

*Egidijus Vareikis**

Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania

World Future Mapping and Scenarios for the 21st Century

The aim of this text is to describe the methods of future studies, its possibilities and limitations, as well as to make some predictions about the real picture of the development of the 21st century. However, the planning is still not very reliable, and far from a “road map” framework. Thus, future studies are still balancing between science and scientific/artistic fiction. The set of methods of future investigation permits one to compose a few or even up to dozens of medium term or long term scenarios of the world’s future. There are a few well-proven laws of social and economic development as well as some partially predictable phenomena in the area of environment, biology, human ethic, etc. No future planning is secure from unpredictable phenomena – “black swans” – and their impact, nor secure from “political decisions” that destroy natural developments in society. So no one scenario can pretend to be absolutely right. The most frequent future scenarios are based on the wish to implement a copy of an existing “happy nation”, to fight undesirable trends, and create some kind of “dream society” while stimulating positives and inhibiting negative trends. The final version of a scenario depends also upon the “human factors”, e.g. knowledge, stereotypes of thinking, as well as the wishes of those who are financing the project. Generally they are “happy end” projects. This makes scenarios rather useless. Only the independent experts that present more realistic and reliable scenarios can help in the planning of medium term and long term futures. Currently many scenarios foresee the so-called American or European way of development, which is in fact the continuation of the existing world order. There is a growing number of publications about the emergence of China (and Russia) as a great power as well as possibilities of a New Caliphate, New Messiah or new Orwellian style regimes.

Introduction: Future Prediction – between Fantasy and Science

There are many discussions about the events and situations that we can expect in the twenty-first century. The scale of prediction varies from totally optimistic to completely negative. Society has been threatened in the past with nuclear annihilation and the possibility of space intruders. Now ecological and

* *Dr. Egidijus Vareikis* is a Member of the Seimas (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania.

Address for correspondence: Gedimino ave. 53, LT-01109 Vilnius, Lithuania. Tel.: +370 5 2396606,
e-mail: egidijus.vareikis@lrs.lt

energy disasters are the main threats.¹ These are, however, technical issues, and they can be solved using modern technologies and by self-regulation of our population. The ideological, political and moral problems are more unpredictable. They often strive for non-realistic solutions, and the results of such solutions are far from being predictable. Despite the very complex situations, the strategists of politics and civilization history are trying to explain what we all should expect.² Thus the general scenarios for the future and special ones (emphasizing one particular area, such as climate change, development of education, energy supply, etc.) are created in large numbers.

One hot-button invention of recent years is so-called strategic thinking and strategic planning. This term covers the planning of development of countries and regions as well as the writing of short, middle term and long term strategies.³ Sometimes they look like fairytales, sometimes set of rules (currently generally called „the road map“).⁴ The internet is full of fairytales about the brilliant futures of countries and regions. This, however, diminishes the reliability of the writers, and it is necessary to find and draw a firm line between fiction writing and studies based on scientific methods.

The countries of the European Union did not resist the temptation to write their own strategies. A few years ago, the Lithuanian Parliament adopted the strategy “Lithuania 2030”. According to it the country should be happy, with smart administration, smart technologies and a smart society that adapts well to the global challenges.⁵ In brief, it is a smart state with a bit of Scandinavian spirit. The Polish strategy pays more attention to technological innovations. Latvians “look for happiness” in the securing of national heritage, and the Estonian dream is the natural environment that makes life healthy and pleasant. The Finnish strategy is marked by the wishes to have more services for what is really a hedonistic way of life. One can present the long lists of institutions, NGOs and different working groups preparing British, German or

¹ Tomas Lombardo, *Contemporary Futurist Thought: Science Fiction, Future Studies, and Theories and Visions of the Future in the Last Century*, Author House, 2006, 420 p.

² National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*. Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2012, 166 p., <http://www.dni.gov/nic/globaltrends>, 2014.12.15. Wider perspective at: <http://www.futuretimeline.net/>, 15.12.2014.

³ Henry Mintzberg, Joseph Lampel, Bruce Ahlstrand, *Strategy Safari: A Guided Tour Through The Wilds of Strategic Management*, Free Press, 2005, 410 p.

