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The Silence of Words and Political Dynamics
in the World Risk Society[†]

by
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September 11, 2001, will stand for many things in the history of humanity. Among these, no less for the failure, for the silence of language before such an event: "war," "crime," "enemy," "victory" and "terror"—the terms melt in the mouth like rotten mushrooms (Hugo von Hofmannsthal). NATO summed up the alliance, but it is neither an attack from the outside, nor an attack of a sovereign state against another sovereign state. September 11th does not stand for a second Pearl Harbor. The attack was not directed toward the U.S. military machine, rather, toward innocent civilians. The act speaks the language of genocidal hate that knows "no negotiation," "no dialogue," "no compromises," and lastly "no peace."

The notion, of "enemy" is misleading. It stems from an imaginary world in which armies conquer or get conquered and then sign "cease fires" and "peace treaties." The terrorist attacks are however neither just a "crime," nor are they a simple case for "national justice." The notion and institute of "police" proves to be just as inadequate for acts whose results resemble military attacks, just as the police are in no position to dismiss a cadre of perpetrators, who appear to fear nothing. Appropriately, the notion of "civil emergency services" seems to lose its meaning. We live, think and act according to zombie-like notions; according to notions that have died, but continue to rule our thinking and our actions. Yet if the military, trapped in its old notions, responds with conventional methods—such as surface bombings, for instance, then it is legitimate to fear these not only ineffective but also counterproductive: new Osama bin Ladens will be bred.

This is what makes suicide-bombings, even months or years after they have occurred, incomprehensible. The notions on which our worldviews are predicated and the distinctions between war and peace, military and police, war and crime, internal and external security; particularly between internal and external in general have been magnified. Who would have thought that internal security, even Germany's for instance, would have to be defended in

the remotest valleys of Afghanistan? "Defend!" Again, another false notion. Even the distinction between defense and attack does not hold up anymore. Can one can still say that the U.S. is defending its internal security on foreign soil, in Afghanistan and so forth? What if all of these concepts are false and if language fails in the face of reality? What has really happened? No one knows. But would it be braver to be silent about it? The destruction of the Twin Towers in New York was followed by an explosion of chatty silence and meaningless action. To quote Hugo von Hofmannsthal once more: "I succeeded no longer at grasping reality with the simplifying gaze of familiarity. Everything broke down into pieces for me, and those pieces again into more pieces, and nothing else would let itself be encompassed under one concept. Single words would swim around me; they ran into eyes that stared at me and that I stared back into."[1]

This silence of words must finally be broken. We can no longer afford to keep quiet about this. If we could at least succeed in naming the silence of single ideas, to name the distance between idea and reality to presume and to prudently break the bridges of understanding to the novel reality that stems from our civilizing actions, most likely not much, but something, could be gained. In this article I would like to clarify the notion of world risk society and within this context criticize and redefine a series of notions:

1. the concepts of *war* and *terror*
2. second, the concepts of *economic globalization* and *neoliberalism*
3. third, the concepts of *state* and *sovereignty*

What is a world risk society?

What do events and threats like Chernobyl, environmental catastrophes, discussions regarding human genetics, the Asian economic crisis and current threats of terrorist attacks have in common? I will explain what I mean with an example. A few years ago the U.S. Congress contracted a scientific committee to develop a language to elucidate the danger of America's permanent sites for radioactive waste. The problem to be solved was the following: How do concepts and symbols have to be constructed in order to convey a single, unchanging message ten thousand years from now?[2]

The committee was made up of physicians, anthropologists, linguists, brain researchers, psychologists, molecular biologists, archeologists, artists and so forth. It was supposed to answer the unavoidable question: Will the United States still be around in ten thousand years? For the government committee the answer was obvious: *USA forever*! To be sure, the central problem, as to how it is possible at a distance of ten thousand years to have a conversation with the future, gradually proved to be unsolvable. Scholars began searching for models among the oldest symbols of humanity. They began studying the construction of Stonehenge (1500 B.C.) and the pyramids, researching the history of the reception of Homer and the Bible and wanting the life cycles of documents explained to them. But in any case, these were only enough for looking back a couple of thousand, certainly not tens of thousands of years. The anthropologists recommended the symbol of the skull and cross bones. A historian remembered that to alchemists, the skull and cross bones meant resurrection. A psychologist performed an experiment with three year olds: When he pasted the skull and cross bones on a bottle, they frightenedly yelled "poison," if he pasted the same symbol on the wall, they animatedly yelled "pirates!"

