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## The Systemic Crisis in Education as a Threat to Russia's National Security

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*The authors describe the factors that are destroying the Russian education system, a strategy and tactics for overcoming the crisis, as well as model ideas about the future of education in Russia.*

## 1

In recent decades, Russia has been trying to become a part of the West. Having rejected its own values, it promptly reshaped all spheres of life in the Western manner. This process has had a particularly pernicious effect on the education and development of children and youth. Teaching rights to students became more important than teaching them duties, inculcating multiculturalism and tolerance overshadowed the need to learn about respect and friendship, and the widespread cultivation of leadership and competitiveness has meant that the values of care, compassion, and mercifulness have fallen by the wayside [4]. Collectivism has been atomized by individualism, and patriotism has been declared the ideology of marginal people. Reformers hastened to remold Russia's centuries-old education system after the Western model [3]. Educational policy has been conducted contrary to national interests, and our national security has come under threat [1, pp. 5–7].

Today, when Russia has declared its sovereignty in a polycentric world, it is necessary to return the entire education system to its traditional, organic course of development.

Russian education in all of its historical manifestations has always had the powerful potential to contribute to the development of Russian society and an appropriate state. It has had the potential to renew and breathe life into both. The experience of the twentieth century has shown that our education system has repeatedly proven itself to be a source of unprecedented socio-cultural achievements and technologies. It has been able to eliminate homelessness, illiteracy, and technical backwardness. It has also been able to innovate new forms of education and re-education for individuals. It has established an integrated developmental system of preschool education, and it has provided opportunities for working youth to study through evening school

and correspondence courses. It has proven its effectiveness in the teaching of the natural sciences, mathematics, and a number of other subjects. Currently, there is an obvious need for such technologies. Indeed, the challenges that the education system has to deal with today, however regrettable, are practically the same.

Currently, the status of education is changing in our society. It is being transformed from a way of socializing stand-alone people into a mechanism for developing culture, society, and the person. The developmental role that education plays is becoming decisive: it is turning into a “genetic matrix” for the reproduction of society.

In this context, the very notion of “education” must be rethought: it must be recognized as a special philosophical and anthropological category that determines the fundamental basis of human existence and the form by which people acquire humanity. The significance of human-centered ideas in education to the Russian world view consists in understanding man as a creative, self-creating creature, in recognizing the self-worth of the human personality, and in considering education as an attribute of the human being, and not as an auxiliary function of socioproduction systems.

The key idea of the anthropology of education is that education should by no means be limited to only transmitting a certain set of knowledge to the younger generations and ensuring that they develop cutting edge competencies. The sociopolitical and philosophical catastrophe that struck Russia at the end of the twentieth century in turn spawned an anthropological catastrophe. People experienced a displacement of their humanity, which for some meant losing the meaning of life whereas for others it meant losing their moral character.

In fact, it is the task of education to shape the person and teach him or her about one’s freedom and dignity. Education is the universal tool that is used to develop the person’s basic abilities. It allows an individual to assume and uphold one’s own humanity and to transcend the status of being a mere material resource of

social production by becoming a true cultural subject who is aware of his or her place in history.

To achieve this, we do not need a cosmetic “European-style” renovation [evroremont] of education, but rather a transformation of its entire essence, its ontological and ideological foundations, aspirations, and its scientific and technological structure that has continued to develop right up until the present. It is no longer able to meet current historical challenges.

Russian education is currently at a bifurcation point: Either it will be restored as a public good and service of strategic importance to the state, or it will be transformed into an instrument to reformat the country’s civilization and people into a society that is focused on production, consumption, and the commercialization of services.

## 2

It is a universally acknowledged fact that the Soviet school system was the most advanced and the Soviet people were the best read in the world. Up until recently, our former citizens wrote computer programs for American companies, and the graduates of our universities went on to teach at American universities. However, the comparative advantages of our education system have become lost.

Currently the Russian education system is preparing the next “Maidan” using public funds. Patriotic, spiritual, and moral education is being defamed and sabotaged at the same time as it is being displaced by the need to shape students according to cosmopolitan “market” principles.

Because of this, we should consider education as part of the national defense system.

