The Virtual Communities

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Summary: In the contemporary highly globalized world, the contents of the whole variety of connections and dependences do not fit into the long-established notions on structuring and organizing international communication. The present situation bears the signs of a change having occurred in the qualitative characteristics of the autonomous social organisms and their interrelationships. The new dimensions of social relationships are set by the new means for creation of benefits, by the new benefits, by the new risks and threats. We are talking about an information economy, different from the industrial manufacturing that dominated in the past. The relative share of services in the gross product has increased. Undreamed of in the modern times, magnificently presented in Charlie Chaplin's silent movie, new technologies are entering everyday life, everyone's lifestyle. The development of genetic engineering and biotechnologies portends possibilities to meddle with the mystery of life. In this postmodern world, the role of human communities with new sets of principles is starting to make its mark. Their interactions with traditional structural units give new dimensions to the relationships we continue to call international through force of habit.

Turning points in history have always stimulated reflections and given birth to new theories for comprehension of the historical process. The transformations that occurred in the world at the end of the 20th century are a big provocation to reason. Under the action of all forces, a completely new situation was created, in which the organized human communities and the relations between them are changing. With the increased interdependence, a new fundamental issue comes to the foreground: whether history is leading mankind to "one common great universal spiritual and material entity"[1], which will have no separate communities with messianic claims to dominance in determining the meaning of social relationships.

The new means and ways of communication facilitated by new information media also play a part in the identification and differentiation of tools of international relations. For them, the traditional borders between human communities cannot be an obstacle. The contemporary opportunities to transfer voice and images in cyberspace enable the formation of a wholly new web of intensive interactions between people. Their grouping is not based

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[1] Berdyaev, N., The Meaning of History, Hristo Botev Publishing House, Sofia, 1994, p. 127.

on nationality and state. Communication is no longer determined only by political separation of communities with their own independent territorial, political authority, economic and cultural systems. New occasions to become more cohesive and communicative are emerging, where no concern is given to territorial, geographic, political and economic bounds.

Modernity enforced the paradigm of progress, i.e. the understanding that each next generation will live better than the previous one. In the contemporary postmodern world, a lot of doubts arise in this regard. Obviously, it will be hard to ensure that our children are more successful, more secure, freer and have better lives. Now that we know that on the whole the conditions for life on Earth are getting worse as a result of climate change, population growth, and the uncontrolled and unprepared penetration into the secrets of life. If the conflict between Man and the biosphere of Earth is not consciously overcome, the human civilization might disappear not because of catastrophes – like the one predicted for 2012 by the Mayans, or some sort of cosmic cataclysm, but as a result of an ecological catastrophe.

Today, social systems are determined, to a high degree, by technological systems. Now, in the span of a human life, the technologies that affect the way we live our lives change repeatedly. The means and technologies for production and communication change too, the way of restoring human capabilities changes, the kitchen utensils and technologies change, the means and technologies for keeping historical records change, the ways of developing human knowledge change. In the new information society, the logic of the social behavior of people is changing. The biological and social rhythms of development are interacting in a new way too.

The social networks as neo-identities

The cybernetic systems created using ever-advancing computer equipment and information technologies are bringing forth new elements to the structure of society. Brand new communities of people are forming, which are establishing themselves as dynamically changing "active entities" in the postmodern world, and to a big extent they endow it with its new characteristics. Impressively fast, social life has intertwined itself in the so-called social networks. They have become a powerful factor in the development of the processes in the world. By facilitating the connection and communication between people from different parts of the world, with different positions in the hierarchy of the traditional social constructs, the social networks provide them with a new way to organize the defense of their interests.

In this article we aim not so much to present the social networks in their entirety, but to focus attention to their role in the processes of interaction between different autonomous communities in the contemporary world, i.e. to the effect that they have on the totality of connections and relations, traditionally called international relations.

The new factors in the postmodern world are not connected to a definite political, economic or legal system, to a territory, to obligations under international contracts and, in general, to the attributes of the classic heralds of international relations.

