

# Russians Debate Sustainable, ‘Stable,’ Or ‘Self-Sustaining’ Development

*Without investment in infrastructure, technological development for industry, and social protection for the population, there can be no “sustainable development,” said Russia’s official document for the Earth Summit in Johannesburg. The report, prepared by Russia’s Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, was summarized in the daily Kommersant on Aug. 27. The authors, including specialists from Russia’s Foreign Ministry and Natural Resources Ministry, wrote that in order to achieve stable growth, Russia would need at least \$2 trillion of investments. “Stable” is the meaning conveyed by the term, used to translate into Russian the phrase “sustainable development.”*

*The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade is headed by liberalizer German Gref, but its paper for the Johannesburg meeting reflects the continuing high, reality-based pressure from many quarters within Russia, to address the plight of the real economy.*

*The document of Gref’s Ministry contrasted spectacularly with the subject of the speech prepared by Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov for the Earth Summit: “Conservation of Biodiversity in Russia.” This contradiction apparently irritated Igor Chestin, head of the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) Moscow office. This angry “biodiversifier” told Kommersant that the Russian delegation was as unprepared for the discussion at the summit, as it was in 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit. Chestin blamed Gref’s Ministry for not inviting representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to the delegation. Chestin was also dissatisfied with the fact that the Russian delegation was partly represented by “diplomats.” “With such a level of preparation, Russia should not send any delegation at all,” grumbled the WWF asset.*

*The most productive public debate of development policies in Russia occasioned by the Johannesburg event, is represented by a major, three-part article by Prof. Yuri Gromyko, appearing in the daily on-line publication Russky Zhurnal (also known by the name of its English edition, The Russian Journal). The installments are in the Aug. 26, Aug. 29, and Sept. 3 issues. Under the title “Problems of Sustainable Development: Are We Prepared for This Discussion?” Gromyko took up the theme Lyndon LaRouche has established in his dialogue with the Russian intelligentsia during recent years: what Russia’s mission should be in the current world crisis. We offer excerpts of this important contribution to the discussion, translated from Russian by EIR. Subheads have been added.*

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## Problems of Sustainable Development: Are We Prepared for This Discussion?

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by Yuri V. Gromyko

One specific aspect of the topic of sustainable development is of interest to us—Russia’s ability to formulate goals for world development, in its own name and from its own standpoint, and to define its mission and role in a world undergoing transformation and change. So far, we have to say that Russia is not prepared for this discussion. It is unprepared, despite certain work done by Academician N.N. Moiseyev and the ideas of Academician D.S. Lvov, not to mention their predecessors, particularly Vernadsky, whose scientific program prepared Russia for this discussion at least 70 years ago. . . .

Why do I consider Russia unprepared? Because we are incapable of proposing (or we don’t want to) on behalf of Russia a new project for world development, a project that would require the consolidated efforts of the majority of nations, in order to construct a new world order. . . . As a world power, Russia cannot simply follow some home-grown isolationist strategy. Being already part of the world and having inherited world-scale resources, it cannot suddenly start to view itself as a small European country, just because envious and territorially greedy outsiders demand that the feeble proprietor of these resources hand part of them over in payment of its bills.

We emphasize that arguments of precisely this type, based on an alleged inability to manage life properly, will be used as the main justification for territorial pretensions against Russia, beginning with Kaliningrad.

### Russia Must Propose Planetary Solutions

Therefore Russia has always been in a position, where it had to propose extravagant, unexpected solutions of a planetary nature and scale. If Russia tries to act from a position of mediocrity, it will be destroyed by circumstances, the rest of the world, and its own population. . . . Russia today, whether we like it or not, lays claim to the heritage of Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union. . . .

Before integrating ourselves into the world community and accepting its rules of the game, it wouldn’t be a bad

thing to find out what kind of shape the world community is in. Might it, for example, be financially bankrupt? Because in that event, an entity attempting to integrate into the world community will be assigned the sorry lot of supporting the world currency, the dollar, with its resources and reserves.

