

SOCIAL OBJECTIVES OF MODERNIZATION

Vladislav Surkov

1.

I see three major social dimensions of the modernization policy as such and, in particular, the creation of this innovation centre or complex project. Primarily, its literal sense is social.

Our ability to further improve the well-being of our nation directly depends on the state of our technological structure. If we remain a primitive economy based solely on raw materials, then we will continue like that, scraping by on bread and kvass, counting kopecks every day. The higher our intellectual, scientific and technical potential, the closer we will be to the 'white collar' category in the global division of labor. It is of course known that highly skilled labor is paid better than unskilled labor. I believe that we should be striving to obtain the status of managers and of the 'think tank' in this global division of labor.



There are only a few such nations; their number is limited, and I think joining them is a positive and ambitious task.

2.

If we talk about the second dimension – the social dimension – of the policy of modernization and innovation, then we need to realise that any society needs mobile and active social groups at each new historical stage in order to develop further. There is always a certain group of people that hauls society forward; society does not move forward in sync and as a whole. Quite recently, when state property was distributed here, and when privatization was carried out, I myself, working in business, belonged to the minority, which had new policies as its blood-vested interest. This was sometimes quite literally so, because I had direct benefits from it. And, in principle, at that time the business and the part of bureaucracy that joined it constituted exactly that

APOLOGY OF COMPLEXITY

The role of the intelligentsia has come to dominate discussions regarding the course of modernization in Russia, its priorities, imperatives, and final goals. Many experts insist that the first step of modernization is invariably linked with political change, while others emphasize the need to 're-industrialize' the country.

On April 7, 2010 in Moscow, during the first meeting of the association of young scientists and engineers, *Futurussia* (an organization tasked with the creation of innovative projects in the city of Skolkovo), the First Deputy Chief of Staff of the President of the Russian Federation, Vladislav Surkov, commented that the successful path towards a complex society and political system is always mediated by developments in the national economic profile. Primitive and raw economic models often require equally simple vertical models of political regimes. **That's why the diversification of the economy, increasing the share of innovations in the production process, is important for the gradual differentiation of a political system.** This is the thing that business and society have to keep in mind – that neither short-term commercial profit, nor a momentary transition to an open multi-party system will lead to any breakthroughs in modernization.

Why should all efforts for political reform and industrial policy presuppose new measures for the creation

of innovative sectors within the native economy? The answer, according to Vladislav Surkov and the authors of the report *Modernization As Political Program*, presented by the Workshop of Political Critics in Russian State University for the Humanities on the 8th of April, is as follows: only the 'intellectual class' (as the authors of the report call it), or, according to Vladislav Surkov, the 'highly intellectual creative state,' which has a life-interest in the intellectualization and complication of society, can become a real subject of both technological and political modernization. And, according to Surkov, in order to maintain such a class as a significant political factor in Russia, it has to rely on a solid and sustainable social basis, which can only be provided by the united actions of government and business in the sphere of technological innovation.

The market can create inside itself some extra-market areas, areas in which the 'intellectual class' can do its job without worry. This is something that no businessman can get rid of. Paradoxically, the more a people have an opportunity to cut themselves off from vanity, the more 'modern' a society becomes.

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mobilizing force required for the development and modernization of our society. Today, after the crisis, we can see that our social life has somewhat decelerated. At present there is no social vanguard in sight. Our task, at least the way I understand it, is to set in motion certain groups among the population. I believe that our multiple technical and research institutions and colleges must be interested in modernization and in innovative economy. And business as well (although not all of it, since different positions exist in business). Nowadays, it seems to me that this discussion, which has also affected the Union of industrialists and entrepreneurs, reflects a rather reactionary position of a significant portion of our business. However, there are quite a number of capitalists who share our values. And I believe that they will become good partners of both society and the state in this move towards the renewal of our economy.

I also think that a contraposition of modernization efforts against an innovative economy is absolutely vicious, because we need both. There is even such a term as 're-industrialization' used in business circles, which in fact means 'new industrialization'. It is something essential. In my opinion, the construction of such socially motivated groups is a social dimension of modernization and innovation policies. It is quite a serious question of whether we succeed in it. But I believe that, undoubtedly, we will be able to do it. It is also clear that motivations should not be only moral ones. If our engineers and businessmen, who pay attention to this sphere, start making money on it, we will manage to do something only if we attract people to this sphere, if we show them that it is profitable, if we are able to attract people to this new policy with direct financial gains. It is one of the objectives of our current discussion. We would like to incorporate these financial flows with the capacities of our engineers and our scientists.



3.

The third social dimension, which is the most fundamental in my opinion, is that, undoubtedly, economic modernization, technical re-equipment and creation of elements of an innovative economy are the major instruments for strengthening democratic institutions. Actually, I hold the view that the authority vertical (there is such a popular and very simple term, it is a line, a vertical, it is something linear, i.e. something very simple in principle) is just a projection of the oil pipe into the political sphere. It is just a mirror image. If we have such a primitive economy that resembles a pipe, then we will also have a similarly primitive political system. A democratic society is actually a society of abundance, let's not forget that. A poor society will never become quite democratic. A complex society built in an elaborate way does not always engender a complex economy. And a complex economy always engenders a complex society. Nowadays, making use of the situation in the country, which, despite the crisis, is quite stable, we should do everything to improve the quality of our economy at a rather rapid pace. We simply may not get a second chance.

4.

We are sure that it should be, and I have said it many times, an international project. Actually, it should be cosmopolitan, because, undoubtedly, we cannot accomplish any breakthroughs without deep integration or without mix-

ing our capacities and the capacities of other developed economies. We lack such experience, almost entirely. And while I don't want to offend anyone, I am absolutely sure that, however patriotic we are, the highest form of patriotism today would be the realization that we cannot develop our country without an internationalization of the development sphere. All the rest, this 'relying on our own forces' and that 'we can do it ourselves', is unpatriotic. **We cannot do it ourselves.** Let's assess the situation with a certain measure of calm. As the more people believe in this project and join us in supporting it, the less will be the risk of its curtailment in the process of counting state expenses. I am totally honest about it. Such projects can rely only on an evident public support. Maybe not on the support of everyone, but at least the support of the scientific community and of our engineers, as well as of a part of the business, is crucially important for us. I think it will also involve the factor of irreversibility of the process of innovative development in the country. We will need to attract as many interested people as possible. ■

From the address of Vladislav Surkov, the first deputy of the head of the RF Presidential Administration, delivered on April 9, 2010 to the participants of 'Futurussia' community, invited to work on the creation of the future-city in Skolkovo.