

Forcing Change



A New Spirituality for a New Humanity: Thoughts on the Global Future 2045 International Congress

By Carl Teichrib (www.forcingchange.org)

NOTE: This issue of *Forcing Change* looks at the recent Global Future 2045 International Congress that took place in New York City, a prestigious gathering of leaders from the transhumanist community.

If you are unfamiliar with transhumanism, please download and read the following back-issues of *Forcing Change*; “Transhumanism and Mormonism: Encounters in Salt Lake City” (April 2013), “Looking Backward to Our Techno-Future” (July 2011), and “The Rise of Techno-Gods: The Merging of Transhumanism and Spirituality” (October 2010).

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Carl Teichrib Editor.



“Did you see the robot?” I asked the male hotel housekeeper as he passed me in the hallway of New York City’s Empire Hotel.

The gentleman stopped and gave me a curious glance; “What are you talking about?”

“You passed right by a robot,” I said matter-of-factly, motioning down the dimly lit hall behind us. “He’s the one sitting.”

The housekeeper turned to look at a small group of people standing and talking five doors down, where, close by, an Asian man was seated on a wheeled, cart-like carrier.

“That’s not a human,” I emphasized, “it’s a highly advanced robotic head on a mock body.”

The hotel staff member looked harder; “No... that’s a man. He must be handicapped, that’s why he’s sitting in the cart.”

“Do yourself a favor. Walk up and look closely. You’ll see it’s not a person at all.”

Pointing to an individual in the group who looked identical to the one sitting, I explained that the man standing was Dr. Hiroshi Ishiguro, a Japanese robotics inventor, and that the “head” on the false body was his creation – and that because of advanced software, the “head” involuntarily moves and automatically reacts to its changing environment. The housekeeper stared harder at the group, and then turned to me with a look of exasperation; “That can’t be true!”

“Just walk by and take a look,” I assured him. “It’s not what you think.”

Retreating down the hallway, he sauntered past the group and guardedly examined the person on the cart. Soon he was stopped, peering closely at the “human,” shaking his own head in disbelief.



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Crisis and Transhuman Change

From June 15 to 16, 2013, world-renowned scientific thinkers, inventors, philanthropists, entrepreneurs, and spiritual leaders met in New York City's Lincoln Center for the Global Future 2045 International Congress. Just a short hop from the Empire Hotel, where many of the GF2045 participants were staying, the Lincoln Center was buzzing with hive-like excitement as transhuman aspirations were explored and proclaimed. Transhumanism, the idea of a technically based future human evolution – and the accompanied call for a worldwide evolutionary strategy – was the primary purpose of this global gathering.

The New York GF2045 Congress was not a one-off event, but was part of a broad and comprehensive endeavor that started in 2011 under the guidance of the soft-spoken and likable young Russian multimillionaire, Dmitry Itskov. That year, Itskov – working with Russian experts from the fields of neural interfacing, robotics and artificial systems – birthed the *2045 Initiative*, an organized movement dedicated to forwarding a complete social evolution and a new global spirituality. Moreover, it would be a “megaproject” predicated on the goal of cybernetic immortality.

The New York GF2045 official programme describes the *2045 Initiative* this way,

“The main goals of the 2045 Initiative are the creation and realization of a new strategy for the development of humanity which meets global civilization challenges; the creation of optimal conditions promoting the spiritual enlightenment of humanity; and the realization of a new futuristic reality based on 5 principles: high spirituality, high culture, high ethics, high science and high technologies.

The main science megaproject of the 2045 Initiative aims to create technologies enabling the transfer of an individual's personality to a more advanced non-biological carrier, and extending life, including to the point of im-

mortality. We devote particular attention to enabling the fullest possible dialogue between the world's major spiritual traditions, science and society.”¹

In 2012, the year after Itskov launched his *2045 Initiative*, he hosted the first GF2045 Congress in Moscow. This event took place in mid-February and attracted approximately 1500 observers and 50 presenters, dealing with such technical and diverse topics as “The Acceleration of Technology in the 21st Century,” “Populating Beyond the Earth,” “Cybernetic Medicine in the Present and Future,” “The Russian Brain Reverse Engineering Project,” “The Proto-Science of Consciousness,” and “Religion in the Age of Human Politics.”

