

What can the XXI Century Wars (if any) Look Like?

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Practically the whole history of mankind could be called, to borrow famous Hobbsean words, as “a war of all against all.” To avoid a full crush of the society and eradication of the whole population something radical enough had to be done. It was natural that people started with efforts to make existence livable, to introduce at least a semblance of order into internal life of their societies. Governments came into being, laws were introduced, which with time have developed into better or worse legal systems.

These changes inside of most countries were not automatically followed by anything similar in international relations, on the world scene. Quite to the contrary. Here as in the past the behavior of the nations and governments was determined by one law predominantly - by the law of jungles. Which permitted practically everything: murders, including mass-murders not only of combatants, of militaries of the other side, but also civilians be they men, women, or even children. Abhorrent conditions of the prisoners of war were usual, as well as their tortures.

Of course with the advent of science and technology the mood started to change also in this respect, the strive to self-preservation from annihilation in wars with other countries has become stronger and stronger around the world, as well as understanding that some rules have to be introduced also here, to put limits on inhumanity and cruelty of wars. Outstanding human minds started to doubt whether war should be considered a normal and eternal institution. Ideas of outlawing the wars were put forward by some outstanding thinkers like Em. Kant.

But it was still miles away from any real concerted efforts of the governments or even the public to change the situation in terms of organized and consistent efforts to free the humanity from one of the worst threats to its well-being and to tell the full truth - to its existence. The public mentality and in particular its political mentality was not yet prepared to start such efforts.

At the same time it would be wrong to ignore this beginning as modest as it was. Especially because the new developments would most probable encourage the peoples and the governments to follow this path much more resolute and fast. Would there be any doubts about it, the events of the XX century dispelled them quickly and in a most obvious way.

Under new developments I have in mind first of all developments already past but which have become a unique phenomena of XX Century - the two devastating world wars - and their aftermath, of which we are not completely free even now. Of course humanity has experienced in its history quite a number of terrible wars. But none of them could be compared with World War One by the number of casualties and intensity of suffering, by political, social and psychological

consequences of the hostilities, as well as the political calamities in the world. World War Two had even more profound influence on the future of humanity and the Fate of the World.

Nobody would deny that there were also in this sense horrible centuries in the past. Invasions of the Huns, Mongols, Turks and Normans, religious wars that ravaged Europe, Napoleonic wars, that bled white France and cost tremendous casualties to many other countries, cruel subjugation of America by the Spanish Conquistadors - these are some of the examples of large scale and high "intensity" horrors and devastation, which the humanity had to suffer from wars already before the XX Century.

Transformation of the armed forces into mass armies, which indeed meant armed peoples, together with permanent, sometimes very dramatic technological and scientific progress (invention of modern rifles, machineguns, quickly rechargeable guns, chemical weapons, new explosives, mammoth man of wars) opened eyes of more farsighted people on the possible horrors of future wars. Some forecasts are really astonishing even today. Some people, not necessarily military specialists have shown unique ability to penetrate into the future. One of most striking, in my opinion, examples is Ivan Bloch, a century from the publication of whose work was commemorated this spring in St. Petersburg on the initiative of the Dutch Foundation of War Studies.

Everything is unusually striking in this story. Beginning with the author. He was born in a poor Jewish family in the Western part of Russian Empire (to be exact in today's Poland). But he was a very skillful and successful businessman, who later has become a big railway tycoon in Western Russia. But his real interest was war studies and he spent years on them. The result was a six volume book maybe unprecedented in its seriousness and also broadness of the approach. Everything connected with war: its economic aspects, problems of transportation, demography, its social and political consequences was analysed here with unprecedented seriousness and fundamentalism.

A copy of this unique work the author has presented to the Emperor Alexander the III and was received by him in presence of his son Nicolaus the II. The latter has become especially interested and invited him for another meeting. He also sent the book to the war ministry, which found it very useful and recommended that it should be read by all staff officers of the Russian Army. I have no means to judge whether and how it influenced military policy of the Imperial Russia. But I guess his pacifist ideas had some influence upon thinking of the Tzar Nicolaus and in particular moved him to initiate the first arms control and disarmament conference in history, which took place in The Hague in 1899.