Other scientists suggested literally plastering the ground around the permanent waste sites with ceramic, metal and iron planks that contained all sorts of warnings. However the judgment of the linguists was unambiguous: it would only be understood for a maximum of two thousand years! Precisely the scientific meticulousness, with which the committee proceeded clarified what the concept of world risk society implies, uncovers and renders understandable: human language fails before the task of informing future generations of the dangers that we inadvertently put into the world through the use of certain technologies. The modern world increases the worlds of difference between the language of calculable risks in which we think and act and the world of non-calculable uncertainty that we create with the same speed of its technological developments. With the past decisions on nuclear energy and our contemporary decisions on the use of genetic technology, human genetics, nanotechnology, computer sciences and so forth, we set off unpredictable, uncontrollable and incommunicable consequences that endanger life on earth.

What is then new about the risk society? Were not all societies, all people, all epochs always surrounded by dangers that prompted these societies to unite just in order to defend themselves? The concept of risk is a modern concept. It requires decisions and attempts to render the unpredictable consequences

of civil decisions predictable and controllable. When one says for example, that a smoker's risk for cancer is X amount high and the catastrophe risk of a nuclear power plant Y amount, then this means that risks are avoidable negative consequences of decisions that appear predictable through the probability of accidents and diseases and thus unlike natural catastrophes. The novelty of the world risk society lies in the fact that we, with our civilizing decisions, cause global consequences that trigger problems and dangers that radically contradict the institutionalized language and promises of the authorities in catastrophic cases highlighted worldwide (like in Chernobyl and now in the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington). The *political* explosiveness of the world risk society lies precisely in this fact. Its heart rests in the mass media, politics, and bureaucracy—not necessarily at the site of its happening. This political explosiveness does not allow itself to be described or measured in the language of risk, number of victims dead and wounded, nor in scientific formulas. This causes it to "explode"—if the metaphor is permitted—with responsibility, demands of rationality, legitimizations through reality checks; for the other side of the present danger is the failure of institutions that derive their legitimacy through a declared mastery of danger. For this reason the "social birth" of a global danger is an equally improbable as well as dramatic, traumatic, world-society shaking event. In the shock highlighted by the mass media it becomes evident for a second in the world, that the silence of words—or according to one of Goya's etchings—"the slumber of reason generates monsters."

Three layers of danger can be identified in the world risk society. Each one either follows a different logic of conflict, circles around or represses other topics, or crushes or empowers certain priorities: first ecological crises, second global economic crises, and third—since September 11—the risk of transnational terrorist networks. Despite the differences, all three possibilities of danger present a common pattern of political opportunities and contradictions within the world risk society: in an age in which faith in God, class, nation and the government is disappearing, the recognized and acknowledged global nature of danger becomes a fusion of relations in which the apparent and irrevocable constants of the political world suddenly melt and become malleable. At the same time, however, new conflict and political alternatives present themselves, which once again question the unity of the world risk society: How could these dangers be overcome within the limits of historical non-simultaneities of single nations and cultures?

This is how the horrific pictures of terrorism, these obscene images of a live mass murder and a live suicide, staged as a global television appearance, shook people worldwide and triggered a political reflexivity that contradicted all expectations. It was questioned and discussed over and over again: What could unite the world? The experimental answer is: an attack from Mars. This type of terrorism is like an attack from an "internal Mars." For a single historical blink of an eye, the disputed sites and nations stand united against the common enemy of global terrorism.