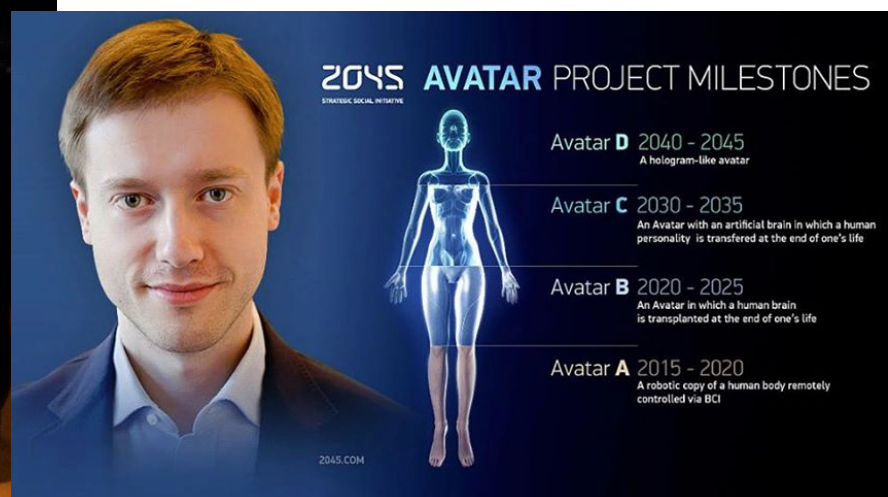
Through the Moscow congress and the *2045 Initiative*, a new program was introduced to the transhumanist community: the Avatar Project. Currently the flagship of the *2045 Initiative*, this project has the audacious aim of accelerating “the creation of technologies that will enable a gradual transition from our biological bodies to an increasingly advanced artificial carrier of the human self.”² In other words, once we have mapped the brain and unlocked the secrets of the mind – considered by many to be the “Manhattan Project” of the 21st Century – we theoretically will be able to upload our consciousness and memories, take possession of a non-biological android body, and escape the bounds of mortality.

If the Avatar Project sounds like science fiction, *that's because it is*. But it's more than that; it's science fiction attempting to emerge as a “future reality.”



Left: Dmitry Itskov at the New York GF2045 Congress.

Below: Dmitry and the Avatar Project timeline; to create an artificial carrier for the human personality by 2045.



The “Avatar Project” and its connection to the GF2045 Congress explains the robotic head I saw in the Empire Hotel, described as a “Gemanoid” by Dr. Ishiguro, for during this New York event a number of technologies were showcased that pointed to what an “advanced artificial carrier” might entail. Other techno-developments I witnessed included Dr. Ishiguro’s “Telenoid,” a “genderless” and featureless human-like child robot; and Nigel Ackland’s bionic arm, the world’s most advanced artificial limb.

But the one item many came to see was “Dmitroid,” the working android head of Dmitry Itskov. That’s right; the founder of GF2045 was going to introduce a robotic copy of himself. Designed by the renowned robotic inventor David Hanson, “Dmitroid” was supposed to be introduced on the first day of the conference. But by the end of the second day it was apparent that Dmitroid was a no-show. Later I found out that Hanson and his creation were waiting in the wings at the Lincoln Center, but glitches – due in large part from a too tight completion schedule – kept the android from its public debut. For many participants this was a disappointing turn of events, as Hanson’s robots are world-known for their complex motor functions, computational power, and incredible life-likeness.

Breakthrough scientific developments were also introduced at the New York Congress, including Neural Dust – microscopic transceivers that can be powered by ultrasound (no need for batteries), and sprinkled to free-float on the brain. Then, as these miniature devices interface with neurons and each other, they send signals to an outside receptor: a computer, an advanced prosthesis, or a “Dmitroid.” Neural Dust, it is believed, will revolutionize brain-computer interfacing with endless applications and possibilities.

Granted, Neural Dust is not yet functional. However, the team heading this project from the University of California, Berkeley, foresees animal model testing in under two years.

All of these remarkable transhuman ideas and technological advances were placed in the context of global crisis during the first morning. Itskov spoke of the need for a new evolutionary leap that would bring lasting world peace, the end of war, the eradication of diseases, and a permanent resolution to global strife. Instead of competing with each other and struggling to survive, the improved human species would bathe itself in spiritual enlightenment and personal betterment.

Dr. James Martin, a billionaire philanthropist who gave Oxford University its largest monetary gift in its 900-year history, followed Dmitry’s opening speech by outlining a series of burgeoning world crisis; overwhelming climate change, a growing and out of control human population, a coming resource crunch of global proportions, scarcity of fresh water, the destruction of agricultural capacity, and massive economic imbalances between the rich and the poor. All of this, he explained, requires a total transformation of human nature and the need to reshape our future before it arrives – thus the necessity of becoming transhuman.

