world as much as possible. If Russia's present position in the world is observed from these viewpoints, what seems the most false idea is that Russia as a country is falling victim to globalisation.

In a decade of being actively involved in the world's political and economic system, Russia has shown that it has retained all its specific (sometimes excessively specific) features and is also able consciously to regulate its involvement in various aspects of globalisation.

The problem firstly concerns the quality of strategic planning and prognosis of foreign activity and – yet again – the stability of the country's domestic, social and economic development. In Russia's case, the issue is mainly about Russia's involvement in modern multilateral relations in the economy, finance and world trade.

In principle, we do not have a problem as far as humanitarian and cultural differences are concerned. And there is certainly no rift between us and the group of the most developed, civilised countries. We Russians can talk as much as we like about the uniqueness of the Russian Orthodox civilisation but when we open a book by Dante, Shakespeare, Maurois, Remarque or Fitzgerald we can quite effortlessly understand the system of values which the typically 'Western' heroes of these works live by. And it is not because we are good at working these things out but simply because we all live by the same system of basic values – though we often do not notice, or even refute it.

The principal difference between Russia and the states of the Third World, which are also involved in the globalisation

process, is that their fairly brief experience of only a few decades of independent existence has not allowed their social structures to become sufficiently strong and stable. The impact of globalisation may twist these structures into the most distorted shapes, some of which may be dangerous for the rest of the world.

So we turn to the subject of the 'globalisation process' which has turned out to be less controllable than originally thought. First and foremost, this is because the developed countries, having opened information channels and communications on a human level with the developing world (the South), were unable to stop challenges being sent back through these same channels. Generally speaking, from the very outset, the developed countries of the North, which initiated globalisation, should have shown concern over the lack of a suitable environment for the growth of these challenges in the Third World countries, or destroyed their breeding grounds in time. But wisdom comes with experience. There was a time when nobody was afraid of the rising Mujahadin and Taliban, and turned a blind eye to the missile and nuclear exercises of dubious regimes who counted drug barons and brutal murderers among their allies.

The theory of mutual independence (and not just the South's dependence on the North) which was so popular in the 1960s and 1970s is working really hard in practice right now. Evidence of this can be seen in illegal immigration, drug-trafficking, and the spread of political Islamism in its most extreme forms. The culmination of it all, of course, was the terrible tragedy of September 2001. I will resist drawing banal and basically unjust conclusions to the effect that it was the cudgel of globalisation hitting its master, the US. All the countries of the developed world, including ours, acted imprudently and with lack of foresight. We only have to recall all the regimes we were friendly with and we no longer feel like blaming anyone else.

In its parameters, Russia is undoubtedly much closer to the developed countries of the North as far as relations to globalisation go. This should dictate specific foreign policy aims.

The uniqueness of Russia's position in the system of relations between the North and South, is partly enhanced by Russia's vast resource potential which mainly characterises the countries of the South, and its humanitarian, industrial, military and strategic potential, as well as its historical experience, which is characteristic of the countries of the North.

For just over ten years following the collapse of the confrontational bipolar system of international relations, the Russian foreign policy community and, to some extent, the world community, lived in the pleasantly relaxed belief that 'The terrible past is behind us now and any new problems can be solved as they crop up'.

Life turned out differently, however. It was not the fact that particular problems are successfully solved only when there is a general system for solving them. As already mentioned, the defunct Yalta-Potsdam system had left us with most of our legal and institutional mechanisms intact, including the UN.

After the collapse of the bipolar system of international relations, nobody tried to reform the mechanisms which had been created in the 1940s, because it was too dangerous. When the world's superstructure collapsed, its institutional framework had at least to be saved. The fact that this framework cannot go on bearing the weight of a new political system forever is another matter. And equally, the parameters of this structure are still not clear enough to be sure what the new institutions will look like.

Unfortunately, the search in the 1990s for a new set of instruments with which to regulate the world set off on the wrong track. The polycentric system which was evidently taking shape was unable to quash the attempts of a number of power groups to act as a sole referee in the world arena. The only 'surviving' superpower, the US, began striving to adopt the role of a sole leader, or at least a faultless referee, if not the world's policeman. This has resulted in the United States using entirely unacceptable methods to regulate international relations, such as the exertion of pressure using force and direct military action.

