

PRESIDENT MIKHAIL GORBACHEV – FRIDAY, 28 MARCH 2008

Opening Speech

Defining the Challenges

Good morning,

First of all I would like to congratulate our partners, the Club of Rome, for organizing this conference and of course I would like to thank Mercedes Bresso and other representatives of the Piemonte Region who have been working with us for many years in the World Political Forum.

I think that today, knowing the agenda of our meeting, we can say that not only do we observe the 40th anniversary of the historic initiative by your great compatriot and founder of the Club of Rome, Aurelio Peccei, but we are here also because we are concerned for the future of the world and for the prospects of world affairs.

We see that in this world's rising chaos, political leaders are often imitating or simulating activity but not impacting the world as they really must. We know that even the first reports of the Club of Rome were turning points in shaping the concepts of unity, of worldwide interdependence, and of the global nature of the processes underway in the world. These first reports contained dramatic predictions of the exhaustion and shortages of raw materials and food, and of worsening social and economic problems on a global scale. Today we can say that many of those predictions have come true to a very significant extent.

"The Limits of Growth", the paper that contained the first report of the Club of Rome, contained a very important pronouncement: that entirely new approaches are needed in order to redirect development towards equilibrium rather than towards uncurbed growth.

Even though not all the predictions contained in that report were used in practical work, some of them actually were, and the ideas contained within it were certainly received with a lot of interest in the world. They provided a powerful impetus for thinking in political, academic and public quarters about world prospects, so we have to congratulate our colleagues of the Club of Rome.

I am an honorary member of the Club of Rome and so I congratulate them on this fortieth anniversary; this is an important story, it is directed to the future of the world and that is why it is so important.

It is also fundamental that steps were made in order to move from predictions of crisis and catastrophe towards working out practical proposals and recommendations. That is the greatest achievement of the Club of Rome and then it was up to us, political leaders, businessmen and others to act on the recommendations of the Club of Rome. That was our responsibility rather than the Club's and we have to be quite critical of ourselves

because we did not fully measure up to this responsibility to act on those warnings and recommendations.

Subsequently, there were about thirty more reports of the Club of Rome and when I think about this fortieth anniversary I have to link this date with the developments of twenty years ago, with the process of change that started in the vast space of the Soviet Union and then affected the entire world.

I am referring to Perestroika. Of course not everyone accepted it immediately, there were suspicions that it was pure propaganda, but Perestroika moved forward and became a reality. Perestroika was based mostly on internal impulses, on the awareness that the totalitarian system and the lack of freedom was curbing the development of our country and not allowing the potential of our people to reach its full strength, but at the same time the process was also nourished by important external factors, by our awareness of the interdependence and interconnectedness of the world.

We can therefore say that the concept of the Club of Rome and of the global nature of the processes underway in the world, the transcending of national boundaries and social systems, was one of the sources in the new concept of the world that constituted the philosophical basis of Perestroika and of the new political thinking that put an end to the Cold War.

The concept that the world is interdependent, that no country can cope alone with the problems of the world, was integrated in the political platform of the new Soviet leadership. For the first time it became part of government policy of one of the superpowers and I believe that the peaceful nature of these changes was one of the main achievements of Perestroika.

Of course, I keep hearing in the West that this whole achievement was a victory of the West. We see this complex of victory, this triumphalism that still captures the thinking of our partners and friends with whom we worked together to end the Cold War. This complex of victory really clouds their thinking and their approach to the world.

Today, the world is even more complicated than when we started Perestroika and the new thinking. The changes that are happening in the world, the new giants that are entering the political world arena and making an impact – countries such as China, India, Brazil – create a totally new situation: no major international issue today can be addressed without the participation of these new world powers and without taking their opinion into account. We have to accept that as well.

So, once again let me say that the peaceful nature of these changes was really one of the great achievements of Perestroika, and the potential for a peaceful transition is still there. We have to use that potential, look at all the various geopolitical and other aspects of the world and also take into account the problem of shortage of resources, the global deficit of drinking water, and many other problems such as global warming, which we have to

accept as a fact, even though five or ten years ago we were being told by some people that there was no such thing, and that only some academics thought about global warming.

All of these factors have created a new situation, which we must seek to understand and from which we have to draw conclusions that should be the basis for appropriate policies in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

I think that just like at that time, in the mid 1980s, when in order to make a transition to a new phase of world development and relations between the world's leading powers we needed to transcend some traditional concepts and approaches, and to go beyond those approaches that could not be the basis for new action, similarly today we need to transcend old approaches because the world has changed. As I will be saying in these remarks, we need to find a way towards governance in this global 21st century world. That is what we should be thinking about today.