People are no longer only citizens of a certain country or of a supranational community like the European Union; they are not citizens of the world, but rather "netizens", members of numerous networks, which structure the growing diversity of identities. As it was noted above, today about half of the population of the world is intertwined in networks of virtual

communities through contemporary technical tools and information technologies. A new infrastructure is being created, not only earthly but cosmic too, providing connectivity to the people in one cyberspace. The telecommunication technologies have changed all aspects of society – existential, political, social, economic, cultural, organizational and managerial. With the availability of new technical tools and technologies, new communities of people with different social status in the traditional social entities arise. New community interests are created between people with different skin color, between rich and poor, young and old, highly and poorly educated people all over the world. Having never met, and they probably never would, these people communicate between themselves by pushing a key or a button without giving any thought to spatial distance, social order, rules and power. New electronic tribes, connected groups, are being created whose reach goes beyond some arbitrarily set geographic area. There is no doubt that "the primary motive for increased connectivity throughout history has been individual greed for resources, opportunities, influence and – most importantly – an improved standard of living"[2]. In this sense, the present phenomena are not anything new inn principle from the perspective of human nature, but they bring brand new things in the organization of the human communities. In an original way, their members have attained a new degree of freedom. Their ideals, interests and aims do not always fit into the stereotypes of belonging to a class, nation, race or religion. Their actions "are not always compatible with perfectly legitimate considerations of national security"[3], and moral and ethical standards. The new virtual communities and networks are giving more power to the people and are limiting the capabilities of the traditional official authorities, be it in democratic or totalitarian states. This

in and of itself is changing the nature of the state and the other historically established forms of organization of social life. Prerequisites were created for formation of "flash mobs", which are capable of changing and mobilizing public opinion in a short space of time, of destabilizing unpopular governments, of focusing the attention of the global society to certain problems. By joining these virtual structures, the citizens receive a new power to do good or evil. The combination between the new information technologies and the growing pursuit of freedom is changing the technology of power and the political process, the character of the relations between different social communities. The new technical tools and technologies eliminate the obstacles to communication perceived for a long time as insurmountable – the political will of rulers, borders (with their inherent passport, customs and phytosanitary control) and censorship. The autonomy of organized communities and the borders between them determined the nature of international relations. Now, a lot of the interactions between subjects of certain states and other structural entities can be called international only provisionally.

The communities based on the new opportunities for connectivity interact with the traditional social bodies, and this leads to blurring and dissolving of the borders between the real and the virtual world, and thus an intertwining occurs between real and artificial. Under these new circumstances, the conditions for organization of social life are changing.

The combination of human ambitions with the new opportunities provided by the cybernetic systems and information technologies has resulted in connectivity between people undreamed of in the age of modernity. They enter spaces with dimensions, which appear

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2 Barnet, T. P. M., The New Rules: Redefining Identity in the Age of Connectivity. World Politics Review, 07 June, 2010.
3 Schmid, E., The Digital Breakthrough, Liberal Review, 1 April, 2011, http//:www.librev.com/index.php?

infinite to the consciousness of the modern world, and methods of communication, which were simply unthinkable in the recent past, are coming to light. The virtual communities reveal unsuspected opportunities for sharing ideas, for discussions, for comprehension of interests, for organization and undertaking of purposeful actions beyond the context of the historically established social entities like people, nation, state, interstate coalitions. Joining such communities is easy. The obstacles and limitations of citizenship requirements, along with the obligations and rights stemming therefrom, have no place here. Hundreds of millions of people from all over the world in the space of one historic moment grouped and built social networks like Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, You Tube and such like. From the beginning of 2009 to July 2010, the number of Facebook users has grown from 150 to 500 million people[4]. The third biggest power in terms of demographics on Earth has been built. In a sense, it can be assumed that the goal of its creator Mark Zuckerberg to create the world's favorite social community has been achieved. By the middle of 2010, about 300 million people have registered in MySpace, and about 125 million people – in Twitter[5]. They shape part of the characteristics of the postmodern world, and they are intrinsic structural elements in the new reality.

Social networks do not replace the classic form of social organization – the state, but they do supplement it in many aspects. The virtual communities enable people to communicate between themselves, to organize on the basis of common interests and to pursue common aims, i.e. like the state organization, to provide a better life for themselves. The people connected in this way remain under the power, norms and rules enforced in their states, but they broaden their opportunities to control their destiny. Furthermore, virtual structural units unaffiliated with borders, territory and other attributes of classic human communities interact with states with the confidence of equally-ranked players. In practice, social networks have a powerful effect on the political processes, the economy and culture.

A fierce fight is about to take place between those who want to connect freely, and the others who view this freedom as a threat to them and to the foundations of order. Some countries have decided to follow the cutting edge of the information technologies, and take advantage of their benefits without resistance. A group of hyper-connected countries like Finland, Estonia, Sweden and Israel has formed. With their powerful technology and innovation sectors, with their stable economies and calm political atmospheres and with their target-oriented investment policies, these countries are skillfully taking advantage of the new dimensions of communication. Finland, which faced a lot of difficulties after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, found an intelligent solution by creating Nokia and holding a big share of the market for mobile communications devices. Estonia has become a model of how to create an electronic government.

