

VALDAI DISCUSSION CLUB REPORT



Valdai | Discussion
Club

www.valdaiclub.com

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST: HOW TO AVOID IRREPARABLE DAMAGE

**Oleg Barabanov, Timofey Bordachev, Yaroslav Lissovolik,
Fyodor Lukyanov, Andrey Sushentsov, Dmitry Suslov, Ivan Timofeev**

MOSCOW, OCTOBER 2017

Authors

Oleg Barabanov

Programme Director of the Valdai Discussion Club; Professor of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; Professor of the Russian Academy of Science

Timofey Bordachev

Programme Director of the Valdai Discussion Club; Director of the Center for Comprehensive European and International Studies at the National Research University – Higher School of Economics, Ph.D. in Political Science

Yaroslav Lissovolik

Programme Director of the Valdai Discussion Club; Chief Economist, Eurasian Development Bank; D. Sc. (Economics)

Fyodor Lukyanov

Research Director of the Foundation for Development and Support of the Valdai Discussion Club; Chairman of the Presidium of the Council of Foreign and Defense Policy; Editor-in-Chief of the Journal “Russia in Global Affairs”

Andrey Sushentsov

Programme Director of the Valdai Discussion Club; Director of the Foreign Policy Analysis Group; Associate Professor at the Department of Applied International Analysis of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; Ph.D. in Political Science

Dmitry Suslov

Programme Director of the Valdai Discussion Club; Deputy Director of the Centre for Comprehensive European and International Studies at the National Research University – Higher School of Economics

Ivan Timofeev

Programme Director of the Valdai Discussion Club, Director of Programmes at the Russian International Affairs Council, Ph.D. in Political Science

ISBN 978-5-906757-69-2

Contents

Structuring the Creativity	3
“Homework” Becomes the Priority	6
Strategic Frivolity and Political Histrionics	6
Security “Consumers” Versus Security “Providers”	8
A Class with no Teacher	10
Sovereignty – Again.....	12
Not Dogma, but a Guide to Action.....	14
Indivisibility as a Value	17

Structuring the Creativity

The idea that conflict can have creative implications is by no means new. More than 2,000 years ago, Heraclitus stated: “One should know that war is universal, that truth is a struggle, and that everything happens through struggle and necessity.” Plato expanded on this idea substantially. As for Hegel, he largely based his philosophy of history on trying to understand the nature and ways in which conflicts develop – on the struggle of opposites.

However, as Hegel also found, conflicts are only creative when the parties approach and overcome them with reason. Moreover, this ability to employ reason towards conflict resolution should have, logically speaking, grown stronger from one generation to the next throughout human history.

Unfortunately, there is no firm evidence to suggest that this has happened. Furthermore, larger conflicts are now breaking into smaller ones even as other conflicts of every possible size and type are also appearing.

In a sense, conflicts became more chaotic after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The fact is, the confrontation between the capitalist and socialist systems was largely inherent in the global system itself. In essence, both of those systems – at least on paper – strove toward a similar future that they described in similar terms of human rights, technological progress, improved quality of life, and so on. In addition, both systems insisted that history “made sense,” that conscious individuals could and should control the historical process and, by extension, the future. In effect, the only irreconcilable argument was over how to achieve the future that both wanted. All other conflicts were

subordinate and part of this larger and fundamental systemic conflict.

Today’s conflicts, by contrast, seem to have taken the form of a bizarre and perplexing puzzle – one to which reason does not even apply. The pieces of this puzzle include separatism, religious strife, social tensions, enormous inequality in technological development, and much more. And, of course, even the idea of holding similar visions of the future is now out of the question.

Alas, there is also no unity concerning the causes of humanity’s current condition. Perhaps the problem lies much deeper than in dramatic political changes. Its roots might stretch back to the post-war intellectual malaise, in the rise, for example, of a postmodernism that deliberately sought to destroy all rational goals for development. Perhaps, new technologies, especially in communications, have played a fatal role. Perhaps, many other factors are also to blame – or else, more likely, a combination of them all.

However, the only possible solution is to make a rational analysis of the world and its various conflicts, as well as the hypothetical creative implications they hold. History should conform to reason, and this report is an attempt to apply such reason to current events. Creative forces must be comprehensible. If the present situation is a case of “creative destruction,” could a new world order arise from the current conflicts?

*Andrey Bystritskiy,
Chairman of the Board of the
Foundation for Development and
Support of the Valdai Discussion Club*

Away, then, with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, 'Peace, peace,' and there is no peace!

(Jer 6:14)
Martin Luther,
Thesis 92 of his *Disputation on the Power of Indulgences*,
the text that, according to legend, he posted on the door of
All Saints' Church in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517

We are now faced with the fact, my friends, that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now... Life often leaves us standing bare, naked, and dejected with a lost opportunity... We still have a choice today: nonviolent coexistence or violent coannihilation. We must move past indecision to action.

Martin Luther King, Jr.,
in his speech *Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence*,
delivered on April 4, 1967 at Riverside Church in New York City

The United States has great strength and patience, but if it is forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea.

U.S. President Donald Trump,
in a speech before the United Nations General Assembly
on September 19, 2017

Five hundred years ago, in the late fall of 1517, 34-year-old Saxon theology professor Martin Luther published his "Ninety-five Theses" challenging the papal bull on "Assisting with the construction of St. Peter's Cathedral and the salvation of the souls of the Christian world" that permitted the sale of indulgences. The ensuing dispute about the nature of repentance and redemption not only led to one of the most significant religious schisms in history, but also served as a catalyst for fundamental political changes. This theological dispute also paved the way for the formation of a different system of European politics – which, at the time, were practically synonymous with world politics.

A new era was dawning. The time of universalism, when Europe had viewed itself through the prism of a common religion, was replaced by an era of national self-determination and the emerging

notion of national interests. Luther augured the appearance of Johannes Gutenberg, the father of the media revolution of the late Middle Ages. The printing of books spurred the spread of knowledge, but the first "bestseller" was Martin Luther's translation of the Bible into German. That gave a national form and interpretation to the Scripture intended for all. Set in language accessible by the masses, his translation brought the content of the Bible into public discourse specific to different societies.

Europe had to endure almost a century and a half of turmoil and religious strife that included the Thirty Years' War before a new order arose in international relations – the Westphalian system. At its core was the concept of state sovereignty, a basic principle that has remained unchanged despite the countless upheavals in human affairs over the ensuing almost 370 years.



Historical analogies are always flawed, if not dangerous: the past does not hold the answer for the future. Nonetheless, it is possible to discern some parallels between current trends and past events. As it happened at that time, the period of universality (albeit much shorter) is coming to an end – together with the understanding that it will take more than just a common effort, but a single worldview to achieve a holistic world. The issue of sovereignty is once again in the spotlight. The question arises of how to ensure sovereignty in an interconnected world where technologies and global phenomena blur national borders and where no one has yet devised alternative structures to the traditional concept of statehood. Once again, there is a pressing need for shared understanding. To what extent do ordinary citizens and their leaders speak the same language? How fully do they understand what is happening? And, to what extent does the same concept have the same meaning in different political systems?