Dr. Martin also suggested various social and political courses of action to stem the tide of human-induced catastrophe, including the shutting down of coal-fired power plants and bringing the worldwide population of domestic cattle down to 200,000 from an estimated 1.5 billion (cows are considered the second largest contributor to green house gas emissions). He then elaborated on creating enclosed, solar powered “climate change cities” in far northern and southern regions (an idea that infers a global energy grid, for a sunlight problem exists in these extreme latitudes – that is, the absence of useable daylight during winter months). Furthermore, he acknowledged that Russia and China are better poised to

survive world upheavals, and predicted the rise of an international “technocray” to manage global society by 2045.

By the end of the morning on the first day of the Congress, I had heard a steady stream of “calls to action,” including the need to overcoming fundamental religious differences in the name of global unity.

Indeed, “world crisis,” the transhuman and technical answer to these global problems, and the need for a new spirituality based on human cooperation were inescapable themes at the Global Future 2045 Congress.

New Spirituality

From the first speech by Dmitry Itskov to the closing of the event with an interfaith panel, spirituality and religious themes were an inescapable part of the entire event. Dmitry was publicly upfront about this, explaining that his journey to transhumanism came through a spiritual experience. In a brief conversation with the Russian tycoon on the following day, he acknowledged a spiritual mid-life crisis, and noted the role of Cosmism – particularly the teachings of Tsiolkovsky – in his search for metaphysical meaning.

Practically unheard of in the West, Cosmism is a spiritual-scientific worldview that can be traced to the turn of the last century. Moreover, Cosmism is truly a *Rossiia* conception, one that follows the Russian intellectual map of a multidisciplinary approach to the questions of life, immortality, perfection, and the role of Russia as the epicenter of world salvation. Its historical trail weaves an unorthodox path of Russian Orthodoxy, occultism and Theosophy, science and art, and philosophical speculation; as Christ died for Mankind, so Mankind must embrace the task of self-resurrection.

George M. Young, a Fellow at The Center for Global Humanities at the University of New England, has been a longtime student of the history of Cosmism. Consider his explanations excerpted from his book, *The Russian Cosmists*.

“Russian Cosmism, [is] a highly controversial and oxymoronic blend of activist speculation, futuristic traditionalism, religious science, exoteric esotericism, utopian pragmatism, idealistic materialism – higher magic partnered to higher mathematics.”³

“Main themes in Cosmist thought include the active human role in human and cosmic evolution; the creation of new life forms, including a new level of humanity; the unlimited extension of human longevity to a state of practical immortality; the physical resurrection of the dead; serious scientific research into matters long considered subjects fit only for science fiction, occult, and esoteric literature; the exploration and colonization of the entire cosmos; the emergence on our biosphere of a new sphere of human thought called the ‘noosphere’; and other far-reaching ‘projects,’ some of which may no longer seem as impossible or crazy as they did when first proposed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.”⁴

As Young states, “Once dismissed and derided, Cosmist ideas are now regarded as a main tendency in Russian culture and thought... the Cosmists, like many Russians, are expansive thinkers; their worldview attempts to comprehend all humanity, all time, all space, all science, all art, and religion. Moreover, this view is totalitarian in the sense that it must apply to all, without exception.”⁵

Young also notes that Cosmism resonates to some degree with an anti-Western sentiment, and is viewed as a “robust alternative” to Western intellectualism; “To its adherents, Cosmism is a continental, Eurasian antidote to the growing threat of cultural and intellectual Atlanticism.”⁶

Although pushed down during the Soviet era, primarily during Stalin’s rule, Cosmism nevertheless formed the intellectual soil for the Soviet Union’s space industry – which succeeded in putting a man in orbit first. In fact, Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, a Russian founding father of modern rocketry, was a leading Cosmist.

Today, Tsiolkovsky still exerts an influence on Russian spiritual-scientific thought, and at least one other GF2045 speaker – Akop Nazaretyan – admitted to a Cosmist worldview. In essence, Cosmism is “Russian transhumanism,” and as the GF2045 Congress was weighted with Russian-based presenters and 2045 staff members, I was left with little doubt about the resurgence of this Russian worldview.

While Cosmism is an undeniable intellectual force in Russian transhumanism, it must be noted that many who find Cosmism attractive also embrace other spiritual traditions. Dmitry demonstrated this fact at the GF2045. Although he admitted to Cosmism, he also expressed his interest in Eastern spiritual practices as a way to reach divine potential. Therefore, Tibetan Buddhists and Hindu Monks, along with other religious thinkers, joined Dmitry in discussing the vitality of religion in achieving evolutionary transformation.



