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## **RUSSIA AND AMERICA – ONE COMMON DESTINY**

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As a custom, with the holiday season approaching, people assess the events of the past year and strive to look into the dangers that lie ahead. Whether we want to or not, we must do this in order to open our eyes to reality.

The succession of events on the international arena in the world became a sequence of disappointments and defeats for humanity. All well-reasoned desires of countries that share democratic values and strive to improve international cooperation seem to be falling into an abyss of distrust and intolerance. The circumstances call to mind the prophetic words of Dostoevsky that the struggle between good and evil takes place on daily basis within the hearts of people. Unfortunately, there appears to be more hearts filled with hatred than with love and kindness. Perhaps, some day, people will refer to our times as the age of burnt-out love. There are even religious overtones and parallels here. In the Christian Bible, during a walk in the Gethsemane Garden, Jesus Christ said, looking into the future, that love in many people will cool down.

We need to recognize that civilization stands on the brink of catastrophe. Until we realize and pragmatically evaluate the threat facing our planet, we will not be able to take any effective steps to rescue humanity. So far, our efforts to save the civilization have been limited to merely crawling away from the abyss of darkness. If we don't daresay to ourselves that piles of money,

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petroleum reserves, mighty armies, and nuclear weapons cannot keep the peace, we will continue to walk towards the destruction of our planet.

It is difficult to speak of these things on the eve of Christmas and New Year. At the same time, without understanding the present situation, we are at a loss to take the necessary steps to survive. In that case, the next New Year may not come.

Many people recognize the tragic situation, but are afraid to acknowledge the impossibility of saving the world with old conventional methods.

Diplomatic negotiations have been reduced to hypocrisy and mutual deceit. Conventional diplomacy is not effective. Diplomacy has no identity as an active instrumentality of international relations.

Two directors conduct this earthly spectacle, God and the devil. One of them strives to finish off the play with death and emptiness. The other wants to have a happy ending.

It is difficult to make a vaudeville show out of a tragedy. Most certainly, the outcome of our play on planet Earth will be a sad one. The actors and the spectators will not be alive when the curtain falls.

The circumstances in the world today constitute a ball of tangled twine filled with desperate contradictions. If someone tries to remove a problem from that ball of twine, a hundred other problems will inevitably be dragged out along with it. That sort of difficulty can no longer be addressed. If it is impossible to untangle the ball of contradictions, maybe we should try searching for the answer to the problem someplace else. In mobilizing the world's spiritual power, and one's own spiritual power, we need to realize where the solution to our problems may be. My supposition is that the answer as to how the world should be saved would be found in heaven. The people that get that answer should be obligated to turn it over to us, ordinary men living in the world. In order for us to have the opportunity of taking that last chance, however, we must acknowledge that we truly don't know how to come out of the trap where we presently find ourselves. These are not tales of the world's peoples or the discourse of a lost Paganelli.

If you get all the ministers of foreign affairs of all the countries in the world together with their presidents, they would not be able to give you the answer of how to escape the global crisis. Everyone will be speaking eloquently and thoughtfully, emotionally and impartially, but there will not be an answer.

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I need to reiterate that I believe that the heavens hold an answer for us. Some people just do not know it, others just do not believe it, and others yet just refuse to take advantage of it. My argument is simple: if the creature does not know where the solution is only its Creator does.

In the pernicious conditions of our present existence, the main actors of my narrative, Russia and America, behave ambitiously. It seems that America interprets the events as mere temporary problems. Russia appears to be ignoring what goes on as though it does not impact its interests. At the same time, I need to note that in this difficult time for the civilization, both Russia and America make bad decisions in choosing their friends and allies. There is no historical or strategic justification now for such behavior, as the destruction of the entire civilization is imminent. If civilization ends, it will not end in one place only.