The Valdai Discussion Club reports¹ have repeatedly addressed the subject of rules and regulations – both the universal and the particular – the relationship between “those higher up” and “those lower down,” and tried to determine whether it is possible to achieve balance in a world of numerous players with different statures, degrees of global influence, characters, and political cultures. Answers to the questions we posed in previous years have yet to appear, but the outlines of the trend first noted three years ago have become more distinct. We will try to delineate them in this report.

¹ ‘New Rules or No Rules,’ Valdai Discussion Club Report, March 2015. Available from: http://valdaiclub.com/a/reports/new_rules_or_no_rules_xi_annual_valdai_discussion_club_meeting_participants_report/?sphrase_id=174283; ‘War and Peace in the 21st Century: International Stability and Balance of the New Type,’ Valdai Discussion Club Report, January 2016. Available from: http://valdaiclub.com/a/reports/international-stabilityand-balance-of-the-new-type/?sphrase_id=174291; ‘Global Revolt and Global Order: the Revolutionary Situation in Condition of the World and What To Do About It,’ Valdai Discussion Club Report, February 2017. Available from: http://valdaiclub.com/a/reports/valdai-club-reportglobal-revolt-and-global-order/?sphrase_id=174296

“Homework” Becomes the Priority

The final section of last year’s Valdai Discussion Club report was called “Homework Time.” International processes ran up against internal constraints as the people of the world’s leading countries resisted the increasingly global agenda of the ruling class. “The time has clearly come to declare a ‘water truce’ so that all parties can attend to their respective internal affairs,” we wrote one year ago.

The reality exceeded expectations, so eager have some of the major powers been to focus on their “homework” to the detriment of everything else. The slogan “America First” that gave Donald Trump his election victory in 2016 became a war cry signaling the triumph of domestic concerns over foreign ones. This “homework” turned out to be more difficult than anticipated. Completing it – and in many cases, dealing with the conflicting ideas of how to do it – consumed the attention and energy of the leading states. Self-centeredness has become the predominant approach.

The reasons for this are clear. Societies are unhappy, bewildered, distracted, and frightened. There is a growing demand for action, for each state to rapidly and decisively implement measures that benefit citizens as close to the grassroots as possible. Regardless

of the political model they represent, the decision-makers in Russia, the U.S., China, India, and United Kingdom find themselves under growing pressure from the force of public opinion – made all the greater by modern forms of mass communication. All politicians without exception know firsthand that the media, as the classic formulation by Marshall McLuhan states, have become not merely the transmitters of information, but the creators of content. The experience of the 19th–20th centuries shows that pressure from below inevitably leads to the growth of national self-centeredness and a diminishing of the importance of external factors. Simply put, every politician wants to hold onto his or her position and internal threats pose a much greater danger in this respect than external ones, with the result that neutralizing them is always the highest priority.

The hope for “water truce” has not materialized. The assumption that players fixated on domestic issues would be less active in foreign affairs has proven wrong. In fact, just the opposite is true: such leaders use actions in the international arena as a means for achieving objectives at home. Their foreign policy moves have become more situational and impulsive, only exacerbating the general instability in the world.

Strategic Frivolity and Political Histrionics

The world is returning to the era of blatant and shameless competition. This is neither new nor fatal. Humanity has accumulated sufficient experience at managing rivalry-based relations and the knowledge necessary for lowering the inherent

risks – especially if more or less clear-thinking “captains” capable of bargaining and negotiating are at the helm. Force is just one of the tools available to leaders, and the threat of applying that force is a useful bargaining chip. However,

the actual use of military might could and should be limited.

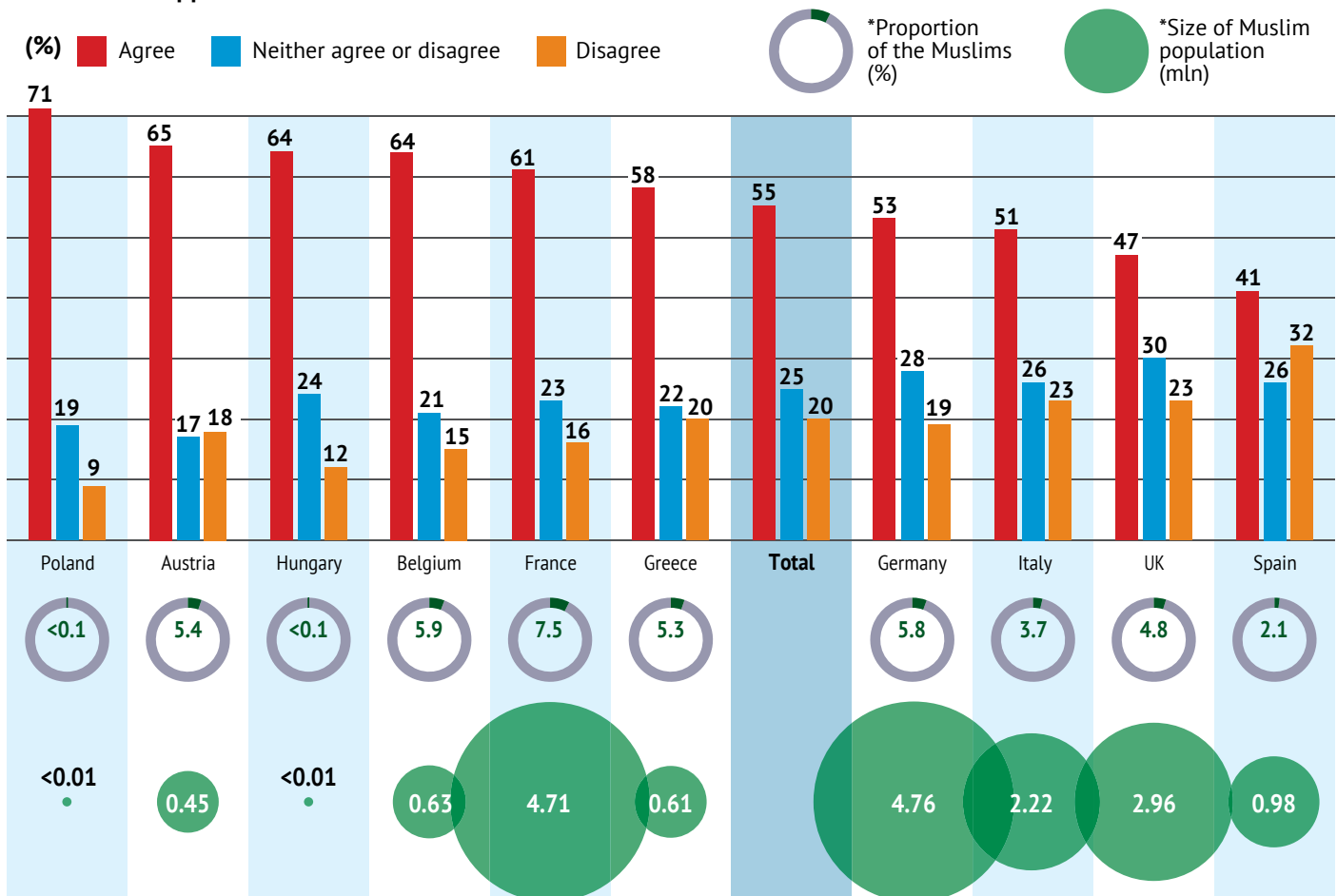
The problem is that rational thinking is now in short supply and world politics is beginning to resemble a devil-may-care cabaret of sorts. This 21st century brand of self-interest poses a danger by perpetuating the previous era, in which giddiness over the “end of history” and subsequent splurging on “peace dividends” led the mightiest powers on earth to feel overly complacent and even at times to lose their instinct for self-preservation. This finds particular expression in the current orgy

of trolling that has almost become the official language of diplomacy.