But the next XX century put the whole problem in a new prospective. One cannot but agree with Alvin and Heidi Toffler who compare the difference between previous wars and the wars of the XX century with the difference between the traditional old economy, based on conventional raw materials and physical labor with contemporary economy, based first of all on knowledge. "This remarkable change in the world economy is bringing with it a parallel revolution." We believe, they write, that the promise of the twenty-first century will swiftly evaporate if we are using the

intellectual weapons of yesterday. It will vanish even faster if we ever forget, even for a moment, those sobering words of Leon Trotsky's, quoted at the beginning of this book. "You may not be interested in war, but war is interested in you." (Alvin and Heidi Toffler "War and Anti-War," New York, 1995, Warner Books, pp. 3, 5.) And they make a gloomy forecast that the same will happen in future, following the new radical transformation of economy, transition from industrial into what they call the "Information" age.

Two years ago the major interest was devoted to traditional issues of the past: was cold war inevitable? what were its main origins? who carries more guilt for it? Etc.

Today as the distance since the end of the cold war has increased, we found also out that its end does not mean an end to all the problems and some even started to worry that in one or other way the cold war can return. All of this naturally changed also the focus of our major interest. Purely historical interest yielded to practical concerns and disappointments.

As to the history, here we also see some significant changes of major interest of the public.

One of the subjects, lively discussed during these last years was the end outcome of the cold war. Did it end in a draw? Maybe both sides have lost it, because they have lost a lot of time, resources, opportunities, which otherwise would make their life, the state of affairs in the world better? Or it ended with a victory of one side (USA and its allies) and defeat of the other (obviously Soviet Union)? Why has this latter perception become almost a common wisdom - both in the West as well as in the East? For several reasons I presume.

Most obvious is the fact that two events - end of cold war and demise of Soviet Union followed by a severe crises, practically coincided in time. But it is a proverbial truth that coincidence in time does not mean a causal relationship. Quite to the contrary, the end of cold war could facilitate the solution of many problems facing the Soviet Union.

In the West, aside from the very simple fact that it is always so pleasant to be a winner, there were also other, more serious reasons for publicizing this version - that the West has won the cold war. Among some people there (mostly cold warriors) it could have been regarded as an argument, which could help to justify the cold war, an enterprise that meant squandering of tremendous resources on weapons and military machine, not possible to use even in extreme situations, creation of dangerous tensions, which carried the risk of nuclear self-destruction and made inevitable local, but often very bloody, wars on the periphery. The concept that the USA, the West have defeated USSR, have defeated the monster of "world communism" had to show, that all these sacrifices were not in vain, that they served a rational goal, having broken the spine of the archenemy, once and for all, broken the "evil empire" to pieces and caused in its heartland - Russia - a deep manifold crises.

The logic here was very simple. As the USA, the West have much bigger GNP, having imposed on the Soviet Union an unprecedented arms-race, isolated it economically, they doomed us to a defeat sooner or later.

To my surprise this perception was picked up also in Russia. For some people it looked like a plausible explanation (even an easy excuse) of the difficulties, acute crises the country is going

through lately. After a defeat in war (even if it was a cold one) you are doomed to suffer - "winner takes all!" And this liberates you from any responsibility for wrong policy or mismanagement. Others wanted to make different points, blaming the former communist rulers of the country - either for having accepted the cold war's rules of the game, partially introduced by ourselves, partially imposed on us by the West (a view I would at least partially share), or for having yielded to the West and lost the cold war (here the judgment depends on political sympathies and position of each participant of the discussion).

Whatever the reasons for this perception, I consider it to be absolutely wrong. Nobody has won the cold war, both sides lost. Lost having squandered a lot of efforts, resources and time in irrational exercises of power, accumulation of arms, which you anyway cannot use for any rational goals. Lost having for a long time neglected the real problems of their countries and of the world in which all of us are doomed to live. Lost, having deformed, militarized our relations, our economies, our mentality, our lives.

