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Point of View

In Search of an Advanced Strategy for the Development of Civilization
50th Anniversary of the Limits to Growth Report to the Club of Rome

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Abstract—This article analyzes the consequences of the publication of the first report to the Club of Rome, *The Limits to Growth* (1972), which, on the basis of modeling, showed the likelihood of collapse as a result of a discrepancy between the growth of the world population and the possibilities of meeting its needs under the degradation and depletion of natural resources; a strategy to overcome it, the concept of organic growth, is outlined. The author concludes that the past decades have not diminished the conceptual and prognostic significance of that work. Moreover, the severity of global problems associated with demographic growth and world ecosystem degradation has by no means been overcome; on the contrary, it is increasing. The adopted world strategy for sustainable development until the 2030s shows that humanity has taken seriously the warnings of the Club of Rome. This is one of the most important results of that remote but rather significant publication.

Keywords: modeling, organic growth, sustainable development, demography, Club of Rome, civilization, future of humankind

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In the early 1970s, under the auspices of the then little-known international public organization Club of Rome, the report *The Limits to Growth* [1] was presented to the world scientific and political establishment, implemented under the club's project on the "predicament of mankind." Its conclusions and the problems raised attracted universal attention, and discussion of them has continued in the 21st century with no less fervor. What is the secret of this success?

First, there is the extremely alarmist final conclusion of the report on the actual "predicament of mankind": with relatively limited resources of the biosphere and continuing demographic growth rates, the baseline scenario assumed an uncontrolled population decline and a sharp decline in living standards. The ecological survival of humankind, as follows from the report, is under real temporal threat. Of course, there were many disturbing theoretical constructions in the demographic context before (for example, neo-Malthusianism), but they were predominantly speculative. As for the report in question, it used a nontraditional method for analyzing global-scale phenomena.

Second, the authors of the report used a computer model based on the ideas of their predecessors, in particular, J. Forrester [2], which laid the foundations for modeling global processes. The conclusions formulated on its basis were presented to the public as unconditional, while the authors themselves emphasized the variable (scenario) nature of their constructions. Nevertheless, the graphs constructed seemed to the majority of the uninitiated to be realistic predictions of the heirs of the ancient Roman vestal priestesses.

Third, the conclusions of the report were not only alarmist in nature but also left hope: if humanity manages to control demographic growth and the exponential consumption of natural resources, then it is possible to maintain the equilibrium of the biosphere (and hence the survival of the global society) while satisfying the rational needs of man and his comprehensive spiritual development.

Finally, fourth, the social message of the report coincided with the critical sentiments towards the consumer society that dominated the liberal circles of Western European society. The extrapolation of the consumer trend had a clearly negative prognostic connotation. The conclusions of the report constructively confirmed this.

The established orientation of world development needed a radical transformation to ensure the historical survival of humankind. A general direction towards this was indicated: a decrease in demographic growth,

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the modernization of technological development, and the rationalization of consumer guidelines.

However, scientific and public opinions divided radically. Some experts (let us call them conditionally *positivists*) generally positively perceived the results of computer simulation, at the same time estimating the probabilistic degree of their approximation to reality. Others (let us call them *negativists*) were quite critical: they rejected the methodological possibilities of adequate modeling of global processes; argued that technological modernization could level the degradation trends of development; and held that the market economic model would be able to regulate economic, environmental, and demographic processes.

The authors of the report constructively accepted criticism: for three decades, from the beginning of the 1990s to the beginning of the 21st century, they corrected the initial model constructions several times (20 [3] and 30 years [4] after the publication of the book) based on modern statistics, taking into account, for example, an increase in the annual consumption of natural resources by humankind, the ongoing demographic growth of the world population, the environmental burden on the biosphere, and the modernization of technologies. Their conclusion remained the same: socioecological conflict is inevitable if humanity does not radically transform its activities, reduce demographic growth, and decrease the pressure on its natural habitat.

The latest version of the report (that this is indeed the final version) was confirmed by Dennis Meadows, one of the leaders of the project, in an interview to *Expert* magazine in April 2012. In his opinion, humankind has already come close to an extremely dangerous state and it is necessary to return to the limits of stability.

