

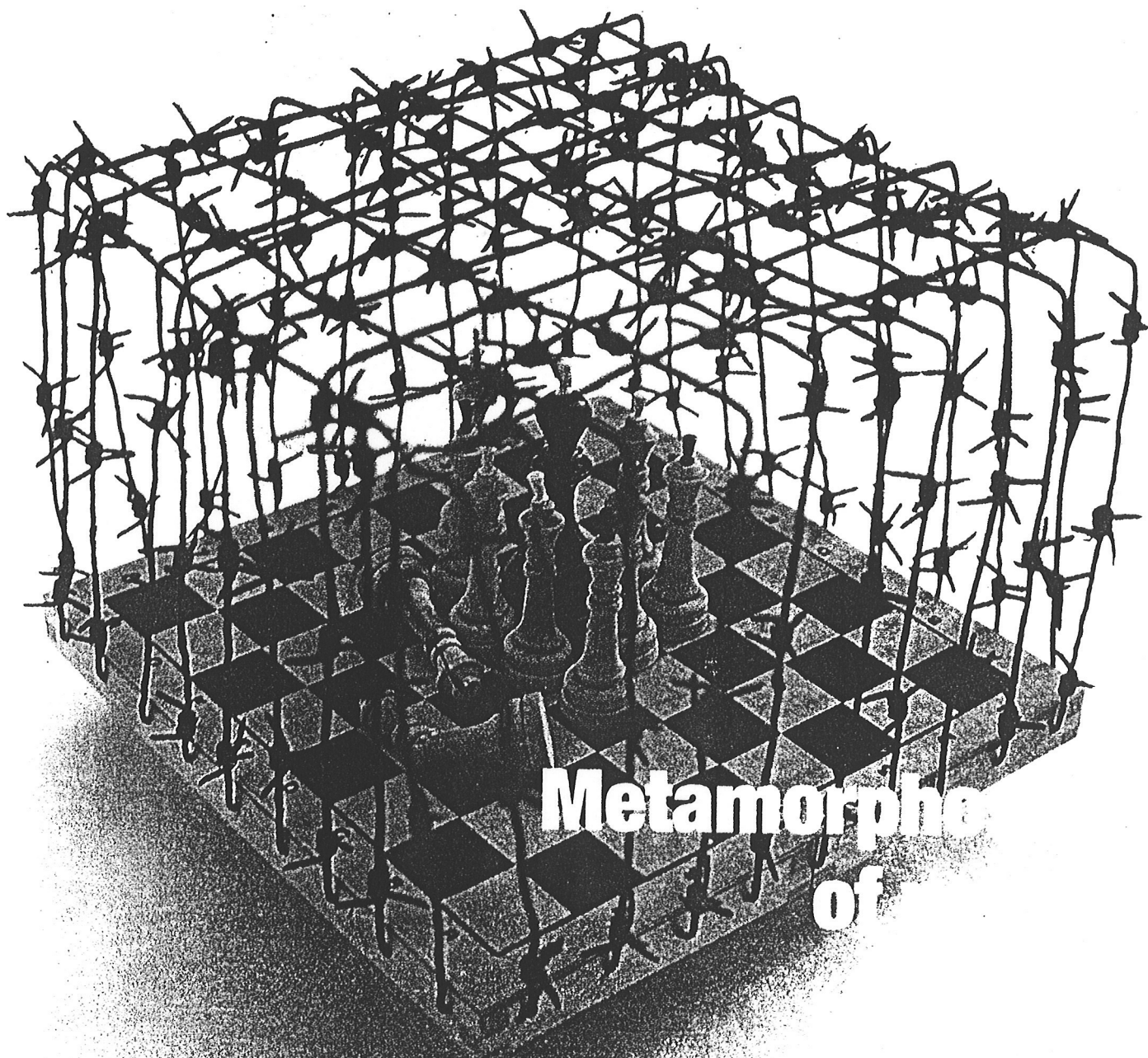
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# NEW TIMES

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# To make a dream come true

**T**he world and our perception of it are changing rapidly, and that is not so much a banal statement as it might seem at a first glance. If we have noticed this fact, then our thought is moving at a different rate than the changes: either more slowly, or more quickly. Depending on the person. And the criterion of this rate becomes one's reaction to ideas and projects that only recently were viewed as fantastic. Also, the ability to shape new approaches to the solution of problems, approaches that differ from those based on yesterday's realities.

The changes in Eastern Europe and the discouragingly rapid progress towards the unity of the two German states have revealed graphically the hitherto unsuspected dynamics of the postwar status quo. Another example – Moscow's orientation on the search for a non-standard solution to its contradictions with Tokyo, which also indicates a noticeable widening of the sphere of possibilities. Indeed, is it worthwhile arguing with neighbours, as in Chekhov's story, over the tiny plot of land, Luzhki, when no one is sure what to do with it. Would it not be better for the neighbours to get down together to developing them? Definitely better than simply setting fire to a disputed territory, as has happened in the past.