The driving force behind the “color revolutions” was youth, and it was a fairly easy task for organizers to bring them out to participate in mass protests. It is fair to say that Ukrainian teachers helped lay the groundwork for the Kiev Maidan. Signs of trouble in the Russian educational system are already evident.

In late 2015, Varvara Karaulova, a student in the Department of Philosophy at Lomonosov Moscow State University, tried to

flee Russia and join ISIS, a terrorist organization that is outlawed in the Russian Federation. Irina Babykina, a student at another prestigious university in the capital, tried to follow in Varvara's footsteps. These are not the only two examples. How many of our students and graduates would like to leave Russia, though if not to join ISIS, then to emigrate to the West? Serious gaps in spiritual, moral, and patriotic education have been allowed to develop not so much at the university education stage (when a young person has already developed their world view), but at the elementary, secondary, and even pre-school stages.

One of the main places where teenagers and young people meet significant adult role models is at school.<sup>1</sup> This institution, in particular, is substantially responsible for raising children and youth.

### 3

Every nation has its own education system that has been developed over the course of centuries. Each one is based on an ideal path by which all educational activity, including all of its separate processes, is measured.

Such a national educational ideal has been formulated in the "Concept for the Spiritual and Moral Development and Education of Russian Citizens" as the inherited link that connects the educational ideals of the various epochs of Russian history together: There is continuity between the path of imitating Christ, the path of devoting oneself to the service of the Fatherland, the path of service to the communist ideal, and the path of the individual who is free to determine his own goals. A modern ideal has also been formulated:

The highly moral, creative, and competent Russian citizen accepts the destiny of the Fatherland as his personal one. He is aware that he takes responsibility for the present and future of his country, and he is rooted in the spiritual and cultural traditions of the people of the Russian Federation, who hail from multiple ethnicities.

This ideal path bears the imprint of the people's faith, which is predominantly defined by ethnicity and religion. Ensuring that new generations understand that this path has remained stable across the ages is the most important task of education. Despite its declared atheism, the Soviet school system passed on an ethnically and confessionally defined ideal path using various tools: through the literature curriculum, which emphasized characters with firm moral values; through the "moral code of the builder of communism," which was copied from the moral code of the second tablet of the Ten Commandments; through the examples of heroic service to the Fatherland and to loved ones; and through the examples of sacrifice found in the heroic deeds of Soviet films, literature, and journalism.

The modern Russian education system does not incorporate elements of spiritual and moral development.

The main goal of education reform is to remove the overriding ethnoconfessional principle of Russian society. This breaks up education into contradictory fragments and promotes the formation of a sectarian, irrational, and nihilistic consciousness with an extremist bias. The dissolution of this overriding ethnoconfessional principle is manifested in the spread of occultism and neopaganism. In the long run, it could provide the right conditions for an upsurge of religious extremism, which is currently spreading thanks to cultism and occultism, in particular.

A destructive educational strategy that is focused on egoistic paths, which are broadcast across the global media space, is being imposed on the society. These paths differ fundamentally from classic cultural paths that inspire spiritual creativity, development, and transformation. The egoistic paths transmitted by the media are commodities to be consumed, and they are designed to help students consume the goods that are necessary to create an appropriate public image (in any case, in a consumer society the student must be prepared to buy a mandatory set of goods and services and imitate virtual media idols).

These virtual egoistic paths come into conflict with the ideal path of the national educational culture. They put themselves on an equal footing with the latter. They disrupt the relationship of

the people with its history and culture, and they encourage Russians to live in virtual reality. This system disorients both the society itself as well as its education system.

The disintegration of the national education system is undermining the Russian state insofar as the lack of proper education leads to the deterioration of the educational process and produces a corrosive educational environment that creates sources of extremism.

One of the main threats to Russia's national security is the threat of disunifying the people and dividing society. Such a process could provoke civil confrontation, which in its severest form could reach the level of a civil war. A modern civil war, just like an international conflict, could assume a hybrid form. We must prevent the possibility that the education system could be used as a tool for conducting hybrid warfare.

#### 4

Society is stable only when the spiritual is the predominant factor within the main part of it and when the people follow an ideal path that is in harmony with the popular educational culture. At the same time, the people receive support in the information space, and it is clearly declared to be the mission and overarching goal of education. The mechanisms determining the development of educational systems are oriented toward the people.