The unspoken and complacent belief that “the unthinkable could never happen,” that “countries would never inflict irreparable damage on each other” has now come to replace the constant sense of unease that the political community experienced throughout the Cold War – and that prompted it to implement measures to ensure that “the unthinkable” could never happen. In different periods of history, the fear of a large-scale war breaking out has served as a natural inhibitor

EUROPEAN VIEW ON MUSLIM IMMIGRATION

«All further migration from mainly Muslim countries should be stopped»



Source: Chatham House, Pew Research Center.

* Population data before migrant crisis 2015

to most oversized ambitions. That fear has now given way to the dubious conviction that such a war could never occur – due to the existence of nuclear weapons, the economic interdependence of states, and the fact that no single power is truly capable of dominating the world.

This has led to an increase in “strategic frivolity” in world politics – to a willingness on the part of leaders to create situations fraught with risk for the sake of short-term tactical interests. This resulted from the enormous imbalance of powers that arose after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Finding themselves unopposed after the end of the Cold War, the U.S. and its European allies had the freedom to do practically anything that they considered necessary and proper. Initially, those actions did not lead directly to an increase in the overall level of threat. In exactly the same way, the aggressive policy that Rome pursued during its heyday did not lead to world war for the simple reason that there was no one against whom Rome could fight.

Now, however, the balance of powers has changed. Actions that 20 or 25 years ago would have

caused no more than local repercussions now have the potential to grow into a global conflict. Today, a greater number of players are capable of provoking a major war. On the one hand, the world’s major powers respond to each other’s most assertive actions by drawing “red lines,” the crossing of which incur no less assertive responses.² On the other hand, some of the small and medium-sized countries in Eastern Europe and Northeast and Southeast Asia base their policies on conflict rather than on co-operation. They could play the same role today that the small Balkan states played in the outbreak of World War I.

The situation concerning North Korea, for example, resembles a proxy war in reverse. In place of major players using smaller ones to achieve their ends, Pyongyang commits provocations in the hope that, if tensions rise high enough, its huge neighbours – Russia and China – will be forced to take its side in order to prevent their global rival, the U.S., from strengthening its position in the region. In other words, a catastrophe could be sparked not by the clash of the most powerful states vying for domination, but by the actions of a third country pursuing its own, sometimes very petty objectives.

Security “Consumers” Versus Security “Providers”

The breakdown of institutions designed to ensure security has been gradual. The first blow to their integrity came with the decision to override states’ sovereignty and permit intervention on humanitarian and political grounds. The next step was to build purely transactional relations with a number of states, including them in various unions, partnerships, and blocs. That approach peaked when Donald Trump took office, but it was

former U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld who first enunciated the guiding principle much earlier.

² The most obvious example is the situation around Ukraine in 2014, when Russia deemed that all red lines had been crossed and resolutely responded to the actions. Another potential source of instability – East Asia, where China closely follows the developments of regional conflicts and U.S. involvement in them.

It is not the idea that these are dangerous times and that each country must therefore fend for itself that drives states' current self-centeredness. It is the spirit of consumerism characterizing modern society that has tainted international relations. The 21st century has seen a rise in the "consumption" of security and a simultaneous decline in its "production."

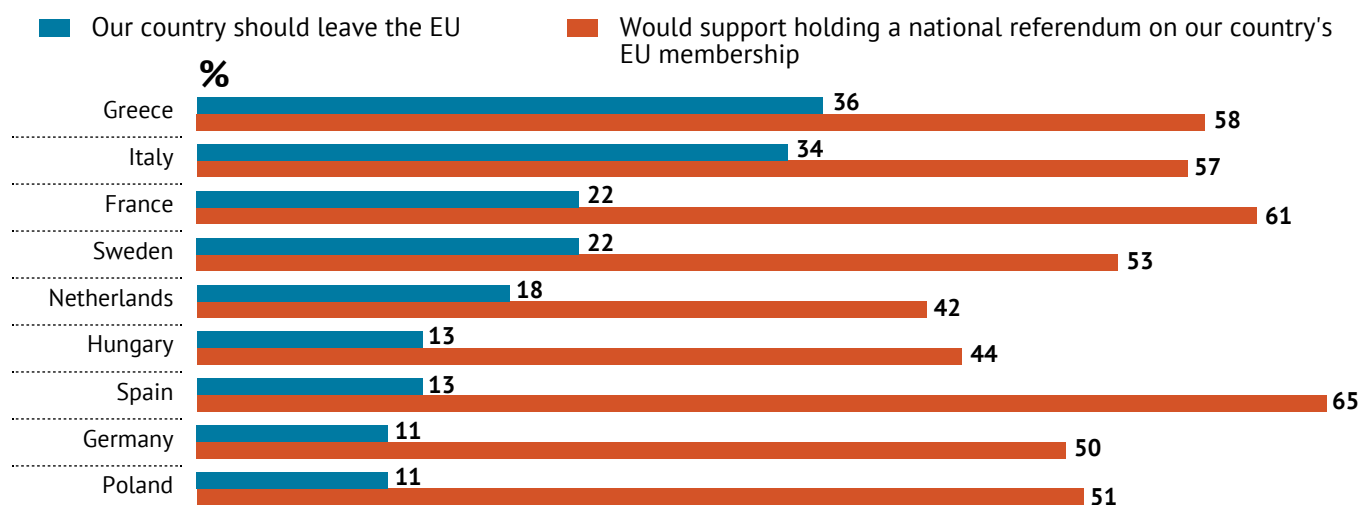
The Cold War, to which so many references are made now, exhibited different dynamics at different times. The culmination came in the fall of 1962, when the conflict over the Soviet Union's plan to deploy nuclear weapons in Cuba nearly led to war between Moscow and Washington. The high drama of that crisis made it a very educative experience. The opposing sides realized the price and possible consequences of conflict, forcing them to proceed with caution and to avoid situations that could lead to an uncontrollable escalation. The goal was not so much to reconcile their differences or end

their rivalry as it was to establish ground rules and to delineate "red lines" that each would definitely respect.