⁴ The kind of fairytale is the poetical story „Ruhnama“ („Book of Soul“) of former Turkmen president Niyazov about the brilliant future of his country (online (<http://www.ruhnama.info>, 17.12.2014)). The more serious is the 2050 vision of Kazakh president Nazarbayev, thought it is also more the geopolitical dream than the reflection of real possibilities (http://www.kazakhembus.com/in_the_news/president-nursultan-nazarbayevs-2014-the-state-of-the-nation-address, 17.12.2014).

⁵ Lithuania 2030, <http://www.lietuva2030.lt/>, 17.12.2014.

American plans for the future and writing various studies.⁶

All the “official” or stated requested strategies have at least two negatives that make them useless.

- Firstly, all they predict are optimistic results. No government will buy any study that predicts bad events during the ruling term of the government. It can be borrowed by tabloid press only. Real life, however, shows that there are not solely good times waiting in the future. It is rather the opposite. Thus, the strategy is a failure from the beginning.
- Secondly, the strategy has to be politically correct. It is doubtful, that any government would officially plan to increase its territory by taking land from neighbors and thus will apply war as the solution to its problems. It would be a scandal. History, however, teaches us that problems have been solved on the battlefield more frequently than with the methods of healthy competition. This also makes the official strategies worthless.

It is necessary to add that authors of these strategies like to limit themselves to short-term (not longer than ten years) future predictions that seem to be more realistic and produce more predictable results. The extrapolation of these results to a long term perspective, however, generally leads to significant mismatches with reality.

If this is the situation, then who is able to write a realistic scenario and predictable history of the 21st century? Do we have any experts (independent of financial donors) who do not hesitate to say, “what we can expect”, and “which geopolitical dreams can become reality?” Sometimes we rely only on science fiction writers or a few respectable experts. Science fiction writers have a right to create fictions according their fantasies; but the political scientist always has an argument to explain why reality differs from a prediction made few years ago. We have to reject the view that futurology is not a scientific discipline and only a fairytale world belonging to some sociologists. It is a science, but is not always accepted as such.

The unexpected events of life, the “black swans”, e.g. natural disasters, change history sometimes in more radical way than is predicted in the social projects. Moreover, even those who see the world as predictable are limited in their thinking facing the so-called idols of Francis Bacon. Impartiality can easily be replaced with emotional and irrational decisions, i.e. it is impossible to liberate from stereotypes, definitions or lack of knowledge.⁷

⁶ Alberto Alesina, Giavazzi Francesco, *The Future of Europe: Reform or Decline*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2006.

⁷ Hesse, M. B., “Francis Bacon’s Philosophy of Science”, in D. J. O’Connor, ed., *A Critical History of Western Philosophy*, New York, 1964, p. 141-152, <http://www.sirbacon.org/links/4idols.htm>, 18.12.2014.

The aim of this survey is not to propose a universal scenario for the future. Rather, it will describe the methods of future research, its possibilities and limitations; it will also make some predictions about the real picture of the twenty-first century's development.

1. Methods of Future Prediction

Every thinker making a long-term scenario must answer six fundamental questions:⁸

- *What is the future of us as physical and biological objects?* – will we live longer? Will we be more and more dependent on technologies? Will we face environmental or anthropologic disasters? It can be proved easily that the survival of Homo sapiens is not an eternal guarantee.
- *What is the future we are afraid of? What would we like to avoid?* War, criminal violence, loneliness? Are we able to prevent this? Why did we not prevent war and other negative social phenomena until now?
- *What are the values and stereotypes we are ready to defend, and what are we ready to get rid of?* Gender equality, family, individual egoism? Is it a relative good or relative evil?
- *Do we have alternatives to our stereotypes?*
- *What is the desirable picture of our futures?*
- *Are we powerful enough to bring our plans to reality, i.e. do we have sufficient resources for our plans?*

There are many attempts to answer the questions above. However, as previously mentioned, several factors diminish the scientific significance of the answers. They are under the influence of ideologies. In addition, we cannot predict something that has never happened, and all our explanation is the extrapolation of present and the past to the future. Theoreticians and practitioners often base their ideas on some typical frameworks. Some of them are worth mentioning.⁹

- *Used Future.* Prediction of the future based on an existing “success story”, or a successful country. The safe ideas to create New America,

⁸ Sohail Inayatullah, “Neohumanist Educational Futures: Liberating the Pedagogical Intellect”, Edited by Sohail Inayatullah, Marcus Bussey and Ivana Milojević Tapei, Tamkang University Press 2004. More at: <http://www.veoh.com/watch/v18647040KdFfZ7Nx?h1=Futures+Thinking+for+Transformation+-+Six+Pillars+of+Futures+Studies+by+Sohail+Inayatullah>, 18.12.2014.