People form their understanding of the history of their society and its place among the states and peoples of the Earth, and they develop an ethnohistorical consciousness and learn to think historically under the influence of this ideal path.

Currently, neither the school system nor universities are addressing the problems of how to teach their students to think historically. History is presented to students as a set of dates, names, and events. This prevents them from making meaningful connections between historical events or grasping patterns of development. The removal of the ethnoconfessional component from the teaching of history so that it no longer features in regulatory and axiological interpretations of historical processes means that the historical consciousness of young people becomes

dominated by myths and unreliable information. The academic component is washed out, as it has been replaced by ordinary knowledge and false judgments.

The principles of spiritual, moral, and information security require that students be taught historical thinking according to textbooks that reflect the clear meaning of historical process as well as a vision of the place of our people in history that has been filtered by patriotism and traditional values.

The study of one's native language occupies a special place in humanities education. Its task is to teach students an ethnolinguistic culture that ensures that the spiritual and moral groundwork and worldview of the Russian people is passed down to the next generation. Changes in the vocabulary of the Russian language at the turn of the twenty-first century have a qualitative character and have affected the very core of the lexical system. Slang, prison and camp jargon, Anglicisms, and the computer jargon of social networks have all entered the everyday vocabulary of Russians. People speak ungrammatically, fail to observe stylistic norms, and make incoherent statements. The most dangerous fact is that these trends in the deterioration of the grammatical structure of the language have influenced the teaching of the Russian language at the elementary level. This can be seen in textbooks and primers that have been approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation. When first graders learn from these materials, they often lose the knowledge of their native language that they naturally acquired before entering school. Reviewers have determined that a number of textbooks (e.g., the "Twenty-first Century Elementary School" [Nachal'naya shkola 21 veka] series by the group of authors headed by Professor N.F. Vinogradov) in places present information in such a way that they can cause neuroses, because they lead students to numerous dead ends.

There has been a clearly marked trend to borrow foreign concepts into the teaching of social studies. Thus, the federally prescribed set of textbooks includes *Social Studies* [Obshchestvoznaniye] for the seventh grade (by A.I. Kravchenko and Ye.A. Pevtsova and published by the Russkoye slovo publishing house). It is now past its



tenth edition. Beginning in the first paragraph, the authors hasten to say that in the United Kingdom and the United States adolescents are called “teenagers” or “teens.” These terms are then frequently used throughout text instead of the native Russian word (*podrostok*). We also encounter another example of brazen stupidity in the first paragraph: “[T]he period of adolescence is the time in life between childhood and maturity” (p. 11). If this is true, then where do we insert youth and young adulthood? The first chapter (“The Personality of an Adolescent”), which is not quite 60 pages long, is so full of the last names of foreign scientists that seventh graders cannot help but conclude that there must be no Russian sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists. The authors cite the following “great” Anglo-American academics: the psychologists Robert J. Havighurst (p. 15), Michael Howe (p. 53), and James Dobson (pp. 15, 48); the sociologists Emory S. Bogardus (p. 57) and Ralph Melvin Stogdill (p. 57); the anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn (p. 60); and the writer C. Northcote Parkinson (p. 58). At the same time, the text mentions the Russian academics V.P. Efroimson (p. 60) and M.I. Stankin (p. 47) once. Is that what can actually be called a true list of the most famous researchers in adolescent psychology?! Should seventh graders really learn the names of all of these researchers? The list of such absurdities can be continued.

The Bologna Process procedurally facilitates and motivates the outflow of the best qualified personnel from Russia to other countries, which makes our education system ineffective for our own country. Immigration processes lead to the loss of personnel, the leakage of classified information, and the transfer of Russian technologies to competitors. This leads to the weakening of the country’s intellectual elite; scientific, technical, and technological backwardness; as well as economic degradation.

The distortion of the humanities within the education system poses a direct threat to the preparedness of the younger generation, which creates fertile ground for the successful application of technologies for managed chaos.

To remedy the situation, we need to develop a concept for teaching Russian language and literature that is focused on the

classics. We need to strengthen the study of Russian language and literature and introduce a narrow list of recommended works that emphasizes Russian classic literature, because these are the works that enshrine high aesthetic values and provide the templates for moral education.