His scenario proceeds from the traditional alarmist conclusion, receiving, however, a distinct predictive trend. Yet even in four decades, in 2052, if we follow the strategic scenario [5], on the one hand, the negative version of social and ecological collapse will remain unrealized, while on the other, humanity will continue to teeter precariously between the consequences of the continuing exponential growth and the desire to survive in the face of growing upheaval.

Over these decades, versions of *The Limits to Growth* were published in many millions of copies in many countries of the world (in our country, the book was published only 20 years after its first release [6]); translated into almost all world languages; it is hardly possible to find mass media in the world that have not discussed, to one degree or another, whether negative scenarios for the development of civilization were realistic or utopian. Patronizing this project, participating in, and often initiating relevant discussions, the Club of Rome in those years turned into one of the most prestigious international public organizations, the opinion of which became important for scientists, state officials, politicians, and the public.

Over five decades, under the auspices of the Club of Rome, more than four dozen reports have been published—fundamental studies prepared by individual specialists or their teams, which considered global issues related to overcoming the "predicament of mankind." In fact, these studies, implicitly or explicitly, continued to answer the questions raised during the discussion of *The Limits to Growth*. There are at least two basic ones: the first is whether world collapse is possible in the process of imbalance in the demographic growth on the planet and the natural resource potential, and if so, then the second is whether it can be avoided, and what are the ways of the strategy for the constructive survival of humankind?

The logic of the development of modern civilization, presented in *The Limits to Growth* and confirmed within the framework of system dynamics, brings to reality the sharpness of strategic contradictions in the planetary system man–society–biosphere. The absolute growth trend of the world population and the relative limitation of the natural potential determine the historical fatality of the acute nature of the future global socioecological contradictions. This means that the search for an answer to the second question (based on analyzing the reports to the Club of Rome) becomes inevitable.

Philosophy of the dynamism of civilization: From quantitative growth to sustainable development. The basis of the strategic survival of modern cyclization is a radical transformation of the historical model of development.

The locomotive of the effectiveness of traditional market relations is the phenomenon of quantitative growth in all its manifestations: from industrial and agricultural production to the service sector. In the conditions of industrial society, the degree of "quantitativeness" is inferior to its qualitative characteristics. However, in the transition to postindustrialism, primarily as a result of innovative trends, indicators of the "qualitativeness" of development should, theoretically, prevail over indicators of the "quantitativeness" of growth.

The reality of the natural limitation of civilizational dynamism has led to the emergence of modern forms of the zero-growth strategy. While historical theories (for example, Malthusianism) focused on the zero development of demographic processes, modern concepts extend this form of development practically to all areas of activity, when the economic effect is due to scientific and social dynamism—a global equilibrium strategy associated with a reduction in demographic indicators and the improvement of technological solutions. In other words, the effectiveness of activity is determined not so much by economic criteria as by improvement in the quality of life, and this trend receives a global–regional dimension.

In this context, the concept of organic growth is formulated, which has become one of the basic strategic principles of the Club of Rome. Within its framework, the world system is considered as an interconnection (and interdependence) of various regions at different stages of development, meaning the specifics of the socioeconomic differentiation of developed and developing countries [7].

Nevertheless, they are united by a common goal: the positive development of an integral organism—world civilization. Coming to the level of organic growth implies the interconnection of subsystems, when rich countries share their resources (innovations) with poor ones, which is considered by E. Pestel as the most important condition for the effectiveness of global governance, as a reality of entering the structure of an "organic society" [8].

The forms and scales of the modern dynamism of civilization make it possible to implement the postulated guidelines, meaning, in particular, Factor Four—increasing the efficiency of activities several times in all forms of its manifestation [9] and Factor Five [10], which takes into account the rationalization of activities and further increasing its efficiency in the process of using innovations and greater social orientation of public policy. This process is considered as a stage of accelerated advancement of civilization on the way to its sustainability.

From the beginning of the 1970s (the limits to growth) to the beginning of the 1990s (the first global revolution) [11], difficulties continued, requiring radical changes in the system of existing planetary contradictions. The severity of the difficulties associated with the need for civilization to get out of crisis (for survival and positive historical dynamism, on which the Club of Rome had tirelessly insisted in its reports over the past 20 years), was perceived at the level of the world establishment.

