

**Speech delivered by Dr Vassos Lyssarides at the conference  
organized by the Lyssarides Foundation in cooperation with  
the Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs**

**“Contemporary Challenges in the Era of Globalization”**

**1.6.2010**

I welcome you and express my appreciation for your attendance .It is the aim of the foundation to continue cooperation with universities, cultural and political organizations. Our next activity will be a seminar on the European experiment with Pauline Green and other personalities among the speakers.

I express thanks to the prominent speakers of today who accepted our invitation (Prof. Koufoudakis, Dr. Wijk.,Prof. Theophanous) and to the president of EDEK Mr Yiannakis Omirou for his greeting.

Our subject is globalization. We may, today, face a quantum on a process which is as old as human society which was created on the necessity to face collectively the common dangers and to secure elementary supplies and on solidarity. It evolved from groupings of race, towns, nations, to multinational organizations, and now to the distorted evolution of unity of action of the global economic and monetary circles with lack of effective political control. The economic is predominant over the political. The result is immense

deserts of deprivation and small oases of overaffluence but with a provocatively uneven distribution of national income.

I will not enter into the discussion between globalization and internationalisation. I will only state that the globalization should be the international political control of markets and treaties. It was predictable that economies without frontiers was a wrong description of the state of affairs.

The unipolar system with a selective implementation of principles led to conflicts, anomalies, and crude interventions.

The UN failed its role and the necessity for a radical restructure is obvious.

The deprivation of rights, especially national rights was bound to lead to terrorism which cannot be faced by state terrorism. State terrorism feeds terrorism.

The tolerance of occupation (Cyprus) leads to constant anomaly, and the deprivation of fatherlands (Palestine) to constant violent confrontation. The movement for a corrective process of globalization is without a compass and the immense fragmentation of the working strata undermines common action.

The present economic crisis gives us a sample of the paradoxical phenomena. The remedy was handed to those responsible for the crisis. Even the theory of super value is in a way bypassed. Trillions of dollars are accumulated by selling at exorbitant prices steady values or no values (stocks and money).

It is not my intention to deal with the issue. Others will do this. I will only hint at certain aspects.

The unipolar system is already besieged. New economic poles are developing (China, India, Russia) and unhappily the EU is still searching for a process of true unification and an independent political line. Often we witness the upset of European values which implicated even the judicial power.

The necessity for antagonism was used as a pretext to diminish the social state. (The dispute on realism and ecumenism is schematic).

The new international subjects are a combination of cooperation and clash.

Democracy was wounded even by democratic representative systems.

At the present stage the only possibility for diffusion of power is decentralization with more powers to local authorities and peoples' participation not only through properly functioning parties but also by NGO's on specific issues

There is a tendency to refer to a clash of civilizations and religions. This does not correspond to realities though these issues are being used to excuse confrontations with different causes.

On the contrary we should aim at an osmosis or synthesis towards a polycultural structure. Global hegemony circles try to de-

nationalize cultures. Thus they can control situations more easily .One thing is osmosis and another elimination.

We reject narrow nationalistic approaches but we also reject a cultural Orwellian society.

This phenomenon is more dangerous for countries facing problems of survival like Cyprus.

The organized de-nationalization is added to the limitation of ethnic sovereignty when this is not followed with proper participation in the decision- making apparatuses.

It is true that there is not enough influence from progressive ideas on globalization. On the contrary, practical stances of even the Socialist movement were non-effective.

We need a new Socialist manifesto, but more we need common practical stands. The diachronic problem of technological development, the working hours and unemployment, plus the migration problem dictated by the chasm in development and standards of life, are vital issues. Democracy is not only the right to vote, but the right to participate in social, economic and cultural developments. On an international level we can't speak about equal trade conditions between countries with over sophisticated means and the primitive plough. Equality of opportunities is missing and democracy is defeated by deprivation of human rights. We need a redistribution of knowledge, and technology.

The world has not become the common village except for the economic elite with its profit-oriented approach. The present interdependence creates the picture of a post colonial hegemony in the Third World, a softer hegemony in the sophisticated world and marginalization in the internal front although the global output is rapidly increasing.

The definition that globalization is the deepening of world markets by the free exchange between countries does not describe the issue.

Natural osmosis of ideologies doesn't lessen the deep antithesis. A special chapter on the role of the Mass Media should be added onto the agenda on globalization.

Once again I welcome you.

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