Precisely the universalization of terrorist threats against the nations of the world renders the battle against global terrorism a major political challenge in which opposing camps forge new alliances, regional conflicts are dammed, and the cards of world politics get reshuffled. Until recently, national arms reduction plans still dominated Washington's political actions and debates—now there is no more talk of this. Instead the view seems to have taken hold that not even a perfect arms reduction system could have prevented these attacks and that the way to ensure U.S. internal security is not by the U.S. acting on its own, but in a global alliance. Relations between former Cold War enemies, Moscow and Washington, play an outstanding role. U.S. unilateralism falls flat on its face in the world risk society and for national interests. It is not possible for the U.S. to arrest Osama bin Laden in an isolated action by the CIA and the Pentagon without the rest of the world. The world risk society requires a multilateralism of the sort in which Russia comes out of the role of the petitioner and switches over to the role of nation to be wooed. Russian president Vladimir Putin's decision to completely and unmistakably place himself on the side of modernity, civilized and attacked, opened up new power and opportunities for refashioning himself as an important partner in the multi-pronged balance of power in the global alliance. However, this certainly does not create the illusion that the war against terrorism can underhandedly expand into a war against Islam, that is, a war that doesn't conquer terrorism, but feeds and increases it; or a war that might reduce important liberties or renew protectionism and nationalism and demonize cultural others.

In other words, the global nature of the perceived threat has two faces: It creates new forms for a political risk society *and* at the same time regional inconsistencies and inequalities with regard to those who are affected by those dangers. The fact that the collapse of global financial markets or the change of climate in single regions, for instance, has diverse effects, does not change the fact that in principle *everyone* could be affected, and that overcoming

these problems in the present state necessitates global political efforts. Environmental problems such as global warming, the overpopulation of the world (of present and future generations) could promote the idea of a "community of common destiny."

However, this does not by any means occur without conflict. For example, when the question is raised as to what extent industrial nations have the right to claim that developing nations protect important global resources such as rain forests, while using a lion's share of energy resources for themselves. Yet, it is precisely these conflicts that form common ground by underlining the fact that global solutions need to be found and that these are to be brought about not through war but through negotiations.

However, this by no means implies that there is only *one* answer to the demands of the world risk society. The ways *into* the world risk society are for European and non-European nations and cultures just as different as the ways out of it can be. In this sense it becomes clear that in the future there will be *many* modernites. The debates surrounding an Asian Modernity or a Chinese, Russian, South American or African one are just beginning now. This type of discourse clears all doubt that the European monopoly on modernity is broken in the world risk society. Seen in such a manner, the radical critique of modernity in a non-European realm turns out to be one against "excessive individualism," against the loss of "cultural identity and worth," in short, against a "McDonaldization of the world," not as a straightforward rejection of modernity, rather far more as an attempt to test and try out *other modernities* that selectively hearken back to the western model of modernity.

The everyday realm of the "world risk society" does not come forth as a love affair between everyone and everything. It comes about and consists in the perceived necessity for global consequences to civilizing actions—regardless of whether or not these consequences create globality through information technology-networking, financial channels, natural crises, cultural symbols, the pending atmospheric catastrophe, or terrorist threats. Therefore, it is the relexivity of the world risk society that breaks the silence of words and allows globality to become painfully aware of itself in its own context and builds new approaches to conflicts and alliances. What has been shown for the modern nation-states is that they can only keep their vulnerability in check through constant communication—this has proved true even for the world

risk society. This brings me to my second question: How do the meanings of "terrorism" and "war" change in the context of the world risk society?

Terrorism and War

Even the notion of "terrorist" is misleading in the end when talking about the novelty of the threat because it creates the illusion of a familiarity with motifs of national liberation movements that do not apply at all to the perpetrators of suicide and mass murder. What is simply inexplicable to the western observer is namely the way in which fanatical anti-modernism, anti-globalism *and* modern global thinking and acting are interrelated.

Hannah Arendt coined the term "banality of evil" with the fascist mass murderer Adolf Eichmann in mind. In this vein, we can imagine absolutely evil technocrats that are family oriented, but not terrorists in the name of God, who marry in the west, earn engineering degrees in Germany, bear a fondness for vodka and quietly plan years in advance technically perfect group suicide murders as mass murders and execute them in cold blood. How is this at all rooted in modernity and to be simultaneously understood as the archaic selflessness of evil?

If up until now the military focused its attention on itself and other national military organizations and their defenses, now it is transnational threats from underground perpetrators and networks that challenge world governments. Just as earlier in the cultural realm, it is possible to experience the *death of distance* in the military realm as well, that is the end of the state monopoly on violence in a civilized world, in which everything can turn into weapons in the hands of a few decisive fanatics. The peaceful symbols of the civilized society could be converted into instruments of hell. In principle, this is nothing new but, rather, it is a critical experience that is omnipresent.