The news that we are hearing fifteen, twenty years after the Cold War, something that we need to understand, is that unilateralism doesn't solve problems and is a way towards a dead end. The triumphalism that I have mentioned, the complex of victory, the idea that one superpower could solve the world's problems, brought about ideas about a new empire, a new kind of leadership etc., and I think that this was a big mistake in outlook and we saw the results of that. The Charter of Paris for a New Europe was forgotten, the charter that proposed a way towards a new integrated Europe, a new security architecture for the whole of Europe. Where is all that today?

We need to be very critical of what has happened during the past 15 years if we are to find a way out of this situation. We no longer have the 40 years that Moses had and that the Club of Rome envisioned when they said that in the next few decades we had to find new approaches. We need to act now, and this is something that we really can no longer ignore.

Two years ago, I was visiting the US and at that time there was a lot of concern there about what was happening in their country, about Iraq, about the impending financial problems, and a lot of questions were asked. I said that when we started the process of change in our country in the mid 1980s, we understood that we needed to put an end to the old ways, to the totalitarian system. So we needed change, but at the same time I said that the United States also needed change.

When I said that, at that time, it was ignored but two years ago when I said "you Americans need your own Perestroika, American style", and I spoke to large groups of people, up to fifteen thousand in one single audience, many of them rose to applaud and welcome that thought. Yes, we need a new kind of Perestroika to adapt to new conditions. This, I think, can be a subject of our discussion.

After the end of the Cold War, based on the first successful examples of cooperation between the great powers, many world leaders spoke about the need for a new world order. President Bush, Mr. Gorbachev – someone I know quite well – all spoke in favour of a new world order. Then the Soviet Union ceased to exist and all that talk was forgotten. The West, the US in particular, were rubbing their hands with a sense of victory, having got the gift of this new situation they wanted to exploit – but it didn't work.

It didn't work and I think that we all failed because we were not working in order to move forward together, based on new principles so as to create a world order that would be, as Pope John Paul II said, more secure, more humane and more just. These are the right principles of His Holiness that have not yet been realized.

We are now watching problems such as new conflicts, and even wars, here in Europe, and this is because the global multilateral approach was rejected and a unilateral one was adopted, and at the same time we saw that globalization and internationalization of all problems is continuing, these problems have become even more complex.

We see today a world without governance, in chaos, and in such chaos it is impossible to plan for steps to end the crisis that we are seeing. In some areas we have crossed the red line: as early as 1977 Mr. Peccei said it was quite possible that mankind had been given just a few years to see reason and sense, and to change direction. Those words of Mr. Peccei were uttered thirty years ago, so how much time do we have? Ten years? A little more? But we still do not have the coordinated approach 20 years after the end of the Cold War. We have not yet developed new rules.

The tendencies of the past few years have forced us to think about the possibility that we will be seeing major shortages of resources in the coming years. When I discuss these things with our Chinese friends they say: "Well, when we achieve the same level of development and consumption as in the West then we will start working together on such issues". It sounds like a joke but I think it is really a cautionary warning to all of us.

We really need to find a way out of this vicious circle, but the only way is through a difficult and sometimes painful transition that will affect our way of life, our models of consumption and lifestyle. It is not easy to muster the courage to do so, but as I recalled yesterday talking to my friends, when my predecessor Chernenko died, I asked Andrei Gromyko who was a member of Politburo, to have a one-on-one talk with him, and I said "You see that the country needs change: three general secretaries have died one after another, there is no real governance in the country, we really need to change our system, to decide and muster the courage to take the first step. Do you agree?" and he said "Yes I do agree with this assessment and that we must take these first steps".

I think that this is what we must understand now, we can no longer postpone action. Sometimes when our colleagues speak in dire terms about the situation we accuse them of alarmism and even I said something like that yesterday to our friends, but he replied

that if we do not raise the alarm we will waste the remaining few years that we have at our disposal and then we will face chaos.

Chaos will then deal with the problems instead of us, so we are facing a multiple threat to the security and safety of mankind and therefore as I said we need to decide to take the first step.

We are facing three challenges: the challenges of security, of poverty, and of the environmental crisis. All of them are interrelated, you cannot just take one of those challenges, such as the environment or poverty, and address it separately. These three challenges have to become the basis for the development of a truly global approach to governance, to regulating world developments. Here again I believe that one of the achievements of the Club of Rome were the proposals for global governance, and today practically everyone accepts the need for some kind of global governance.

I see that contenders for public offices in various countries today are speaking of global governance and are even in favour of nuclear disarmament. Sometimes you hear that from unexpected quarters such as Senator McCain, and that was quite a surprise for me. Of course I don't want to interfere into America's internal affairs but just a couple of days ago he mentioned that, and I think that is a very serious and important issue.

We have seen the results of unilateralism in Europe and also in particular in Iraq. That was an attempt to solve the problems of security, of democracy and of resources through a dictatorial approach, a unilateral use of force.