Countries, which try to restrict their citizens' access to connectivity technologies, are at the other extreme. The authorities in Myanmar, Cuba and Belarus are making efforts to limit the introduction of new means of communication and the use of new information technologies. But they are penetrating into these countries too, through the upper political class. In practice, the population gets a taste of the temptations of the new forms of communication through illegal markets.

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4 The Economist, Jul 22nd 2010.
5 Ibid.

It is already noticeable how some states, which – given their economic and technological capabilities – have played a special role in the development of the new means of communication and with the material and authoritative resources now at their disposal, are making purposeful efforts to bring the influence of the new phenomena under control. Although they are using different methods, the state machines of USA, China, Russia, United Kingdom, France, Iran, Israel, Thailand, Morocco and Saudi Arabia (selected as representative of different approaches) are making efforts to keep the connected groups under control. The new technologies themselves provide new opportunities for the authorities to keep the processes in their countries under control, and even beyond their borders. The countries mentioned above, but also all the others, are carefully considering the consequences of the citizens having free access to connectivity technologies. The major part social networks like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are thought to have had in the rising wave of protest in the Arab world has confirmed the fears of the powers that be, especially of undemocratic regimes. It seems as if China has designed a special model for bringing the opportunities of the connectivity technologies under control. To one extent or another, the way in which the Internet is controlled in China is being copied all over the world. China achieved a compromise with Google under which the authorities ensured that they have control over the contents of the information to which the citizens can gain access. Not without success, the Chinese authorities are using the revolution in the information technologies to establish and popularize their system of values, to form a positive attitude to the successes of a state with one-party system, to parry the pressure on the issue of human rights, etc.

The wide spread of information technologies in social life has brought very impressive changes to dictatorial regimes. The Internet, mobile phones and the social networks provide the opportunity for events all over the world to play out before the eyes of the whole world. The dictatorial regimes, which cruelly suppressed any resistance in the past, already have to use more sophisticated ways to stay in power. Taking into account that the protests in Cairo were being watched by many people across the world, the Mubarak regime did not dare to use brute force against the rebels, and it judged that it had to step down. Even Muammar Gaddafi tried to pretend to be a victim of external forces and made an attempt to organize – according to the ideas of the opponent of violence Mahatma Gandhi – a "peace march" to the City of Benghazi in order to deal with his adversaries.

For the more weakly developed countries with limited resources, the establishment of such control is unachievable. The quick spread of the connectivity technologies in them inevitably threatens the status quo. On the one hand, an opportunity is opening up to build a civil society, but on the other, it can also be used by dark forces. Their weak governments will hardly be able to keep on top of the situation. These trends portend a growth in the number of weak or failed countries, which turn into serious threats to international security.

The possibility of using the opportunities for liberated communication in a manipulative manner and for dangerous purposes should not be underestimated. This means that the user has powerful tools against political adversaries, against rival countries, against economic and financial competitors, ways to pursue morbid ambitions. The new opportunities for connectivity contain new risks and threats to the security of separate elements and of the world as a whole.

Later, we will take a further look at some factors which play a special part in the formation of new identities in the postmodern world.

The role of IT companies in the postmodern world

With the increasing role of information technologies in the postmodern world, the role of the companies, whose products and services make possible the information society, the information economy, near-instant communications, electronic commerce, electronic payments and virtual communities, is becoming special. The providers of Internet platforms and services, the manufacturers of mobile phones, the entire equipment needed to accumulate huge data banks and provide access to them, the providers of hardware and software for the creation of powerful information systems, are starting to play a key part in the postmodern world. In the beginning of the 21st century, the so-called IT sector had the most rapid development, with old producers of electronics like IBM reestablishing themselves and new ones like Dell and Apple gaining new ground. Their products stimulated rapid development of software for them, a niche in which Microsoft, Internet, Google, etc. stood out. The mobile information technologies provided a chance for Nokia, Sony, Ericsson (the latter two have merged), Vodafone, Samsung and many others. By uniting talents, technologies and money, they have turned into giants that to a great extent are setting the directions and fashions in the development of the world. According to data of Gartner, one of the leading research companies in the IT sector with ties to the New York Stock Exchange, the incomes of the companies offering IT services in 2009 amount to USD 763 billion[6] (see Table 1).