Every one of us has only one life to live. I have long regretfully noted that many people in Russia and the U.S. lament the fall of the U.S.S.R. with a sense of nostalgia. As if in an effort to resurrect the extinct Soviet mammoth, Russia today tries to take positions contrary to those of the U.S. In light of the growing Islamist terror and the gigantic military capabilities of China, it seems absurd for America and Russia not to cooperate politically and economically. Russian political analysts cautioned the Americans in the 1990s that the U.S. would one day have to be very close with Russia. I say that the prophetic statement is true today. Despite their differences, the countries once had to unite to fight Nazism.

George Bush and Vladimir Putin are not opposites. They have similarities on the individual level. I dare to presume that if they had grown up in the same country, they could have become good lifelong friends. As they are, however, Bush and Putin are children of two different educational systems. It seems that Bush had people as teachers. Putin's teacher was life itself. He does not make any naïve or emotional decisions. Not a single little piece of information escapes his sight. He is in good physical condition and always restrains himself. He does not believe anyone. At the same time, he permits the people around him to play his game, as long as it does not get dangerous. Khodorkovsky once started a dangerous game and had to pay for the consequences. The Russian President is appropriately cynical in his views, intelligent, and strict. On a personal level, he is quite personable and friendly.

George W. Bush has a very strong inner personality. He is at the same time tormented by and happy with his democratic point of view. He has kept his naiveté and continues to rely on

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others for advice. Sometimes, the President's friends give him bad recommendations. Take the Belarusian issue for example. It does not make sense to fight against a country in the middle of the European continent that wants to be friends with America only because the State Department accuses President Lukashenka of being a dictator.

Even the regimes in countries where presidents almost literally eat their people at state dinners do not merit such reproach from the Department of State as long as they remain quasi-loyal to the U.S. government. Is not that a sad paradox of our time? If you don't like Lukashenka, try to be friends with the people.

At the same time, I think that in the near future, America will nostalgically look back on its last naïve and principled president.

I will return to the discussion of global problems. Speaking in metaphors, I will say that a giant tarantula is sitting on the world's neck, and its sting would be lethal. Many people think that we should not do anything, that we should just wait. What should we wait for? The tarantula is not going to leave. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the leader of the Russian Liberal Democratic Party told me that in this case, he would beat the creature to death and shoot it. Mr. Zhirinovskiy, you would not have enough time to do it.

A wise cleric, who is considered by many to be Solomon, said that there is a time for everything – a time to sow, a time to reap, a time for war, a time for peace. I think that this coming year is a time for Russia and America to mend the torn clothes and create a much-needed relationship based on trust with each other. It is easy to say this. In politics, as in personal life, one needs to conquer one's own self first in order to win. We are our own worst enemy. We need to overcome our ambition and self-confidence. We need to recognize that we do not know the way to solve a difficult situation that could lead to a global catastrophe. We need to raise our eyes towards the sky. There it is written: "I give you a new commandment: love each other, for I am the Path, Truth, and Life."

This is what happened to me. I have always been talking about love. Today, I must say that no one has to love everyone else. It is sufficient just to be tolerant. In that case at least there will be hope that the flowers of love may blossom among your children. We need to create our future today, before the darkness descends upon us. Yesterday is gone and will never come back.

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Tomorrow may never come. We have only today. Russia and America have only today. This New Year is today.

Spiritual Diplomacy believes that conflicting situations need to be resolved with God's good will based in the shared spiritual values of the parties in confrontation. It must be done as quickly as possible. Peace may gradually emerge from these efforts. We are always waiting for a miracle to happen, whether we are aware of it or not. The true miracle is our positive outlook and our firm determination to succeed. Spinoza once said that a man will not be able to do something as long as he thinks that he will not be able to do it. Jesus Christ said that faith can move mountains. As many other people in the world, I remain hopeful that Russia and America will be able to move mountains and save our world.

This is why, on the eve of this Christmas and New Year, I encourage everyone to be strong, positive and determined, so that together we would be able to move mountains and sow the seeds of tolerance that will shoot up during the lifetime of our children and grandchildren.