The United Nations adopted the concept of sustainable development of civilization (Rio-92), which, in essence, is an institutional form of qualitative growth (zero growth, organic growth, etc.). It is based on economic growth, limited, however, by environmental and sociocultural setups focused on meeting the rational needs of both present and future generations. The UN concept of sustainable development, designed for a historical perspective, traditionally postulates improvement in the quality of human life. However, the analysis carried out within the framework of one of the latest published reports [12] indicates the polarity of the situation: on the one hand, the implementation of the concept of sustainable development implies a clearer practical orientation, because theoretical declarations do not always correspond to the capabilities, especially those of developing countries; on the other hand, however, a positive prospect of the civilization of sustainable future is revealed. Today, there is no real alternative to it: global society will follow this direction, in accordance with the UN decisions, until the 2030s.

Demographic realism: From the expansion of population growth to the quality of life. Demographic trends are still viewed as a determining factor in the imbalance of the global social–natural system.

The Earth population counter works tirelessly. According to UN data, slightly fewer than eight billion people live on our planet (at the beginning of the 21st century, there were about 6 billion). For many decades, the annual growth of the world population has fluctuated between 1–2%. If this indicator decreases to 0.5%, in about a century there will be about 11 billion people on Earth.

Obviously, exponential demographic growth has a clear predictive trend, which has not changed radically during the Covid period. Consequently, demographic stress will continue to be a factor influencing global dynamics for the coming decades. These data correspond approximately to the baseline (out of the 12 presented) *Limits to Growth* scenario. If real measures are not taken, civilization will implement, as follows from it, a less favorable scenario.

More than 70% of the world's population lives in just two dozen densely populated countries. This group includes both conditionally developing (Indonesia, Pakistan, Brazil, and others) and developed (the United States, Russia, Japan, and others) states. China and India, despite large-scale depopulation efforts, remain the only countries in the world community where the population exceeds one billion people. India's demographic indicators are expected to surpass those of China in the next decade. Moreover, according to the University of Washington, a trend is developing in which China will lose its "billionaire" status (the country is trying to stop this trend by abandoning measures to reduce the birthrate).

One of the reports [13], based on the concepts of system analysis and synergetics, developed a mathematical model for the phenomenological description of demographic processes, both present and future. It follows from it that the demographic transition in developing countries, that is, the reduction in fertility and mortality, will be realized after the world population has approached 14 billion people. Note that the quantitative nonlinear theory of the world population, proposed by S.P. Kapitsa, defends the thesis according to which demographic difficulties are caused not so much by a resource shortage as by the internal pattern for the growth of an open system.

From the demographic constructions of *The Limits to Growth* in the framework of any scenarios, it follows that an unconditional decrease in the quality characteristics of life in the global dimension will occur. However, world statistics provide more optimistic information on this issue.

According to the Population Division of the UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs, the

average life expectancy in the world will reach about 70 years by the second decade of the 21st century (at the end of the 20th century, this figure was 65 years). At the same time, it is obvious that regional indicators are very differentiated; they differ greatly in developed and developing countries (an African lives on average two decades less than an American).

Quality indicators of life, according to UN data, correlate with economic and demographic characteristics. The highest standard of living is in Norway, Switzerland, and Ireland. It is in these countries, as well as in other developed ones, that low birthrates are typical. For example, in Norway the birthrate is 1.56, while in Niger, Sudan, and Chad, where the standard of living is extremely low, this coefficient reaches 6.91.

In the scenarios developed in *The Limits to Growth*, this relationship is clearly revealed, correlating with real processes. Extrapolation of current trends steadily leads to economic stagnation, social tension, environmental stress, and ultimately to social and environmental collapse. Mitigation and possible overcoming of the crisis are associated (along with a decrease in demographic indicators) with the improvement of traditional technologies.

Innovativeness of the anthroposphere: From the "brownness" of activity to the "blue" cyclicality. The industrial society that began to take shape more than 200 years ago, having moved from predominantly manual labor to large-scale factory production, on the one hand, stimulated productivity growth in all areas of activity; on the other, the expansion of the production, economic, and sociocultural functioning of society led to an increased impact on natural ecosystems.

Moreover, until about the mid-20th century, the current techno-economic model of civilization did not take into account the reality of environmental growth restrictions: the activity was predominantly of nature-consuming character and entailed significant environmental pollution, especially in large cities. One of the most illustrative examples is the infamous smog in the English capital (associated with the loss of many human lives), when thick fog was combined with emissions from technical and technological systems (cars, thermal power plants, and fireplace heating). However, the dangerous acuteness of the ecological situation in London is a thing of the past.