With the horrific scenes from New York, terrorist groups have established themselves as new global actors in competition with states, economies and civil societies in one swoop. The terrorist networks are similar to "violence NGOs." They act like Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in a non-territorially bound, decentered fashion—acting locally on the one hand, and transnationally on the other. They use the Internet. While Greenpeace, for example, uses environmental crises and Amnesty International human rights causes against national governments, terrorist NGOs increase their monopoly

on violence. This means that on the one hand, this type of transnational terrorism is not limited to *Islamic* terrorism. Rather it can align itself with any possible goal, ideology and fundamentalism. On the other hand, a distinction has to be made between the terrorism of national freedom movements that are nationally and territorially bound, and that of the new, transnational terrorist networks that act without any territorial affiliations and across national boundaries and manage, as a consequence, to cancel the national language of war and the military with one strike. Previous terrorists tried to save their lives after committing terrorist acts. Suicide terrorists create a monstrous destructive force through their intended surrendering of their lives. The suicide bomber is the most radical contrast to the *homo oeconomicus*. He is both economically and morally completely uninhibited, and for this reason, a bearer of absolute cruelty. In a strict sense, the act and the suicide bomber are one. A suicide bomber can neither commit a suicide attack more than once, nor can state authorities convict him. This singularity is marked by the simultaneity of act, confession and self-extinguishment.

To be exact, governments did not even have to search for suicide bombers in order to find them guilty of their crimes. The culprits have confessed to their crimes and turned their weapons on themselves. For this reason, the Anti-Terrorism Alliance does not want to capture the culprits of New York and Washington (these have pulverized themselves), rather they seek the alleged people behind them: the puppet masters or the state patrons. Whereas the culprits turn the weapons on themselves, the causalities dissipate and get lost. This means that states are indispensable for building transnational terrorist networks. But perhaps it is precisely this lack of government identification, this lack of functional government structures that offers the humus for terrorist activities. Perhaps the placing of responsibility on governments and on those behind the scenes who give the orders stems from military thinking and we are on the threshold of an *individualization of war*, a type of warfare in which wars are no longer conducted state against state, rather individuals against states.

The power of terrorist actions rises with a series of conditions: with the vulnerability of a civilization, with the global, mass media-informed presence of terrorist risk; with the U.S. president's assessment that "civilization" is under threat because of these culprits; and with their readiness to extinguish themselves. Finally, the risks of terrorism exponentially multiply with technological advancement. With the technologies of the future—genetic engineering, nanotechnology and robotics, we are opening "a new Pandora's

box" (Bill Joy). Genetic manipulation, communication technologies and artificial intelligence are all interconnected ways that can get around the government monopoly of violence and will wind up opening, if no international bar is placed in front of this, the door and gate to an individualization of war.

Thus a genetically engineered menace with long periods of incubation that threatens and targets specific populations—in other words, a genetically engineered miniature bomb—can be built by anyone without any tremendous effort. This is just to cite one of many examples. The difference between atomic and biological weapons is notable. It is based on scientifically-based technological developments that can be easily expanded and capable of revolutionizing themselves again and again. So much so that the possibility of government control and monopolies fail, as with atomic and biochemical weapons when they were given as specific materials and resources (weapon-convertible uranium, costly laboratories). *Politically,* this empowerment of individuals against governments could open a Pandora's box. Not only were the recent boundaries between the military and civil society torn down, but also the boundaries between innocent and guilty, between suspects and non-suspects, where jurisdiction up until now made sharp distinctions. If the individualization of war should continue to be a threat, then the citizen should *prove* that he or she is not dangerous; because under these circumstances every individual could come under suspicion of being a potential terrorist. Everyone has to put up with the fact that he or she, in the absence of any concrete reason, has to be checked "for security reasons." This indicates that in the end, the individualization of war can translate into the death of democracy. Governments would have to ally themselves with other governments against citizens in order to avert the dangers with which their citizens threaten them.