⁹ Metafuture.org, <http://www.metafuture.org/>, 2014.12.18. Sohail Inayatullah, “Six pillars: futures thinking for transforming”, *Foresight*, 2008, vol. 10, issue 1, p.4 – 21.

Scandinavian model, New Caliphates, etc. In reality these are attempts to create New Americas, following something like the “Scandinavian model”, New Caliphates, etc.¹⁰

- *Disowned Future.* The future is “constructed” to get rid of mistakes of the past and to avoid them in the future, i.e. to remove the negatives of policy from social life; for example, to remove phenomena such as Nazism, racism, social inequality, etc.¹¹
- *Alternative Futures.* Popular method in predicting the influence of one particular parameter. For example, what can we expect if globalization will spread, or what if the opposite is the case—what will happen if the nation will secure its identities, or in the case that they will ignore or be influenced by cultures of other civilizations.¹²
- *Alignment.* These are scenarios for cases of life in a society of internal regulation. The government can support (legally or financially) some “positive” trends and suppress the negative ones. History shows that such regulation leads to social disasters (e.g. the “building of communism”). It attracts many writers, because one can present even “logic” quantitative measurements of the futures. It is well supported by different business and interest groups.¹³

Going further with the review of methodology of prediction, it is worth mentioning that history itself is the subject of controversy. One can see history as continuous, cyclical, “sinusoid”, or even a discontinuous chaotic process. It is enough to remember that Plato’s cyclical change is social development, the linear history in St. Augustine’s “City of God”, the “zig-zag” history of Machiavelli, and other either “progressive” or “regressive” versions. The reader knows, of course, that a lot of theories talk about traditional, industrial, postindustrial societies, modern and postmodern state of social groups.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, dozens of social and economic development laws were discovered. They permitted us to predict some moments of history. There are short and long term cycle theories that permit us to predict some “waves” of economic and social development.

The concept of “waves of democracy” is the classical example described

¹⁰ Blair H. Sheppard, Jon Hartwick and Paul R. Warshaw The Theory of Reasoned Action: A Meta-Analysis of Past Research with Recommendations for Modifications and Future Research. *Journal of Consumer Research* Vol. 15, No. 3 (Dec., 1988), pp. 325-343.

¹¹ Sohail Inayatullah, “Theory and practice in transformation: The disowned futures of Integral extension”. *Futures*, vol. 42, issue 2, March 2010, p. 103–109.

¹² Paul B. Pedersen, “Multiculturalism and the Paradigm Shift in Counselling: Controversies and Alternative Futures”, *Canadian Journal of Counselling*, Jan 2001, vol. 35, no 1, p. 15-25.

¹³ Steven W. Sender, “Systematic agreement: A theory of organizational alignment”, *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, Spring 1997, vol. 8, issue 1, p. 23–40.

in political science texts.¹⁴ The clearest observation of these “waves” can be observed in Latin America. The political system (or its mask) is changing in twenty year intervals—dictatorships have been replaced by democracies, and vice versa. It was observed in this region already for century. A similar picture is in Africa. The democratic states of the 1960s changed into dictatorships in the early 1980s. Now we observe comparatively democratic Africa, which is going slowly to authoritarian regimes, and soon we will see new dictators.

There is no mystery in these “waves”. They can be related to generation change and new ideas that have critical mass support periodically. The waves are more “clear” regionally; there are societies that are not extremely affiliated with constitutions, national histories, and the stability of the state. Waves are interrupted by wars and other global and regional disasters. It is clear why waves are better expressed in Latin America, which avoided the greater influence of the World Wars, as well as in Africa, where the nations “started” their histories mainly in 1960s. However, even in Europe we can observe something similar after World War II. There was a rise of democracy in 1945-1950, 1985-1990 and maybe 2025-2030. There are the periods of some disappointment in 1965-1970, and probably now.