However, the nature-consuming type of development of modern civilization and the dominance of the "brown" economy associated with "colored" emissions into natural ecosystems are hardly losing their positions. Nevertheless, the historically established Western model of economic development gradually created the material and sociocultural preconditions for mitigating sore spots. This was facilitated by the entry of the world community into the era of postindustrialism, within which a high degree of innovation allows reaching the level of effective technical solutions that combine the needs of traditional economism with the growing popularity of environmentalism.

The waste-associated structure of production, when the technological process involves emissions into the environment, is gradually being replaced by a cyclic (closed) model. We mean only the scale of cyclicity and the possibilities of its implementation. It is within this framework that it is possible not only to reduce relatively the number of resources used but also to reduce degradation changes in natural ecosystems. Therefore, the implementation of the "circular economy" settings [14] is considered as one of the determining prerequisites for the balance between human activity and the functioning of the biosphere.

The information (today, digital) revolution is another opportunity for further rationalization of the relationship between the elements of the man–society–biosphere system. The digitalization of activity creates conditions under which an increasing part of the material forms of the functioning of civilization moves into the virtual sphere—the scale of material activity decreases while its efficiency is increasing and the negative impact on natural ecosystems is being minimized. Thus, it seems that the ideas of E. Schumacher [15] about the "Buddhist economy" are realized, striving for a balance of human interests and eco-friendly stereotypes, for activity (and life) according to the "small-is-beautiful" principle.

Modern civilization perceives the ideology of the "green" economy (one of the reports calls it *blue*) [16]. We mean that the entire structure of its functioning and the existence of society acquires a distinct socio-ecological context. For example, the development of the energy sector implies not only the rationalization of energy consumption but also real access to alternative energy sources and the gradual abandonment of the use of hydrocarbon fuel resources. A radical improvement in the urban environmental situation is associated with an adequate solution to the problem of waste, the improvement of transport infrastructure, in particular, with a large-scale transition to electric vehicles. Man, while satisfying his rational needs, at the same time tries to account for modern environmental stereotypes.

The blue (green) economy is becoming the basis for real technological modernization, and the traditional linearity of activity is gradually being replaced by its cyclicality. Within the framework of modern civilization, there is a clear need for more active and large-scale ecological and economic solutions. The pace of their implementation in no way corresponds to the severity of tension in the formed system of relationships between man and his natural environment.

At the crossroads: From ecological instability to the balance of the biosphere. It seems that the negative ecological trend of the scenario constructions of *The Limits to Growth* is being implemented. At least three conclusions were formulated in the UN documents sum-

ming up the "environmental twenty years" (from Stockholm, 1972, to Rio de Janeiro, 1992).

First, despite significant efforts (the allocation of about 2% of GDP by most developed countries for environmental purposes and the reorientation of technologies), the global socioecological situation has by no means improved. As before, the techno-anthropogenic factor is the determining condition for the further degradation of an increasingly large number of structures of the biosphere.

Second, the extrapolation of the Western model to the global social–natural system is inadequate for the strategic development of civilization as a whole, given, in particular, its high consumer standards.

Third, there is a need to reach the level of an ecological strategy that is more appropriate for the severity and scale of biospheric tension. As such, the concept of sustainable development of civilization was put forward, based on the balance of not only economic and environmental but also sociocultural stereotypes. The UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio de Janeiro, 2012) confirmed the expediency of a more active implementation of this concept in the global context, given the scale of social and environmental ill-being. Later, under the auspices of the United Nations, a document ("Transforming Our World," 2015) was adopted, in which environmental issues were still among the global goals facing modern civilization.

Over the past few decades, significant data have been collected on the specifics of the global socioecological situation, its regional and local features, and the main directions of its dynamics. In fact, most of the reports to the Club of Rome, to one degree or another, deal with environmental issues, which are considered one of the key global problems of our time.

Obviously, the ecological plume in one way or another affects almost all spheres of human existence, ranging from environmental security, related to the consequences of the possible use of weapons of mass destruction ("nuclear winter") and food, energy, and resource shortages due to the degradation of natural ecosystems and to the situation with people—the consequences of global demographic stress and its prospects in historical dynamics.