This drive to gain control of the world's political arena is hampering progress in the formation of a system for regulating world affairs collectively.

Despite the fact that the results of regulating international affairs unilaterally have proved negative, the US continues to force its policy through, even though such action may cause the reverse effect and provoke other players in the international system into acting in a unilateral and essentially anti-American manner. These players are primarily a new breed of non-state representatives, and this may result in a serious unbalancing of the entire system.

That in turn could result in the adoption of entirely unacceptable methods of regulating international relations, such as the threat of force and its direct use. Unfortunately, similar attitudes are making themselves felt in the Russian élite as well. It is gratifying, however, that they are having no more than a marginal effect on the foreign policy community.

Generally speaking, the efforts of any country or group of countries to gain control of the world's political arena hamper the progress in establishing a system for regulating world affairs collectively, which is the best method in this very complex world. The importance of this task cannot be overemphasised. The removal of international confrontation on a global scale caused the unbalancing of the world system and activated a whole series of conflicts, many of which had been smouldering unnoticed for some time but whose expansion had been prevented by the superpowers.

The breeding grounds of conflicts in the modern world, even in far-flung places away from the centres of world development, have an impact on the political, economic and social life of countries who are seemingly not directly involved in the conflict. A graphic example of this is the ethnic conflict in Yugoslavia which, at its height, affected the security of the entire European continent, Russo-American relations, and contributed entirely new features to the development of the political situation in Russia. The fact that localised conflicts swiftly acquire

international significance is one of the most dangerous features of present-day international relations. Crude 'police-like' interference from outside merely aggravates conflicts.

The only way forward is for international regimes to introduce ways of preventing and ending conflicts, ways that are based on the co-ordinated actions of the world community, a commitment to the norms of international law, and a determination to prevent their violation, no matter how well the reasons for this violation are argued.

Furthermore, there is no equivalent institution to the UN at present and none is envisaged. The UN itself is purely a modern version of the pre-war League of Nations, and this worldwide inter-governmental organisation will remain the principal instrument for world regulation for some considerable time to come. For the time being 'club diplomacy', notwithstanding its effectiveness in individual sectors of world politics and economics, cannot aspire to this role. Even with all their conspicuous self-confidence, the magnificent 'Big Seven/Eight' have no intention of aspiring to replace the UN.

In such a situation there is a need to undertake a radical restructuring of the UN. The world community should show a new commitment to this institution, certainly in view of the redistribution of the 'old' states' plenary powers. To a considerable extent, this problem has to do with the size and calibre of the UN Security Council, and the procedures for passing resolutions in this body.

Of no less significance is the UN's role in co-ordinating world economic development as the most crucial index of the world today. A more effective and powerful UN (primarily at Security Council level) may reassess the idea of having real control over the world's economic and financial systems. While formally working within the framework of the 'UN Family', the World Bank and International Monetary Fund group are in actual fact independent, and subordinate only to individual group interests which adhere unilaterally to a super-liberal economic idea.

The UN Security Council, with the possible entry of new

permanent members who are also major economic powers in the world such as India and Japan, plus certain other countries who represent the pooled resources of leading countries of the Third World, and possibly a single EC representative, might really succeed in co-ordinating the UN's economic and political set of instruments and use it to solve problems of a truly common nature.

Obviously, when we speak of the reform of the UN and particularly the Security Council, we have to analyse the consequences for Russia. At the same time, we also have to remember that the deterioration of the role of the UN and Security Council in the world system would mean that Russia would lose one of its most vital institutional resources. For the time being we are unable to compensate for this loss through the workings of various clubs. Our part in the informal mechanisms of developed countries is either unsubstantial, or totally dependent on the will of the other members who have allowed us into these clubs.

In such a situation it is probably better to share some of one's exclusive rights at Security Council level and generally increase one's real gain from these rights and privileges, rather than wait for them to be secured along with the role of the Security Council.

Economic factors of global politics are also having an increasingly significant role in the world today. The world economic system may, and indeed should, become more flexible as far as its regulation is concerned. The complexity of the world economy and its increasing proportions show that it is inadmissible for the dollar to be the only world reserve currency. The world cannot allow itself to be so dependent on the condition of the sole, albeit very large and, in principle, stable economy of the US. Several currencies should be used as means of accumulating and safeguarding world currency reserves.

