

THE CONFLICT OF CIVILIZATIONS - IS IT MYTH OR REALITY?

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As soon as the bipolar system of the global order collapsed, all of a sudden on a scene of a history appeared a star called “a phenomenon of civilizations”. This phenomenon became the most discussed issue because previously it remained behind a veil of two systems. As soon as the veil of bipolar system of the global order was taken off of “a phenomenon of civilizations”, it became the center of gravity for intellectuals and politicians in their searches of the decision for the current problems of the present time as well as the ones that will exist for the mankind in the future. The American intellectual elite, as is it known, has set the tone to this kind of discussions on the subject. It is also worth mentioning that the greatest resonance in all corners of the world was caused by the concepts which were put forward by the American researchers F. Fukuyama and S. Huntington. The essence of the concept of F. Fukuyama entitled «The End of History» is that after the disappearance of a bipolar system as a global order, there has come an era of undivided power of western liberal and to be more correct – neo-liberal civilization, which is capable to solve all the problems – economic, social and cultural, that were tormenting the mankind from the beginning of the times. Therefore, the neo-liberal civilization is a crown of a history. It, in its own way, concludes the process of historical development of the mankind.

When an article by Samuel Huntington called «Collision of Civilizations » appeared in the summer of 1993 – it created an effect of a bomb explosion. The reason for it was because the topics that were raised in it were from the specific sphere of a human life, that is, the extremely thin and delicate spheres of spirituality and culture. Previously, when we spoke on those spheres, we have been using the categories of interaction, interference and mutual enrichment. And, therefore, it was thought to be a bad example to talk about the conflict, collision of cultures, civilizations.

Besides, there is still a euphoria exists concerning a victory of the West in a Cold War and the start of an era of a mono-polar world - an era of the West. Many

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were absolutely sure that a worldwide historical process has already come to its end. And as the result of it, there is already or will be a worldwide permanent establishment of the Western civilization.

The major meaning of such a concept of his, Francis Fukuyama explains in his sensational article called «The End of a History»: «probably we are becoming the witnesses of the end of a history as such: it means the final point of the ideological evolution of mankind and unification of the western liberal democracy as final form of human rule. Certainly, conflicts may still exist somewhere in the third world but the global conflict is behind us and not only in Europe but, especially, in the non-European world where huge changes occurred – first of all in China and Soviet Union. The war of ideas has reached its end. Advocates of Marxism - Leninism can still meet in places such as Managua, Pyongyang and Cambridge (State of Massachusetts, U.S.), but the triumphal victory was won by the world liberal democracy ».

Furthermore, the author continues:

“Did we really come to the end of a history? In other words, are there still any fundamental "contradictions", to resolve which modern liberalism is powerless, but which would be resolved within the framework of certain alternative political-economic structure? Since we build our arguments upon idealistic points of view, then, we should seek the answer in the sphere of ideology and mind. We are not going to talk about all the difficulties that face liberalism included the ones coming out of the self-proclaimed Messiahs; we are, instead, interested in those that are embodied in a significant social and political forces and movements and are a part of a world history. It does not matter, what kind of ideas exist in the heads of the residents of Albania or Burkina Faso; the only item that interests us is what could be called as a common ideological theme for the whole mankind.”

In a previous century two major themes confronted liberalism – they were fascism and communism. And as it is well known, both of them have finally and completely disappeared.

The future is dedicated not to fight for great ideas but more likely to a realization of an ordinary economic and technical problems. And all of this is quite boring!

Since, as F.Fukuyama asserts, the thorny way of mankind has successfully ended, then, indeed, may be there is no need at all in a painful searches of the best solutions of a constantly arising problems of the human life.

However, very soon realities of life have forced to replace the tone of estimations and reasonings of neo-liberal globalizations to almost 180 degrees. One of the most close characteristic example of it was the publication in a magazine called “Business – week” in 2000.

Reflecting the prevailing moods at the end of 2000, “Business – week” magazine in its editorial article wrote: «Phenomenal days of globalization have passed». If at one point of time it was considered that a simple distribution of the

market will destroy poverty, dismantle dictatorships and unite different cultures, today just a sheer mentioning of globalization causes animosity, disagreements and blames... The despair supersedes a euphoria; defense replaces triumph. Two waves of the protest testify to a growing doubts in ability of a globalization to create good».