It is already clear that the acuteness of the world's socioecological contradictions is by no means a thing of the past. While, according to eyewitnesses, fish have appeared in the Thames, and royal swans feel good, the world statistics are not so optimistic: biosphere ecosystems are steadily degrading and the range of endangered species of flora and fauna is expanding. Moreover, the contradiction between the relative unlimitedness of the material needs of society and the comparatively limited capacity of the biosphere is becoming more acute. The growth of the historical load on the planetary ecosystem has reached a level when the natural mechanisms of its self-organization that determine the ability of living systems to adapt to external influences are violated.

Violation of the capacity of the biosphere is one of the basic factors provoking the trend towards a reduction in the natural productivity of the agricultural sector, degradation of water resources and a shortage of fresh water, and air pollution. The historical limitation of the natural resource potential increases the degree of conflict between countries and regions for its availability. Deterioration of the quality of the natural human habitat as a whole is characteristic of both developed (North) and developing (South) regions. However, the population of the South is more dependent on the natural environment: the ecosystems of the South are less stable than the natural structures of the North. The ecosystems of most developed countries are protected by advanced technologies that minimize (in comparison with the archaic technical systems of the South) the impact on the elements of the biosphere. Nevertheless, its changes acquire a planetary character, transforming the climate. This causes serious concern within the world community. Two possible scenarios of climate change are being discussed, namely warming and cooling of the global climate.

Adherents of climate cooling (there are many fewer of them) proceed from the assumption that anthropogenic activities associated with the greenhouse effect are not considered as a determining factor in the dynamics of the global climate. In this context, the process of historical cyclical circulation is analyzed—the natural change of cold and warm periods of the Earth's development, the phenomenon of the gradual cooling of the Sun, and other processes.

On the contrary, supporters of climate warming (the greater part) provide evidence that it is anthropogenic factors, caused, in particular, by an increase in greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane), that lead to an increase in the temperature regime on our planet. Presumably, by the end of the 21st century, the corresponding indicators, according to various calculations, may increase by two degrees, which will lead to significant negative consequences—the melting of glaciers, rising sea levels, and flooding of European cities.

Yet it is also obvious that any radical change in the historically established parameters of the biosphere will have a negative impact on the development of its biological objects, including humans. That is why the world community takes possible climate changes so seriously (Leaders' Summit on Climate, April 2021), developing measures to mitigate and prevent them strategically.

One of the reports to the Club of Rome presented the Planetary Emergency Action Plan [17], which includes a system of possible political decisions aimed at resolving potential radical climate changes and their

consequences. In essence, a project of actions is proposed to integrate the efforts of the states of the world community to achieve these targets. It proposes a mechanism for solving three problems of a global scale: preventing climate change, reducing biodiversity, and preserving human health.

In the 20th century, civilization entered the era of the Anthropocene, in which human activity determines the dynamics of socio-natural changes. In the 21st century, most of these changes are negative. The potential of overcoming them implies the entry of humankind into the era of the Biogeocene, in which the desire for an adequate coexistence of man and his biosocial environment is realized.

North–South dilemma: From polarity to contradictory unity. A significant part of the reports presented to the Club of Rome, substantiating and developing the ideas of *The Limits to Growth*, is devoted to the problems of the Third World. The processes taking place in developing regions have a significant impact on world dynamics, complicating and destabilizing the economic and political situation and exacerbating environmental degradation. It is not by chance that in one of the first reports, back in the mid-1970s, a strategy was proposed for "reshaping the international order" [18], focused, in particular, on transforming the relationship between the countries of the North and South, mitigating and overcoming the polarity of their development in the long run.

Since the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, the differentiation of the Third World countries themselves has become clearer. On the one hand, new industrial countries have emerged (for example, Hong Kong and Singapore); China, India, and some other countries in Asia and Latin America have been developing rapidly, steadily overcoming the "Third World" stereotypes. On the other hand, among the countries of the South, especially in the African region, many still fail to remove the sharp contradictions of national and regional development (in demography, economy, and other areas).

