

Conference Invitation
February 25-26, 2012 in Berlin

Securing Mankind's Future

The current systemic crisis poses the fundamental question of whether mankind as a species is fit to survive. At this point in time, we are confronted with several existential crises: A thermonuclear Third World War is on the verge of breaking out, the trans-Atlantic financial system is about to disintegrate, the Earth is being hit with extreme weather fluctuations due to galactic changes, and we are experiencing, in particular in the so-called West, a cultural crisis, which has never befallen us with such complexity.

It is quite obvious that mankind as a whole is not organized in the way that our common interests require. Heterogeneous secondary interests often obstruct our vision of how to solve the problem, because the solution can only be found on a higher level.

Individuals, institutions and interest groups continue to pursue the goals they initially defined, without reflecting on whether the fundamental theoretical assumptions underlying them, have proven to be erroneous. Thus, we find ourselves in a position similar to Nicholas of Cusa's in the beginning of the 15th century. 14th century Europe had descended into a Dark Age, in which the financial system of the Bardi and Peruzzi banking houses collapsed, and the Black Death spread from India to Iceland, wiping out about

one third of the population, and driving people into a combination of despair and insanity, as is depicted in the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch or Brueghel. Intellectual life in universities was dominated by the Scholastics and Peripatetics.

Nicholas of Cusa, the most important thinker of the transition from the Middle Ages to modern times, was very conscious of the fact that his work would introduce a new epoch of humanity, by breaking with the accepted thought-structures of the time.

Today, we have long entered a condition, in terms of civilization and culture, that Friedrich Schiller would have termed "barbaric". The kind of Dark Age that would break out as a result of the use of thermonuclear weapons and of a global financial collapse, might even wipe out all means of human livelihood.

Nevertheless, in principle, there is no basis for pessimism, as the Earth and all life that exists thereon are integral parts of an anti-entropically developing universe. There is no reason to assume that we cannot reach the next level of the evolution of our species, and thereby leave many of our "childhood diseases" behind us. The Russian scientist Vladimir Vernadsky wholly believed, in the tradition of Cusa, that an increase of the Noösphere proportional to the Biosphere, would also change the condition of mankind in favor of reason. This fundamental approach will be taken up at our conference.

The 21st Century: Third World War or Peace?

The extended policy of regime change, as seen in the wars against Iraq and Libya, and as is threatened in the case of Syria and Iran, is actually directed against Russia and China on the strategic level. These two countries have clearly signaled that they will weigh military strikes on Syria and Iran as existential threats to their own vital interests. Military experts around the world agree, that a military attack on Iran would be synonymous with an escalation toward World War III.

Russia has made clear that it considers the stationing of missile defense systems in Eastern Europe as a part of NATO's strategy of encirclement, and China has unmistakably declared that it is prepared to defend its interests in Asia and the Pacific militarily, if necessary. The governments of both countries have made it clear-

ly understood, that they see themselves as the targets of the Western policy of regime change.

The massive military buildup in the Indian Ocean, the Persian Gulf, and the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as the exacerbation of the conflict around Syria and Iran, demonstrate that the fuse to the powder keg is lit.

Therefore, the aim must be to find levels of cooperation amongst the potential parties to a Third World War. Instead of regarding the Arctic, for example, as a potential catalyst for military conflict over the exploitation of raw materials, we should recognize the possibilities for international cooperation in this gigantic, practically uninhabited region of the Earth, which is now becoming more accessible by the melting of ice. Cooperation not just amongst the Arctic nations, but worldwide.

The Russian government has set as priorities the development of the Arctic, and of infrastructure in Siberia. This includes the construction of a tunnel between Siberia and Alaska under the Bering Strait. These regions have all kinds of raw materials, but new technological breakthroughs are required to exploit them, because of the permafrost conditions. Opening up the Arctic could thus become one of the common aims of mankind.

Each step of the expansion of human civilization must be regarded as an economic platform, which determines the entire level of productivity of the economy at that given moment. Examples of past economic platforms run from the original settlements of sea coasts and along rivers, to the next highest platform of building canals between rivers and roads into the continents' interiors, and then on to the next stage of continental infrastructure development through the building of railways, and up to the level of infrastructure density that we have today, for example, in Germany.

From this perspective, we are now about to rise to the next higher platform. The building of the Eurasian Land-Bridge, which has been on the agenda since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain, can now be expanded into the World Land-Bridge.

This new economic platform of the World Land-Bridge will end the era in which the lives of billions of

human beings are needlessly threatened by hunger and disease. For the first time, it will be possible to create dignified conditions of life for all human beings on this planet.

The Extraterrestrial Imperative

German-born space scientist and rocket engineer Krafft Ehrlicke, who made a decisive contribution to the development of the Atlas rocket, as part of the Apollo space program, devoted his entire life to interplanetary space travel and to the idea of colonizing the Moon and Mars. He was convinced that manned space travel was the natural next step in the evolution of mankind. Only when man's existence is totally dependent upon his respecting the universal laws of science, he said, will he act with reason. Krafft Ehrlicke called that the "extraterrestrial imperative".

As a German humanist, he also believed that technology as such is neither good nor bad, but that the use which is made of it depends entirely on the development of man's morality and character. Therefore, he embraced the idea of aesthetical education as elaborated by Friedrich Schiller, and Wilhelm von Humboldt's idea of the overall development of man, which he considered inseparable from the idea of scientific and technical development.

Given the truly gigantic challenges posed by manned space travel and the colonization of other planets, they can obviously not be mastered by one nation or by only one part of mankind. Cooperation among nations of all five continents will create the level of reason, which is a precondition for transcending the idea that war can serve as a means of solving conflicts.

A growing number of scientists in many nations have long been convinced that the galactic processes which cause the weather on our planet, be it volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, hurricanes, droughts or flooding, have entered into a new and dangerous phase. In the past 500 million years, there have been five mass extinctions of species, which each wiped out up to 96% of all species. If mankind as a species is to survive the next mass extinction, it is urgent that we learn to better understand those galactic processes. This is also a common aim of mankind, if we are to avoid the fate of the dinosaurs, for example.

Systemic Collapse or New Credit System

The trans-Atlantic financial system is hopelessly bankrupt. The only way to prevent an uncontrollable collapse of the global financial system and the unprecedented social and political chaos it would bring about, is to immediately introduce a global two-tier banking system worldwide, in the tradition of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Glass-Steagall Act, as a preliminary, indispensable measure. What is even more important, however, is to replace the current monetarist system by a credit system in the tradition of the first American Treasury Secretary, Alexander Hamilton. The credit created by sovereign countries must be exclusively aimed at increasing the productivity of the physical economy, that is, at achieving higher energy flux densities and optimal investments in scientific progress.

A Cultural Renaissance

The image of man underlying globalization is that of the oligarchical model, which has characterized empires for thousands of years. The privileges of a small ruling elite are defended at the expense of the great majority of mankind, who are condemned to poverty and backwardness. Whether the ruling elite is organized around aristocratic titles or money is irrelevant. Today's helots are those who have to work in low-wage countries.

Mankind will only be able to overcome the current crisis if the future order is based on a different image of man: man as a creative individual, differentiated from all other creatures by his cognitive capacities. That is why we need a Renaissance of classical culture, because only the great classical works of art and the method of thinking of the composers, poets and other classical artists who created them, nurture those faculties of the human mind which correspond to the true nature of man.

The very purpose of conference is, by confronting the necessary ideas and principles, to contribute to the future era of mankind which they must inspire.