It is pleasing to note that several currency zones are presently being set up, and one of them, the Euro zone, has already been launched. The issue now is how fast it will expand and how

strong it will prove. The close collaboration between Russia and the EC and the Euro zone should be seen as definite insurance against the all-powerful yet unstable dollar. What's more, because of its fairly close economic ties with the EC, primarily in the energy sphere, Russia has serious instruments of influence on the 'insurer'. We do no have such opportunities as far as the dollar and the US are concerned.

Another currency zone, that of the Asia-Pacific region, is also taking shape. Whether its currency will be Japanese yen or Chinese yuan remains to be seen. Perhaps it should be turned into a bi-currency zone. It is clear that, as far as economic potential is concerned, China's prospects are better than Japan's and, consequently, so are the advantages of China's currency. The crisis in Asia showed that the stability of the yen, which had strengthened over the previous ten years on account of the new economy, could not be relied upon. With the powerful backing of the Chinese state, the yuan was the only major currency of the Asia-Pacific region not to have been devalued. The launch of a yuan zone or even a yuan-yen zone will obviously result in the Asiatic economic order acquiring a new outline and this, in turn, will correct the world economic order.

Discussions about the world economic order from Russia's vantage point always touch on the country joining the World Trade Organisation. It is undoubtedly foolish to remain outside the framework of a virtually worldwide network of 'free trade' (this is put in inverted commas, as it would certainly be difficult to find another more regulated mechanism than the WTO). However, it would be equally foolish to sacrifice everything just for the sake of joining.

We must look very carefully at how the European Union upholds its interests, and not just in run-of-the-mill trade wars but also how the EC fixes its long-term interests and, in particular, its preferential trade relations with former colonies and other countries of interest to it. We should remember our dreams of integrating into the Commonwealth of Independent States, which would theoretically be possible if we joined the WTO.

When speaking about globalisation and the global system of international political and economic relations and institutes, we must not forget about another process: regionalisation, the process of rapprochement on a regional level and the formation of more closely-interconnected models of the world system. The most striking example of this is Europe, where around the nucleus of the European Union is a distinctive expanding zone of political and economic ties and institutes which is continuously spreading over all the European and Euro-Asian regions.

Russia, which has indisputable advantages in a series of regional directions (CIS, for instance), must treat these processes more attentively. By integrating successfully into the regional processes, or perhaps even forming them 'around oneself', one eventually ends up joining the system of global relations in a more successful manner.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union presented the republics of the former USSR with the choice of either starting the process of forming a new international political region or joining one of the others that already existed. The latter opportunity was fully taken up by the Baltic countries, which clearly set their sights on being integrated into the institutional network of European relations and are now poised to join the EU. On the way they have picked up many problems of their own making. What these problems are really about is common knowledge. As for the other states, such an opportunity is unlikely to come their way in the foreseeable future. For objective reasons, none of the regions bordering the CIS has so far been able to absorb, other than marginally, any of the states which emerged after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. This is partly due to the fact that the countries along its foreign borders had their own international and political identity eroded in the early 1990s, and various internal processes occurring in them at the time reduced their 'absorbing' potential.

With all this in mind, it is impossible to make any worthwhile prognosis of international structural changes in the region in the

mid-term. An open question also remains in the long-term: how long-term is the post-Soviet international political region? Is it going to develop into another region? In principle, we can see that such processes may take place. Take, for instance, the international political region of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), which emerged as such after the disintegration of the socialist union and then gradually began to dismantle itself as a result of drawing closer to the EU countries.

The emergence of an international political region in post-Soviet territory was thus objectively predetermined, and so, too, was the minimum number of institutionalised mechanisms for organising it. This, in turn, is explained by the fact that it comprises countries which, despite all the losses they have suffered, still conduct themselves in an appropriate manner on the international political scene. The élites of these countries used to be part of the Soviet system which, over half a century, actively set the standards and traditions of contemporary international conduct, and as representatives of one of the two superpowers 'approved' what the other members of the international community had to offer.