Already in our press, one can read about plans to create on the South Kuril islands – arguments over which have raged for so long – an international demilitarized zone of joint Soviet-Japanese enterprise and trade. To tell the truth, such a prospect today does not look unrealistic.

Or take another project which aims at linking the Far East with Europe, Africa and even America. That is the project for a transcontinental, or rather a round-the-world highway, that would run across all parts of the world along the perimeter of several continents.

Under the median strip between two four-lane expressways a pneumatic tube

systems concealed by bushes and trees would be built to accommodate high-speed freight transport. A green belt one kilometre-wide would run along each side of the highway. In the project, it is described as "a neutral buffer zone" and, apparently, would be under international, not national jurisdiction, or would have a special status if it remained under national jurisdiction. For the greater part of the way, this zone would be used as a nature protection area, while at some points, especially in economically important and border regions, industrial, trade, science and technology, cultural and tourist centres would be built complete with airports, railway stations, harbours, hotels, exhibition halls, theatres, scientific institutions, etc.

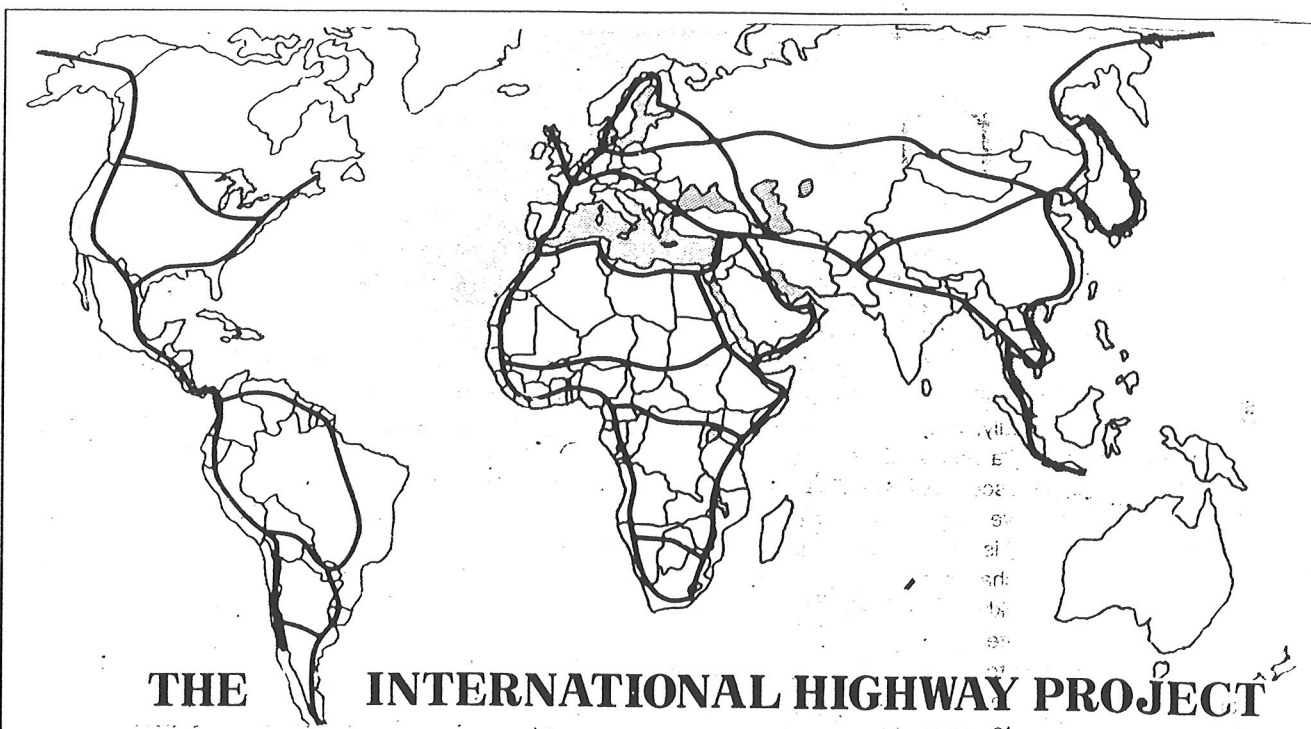
The International Highway Project does not look so unrealistic as things we read in science fiction ten or more years ago. The project could be turned into a reality thanks to the lessening of the military-political confrontation and as a means to overcome its consequences. Indeed, if the process of disarmament continues, then things which today seem the height of political realism might become amazingly simple. For the project of a round-the-world highway is designed to change the political realities, just as the Soviet project for disarmament by the beginning of the next century and next millennium, which seemed pure utopia only recently. It won't matter if such projects do not correspond fully to the initial plans and timetables. What is important is achieving them. What matters most are the common political will, readiness to cooperate and the joint efforts of diverse political and social forces. That is why it is so essential to overcome their mutual alienation and separateness.