The most explained and, at the same time, even and critical analysis of the concept of a neoliberal globalization can be found in the style and methods of operation of the international economic institutes, such as – the International Monetary Fund, The World Bank and the US Department of Finance.

Taking into an account that the conclusions formulated in Joseph Stiglitsa's book have a comprehensively verified character - both in terms of scientific theory and in terms of reliability and sufficiency of the facts used for this analysis - he thinks that it is necessary to provide those that have key character for understanding of the essence and direction of the fulfilled neoliberal globalization.

Now, let me direct your attention to a below provided following conclusions reached by the author of the book «Globalization: disturbing tendencies».

1. The uniqueness of this given work is that its author worked during four years from 1994 till 1997 as the head of the council of economic advisers during the administration of President Bill Clinton, and the following three years - from 1997 till January 2000 - he worked at The World Bank as a Chief Economist; later on he became its First Vice-President; it is also worth mentioning that he was an outstanding scientist - a Nobel Prize Nominee in an economy for 2001, knows in details and, specifically, from within how the processes of a neoliberal globalizations move and what they are aimed at, who and how is supervising over such processes and, at last, the final results of them.

Why globalization – the force that brought a lot of positive things is in the center of such a sharp discussion? Opening the markets for international trade has helped many countries to carry out much faster economic growth than it could have been otherwise. International trade promotes economic development only when country's export influences its economic growth. Stimulated growth in export was the central point of the industrial policy which have enriched a significant part of Asia and essentially improved the life of millions. Because of the globalization the life expectancy has increased for many nations of the world, their standard of living has increased as well.

Globalization has reduced feeling of isolation which was sharply felt in a less developed countries and to most of them gave an access to knowledge in such a scale that is much higher than the opportunities the richest residents of any country had hundred years ago. Communications among activists of this movement in a various parts of the world, carried out via Internet, in particular, have created a public pressure which resulted in a signing of an International Agreement on

prohibition of an anti-infantry mines' use, despite the resistance of the powerful states. The agreement was signed by 121 countries in 1997. It reduces the probability for the children and other innocent victims to be harmed by this dangerous weapon.

The foreign aid – is another aspect of the globalized world -, despite all the lapses, has benefited the millions of people.

Those who demonize globalization, more frequently omit its useful results. However, supporters of globalization are even more biased. For them, globalization (which is usually associated with a triumph of the American style capitalism) is a progress and less developed countries should accept it if they want to have an effective growth and overcome poverty. However to the big number of the countries globalization has not brought promised economic gains.

2. Growing gap between “have” and “have-nots” leaves more and more people of "the third world in a severe poverty who live for less than a dollar per day. Despite of the repeated promises given within the last decade of 20th century, the number of people living in a poverty has increased to 100 million and it was going on when the universal income grew on the average of 2,5 percent per year".

3. The West was pushing the program of globalization in such a way so that it could provide to itself a disproportionally bigger share of benefits on the behalf of less developed countries. It was unfair that the more developed industrial countries refused to open their markets for the goods from the less developed ones, for example, keeping their quotas on a multiple set of the goods - from textiles all the way to sugar, – and, at the same time, insisting from less developed countries to open their own markets for the goods from the developing world; it was also unfair that developed industrial countries continued to subsidize their agriculture, making a competition more complicated and insisting from less developed countries to liquidate the subsidies to manufacture their own industrial goods.

4. However, not only in the field of liberalization of trade, but also in all other aspects of globalization when it would seem that they were guided by good intentions - frequently they ended up with a negative side effect. When projects both in an area of agriculture and in the field of an infrastructure, recommended by the West, developed with the help of the western advisers and financed by the World Bank or other international organizations have failed, the burden of return of credits nevertheless fell on a poor population of less developed countries if, of course, there was not in one way or another an agreement on writing-off such debts.

The benefit of globalization was frequently much less than its defenders asserted it to be and its price was much higher because the environment was destroyed, corruption has penetrated the political processes, and besides, fast changes did not give the countries enough time for cultural adaptation.

Those who worked in a less developed countries, understood that there is something vicious in a policy of globalization; especially when they saw that

financial crises become the usual phenomenon, and the number of poor people grows day by day. But they did not have any means of influence in order to change the rules or have an effect on the international financial institutions that created such rules. People who appreciated democracy in formulating decisions understood that "conditionality" – (the conditions created by the foreign creditors as a payment for their help) has been shaking their national sovereignty. But since there was not any protest movement, there was little hope for their complaints to be heard. Some protesters used extremist actions; others have suggested to raise protectionist barriers of a less developed countries. However, despite of the internal problems of the movement, the very members of the trade unions, students and defenders of an environment - ordinary citizens, marching through streets of Prague, Seattle, Washington and Genoa, have brought into the agenda the question about the need of reform in the developed world.