The Commonwealth of Independent States is now an inseparable element of the Euro-Asian political system – which does exist, regardless of variously held views to the contrary. The CIS ensures that the institutional, organisational and, to a certain extent, standard legal procedures concur in the Commonwealth states. Obviously, the Commonwealth is an 'umbrella organisation' whose function is to give basic structure to the territory of the former USSR. Discussions about the lack of need for CIS are on the same unprofessional level as those about the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe or the United Nations, and derive from an erroneous approach to international relations. In no way is the CIS worse than any other regional organisation, although there is still some way to go before its member states are fully integrated and unified.

The best strategic line for the Commonwealth's development consists of keeping its main framework in working order while

integrating and developing its individual sectors in formats of variable sizes and at different speeds.

In discussions about formats within the Commonwealth's framework, concerns are often raised regarding their potentially destabilising role in the CIS's overall relations, frequently without taking into account the problem of 'mega-formats'. Increasingly evident in the CIS (and in Russia's foreign policy on the CIS), is the problem of the autonomisation of the Commonwealth's Asiatic and European flanks as the Asiatic block has strengthened its internal unity. In this context unity does not mean 'due interconnection and coherence of parts', it means a considerable number of challenges and directions of interaction which are at the same time a priority for all the states of this southern 'mega-format'. The Caspian Sea is an important unifying factor.

The subsequent autonomisation of these two flanks raises the issue of its feasibility within the framework of a single international and political region. International relations on the Central Asian and Trancaucasian flank are much more dynamic than on the European one. As has already been mentioned, this is explained by the fact that several objectively interconnected regions – Central Asia, the Trancaucasian region (or, more precisely, the Caucasus), the Near and Middle East and Southern Asia – have re-established geopolitical unity.

The European flank theoretically had a chance of reuniting with the Central and Eastern European region, provided its forecasted development proved satisfactory and the CEE continued to function subsequently as an independent international and political entity. But it is presently turning into a limitrophic belt along the borders of the expanding EU.

Strange as it may seem, it is this 'divisiveness' that may turn into a serious threat for the Commonwealth in the future. In this context, a search for a consensus is becoming not so much a problem of 'Russia and the state of CIS', as that of 'the European state of CIS and the Asiatic state of CIS'.

For any region, including the CIS, to function normally, there

have to be mechanisms in place for responding to threats and challenges of a military nature. These days, collective security acts as such a type of mechanism. It does not presuppose so much a collective reaction to aggression against the members of a foreign allied force, as the potential to avert forcible military instability issuing from within its own union. This might have been caused by differences of opinion among its member states as well as ethno-national religious conflicts, large-scale terrorist acts, civil wars, humanitarian catastrophes and so on. As the leading power of the post-Soviet territories, Russia is the most interested member of the potential system of collective security in the CIS and is fully capable of developing this system with maximum regard for its own national interests. However, when speaking of collective security in the CIS, we must not only confine ourselves to the framework of states which concluded the Treaty on collective security.

Relations with the countries of the former USSR also concern the problem of the Russian ex-patriot communities which have yet to be appropriately reflected in our foreign policy. Unlike traditional ex-patriot communities in the rest of the world, the new Russian ones are still in the long and drawn-out process of being formed. At the same time, there are strong doubts that they share a common identity with the Russian-speaking citizens of the former USSR. Over the past 11-12 years, a natural breakdown in the communities has been taking place as former Soviet citizens abroad have stopped gathering together in local societies and a whole generation has grown up without having opportunity to mix with people from the same cultural backgrounds as their parents. The communities are also disintegrating because there is no dominant age-group among them. They may only get stronger where the children who were born abroad have grown up.

The communities are presently in the process of forming an identity and formulating their attitudes to Russia. It is therefore extremely important for Russia's foreign policy concerning them to be as consistent and well-formed as possible. Otherwise, it is

not impossible that these independent communities will cease to exist as such.

During its formation, the CIS overcame the primitive approach of 'integration or disintegration'. The processes taking place in the Commonwealth are of a more complex nature. Relations within the post-Soviet territories are becoming fully-fledged international ones. This is evidence that it is becoming an international region with the CIS playing a role in its initial structuring. And this role is not over yet. The European aspect of Russian foreign policy is, to my mind, its second most important priority.

International relations in Europe continue to determine the development of the world situation as a whole. The conjectures about the crisis in Europe are most likely fabrications of the sated European intelligentsia and their envious peers in Russia. Western Europe in the 1990s entered a definitive phase in its formation as a new player in international relations – that is, as an integrated union which includes all the aspects of vital activity of traditional states. This is a real achievement of the 'system' whose role will become clearer in the foreseeable future.