The shortest waves (or cycles) in economic development, called short business cycles, last 3-5 years (40 months). Joseph Kitchin investigated them in the 1920s.¹⁵ The origin of them is in some “human factor”; e.g. companies react to the changes in the market with some delay and try to “catch up” later, or they try to increase production or service supply, or they try to employ more people while avoiding investments and capital. The company is fully operational with existing resources. This soon creates overproduction, lower prices, lower sales, and more products in storage. This is the time for re-adjusting to the new realities, decreasing production and fitting to the new situation that can later initiate the new cycle. Thus, our “economic car” is driving in a kind of impulsive manner because of the changing of streetlights.

Longer lasting waves last 5 to 10 years and are related with the so-called Clement Juglar phenomena, first described in 1862, and proved many times later. It states that the larger investment waves are much slower than the short

¹⁴ John Markoff, *Waves of Democracy: Social Movements and Political Change*, SAGE publications, 1996. Sartori, G., *The theory of democracy revisited*, part II, New York: Chatham House, 1987; Samuel Huntington *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press. 1991 Charles Kurzman, “Waves of Democratization”, *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Spring 1998, vol. 33, no 1, p. 42–64.

¹⁵ Joseph Kitchin, “Cycles and Trends in Economic Factors”, *Review of Economics and Statistics*, The MIT Press, 1923, vol. 5, no 1, p. 10–16.

term waves described above.¹⁶ In other words, it is like fueling our “economic car” that does more than impulsive driving.

There is the evidence of 10-25 years cycles that look like the improvement or repairing of our car. These are the massive investments, renovations or new constructions, introducing new technologies and sophisticated infrastructure. The discovery of these waves came from the observations of a Jewish emigrant from Russia named Simon Kuznetz.¹⁷ Despite some criticism, the existence of Kuznetz’s waves or cycles is recognized.

Probably the most interesting in this context is the Soviet economist (more precisely anti-Soviet, because he was killed by Soviet NKVD in 1938) Kondratyev, who discovered the long term (40-60 years) waves in economic development. These are of extreme importance, because ups and downs up in them are related with wars, changes of political ideologies, etc.¹⁸

Konratyev cycles are related with social shifts. The probability of war is higher in the initial phase, or growing period that can be called “spring time”. In “summer time” we have a period of stagnation caused by higher life standard and better social security. In the declining period, “autumn time”, the authorities look for stability rather than for new ideas, and it causes the “winter”, which is the major crisis.

Arthur Lewis indicates that we had intensive growth periods in 1853-1873 and 1951-1973, partially good growth in 1873-1913, and after 1973 until the current major crisis. 1913-1951 was a time of greater decline.¹⁹ This is an allusion to the Kondratyev wave.

There is also the so-called Saeculum theory about 90 year cycles, i.e. the time from some important event (for example declaration of state independence) until all the “participants” of this event are dead. Maybe this is only a prolonged Kondratyev wave, but the evidence says that it can be important for future predictions.²⁰

The USSR was an entity that existed for approximately 70 years. It was

¹⁶ Clement Juglar, *Des Crises commerciales et leur retour periodique en France, en Angleterre, et aux Etats-Unis*, Paris: Guillaumin, 1862, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1060720>, 18.12.2014.

¹⁷ Simon Kuznets, “Economic Growth and Income Inequality”, *American Economic Review* 1955 March, vol. 45, p. 1-28.

¹⁸ Andrey V. Korotayev, Sergey V. Tsirel, “A Spectral Analysis of World GDP Dynamics: Kondratiev Waves, Kuznets Swings, Juglar and Kitchin Cycles in Global Economic Development, and the 2008-2009 Economic Crisis”, *Structure and Dynamics*, 2010, vol.4., no 1., p. 3-57.

¹⁹ Arthur W. Lewis, “Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labor,” *Manchester School of Economic and Social Studies*, 1954, vol. 22, p. 139-191.

²⁰ David Galland, “Into the Fourth Turning: A Casey Research Interview with Neil Howe, Co-author of the Fourth Turning”, *Casey Research Special Report*, 2009, www.caseyresearch.com/pdfs/20090922_TheFourthTurningJMD.pdf, 18.12.2014.

the same life-time as Bismarckian Germany. Now, 70 years after World War II, we have all the postwar developments. The legacy of it probably is already unimportant, and everything is like the lives of old people. We are not aging demographically. They have the “retired” political ideology.