It is difficult to know whether today's leading politicians hold such an understanding. At this point, it seems they more likely believe in the usefulness of controlled destabilisation, of using local conflicts to clarify relationships between the "heavy hitters." That is not a new approach: it was also employed during the Cold War, including in the period after the Cuban missile crisis. But at that time, the superpowers were fairly certain they could regulate the intensity of such "tensions on the ground" and ensure that they served their own interests.

Now, however, the "tail" has learned to "wag the dog" masterfully, and not because smaller states have suddenly come into newfound power, but because the world order is badly out of balance and relations between the major

EU'S FUTURE ON THE AGENDA



Source: Pew Research Center.

powers are in disarray. Attempts at “managed destabilisation” have repeatedly devolved into uncontrolled “hybrid” confrontations. The danger with hybrid confrontation is that it is asymmetrical – in both its objectives and its methods – and its primary strength

is unpredictability, the ability to respond not “tit for tat” to an enemy’s actions, but in ways that the adversary does not anticipate. The Cold War – with its “arms control” and “containment” – looks appealingly simple and straightforward by comparison.

A Class with no Teacher

To some degree, the breakdown of the Cold War system of rules and institutions pushes the international order back to the pre-Wilsonian era, when formal and informal arrangements provided only weak control over global political and economic systems. That greatly increases the need for those states and international players whose actions most influence the quality of life of all humanity to formulate well-considered foreign policies. However, each of the world’s major players faces a lack of either material or non-material resources that would enable them to fulfill the function commensurate with their status. Once again, we have a world composed of individual states, but even those that most longed for a return to this “classic” paradigm turned out to be unprepared for it.

The United States is no longer able to strive for full-fledged global domination, but its military and economy remain the most powerful in the world. The U.S. has begun a fundamental shift away from its status as a “superpower” exercising “global responsibility” and enjoying a universalist hegemony to becoming simply a “great power” focused primarily on its own interests and internal political considerations rather than on objectives related to maintaining

the international order as a whole. That makes the internal difficulties the U.S. is facing a threat for the rest of humankind. An examination of the dynamics of the U.S. political process suggests that Trump is not the cause, but only an exaggerated manifestation of larger trends.

Circumstances are forcing China to come out of the shadows and play a more decisive role in world affairs. However, Beijing has not accumulated sufficient economic or political resources to lead others or gain their trust regarding its intentions. China’s neighbors are concerned about its growing might. A whole range of reasons suggests that China’s current political model – one that it has been following since its principles were first laid in the late 1970s and early 1980s – is reaching the end of its viability, and that a difficult transition lies ahead.

The European Union must now rethink its whole project for integration. Even if it eventually overcomes its systemic crisis, with the EU becoming more a “Europe of Individual States” than a “European Union” per se, it is unlikely to become a full-fledged global player. However, the EU will continue to wield significant influence,

especially in adjacent territories. As a result, if competition increases, the EU will not so much “export stability” as it will foster conflicts on the European periphery.

Germany stands at the center of Europe’s transformation and has been pushed, somewhat reluctantly, into a leadership role. German leaders see the preservation of the European Union as the only way to ensure the stable political and economic development of their country and as the only guarantee that the deadly “German question” will not resurface. However, German public opinion is in conflict with the task the country faces on the international front. Germany must act as the engine of change for the European Union, but judging by the results of the recent elections there, its own citizens are of a different mind, with the majority fearing that any changes to the status quo would only make the situation worse, not better.

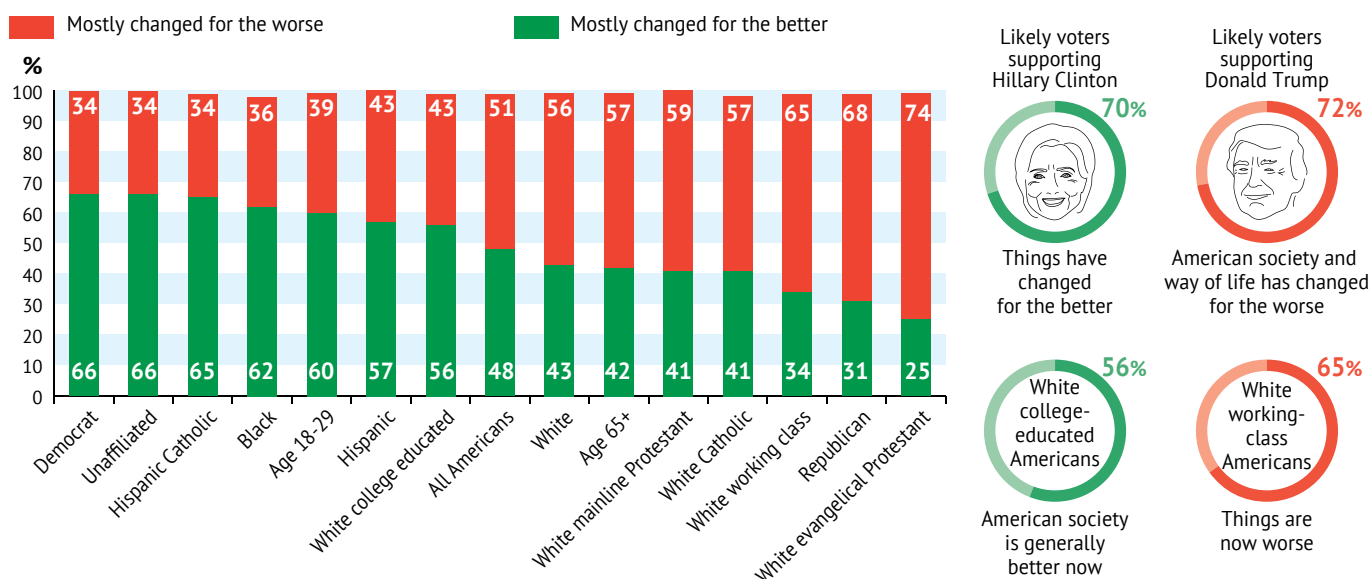
Russia is experiencing serious problems associated with its precarious demographics and fragile economic structure. This puts sharp limits on Russia’s ability to wield influence internationally, despite gains in that area in recent years resulting from its increased military and political might. It also undermines hopes for the conservative international agenda Moscow would like to advance. Moreover, Russia must formulate a new development model to replace the current approach, one that focuses largely on overcoming the consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The world has changed so much in recent years that an entirely new reference point is needed.

India’s global ambitions depend on the extent to which it can consolidate its leadership role in the region, although significant obstacles are likely to complicate that task. South Asia has become a bitter point of contention between

THE DIVIDE OVER AMERICA’S FUTURE (2016)

Nostalgia for the 1950s

Since the 1950s, do you think American culture and way of life has mostly changed for the better, or has it mostly changed for the worse?



Source: Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI).

* Survey conducted before the presidential election 2016.

the major world powers. Delhi has not yet managed to mobilize broad and effective international support for its course, or to convince its foreign partners of its ability to play a truly global role.