The European subsystem of international relations is, as a whole, the most institutionalised one in the world today. In principle, they may be regarded in Europe as the co-relation of three different sets of relations, or tracks: the pan-European, represented by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe; the Western European, represented by the EC (and partly the Council of Europe) and the Euro-Atlantic, personified by NATO. The 'autonomy' of individual countries in Europe is constantly being reduced. The politics of any state in the European subsystem may be regarded from the vantage point of its relationship with any of the three different tracks and its conformity to the dynamics of the dominant track and, consequently, its ability to relate to the international political situation. As for Russia, its unique position within the European subsystem is in a way similar to that of the US, allowing it to choose which track to give priority to, instead of simply

submitting to its dynamics. In other words, Russia's freedom of choice in its activities in Europe is greater than any other state's. Its main concern is how to use it.

Russian's European identity can hardly be disputed. Most of our country's population live in its European part. The most dynamic individuals among Russia's commercial élite and Russia's young people are all Europe-oriented. In this respect we are an absolutely stable power with resource advantages which may ensure that Russia's interests are fully realised. Russia does not have any insoluble or objective differences of opinion with any European country. Tensions in relations with Europe only arise because of our territorial proximity, intertwined interests and shared strategic security zones. Russia's historical ties with the countries of Europe are exceedingly well-established both bilaterally and multilaterally. And no objections, not even references to 'the Kaliningrad issue', can affect the objectivity of this observation.

The Asia-Pacific region is as important in international relations today as the Euro-Atlantic one. The dynamism of this region's development is giving it a chance to become a world leader. Unfortunately, the position of the former USSR and Russia has always been complex in this region. The region is of undoubted interest to Russia and, even geographically, the presence of Russia in this region is extremely significant. However, there are still insufficient opportunities for Russia to realise its interests in the region. After World War II the region's political map was mostly created in Washington which predetermined the orientations of the Asia-Pacific region towards the US and ensured Russia's marginal significance in the region. In this context, Russia's renewed collaboration with China and Japan, improved relations with South Korea and inclusion in the institutional mechanisms (the Asia and Pacific Economic Council and the Asiatic Federal Intelligence Service) of the Asia-Pacific region can only be welcomed. On the other hand, the collapse of the economic potential of Russia's far east region questions the ultimate expediency of this activity. What

good are all these ties and improved relations when one's own region is trapped in appalling poverty and cut off from the rest of the country's social and economic trends? Against the backdrop of a dynamically-growing China, the situation gives rise not only to regret but to certain apprehension as well.

As far as our policies in the region were concerned, I always used to be surprised and dismayed by our state officials' approach to the issue of concluding a peace treaty with Japan. A peace treaty cannot be an end in itself for Russian diplomacy, as is often supposed today. From the viewpoint of international law, the propaganda cliché to the effect that the absence of such a treaty is almost tantamount to a state of war, is totally groundless. It is therefore advisable to proceed from the necessity to conclude a peace, friendship, and co-operation treaty which should really be all about cooperation. The treaty could, and even should, be concluded with a whole series of issues, such as those concerning territory, being passed over in silence. And there should be no speeding up of the preparation of the treaty on our part, or attempts to get maximum advantages from it. Any discussion of issues concerning territorial concessions during the drawing up of this treaty and future ones is absolutely inappropriate and will only cause a series of similar demands on the part of other states. As far as the motivations of foreign policy actions are concerned, it is essential to proceed from the premise that Russia does not have a territorial problem. The fact that the problem exists in the heads of a number of Japanese politicians should not worry us that much.

The Near and Middle East is one of the most contradictory regions for Russian foreign policy. Despite serious attempts to penetrate and consolidate its position in the region, neither the former Soviet Union nor present-day Russia has been able to match the influence of the US or even the EU. At present, the geopolitical unity of the regions of the Near and Middle East, the Trancaucasian region and Central Asia, is being rapidly restored. When the confrontational model of international

relations disintegrated, so did the barriers separating the southern Soviet republics and the countries of the Mediterranean basin.