In the creation of strategies there are some typical frameworks – archetypes – that permit us to create typical strategies. Jim Dator²¹ presents a few examples from a long list of possibilities:

- *Archetype of growth* – technology permits us to solve all the current problems of civilization. All the problems of society can be solved generally by progress (for example in the area of telecommunication).
- *Disaster* – a sudden decline in technological growth (may be caused by different factors), that causes the new quality in relations between economy, people’s everyday lives, gender relations, relations between religious and secular life, etc.
- *Stabilization* – the technological and economic growth is sacrificed for “special” purposes, for example environment protection or healthcare. Society decides that the solution lies not in technologies, but in understanding where we are and what we are.
- *Transformation* – this is a change of a major political dream or main political and social ideology. For example, Jesus Christ or the possibility to use thermonuclear energy. On the other hand, maybe a re-evaluation of the values we are currently defending.²²

According to the archetype of growth, for example, the 21 century has to be an Asian century. First it will be the main producer, and later it will be the main consumer. Asia will decide what the rest of the world has to do. However, the disaster archetype warns that some new epidemics, Tsunamis (it destroyed Japan), and some kind of “Taliban” can destroy any “growth scenario”. We have experienced Asian stabilization. Confucian thinking stopped Asia from conquering the remaining world several times. Transformation – something new – maybe a “happy” Latin America or Central Europe, will overshadow Asian development. Such scenarios can be created for other regions.

Thus, the set of instruments to create scenarios for the future is huge. Anyway, there are powerful human factors: existing stereotypes, dreaming,

²¹ Clement Bezold, “Jim Dator’s Alternative Futures and the Path to IAF’s Aspirational Futures”, *Journal of Futures Studies*, November 2009, vol. 14, no 2, p. 123 – 134, <http://www.jfs.tku.edu.tw/14-2/E01.pdf>, 19.12.2014.

²² I suggest reading: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>. There are the evaluations of regional differences, factor of „human nature“, that can decide how the „westernness“ or „easterness“ or other traditions influence the ideology of social group or society.

requirements to fulfill the needs, and the strategic goal of the authorities who finance all this business.

2. The Evaluation of Different Factors of Development

Does any reality that happens for sure in the future exist? Yes, there are some factors, futurists say, that really happen and that influence the future:

- *First.* Demography.²³ The human population grows, and it will reach maybe 9 billion in 2050 (if no any global disasters occur). The Majority of them will be urbanized, i.e. 5 billion will live in the cities. Around 2045, the number of people older than 60 will be larger than those younger than 18 (in Europe it already happened in 1995). The so-called median age in Europe is now 39 years, and it will be 47 in 2050. Europe now spends 15 percent of GDP for elderly population, and will spend one third after four decades. The USA will look much better – it will have 400 million people with the median age around 40. Despite AIDS and other shortages, there will be 2 billion Africans in 2050, which would be more than one-fifth of the world population. India will have 1.6 billion, China will have 1.4 billion, and Russia will have a bit more than 100 million. This cannot happen, because in any situation we can expect conflict because of imbalances in the distribution of resources, welfare, etc., and conflict between declaration that all humans are equal, and practical implementation of this. Economies of the Middle East and Africa simply will have no possibility to offer the opportunities for a new huge workforce; the West will have to rethink its own global responsibilities.
- *Second.*²⁴ Climate change. How much are we spending now for that problem? Climate change generates not only economic, but also political problems – disagreements on water and resources, ethnic, and regional conflicts. Russia and Norway cannot agree on Spitzbergen and surrounding areas in the Arctic with the participation of other countries. There are problems even in the relations between the USA and Canada, not to mention the constant animosities in Africa, and conflict between India and China.
- *Third.* Energy market: the possibilities of the generation of energy, dis-

²³ Pew Research Center, *Attitudes about Aging. A Global Perspective*, January 2014. <http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2014/01/Pew-Research-Center-Global-Aging-Report-FINAL-January-30-20141.pdf>, 2014.12.18.

²⁴ Houghton J.T, et al., eds., *Climate Change 2001: the Scientific Basis*, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

proportions in access, price, etc.²⁵ It is necessary to mention that there is unlimited space for fantasies in predicting the situation of energy generation in the future. The global picture can change very quickly if new sources of energy and new generation technologies (like thermo-nuclear synthesis) will be used.