In recent years, there has been a slight decline in their incomes, which is probably due to the breakout of the financial and economic crisis, but on the whole we are talking about astronomical amounts. The goods and services, which they are producing and trading, are having a huge impact on the economy, politics, and people's lifestyle. They engage in business in all parts of the world, and this enables them to have a tangible influence on the development of the individual states through their investment and trade policy, as well as on public opinion, security and international relations. As far as the world is the captive of modern technologies, all aspects of life in postmodern societies will fall under the influence of the companies that create and use them in an original way.

All vital systems function thanks to the use of information technologies, and this makes them

Table 1. Incomes from IT services[7] (in USD millions)

Company	2009 income	2009 market share (%)	2008 income	2008 market share (%)	Growth (%)
IBM	55,000	7.2	58,892	7.3	-6.6
HP	34,585	4.5	38,584	4.8	-10.4
Fujitsu	23,342	3.1	23,444	2.9	-0.4
Accenture	20,939	2.7	23,732	2.9	-11.8
CSC	16,004	2.1	17,112	2.1	-6.5
Others	613,191	80.4	643,681	80.0	-4.7
Total for the market	763,061	100.0	805,445	100.0	-5.3

6 http://www.gartner.com/resId = 1361622
7 Compiled using data of http://www.gartner.com/resId = 1361622

highly vulnerable to malicious cyber-attacks given the difficulty of making them reliably secure. The key to dealing with these new problems is also in the hands of the IT companies.

Those engaged in the information technologies, i.e. in the creation, processing, storage and distribution of voice, image, textual and numerical information through computer and telecommunication systems, are a leading factor in the transformational processes in the postmodern world. Their role in the building of the virtual communities and social networks is also special.

Netocracy in the new elites

Influential heralds of worldviews have always played an important part in social development. For the contemporary historical stage, a lot of authors assume that about 50 million people, i.e. less than 1 % of the population of the Earth, form the so-called Davos culture (after the name of the annual meetings of the world elite in the Swiss resort Davos). They "control virtually all international institutions, many of the world's governments and the bulk of the world's economy and military capabilities"[8]. This is the new elite, whose power is based on authority, created by the demonstration of original views for solving the problems of the contemporary world and convincingly proposed models. For example, the group of politicians, scientists, financiers and businessmen, who prepared a thought-provoking report before the meeting of the leaders of the 20 countries with biggest economies at the end of 2009. They proposed

ideas for a new treaty for coordinated response to the financial and- economic crisis that has broken out[9]. Many similar forums function around the world, which have a powerful influence on crucial decision-makers. Their decisions concern everyone. Without being elected to political posts, they have the power to change the world.

Among this elite, a special place is taken by the so-called **netocracy**. This new term signifies power in the networks. We are talking of key positions in the building and maintenance of the networks, functioning on the basis of computer equipment and contemporary communication technologies. Using the revolutionary solutions provided by modern technology, these people have created huge riches, and play a significant part in directing the development of the world. As Economist magazine defined them: "... with enough brains, money and influence, they affect the lives of a great number of other people"[10]. They have become influential and rich by creating smart things, inventing useful items or finding original new ways to apply someone else's inventions. Ideas lie in the core of the success of today's elite. They are very powerful themselves, but they also create new powers which are important elements in the structure of the postmodern world.

In September 2010, the richest people Bill Gates and Warren Buffet, along with the 50 richest Chinese people, discussed the issue of how the rich, who cannot spend their fortune on themselves, could spend it to benefit of others[11]. Inspired by the same idea, Mark Zuckerberg, who created Facebook together with Dustin Moskovitz in 2010, when he was

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8 Betts, R. K., Conflict or Cooperation? Foreign Affairs, November/December, Review Essay.
9 For a Global New Deal, Vision Paper to be Discussed in the Geneva Group, Geneva, 22 November 2009, Global Progressive Forum, Brussels, 2009.
10 The Economist, Feb, 8th, 2011.
11 They Work for Us. In Democracies the Elites Serve the Masses, A Special Report on Global Leaders, The Economist, Jan. 20-th 2011.

only 26 years old, made a donation of USD 100 million to schools in Newark[12].

One cannot become a member of the netocracy, of the group of the chosen ones, by paying for the privilege. Membership is acquired on the basis of knowledge, exclusive information or innovative solutions. In the information society, a place among the netocratic elite is not secured by having aristocratic titles (as it was under feudalism), birthrights or wealth (as it is with capitalism)[13], but by having the capability to generate ideas and the possession of exclusive information. There is a place in the new elite, in particular in the netocracy, only for those who are capable of creating and mastering new socially significant knowledge, and implementing it in the form of some power, which is different or alternative to the nominal power of the old-fashioned elites. The place in the hierarchy of the new elite is determined by the extent of the significance of the available knowledge and exclusivity of the ideas.

