

DEMOCRACY IS A FORM OF LIFE IN MENTALLY SANE NATIONS

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Present-day liberal democracy is one of the forms of social organization that is most admissible in western society with their long tradition of civil liberties, Christian values, and the essential role played by human rights. It is very unlikely that this will expand across the globe over the next couple of decades. This is primarily because most people still do not realize what benefits individual liberty can bring for economic and social development. So, it is neither a disease nor is it a panacea. Democracy does not cure illnesses – it is just a normal form of life in mentally sane nations. **It is only after recovery that democratic traditions are established.**

Unfortunately, present-day Russia is ill, and while it inches towards becoming a free country, it is not getting any closer to becoming a state governed by the rule-of-law. Freedom in Russia means a form of life that allows people to resolve existing

contradictions in the system individually, by way of bribery, kickbacks, and exceptions to the rules. Such freedom does not require democracy, but it does not create a viable system either. As a result, those who analyze our system from the outside are quite right to underline this fact, but, unfortunately, not everyone in Russia understands it.

The main features of modern democracy are free elections and the accountability of authorities to its citizens. Ratings published by different rating agencies only represent the attitude of the developed nations to those countries that have not yet met the standards of a modern democracy. These ratings do not hold any significance in the sense that their value is purely indicative and they are rarely used as the basis for policy making in major states in relation to individual countries.

This is the reason why China will never attempt to prove that the USA or France are non-democratic. The Chinese are well trained to match their ideas to reality and they will prove that their not-quite-democratic system is more economically and socially efficient than those operating in the democratic European system. So it is not a

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new definition of democracy they will fight for, but rather a struggle to shift the concept of democracy towards efficiency, both social and economic, as the main criterion to assess the development level of individual states.

The reasons why Islamic countries do not want to com-

pete with the West in shaping standards of democracy are different. Western organizations base themselves on adherence to certain principles of law, for instance, the prevention of torture, cruel treatment, racism, etc. On the contrary, the Islamic tradition accepts discrimination on religious grounds and this is why the Muslims cannot offer any prescription to cure Europe's illnesses. We should be consistent: if you believe that European, and by that mostly secular, principles should not be applied to treat the illnesses of other cultural systems then it is inappropriate to encourage those other systems to heal western civilization.

The West has resorted to the surgeon's knife in the form of humanitarian interventions to cure some diseases like totalitarianism and violations of human rights and there is nothing wrong in using the method. Even Russia applied it in South Ossetia during the war in 2008, which, consequently, seems to have been fatal for the democratic development in this region where power remains with the kleptocrat Kokoyta. I fully support the idea of humanitarian intervention or even depriving sovereignty to those

states whose authorities provoke or cannot stop genocide and ethnic cleansing. **The concept of sovereignty is a wasteland if it disguises death and violence and destruction of the state is the right move when it leads to the salvation of its citizens. ■**

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