



GEOPOLITICAL HYPOTHESES AND CONCEPTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GLOBAL PROCESSES IN THE 21st CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

In the European Union annual report for the year 1997 globalization is defined as follows: 'globalization can be defined as the process by which markets and production in different countries are becoming increasingly interdependent due to the dynamics of trade in goods and services and flows of capital and technology'.

It is a fact that globalization presents exceptional opportunities for development, but it also causes problems stemming from:

- the growing economic inequality (For instance, back in 1997 in its report, the World Bank noted that more than one billion people were living on the verge of poverty. Today, the situation has not changed);

- the increased interrelations between the economic structures in the global world and the potential for crises in some of them to lead to a world crisis like the current one;

- the irregularity of capital flows, which makes national economies susceptible to shocks;

- the slow integration of the inefficient economies into the rapidly developing integrated communities;

- the poorest countries are subjected the most to the unfavorable consequences of globalization.

This naturally raises the following question: Is mankind after all capable, in the short or in the long term, of finding solutions to its global problems and of building a better global world where all are treated justly?

Many leading scientists in the area of globalization are looking for answers to this question.

Key words: globalization, geopolitical hypotheses, global conceptions, futuristic school of thought, global problems of the mankind, Club of Rome, economic growth, World Bank

'Might without wisdom has turned man into a modern barbarian, who has enormous power at his disposal, but very limited abilities to figure out how to use it. Man was smart enough to steal the fire from the gods, but he lacks their ability to use it. The contemporary global crisis is a direct consequence of man's inability to ascend to the level and to bear the responsibilities corresponding to his new role. The problem is in man himself and any possible solution depends on him.'

These are the words of Aurelio Peccei, founder of the Club of Rome, taken from his book 'The Human Quality' (Peccei, A., The Human Quality, 1987)

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Over the thousands of years of evolution, man has been creating his civilization, but becoming the de facto ruler of the planet, he has also been fuelling constantly and irreversibly the process of globalization. Definitions focusing on its dynamism, its irreversibility and its ubiquity are equally correct. Globalization encompasses everything and everybody:

- it is a process of internationalization of production and exchange;

- it is a phenomenon by which national economic borders are erased;

- it is a process by which the economic activity reaches a global dimension, etc.

Some authors link globalization to the birth of a new age - the age of net economy, the world of the new information society. (Пипев, Ив. Глобализацията - същност, проблеми, тенденции, изд. „Булвест 2000”, С. , 2001)

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Many of the definitions of globalization are more than similar. This is completely natural having in mind the clear common causes and conditions which facilitate the process of globalization.

Globalization can also be regarded as the triumph and tragedy of contemporary civilization. The global world certainly cannot be equated with Heaven on Earth. That is because globalization, just like any other unique process, also has its flipside – the global issues.

This is the popular, universally accepted term for those most important issues for the modern society, arising in the age of globalization as a consequence of the socio-economic development of human society.

These issues are diverse, but also very dynamic in their mutability. For some of these problems short-term solutions are required or no solution has been found at this stage. Some of the issues that fall into this category are:

- the discrepancy between the demographic growth of the population and the dynamics of the development of the forces of production;
- the more rapid development of the forces of production in comparison with the social, international and institutional relations;
- the rational utilization of the planetary resources, the resources of the World Ocean and those of the Space;
- the economic inequality;
- the ecological problems, etc. (Пипев, Ив. Глобализацията - същност, проблеми, тенденции, изд. „Булвест 2000”, С. , 2001)

The main problem of the contemporary mankind is that humanity is not prepared well-enough to solve the global issues. Or, as Bertrand Schneider phrased it: 'We know a lot, but we understand very little'. (King, R., Schneider B., *The First Global Revolution*, 1992)

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This naturally raises the following question: Is mankind after all capable, in the short or in the long term, of finding solutions to its global problems and of building a better global world where all are treated justly?

Many leading scientists in the area of globalization are looking for answers to this question. The different forecasts picture several directions for the future of the development of the global world:

- significant changes in the employment and use of workforce such as substantial increase in the qualification of the workforce with the purpose of establishing a highly developed and energy-efficient economy;
- new dimensions of economic growth linked to perfecting the market mechanisms;
- new tendencies in the processes of urbanization such as weakening of the tendency for increase of the urban population, etc.