5. Participants in the protest actions saw globalization absolutely in another light than US Secretary of Finance or Ministers of Finance and Trade of the majority of the developed countries. The enormous difference in their points of view could have generated a doubt on whether protesters and the persons developing a policy speak about the same events? Do they have the same data? Does such an obscured vision of the people in power come from their own specific and private interests?

6. What is the essence of a phenomenon of globalization which is a subject of the attacks and praises at the same time? In its own deep basis, the closer integration of the countries and people has resulted in a huge reduction of the expenses for transportation and communication, demolition of artificial barriers for the movement of goods, services, capitals, knowledge and (in a lesser part) movement of people through the borders. Globalization was accompanied by creation of new institutes which have joined to an existed one to work in above-national frameworks. In the sphere of the international civil society, the new groups, similar to Anniversary Movement that requested to decrease the burden of debts for the poorest countries, have joined the already existed for a long time organizations like the Red Cross. Globalization is being greatly supported and pushed by the transnational corporations which move through borders not only capitals and the goods but also technologies. Globalization has also renewed the attention to the interstate institutes that were in an existence for a long time: The United Nations, created to keep the peace worldwide, the International Organization for Labor, etc...

7. Joseph Stiglitz emphasizes that he in his work has focused attention mainly on IMF and the World Bank. That is because they were in the center of a decision-making on global economic problems for the last two decades.

8. As Joseph Stiglitz points out the "Initial Concept" of the IMF was based on a recognition that the market mechanism frequently does not work and that it can lead to a mass unemployment; that it cannot provide only by itself the financial

funds necessary for the countries to restore their economy. IMF was based on a principle according to which stability demands collective efforts on a global level just as The United Nations was based on a principle of the need for the collective efforts on a global level to maintain a political stability. During the course of time the IMF has undergone significant changes. Based on a recognition that the market mechanism frequently functions unsatisfactorily, it, with ideological force, began to protect rule of the market economy.

9. The most dramatic changes have taken place in these institutes in 1980's, during an era when Ronald Reagan in the USA, Margaret Thatcher in United Kingdom preached an ideology of the free market. IMF and the World Bank became new missionary institutes, through which these ideas were forced into still resisted but feeling a sharp need in credits and grants poor countries. The Ministries of Finance of the poor countries were ready to accept a new belief if it was required from them in order to receive the funds, despite that the overwhelming majority of government officials and, moreover, the population of these countries continued to doubt more often about the need of the offered measures. After half a century since the creation of IMF it became clear that its mission ended up in a failure. Something that was planned - has not been realized, - and that is an offer of financial funds to the countries facing recession with the purpose of rendering assistance in restoration of economy up to a full employment level.

In spite of our understanding that the economic processes for the last fifty years has deepened enormously and despite of the IMF's efforts for the last quarter of a century, crises in our world have become more frequent and (except for a Great Depression) became deeper.

10. Behind all problems of IMF and others international instructors stands the problem of management that decides what is needed to be done. The dominating role in these institutes belongs not simply to the richest industrial countries but to their commercial and financial circles, and, obviously, the policy of these institutes reflects it. The selection of the administrative board of these institutes symbolizes the problems in which they are engaged in which, in its turn, frequently creates difficulties in their functions.

While almost all activity of IMF « the World Bank is concentrated today on a less developed countries (at least all their credit activity), its management consists of representatives of the developed countries (by tradition and a tacit agreement the head of IMF is always the European, and the World Bank is an American). They are elected behind the closed doors, and there was not a case that such leader was required to have an experience working in a less developed part of the world. Institutes are not representative units in terms of the nations that they serve.

11. There also exist a problem on who speaks on behalf of the country. In IMF it is the Ministers of Finance and managers of the central banks. In WTO it is Ministers of Trade. Each of these ministers is closely connected to the certain

groups inside the country.

Ministers of Trade reflect interests of a business community like exporters who wish to see the openings of new markets for their products and producers of goods who compete with the new imported products. Ministers of Finance and managers of the central banks are usually very closely connected with financial community: they come from financial firms and after working for a government - do return back to the companies.