- *Fourth.* Irrationality of society: e.g. religious extremism, glorification of celebrities, and the diminished authority of science and logic. This is postmodernism in a broad sense.²⁶ National (ethnic) identity is disappearing (not everyone agrees with that!), and societies are more and more fragmented and vulnerable, lacking solidarity and consolidation. Glorification of celebrities is the replacement for national heroes and national identity. National interest goes lower on the priority list. Information technologies permit spreading of unauthorized information, pseudo-science, and disinformation. There is a field for pseudo ideologies that look nice, though are dangerous.
- *Fifth.* The shrinking of state influence and number of state functions.²⁷ The international institutions which are based on country membership, such as the UN, European Union, and NATO are weakening, and their functions are becoming useless. There are constant discussions in Europe about what is better: EU institutions or national parliaments? The EU is still economically and legally powerful, but very remote from the average citizen. Citizens think they have no chance to communicate with any EU authority.
- *Sixth.* The negative side of globalization – international terrorism, organized crime, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, “asymmetric treats”, epidemics, and migration.²⁸

All of these factors influence our scenarios. Besides that, each writer has his emotions. Emotional factors influence the final document. Emotions, as is clear, can differ on a large scale.

²⁵ REN21, *Renewables Global Futures Report* (GFR). SEP (Institute for Sustainable Energy Policy of Japan.) press.

²⁶ Niklas Luhmann, “Why Does Society Describe Itself as Postmodern?”, *Cultural Critique* No. 30, *The Politics of Systems and Environments*, Part I, Spring, 1995, p. 171-186.

²⁷ Peter van Ham, “The Rise of the Brand State: The Postmodern Politics of Image and Reputation”, *Foreign Affairs*, Sep. - Oct., 2001, vol. 80, no. 5, p. 2-6.

²⁸ Graham S. Bird, Brock Blomberg, Gregory D. Hess., “International Terrorism: Causes, Consequences and Cures”, *The World Economy*, February 2008, vol. 31, issue 2, p. 255–274.

3. Some Practical Myths and Practical Stereotypes of Future Prediction

The numerous writings and publications of future strategies can be divided into a few stereotypical models and future visions. They are often quoted in the speeches of politicians, in “official” strategies, and in public discussions. Thus, they cannot really be considered scientific, but they are a base for political decisions more often than the concepts of political scientists. So I will not present the many quotations of this public debate for the people who want a more political science based survey.

The American vision is *Pax Americana*. This is the world dominated by the USA. In the world there is a constant battle for so-called eternal values such as freedom, democracy, human rights, and a liberal market economy that keeps all this in place. According the American vision, all the nations finally have to reach the Fukuyamian “End of History”.²⁹ *Pax Americana* in essence is the continuation of 20th century ideas, and it is possible in the situations where no major changes occur – the world will continue to globalize (or at least virtualize). Europe and the USA can sleep well – they will remain dominant powers for a long time, and they will set the rules of the game. It’s clear that this is an easy model, so there are an impressive number of authors and readers who would agree on such a pathway of development. In this situation, readers can only choose a side – is he for easy, pleasant (“rich”) life, or against it? What is necessary for the feeling of happiness?

The supporters of the model say that America will not disappear in the next few decades because nobody really wants it to disappear, even those who dislike it. The economies of China and India will grow; however, these countries will have to spend more resources for solutions to internal problems rather than for international relations. They will never overcome America, whatever their relations with the USA would be. The idea of a declining America (and Europe as well) is completely wrong. Unlike many other authors, American futurologist and writer George Friedman reminds us that notions about a declining United States is maybe logical, but completely wrong. The USA was not a great power until World War II. It indeed became a superpower after the war, but had to fight the Cold War against the Soviets. The real American century started only after the collapse of USSR. Thus, the Americans’ dominant

²⁹ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Free press, 1992, 418 p.

century was not the 20th, but will be the 21st century.³⁰

The European vision of the future is Davos World, named after the name (and ideology) of the annual World Economic forum.³¹ This is a simple scenario based on economic benefits, predicting that the driving force for ruling the world will be endless economic interest – to consume more and to possess more. Information society and postmodern habits will have to serve to increase the area of consumption. The producer of goods will be, of course, Asia, but “redistribution” will remain in the hands of Europeans and Americans unless the Asians themselves become the main consumers.