One of the types of forecasts for the future of the globalized world is that of the so-called global conceptions.

Some of the organizations that make such forecasts and global geoeconomic and geopolitical conceptions are the United Nations, the World Future Studies Federation comprising 15 organizations and institutes, the Hudson Institute, the World Policy Institute with a headquarter in New York, the Worldwatch Institute in Washington, the Club of Rome and others.

The global conceptions can be categorized and summarized into three main groups- the pessimistic, the optimistic and the realistic.

1. The pessimistic school of thought includes the first reports of the Club of Rome. Its most distinguished proponents are: Aurelio Peccei, R. Heilbroner, J. Forrester and others.

The main conception of this school of thought is that the world will be plagued by a formidable multi-polar crisis in economy, ecology, etc. This is deeply emphasized in the mathematical model created by Forrester, which covers the following variables: population, food production, industrialization, ecology, use of non-producible resources. By analyzing these variables Forrester draws the conclusion that the planet and its economic system are threatened with inevitable collapse. Similar conclusions were reached by the research team led by Dennis Meadows. According to the scientists in this team the negative consequences can be overcome by placing the system in 'global equilibrium'. Meadows believes that such a state of equilibrium will be possible after a certain amount of time provided that the demographic and economic growth is restricted.

The restriction of the demographic growth can be achieved by having simple reproduction of the population.

The restriction of the economic growth can be accomplished by limiting the growth of production capacities to a certain level and minimizing the use of natural resources.

In order to avoid the global instability of the economy and the physical systems are proposed alternative programs, in which main parameter is growth restriction. This restriction is called 'dynamic development' by M. Mesarovic and E. Pestel.

2. Optimistic school of thought

Its most famous representatives are the scientists from the Hudson Institute H. Kahn, L. Martel, W. Brown and E. Wiener.

Their research programs and theoretical conceptions can be found in two of the Institute's publications – 'The Year 2000' and 'Earth full of resources'.

The optimistic school of thought's forecast covers 400 years. It is normal that with such a length of time, the forecasts are more unstable and undefined. But after all, according to the creators of this program, the post-industrial, superindustrial society will become wealthier and will learn more about how to manage the forces of nature.

The programs of the Hudson Institute present two possibilities for securing the future of mankind:

- 'earth' outcome - according to it all problems should be solved on the planet, by using all the resources and capacity of the Earth, including its oceans and depths;
- 'space' outcome - accelerated study of the boundless cosmic space with the purpose of providing conditions for the migration of the human population to other worlds.

The authors of the program prefer the "earth" outcome.

In addition to that, they offer several options for coping with the oncoming ecological and economic cataclysms. They propose four variants:

- Neo-Malthusian-uncontrolled demographic boom without regard for the depletion of the raw materials and resources, which will result in disaster;
- mildly pessimistic - if new planetary and cosmic resources are discovered, the world catastrophe can be avoided for a considerable period of time;
- mildly optimistic - the economy is provided with all the necessary resources, new ones will be discovered and the perspectives are favorable;
- the model of the scientific and technological progress (STP) -due to the results of the application of the new technologies, the diminishing resources and the deteriorating ecological environment can be improved, which will also be beneficial to world development.

3. Realistic school of thought

Representatives of this school of thought are Jan Tinberger, V. Leontiev and others.

In the third report of the Club of Rome titled "Reshaping the International Order", coordinated by Jan Tinberger, the globalist theories became undoubtedly realistic.

In their economic analyses, the researchers reached the conclusion that it is necessary to regulate to some extent the global economic processes in action.

The main conclusion drawn by Jan Tinberger and V. Leontiev is that the problems of mankind, the negative tendencies in the ecological and economic spheres can be solved only by means of radical changes in the world economy and politics along with the

development of a new structure of the economic institutions and organization.

CONCLUSION

The progress of the process of globalization in the contemporary world has both positive as well as negative consequences. The gap between rich and poor at a national and international level is not decreasing but widening. Especially notable is the income gap between the industrial North and the developing South. Around 40 % of the world's population lives under the poverty threshold. Nancy Budstow wrote: 'It is a paradox that inequality is raising at a time when democracy and free markets triumph and usher in a new age of freedom of opportunity'.

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