Even the unity of the West is in question. The Old and New Worlds are moving in different directions. The U.S. and the U.K. have shown that they are prepared to place

national interests above collective obligations and alliances. The principle of “America First,” born of deepening tensions within U.S. society, is becoming a universal imperative. Left without a homeroom teacher, the students are vying fervidly to see who can best complete their “homework” – that is, to advance their national agendas, even to the detriment of international relations.

Sovereignty – Again

The United Nations and its Security Council are practically the only 20th-century international structures that remain functional. The UNSC rises above the resurgent international anarchy like a lone bastion of relative consistency. That citadel is strong, but it is hardly indestructible. On the one hand, the “masses” are agitating for equality and there is a groundswell of support for initiatives to limit or annul the veto power – a disquieting portent for the permanent members of the Security Council. On the other hand, although the U.S. has repeatedly raised the issue of the need to resolutely deal with the organisation’s inefficiency, that rhetoric has now reached new heights. It is unprecedented that, from the rostrum of the General Assembly, the head of one sovereign UN member state would declare its readiness to destroy another sovereign member state (see quote in epigraph).

This episode concerns the root problem of international relations – the meaning and definition of sovereignty and the principles governing interactions between sovereign states. This theme, which harkens back

to the time of Martin Luther, is once again at the top of the international agenda.

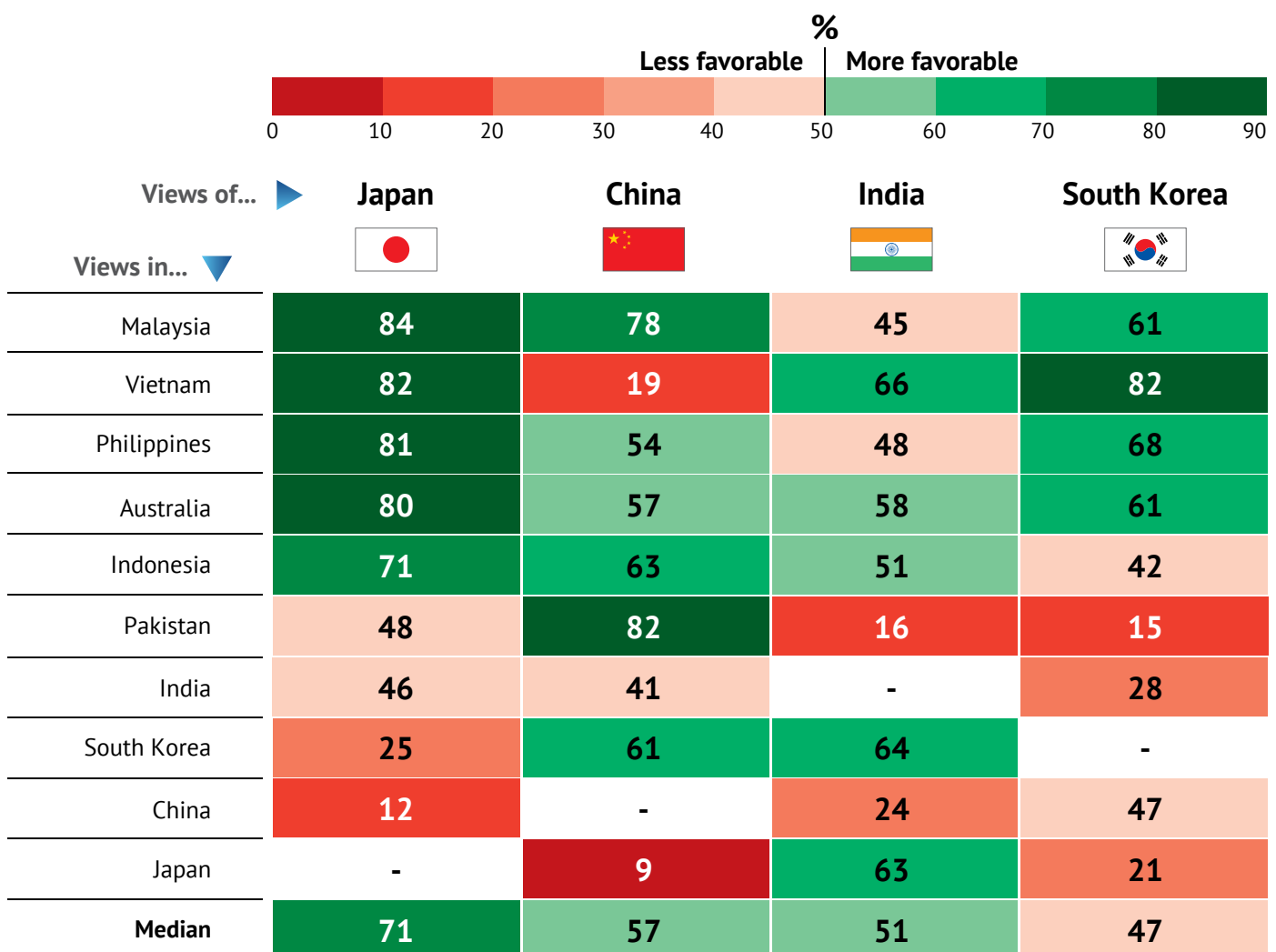
In the quarter century since the end of the Cold War, the intensive globalisation process and deepening global interdependence have led to the realisation that interstate co-operation in pursuit of shared global interests has eclipsed traditional realist strategy. Such strategy holds that, while it is crucial that states achieve some form of balance in their struggle for national interests, those interests do not necessarily overlap. The dilemma between states’ sovereignty and their interdependence was decided unequivocally in favor of interdependence. At the turn of the century, the neoliberal school produced a number of versions of the concept of so-called “flexible sovereignty” (Stephen Krasner’s works being the best example). Discussions of “the erosion of sovereignty,” “limited sovereignty,” and “sovereignty not as a right, but as a responsibility” naturally led to the conclusion that a rejection of the Westphalian system – or, at least, a crisis in its functioning – was inevitable. In time, such ideas spread beyond the neoliberal school and

came to be perceived as a given in global politics, as concepts that all but the “mastodons” mired in 19th-century thinking recognized and upheld.

“Trumpism,” with its refrain about national interests, has taken a sharp turn away from the notion that the erosion of state sovereignty

is an irreversible result of 21st-century global politics. Accordingly, the principles of the Westphalian model of the world are not a relic of the past, but remain a fundamental element of the global agenda. All this makes it necessary to rethink Westphalian principles in light of today’s ongoing economic globalisation.

ASIANS’ VIEWS OF EACH OTHER



Source: Pew Research Center.

Not Dogma, but a Guide to Action

To better understand what a new version of Westphalia might look like, it makes sense to recall the key provisions of the original agreement and consider their applicability to current circumstances.

The Westphalian world consists of sovereign states without a single, supreme power; it contains no principle of an universalist governing hierarchy.

In the absence of a global higher authority, agreement is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of states and, therefore, their non-interference in each other's affairs.

The Westphalian world is regulated by international law that is understood as the provisions contained in the treaties sovereign states conclude between themselves. By definition, with such an understanding of international law, there can be no general "laws" that are binding on everyone.

