

# **FROM THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN CIVILISATIONS TO COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION**

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Dialogue between civilisations is a harmonization of the states' positions and development of coordinated decisions. It is the only way of coexistence acceptable to humanity. It is a way to understanding and agreement on the key issues of life.

This publication presents an attempt to analyze inter-civilisation relations in modern world and substantiate the topical forms of dialogue among the nations, countries and people of our planet.

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## **“DIALOGUE BETWEEN CIVILISATIONS” FORUM: 2002–2006. WHAT COMES NEXT? (Instead of Introduction)**

*S.S. Sulakshin*

The word combination — “dialogue between civilisations” — sounds like a subject for a final exam essay in a literature class at school; it is mysterious, thrilling and exciting. It is set at such a high tone, so globally presented, and half-opens some immense and obscure boundaries and depths.

However, for Russia and the political team representing it on the world scene, this is more like a subject for an entrance examination to world politics.

After the collapse of the soviet “civilisation”, Russia struggles to find its new identity. It has no face, and has not only a lack of understanding, but neglect and suspicion in the world political, economic and humanitarian arena, and must face its own challenge: who are we now, who are we to become, quo vadis? It often makes it easier to understand who one is by looking in the mirror, narrowly scrutinizing others like oneself, comparing and communicating. Striving for activity on the international arena should not be underestimated.

Paradoxical and vexing as it is, they “put up” with Russia in G-8 and in the world of big politics, mainly due to the internal instability of the transition period, the potentially accessible arsenals, nuclear and otherwise, to terrorist forces, as well as technologies, materials and intellect. No other noticeable Russian factors (cultural, religious, humanitarian, spiritual or ideological) appear to exist in the accountability and respect of the world. Perhaps the supply of raw materials is a factor, but the others are, first, not infinite both in terms of volume and time; and secondly, not unique or irreplaceable; and, thirdly, humiliating.

The main thing is that the above mentioned world political and economic “brands” of Russia are rather dubious, ambivalent and

second-rate. Basically, they are not a product of modern Russia, but the heritage of a different historic period, which includes a different political, economic and social regime. The grounds for pride belong to the past. The present is rather a source of worries than of pride or worthy examples. And in the most important dimensions – humanitarian, cultural, ideological – there is nothing to present to the world. One would not impress the world with the “Star Factory” (comment – Russian version of “American Idol”), would they?

And, indeed, what can Russian citizens, their children, Russian politicians and leaders be proud of? And is it really necessary to be proud of one’s country, its image and its current trends? Is it important to look out for them and create them anew? From the basic utilitarian point of view, undoubtedly yes. With the sole spirit, idea and understanding of the way forward, nations have always been more capable than when in conditions of fragmentation, ignorance, disbelief and no view of the future. And when nations are more capable, the economy, national stability, quality and standard of living and harmony with nature are all the better. People live better in the present and are more confident of the future.

But is this the main, let us repeat this, utilitarian target in our epoch – for an individual, society, and state? Beyond the limits of the “epoch” visible from the utilitarian point of view, it is hardly necessary to develop the thesis that an idea, a humanitarian component of our life, is an actual if not a primary component of our life. This includes individual, family, and national ideas. “Without the tsar in one’s head” the meaning of life is not clear, nor the future, and where the source of the transcendent power, lies, which can be the only driving force for victory, impulse and achievement. This works for both individuals and nations, and the country as a whole. Nobody ever wants to vegetate.

In Russia’s historic memory of the past and in the present generations, these feelings – unity and goals, the flight of spirit and power, a craving for fulfilment, achievement, a model for oneself and others – are still alive. But embroilment and transition have considerably exhausted them.