Turkey and Iran played key roles as events unfolded in Central Asia and the Trancaucasian region. This is clearly evident in the situation which has developed around the Caspian energy resources. A network of pipes which will potentially run from Russia's southern borders to the ports in the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, and from Kazakhstan to Novorossisk will create even more intensive collaboration. The highly controversial interests of western Europe and the US are also tied up in this project.

The energy-resources industry is not the only sphere in which these regions have been collaborating since their geopolitical unity was restored. The states of the Near and Middle East today have a strong and sometimes dominant political and ideological influence on the republics of Central Asia and the Trancaucasian region, as well as Russia's Central Caucasus region, the Muslim republics of the European part of Russia and even Ukraine, by way of the Crimean Tartars. In this way, the Near and Middle Eastern region is drawing closer and starting to play an entirely new role in the post-Soviet territories. The most active and dangerous aspect of this proximity is the spread of Islamic extremism, which is one of the most serious obstacles to beneficial collaboration with the countries of the region.

Russia is now an objective of the foreign policy of this region's countries. This is a completely new situation for us to be in, and one which we must first recognise and then eliminate in a purposeful manner. What's more, a situation has arisen in which Russia has virtually no ally in the region to act as an effective channel for advancing Russia's interests. A fundamental problem of Russia's foreign policy in the Near and Middle East is that we are a strategic rival of the region's richest countries in the primary-energy-source market. Having identical resources means that Russia has at least to come to a minimal agreement on its foreign economic activity with the countries of OPEC and,

firstly, with the countries of the Persian Gulf who are jointly represented by the Council for Cooperation of the Arab states of the Persian Gulf. Saudi Arabia is the most influential member of this Council, and mutual relations with Saudi Arabia cannot possibly be established until it loses its status as a major sponsor of political Islamism.

Southern Asia is increasingly becoming a focal point of the world community's attention. As a region it has at least three groups of problems to contend with, and the way these problems develop may impact on the rest of the world. The first obvious problem is the situation in Afghanistan. The forcible removal of the Taliban regime from power has most certainly opened windows of opportunity for the country's rebirth. However, it is quite possible for there to be relapses of instability which are bound to have repercussions for the territories of the CIS. The Taliban based Afghanistan's economic survival on the production and trafficking of drugs. Where is the guarantee that this will be stopped? So far, Karzai's government has no other way (besides UN humanitarian aid) of providing the population with a basic means of survival. The mass-production of drugs will inevitably result in Afghanistan being classed as a failed state, run along similar lines to the criminal Taliban regime, prepared to harbour all kinds of scum within its territory.

Such gloomy prospects are inevitable unless real long-term measures are taken to revive the Afghan economy. Our country could play a serious role, with its considerable experience of mutual relations, a vast Afghan ex-patriot community, and, most importantly, a direct interest in the stability of its southern borders. Because of its unique position as a UN Security Council member and the major partner of the Central Asian republics, Russia has the potential to expand its economic and political role in the task of building a new Afghanistan.

Obviously, Moscow is not going to be motivated simply by altruistic considerations and neighbourly goodwill. Russia's interests lie in localising and eliminating the challenges to its security issuing from Afghanistan, such as drug trafficking,

political extremism and illegal and criminalised migration. Various devices may be employed to deal with these, one of which is unique. Russia's constant use of the power transport routes across Afghanistan's territory to Southern Asia is bringing investment to the region, stabilising the country and reducing the powerful conflict tension in the region as a whole, by strengthening mutually advantageous co-operation.

The second most serious problem is the increasing religious radicalism in such countries as Pakistan and India. While there are plenty of discussions and generally correct assessments of the threats posed by this process, the increasingly strong Hindu radicalism in India is only given a cursory mention. It is as yet only vaguely acknowledged by the world community, accustomed to viewing India through the prism of Gandhi and Nehru's peace-loving philosophy, but quite soon we may find that a significant number of India's élite have very different principles from those of the founding fathers of modern India. It is still unclear how likely it is that this tendency will be surmounted and what its potential impact might be on international relations.

The third most serious problem, which is the subject of much discussion and thought but which unfortunately, does not have a chance of being solved for a long time to come, is the problem of Pakistan and India's nuclear capability. Here Russia's foreign policy deserves a rebuke, for it is probably even less willing to answer questions on this subject than the other leading member of the nuclear weapons club, the US. To a significant extent this is the natural result of our failure to control the momentum of the 'central nuclear balance' in the 1990s. We still think in terms of the number of missiles and warheads in US possession. Our idea of the mosaic nuclear map of the world is now obviously unrealistic and out of date.