It follows that only sovereign states can act as subjects of international law and only they are recognized players in global politics.

Because there is no supreme power, and states cannot interfere in each other's internal affairs,



It is a common knowledge that Westphalian system is named after the Peace of Westphalia (1648), which consists of two treaties signed in Westphalian cities of Osnabruck and Munster. The Peace put an end to the Thirty Years' War that is considered to be the first all-European war. It traces its roots in religious conflict between Catholic and Protestant states in the Holy Roman Empire. The emperor being the supreme authority as well as a catholic ruler opposed the tendency of spreading protestant

faith and its proclamation as official one in formally subordinate parts of the Empire. The Peace enshrined a principle of 'cuius regio, eius religio' (whose realm, his religion). This ensured the right of each prince to determine the religion of his own state and gave birth to the principle of 'religious sovereignty'.

However, this principle did not challenge territorial integrity of the Empire. Only later, it was retrospectively and analytically extended to the entire concept of political sovereignty. Thus, hierarchical structure of international relations within the Holy Roman Empire, which was global and universal by definition, was replaced by a brand-new one with no supreme power over states that became completely independent in their actions. Thus, it is the rejection of the principle of supreme power over states (today it is called 'global government') historically paved the way the principle of the sovereignty of states? of the sovereignty of states. Nevertheless, there was nothing about this in the original treaties of 1648.

each sovereign state holds unlimited power over the citizens on its own territory.

It was this fifth point that eroded most at the turn of the 21st century, gradually giving way to the now universally accepted concept of the protection of human rights. This gave rise to the conviction that some states have the right to interfere in the internal affairs of other states for the purpose of / under the pretext of protecting human rights – a direct contradiction of Westphalian postulates.

There has never been a fixed and absolute written expression of the inviolability of sovereign states. Provisions for interfering in states' internal affairs had also existed earlier, but such actions could only be sanctioned by the sovereign will of signatory states to the UN Charter as a binding treaty of international law. However, interventions at the turn of the century did not rely on consensus, but reflected the will, political interests, and moral assessments of particular states that identified themselves as the standard-bearers of historical progress (hence the discussion of the “right” and the “wrong” sides of history). That situation has since changed, primarily because Western opinions concerning the “sides of history” are fluctuating. For their part, non-Western states have never favored revisions to the concept of state sovereignty.

The liberal world order (that many contend never existed in stable form, but which, for argument's sake, we will allow existed after the Cold War) has been subjected to forces of revision on both sides, and for disparate reasons. The non-Western world adheres to the classic form of the Westphalian system, in which the state is the master of its internal affairs, no one has the right to interfere, no one holds moral authority, and everything else – such as ground rules and zones of interest – is open

to negotiation. Western opponents of the liberal order, primarily mercantilists in the United States, advocate a return to the realist approach inherent in the Westphalian system – but this is the most brutal form of realism, one that the United States dominates by sheer force.

With the U.S. continuing to overwhelmingly dominate according to every measure of power, a return to the cult of sovereignty (with Donald Trump's speech before the United Nations, as was his inaugural address in January, simply a hymn to national interests) is fraught with complications. Donald Trump's policy of placing U.S. interests above all others will de facto exacerbate U.S. exceptionalism – albeit, of a different type than that was advocated, for example, by former U.S. President Barack Obama.

Of course, the authors of this report are not calling for a return to the XVII century – that would be both impossible and unnecessary. Global politics are already brimming with nostalgic impulses rather than realistic approaches. In place of new political philosophies focused on the future, we hear calls to return to our roots and to revive the glorious past along with its antiquated traditions. But there is no going back. The U.S. will not “become great again” in the spirit of the 1950s, much less of the 1890s, the eras for which Trump apparently pines. Another leader of Charles de Gaulle's stature will not appear in France. Great Britain is not destined to be the Mistress of the Sea or the main trading nation of the world ever again. Russia will not restore the Soviet Union or the borders of the Russian Empire at its peak. Neither will Turkey resurrect its Ottoman legacy. The list goes on. Similarly, the classic Westphalian world is gone: too many objective factors now blur the former understanding of sovereignty.

But there is no doubt concerning another point – that the promise of a utopian “world without borders”, i.e. states, promulgated at the close of the 20th century has not materialized. The sovereign state remains the only building block of the international system. Of course, it is necessary to reflect upon and analyze critically the exact nature of that sovereignty, national borders, how today’s mass

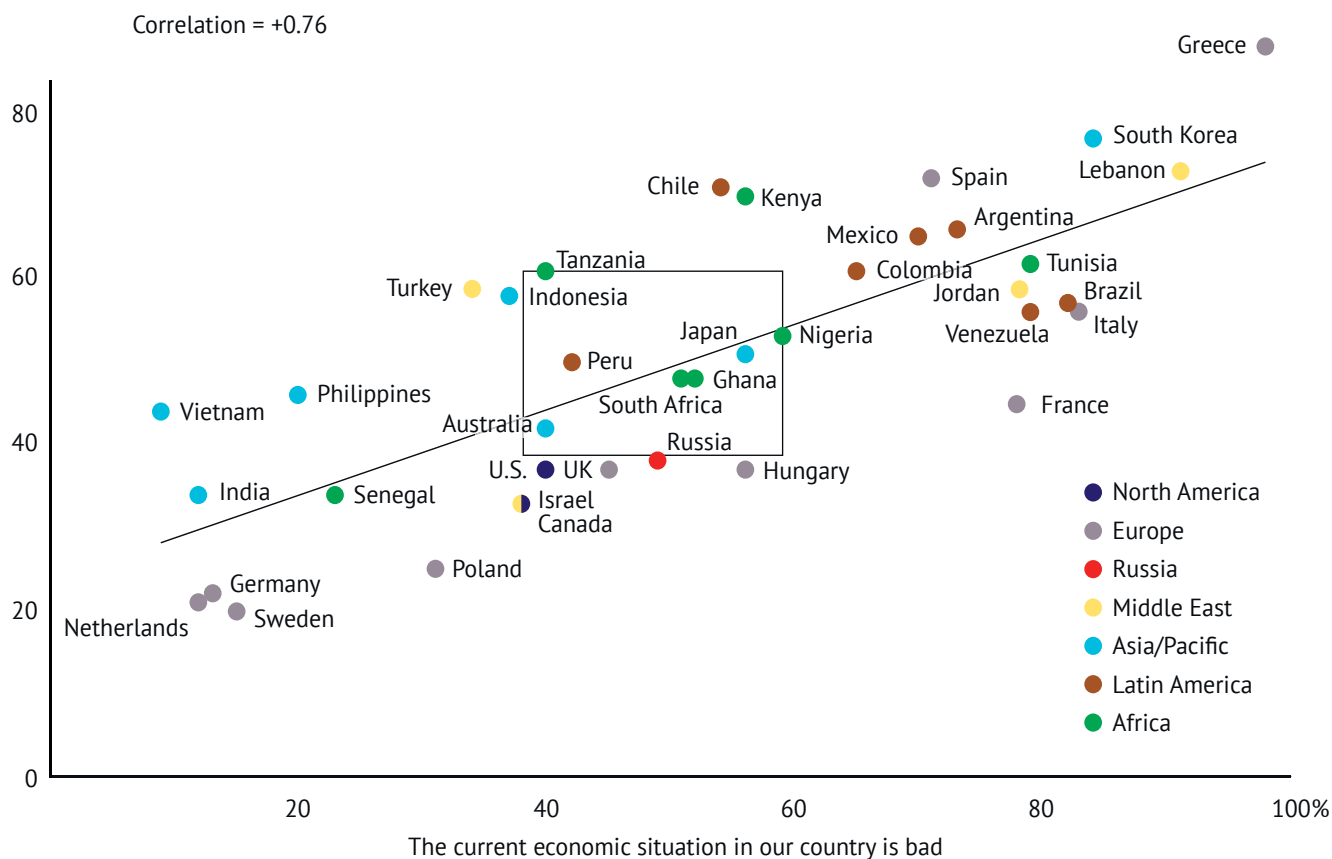
migrations influence sovereignty, the growth of digitalisation, and the hyper-connectivity of the modern world, but it is essential that any understanding of sovereignty includes mechanisms for coordinating interests within societies and between states. And this necessitates a return to the Westphalian world as an example of how to ensure the functioning of the international system.