It follows from the UN materials that, although the population living in extreme poverty is declining in percentage terms, nevertheless, its global level tends to grow. About 10% of the world's population, mostly in developing regions, lives in extreme poverty, unable to meet their basic needs. In sub-Saharan Africa, the average person lives on less than $2 a day (the average American spends about $160); about 9% of the world's population is starving, usually in developing countries, while the average person in the North dreams of "eating something that will help to lose weight." The most acute food shortage is recorded on the African continent, where the number of the undernourished is growing faster than the possibility of solving the problem of food security at the national–regional level. Extrapolation of current trends leads to an increase in the number of people suffering from poverty, food shortages, and unavailability of medical care, especially in connection with COVID-19.

The strategy of overcoming (at least mitigating) the socioeconomic contradiction between the North and the South is generally presented as a two-way process: on the one hand, developed countries in their strategic targets should consider the interests of the Third World to a greater extent; on the other hand, Third World countries should combine more dynamically their national features with the constructive experience of world development. For example, in one of the reports prepared jointly with the African Academy of Sciences [19], it was proposed to consider the natural and climatic conditions and the specifics of the social structure of traditional African society to reach the level of national food security.

The need to implement this strategy is becoming more acute in the 21st century because the removal of the conflict of civilizations is one of the basic conditions for their positive historical development. It is natural that, responding to these challenges of our time, the Club of Rome supported the program "Planetary Emergency Partnership" [20]. It not only assesses the crisis state of world and regional situations in connection with the global COVID-19 pandemic but also its potential as a strategic impetus for regional (African) dynamism.

Overcoming the bifurcation trends of the modern development of civilization, including along the North–South line, in an earlier report by E. Laszlo was associated with the formation of conditions for a "world solidarity revolution" [21]. On the one hand, it was about radical economic, social, and political transformations in the direction of relative civilizational integrity; on the other hand, it was about the preservation of national cultural features and traditional spiritual stereotypes. At the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century, orientation towards strategic civilizational integrity and tactical sociocultural differentiation is becoming especially in demand.

On the way to the man of the future: From "one-dimensionality" to "quality." According to the founder of the Club of Rome A. Peccei [22], the implementation of the positive strategy of the civilization of the future depends on human qualities and the possibilities of their development. After all, only people and their sociocultural integration determine the dynamism and direction of the historical process because man is the real epicenter of world development.

Conventionally, three historical types of man are distinguished: Eastern, Western, and Eurasian. While the first two types are polar and exist in actual reality, the third one is the result of forecasting and largely exists only in virtual reality.

Eastern man (historically formed earlier), based on national religious traditions, tends, as is commonly believed, to combine a single manifestation of being with the world as a whole; that is, the individual and the general are considered in their unity. He is charac-

terized by immanent nature-centricity (ecophilicity), that is, man in his thinking is in harmony with the natural environment, and anthropogenic activity is not associated (at least in the early historical stages) with a significant transformation of natural ecosystems.

Western man, on the contrary, strives, based on a common stereotype, to oppose himself to the external environment: the individual is considered as external in relation to nature—the whole. Based on Christian values, it is characterized by immanent human-centrism, which, relying on Protestant ethics, extolled, on the one hand, the efficiency of labor activity and the high status of economic and social success and, on the other hand, the forms and scales of labor activity that led to an aggravation and expansion of the process of the degradation of the world's natural ecosystems. Thus, Western man, exhibiting an ecophobic attitude, seemed to confirm his "one-dimensionality" (H. Marcuse)—the dominant interest in the growth of a bank account and social success to the detriment of other, including environmental, values.

Eurasian man, who was supposed to emerge according to the theory of Eurasianism of the first half of the 20th century, integrated, according to its adherents, the stereotypes of West- and Eastcentrism, balancing on a combination of elements of ecophobicity and ecophilicity in prognostic activity. His appearance was expected in the Russian geographical space, within which (based on the Orthodox worldview) the mechanism of harmony between man and his external environment was to be realized. In reality, things turned out differently.

Historical retrospect shows that it was the mentality of Western man that created prerequisites for the dynamic growth of Western European civilization, outstripping (in economic, scientific, and technical fields) Eastern-type civilizations. It is Western anthropocentrism (in contrast to Eastern nature-centrism) that has led to a radical intensification of human activity and a high degree of its innovativeness.