As to difficulties we, in Russia, now suffer from, they have nothing to do with the end of the cold war, though some of them are aggravated by its legacy. It is true also about the demise of communist rule in my and some other countries. Not the cold war was the cause of it, but some organic shortcomings of the regime, its policy, the whole concept on which it was build. If the cold war had some influence on the process of erosion of this regime and this empire, this was an adverse influence - an "Enemy," which creates, as people are told, a constant danger of war, threatens all the values you were taught (even conditioned) to cherish, is an easy excuse for economic difficulties and a formidable tool for upholding the status quo, suppressing any dissent and democracy. Even the West has felt it at times (remember senator Joe McCarthy). We felt it constantly. And this by the way was one of the reasons why our reformers paid so much attention to foreign policy, to normalization of international relations, to arms control and wanted to bring the cold war to an end.

So the presence of "The Enemy", of an outside threat - real or imaginary - is always a very potent boost to all kinds of political extremism and militarism and this could only solidify the power and prolong the days of most ugly forms of communism. Cold war was to a part its creation (this does not mean that this Frankenstein did not have another "parent" - the post-war policy of the USA, the West in general), to a part its most important ally.

Theory, according to which we lost the cold war (and were punished for it by the present severe crises) does not hold water also because of hard facts of life. Yes, we had a much smaller GNP than the West, even than the USA alone. But we could tolerate much more, live without many luxuries, regarded as a necessity by many in the USA, modest, but at the same time incomparable better (I speak here only about standard of life) than now. This is another argument against this theory. The cold war was of course a very heavy burden for the country and without the expenditures it demanded, the overwhelming majority of the population could have lived much better, we could have solved many problems, which loomed over the country more effectively and

successful. But even in most elementary, primitive way, counting only the economic indicators of the standard of life, educational opportunities and accessibility of health care, the few years of grave political mistakes, of a completely wrong economic policy, of the ill reputed "shock therapy" has cost us much more than 40 years of cold war and practically unlimited arms race.

But cold war influenced not only us, but also the international relations as a whole. One has to see it in order to understand better the problems we face now.

Here I wanted to turn to a recent book of British historian Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991* (New York, Pantheon Books, 1994). In particular to the chapter "Cold War," where he makes in this connection some very precise and shrewd observations.

The Cold War, writes he, had transformed the international scene in three respects. First, it had entirely eliminated, or overshadowed, all but one of the rivalries and conflicts that shaped world politics before the Second World War. I would add to it that this by no means meant real disappearance of such rivalries and conflicts and we should have been prepared, that after the end of cold war at least some of them would reemerge and maybe even come into the foreground.

Second, writes Hobsbawm, the Cold War had frozen the international situation, and in doing so had stabilized what was an essentially unfixed and provisional state of affairs. As examples he points to the situation in Germany, Iraq's claims against Kuwait, the situation in the Gulf region. As well as development of domestic politics, domestic affairs in many countries of practically all continents. Which, let me say, more than once led to interferences of the superpowers (USSR and sometimes also USA and other Western countries) and on some occasions even caused crises situations. Though both sides somehow managed to keep the division of the world more or less stable. I would also add that when after the end of cold war situation has unfrozen, the accumulated amount of problems has started to come to the surface.

One of phenomena's of post-cold war era has not by a chance become the spread of wars and conflicts, that moved inward. As professor Curt Gasteyger once said they "take place within states, among groups of various kinds and origins, such as ethnic and religious minorities, political extremists and ideological fanatics. As a consequence, the concern for security has also moved from the international to the national arena, from the general to the personal level. Societies and individuals today feel more threatened than states. International organizations - from the United Nations to the various regional organizations from NATO to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) - are either overburdened or simply impotent when asked to prevent, contain or settle these manifold conflicts."

We see quite a few examples of this: Somalia, Bosnia, Angola, Afghanistan, Rwanda, Chechnia, other parts of former Soviet Union.