There is a recent book by Joseph Stiglitz which says that the price of the war in Iraq is 3 trillion dollars. We need just maybe billions of dollars in order to stimulate the research into alternative sources of energy and other instruments in order to solve the world's problems – but we wasted 3 trillion dollars on Iraq.

Let me say it publicly: I am really amazed that the United States today have a bigger military budget than at the highest point during the Cold War. This may show that the only thing the US believe in is the force of weapons. Let us say that openly, and let us also talk about restrictions on trade and other things that the US are doing despite the advice and recommendations of others.

I have been thinking about the fact that Americans are now finally talking about getting rid of nuclear weapons. They had forgotten about President Reagan's call for an end to nuclear weaponry, but now they are saying that they need to achieve nuclear disarmament. So, will they get rid of nuclear weapons and at the same time cause a new arms race in conventional ones?

I am all in favour of getting rid of nuclear armaments, but will America then rule the world with a kind of conventional arsenal that is bigger than that of the rest of the world combined? Why do they need all those weapons? Who do our American friends want to

fight? I still regard Americans as our friends because I know that many in that country are concerned about where the world is going so I am in favour of dialogue with America.

To conclude, I would like to ask you to think together about the new architecture of global governance. This is what we need. The structures that already exist in the United Nations are capable of a lot of good, for example the Millennium Declaration showed the great potential that exists in the UN.

Ultimately what we need is a new world order and we must start building it today. The institutions for peacekeeping in the world have been in many ways discredited. It will be very difficult to restore their credibility. You all know that the United States of America were not even paying the membership dues to the United Nations and at the same time they were undertaking military operations without UN mandate. That too discredited the UN, undermining international law. We all know that, and I think that the current administration is guilty of this in the eyes of the world and of its people.

We need to be very frank when we talk about that, we need global Glasnost. I would say we need Perestroika and Glasnost on a global scale.

Furthermore, there is another thing that we have to think about: the UN Security Council. The Council has a lot of authority, it probably must be reformed to make it more representative than today, but what I would like to propose is also another idea of how to help the UN council. We could propose the creation of a Council on Global Priorities that would work together with the Security Council. It would consist of the most respected people in the world and it would make suggestions to the United Nations about global priorities. These ideas I think are not being generated today within the UN, so we should help it do so. I would suggest this topic for discussion and I would like to listen to similar ideas from all of you.

Thank you for your patience in hearing these remarks. I think it is time to speak the truth in full voice about these problems to the world. We must be in service of the world and of mankind. We must try and help mankind in this very dire and difficult situation. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MIKHAIL GORBACHEV – SATURDAY, 29 MARCH 2008

Closing Speech

I would like to thank you all for your very fine work before and during the conference to help clarify the situation in which the world finds itself at the beginning of the 21st century and 40 years after the Club of Rome launched its activities. Initially I was wondering whether it is appropriate for the agenda of the World Political Forum to discuss a jubilee, an anniversary, and what I heard was that this is indeed an anniversary of an organization that at one point really forced everyone to start thinking.

The first report by the Club of Rome was a truly momentous step that moved us on a very promising ground. We discovered many things as a result, and regardless of the specific fate of every one of the 30 reports of the Club of Rome it is clear that the Club has done a great deal in order for us to become really involved in thinking and in searching for ways towards a world that is better than the one in which we live.

I said at the start of the conference that Perestroika was nourished among other things by the intellectual work, the forecasts, the predictions and the thoughts of the Club of Rome, and this to us was very important although it was the specific situation in our country that was the main driving force in our Perestroika. It was the awareness that we needed to come to grips with the problems that were so evident: a country that was one of the best educated nations in the world, with a lot of science and culture, languished because of a lack of freedom. Everywhere people met, this is what they were talking about, but the government responded by fighting dissidents, who were actually saying quite a few things with which we agreed when we started Perestroika. We took the same positions, in a way, as many of those dissidents.

The thinking of the Club of Rome was a very important source for our analysis, in developing a compelling program for change. As we saw it, the weakness inherent in the Club of Rome was not that it lacked the intellectual resources or vision, or boldness. It had all of that, but what was lacking was translating all those very important thoughts and concepts into policies.

Perestroika actually brought together the ideas that you promoted, and I again congratulate on this 40th anniversary our friends of the Club of Rome and Mr. Hochleitner who, by the way, visited our country when I was president, and this is when I became an honorary member of the Club of Rome.

So, it was a momentous event when these two lines of thought and action actually met. The line of action – that is Perestroika – was based on the needs of our country and the world, of a state that was a superpower and not just a country among many others. This superpower was developing ideas that were heretical compared with its past, it was looking through a radically new perspective and that was very important.