The project for a round-the-world highway also has a symbolic meaning as the road mankind has to travel towards mutual understanding and recognition of its common destiny. The global nature of the project symbolizes the ties between all units of world civilization, ties between peoples,

states and simply all human beings no matter what their nationality or religious faiths.

Leaving aside the purely symbolic meaning, and looking at the technical aspects of the project, one can see that from that standpoint, too, it is not unrealistic, especially when one takes into account the prospects opened up by conversion and the development of new technologies. Japanese and South Korean engineers and scientists are already working on plans for the construction of an undersea tunnel between the Japanese islands and the Korean peninsula. Their programme is a part and a forerunner of the future round-the-world highway.

One of the fathers and main sponsors of the project is the well-known Korean preacher, the head of the Unity Church, a businessman and public figure Sun Myung Moon. He was in Moscow recently for the first time and attended the International Conference on the Role of the Mass Media in Restructuring International Relations. It was sponsored by organizations he had founded – The World Mass Media Association, the Supreme Council for Peace and the Association for Latin American Unity, and our Novosti Press Agency. It was in the lobby of this conference that the International Highway Project was put forward. The conference was very noteworthy. It coincided with another conference in Moscow – that of the Federation of Newspaper Publishers. The participants in both conferences were received by President Gorbachev, a fact that underlined their importance and unusualness. The thing is that the organizations led by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon are mainly conservative (only a short while ago we would have described them as anti-Soviet and anti-communist). Until recently, the leader of the Unity Church and his organizations could hardly have counted on any flattering mention in our press. But we have already travelled quite a distance, and our attitude to the outside world has changed, as has its at-



## THE INTERNATIONAL HIGHWAY PROJECT

A mega-project for the 1990s

itude towards us. The widening of our political outlook during perestroika, and the abandonment of the enemy image, which stood like a scarecrow in our political kitchen garden, have made it possible for us to realize that there is nothing terrible about the conservatives, that they, too, prize human values which our ideological blinkers prevented us from seeing in the past. And so a conference that not so long ago would have been deemed unthinkable, took place.

There was a wide exchange of views, embracing a broad range of problems – political, economic, ecological, cultural. The diversity of participants was equally wide – Communists, Liberals, representatives of right-wing movements. There were ordinary people and intellectuals, bourgeoisie and aristocrats, even people of royal descent, such as the son of Yugoslavia's last King Andrew Karadjordjevic. Or take such eminent personalities as the grandson of the former chairman of the State Duma, Rodzyanko, now an Orthodox Bishop, or the British writer and historian Count Nikolai Tolstoy-Miloslavsky... There were many other world-famous scientists and journalists. And perhaps the most important thing about the conference was not the speeches of its participants (although they were very interesting, as, for example, that of the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister V. Petrovsky, or the Presidential aide V. Zagladin, the reports by well-known Soviet

economists), but the ordinary human contacts between fellow journalists, scientists, teachers and businessmen. Because when there exist contacts at a personal level, there is little room for ideological clichés, which are the first to become meaningless during such contacts. In the course of our conversations, we came to realize how right was the ancient saying that "there are two sides to every story." And just like during the construction of a road, various obstacles are overcome, thus in the course of these conversations the stereotypes almost everyone is sick and tired of were eliminated. This mutual understanding gives rise to a new, planetary thinking – the thinking of the 21st century. The thinking that is now ready for getting down to carrying out such an endeavour as the International Highway Project.

In economic and statistical reference books, transport and communications are usually placed under one heading. However, transport and communications are not merely the infrastructure of the economy. They are also a form of communication and association between people. All their life people mix with one another, and the freer they are to do so, the less they tend to build walls around themselves and the fuller their lives become.

Today, thanks to the latest technology in printing and communications, even a lone voice can be heard much clearer, while the

flow of information has increased to an unheard of degree. It no longer resembles a cobweb around the earth, but is more like a communication lines infested space that has changed our whole life and makes demands on us all the time. Today there are no secrets. There can be no conspiracies. Rockets in Cuba, the Chernobyl disaster, arms sales. Nor has a closed society any prospects. Information systems begin to unite the world before politicians get to the job. If in the past it was mainly food and clothing that were exported, today in our age of communications it is ideas. Perhaps the "information space" will become the infrastructure of the noosphere, the intellectual sphere. Vernadsky spoke in his time.

Thinking, old or new, is the first part of the triad: idea, word, deed, as one of the participants in the Moscow mass conference noted. A dialogue with whom until recently we considered ideological adversaries is a new step forward. It marks the beginning of a new era in human communications, the formation of a new global culture, a culture that mounts all existing barriers and borders, turning them from zones of alienation into points of contact.

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