When thought through thoroughly, a world premise in the present discussion on terrorism, namely the distinction between "good" and "bad" terrorists crumbles. Nationalists are to be respected and fundamentalists are to be abhorred. If one wants to find justifications for such value judgments and distinctions in the age of the nationalistic modernity, they will become a moral and political perversion in the terroristic world risk society as well as in consideration of the possibility of an individualization of war.

Is a political response to this challenge at all possible? I would like to name one principle and that is that of the *law*. In a nationalist context, that which

infringes upon the legal sensibilities of the civilized world is the fact that the victims of the attempts assume the roles of persecutor, judge and executive power at once. This type of "self-justice" must also be overcome in international relations. Even if relations between the states are not fully ripe for it, the global alliance against terrorism has to be based on the law. Thus it follows that an international convention against terrorism must be discussed and ratified. It must be a convention that not only clarifies certain notions but also provides a legal basis for the intergovernmental prosecution of terrorists—in other words, this convention has to create a unified, universal space for the law to be executed. This, among other things, requires that the statute of the international courts of all nations, even those of the U.S., have to be ratified.[3] The goal would be that terrorism would be punished as a crime against humanity worldwide. States that refuse to adopt this convention would have to face combined sanctions from all states. Would this not be an interest that Europe and Russia, based on their historical backgrounds could espouse as their own in order to sharpen their political profile in the global alliance—to help in the battle against terrorism by building its own opposing military momentum to success? This brings me to my third question: How do the meanings of the concepts "economic globalization" and "neoliberalism" shift in the context of the world risk society?

Economic Globalization and Neoliberalism

Allow me to start with an anecdote. When I hear the word globalization, the following political caricature appears before my eyes: The Spanish conquerors. The Conquistadors appear in the New World in their shiny armor with horses and weapons. The thought bubble reads, "We have come to you to talk to you about God, civilization and the truth." And a group of bewildered native onlookers responds: "Of course, what would you like to know?"

This scenario can easily be transported onto the present. Economic experts from the World Bank, the International Monetary Foundation, corporate managers, lawyers and diplomats step off of intercontinental flights in post-Soviet Moscow. A thought bubble reads: "We have come to you to talk to you about democracy, human rights and the free market economy." A delegation of readers responds: "But of course, how else do the Germans go around spreading open violence against foreigners on their streets?"

Perhaps this caricature gives an idea about yesterday's situation, which is no longer valid today. The terrorist attacks and the anthrax scare raise a question that can no longer be swept under the rug: Is the triumph of the economy already over? Will the primacy of politics be rediscovered? Has neoliberalism's apparently unstoppable victory suddenly been broken? In fact, the outbreak of global terrorism resembles a Chernobyl of globalization. If with Chernobyl it was about taking the exaltation of nuclear energy to its grave, with September 11 it is about bidding farewell to the beatification of neoliberalism. The suicide bombers did not only uncover the vulnerability of western civilization, but have also at the same time given a taste of the sort of conflicts that are generated by economic globalization. In the world of global risks the mark of neoliberalism rapidly loses its credibility to substitute the state and politics through economics.

The privatization of airline security in the U.S. is particularly emblematic of the above point. Until now there has been quite a bit of reluctance to discuss this because the tragedy of September 11 was homemade, in part. Moreover, the U.S.'s vulnerability certainly has something to do with its political philosophy. America is a neoliberal nation through and through and is thus unwilling to pay the price for public safety. When it is said and done it was long known that the U.S. was a target for terrorist attacks. But in contrast to Europe, flight security was privatized and taken over by miracle-working, highly flexible part-time workers whose wages are lower than those of fast-food workers, meaning approximately six dollars an hour. Persons that go through very few hours of training and practice this profession for no more than six months occupy these important security positions. Before restricting the basic rights of all citizens to ward against terrorism and endangering democracy and an under rule of law state, efforts should be made toward making flight security government run and more professional. This is just one example of the many other improvements that could be made.

It is America's neoliberal concept of itself—its government penny-pinching on the one hand, and the triad of deregulation, liberalization and privatization on the other—that contributes to America's vulnerability to terrorism. The measure to which this realization catches on will break the hegemonic power that neoliberalism has gained in shaping its philosophy and actions in the past. In this sense the horrific pictures of New York contain a message that has yet to be deciphered: a state, a country can become neoliberal to the point of death.