The policy of the international economic institutes is frequently connected to commercial and financial interests of the certain circles of the highly developed industrial countries.

12. Globalization, - writes in the end Joseph Stiglits, - in itself is neither good nor bad. It incorporates in itself the great force to do good things, and for the countries of East Asia which accepted globalization on their own terms and given to it its own rate, it has brought huge benefit, despite the set-back during crisis of 1997-1999. But for the most part of the world it has not brought a comparable benefit and for many of them turned out to be a catastrophe.

13. The time has come to change some rules that manage the world economic order, to reconsider the procedures of a decision-making at the international level, as well as whose interests those procedures are protecting, to pay less attention to an ideology and more to observing what appears to be productive in practise.

It is extremely important that the successful development which has been carried out in East Asia - was distributed everywhere. Continuation of instability is bound for disaster.

14. Globalization can be reconstructed and when it happens, when it is properly and fairly carried out, when all countries receive a vote in creating a policy that affects them, then, there will be an opportunity to create a new global economy in which not only growth appears steadier and less changeable but also its products will be distributed more fairly. Privatization, market liberalization and fiscal economy - these are the three pillars of the Washington consensus on the basis of which recommendations in 1980's and 1990's were given out.

The problem however is that these political strategies became self-aimed instead of becoming the tool for achievement of a steadier growth that is accompanied by a more fair distribution. Thus, their use was going far beyond reasonable and, at the same time, eliminated other absolutely necessary strategies.

15. The biggest mistakes are the risk of social and political disorders. While the IMF has given 23 billion dollars to maintain the exchange rate, to repay the loans of the foreign creditors, the requirement to aid the poor have not been allocated. According to the American terminology, billion and billions were found for a well-being of corporations but not even a few millions could be found for the welfare of an ordinary citizens. For example, in Indonesia when the food and fuel grants to the people have been sharply reduced, - the clashes have erupted right the next day.

16. The IMF is a political institute. During the operation for the repayment of debts in 1998 it was guided by a task of preserving Boris Yeltsin's authority, even though, based upon all the principles of crediting, this operation was senseless. A tacit agreement on privatization through a corruption mortgaging auctions (if not its direct support of it), in part was based on the fact that corruption promoted the good purpose - Yeltsin's re-election. The policy of IMF in this sphere has been inextricably related with political orders of the Finance Department under the Clinton administration.

Stroub Talbot, at that time supervising a policy concerning Russia (later the Assistant Secretary of State) has widely expressed widespread critical views on a strategy of a shock therapy by saying: "is not there a lot of shock and not a lot of therapy? » Since the failure of radicals in Russia and in other places became more and more obvious, their initiators began to justify themselves referring to an absence of a choice. But alternatives were available. Poland and China applied alternative strategy of reforms. In Poland it was quickly understood that the shock therapy results in decrease of a hyperinflation but is not suitable for the achievement of the social changes. Therefore, a transition to a policy of a gradual privatization has followed.

17. So, nowadays, there are accusations falling on a globalization from every corner of the world. There is a disappointment in a globalization, and it is fair. Globalization could be a good force: globalization of ideas of democracy and of a civil society has changed the way the people think; the global political movements have been created which resulted in a mitigation of a debt burden and the agreement on an anti-infantry mines. Globalization helped hundreds of millions of people to lift their standards of life that was difficult to imagine even in the recent past. But even if it so, the countries which have received the greatest benefits appeared to be the countries which have taken their destiny in their own hands and have realized a role which the state can play in a development instead of relying on a self-regulated market which puts forward its own problems. But there are still millions of people for whom the positive effect of the globalization did not work. Many of them actually began to live worse since their workplaces have been liquidated.

18. Globalization does not work for the poor people nowadays. In its most part it does not work in saving of an enviroment and stabilizing of the global economy.

Some people think that there is a simple answer: to refuse globalization. However, it is not real and it is undesirable. As it was already mentioned above, globalization has brought up a lot of good - the success of East Asia is based on globalization, especially, on an increased trade and the expanded access to the markets and technologies. Globalization has brought with itself improvement of public health services, and also the active global society, which is fighting for the expansion of the democracies and social justice.

We have paid a detailed attention to Joseph Stiglits's assertions and

conclusions formulated in his book " Globalization: disturbing tendencies". Why?