One of the spiritual leaders who had a speaking slot and later participated in the interfaith panel was the founder of Russia's only advanced yogi school, Swami Vishnudevananda Giri. During his presentation, he told the GF2045 audience that we were reaching for transcendental humanism – to form a race of immortal God-men and develop a God-like civilization. These transcendent God-men, he explained, will control thought and time, and possess immortal bodies located in multiple realities. “Fantasy will become reality,” he told the Congress.

Hindu yoga master, Mahayogi ‘Pilot’ Baba, a former Wing Commander in the Royal Indian Air Force, told us something similar; “You are the light, you are the truth, you are the beginning, you are the end.”

As a Christian in the audience, I recognized where Mahayogi Baba pulled these words from – and they weren’t his. Baba had simply created a montage of Jesus Christ’s words about Himself as the exclusive Son of God, taken from John 14:6 and Revelation 22:13.

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’” (John 14:6)

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.” (Revelation 22:13).

These words of Jesus Christ in the Book of Revelation parallel God’s declaration in Isaiah 44:6,8b. Indeed, Jesus Christ is the Redeemer, “the Lord of hosts” who declares Himself to be “the First and the Last.”

“Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God... Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one.”

And here is the cosmic irony in the Global Future 2045 International Congress and the transhumanist aspiration to Godhood: It affirms, in the negative, the reality of the True God.

In fact, the Biblical foundation that speaks to the existence of an exclusive God becomes inescapable when you consider the consistent and determined efforts of Man, attempting, over and over again, to raise ourselves as God. We mortals can’t seem to come up with anything truly unique. All we do is repeat the ancient theme; through special knowledge you too can become God-like. Certainly there is “nothing new under the Sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Nor can true originality be found. Instead, the Genesis justification for our own spiritual deceit is repeated *ad nauseam*,

“You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Genesis 3:4-5)

Concluding Thoughts

Only a few years ago “transhumanism” was practically unheard of, even while the entertainment industry was spitting out a long list of transhuman themed movies; *Avatar*, *Splice*, *Bicentennial Man*, the *Terminator* and *X-Men* and *Matrix* series, *Gattaca*, *Blade Runner*, *I-Robot*, *Surrogates*, to name just a few. Many of those movies were dystopian, such as the *Terminator* series. Others made enhancement something to be desired. *Avatar* did a great job in this; weaving a compelling tale of transhumanism – moving one’s consciousness into a non-human carrier – while promoting a matrix of group-consensus thinking, mystical tribalism, nature worship, and that science can be the portal through which the perfect world is entered. Our modern Western culture has been immersed in transhuman dreams.

Now, transhumanism is moving into higher social and even political domains. For example, the European Union has already put together a special working group to explore transhuman ideas: the ENHANCE Project. And in the United States we can read published reports from government agencies detailing or touching on transhuman issues, such as the 482-page National Science Foundation’s *Converging Technologies for Improving Human Performance*, and the National Intelligence Council’s 2012 report, *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*.

It shouldn’t be a surprise, therefore, to learn that the GF2045 had a political goal; to compel the United Nations to take on the leadership role in future human evolution. As Dmitry wrote in the GF2045 official programme, “I believe that the new evolutionary strategy should be considered at the level of large public and transnational organizations and government leaders.” To that end, an open letter was sent to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, calling on the United Nations to promote a “strategy for the transition to neo-humanity.” Moreover, this letter requested that Ban Ki-moon attend the Congress in person, or to “send a recorded or written appeal to the participants.” [See page 15 for the complete letter].

Ban Ki-moon never showed, and as far as I know, neither did an appeal or recorded message. The GF2045 international political goal, at the present, seems to have fallen short. However, I anticipate that sometime soon a UN “study group” will emerge with suggestions for managing “future human evolution.”

On the technical end, I’m not as convinced that transhuman aspirations will be fully realized. I have no doubt that science and technology will continue to impact society, and in monumental ways. But as impressive as Dr. Ishiguro’s android head was, and as incredible as the theoretical Neural Dust may prove to be, modern science is still groping in the dark on a number of fronts – a fact admitted by a few speakers. For example, the question “what is consciousness” was repeatedly referenced and left open. No one had an answer.