Currently, the development of the new educational areas of “The Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics” for Grades 1–4 and “The Spiritual and Moral Culture of the Peoples of Russia” for Grades 5–9 is being blocked. The recommendations of the Ministry of Education and Science are obviously unachievable. There is no model program, and well-proven training manuals have been left out of the federal list. At the same time, they fail to fully and comprehensively address the specified subject areas. No mechanism for the development of educational and teaching materials is being established.

Humanities education has been so designed as to make it as difficult as possible to teach students a Russian civilizational identity. Rather, it works to establish the identity of a foreign civilization: the West. The consequences of such an educational policy are fully evident in Ukraine.

## 5

There is yet another threat to national security: demography. Russia is the largest country in the world, but it ranks ninth in terms of population. The modern school system does not prepare young people to raise families. A set of courses that focused on the problems of establishing and developing families was withdrawn from the Basic School Curriculum in the early 1990s. Russian teachers have had positive experience teaching a course on the “Moral Foundations of Family Life” as well as other similar courses. Despite the positive feedback from the teaching community and the efforts of parents to restore a family-oriented curriculum to the Basic School Curriculum for the senior grades, this initiative has been stubbornly ignored.

Traditional education that is focused on family values is widely reflected in classic literature, the widely shared practices of

teachers, and the hagiographic tradition of Russian literature. However, it has ignored the works that can be found in current reading lists for schoolchildren. Reading programs introduce schoolchildren to such titles as *Bonjour Tristesse* by Françoise Sagan, *The Garnet Bracelet* [Granatovyy braslet] by Aleksandr Kuprin, *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov, and *Dark Avenues* [Tenye allei] by Ivan Bunin. The high aesthetic value of these works is offered as the main argument for why they are useful. However, the moral problems that they raise are beyond the abilities of schoolchildren to grasp, and they do not address how they should grow up.

## 6

The reform of education affects not only the content of education, creating systemic problems in the knowledge and educational components, but it also destroys the structure by which educational institutions are distributed across the country.

The destruction of the system of rural schools represents a serious threat. They continue to close in mass numbers, which contributes to the deterioration of the countryside. This represents yet another threat to our national security. The arguments of bureaucrats that are based on claims that the rural schools are “unprofitable” and “ineffective” are ridiculous. Arguments that are based on fleeting material impacts and that ignore the negative social and economic consequences that they leave in their wake are obviously inadequate. After all, we will not be able to achieve import substitution and food security without developing the countryside.

In addition, communities that have gathered together on the basis of the social practice of labor in their native land fulfill an important role that grounds the culture. Though it may be inefficient in terms of its profit-generating potential within the system of capitalist production, farming offers high potential for spiritual development and is important for the development of a society’s culture.

The main problem of the administrative system in Russian education is that it lacks a strategic approach [2, pp. 10–14]. Strategic guidelines for education are presented in a fragmented manner, in isolation from recognized managerial concepts. Administrative documents do not present a detailed strategic view for the development of education, and they often even contradict each other. The situation with these documents reminds us of the popular fraudulent shell game from the tumultuous 1990s (an example is the cancellation in 2014 of the “National Doctrine for Education to 2025” that was adopted in 2000).

In such a situation, managerial practice is based on administrators who blindly carry out instructions. This situation has been long recognized and well described in the management theory: It is the practice of the managed deconstruction of objects, which is used to destroy systems that are subject to such destruction.

Regulations that claim to define educational policy, which are based on rapidly changing and fragmentary goals, have been mistakenly adopted as strategic priorities, which divert huge resources to themselves and do not yield the required results. They fail to satisfy the main goal: fulfilling the ontological goal of “education in general,” and, accordingly, the fundamental reason for education.

The kind of management that is based on the basic national (civilizational) values and strategic goals that have been identified in the latest “National Security Strategy” (2015) is completely absent from the Russian education system. The goals for the development of Russian education (“The Concept of the Federal Target Program in Education for 2016–2020”) that have been declared in key management documents do not correspond to basic national values.

There is a gap between values and target benchmarks. “The Strategy for the Development of Education in the Russian Federation to 2025” declares values, but it does not indicate any goals or explain how they can be achieved and supported. On the other hand, “The Concept of the Federal Target Program in Education for 2016–2020” formulates goals for the development of the education system that are in complete conflict

with the identified basic values. This is disorienting for practitioners, and it encourages hypocrisy and double standards in the teacher community.

