

IN SEARCH FOR NEW LEGITIMACY

Vladimir Pligin



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■ *Can the Arab revolutions and protests help to explain the crisis of loyalty that is now occurring both in Russia and America?*

We are talking about fundamental global events. They are based on the problems that the world will continue to face in the 21st century. Change in the demographic picture of the world and the emergence of a global society are of crucial importance here. A quick growth in population, and a growth in the number of young people, was observed in the countries now experiencing such complicated events. The national economies of these countries were unable to adjust to this phenomenon. In the same fashion, **the political system did not find any inner resources to meet the demands advanced by younger generations.** In principle, a large number of countries do not possess the resources to ensure a relatively decent life for a large number of young people.

The global informational space is giving a very clear picture of the capacities, formulas, and ways of life that seem to be naturally attractive and important. These forms of life are associated with freedom and equality, with the chance for reaching certain

seemingly unattainable goals upon applying some effort. That's exactly what the crisis consists of, the one that has evidently weakened the legitimacy of government.

■ *Is this a natural process that always leads to testing the legitimacy in the global society?*

It is quite difficult to fully understand the relations between global and more local, state-related processes. Over 300 million people participate in the processes of global migration. State forms should adapt to these complicated phenomena. But it is a challenge for the various forms of state virtually in any country. It is also a challenge from the point of view of implementing a principle of multiculturalism.

■ *Additional legitimacy is required for the realization of various projects in the sphere of international relations, for the economic and political restructuring of authorities. How can this legitimacy be obtained?*

There are classical formulas, which are the most adequate ones in present times, despite the disputes that surround them. These are formulas of democratic and free societies. At the same time, one needs to understand that the state, in which the society exists, should be juridical. There is a need for a continuous dialogue within the frame of democratic procedures, which will ensure some degree of trust, and, at the same time, allow for the fulfillment of established rules determining state legitimacy.

■ *There is growing indifference and political apathy, and a certain rejection of traditional democratic institutions by the majority of the population in Russia. Why are authorities no longer popular and no longer viewed as legitimate?*

Actually, we are not observing any rejection of democratic institutions by the majority of the population. Even in the case **when we are talking about passivity and aloofness, we need to understand that it is motivated by the demand for an additional development of democratic institutions, not by a**

rejection of democratic institutions. It is true that a significant number of citizens (not the majority!) feel they are outside the system. They often feel the desire to build some other model, which probably has not been fully shaped yet. But this does not amount to a rejection of democratic institutions.

■ *Is there a demand for a new elite, for a new political class in society?*

In principle, the Russian elite has not yet been fully established. However, the existence of the Russian elite per se is extremely important. Formation of an elite is a complicated process that has taken hundreds of years in some societies. However, it seems to me that we have a chance to go through it rather fast. A dynamic generation of people is forming in Russia. These people do not see their future outside of Russia, and there is a hope that they will form the basis of a future elite. I like meeting students and young people, I see that they are interested in the development of their country. They are the future political class. They will acquire the moral standards that really connect an elite to society.

■ *What can serve as the foundation for a consensus between society and these developing elites?*

Consensus is possible only through the need for a modern, transparent, open, corruption-free state, which gives everyone a chance for a decent living and protects everyone's freedom and security. Freedom and security, opportunities for self-actualization — I think this is a very attractive and absolutely pragmatic formula that appeals, in my view, to many people, especially to young generations. I meet representatives of many large companies, who claim the state needs to develop according to this formula. They really need this formula implemented. There is a demand, so efforts need to be made to formulate an answer and ensure steady supply. ■

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exclusively for Yaroslavl Forum*