First of all, because geoliberal globalization based on «The Washington Consensus» is a center piece and, to be more exact, is the fundamental of a modern Western civilization.

Second, because mutual relations of the world civilizations will depend upon which direction will the globalization develop further: on the basis of dictatorship of the West towards non-Western countries and a civilization or on a basis of an equal rights, by constructive cooperation, mutual support and mutual enrichment of civilizations. In this case, we can use a so-called barometer which reflects the condition of an inter-civilisational relations of the present time; and as for a direction of their possible changes in the future we can use the thoughts of people-carriers of various civilizations and first of all carriers of the currently dominated Western civilization in the world, and, certainly, in comparison with those thoughts which are being carried out by non-Western civilizations.

On this topic, undoubtedly, it is interested to bring up the work of a famous American politician Patrick J. Buchanan under a shocking title « Death of the West».

He starts with explaining the issues mentioned in the book by remembering what was the most important events for the people during the Presidential election campaign in America in 2000. He begins his story by saying: « Pat, we are losing the country in which we grew up. Again and again during the endless election campaign of 2000 I heard this sad phrase from many men and women across all America. But let's think - what di they mean?

How the grief and sadness- as if the father dies and you can't do anything, only helplessly look, - how grief and sadness penetrated the hearts of Americans on a threshold of « the second American century? » Did not Mr. Clinton untiresely kept reminding us that we live during the best times when unemployment is reduced to a minimum, inflation couldn't be seen even through a microscope, the crime rate steadily falls, and incomes have grown up to heavens?» As Mr. Bush repeatedly emphasized, do we still have any competitors in military power, economic power or cultural influence? We have won « Cold War». Our ideas - the American ideas - and ideals are spreading worldwide. So where does sadness and grief come from? What are they connected to? » And on this question the author gives the following answer: « In my opinion, this is what is going on: America has passed through social and a cultural revolution. Nowadays the USA – is a completely not the same country as we remember it from 1970's. Another country, another nation.

Patrick Buchanan is very nostalgic for the old, kind America - « America, representing a Melting Pot of God where all nations of Europe are melting and reborn all over again».

“But the tsunami and immigrations, - Buchanan writes further, - which covered the USA, was caused by «not all nations of Europe» “The greatest

resettlement of peoples in a history is caused by emigration from the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and these nations are not melting and are reproducing at all ».

Unregulated immigration threatens to destroy the country in which we have grown up, and will transform America into a chaotic congestion of people who, in reality, have nothing in common - neither historically, not in folklore, nor in language, culture, belief, or ancestry.

«At a close examination it becomes very clear that the greatest political formation of the West - the national state - is at edge of its own destruction ». And the start for it is the European Union and the North American Union.

Millions of people consider themselves as strangers in their own country, the author states. They turn away from mass-culture with its cult of animal sex and hedonistic values. They observe disappearance of ancient holidays and withering of former heroes. They see, how artifacts of the good old times disappear from museums and are replaced by something ugly, abstract, anti-American, as books remembered by him since the early childhood, leave the school program, conceding to new authors about whom the majority never heard of: as moral values inherited from previous generations are overthrown; as the culture with which these people grew up - together with the country in which they grew up dies. During life of one generation many Americans could see, how their God is being discredited, how their heroes are subverted, culture being abused, moral values perverted and are being pushed out of the country, being called extremists, liars because of an adherence to the ideals of their ancestors.

In many, way too many respects there is nothing that the current America can be loved for.

Americans – the Christian nation. But to be more correct the present dominating culture should be called post-Christian, or even anti-Christian, since the values it glorifies is the antithesis essence of the ancient Christian doctrine.

The new culture rejects the God of the Old Testament and enlightens an awe on altars of global economy. Kipling's Gods, « gods of the market » have removed from the podium the God of the Bible. Sex, glory, money, authority - are new Gods of new America.

Two nations, two countries. Old America leaves, but new gathers force. New Americans - generation of 1960's and later on - do not feel any connection to an old America. They consider it being false, double-faced, reactionary, conservative country - and, consequently, they shake off the dust from their feet and successfully build new America. The cultural revolution in their eyes was a nice revolution; on the other hand, for millions of other people this revolution - was a catastrophe which has taken away from them their own country and has lodged in a cultural desert, in the ethnic water drain. These people do not want to live in a new America, do not wish to fight for it.

P. Buchanan writes: « However, the name of the book - « Death of the West »