Likewise, “mind engineering” and the creation of synthetic brains were discussed more than a few times. The reason for the buzz was understandable; governments are now funding “brain mapping” projects to the tune of hundreds of millions per year – literally seeking to map out the neural maze of the human brain and unlock its secrets. However, one speaker reminded the audience that we have successfully mapped the entire neural configuration of the roundworm, which contains slightly more than 300 neurons in its brain/nervous system, and yet we are completely incapable of reverse engineering something as *simple as the worm*. How much more unfathomable must the human mind be!

Indeed, we are “fearfully and wonderfully made.” For all that science has revealed there is a tremendous amount it has not yet grasped.

At the same time, we have to acknowledge that science and technology have made far-reaching advances, enabling great deeds and generating much good. But this fact must be tempered with the knowledge that scientific and technical developments are not beyond blunders, unforeseeable negative consequences, or the granting of capacity to commit evil acts. Political machinations and special interests also press upon the world of science, and much of the scientific community itself has become politically charged, creating what nuclear physicist Ralph E. Lapp once called “the new priesthood.”⁷

I am reminded of Neil Postman’s pondering question in his 1993 book, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*; “to whom will the technology give greater power and freedom? And whose power and freedom will be reduced by it?”⁸

After listening to transhumanist experts for two days, I walked away with all of the above swirling in mind. Over and beyond, however, was this pressing thought: We are witnessing the birth of a post-modern, humanist religion.

Although this religion is not “new” in the sense that it springs from the Genesis 3 framework of becoming “God-like” via special knowledge, it is new in that it uniquely blends modern science with spirituality under the banner of transhumanism and the ascension of Man. It is the crossover of Cosmism, Eastern religions and esoteric beliefs, and the faith we have in the “works of our hands.”

In the near-to-mid term, I expect that the Cosmist conception will increasingly shape and influence this “religion of transhumanism.”

The Global Future 2045 Congress demonstrated that this is happening already. **FC**

Endnotes:

¹ Global Future 2045 International Congress, June 15-16, 2013, official program, p.4.

² Ibid., p.3.

³ George M. Young, *The Russian Cosmists: The Esoteric Futurism of Nikolai Fedorov and his Followers* (Oxford University Press, 2012), p.3.

⁴ Ibid., p.4.

⁵ Ibid., p.4.

⁶ Ibid., p.5.

⁷ Ralph E. Lapp, *The New Priesthood: The Scientific Elite and the Uses of Power* (Harper & Row, 1965).

⁸ Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (Vintage Books, 1993), p.11.

Who's Who

AT THE GLOBAL FUTURE 2045 INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS



Picture taken during a GF2045 media briefing. To the left is Peter H. Diamandis, Dr. James Martin is in the center, and then Dmitry Itskov.

Note: Unfortunately, eight days after the Congress, Dr. James Martin was found dead in the ocean near Agar's Island in Bermuda, the location of his estate mansion. While at the GF2045, I was able to spend some time with Dr. Martin, and he informed me that, like myself, he too had grown up on a farm. I found Dr. Martin to be engaging, and was sorry to hear of his passing.

The following is the list of GF2045 speakers as taken from the official Congress program, and includes those who contributed via video feed. Where possible, I have included the speaker's country of origin. Note: I have listed David Hanson as he is found in the program, although he never took the podium due to problems with his android.

Dmitry Itskov (Russia): Founder and chair, 2045 Initiative. Dmitry co-founded an internet business in 1999, which became the New Media Stars company.

Dr. James Martin (Great Britain): Martin was a computer and information technology innovator, and he wrote more than 100 books on computing - many of which became leading textbooks on software and computing design. Martin joined IBM in 1959, and in 1981 became a private consultant to corporations and the British and American governments. He was the first Briton appointed to the US Department of Defense Software Scientific Advisory Board.

Dr. Akop Nazaretyan (Russia): Director, Eurasian Center for Big History; Senior Research Fellow, Oriental Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences; Prof. at Moscow State University.

David Dubrovsky (Russia): Chief Scientist at the Cognition Theory Department, Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Philosophy; Co-chair of the Russian Academy of Sciences' Scientific Council for the Methodology of Artificial Intelligence.

Peter H. Diamandis (United States): Founder of the X Prize Foundation; Co-founder of Singularity University, located on NASA's Ames Research Center campus; Co-founder, Space Adventures Ltd., and the International Space University.

Dr. Hiroshi Ishiguro (Japan): Director, Intelligent Robotics Laboratory, Osaka.

Nigel Ackland (Great Britain): Former precious metals smelter, Nigel lost his forearm in an industrial accident and has been fitted with the most high-tech artificial limb in the world. This advanced prostheses was designed by the firm, RSLSteeper, and is dubbed "BeBionic3." Nigel lives in Cambridgeshire, and says that "having a bionic hand is like being human again... the psychological benefit is immense!"