Many documents declare that traditional values are the basis on which the Russian education system should be developed. Such a declaration of values can be found in the preamble of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, which promulgates the values of the freedom and independence of Russia. It declares that the people of the Russian Federation are multinational. They are united by the common destiny of their native land, the memory of their ancestors who bequeathed to them love and respect for the Fatherland, faith in good and justice, and the responsibility that they take for their Motherland to the present and future generations.

The national education doctrine, which has played a particular role in the formation of strategic guidelines, details such values as the historical continuity of generations, the preservation and development of national culture, morality, and patriotism, as well as mutual respect for peoples and cultures. The spiritual and moral development of the individual, which has been worked out over the course of Russia's historical development, has been made the cornerstone of the law "On Education in the Russian Federation" (2012), "The Strategy for the Development of Education in the Russian Federation for the Period to 2025," "The Fundamentals of the State Cultural Policy" (2014), and "The Concept for the Spiritual and Moral Development and Education of the Russian Citizen" (2009), which propose a concept of basic national values.

However, no administrative mechanism to oversee the implementation of the declared ideas has been established. The redaction of the law on education dated 2007 described a hierarchy of educational outcomes that is designed to satisfy this objective. The law specified that educational programs must ensure the spiritual and moral development, education, and quality of preparation of students (Art. 9, Cl. 6). But the 2013 law that replaced it provided an ambiguous definition of the goals of education. It declares that the goal of education is to nurture the intellectual,

moral and spiritual, and (or) professional needs of students. The use of the conjunction “or” in the law’s definition creates an absurd situation: An anonymous actor determining public policy is given the right to define a hierarchy of goals for education.

The shameful history of the “National Education Doctrine” is telling. The document appeared in 2000. Having the name “National Education Doctrine of the Russian Federation to 2025,” it was a unique document that determined strategic long-term planning in education. The document was created in response to the call of the first Russian president to develop a national idea. As a result of discussions, a national education doctrine was proposed instead of a national idea. It was widely discussed by members of the academic and teacher community. The document’s status had to be debated in the State Duma and then signed into law by the president of the country. Nevertheless, the Order of the Government of the Russian Federation dated October 4, 2000, No. 751 “On the National Education Doctrine of the Russian Federation to 2025” was adopted.

The doctrine was suppressed in every possible way. Many educational regulations were adopted that completely disregarded the document’s priorities. However, members of the teacher community did not forget about it. When the federal educational standards (FGOS) became the subject of wide-ranging discussions in 2008–2009, a number of their most important provisions that moved to enshrine key goals (ensuring that traditional values are passed down to the younger generation as well as their spiritual and moral development) within the hierarchy of educational goals were justified by referring to the “National Education Doctrine.”

It was clear that the “National Education Doctrine” was quietly canceled by Order of the Government of the Russian Federation dated March 29, 2014, No. 245 “On the Recognition of Certain Acts of the Government of the Russian Federation” to prevent a repeat of the situation. The above-mentioned doctrine is listed as No. 51 in a list of 96 documents. A note indicates that it is no longer valid. This strategic document has been placed on a par with acts that stipulate measures to provide specialized furniture

to educational institutions (which is no. 14 in the list: Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation dated June 15, 1994, No. 688). The note specifies the reasons why the document was canceled: “These measures are conditioned by the need to bring the set of regulations in line with the Law on Education and its accompanying amendments.”

As the website of the Government of the Russian Federation itself notes, certain acts have in fact already “lost their force. Others contradict the law, whereas others try to regulate legal relations that should be governed by acts promulgated by government agencies.” It remains only for us to guess: Is the education doctrine that prescribes the development strategy to 2025 no longer valid? If so, then on what grounds? Or does it contradict the existing law? What regulations of the law could the document contradict? After all, the document specifies that these regulations should be adopted on its basis. Is it really true that this document tries to function like a regulation promulgated by a government agency? In that case, what agency should be responsible for the national education strategy?