The only solution is to muster all the effects of sociocultural and technological development, to declare and demonstrate a phenomenon of development to the world community, and then transfer the technology for its implementation and construction to any other countries of the world, which desire to engage in such development. . . .

The disappearance of that ideological rivalry [between eastern and western systems, under which technology transfer to the developing sector took place, but was driven by considerations of military-strategic spheres of influence of the superpowers-ed.] means that the opportunity has arisen for the first time, to project zones and points of development and create development technologies, with the proportional participation of all the countries of the world. For Russia, this means the nations of the Arab and Islamic world, first of all. With the U.S.A. at loggerheads with the Islamic world, it would be stupid on Russia's part, not to build long-term investment relations with the Arab countries. But the main question is the purpose of building investment relationships. They should be built for breakthroughs into the future, for development.

## **The Phenomenon of Development**

How many countries possess comparable, full-fledged productive forces, based on the integration and complex inter-organization of these three sociocultural spheres of thought activity—scientific-design, educational, and production? Not so many, it turns out. The United States, Japan, unified Europe, and Russia are to be found in this field of possible comparisons. China is moving with tremendous speed toward the creation of full-scale productive forces, while the nations of the Maghreb want to obtain such forces of integration. Other countries lack them. And it is precisely on this point, that Russia finds possibilities for making a substantive and large-scale gambit. Russia could, for example, help Malaysia to form a full-fledged scientific research and development sector, including joint basic research projects with our Academy of Sciences, just as Leibniz performed such work for Russia at the request of Peter the Great. Malaysia has established university science, but university science is not the same thing as fundamental research and development science. Such a scientific development project would not mean the transfer to Malaysia of already explored or obsolete research topics from the Russian Academy of Sciences, but should rather be based on the following elements:

1. Creation of a fundamentally new institutional structure for the organization of science, but using the almost 300-year experience Russia has in this area.

2. Design of programs for new, breakthrough research and design projects, on the basis of a certain kind of breakthrough-research institution, in such sectors as aircraft design and construction, space exploration, nuclear energy, and biophotonics. Obviously, a project of this type would require that Malaysia make some investments, but it could be an investment package, which would also provide for the reconstruction and reorganization of the Russian Academy of Sciences, which, in turn, would make it possible to advance in several directions of fundamental research.

## **LaRouche: Leadership for the Land-Bridge**

The problem of development is necessarily bound up with the organization of spaces and territories, including the consciousness of the people living in a given area and conceptualizing it. The geometry of such "spatial" development turns out to be a very important factor for analyzing problems and setting goals for development. Thus, it is no accident that the well-known economist and Democratic Party Presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche argues that Russia's mission, which should be the basis for the national leadership to define strategic goals, is connected with mastery of the expanses of Eurasia. Russia, uniquely, could take on the function of building a geostrategic land-bridge between Europe and the expanses of Central Asia, making possible the transport of innovative technologies from Europe into the territories of Asia. This transportation of inventions, discoveries, and technological innovations could be organized through the creation of so-called corridors of development, along the transport arteries.

As L.G. Ivashov, vice president of the Academy of Geopolitical Studies, has emphasized, the circulation of freight flows along transportation arteries is a supplementary support factor for security in this part of the region. The idea of creating development corridors in Eurasia, not only on the west-east axis, but also north-south, which will make it possible to revive the economy of Russia's North, is extremely important from the standpoint of the otherwise threatened amputation of enormous, undeveloped continental expanses. To develop this area will allow not only Russian manufacturing to work at full capacity, but also the production capacities of Germany and France, many of which are bankrupt at the present time and are being shut down.