GLOBAL THREATS TO STRUGGLING ECONOMIES

Publics that see their countries struggling economically tend to feel more threatened by the condition of the global economy

The condition of the global economy is a major threat to our country

100%



Source: Pew Research Center.

Indivisibility as a Value

The alarming state of the world should induce the responsible powers to act. It should serve as an incentive for them to overcome selfish instincts in favor of co-operation – for the sake of survival. Although it is still important to “do our homework” – for the reason that no country will devote sufficient attention to global challenges while its own deep problems remain unresolved – we cannot afford to postpone co-operating until every country has first fully implemented its domestic agendas. Coordination is needed right now, today.

Notwithstanding our ideological differences and the decline of international institutions, the fact that Russia, the U.S., and China possess nuclear weapons of colossal destructive power places the greatest responsibility for the world’s affairs on their shoulders. Of course, given the current mood in international relations, it would be naïve to expect a breakthrough to a new, fundamental agreement like those signed in Westphalia, Vienna, San Francisco, or Helsinki. But there are two goals that we can and must set.

First, the world’s leading players should put an end to “strategic frivolity” and exercise extreme caution, in part to avoid setting a bad example for smaller countries.

This also includes the need to improve the concept of strategic stability and expand it to include such additional factors as missile defense, the militarisation of space, and the digital environment. It is necessary, collectively, to formulate possible crisis scenarios along with the mechanisms for collectively responding to them. This information should be set down in writing and installed on the computers and tablets of the military leadership of every country so that, if a flare-up does occur, everyone would know who should communicate with whom, what they should do – and what they should not do under any circumstances.

A top priority is finding ways to reduce cyber security risks. Interaction in this area is extremely difficult, but such efforts could become a model for interactions elsewhere because the cyber environment includes a number of modern elements such as asymmetric relations, the difficulty in identifying actions conclusively, the complexity of technology, and the absence of any definite boundaries or borders. It is precisely for these reasons that this question deserves very serious attention along with a major investment of time and effort. Neglecting it is fraught with catastrophic consequences.

Second, despite the tendency towards fragmentation, we must do everything in our power to achieve the indivisibility of global development, to ensure that all mankind is involved in the economic and political processes and projects that contribute to the progress of every society. This holistic approach would require the international community to develop political mechanisms that could avoid the sharply contradictory measures for development that individual countries often implement now. Nongovernmental players such as the business community and civil society could play an important role in this regard: they are not as tainted by national self-interest and are more committed to the global agenda. Perhaps this unified approach to global security and development could become that common value on which all participants in the international system could agree.

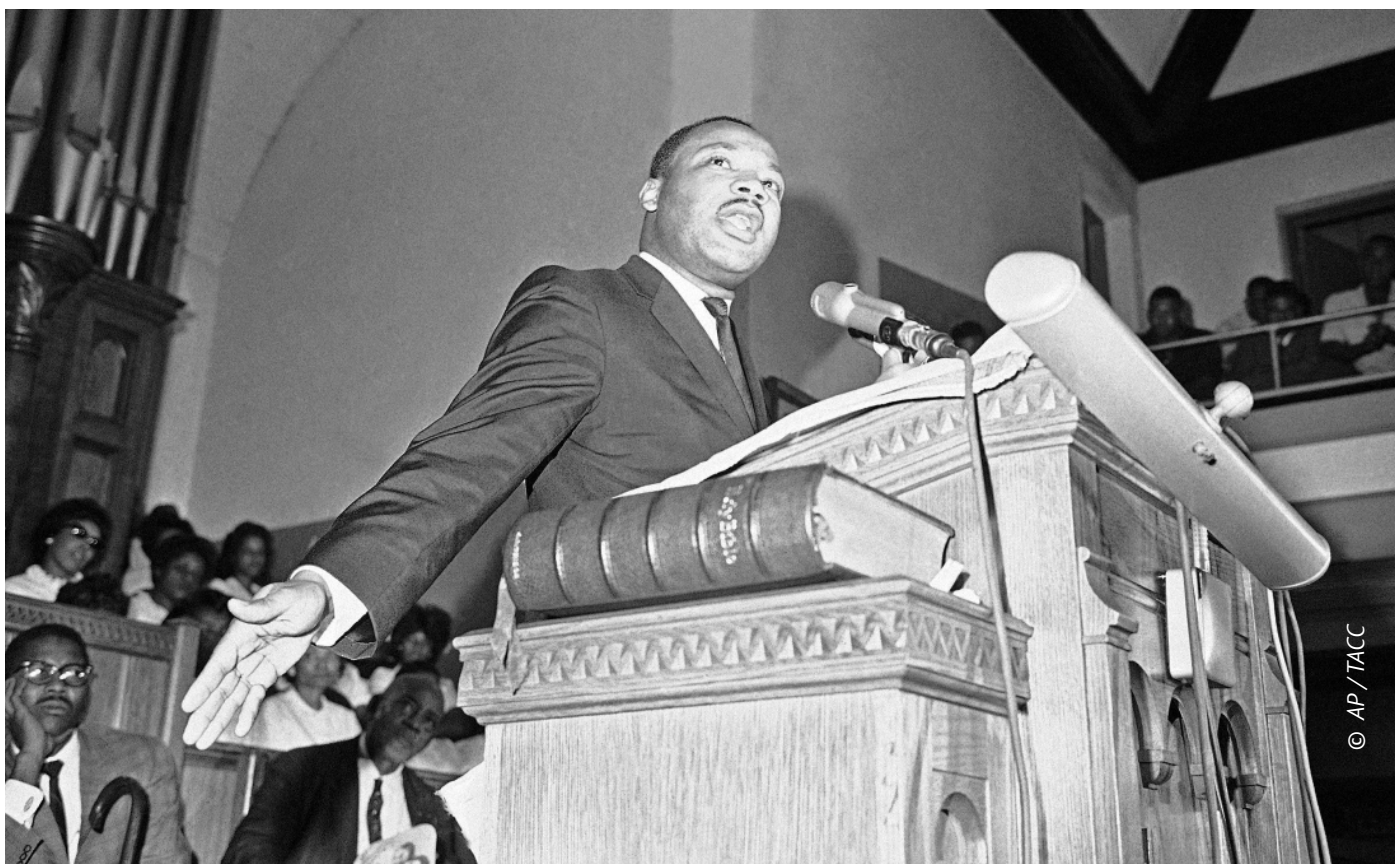
Pursuing indivisible and all-inclusive development would not mean adhering inflexibly and indefinitely to a single scheme. The future of the world economy should not depend on the shifting fortunes of a single model of development. The lesson of recent decades is that systemic crises rock the underlying model, causing tremors everywhere, and especially in those countries