“The Strategy for the Development of Education in the Russian Federation to 2025” was adopted by Order of the Government of the Russian Federation (dated May 29, 2015, No. 996-r) right after the “National Education Doctrine” was annulled in March 2014. The latter document has a status that is less than a doctrine. (Strategies may only be adopted on the basis of a doctrine.) It encompasses only part of modern educational reality. It only offers a nonsystematic description of areas of activity. You cannot call it a strategy. It does not specify any mechanisms by which it could be implemented. By Order dated December 29, 2014, No. 2765-r, the government approved the “Concept of the Federal Target Program in Education for 2016–2020,” which determines the actual administrative mechanisms that will be used to develop education. The target vector of the program does not address the problems of spiritual and moral development in education on the basis of traditional values. In fact, it even works at cross-purposes to this goal. If the category of spiritual and moral development is focused on a type of

education that is concerned with developing the person as a whole, then the target program is only concerned with cultivating human resources for industry in its modern liberal and technocratic form, which has been in place for a number of years.

The teaching community has not yet arrived at a consensus about what should be the essence of public policy in spiritual and moral education (education and development). Russia has accumulated a large amount of experience in the area of spiritual and moral education over the course of 30 years thanks to a movement of teachers and society members that has been supported by the professional community in partnership with the parent community and the traditional religions. However, a multitude of documents and materials (regulations, analytical reports, ideological statements, curricula, etc.) dedicated to issues in spiritual and moral education has been neglected and gone unnoticed. These documents need to be found, studied, analyzed, generalized, and popularized. Often when these documents are discussed and analyzed in academic publications, they provoke resistance from public teacher associations.

Educational administrators at all levels often demonstrate their incompetence when they try to set public policy in the area of spiritual and moral education. The need to establish a continuing education system for teachers has not been addressed. The federal government has not ordered the development of strategies and the creation of mechanisms to advance spiritual and moral education. Instead, certain regions have taken the initiative in this area. They have introduced their own target programs for the spiritual and moral education of the population, including by forging cooperative relationships between agencies that administer the education system, oversee the wellbeing of society, etc.

## 7

The modern Russian education system is inefficient in part due to the imbalance in funding between the administration system and educational institutions themselves. The monitoring and supervisory system has disproportionately expanded at the same time



that many educational institutions have been closed as a result of optimization. The number of educational administrators and their salaries have grown proportionally to the number of closed schools and fired teachers.

The very process of administration as the practice that ensures that supervised activities comply with regulations (laws, moral principles, etc.) has been perverted. True educational administration has been replaced by the manipulation of the community of teachers through strict regulation of their actions.

This is an inevitable consequence of the loss of the value orientations underlying teaching. If values are not affirmed and the goals of education are not made to reflect these basic values, then it becomes impossible to properly choose teaching technologies and tools as well as to properly arrange the entire educational process. A meaningful activity that is designed to obtain meaningful outcomes degenerates into a meaningless formality. The role of the bureaucrat is reduced to carrying out formal processes.

## 8

The “Law on Education” declares that education is a “public good,” but reforms have transformed it into capitalist tool that must be managed by monopolies and generate profit. The quality and effectiveness criteria that are being applied to education have been borrowed from management principles in the services sector. The effectiveness of educational institutions can be assessed on the basis of formal criteria. The main assessment criterion is passing an educational program. Student mastery of this program is tested using formal standardized tests that have been alienated from any meaningful teaching process. In addition, the capabilities of these formal standardized tests are limited.

Many regard the USE, which functions as a universal quantitative indicator of how well students have learned K–11 educational programs, as an instrument that is destroying the education process.

The example of Russian performance at the annual International Mathematics Olympiads was discussed at a meeting of the State Council on December 23, 2015:

The Russian team took the 8th place in points, and it came in 21st in the medal tally. However, for decades our schoolchildren used to come in at the top of the standings at these Olympiads. The last time that happened was in 2007. After that we came in second for three years in a row, for the next four years we came in fourth, and now we placed eighth. This sad statistic provides an objective assessment of the USE, which was instituted as a mandatory test in 2008.

However, the USE has another aspect, which has attracted its defenders. By creating the appearance of being an independent assessment of the quality of education, it allows for the creation of technological systems that then monopolize the educational process. This creates a specific layer of educational administrators who do not think in educational categories (the main ones of which are the person, his values, dignity, and quality of life), but rather in economic ones: profit, financial performance, and capitalization. This layer gradually subsumes all educational administration, and it subordinates the latter to the goal of making a profit.