Dr. Alexander Kaplan (Russia): Brain-Machine Interface developer and founder of the first Russian BCI laboratory; Department of Human Physiology, Faculty of Biology, Moscow State University; Has done research on altered states of consciousness.

Mikhail Lebedev (Russia): Senior Research Scientist at the Center for Neuroengineering, Duke University, North Carolina; Former Research Fellow at the National Institute of Mental Health in Bethesda, Maryland; Former Research Fellow at Moscow's Institute for the Problems of Information Transmission.

Dr. Theodore Berger (United States): Professor of Biomedical Engineering and Neurobiology at the University of Southern California; Director of the Center for Neural Engineering, USC; Currently chairing a global study on brain-computer interfacing with funding, in part, from the US Department of Defense.

Dr. Jose Carmena (Spain): Co-Director of the Center for Neural Engineering and Prostheses at the University of California, Berkeley.

Dr. Michel Maharbiz (United States): Associate Professor, Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, University of California, Berkeley; GE Scholar and Intel IMAP Fellow; 2009 NSF Career Award for his micro-fabricated interfaces for synthetic biology.

Dr. David Hanson (United States): Founder of Hanson Robotics and Chief Technology Officer for Hanson RoboKind, which has produced some of the world's most advanced robots; Former consultant at Walt Disney Imagineering.

Dr. Ben Goertzel (Born in Brazil to American parents, giving him dual citizenship): Co-founder and Chief Scientist of Financial Prediction at Aidya Holdings; Chairman of Novamente (an artificial intelligence software company); Chairman, Artificial General Intelligence Society and OpenCog Foundation; Vice Chair, Humanity+; Advisor to the Singularity Institute.

Dr. Marvin Minsky (United States): Co-founder of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Artificial Intelligence Laboratory; Inventor of the first head-mounted graphical display, the first Confocal Scanning Microscope, and the first Neural Network Learning Machine.

Dr. Alexander Panov (Russia): Senior Research Fellow, Physics Department, Moscow State University; Author of, *Universal Evolution and Challenges in SETI*.

Martine Rothblatt (United States): Founder and CEO of United Therapeutics; Co-founder of Sirius Satellite Radio.

Dr. Anders Sandberg (Sweden): James Martin Research Fellow at the Future of Humanity Institute, Oxford University; Worked on the European Union's ENHANCE Project; Co-founder of Eudoxa and Orion's Arm; Former chairman of the Swedish Transhumanist Association.

Dr. Natasha Vita-More (United States): Design theorist; Fellow, Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies; Chairperson, Humanity+; Co-editor, *The Transhumanist Reader*.

Dr. Ray Kurzweil (United States): Director of Engineering at Google; Senior Fellow, Design Futures Council; Involved in many technical innovations such as text-to-speech and speech recognition, and was the inventor of CCD flatbed scanners and the first print-to-speech reader; Received the National Medal of Technology and Innovation from President Bill Clinton; Author of books such as, *How to Create a Mind*, *The Singularity is Near*, and *The Age of Spiritual Machines*; Ranked #8 US entrepreneur by *Inc. Magazine*.

Dr. Edward Boyden (United States): Associate Prof., Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media Laboratory; Investigator, MIT McGovern Institute; Research Assistant, Bell Labs, Lucent Technologies; *Wired Magazine*, "Smart List 2012: 50 People Who Will Change the World."

Dr. George Church (United States): Professor of Genetics, Harvard Medical School; Director of US Department of Energy's Center on Bio-energy Technology; Director, National Institutes of Health, Center of Excellence in Genomic Science; Introduced first methods for direct genome sequencing, molecular multiplexing and barcoding.

Dr. Randal Koene (Netherlands): Co-founder, CarbonCopies.org, an organization dedicated to brain reverse engineering; Head of Rebrain aspect of the 2045 Avatar Project; Co-founder, Neural Engineering Corporation; Past Director, Department of Neuroengineering at Tecnalia.

Dr. Witali Dunin-Barkowski (Russia): Director, David Marr Internet Lab for Reverse Engineering of the Human Brain, *2045 Initiative*; Head of the Neuroinformatics Department, Center for Optical-Neural Technology of the Scientific Research Institute for Systems Analysis, Russian Academy of Sciences; Founder, Russian Association of Neuroinformatics.