And the third, writes the British historian, the Cold War had filled the world with arms "to a degree that beggars belief." This was the natural result of forty years when major industrial states had constantly competed to arm themselves against a war that might break out at any moment;

forty years of superpowers competing to win friends and influence people by distributing arms all over the globe, not to mention forty years of constant "low intensity" warfare with occasional outbreaks of major conflicts. I would add that the cold war has led to an unprecedented militarization of everything - economies of most bigger (and quite a few small) countries, their foreign and domestic politics (Hobsbawm speaks in this connection about the unprecedented global fashion for military governments which provided a grateful market fed not only by the superpowers largesse, but - since the oil-price revolution - by local revenues multiplied beyond the imagination of earlier Third World sultans and sheiks), international relations, even culture and peoples mentality.

I think this characteristics and changes brought by 40 years of cold war determined also its tremendous force of inertia. The more so that it created tremendous vested interests in keeping the things going as they did. At the same time the old order of things could not, but create serious forces of changes. People became tired of fear of nuclear holocaust. With disappearance of "The Enemy" it became impossible to justify such a long neglect of a lot of domestic and international problems, including the plight of the poor in rich nations and the plight of the poor nations, onslaughts on democracy, ecological dangers, exhaustion of different kind of resources, many of them squandered on armies and arms race, irrationality of such intensive military preparations, when not only big wars, but also smaller ones (with the exclusion of the smallest maybe, like Grenada or Falkland islands) became senseless and more and more difficult to win (why? is a special subject deserving study).

Here I wanted to touch upon so to say "correlation" of the evil and positive sides of the cold war experience. Yes, having been all these years an opponent of the cold war (though my understanding of its origin and real nature could have changed with time), being in no way nostalgic for this period, I am convinced, that having been one of the greatest evils in history, the cold war was also a source of some positive experience.

First of all whether we wanted it or not, it was a source of permanent learning for the politicians as well as, to some degree, to the public. Learning mostly how not to behave, how to avoid the most dangerous turns in policy and at the same time also learning how to behave in nuclear age and survive. On some occasions this process of learning almost failed. In any case neither side could avoid serious, costly and dangerous mistakes. But we avoided the worst and survived, though sometimes maybe due more to sheer luck than to good statesmanship and wisdom. And I hope, that we at least learned from the experience of the cold war one thing - that never again should we try to learn the tricks of the art of such policy, tantamount to experimenting on the life body of our countries, of humanity.

I hope we learned also a few other important things. For instance that in this ever smaller world, over saturated with most dangerous arms, a lot of things which were practiced in the past have become a luxury we cannot afford anymore. I have in mind not only wars, big as well as small (of Vietnam or Afghanistan size), but also political arrogance, unilateralism, which ignores the

obvious interdependence of the world, shying away from responsibility, luxury of ignoring the interests, policy and opinions of the others. But all of this is the higher art of policy in modern times and the cold war was maybe more, as the Chinese say “a teacher the other way around” (excuse me the bad translation, but keep in mind that this is a translation from Chinese to English via Russian) - a teacher who teaches how not to behave, what policy to avoid.

Another positive thing the cold war brought us was the constant awareness that you cannot stay behind. If it concerns competition in armaments, it was of course bad, dangerous, financially ruining. But at the same time our science got a real boost after the American atom bomb. And American science and education got not a smaller boost after our Sputnik.

One other comment I wanted to make in this connection is the political discipline the cold war has imposed on everybody. Because the price of its breach could have been a nuclear holocaust, it was mostly observed. And not only by main participants of the cold war. Others mostly tried to behave, more or less, as well. If only for the reason that the major participants of the cold war could not tolerate a crass violation of delicate balance, as well as certain “rules of the game,” which for better or worse existed. I could not imagine, at least in Europe, a thing like the war in Yugoslavia in the midst of cold war. Of course I do not advocate a return to these sad times, but for the necessity to create an adequate substitution for this cold war discipline. Mainly in a form of dependable mechanisms of collective security and cooperation.

The more so that the end of cold war, due to the reasons mentioned above, didn't automatically solve all problems, did not to disappointment of some people, bring an idyllic quiet and universal love into international relations. Quite to the contrary - the end of cold war having removed the major conflict, which overshadowed all others, has, as was said already, made their existence obvious and their most dramatic manifestations possible.

