

CAREFUL OPTIMISM OF THE POST-CRISIS WORLD

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It has been several months now since the end of the great economic recession was declared. It was thought that its consequences might equal those of the Great Depression, but they have not. This news was received in Russia and abroad with both relief and a certain degree of skepticism. Nevertheless, the global economic crisis, which was predicted by economists to last for several years, has finished. Or has it? What effect has it had on our world as a whole? Leading western intellectuals tried to answer these questions in *Newsweek* Special Edition.

The leading article of the journal, 'The Roots of Stability,' naturally belongs to the editor-in-chief of the *Newsweek* International Edition, **Fareed Zakaria**. The world-famous public figure tried to determine why the economic crisis, which according to all prognoses should have lasted for several years, finished in just a year. His opinion contradicts most economists, who see the reason for the short lived crisis as a result of large-scale government intervention in the economy, which restored credibility to financial institutions. Zakaria, however, searches for the roots of current stability in the three major factors that form the basis of modern world order. **First of all**, peace between major states has allowed national economies to easily develop and gradually become part of a global economy. **Secondly**, stability of the global economy itself has been maintained since the victory over inflation in the 1970s. **Thirdly**, technological innovation, especially in the sphere of communication, has united and consolidated the world for the



first time in human history. In other words, conditions that existed during the pre-crisis time allowed the world to quietly overcome the period of economic instability.

Zakaria's opinion is supported by another outstanding American political scientist, **Francis Fukuyama**. In his article, 'History Is Still Over,' he suggests that the world hasn't particularly changed after all those financial difficulties, despite all that was said during the previous year about the necessity for such changes.

According to Fukuyama, the reason for this is that the hard times passed by too quickly for humans and their conservative nature to have enough time for change. However, there are both good and bad aspects here. It is 'good' that the rest of the world hasn't changed. It is 'good' that the legitimacy of the global system hasn't been questioned. It is 'good' that the G20 has emerged. But it is 'bad' that there is considerable social and political polarization in the USA again.

It's 'bad' that American conservatives still believe in the efficiency of a now self-discredited 'Reaganomics.' It is also 'bad' that the conservatives are opposing Obama instead of trying to help him. In Fukuyama's opinion, all these facts cast doubt on the superpower status of the US. Indeed, we can notice a process of decline already present in the US.

The United States have largely suffered a defeat in Afghanistan. One of the most competent researchers of American foreign-policy strategies (and also author for the RJ), **John Mearsheimer**, reiterates this point in his article, 'Afghanistan: No More the Good War.' He proves that despite an increase in costs and in the number of the American contingent in the country, the goals, which were defined by the American administration at the beginning of the campaign, still haven't been achieved. The only way to avoid total disgrace is to call off military forces from Afghanistan, return power to the Taliban, and hope that they will no longer cooperate with Al Qaeda. Combating terrorism should not be conducted alone but in close collaboration with other countries. In the author's view, this is the only way to avoid a repetition of the September 11th attacks.

These are only three articles. Meanwhile, the journal in its entirety provides a real panoramic view of the modern world. Besides those mentioned above, other contributors are Yulia Tymoshenko and Bernard Kouchner, David Frum and Robert Kaegan, Robert Rubin and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and many other outstanding western intellectuals. ■

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