This is the first point I wanted to make, to emphasize how we appreciate the cooperation with the Club of Rome and I am very hopeful that there will be a future with both of us working together. We will be expanding the work of the World Political Forum: today between me and some others we discussed the future of the WPF. We will not keep it secret and will certainly let you know what we are planning, we certainly would like to expand our activities in places other than Turin and Bosco Marengo, in other continents, in China, Asia, India and other places, because the world is in need of collective action and of developing collectively the concepts that could be the basis for public and international policy.

I think the Club of Rome is an initiative that makes it possible for us to reach an important conclusion about intellectual resources. The revolution in France was preceded by the philosophical revolution. We believe that this revolution has occurred in the world and it's a very important one, but policy making is lagging behind in a world that is undergoing civilization changes, which in the past took several generations to occur and now, in this information society, is reduced to a lifespan of one or one and a half generations. The world really is overloaded with problems that require intellectual resources and the work of intellectual centres, in order to grapple with all of that.

I think that what happened after the end of the Cold War, and I will not repeat too much what I said before, was that an opportunity was not seized to start working practically and specifically towards uniting the world, towards democratic governance and new structures of international order. This work stopped and at least ten, maybe fifteen years, were squandered. Too many people tried to fish in the troubled waters; they have caught and eaten the fish, and what do we see? That fish is not very tasty, and what's worse is that this has created a situation for the world that is more difficult than before.

I think the Americans are beginning to understand that they have lost their way in this new world. On the plane coming in here, I was reading an article by an American political scientist and he was saying that at Malta Gorbachev capitulated to the West, to Bush, and I think this analysis shows that the Americans, the West, have lost their way in the world.

A few years ago Henry Kissinger invited people representing various parts of the world; I was there myself, as well as people from Japan, India, China, Europe, and there were also some well-known Americans, and we participated in a panel which first discussed what the world thinks about America. That was the first question asked and it turned out that I and all the others who were present from other countries – some people I knew, some I didn't – had the same view and the same opinion.

We agreed that history has made it so that America could be a world leader, it can lead in the interest of all, but we all said that it is not happening because America wanted to realize its potential for leadership not through partnership and cooperation but through dictatorial tactics, hegemony, pressure and use of force. This was a common opinion.

The next panel included Americans such as Newt Gingrich, Colin Powell, the former Secretary of Commerce of the United States, and a number of others including Senator Bob Kerry, all people who are beyond suspicion and have something to say. They said: We have nothing to add to what our guests have said, we agree that we are not good at dialogue even with our allies, and we lead wanting others to follow.

It therefore seems that this kind of consensus should have been a warning to America, but with George W. Bush I think all of those American policies have become even worse.

I have participated in a meeting at which Bill Clinton spoke. I listened to him and my conclusion was that in his foreign policies he made a lot of mistakes. At the 75th

anniversary celebration of Time magazine, he said in my presence that "the 20th century became the American century, and let's make the 21st another American century". Now, what happens to us, what about all of us? What about China, India, all the others? So I wrote an article for Time magazine and in that article I recalled what John F. Kennedy once said: "Either we are going to have a peace for all or no peace at all", thirty-five years before Bill Clinton he had it exactly right. He was a real prophet but unfortunately he was not honoured.

I thought it was important to remind you of all these things because before concluding I wanted to make this important point: I think that now that these two important and credible international non-governmental organizations have met here in Turin, it is important for us to make the point that we need to build a truly new world order that will be just, stable, more humane and based on cooperation, that we need a globalization with a human face rather than a way of using the resources of the world for the self interest of some countries.

We need to really understand this in the world today because the 40 years, after the warning of the Club of Rome have been squandered to a large extent. If we want to extricate the world from the current chaotic situation then the only way is to build a new form of life.

Lenin once said that new forms of life are born out of chaos. But chaos can also result in a catastrophe so this is the stark choice that we are facing. We must unite our efforts and build a world order that would help us to solve the world's problems step by step. We need to think about changing the very model of world development.

This is difficult. We in the Soviet Union found it difficult to take the kind of crucial decisions that ultimately replaced our totalitarian system with a movement towards democracy, and we are still moving towards it.

We are probably one third of the way in our march towards democracy, and of course the West wants us to deliver immediately. They say that Russia is not delivering on democracy, that Russia is dangerous, etc. but I am saying that we will continue to move in this one direction, we will be creating decent conditions for our people, we will stabilize Russia. This is difficult.

You remember the time when divided Germany was the main problem in Europe and therefore uniting Germany was that very important process that affected Europe and the world, now similarly Russia's movement towards democracy is a process of similar and even greater importance. I believe we are facing a very stark choice and we need not just linear movement but true qualitative change, transcending the past as we did in the 1980s and moving towards addressing the challenges that we are facing, presented by our society, nature and the economy. This I think is something that should come out of our meeting.