Aside from reasons rooted deep in history - the practically legalized till very recent time lawlessness, right of the stronger in international relations, as well as layers of past injustices, reckonings, suspicions and mistrust, accumulated in the course of history, there was a very strong new reason for it. It is the legacy of cold war. I think that the dangers coming from it are either ignored or highly underestimated.

What do I have in mind in particular?

First of all the mountains of most deadly weapons accumulated practically in all but especially in NATO and former Warsaw Pact countries. These weapons can be sold, stolen, lost, simply forgotten during transportation of the troops or in some other ways get into wrong hands, encouraging in this way not only crime, but also armed conflicts. In addition this countries and in particular the USA and Russia have concluded a number of arms control agreements (part of them inherited from the USSR). Many of them are not yet implemented, some not ratified, a few even for some, as a rule valid, reasons violated. This as well can cause suspicions and in any case demands constant dialogue and contacts, in order to prevent misunderstanding and mistrust.

No less dangerous part of this legacy of cold war is the formidable size of the defense industry and defense science, we have inherited from this decades of unprecedented and dangerous (also unprecedentedly irrational because one just could not use this weapons, without committing suicide) arms race. In Russia, by some assessments - nobody even knows the exact data for sure - it comprised more than half of all industry. Conversion of this monster, as it turned out, is a more complicated and expensive job, than could have been expected even by many specialists.

Aside from economic troubles it brings also serious political complications. Millions of people (including families and also an impressive part of the military personal, people serving in the armed forces), suffering from the changes become an easy target for demagogues. And many of them may join the militarist and nationalist opposition, threatening reforms and democratic changes.

Meanwhile the leaders of the military industrial complex try to find use for weapons, the industry either produces or is interested to produce in order to pay the salaries. One way is to sell weapons, which can become a danger of global dimensions - one can only regret that, maybe because all countries have here some vested interest, there are no serious negotiations waged on this subject and its importance seems to be in general largely ignored. The other way to keep busy the defense industry is even worse - to start somewhere an armed conflict. Chechnia can serve as one of examples. Though the major motives of this war were political (which does not mean valid), an important side effect was that it consumed a lot of weapons (if one speaks about tanks only, about 400 of them were destroyed) and this means quite a few contracts for the military industry.

Aside from these "material" parts of the legacy of cold war, we have inherited also others - lingering remnants of the past suspicions, and in former conflict areas even outright hostility, old patterns and even rules of behavior in economic and political relations, old institutions and organizations, which had to serve the cold war. One of them - NATO - already creates some troubles and promises much more.

If we take all of it together, it will comprise a tremendous problem or set of problems, which have to be dealt with but are as yet not even properly discussed and negotiated.

There is also another serious task, that remains after the end of cold war, aside from dealing with its legacy, with material, political and even spiritual remnants of it, which remain present and still live with us. This is the creation of a new system of international relations, new principles and patterns of life and interaction between the nations. With the end of cold war also the era of bipolarity and exclusive role of superpowers has ended. Instead we have now a multipolar world. And from history we know too good that it is not always a blessing.

Even if the multipolarity we have today differs from the one we had on the eve of the First or the Second world wars. In the sense that the USA and to some degree Russia still play a somewhat special, though not an omnipotent role, that you have a by far not perfect but a different Europe, that the world has become much more inter-dependent, that the risk of using military force as a political instrument has increased tremendously etc. Despite all this changes, compared with the era of bipolarity, the present world promises to be more chaotic, less controlled and therefore in a

new sense more dangerous (though the major danger - that of a nuclear holocaust is removed or at least has dramatically decreased).