Dr. Ken Hayworth (United States): Founder, Brain Preservation Foundation; Senior Scientist, Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Janelia Farm Research Campus; Holder of multiple patents.

Dr. Stuart Hameroff (United States): Director, Center for Consciousness Studies, University of Arizona; Quantum Consciousness Theorist.

Sir Roger Penrose (Great Britain): Emeritus Rouse Ball Professor Mathematics, University of Oxford; Theorist in quantum physics and consciousness; Fellow, Royal Society of London.

Dr. Amit Goswami (India): Founder, Center for Quantum Activism; Advisory Board Member, Institute of Noetic Sciences; Retired Professor of Physics, University of Oregon's Institute of Theoretical Science.

Swami Vishnudevananda Giri (Russia): Founder, Yoga Monastery-Academy; Founder, Worldwide Society of Laya Yoga. [Giri pictured on right]

Dr. William Bushell (United States): Director of Research, Tibet House US; Affiliated with the Anthropology Program at MIT and the Center for Buddhist Studies at Columbia University.

Phakyab Rinpoche (Tibet): Ranking Tibetan Buddhist Lama in the Gelugpa Order; Founder, Buddhist Dharma Center, New York City.

Mahayogi 'Pilot' Baba (India): Member of the Juna Akhara Order of Hindu Monks.

Dr. Robert Thurman (United States): Professor of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies, Columbia University; President, Tibet House US; President, American Buddhist Studies; Author of many books on Tibetan Buddhism; Time Magazine 25 most influential Americans in 1997.

Dr. Alan Brill: Cooperman/Ross Endowed Chair of Jewish-Christian Studies, Department of Religion, Seton Hall University; Author of books on Judaism and Jewish mysticism.

Lazar Puhalo (Canada): Retired Hierarch of the Orthodox Church in America; Founding Abbot, Monastery of All Saints of North America; Co-founded St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Seminary; Author of many books on religious thought. [Puhalo pictured on right]



Open Letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

An appeal by participants of the Second International Global Future 2045 Congress to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

[NOTE: Bold in original]

March 11, 2013

Mr. Secretary-General,

We, scientists, public figures and business leaders from Russia, the USA, the UK, and Canada as well as participants of the Second International Global Future 2045 Congress (15-16 June 2013, New York) would like to bring to your attention a number of serious issues.

The world stands on the threshold of global change. Ecological, political, anthropological, economic and other crises are intensifying. Wars are waged, resources wasted senselessly, and the planet is being polluted. Society is experiencing a crisis of goals and values, while science and technology are providing unprecedented opportunity for advancement. National leaders remain focused on short-term internal stability, without paying sufficient attention to the opportunities for the future of civilization.

Humanity essentially faces this choice: slide into the abyss of global degradation, or find and realize a new model of development, a model capable of changing human consciousness and giving new meaning to life.

We believe that to move to a new stage of human evolution, mankind vitally needs a scientific revolution coupled with significant spiritual changes, inseparably linked, supplementing and supporting of each other. The vector of future development provided by technological advancement should assist the evolution of the consciousness of humanity, the individual and society, and be the transition to neo-humanity.

This type of research will be discussed at the *Global Future 2045* congress. Cutting-edge technologies will be showcased, many of which have already been developed and improved, but not yet available to the people who need them.

The key components of these studies are:

1. The construction of **anthropomorphic avatar robots**—artificial bodies.
2. The creation of **telepresence robotic systems for long-distance control of avatars**.
3. The development of **brain-computer interfaces for direct mental control of an avatar**.

Applications:

- rehabilitation of the disabled;
- replacement of people working in hazardous conditions, or those tasked with cleaning up during peacekeeping missions, etc.;
- telepresence technologies for personal and business communications, as well as tourism.

The successful further development of the above three studies is expected to lead to further breakthroughs, including:

4. Development of life-extension technologies involving **life-support systems for the human brain** integrated with an artificial Avatar body.

(Note: Per the Global Trends 2030 forecast of the US National Intelligence Council, using replacement limb technology advances, people may choose to enhance their physical selves as they do with cosmetic surgery today.)

Application: the significant extension of the lives of individuals whose biological bodies have exhausted their resources.

5. A study of the main **principles of the functioning of the human brain**, and the creation of a functional model.

6. Development of **prostheses for parts of the human brain**.

7. Creation of a **fully artificial equivalent of the human brain**.

8. A study of human consciousness and the possibilities for its future **embodiment in a non-biological substrate**.

Applications:

- treatment of degenerative diseases and traumas of the brain;
- exploration of regions of outer space hostile to biological human life;
- radical extension of human life to the point of immortality.