Many readers will be wondering when there is going to be a discussion of relations with the US and why it has been left to the very end of this section. There are several reasons for this. As a power which is present in the greatest number of sectors of

international relations, the US has been mentioned in virtually every paragraph. That's 'ubiquitous' Uncle Sam for you! However, I have intentionally not embarked upon an interpretation of the regional and national aspects of Russia's relations with the US. The reason for this is partly that the role of Russia's strictly bilateral relations with the US has, to my mind, been somewhat exaggerated in comparison with Europe or the CIS, in which relations are truly full-fledged and multifaceted. What's more, the tradition of Soviet-Russian foreign policy confirms the fact that when we begin sharply to increase activity in our relations with the US, we lack the resources to attend to policies in other directions. In the euphoria of our friendship with the US we forget about other partners and contractors.

We still closely adhere to an erroneous and unrealistic logic which argues that since we are a superpower, the only partner worthy of us is another superpower – the US. But as has already been mentioned, Russia today can no longer be called a 'superpower', so this alone disproves the logic of the argument. The only 'superpower' aspect remaining in our relations with the US is the strategic arms issue. Sadly, other aspects of our relations, in the economic sphere, for example, are clearly being developed well below that level.

The United States is a unique country. Its economy is one of the central elements of the world's economy while its share is 15-20 per cent. This is both an advantage and a disadvantage, since the degree of US dependence on the outside world is so high. Efforts to make this dependence unilateral are precisely what cause 'policing' tendencies to appear in US policies.

The US today is also unique because it is practically the only major country which is now undergoing a radical change to its internal profile. The massive increase in the Afro- and Latin-American communities as a percentage of the population, alongside the increasing popularity of Islam, and against a backdrop of excessive amounts of political correctness, are changing the face of American society. How long these changes can

continue without acute or open social conflict remains to be seen.

It is also obvious that the changes in its internal profile are bound to have a grave impact on the course of US foreign policy. Throughout the 1990s, a fundamental shift in influence took place within the upper echelons of the American élite in favour of new social strata. The process is continuing in George W. Bush's administration. It is to a significant degree the instability (compared to the period of 1950-1980) of the upper stratum of the American élite that is causing the lack of consistency in American foreign policy. President Bush cannot take the blame for this. He is simply trying to swim in a turbulent maelstrom of conflicting currents. There are no definite guarantees that his successor, even if Mr Bush serves two terms of office, will find himself in a more favourable position.

The third unique feature of the US today is that, notwithstanding all its grave domestic uncertainties and instability, it is taking on two roles at the same time – as the world's policeman and its pastor. In the latter role, it also acts as a preacher delivering sermons to the world on how it should live. The role of student, according to Washington, should be played by the likes of Europe, Russia and the other not entirely backward parts of the world community and certainly not by the rogue-states, who are to be taught special lessons. The US is getting increasingly like the Soviet Union during its latter years of stagnation in that, while having exceedingly serious problems on its home front, it went on teaching all those around it how to lead their lives. Those were the years when President Reagan called upon the USSR to become a 'normal country'. Now it is our turn to call upon the US to do just that.

Does all this mean that we should become anti-American or speak out against the development of Russo-American relations? Certainly not. In any case, no matter what the US is like in the foreseeable future, Washington is still Russia's contractor in such areas as strategic weapons and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, global security, international finances, and ecology.

We must however, abandon the primitive approach of ignoring the US's negative side when we are on good terms with it, and only noticing its bad side when problems crop up in our relations. Not only must the US become a 'normal' country but we too must change our attitude to the US and look at it in a calm, rational and normal way.

We shall only succeed in correcting and changing US foreign policy through constant collaboration with Washington, and 'tutoring' it – that is, sharing our knowledge of crucial trends in the world – no matter how unpleasant this often is. If we are to put our bilateral relations on a more stable footing, we must first make them more comprehensive and versatile, and not restrict our discussions to the military and strategic matters still dominating Moscow and Washington's agenda.