The relations between the netocracy and the official authorities are complex. The confidence of the netocracy has already grown to such extent that it can enter into open conflicts even with the strongest governments. A typical example of this is the case of Wikileaks, where a representative of the netocracy Julian Assange released huge tranches of diplomatic cables, though undoubtedly he had very powerful backing such as civil servants, special services of USA and God knows who else. This took place without permission by the official authorities and seriously compromised the American state machine.

With the development of the information society and as the role of the virtual societies and the networks based on information technologies

grows, it would be logical for the power of the netocracy to increase. This power is not limited to the borders of separate states. In and of itself, it cannot be localized, and it does not acknowledge state borders, sovereignty or official authorities. It is led by its specific interests, and it changes the nature of the interactions between social communities.

Who are the new bad guys?

The broadening of the power of citizens in the information society brings both good and evil. Connectivity technologies are also used by destructive structures. Al-Qaida and other terrorist formations, the Afghan Taliban, Chechen separatists, drug cartels, pirates, mafia organizations and dictatorial regimes actively use the global network known as the Internet, social networks, mobile phones (not only as a means of connection but also for activation of time bombs, for large-scale military operations, for recruitment of members and followers, for maintenance of some kind of order and discipline, and who knows what else?). Along with the benefits, the information technologies are also bringing nightmares to humanity.

What dread sowed the periodic messages of Bin Laden in Internet through cell phone or videotape to some TV channel. In addition to the attacks of 11 September 2001 in the USA, and then in Madrid and London, he and his organization also proved, via the modern information channels, that they are a power not to be ignored. They have their own philosophy rooted in Islam, they have an orderly hierarchical organization, but its localization is impossible (for 10 years the most powerful military and intelligence forces searched for this man and his followers, and only just in the beginning of

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12 Ibid.
13 http://www.kpe.ru/biblioteka/analiticheskie-raboty/

May 2011 they got to him and eliminated him. It turned out that he lived in a decent home, and not caves, with his wives and children, not using directly the means for contemporary connection). Its members skillfully use tools of terror, and they are a real nightmare both for governments and citizens.

The terrorist attacks on the US on September 11, 2001 gave a distinctly wrong impression of Osama Bin Laden and his organization as extreme fanatics, who, blinded by some abstract cause and probably under hypnosis, are willing to sacrifice their lives. It is worth it to ponder the context of these events. A link could be made between the arrogant and unilateral denunciation by the US of their treaty with Russia on antimissile defense in the summer of 2001. With this action Washington self-confidently suggested that thanks to their economic, military, technological, etc. capabilities and superiorities, the US have built a defensive antimissile system impervious to enemies. Using civil aircraft, it seemed that al-Qaeda was hinting that the US should not be so self-confident in their ability to build an impervious umbrella. This in itself has shown that without an official public authority, specific territory or representative mechanisms, and using the opportunities of the information society, this power will have withering role in the modern world.

These destructive powers are skillfully using modern banking to transfer cash to fund their activities just by a SMS. In 2009, there were announcements that Taliban prisoners had used cell phones to coordinate attacks on government buildings in Kabul. There are cases of successfully paralyzing the telecommunications infrastructure in order to provide conditions to deploy operations against the authorities and coalition forces in Afghanistan. They use communication technologies to keep the population in fear.

In practice, it seemed that Osama Bin Laden was the most integrated person in virtual space. Sometimes he was real and sometimes like a phantom. He was monitoring the processes in the world, but was also invisible. He carried out military operations, but nobody was able to fight against him. His organization uses tools typical for the modern world such as the global network, cell phones and modern aircraft, but those who have declared a war on the organization are still unable to take advantage of these same tools against their opponents. NATO deployed an army of nearly one hundred thousand in Afghanistan where al-Qaeda generally flexes its muscles against the democratic world. This army carries out planned military operations, billions of dollars are allocated for intelligence and propaganda[14], and yet Bin Laden continues to be a symbol of inspiration just as the ideology formed by him and the objectives of the jihadist movement continue to determine the strategy and tactics of al-Qaeda and terrorist cells scattered around the world continue to operate in the name of Bin Laden.