The economic commentators of the big daily newspapers worldwide suspect this and insist that what was true before September 11 cannot after September 11 be false. In other words, the neoliberal model will persist even after the terrorist attacks because there are no other alternatives to it. But this is precisely what is wrong. This reveals a lack of alternative thinking. Neoliberalism has always been frowned upon for being a good weather philosophy that only works when blatant conflicts or crises arise. The neoliberal imperative insists that too much government and politics and the regulating hand of bureaucracy are the real causes for world problems like unemployment, global poverty and economic breakdowns. The success of neoliberalism relied on the promise that a free economy and that a globalization of markets would solve the problems of humanity. It championed the belief that by giving free reign to egoism, inequality could be battled against in accordance with global standards and that global justice could prevail. Instead, this belief of capitalist fundamentalists in the magic power of the market has recently proven itself to be a dangerous illusion.

In times of crisis neoliberalism is left standing without a single political response. The approach of increasing the dosage of bitter economic medicine even more radically when a breakdown is pending or comes full-circle in order to rectify the problematic consequences of globalization is an illusionary theory that only now begins to pay the price. On the contrary, terrorist threats make the simple truths that the neoliberal triumph had suppressed known again: That the separation of the world economy from politics is illusionary. There is no security without the state and public service. Without taxation there is no government. Without taxation there is no education, no affordable health care, no social security. Without taxation there is no democracy. Without the public, democracy and civil society have no legitimacy. And without legitimacy there is also no security. Thus it follows that without the shape and form of a legally regulated (meaning recognized and not violent) national settlement of conflict in the future and above all on the global level, there will also be no world economy in any form.

Wherein lies then the alternative to neoliberalism? Certainly not in national protectionism. We need an expanded concept of politics that is capable of appropriately regulating the potential of crises and conflicts. The Tobin Tax—being demanded more and more by political parties in Europe and worldwide—on the unbridled flow of capital is only a first programmatic

step. Neoliberalism insisted upon the economy breaking out of its nationalistic dwelling and building transnational rules for itself. At the same time it assumed that the government would keep on playing its old game and keep its national boundaries. After the terrorist attack, even the States recognized the power and possibilities of transnational cooperation, even if only for the scope of internal security. All of a sudden the opposite of neoliberalism, the importance of the state, becomes once again omnipresent and in its oldest Hobbesian variant: that of guaranteeing security. What was unthinkable up until recently—a European warrant of arrest that disregards the sacred national sovereignty of matters of the law and the police—is now within reach. But perhaps soon we will also experience a similar joining of forces in light of the possible world economic crises. The economy has to prepare itself for new rules and new circumstances. The times of "everyone to their best of their abilities and will" are certainly over.

The terrorist resistance to globalization has achieved in this sense the exact opposite of what it sought to achieve. It introduced a new era of globalization of politics and of the states—the transnational invention of the political through cooperation and networking. In this way the not yet publicly noticed strange natural law has proven itself that to resist globalization—whether you like it or not—only accelerates its engine. This paradox is enough to grasp that globalization is the name for a strange process, which gets realized on two opposite tracks: either one is for it or against it. All of those who oppose globalization not only share global communications media with those in favor of it—they also operate on the foundation of global rights, global markets, global mobility, and global networks. They also think and act in global categories which they create through their acts of global openness and global attention. One need only to think of the precision with which the terrorists of September 11 staged their acts in New York as a television worthy *live* catastrophe and *live* mass murder. They were able to count on the destruction of the second tower through a passenger aircraft transformed into a missile being transmitted *live* throughout the entire world through omnipresent television cameras.