At the same time, ecophobicity as an integral element of Westernization, which spread on the wave of globalization on a planetary scale, has led to a steady aggravation of regional and global socioecological situations, posing a real threat to biospheric well-being and the potential survival of modern cyclization. In essence, the speculative forecasts of the early 20th century about the "decline" of Western European civilization (O. Spengler) came true, confirmed by model scenarios in its second half.

In response to these challenges of modernity, man of the Western mentality switched on internal and external mechanisms that ensured a decrease in the degree of civilizational ecophobicity both at the activity level (raising the status of environmental engineering solutions) and at the mental level (using ecophilic elements in traditional thinking). In other words, Western man is increasingly guided by "eastern" (Eastcentric) stereotypes, seeking to harmonize his relationship with the natural world.

The "easternization" of man of the Western type of thinking is intensifying, which is determined, on the one hand, by the effectiveness of the crisis tendencies of traditional sociocultural values (and in this sense, both the "decline" and the "limits" of development stereotypes are a harsh but realistic designation of real trends). However, on the other hand, Western man, in accordance with the well-known parable about a frog that got into a jug of milk, churns his "butter," correcting the disadvantages of Westcentrism with the advantages of Eastcentrism (harmony, ecophilicity).

At the same time, an alternative trend is clearly manifested—Westernization actively penetrates the system of civilizations of the Eastern type, which, having adapted Western innovations, returns the historically lost status in the hierarchy of world processes. Asian "new tigers" claim leadership positions in the global rankings, and Eastern man perceives (while preserving the national mentality) elements of Western European stereotypes (activity, rationality).

At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, under the influence of globalization processes, the dialogue of cultures is expanding (despite economic contradictions and political difficulties) as a universal principle that ensures the spiritual enrichment of the interacting civilizations. It is dialogue that creates the conditions for the interconnection of European and non-European cultures, acting as an adequate form of interpersonal communication. At the junction of world cultures, it seems, the contours of "qualitative" (or Eurasian) man are already appearing, who harmoniously perceives both Western and Eastern values, while maintaining, to one degree or another, the traditional mentality.

By the beginning of the 21st century, the historical limitations of ideas about the dominance of Westcentrism over Eastcentrism and vice versa—Eastcentrism over Westcentrism—had been revealed. It is obvious that Westernization and "Easternization" are two hypostases of a single global sociocultural process that links the past, present, and future of world civilization.

Humankind, overcoming immanent contradictions, is steadily striving for civilizational integrity, which turns out to be a desired but stubbornly slipping horizon line. The integral strategy of civilization seems to be the trend that will ensure the strategic balance of Westernization and "Easternization" on the way to the perfect man of the future.

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Ancient Greek Troy fell because its inhabitants did not believe the prophecies of Cassandra, which were objectionable to them. People have not remained so dangerously indifferent to the "limit" results of the first report to the Club of Rome.

First, the discussions and debates that took place around the world (and continue today) about the actual reality of alarmism and its conclusions indicate that humanity as a whole accepts the formulated outcome: if we do not change the main directions of development, civilization in its modern forms will end its existence in a historically designated time perspective.

Second, the world community has really considered the report's warning about the coming collapse. The answer to it is the adopted strategy of sustainable development, based on the balance of economic, environmental, and sociocultural processes of civilization, implemented at both the global and regional-national levels.

Third, a whole area of global studies (globalistics) has emerged in science, which analyzes the entire complex of difficulties facing humanity and ways to overcome them.

Fourth, modern civilization has received guidelines for joint advancement towards the future: the reality of the limits of traditional development has been outlined and a general direction of positive movement towards the future has been outlined, which acquires not only a global but also a regional and national dimension.

The report timed to the half-century anniversary of the activity of the Club of Rome confirms that the conclusions of *The Limits to Growth* remain valid. Civilization is still facing a set of global problems (the basic ones are noted in the subtitle of the book—"Capitalism, Short-Termism, Population, and the Destruction of the Planet" [23]), which requires further analysis and real measures. This means that the members of the club will meet the next half-century anniversary at work, the results of which humanity is looking forward to.

The Ancient Roman philosopher Seneca (in a letter to Lucilius) left us a warning: Fortune grows slowly but dies quickly. This maxim is also important in the ecological context: one should not postpone for a long time the solution of the questions posed in *The Limits to Growth*; otherwise, it may be too late because the degradation of local subsystems of the biosphere is already receiving an impetus to irreversible changes.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that he has no conflicts of interest.

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