With respect to the wave of protests that rose among the Arabian people, al-Qaeda reminded the world of its relevance by blaming dictatorships and it definitely is playing a role in these processes. Skillfully taking the advantage of the not so ostensible role of the Western world in the political life of Arab countries, al-Qaeda is seeking its supporters and opportunities to gain control of new positions in this region.

Oppressive regimes are successfully using achievements of the information society to crush any opposition. For example, specialists from the Iranian authorities encouraged citizens to send photographs of protesters to Internet sites, specially created by them in order to be able to easily identify the opponents of the regime.

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[14] Bergen, P., Will We Ever Find Osama Bin Laden? Don't Count on It. The Washington Post, January 28, 2011.

There are many other examples that could be quoted to illustrate the negative aspects of using the attributes of the information society; however, these are sufficient to justify the need of undertaking firm efforts to minimize these effects. It is obvious that there is a necessity to coordinate cooperation – in an accountable to all of humanity manner –between the official authorities, the netocracy, the research centers, the security services, the structures of civil society, the philanthropic organizations, etc. if we are to deal with the big challenge – the use of the big achievements of the human mind by the Devil.

The construction of a "new security architecture" requires contemplation of the transformations in the world and the system risks

The dynamic changes in the contemporary world put to the test the capability of humanity to mobilize its wisdom for dealing with the new challenges and threats. They entail processes and phenomena in social life unknown and unconsidered throughout history, which give birth to new structural elements and relationships. Serious risks to ensuring security and sustainable development, as they are the most favorable conditions for dignified human existence, originate from this. **The unparalleled rates of internationalization, the occurrence of transnational phenomena, and globalization have brought about a previously unseen mutual dependency between relatively separated communities.** New functional connections are being established between activities scattered all over the world. This trend is changing the foundations of world economy and international relations. All participants try to make sense of their interests, place and role in the new realities, and to determine a line of behavior

from a strategic, geopolitical and economic perspective. Under these circumstances, organizing their interrelationships becomes difficult. A necessity arises to redefine values common to all mankind, to formulate common aims, to develop new commonly acceptable behavior norms, to build new mechanisms and institutions for regulation of the relations between diverse elements in a globalized world. The financial and economic crisis which broke out recently emphasizes with new strength that an agreement must be reached on **the necessity of integrating into a system the mechanisms for regulation and management of the processes in society that function at national, regional and world level.** This system should reflect the dynamics in the change of the balance of power as a main regulator in the development of the processes in the world.

Former theories, paradigms, categories and notions for explanation of the phenomena in international communication are not enough to gain insight into the trends determining the directions in the development of human communities and the interaction between them. Today, not everything, crossing borders of separated social communities, fits into the notion of "international relations". Processes determining how human relationships are organized on a global basis are also developing in parallel with international and other intercommunity relations. Many connections and dependencies are gaining a global scope, structures with global scope are emerging. They are a function of real existing problems common to all mankind – military, ecological, energy, food, demographic, health, etc.

There are real threats to the existence of humanity, which imperatively bring to the forefront the necessity of measures and solutions to face them. This is why the appearance of assessments by powerful centers

that mobilize persons with a big potential for thought are turning into steps to elevation of human wisdom. A special impact is made by the generalizations, presented by leaders of significant factors in the structuring of the contemporary world. In the conditions of the "deepest global crisis after the World War II"[15], a new format of cooperation for dealing with big challenges has emerged – the group of the 20 states with the biggest economies. The meetings of their leaders played an important part in the development of coordinated approaches in the implementation of anti-crisis measures. They stimulate further and deeper reflection of how to deal with the challenges and the threats, which humanity faces. The president of Russia Dmitry Medvedev has developed ideas for "self-organization of a just and multipolar world", and he has proposed an initiative for "a new security architecture" in the Euro-Atlantic space[16]. Obviously, it appeared in connection with the crisis in the relations between Russia and Georgia. Through its president, Russia proposed the establishment of an international political and legal mechanism for prevention of such conflicts, which is to be a new development and extension of the Helsinki Final Act (1975). Here, I would like to share **some observations,** which I think are relevant to the effects of changes in world and security issues.

1. I definitely think that **efforts to strengthen security would make sense if they reduced the risks that modern dynamics bring to Man, citizens, companies, states, and non-governmental and supranational institutions.** Such understanding supposes a new way for organizing the interactions and mobilizing the powers of all factors to establish a comprehensive security system.