The Chinese vision is “The Union of Dragon and Bear”. This is first of all Chinese scenarios that Russia can stick to. The main dream is a growing economy that creates jobs, and a means for life and prosperity to everybody. The economy is above human rights and freedoms; this is a victory of primitive Marxism that in reality means the progress achieved by a low paid job is almost slavery. Many say that the 21st century has to be an Asian or Eurasian century. There is no secret that in recent decades there were lot of optimistic predictions for China. This country will rule the world, and we have to be prepared for this future fact.³² In official form, the Chinese dream looks very promising; China is a peaceful country following the Confucian idea not to be engaged in aggressive wars. Rather the opposite. It tries to achieve harmony of not only of a happy China (Central State), but of the surrounding World. Realists who do not think much about Confucius, present a few banal but strong arguments. China is the biggest nation in the world, one fifth of *homo sapiens* are Chinese. It is already making China a great country. China is rapidly growing, and its competitive economy is almost second in the world (soon be the first). The Chinese citizen is a symbol of a well-working, well-educated Asian, who is coming to the world without any wish to make war, not shouting radical phrases, not demanding much social support, and establishing restaurants and business centers. The base for the Chinese and Russian dream is simple pragmatism. Chinese think (and with good reason) that the world’s fear not to receive Chinese products is bigger than the Chinese fear of losing markets.

This vision nevertheless has a few problematic moments. Do big producers really have to be the most influential and strongest country in the world? China produces a big portion of goods for the global market; however it has

³⁰ George Friedman, *The Next 100 years: A Forecast for the 21st Century*, 2009.

³¹ World Economic Forum, *Strategic Foresight*, <http://www.weforum.org/community/strategic-foresight>, 2014.12.19.

³² G. John Ikenberry, “The Rise of China and the Future of the West. Can the Liberal System Survive?”, *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2008.

no wish to reject its habits to co-operate with “evil empires”. The same is right for Russia. They will not dominate until the world will live in the same world order. China wants to produce more not because of its love of the world, but because of its own (self-)interests. It does not work for important global projects such as climate change, and it continues with the social system that is already sentenced to death.

China lacks the chance for geographic expansion. It is a geographic island. In the north it has Siberia, in the south there are jungles and mountains, in the west it has mountains and desert. China is a huge factory, but it can hardly be more than a factory. China is united by money and brute force. After it has to pay more money for the workers, it has to use a force and trigger the resistance. Chinese history shows a paradoxical situation – always, when it opens to the world it is ruined by internal conflicts. The same is in place today. China has to choose to lock itself in the island or to risk becoming the area of internal struggle. The greater Chinese crisis will come in the 2020s (there is agreement among many futurists on that).

The Russian crisis is predicted for the same time. In the last two decades, not one of Russia’s geopolitical projects or dreams was implemented. The main dream remains outside official declarations, but it is a part of all other dreams. This is the restoration of great power/superpower status (geographically – restoration of USSR). From one hand, it may look like Russia is powerful enough “to collect” former republics again, but the main problem is that it wants to do it quickly and in all the directions. And in this respect Russia is too weak. It has no attractive messianic idea. Gas and “fist” are not sympathetic, even for allies, but Moscow did not invent anything new. One can expect Russia will have a new and even deeper crisis.

The Islamic vision is The New Caliphate.³³ This is a world order is based on the primacy of religion, and is one of the examples of renaissance and modification of one of the main religious faiths. If we can imagine the global victory of Islam, we can recognize that there will be no economic growth and technological innovation. The main idea would be to convert people into the right kind of faith, and, even in stronger words, to force people to convert. The Ottomans had this idea a few centuries ago, and they managed to sometimes buy this formal manifestation of beliefs and make impressions of voluntary changes of faith.

This vision is very problematic as well. Instead of imposing its conditions for world governance, political Islam intends simply to destroy the exist-

³³ Nick Danforth, “The Myth of the Caliphate: the Political History of an Idea”, *Foreign Affairs*, November, 2014.

