Editorial

The world in 2020: what are the threats to humanity?

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The development of human civilization is non-linear: a few years, or even decades of upward progressive development, change to a greater or lesser period of degradation. At the same time, the above cyclicality is characteristic for both economic and political, social, cultural and other processes of vital activity of human civilization.

Unfortunately, the current day risks remaining in history books as one of the most tragic and at the same time shameful historical periods. Some experts even claim that human civilization is coming to an end. In particular, with an unprecedented level of knowledge and skills, humanity is gradually slipping into an ecological crisis and the depletion of the planet, the collapse of democracy, regionalization, recognition of the "right of the strong" in international relations, which inevitably leads to the disintegration of entire regions of the world and provokes new conflicts in the military point of the planet. Moreover, there is increasing talk of a possible next global military conflict.

So, in order to understand the state of our civilization, it is necessary to point the decisive global problems that threaten to reject humanity in its development for many years ago. We should note that the global problems of humanity are those characterized on a global scale, that is, they go beyond one state or group of countries; are complex in nature; are relevant to most countries of the world; affect the further development of humanity; can only be resolved by the efforts of the entire world community.

One of the urgent problems that needs to be addressed as soon as possible is the problem of environmental pollution. According to experts, one of the possible reasons for the disappearance of human civilization is the transformation of planet Earth into a place that is not suitable for human habitation due to human pollution.

Deforestation, exploitation of seas and soils, pollution of reservoirs and air - all these factors are pushing our world towards an environmental disaster. Already, about a quarter of all species on the planet are endangered. To the problem of pollution of the biosphere is added the problem of rapid reduction of habitats of animals through human economic activity.

Carbon emissions from industrial production have already led to an increase in average annual temperature, leading to dramatic climate change on the planet. The devastating droughts and fires that swept Latin America, Australia and the southern United States last year and early this year are already demonstrating what much of the planet could turn into if humanity did not control its activities. It should be noted that the Global Anti-Warming Agreement will no longer save the planet. Even if countries adhere to it, the climate will irreversibly change and make much of the Earth uninhabitable. This is evidenced by a new report by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

It states that in the future the average temperature on the planet will rise by more than three degrees, and this will lead to a mass extinction of species. Much of the planet may become unfit for human life. Even warming above $1.5\,°C$ will have dramatic climatic effects.

But even at this level, to keep warming by only $1.5\,°C$ by 2030, greenhouse gas emissions will have to decline by 7.6 % annually over the next decade. The way out could be a significant strengthening of countries' commitments to greenhouse gas emissions.

Therefore, the need to conclude a comprehensive climate agreement with all or most countries of the world is obvious. However, in modern conditions such a goal is difficult to achieve. It is noteworthy that the current Paris Climate Agreement, signed by about 170 countries, is not

being fully implemented, and one of the largest economies in the world - the US - has generally withdrawn from this agreement with the coming into power of President Trump.

The essence of this agreement, concluded in 2015, is that the signatory states undertake not to allow the average temperature on the planet to rise above 2°C with respect to indicators of the pre-industrial era, and if possible reduce it to 1.5°C.

The agreement also envisages the obligation of the signatory countries to start from 2050-2100 to limit greenhouse gas emissions from human activities to the level that trees, soil and the oceans can process naturally. In addition, each country undertakes to review its contribution to reducing harmful emissions into the atmosphere every five years.

Among other things, developed countries need to allocate funds to a dedicated climate fund to help poorer countries combat the effects of climate change (such as natural disasters or rising ocean levels) and the transition to renewable energy.

However, the difficult geopolitical situation, the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement, and the escalation of the arms race in different regions of the planet make it unlikely that a new global climate agreement will be concluded in the near future. Unfortunately, these processes can lead to catastrophic consequences for the ecology and climate of planet Earth.

The second major problem, which is becoming urgent for many countries in the world, is the gradual reduction or complete rejection of democratic principles of social development, the disintegration of entire regions of the world, and the curtailment of globalization processes. At the same time, dictatorship always comes to the place of democracy. In different parts of the world, the process of derogation from basic democratic values is at different stages: if in most post-Soviet countries, with few exceptions, the concentration of power in the hands of a single head of state is not surprising, then, for example, Turkey's rejection of democratic principles after many the years of building a European-type democratic society is disappointing.

Similar processes occur in many regions of the world: Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, and even the modern US. However, in all its history, humanity has not created a better type of social system than democracy. Only taking into account the interests of as many members of the human community as possible while adhering to clear rules and principles of coexistence can lead to the development of a full-fledged society and state. At the same time, a set of relevant principles was formulated by European thinkers of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century: humanism, education, equality of all members of society. Over time,

ideas of the Enlightenment manifested themselves in the concept of liberalism.

Liberalism proclaims that initiative (active), free, uncontrolled activity of persons, mainly economic and political, is a real source of progress in public life.

Liberalism aims at affirming parliamentary order, free enterprise, democratic freedoms; upholds the absolute value of the human personality ("person is more important than the state") and the equality of all people with regard to individual rights. The aim of liberalism is to maximize the weakening ("softening") of various forms of state and public coercion towards the person, to advocate the path of peaceful, reformative implementation of social transformations.

The creation of the EU was a triumph for the principles of liberal democracy. Postwar Europe has become one of the most developed regions and for many years has been a magnet for people from all over the world looking for a better life.