2. Security has always been in close connection with the system's structure (national, international, world and global). **During the process of restructuring the system, the tasks of ensuring security become more complicated many times over. New elements are conceived, new relations are established and a new degree of interdependence is obsessively imposed.** *Now not only international relations structure the world.* New actors are (participants) appearing in communication. Besides countries, important players in the complex interactions in the modern world are also non-governmental formations – national and transnational companies, new regional and global structures. Players with a supranational nature are establishing themselves on the stage of history . The world is feeling the presence of difficult-to-identify actors, which are not related to a specific area, territory, responsible public authority, but are influencing the behavior of others. The progress in information technologies and communications has brought forth new factors in the interactions between autonomous societies. New identities and power centers are being formed. In short, it would have been hard to transpose the modern world onto the international relations system, which was structured according to the nation-state idea. At the same time, globalization (although some predicted that it would die out) has burdened the state with new functions.

3. **New realities stimulate new perceptions (ideas, ideologies) about social development.** Today, the dimensions of national ideals and national mythology are different. Stereotypes of the Westphalia system of social life organization are eroding. Nowadays, the principles of regulation of international relations such as equality, respect of sovereignty, non-interference

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[15] Council of the European Union, Brussels Europen Council 18/19 June 2009, Presidency conclusions, 19 June 2009.
[16] Выступление Президента России Д. А. Медведева на Конференции по мировой политике (distributed by the Russian Culture and Information Centre in Sofia in June 2009).

in internal affairs ring hollow and old-fashioned. Not equality between states, but human rights, not the will of the sovereign, but the care for living conditions (nature) justify and motivate the behavior of individual identities. Along with the changing nationalisms, a consciousness of global interdependence is being created. All this has seriously challenged the traditional schools of thought (realists, idealist, liberals, Marxists and their neo-trends) for understanding the processes running in the world. For example, it is hard to accept in our time one of the postulates of the school of realism, as defined by Hans Morgenthau, that "foreign policy which follows universal principles leads to suicide"[17]. Maintaining world peace under conditions of mutually assured destruction, i.e. when humanity is able to destroy itself, is a supreme value. Today, more deserving of special attention is the insight of the ideologist of the synthesized in the European Union integration model Jean Monnet, who on the eve of the Second World War concluded that **it is impossible to have peace in Europe based on paradigms of the nation-state idea** with its main attribute – sovereignty.

4. Security is always connected to values, to identities and their capability to be maintained and to function. They face both external and internal risks and threats. In connection with this, I would just like to note that **one of the system risks relates to the ambitions and passions for creation and to the existence of unviable social bodies.** A sustainable inspirer for actions in this respect is "the sacred and great" nation-state idea.

5. **The long-established principles, rules and norms of behavior in international relations are no longer effective tools for maintenance of the peace and security and for development of cooperation.** We are witness

to outrageous violations and circumventions of the pillar of contemporary international law – the UN Charter, of multilateral and bilateral contracts. The law enforcement mechanisms that have taken such a long time to build appear impotent and are losing their authority.

6. The security issues already presume a complex and multilateral approach, which can hardly fit into the models for ensuring national security, or into the idea of collective security, as it was manifested in the 20s, 30s, 50s and 70s of the 20th century. It must be comprehended that **another of the system risks lies in the possibility that some autonomous communities may realize their interests at the expense of others**, may limit their opportunities to benefit from international cooperation or may cause them trouble and suffering.

7. **A system risk lies in the fact that multidirectional efforts are being made to ensure national, regional (collective), international, world and global security.** There is no hierarchic subordination or co-subordination of the aims. There is a mix of efforts in the world for achievement of a higher degree of security but they are not organized in a system. All actors give priority to their own security – company, national, coalitional, even though it would be reasonable for them to be a function of common security. A common approach is necessary in the ordering of priorities in the context of ensuring security.

8. A problem in the organization of coordinated and joint actions to ensure security is that **not all actors have clear aims and capabilities to pursue them**. Some of their representative bodies have no competences and authorization to assume responsibilities and to bind the factor in question into commitments. Weak regimes are destabilizing factors in multilateral systems.

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[17] Morgenthau, H. J., American Foreign Policy: A Critical Examination, London: Methuen, 1952.

Insecurity appears when the opportunity and capability to prevent it and render it pointless is lacking.