## **'We Cannot Halt Production'**

It might be objected, that the Rio and Johannesburg forums were dedicated precisely to the task of lowering the industrial and utilization load on nature. And, that all these development corridors and full-scale productive forces would be aimed at increasing that load, or, at least, not at lowering it. This is true, and here is where we approach a formulation of the problem. If we want to ensure even relative equality for the entire population of the planet, we cannot simply halt production. That would mean inevitable famine and unem-

ployment for the population of a huge number of countries, and an intensification of inequality. The ostensibly neutral ecological standards, formulated by the developed countries, serve the political and economic purpose of suppressing competitor nations. An example is the standards for processed lumber. Without adopting the relevant measures in the timber industry, Russia will be squeezed out by the Swedes, Finns, and Koreans. On the other hand, continuation of the exploitative practices of a number of industries, including extractive industries, is ruthlessly destroying nature, depriving future generations of vitally important resources.

Here, we confront two irreconcilable positions. The first is Malthusianism in its various forms. The key theses of this position are that population growth must be stopped, the birth rate must be controlled, there are not enough natural resources, and growth has limits.

Posed as the alternative to Malthusianism is the position of the advocates of naive technological progress. The key theses of this position are that the exploitation of natural resources should be continued, natural rent should be divided among nations, raw materials processing should be increased, and new areas of industrial development should be created, allowing the derivation of ever more profit-yielding commodities.

Both these positions lead to a dead end and are destructive for mankind. The Malthusians propose to sacrifice a huge group of countries to inequality and deprive them of any possibility for development, including simple demographic reproduction, in order to maintain the standard of living and consumption of the “golden billion.” The naive technocrats, in turn, propose the pitiless destruction of natural resources. But both of these positions deny the possibility of a breakthrough in scientific methodology, which would make it possible to master a fundamentally new class of technologies, which use fewer natural resources and are more efficient. These define a new technological development phase. To get beyond these two positions requires the introduction of completely different notions about the development of humanity as a whole. Setting goals for the development of humanity as a whole and defining the rights of mankind as a whole, together with the rights of the individual, should be the tasks of the Johannesburg summit.

### **Developing Humanity as a Whole**

Do groups exist, capable of conceptualizing the problem of the development of humanity as a whole? How should this problem be conceptualized? Such groups do exist, both in Russia and abroad—in particular, the above-mentioned L. LaRouche, author of physical economy, as opposed to the alchemy of finance. In Russia, Pobisk Grigoryevich Kuznetsov—called a modern Leonardo da Vinci by a number of foreign scientists—explored this problem in a consistent and highly interesting fashion. The basic ideas of P.G. Kuznetsov, in the view of his student and close collaborator,

member of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences Prof. B. Ye. Bolshakov, may be called “anti-genocidal,” in that they aim to overcome the terror inflicted by one small section of humanity upon humanity as a whole. . . .

It is the task of humanity, to prevent the destruction of the planet. This requires raising the level of utilized capacity, while reducing losses, lowering the inefficient expenditure of living bioresources and organic substances. This concept implies the important task of ensuring that the power of created and utilized sources of energy approximate the power of the natural sources of energy that provide for life on Earth—in particular, the Sun. The reproduction of conditions for life on Earth requires the reproduction, within a certain limit, of all existing sources of power. Thus we have the idea put forward by P.G. Kuznetsov’s close friend, the remarkable Soviet philosopher E.V. Ilyenkov: “It is the task of humanity to light a sun in the universe.” What this means in the language of technology is to achieve, at last, the first industrial results from thermonuclear fusion power, and to follow the extraterrestrial imperative of Krafft Ehrlicke—to move on to the colonization of space.

It was the genius of P.G. Kuznetsov, to define beforehand the class of systems, in which humanity’s breakthroughs to the future should occur. This class of systems is defined on the basis of the identification of types of laws and regulations, which may be used in organizing development. Through analyzing types of laws and the invariants they determine, P.G. Kuznetsov was able, using the table of spatio-temporal dimensionalities for all magnitudes in physics, proposed by the famous Soviet aircraft designer R.L. Bartini, to construct a sort of “Mendeleev Table” of development situations. This table has some cells filled in, but also some empty ones, which may orient the scientific community to the discovery of new physical laws. . . .