Does globalization have to be the cause for terrorist attacks? Is it perhaps about an understandable reaction to a neoliberal steamroller, that as critics state it, seeks to flatten out every corner of this world? No, that is nonsense. No cause, no abstract idea, no God can justify or excuse these attacks. Globalization is an ambivalent process that cannot be reversed. Precisely smaller and weak states give up their politics of self-sufficiency and rush to

join the world market. How did one of the big daily newspapers title the news about the German Chancellor's visit to the Ukraine? "We forgive the crusaders and await the investors." In fact, there is just one thing that is worse than being steamrolled by foreign investors and that is *not* being steamrolled by foreign investors. It is necessary, however, to link economic globalization with a policy of cosmopolitan understanding. The dignity of people, their cultural identities, the otherness of others must be taken more seriously in the future. Wouldn't it make sense to build a new pillar in the alliance against terrorism? To build a cultural bridge so to speak, and foster a dialogue between the cultures on the inside and outside in relation with the countries in the Islamic world and also with the countries of the so-called Third and Fourth Worlds, that view themselves as victims of globalization? And couldn't a culturally extroverted Europe, and in particular a culturally extroverted Germany, play a leading role since it is less plagued by a colonial past, but still cognizant of its obligation because of the Holocaust?

This brings me to the fourth and final question: How and to what extent do the concepts of "state" and "sovereignty" change in the eyes of the world risk society?

State and Sovereignty

To get right to it, terrorist attacks reinforce the state, but cancel its central historical form, the nation-state. National security is, in the borderless age of risks, no longer national security. This is the biggest lesson from the terrorist attacks. Certainly, there were always alliances. The deciding difference is that today, global alliances are necessary not only for external but also for *internal* security. In the past it was accurate to say that foreign policy was a question of choice, not of necessity. Today, on the contrary, a new principle of this as well as that govern the scene; national security and international cooperation are directly linked with one another. The only way to have national security in the face of the threat of globalized terrorism (but also of financial risks, the downfall of organized crime), is transnational cooperation. The paradoxical principle is valid here: states need to *de*nationalize and *trans*nationalize themselves. This means that they need to sacrifice certain aspects of their autonomy in order to overcome their *national* problems in a globalized world. The acquisition of a new space for action and leeway, that is the expansion of political sovereignty and control has to be paid with "self-denationalization." The dismantling of national autonomy and the growth of

national sovereignty do not by any means logically cancel each other out. Rather they can reciprocally reinforce and expedite each other. The logic of the zero sum game that was valid for empires, superpowers, colonialism economic and cultural imperialism, independent nation-states and military blocks loses its power of justification.

In this sense it is crucial to introduce the difference between sovereignty and autonomy. The nation state was based on the equation of sovereignty with autonomy. Viewed in this light, economic independence, cultural diversification, and military, legal and technological cooperation between states automatically lead to loss of autonomy and sovereignty. Though if one measures sovereignty by political creative power and fixes it on the question of to what extent a state succeeds at gaining power and influence on the stage of world politics and increases its citizens' security and prosperity, it follows that an increasing interconnection and cooperation leads to a loss of autonomy and to a *gain* in sovereignty. In other words, the worth of a state like Russia in the world is no longer measured on its potential for confrontation, as it was during the Cold War, but on its *cooperative* potential and art, that is, on its ranking in the networked states of the world and the world market as well as on its presence in supranational organizations. That is separated and united sovereignty does not reduce this, on the contrary, it increases the potential for single state sovereignty. In this sense, not only the global terrorist threats but also the world risk society in its entirety opens a new era of transnational and multilateral cooperation.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia notably led to a large number of nationally defined successor states in which ethnic, national and civic identities in part find conflictual overlap with one another and in part exclude one another. This newly awakened national consciousness in the countries and states of Central and Eastern Europe seems at first glance to be in conflict with the discovery and development of cooperative transnational states in the face of the challenges placed by the world risk society. The opposite is true. These challenges can contribute toward taming the borderless national and ethnic tensions in the post-Soviet states. If these countries concur in defining their position such that they can be confronted with common historical challenges, then it will be possible and necessary to find political frames and coordinates to vote on national solutions and demands on sovereignty under transnational conditions. This is now being experienced and spelled out in geopolitical questions of borderless "internal security" of states that overlap one another both ethnically and

nationally. In any case, this can be transferred onto questions regarding regional world economic cooperation, the curbing of global financial crises, the impending atmospheric catastrophes and environmental dangers, poverty and last but not least, human rights. In other words, in the recognized and acknowledged threats of the future there may even be a key to lessen the historical experiences of violence cooperatively.