As it became clear that the cold war is approaching its end, there was much talk about necessity of radical changes. M. Gorbachev's favorite topic has become "the new political thinking." And President G. Bush spoke about the "new world order." In general there was much talk, but hardly anything really important was done. There were also a lot of opportunities to discuss this very important problems - bilaterally as well as multilaterally. Nobody tried as yet to work out an all embracing concept of this new (I would avoid the word "brave"- hopefully we are out of this danger) world, being more concerned about most acute problems that have to be attacked after the end of cold war. But you do not need to be too ambitious to understand that without some vision, without understanding of what you actually want to create in place of cold war, what problems have to be solved, what the new dangers and opportunities expect you on the way, any attempt to use this unique chance to put the world more or less in order will be a failure.

That is why our countries badly needed a thoroughly thought through long-term policy including a viable concept of how the world should look like in the post-cold war era. But failed to produce it. And if you have no coherent policy, your actions are reduced to reactions to the events which anyway happen all over the world, even without having been planned by either of the big power.

In such situation the negotiations and our relations develop without an agenda. We less and less determine the course of events. Too often they drag our policy instead of being the result of it or at least being influenced or rendered more or less harmless by it. This can cause-and we see it already - certain deterioration in our relations. Because our interests not always coincide, in a situation, when we have not created a common frame of reference, developed an agreed upon sense of political priorities, many of the events can create not only controversies, but also irritation, suspicions and tensions. How far can it go?

I do not want to over dramatize the situation. A revival of a threat of nuclear war, even a full fledged cold war and arms race is in foreseeable future not probable - of course if we do not make absolutely stupid mistakes and do not get crazy.

But at the same time I would not give guaranties that we shall remain absolutely safe and have decent relations whatever policy we pursue. We can get into troubles and this has to be understood. In other words the end of cold war has not yet become irreversible (I speak of course about the substance of the relations-not about exact repetition in old forms and all details).

I would dare to describe in this connection a few scenarios, which look realistic enough to be taken into account.

They are mainly connected with possible changes in Russia, in some cases provoked or in other less immediate way connected with policy of the West, in particular, with policy of the USA. The sad fact is that the situation in Russia has not yet become stable, the democratic changes have

not yet become so solid and irreversible that you can completely exclude any possibility of radical changes in Russian policy.

As a rule internal situation and foreign policy of a country are closely connected. When in the middle of 80s perestroika started, it included both the domestic as well as the foreign policy. And without internal changes we hardly could initiate a policy that in time, having been joined by the USA and other Western countries, led to the end of cold war, having deprived the West (as well as ourselves - this was inevitable) of an enemy. Of course this new policy was not welcomed by everybody in the country, as also the internal changes. Opposition to Gorbachev's policy took very dramatic forms and ended with an attempt of a military coup d'etat. We (including the West) were lucky enough that this attempt failed.

And this opened a unique opportunity to make radical steps in our democratic reforms inside the country and in our foreign policy. Regretfully we missed this opportunity (I still hope not completely). The major mistakes done in this hour of real triumph of democracy and democrats in Russia are now obvious.

First of them was dissolution - instead of far-reaching reform - of the Soviet Union. This not only aggravated the economic situation (which it for sure did), but prepared ground for ethnical, religious and other conflicts. It is obvious that the sheer example of all the republics of the former Soviet Union, getting full sovereignty, has encouraged separatist trends inside the republics of former Soviet Union, almost all of which historically or as a result of Soviet regime have become multi-national, multi-ethnic. So this problem has acquired serious dimensions in Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, not to mention Russia. In some instances it lead already to bloodshed. Russia is especially vulnerable not only because it is a federation, including more than 15 ethnically different entities, but also because more than 25 millions ethnic Russians live in other republics of the former USSR. And this can always be used by local or Russian extremists to fan up nationalist or neo-imperialist ambitions, which could lead to conflicts or at least prevent normal cooperative relations. Crimea and Black Sea fleet are only one of examples.

But in connection with the topic we touched - possibility of a return to militant or even cold warish policy, most important is that such situation leads to spread of nationalistic and militarist feelings, which can affect the whole political situation in the country. Actually it already does happen. Quite a number of Russian politicians try to make a career on this issue.

The second big mistake was the worst possible choice of the model of economic reform. We opted for so called "shock therapy," though under guidance of the International Monetary Fund it was tried out in quite a number of countries and almost without exceptions turned out to be a complete failure.