ting world order. Destruction without construction is dangerous for Islam itself. The authors indicate a few scenarios for Islamic development.³⁴ The first speaks about a “return to the beginning”. This is a regression. The Prophet seems to have an idea of the Islamic state. However, it really went with constant failures. Christians are happier, because Jesus Christ did not establish a state and never attempted to do this. Islam is divided, and there are few explanations of this. Islam cannot be the background for a state – an Islamic republic theoretically is not functional, practical, and attempts are functioning far from normality. The confrontation inside Islam can be even more predictable because of war and confrontation with the West. This is a regression as well. It is possible for Islam to turn toward modernization and Western values. It would be good for people, but not good for Islam as such. The Euro-Atlantic community generally acknowledges Islam, that it is not modern, secular, or innovative. Muslims say that Europeans themselves are guilty (colonial past), and that they need to propose solutions. There is the theory of pendulum in Islamic development as well. The pendulum swings between the wish to be good for the west, and the will to terrorize it. Finally, some theorists believe in the possibility of a step-by-step integration of Islam into the existing world order. The modernization of Islam remains the main issue in discussion. Can Islam be modernized in principle? Only in this situation can we expect the harmony of civilizations instead of a clash of them. The main problems that Islamic countries face are really not the problems of this faith, but rather normal “technical” problems of state management.

The Middle East is the problem, but not the opportunity. September 11 brought even more chaos to it. It showed that the region has no political solidarity or common values; there is in fact no globalization.

The World of Fear is an “Orwellian” vision. One may say that defenders of “strong hand” policies see *finalite politique* in the establishment of some kind of Orwellian order. A fear scenario predicts the world in which the main part of the population is poor, or “losers” who are willing to accept the dictates of the government.³⁵

A New Messiah is one more rather unofficial vision. This is in people’s hearts rather than in officially recognized programs. It looks politically incorrect to speak about this, though nobody rejects the appearance of a “black swan” in the future. Political and social scientists try and look to the life of

³⁴ Sohail Inayatullah, “Islamic Civilization in Globalization”, <http://www.metafuture.org/articles-by-sohail-inayatullah/islamic-civilization-in-globalization/> arba <http://www.metafuture.org/articles-by-sohail-inayatullah/alternative-futures-of-the-islamic-ummah/>, 2014.12.19.

³⁵ George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-four, A Novel*, New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1949.

society as a phenomenon not very dependent on human emotions, and even though they recognize that that society needs new personalities and new leaders, worthy of trust—thus it needs a New Messiah. Two thousand years ago Jesus destroyed the spirit of Ancient Rome, thus destroying the world order of that time. Waiting for a Messiah would be the logical solution of all shortages in previous visions.

In recent years, many authors propose so-called BRIC (or similar) scenarios for a medium-term global multipolar future. The main countries in this project have to be Brazil, Russia, India, China (and maybe also South Africa).³⁶ This would be a good multi visual project; however, it has few serious obstacles. All of the countries mentioned have their internal problems that hardly allow them to become the leaders of the group. They would hardly agree to manage the world in the framework of these four or five countries. Thus, despite the attractive idea, it will hardly work.

Conclusion

The set of methods of future investigation permits the composition of several and perhaps even dozens of medium-term and long-term scenarios of world futures. They are produced by experts of different nations and international organizations, futurologists, and individual writers.

There are some few well-proven laws of social and economic development, as well as some partially predictable phenomena in the area of environment, biology, human ethic, etc. They permit predictions to be made about the state of the world we can expect in 20-50 years, and the shape of human civilization in the case of implementing some political, social, environmental, and technological ideas. However, the planning is still very unreliable, and far from a “road map” framework. Thus, future studies are still balancing between science and scientific/artistic fiction.

No future planning is secure from unpredictable phenomena – “black swans” – and their impact, nor secure from “political decisions” that destroy natural developments in society. So no one scenario can pretend to be absolutely right. The most frequent future scenarios are based on the wish to implement a copy of an existing “happy nation”, to fight undesirable trends, and create some kind of “dream society” while stimulating positives and inhibiting negative trends. The final version of a scenario depends also upon the “hu-

³⁶ Forum BRICS, <http://www.bricsforum.org/>, 19.12.2014.

man factors”, e.g. knowledge, stereotypes of thinking, as well as the wishes of those who are financing the project. Generally they are “happy end” projects. This makes scenarios rather useless. Only the independent experts that present more realistic and reliable scenarios can help in the planning of medium term and long term futures.

Currently many scenarios foresee the so-called American or European way of development, which is in fact the continuation of the existing world order. There is a growing number of publications about the emergence of China (and Russia) as a great power as well as possibilities of a New Caliphate, New Messiah or new Orwellian style regimes.

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