9. The lessons of the failure of the based on idealism Versailles international system and World War II provided strong arguments that **special responsibilities are needed in order to guarantee peace and security.** Constructing the postwar structure of the world, the victors of the anti-Hitlerite coalition have matured enough to accept Franklin Roosevelt's idea of assuming a special burden to secure world peace. This idea found concretization in the UN Charter, which assigned these responsibilities to the Security Council. The five permanent member states play a special part in it. Although criticisms are directed at this model – that it imposes a dictatorship of a minority of countries, it is also intended to prevent the adoption of resolutions, which are unacceptable to some of the states burdened with the special responsibilities of conserving the peace. This is a big achievement in the comprehension of the problems of security and the paths to its realization. In our age, it is necessary to conduct a careful review of the possibilities of the primary factors in the international system and to find a new, more representative – and more adequate to the contemporary balance of power – solution to the issue of the special responsibilities of maintaining peace and security.

10. In the nuclear missile era, a special factor for guaranteeing security is **the maintenance of strategic stability**. With all its insanity, the Cold War stimulated humanity to achieve some wisdom by making sense of the harsh realities. The two nuclear superpowers USA and USSR were able to convince themselves of the illusion that one of them would manage to deprive the other of capability to strike in response if it became a target of a first nuclear strike. After squandering huge amounts in this direction, they came to their senses, and gave up on the idea of building their own "impenetrable" antimissile umbrellas, which was formulated in the Antimissile Defense Treaty of 1972. For almost 30 years, until its unilateral denouncement by the USA in 2001, it was a basis of strategic stability by removing the temptation for someone "to push the button first". An alternative to this poorly understood but brilliant idea has not been found yet. With the real spread of nuclear weapons and the creation of opportunities in many countries to fire them at long distances, the threats to security become more and more distressing. I will allow myself a conjecture here, for which I do not have concrete evidence, but logic makes me connect the decision of USA to build an antimissile shield and the attacks of 11 September 2001. It was as if a force appeared that showed the suspiciousness of these intentions. Blows to symbols of American economic and military power were delivered not by missiles, but by airplanes of civil aviation. Undoubtedly, the countries with nuclear missile capability have an important role to play in maintaining strategic stability. The accumulated experience can develop in the new conditions.

11. An important component in the present balances of power is the tools of cybernetics. In the collisions between interests in the postmodern world, cyber power is becoming a very important factor. It provides advantages and chances for asymmetric cyber-attacks not only to state-organized communities, but also to individuals, groups and virtual communities. Cyber security is a relatively new security aspect but the cases with cyber impacts on important systems in Estonia in 2007, in Georgia in 2008 and on the Iranian nuclear program in 2009 necessitate a new attitude to cyber threats. Cyber power should be viewed through the prism of its role in the postmodern world. It is undoubtedly changing the dimensions of the fundamental issue of peace and war.

The list of the lessons of history can be prolonged with many more conclusions, but it is as though **a new security paradigm** cannot crystallize out of them just yet. Without making any special claims, here I will allow myself to think that **the imperatives direct all participants in the complex interactions of the cosmic definition of Earth and beyond to focus their efforts on building a *common security system,*** which diminishes or excludes the risks arising from conflict of interests of different identities. Everyone looking for security should accept their share of the responsibility to maintain it.

The current state of affairs in the world provides some, but not all, with benefits and brings a lot of trouble. **There is no effective system of interrelationships that ensures rational use of the resources at the disposal of humanity and to deal with the threats of natural and social cataclysms.** From here it is easy to get to pledges for establishment of new international, global, world order. They have repeatedly appeared throughout history. The director of the Institute of History at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences Prof. Georgi Markov has counted 13 attempts for establishment of a new world order[18]. They have always occurred in previous epochs, when the old order was unsustainable, but there were deficits of prerequisites and catalysts for crystallization of a new state.

The new factors in the international system are objectively changing the previous foundations of strategic stability. For a long time it was supported by preserving the capability to deliver a responsive blow in the event of being subjected to a first blow. Some of the new identities have their place in virtual space but they are not connected to a specific geographic location and territory, the location of their headquarters is unknown. If one of these new

players obtains and decides to use weapons of mass destruction, it would not be possible to seek retribution. Therefore, the new identities give new dimensions to security problems. But as history proves, the problems reveal opportunities for humanity as a whole and the separate factors to prove their elevation and wisdom by building a reliable system for dealing with the risks and the challenges. In order to free the world of the fears caused by the elaborated interdependencies, super intelligence is required.

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The growing diversity of different types of autonomous social communities is creating a new structural problem for the postmodern world. It is hard to build mechanisms for interaction between nation-state, international, transnational, supranational identities and identities of the virtual world. Because of the specificity of their internal structure, hierarchic organization and management, they have no functional units of their own, and the traditional attributes of the classic heralds of international relations, which should realize the interaction between them as homologs.

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