Two ideal types of transnational cooperation among states emerge: "surveillance" states and "open world" states, in which national autonomy gets reduced in order to renew and expand national sovereignty in the world risk society. Surveillance states with their cooperative power threaten to become fortress states in which security and the military will be writ large and freedom and democracy writ small. The word is already out that western societies accustomed to peace and prosperity lack the necessary measure of friend or foe thinking and the readiness, the advantage that the marvel of human rights had up until now, to give up the now necessary measures of resistance. This attempt to build a western fortress against the cultural others is omnipresent and will surely increase in the coming years. A policy of state authoritarianism that behaves adaptively in foreign relations and authoritarian in domestic affairs could stem from this. For the winners of globalization, neoliberalism is appropriate; for the losers of globalization, it stirs up terrorism and xenophobia and administers doses of the poison of racism. This would resemble a victory of the terrorists because the nations of modernity rob themselves precisely of that which that make them attractive and superior: freedom and democracy.

In the future, it will mostly come to posing the following question: What are you fighting for, what are we fighting for if it is about fighting transnational terrorism? An open world state system based on the recognition of the otherness of others holds the answers to this.

Nation-states, whether their borders are internal or external, can possess ethnic and national identities that overlap and exclude one another or have not grown together peaceably. Open world states, on the other hand, emphasize the necessity of self-determination with the responsibility toward others and uniting foreigners within and beyond national borders. It is not about denying self-determination or damming it in—on the contrary, it is about freeing it from national tunnel vision and connecting it with an openness toward world interests. Open world states not only fight against terrorism, but also against the *causes* of terrorism in the world. They gain and

renew the powers of creation and persuasion of the political by solving pressing global problems and problems that seem insolvable by single national initiative.

Open world states are founded on the principle of the state's national indifference. Similar to the Westphalian peace that had been able to end the 16th century religious civil war through separation of church and state—which is the crux of the argument here—the world national (civil) wars of the 20th and early 21st centuries are also addressed with a separation of church and state. Similar to how the irreligious state renders the practice of different religions possible, open world states have to provide this for border-crossing closeness of ethnic, national and religious identities through the principle of constitutional tolerance.

I am coming to my conclusion. It is almost superfluous to pronounce it, but I am hopelessly rooted in the tradition of the Enlightenment, even if self-critically applied. With this in mind I have attempted inadequately and provisionally to trace how a political handbook, which is seemingly composed for perpetuity, gets dissolved and reshaped. Perhaps it has astounded you as much as it has me that the fear of danger that paralyzes us also succeeds in obstructing our view of the very broad political perspectives that are opening up. I have hinted at three of these only seemingly paradoxical opportunities that the world risk society has to offer.

First, it seems possible and necessary to me to create an *international legal foundation* for the alliance against terrorism. It would entail an anti-terror-regime that regulates issues like tax investigation as well as the extradition of perpetrators, the authorization of armed forces, the jurisdiction of courts and so forth; only in this way can the long-term challenge in shifting historical and political contexts really be met.

Second, it would be necessary to base the promise of the alliance not only on military means but to base it on a credible *policy of dialogue*—first of all with regard to the Islamic world, but also toward other cultures who see their worth as threatened through globalization. Only in this way can what military actions provoke in helping terrorists to succeed in allying themselves worldwide with the Islamic populations be prevented. Perhaps the more culturally and in foreign policy more dialogue-experienced Europe is better equipped to do this than the culturally-introverted America?

Third, the dangers of the world risk society could be transformed into opportunities in order to create regional structures of cooperation between *open world multinational states*. Let me end with a quote from Immanuel Kant: "To think of oneself as a member of a cosmopolitan society in compliance with state laws is the most sublime idea that man can have about his predicament and which cannot be thought of without enthusiasm."

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† *This article is based on a talk given to the Russian Duma in November, 2001 and was translated from the German by Elena Mancini.*

Notes

[1] Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Der Brief des Lord Chandos*, Stuttgart 2000, p. 51f.
[2] See Gregory Benford, *Deep Time: How Humanity Communicates Across Millenia*, Avon 1999 as well as Frank Schirrmacher, "Ten Thousand Years of Isolation" in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Nr. 209 of September 2000, p. 49, whom I have to thank for this example.
[3] Baltasar Garzón, "Die einzige Antwort auf den Terror" ("The only answer to terror") in *Die Zeit*, Nr. 44, October 25, 2001, p. 11.