most deeply integrated into the “core” of that system. Incidentally, that experience underscores the need to develop alternative formats for economic integration that are suitable for countries with different forms and degrees of development. The projects in Eurasia – the Eurasian Economic Union, the One Belt and One Road Initiative, BRICS+, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership – are steps in the right direction.

As we suggested in previous reports, part of the solution would be to organise the international economy and politics according to macro-regions. This could reduce the number and the scale of the dividing lines that tend to spark conflicts. It is also necessary to place states within an institutional framework that would limit their national self-centeredness, and to reduce the number of states that, at some stage,

would have to start formulating the rules for a “new Westphalia.” In renewing the international legal system, it will help to take into account the best practices of the macro-regional communities. Given that the new era is growing naturally out of the old – and not starting from a condition of complete collapse as happened after the world war – the code of rules will probably take shape as a series of precedents, rather than as a result of a general agreement.

There are plenty of obstacles on the path to regionalisation, including the significant inertia connected with universalism. Not surprisingly, some power centers do not want their “wings clipped” by operating only within regional boundaries. It is difficult to expect that the U.S. would abandon its presence in Asia and confine itself to the Euro-Atlantic region (or vice versa), or



Martin Luther King, Jr., giving speech at Riverside Church in New York City, April 4, 1967

that China – now active in South America, Africa, and South Asia – would willingly operate only in the Asia-Pacific region. For its part, Russia feels that the former Soviet space provides insufficient maneuvering room – as is obvious from its activity in the Middle East. Another significant obstacle is the difficulty of consolidating the regions politically – without which economic integration becomes very unlikely. Deep disagreements exist in many parts of the world, and it is often more difficult for neighboring countries to agree on regional issues than on global concerns – with India and China offering a vivid example.

But the immediate challenges should not overshadow the main goal – namely, the urgent need to make the international system manageable again, to reduce the risk of conflict, and to create the requisite conditions for development and growth.

Speaking 50 years ago in New York with an appeal to end the Vietnam War and reflect on the global responsibility of the United States, Martin Luther King said: “A genuine revolution of values means...that our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Every nation must now develop an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in their individual societies.” His words are even more relevant now than they were in 1967. Taking responsibility for the entire planet does not mean neglecting or rejecting any one part of it. To the contrary, ensuring the well-being of the whole necessarily preserves and strengthens the diversity of its constituent elements. With the world undergoing radical changes and with dangerous national self-interest on the rise, this is a principle we cannot afford to ignore.



U.S. President Donald Trump addressing the United Nations General Assembly, September 19, 2017

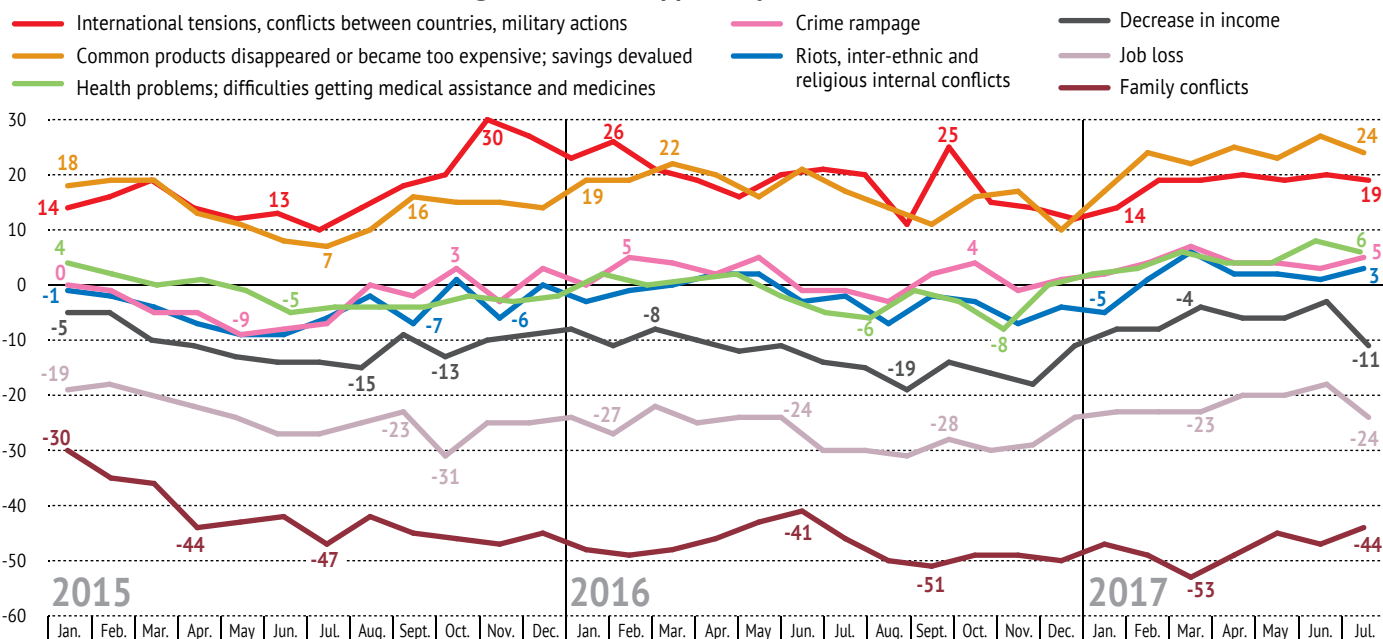
GREATEST THREATS AROUND THE WORLD



Source: Pew Research Center.

Fears of Russians

What is the likelihood that the following events will happen in your life?



*Fear Index reflects how high the probability of certain event is for Russian respondents. The higher the value of index is, the higher the probability of this event is.

Source: Russian Public Opinion Research Center.



#Valdaiclub

 **ValdaiClub**

 **ValdaiClub**

valdaiclub.com

valdai@valdaiclub.com

ISBN 978-5-906757-69-2



9 785906 757692