Conclusion

Nearly two years have gone by since the events of 11 September 2001 in the United States: a moment which has often been called the turning point of the new millennium, the point at which its real, as opposed to its calendar date, really began. During that time, the world has become neither more predictable nor more safe. The tragic acts of terrorism in Moscow, Indonesia and Israel and most recently the conflict in Iraq, serve only to strengthen the sense that we stand at a frontier in history. They underline how close the world has come to the edge of the abyss, and demonstrate the extent of the dark powers of chaos and destruction which stand before us.

The task I set myself in writing this book was to reflect on the present state of the world and the direction we are taking; to consider the dangers that threaten us and see what the possibilities for mankind really are. To achieve this purpose I have thought it essential to approach my judgements with an open mind. They can and should be examined critically and amplified. In the end, I hope we can establish some kind of common denominator which will provide a general understanding of the tasks we all must tackle.

After the dark days of October 2002 in Moscow I added much to my manuscript, and re-wrote a great deal of it. Some of the ideas and thoughts contained in this book derive directly from the reflections prompted by those dreadful days and hours. The main conclusion that emerged from my sleepless nights was that a new epoch had begun for all of us — one in which action must take precedence over reflection. What I would like is for this book to become a stepping-stone on the path to finding an answer to the main question which history now poses to us.

We are faced with the need to determine how much time will be allotted to us in the coming millennium, and whether mankind will find the will and the intelligence to last for another century, in order to give our grandchildren the chance to see a new sunrise.

We have reached a stage in the development of civilisation where the future will have to be fought for. But we really do have the power of choice, which in itself represents the greatest hope that humanity can hold on to. We have to attain a new level of development, to acquire a true sense of existence, a new culture of peace, and a culture of life.

There are too many of us, and we are too different from one another. Our world at present is unjust and cruel. But our home, Planet Earth, is also too fragile to contain us. In the face of our creator and of eternity, we are too small to allow the destruction of what we ourselves did not create. We must not be allowed to remove the memory of our ancestors and to deny the future to those who will follow after us.

For the epigraph for my book I chose the words of the great philosopher Immanuel Kant: 'Creating the world is not the work of a moment, but of eternity'. We do have time to change, and to find solutions, though not perhaps very many. But there is no doubt that the creation of such a world is the greatest and most worthy goal before all of us, for the whole of mankind itself.

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Mayor Yuri Luzhkov of Moscow has made his reputation nationally and globally for transforming the capital of Russia. All the while, he has been pondering deeply the imminent fate of man.

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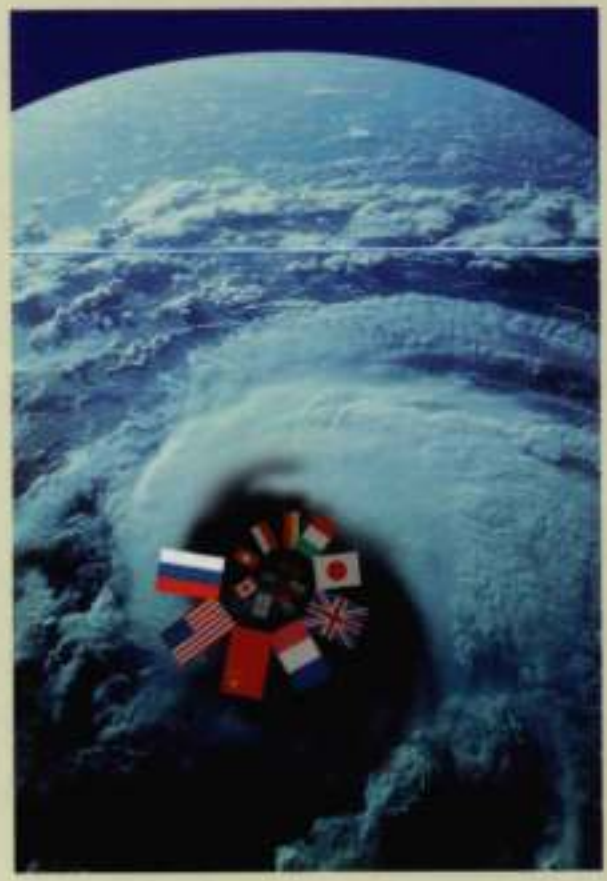

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