During the reform years, there were many cases of hostile takeovers of educational institutions. Newly installed administrators substituted commercial structures that measure the achievement of formal indicators for true educational assessments. This style of management disrupted professional traditions and led to a sharp decline in the quality of education. It claimed that schools were “high performing” if their students achieved formal indicators that had no relationship to actual educational outcomes.

An example of this type of thinking is the latest management document that defines the current direction of catastrophic transformations in the education system: “The Concept of the Federal Target Program in Education for 2016–2020” (Order of the Government of the Russian Federation dated December 29, 2014, No. 2765-r).

The program was not originally developed using the categories that fulfill the national ideal for educating a moral person to have a civil and patriotic consciousness and to demonstrate competency and responsibility in his or her professional field. The goal of the program is “to establish conditions for the effective development of Russian education that is directed at cultivating the competitive human capital of students.”

It is clear from the stated goal of the “Federal Target Program” that the human is negated. The ontological essence of the person and his or her integrity and rootedness in history and culture determine the integrity of social and educational reality. The concept of the “Federal Targeted Program in Education for 2016–2020” is leading to the fragmentation of education. Fragmentation is evident in how the goals themselves are framed. The program lacks objectives for the systemic development of education, because its mission and values are not stated. It only defines objectives and directions, each one of which determines just a fragment of the entire spectrum of socio-educational reality (working with talented children, working with children from poor families, developing supplementary education programs, creating a system for the independent assessment of the quality of education, etc.).

For each of the objectives, a mechanism is established that allows this fragment to be developed according to its own logic. Regulations, educational programs, experiments, criteria for evaluating effectiveness, etc., are developed to support it. Yet in reality, gifted children, children from poor families as well as ordinary children study in the same class, attend institutions of supplementary education together. However, the program does not establish objectives for the creation of mechanisms that facilitate the establishment of a unified educational space for the school or region. In other words, it does not provide a method for linking together the separate fragments that make up the educational process, and, thus, it fragments the teacher’s professional consciousness.

The most capital-intensive objective of the program is the creation of an independent education quality assessment. This is a completely different systemic level for fulfilling the same economic ideas that inspired the creators of the USE. It is clear

to any basically literate person that the “national-regional system for the independent monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education at all levels” is a capital-intensive and very lucrative commercial project that the whole education system must work to achieve, and the profit from it will be appropriated by a narrow corporate group.

Because the program does not address issues related to the development and public discussion of education quality indicators, and the educational goal itself is formulated not in terms of educational but in economic categories, assessing the quality of education is not important for the program developers. They do not see it as an academic problem. For them, it is only important to establish a system for assessing the quality of education (in the absence of criteria for the quality of education proper) and subordinating all educational institutions to this system.

Thus, as a result we have a caste of educational economist managers who are transforming the entire system of education. From the point of view of psychology and education, many of their actions are not justified, which indicates their nonprofessionalism. However, they are “professionals when it comes to receiving money” or, as Academician and Vice President of the Russian Academy of Education V.V. Davydov once said, they successfully engage in the practice of “teaching administrators to arrange the lives of others to advance their interests.”

It is useless to declare one’s good intentions without changing the approach itself, which successfully carries out at least two goals:

1. turning education into a branch of capitalist production whose costs are borne by the state and whose profits are appropriated by a corporate entity; and
2. optimizing education for the production of “human capital,” which is invested in global production in the interests of a transnational entity (diversion of talented people abroad). It also focuses on the production of “human resources,” who are thoughtless consumers and performers of highly specialized functions within the divided labor system, devoid of the ideals and values of the Motherland and

family, and narrowly focused on consuming the products and services of the global market, which is increasingly focused on making people feel virtual and unnatural wants and desires.

## 9

If we evaluate the performance of the education system according to the criteria of “success” and “competitiveness,” then at the state level they should not be thought of so much in economic or financial terms as in terms of morality, ideology, geopolitics, the military, and culture. Such performance is possible only if the spiritual basis of education is sustainable. This requires a completely different model of education.