### **New Financial Institutions Are Needed**

If we undertake such a review, we should also go back and analyze the term “sustainable development,” and look again at the problem of translating the phrase “*sustainable development*” as “*ustoychivoye*” [in Russian, “stable” or “sustained” development]. In our view, the philosopher P.V. Malinovsky was right to propose, earlier, to translate “sustainable” as “*samopodderzhivayushcheyesya*” [Russian, “self-supporting” or “self-sustaining”], and to link the idea of development, understood in this way, with the Aristotelian concept of autopoiesis—a sort of responsible self-action, ensuring the reproduction and build-up of certain principles of life in a community or a nation. If we look at the idea of “sustainable development” as autopoiesis, it becomes possible to bring humanist approaches to the analysis of the forms of organization of mentation, closer to the philosophical-scientific and technological approaches connected with “breakthroughs” and the transition to a new techno-sociocultural phase. For it is mentation, organized on the basis of the appro-

priate highly effective type of education, which becomes the resonating system, capable of responding to new ideas, long before they are fully implemented. . . .

At the Johannesburg summit, Russia could declare its intention to build a new, humanistically oriented civilization. . . . Russia is prepared to formulate and propose large-scale projects for joint international implementation, including the organization of development corridors in Eurasia, the reconquest of territories with extreme climatic conditions (Russia's North, the arid deserts), and the exploration and development of near and outer space, including the colonization of Mars and the creation of an artificial atmosphere on that planet. It is precisely projects like this, which could become the engines of new breakthroughs in the electric power industry, and in air, space, and rail transport systems, and could be directed toward the discovery and mastery of new physical principles.

The proposal of large-scale projects, with the participation of many countries, makes it possible to resituate the questions of the condition of finances and the possibilities for investment in such projects. The world financial system is in a state of high instability. In order to provide investments for large-scale projects, there must be a project for new financial institutions, which work in the interests of development for all humanity.

# Controlled Debate on Famine Kills Africans

by David Cherry

The environmentalists' campaign to persuade African countries now facing starvation, to reject American donations of genetically modified (GM) maize, is "revolting and despicable," U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) chief Andrew Natsios said in Zambia, after its government was persuaded to refuse the U.S. food aid. The green groups, he said, including Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, "are using big-time, very well-organized propaganda, the likes of which I have never seen before" in 12 years of American-led famine relief efforts, according to a lead article in the *Washington Times* on Aug. 30.

An estimated 14.2 million people in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Lesotho, and Swaziland are suffering from famine, according to the UN World Food Program's September figures. This estimate is an increase of 1.6 million since May; the famine is getting sharply worse. James T. Morris, executive director of the UN's World Food Program (WFP), addressed a press conference in Johannesburg, South Africa on Sept. 16, in which he said the crisis was of "incredible proportions" and was increasing faster than had been imagined. The WFP team had just completed a two-week assessment tour of Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Zambia, and Swaziland.

Zambia's President Levy Mwanawasa told journalists at the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in the first week of September, "Simply because my people are hungry, that is no justification to give them poison, to give them food that is intrinsically dangerous to their health." His Minister of Health, Brian Chituwo, only days before, at a meeting of Southern African health ministers in Harare, Zimbabwe, reported that some Zambians even fear GM foods could facilitate the spread of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Hysteria of this kind was evident in Lusaka, the Zambian capital, at a public meeting Aug. 12, which the government convened to discuss the issue. There, Women for Change Executive Director Emily Sikazwe said, "I am a scientist by profession. . . . Yes, we are starving but we are saying no to the food the Americans are forcing on our throats. . . . I hope our local scientists are not being used to commit crimes against their own people." Others voiced similar sentiments. President Mwanawasa has now sent representatives to other countries to study the question.

There is no danger from genetically modified foods. There is, of course, a difference between the modification of genes

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