Unfortunately, modern generations of Europeans have apparently forgotten the horrors of the Great War, caused by the thirst for unlimited power of one authoritarian leader. The creation of the European community was not least the reaction of Europeans to the war and the desire to prevent its recurrence. Nowadways, as in the 1930s, European and American elites, partly corrupt and partly disoriented, find themselves unable to withstand the challenges of today: new authoritarian leaders are trying to destabilize Europe and other regions of the world, undermining the achievements of past generations, and, as well as in the past century - encroach on neighbors' territories, seeking to satisfy their perverted geopolitical ambitions; human-hate ideologies such as fascism, communism, ultra-conservative Islamism are once again resonating in the minds of residents of different regions of the world. Accordingly, the preconditions are created to inspire various "hybrid" local conflicts.

Is global conflict possible in today's context? It seems that the likelihood of global conflict is huge. The high levels of tension in different regions of the world, due to various factors, and the inability of the world elites to adequately respond to contemporary challenges, may well lead to a situation out of control.

Efforts to destroy the world political system and the system of international relations, as a result of increasing global tensions, curtailing the principles of democratic development of society, naturally lead to problems in the economy, in particular - to economic regionalization. More recently, it seemed as if the world economy had never been stronger, more open and united: producers had the opportunity to open production almost anywhere in the world; financiers were free to invest in the world's most perspective economies, and workers were able to migrate almost without difficulty in search of better job opportunities.

Now is the time of the trade wars: the two largest economies in the world (the US and China) are in a state of permanent conflict; stronger countries resume economic discrimination practices of weaker countries to achieve their geopolitical goals, and so on. At the same time, international institutions show their inability to cope with real problems. The World Trade Organization is on the verge of collapse and unable to cope with economic disputes, just as political institutions are unable to fulfill their functions in the field of international relations. Both the UN and the OSCE and the WTO, are able to «express their concerns» but are not able to make genuine decisions in times of criseses.

Is it possible to change things? Obviously, in order to restore the normal development of mankind, the world's political elites must play their part. In particular, governments of the world and international organizations whose immediate task is to provide economic, environmental, social, political, military, information security at the level of each country, region, continent, and the world as a whole must clearly fulfill their functions: if any member of the world community violates its obligations towards another country, world governments and authorized international organizations should immediately take effective, rather than decorative, measures to restore justice and the world order; the same algorithm of action should be applied by the governments of the countries in relation to the domestic entities in case of their illegal activity directed against the interests of the respective country.

With regard to the wider context of the development of world processes, it is thanks to globalization, as a deliberate policy of the developed countries of the world, aimed at the gradual integration of economic, political, socio-cultural and other systems, that any person can satisfy his needs in any sphere. Of course, there are still countries on the planet that lack food or have limited access to education, but in most cases, thanks to the loyal migration policies of richer countries, such people can (or could until recently) find their place anywhere to another point in the world. In doing so, today we are witnessing the curtailment of migration programs and the gradual closing of the borders of many cranes for foreigners. As an example, one should cite changes in US migration policy. In particular, President Trump has taken a course to restrict Mexican access to the country. This decision was due to the fact that there was a high percentage of criminals among Mexican migrants. So Trump has decided to step up migration policy and build a physical wall on the border with Mexico. At the same time, this decision does not take into account the reverse side of the coin, namely that millions of Mexicans,

working for US companies or starting their own businesses, are developing the US economy. So instead of fighting crime, the US president decided to fight the Mexicans as a whole, unaware of the detrimental effects of the US economy and international relations in general. Interestingly, similar processes are taking place in Europe as well: in 2016, UK citizens decided to withdraw from the EU. Without going into detail whether the results of the referendum were falsified or whether there was a manipulative influence on the referendum participants and through whose efforts, it should be noted that the majority of citizens deliberately voted for economic and political separation from the rest of the European continent. Accordingly, the efforts of several generations of Europeans, who, in the decades since World War II, have built the most successful European community in the history of mankind, have been called into question by the results of the British referendum and, in the event of the final withdrawal of the UK from the EU, will be led by the EU.

As a metter of fact, in continental Europe there are also enough forces working to destroy the European Community. It is worth mentioning the relative success of the nationalist Marine Le Pen in the French presidential and parliamentary elections, the months-long protests of the so-called «Yellow Jackets», which cannot clearly explain why they are protesting and destroying buildings and cars, or winning the parliamentary elections in Italy of the right-wing nationalist the «League of the North" party, which stands for withdrawal from the EU. Similar processes are also taking place in Spain, where the movement to separate Catalonia from Spain has already become threatening, both for the country itself and for the EU as a whole.

Do the supporters of the relevant movements, voters voting for an exit from the EU, the global players who provoke the disintegration of Europe, understand that their joint actions can lead to unpredictable consequences not only in Europe but worldwide? Does President Trump realize that his protectionist policies are causing a devastating blow to the global economy and, by making inappropriate political decisions, helping to destroy the world order by authoritarian regimes? The direct consequences of such a policy could be the irreversible climate and environmental changes on the planet, the slowdown in the scientific and innovative development of mankind, serious economic problems and, as a result, impoverishment of millions of people, local military conflicts, or even a global military conflict with many casualties. The question remains rhetorical. Will the vector of human civilization develop in 2020? Unfortunately, it is unlikely.