The current model of education does not correspond to the Russian civilizational model and contradicts “The National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation” that was adopted on December 31, 2015 (Presidential Decree No. 683 dated December 31, 2015). Thus, the “Strategy” stipulates the need to preserve Russia’s sovereignty, and it asserts its role as one of the leaders of the polycentric world order, which is ensured through the protection of the basic values of our civilization.

One of the most important threats to our national security is the desire of the United States to preserve its dominance in the world through the universal application of the globalization model that is molded in the image of Western civilization. The current model of Russian education forms a part of the project to create a global educational model that has been established to satisfy the needs of Western financial and political institutions.

We should note that the actions of certain agents to advance the idea that the Western civilizational model should dominate the world present a serious threat to Russia’s national security.

Russia defines itself as one of the leaders of a different polycentric model of globalization, where each cultural region can develop on the basis of its own civilizational traditions and assert its national sovereignty on the basis of partnership and equal relations. But to achieve this a state needs more than just

sovereign policies, armed forces, industry, and agriculture. It also above all needs a sovereign educational system aimed at establishing Russian civilization as an equal partner in the modern space of geopolitical competition in conformance with the traditions of its historical development. It must absorb the models of Russian education that have been developed over the course of epochs. The latter models encompass the ascetic, brotherly, and communal education of medieval Russia; the classical education of the Russian Empire; and the fundamental education of the Soviet period.

Clause 11 of the “The National Security Strategy” considers spiritual components as some of the factors determining Russia’s sovereignty:

Traditional Russian spiritual and moral values are being revived. The rising generation is developing a respectful attitude towards Russian history. Civil society is being consolidated around common values that form the foundation of statehood. They include Russia’s freedom and independence, humanism, interethnic peace and harmony, unity between the cultures of the multinational people of the Russian Federation, respect for family and religious traditions, and patriotism.

Thus, the “Strategy” has already enshrined the value orientations of the new educational model.

A number of documents have declared their support for traditional values as the basis for the development of education, but no actions have been taken to back up these words.

On the contrary, many administrative processes in education are deliberately undermining these traditions.

To correct the current situation at the organizational level, we must establish a competent body in which the professional community and the general public participate, including independent initiatives that represent the parental community and traditional religious organizations.

However, there is not a single authoritative organization left in the Russian humanitarian sphere that is able to give an independent expert assessment of the activities of the Ministry of Education and Science and call things by their proper names.

The Russian Academy of Education has been subordinated to the latter ministry, whereas the Russian Academy of Science is undergoing gradual reform. The socioeducational movement is no longer active, and it is not represented by any distinct institutions.

## 10

The negative consequences of the market approach to education have so far been partially cushioned amid the strong resource potential accumulated by the previous generations; however, the pernicious aftermath of such an attitude is certain to fully transpire over a longer term. There will come a period when these resources will run out, and at that point the society will begin to actively degrade.

We need a new strategy for the development of education, in which the interests of transnational corporations will be limited since the system will be based on relations between equitable geopolitical partners in the multipolar world space that has been declared in the “National Security Strategy.” The state’s interest, which is focused on sovereign civilizational development and promoting the interests of domestically oriented manufacturers as well as society’s interest in sustaining the high quality of human life in Russia, should occupy a central place within this system.

Because of this, Russian society and the state are faced with the task of changing the educational paradigm. It does not make sense to renew and reconstruct the current education system. It needs to be replaced. The current monopoly of liberalism needs to be replaced with a monopoly of patriotism. In the words of our president, the patriotic national idea of Russia is Russia itself and its people, who are united by a common calling to preserve the Fatherland and together to create our common future. The Russian people will assert it by working to advance the historical cause of their fathers and grandfathers.

We must develop our own education system based on centuries-old traditions and take it to a new level. To achieve

this, we need to search for a fundamentally new education system.

Russian education needs a model that does not lag behind, but which forges ahead. This model could be created on the basis of human values. It is focused on the person. It seeks to preserve and affirm the image of the “eternal man” in his integrity. It affirms the authenticity of human existence under the conditions of technocratic expansion, and it teaches people the ability and determination to change the vector of civilizational development away from the “transhumanistic” consumer civilization that seeks to destroy people’s humanity. It creates conditions for spiritual growth and the cultivation of humanistic traits in every person.

## Notes

1. Here and elsewhere when we use the word *school*, we mean any educational institution in the broadest sense, from kindergartens to universities.

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