The results are well known: galloping inflation (the prices increased since beginning of 1992 by several thousand times), misery of the majority of population - more than 50 million people live beyond the line of poverty, sharp decrease of production (the assessment is - at least by 50%), disastrous growth of death rate and plummeting birth rate - we lose now yearly about a million

people from a population of approximately 150 million. Among other consequences, very dangerous in my view, is neglect and gross under-financing of education, science, culture and health. It leads already to visible deintellectualization of the country, saps from one of its major sources of strength - intellectual resources, causes physical and intellectual degradation of the people.

Intellectual degradation is accompanied by moral one. Its extreme expression is unprecedented growth of crime and corruption (practically unpunished).

What makes the things even worse, misery and sufferings of the majority are accompanied by an absolutely unprecedented increase of wealth and "conspicuous consumption" of a few - the so called "new Russians." Because most of the big fortunes were earned in a dishonest, sometimes outright criminal and at least questionable way, this becomes a source of growing social and political tensions.

The obviously poor results of this policy, together with the poor quality of the new bureaucracy its incompetence, absence of professionalism and often rather doubtful moral integrity (the President recently publicly complained about all this) deprived the government of Russia of respect of the majority of the population. I would say that it is still in power mainly because it relies more and more on sheer force and as it has shown in fall 1993 and later in Chechnia does not shy away from brutal use of force. The second factor that helps (though it is of temporary nature) is the passivity of the population.

Third grave mistake was the violation of the constitution and violent dispersal of the Parliament in October 1993 (by far not a very good one, but even a bad Parliament is usually better than none). This was a heavy blow against the young, vulnerable and insecure democracy in the country.

And the fourth mistake (or even crime, though in policy a mistake is often worse than crime) is the war in Chechnia, which lasts for almost a year, has cost us as well as the Chechens heavy casualties, not to speak about heavy military expenditures. The war has shown again how easy it is to start one and how difficult to end it.

All of this of course makes the situation in Russia rather unstable.

We witness growth of left and right radicalism, up to outright fascism. Very few people will dare to guess what will happen in observable future. And if an economic and political chaos erupts, one can expect violence, which can end in a dictatorship of some kind. This naturally will also drastically change our foreign policy, including our relations with the West.

This must be a matter of mutual concern. In the fall of 1991 there practically were no anti-American and anti-Western sentiments in Russia. I would not over dramatize the present situation, there is no burning hate against the USA and other Western countries also today (not yet at least). But the attitude of the Russian public has radically changed. The trust, the confidence in their willingness to help, the belief that now we are if not yet allies, so at least partners, ready to cooperate, has practically disappeared. And there are more and more suspicions, sometimes a bit paranoid. Like the rather widespread belief that Western support of Gaidar reforms was a

conspiracy, intended to undermine might of Russia once and for all, to transform it into a kind of third world country. Such feelings were not completely baseless - the West, the USA supported the "shock therapy" so visible, even demonstratively, that it really looked to many Russians as a Western plot.

We also moved from almost a full unity in foreign policy to serious controversies. Some of them were connected with events in Yugoslavia. But the worst, most destructive controversy can become the issue of expanding the NATO to the East. Quite honestly, I do not understand the Western position on this issue. What vital interests of the present or future members of NATO do this plans secure? But one thing I know for sure: expansion of NATO to the East is a welcome present to our nationalists, neo-imperialists, militarists, all those who would like to turn the tide of events back, to acquire again "The Enemy," to return to the rules of the game, which we followed during the cold war. And this could really comprise a threat to our Western neighbors. It can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

So again I would like to repeat that I do not want to paint the situation in absolutely dark colors. But serious deterioration of our relations with the United States, with the West in general is possible and it can reach the temperature close to the cold war. What worries me most is that we even do not need to do something especially bad to achieve this state of relations. We already drift in this direction and it will be enough just let it going as it goes. Everybody knows the rule of the bicycle - if you do not rotate the pedals, if you do not move it will fall on one side or the other. The same is true today for foreign policy, for relations between Russia and the West.