Participants of the *Global Future 2045* congress include scientists, philosophers, representatives of different religions, public figures, business leaders, and philanthropists. We will demonstrate the realistic nature of Avatar technologies and launch a new science megaproject that will form the foundation of a new evolutionary strategy for humanity. This realization will make it possible to solve many of society's problems once and for all, overcoming the biological limitations of humans, and creating a new civilization with high ethics, culture, spirituality, high technology and science.

This new strategy should become an alternative to nationally focused ideologies, transforming the inhabitants of our planet into citizens of Earth, and bringing nations together, making it the meaning of life for each citizen to serve high ideals and principles, and pursue constant self-development.

To carry out this important mission, your support is key for us. We invite you to take part in the congress personally, or send a recorded or written appeal to the participants.

We believe that in the near future, the UN General Assembly will gather not to regulate military conflicts, but to recommend that heads of state and leaders of national and transnational organizations take it upon themselves to realize the strategy for the transition to neo-humanity.

Signed by:

• **Dmitry Itskov** — Founder of the *2045 Initiative*. President of the *Global Future 2045* congress.

• **Ray Kurzweil** — Director of Engineering, Google; futurist and inventor, co-founder, Singularity University, and author of *How to Create a Mind*.

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- **Dr. James Martin** — British author and entrepreneur and the largest individual benefactor to the University of Oxford in its 900-year history.
 - **Dr. Theodore Berger** — USC Professor, brain prosthesis technology developer.
 - **Dr. Peter H. Diamandis** — Founder and Chairman, X Prize Foundation, co-founder, Singularity University, author of *Abundance*.
 - **Dr. Robert Thurman** — Professor of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist studies at Columbia University. Author and tireless proponent of peace.
 - **Dr. Amit Goswami** — Professor Emeritus from the Theoretical Physics Department of the University of Oregon.
 - **Dr. David Hanson** — Robotics designer and researcher, creating androids: humanlike robots with intelligence and feelings.
 - **Dr. Alexander Kaplan** — Psychophysicologist, founder of the first Russian Brain-Computer Interface laboratory.
 - **Dr. Ben Goertzel** — Artificial General Intelligence researcher and entrepreneur. Founder, OpenCog Project. CEO, Novamente LLC.
 - **Dr. Natasha Vita-More** — Human enhancement theorist, university lecturer, co-editor *The Transhumanist Reader* on the philosophy of self-directed human evolution.
 - **Dr. Randal Koene** — Head of Carboncopies.org, author of the concept of Substrate-Independent Minds (SIM).
 - **Dr. Anders Sandberg** — Researcher, Future of Humanity Institute, and science debater, futurist, author of the *Whole Brain Emulation Roadmap*.
 - **Dr. Stuart Hameroff** — Neuro-anesthesiologist and professor at the University of Arizona. Co-creator of the Orch OR model of the quantum nature of consciousness and memory.
 - **Dr. Ken Hayworth** — President of the Brain Preservation Foundation, and Senior Scientist at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Janelia Farm Research Campus.
 - **Dr. David Dubrovsky** — Russian philosopher, psychologist and expert in the field of analytical philosophy of mind.
 - **Dr. Witali L. Dunin-Barkowski** — Head of the Russian project for reverse brain engineering. Professor. Founder of the Russian Association of Neuroinformatics.
 - **Dr. Alexander Panov** — Astrophysicist, author of the Snooks-Panovcurve which describes the singularity.
 - **Dr. William Bushell** — MIT-affiliated religious anthropologist.
 - **Lazar Puhalo** — Archbishop (ret.) of Ottawa of the Orthodox Church in America.
 - **Swami Vishnudevananda Giri Ji Maharaj** — Russian yoga master, philosopher, futurologist.
 - **Rabbi Dr. Alan Brill** — Cooperman/Ross Endowed Professor in Honor of Sister Rose Thering at Seton Hall University.
 - **Nigel Ackland** — Pioneering user of the world's most advanced bionic artificial arm.
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The Politics of Evolution

The *2045 Initiative* aims to be more than just a technical, social, and spiritual movement. It recognizes that if the components of future human evolution are to come together in the trans-humanist goal, then a political movement needs to be launched. Enter **Evolution 2045** - the political party of the *2045 Initiative*.

Below is the Manifesto and Aims and Goals of the Evolution 2045 political party.

NOTE: Bold in original.

Manifesto

The Initiative 2045 announces the creation of its own political party — "Evolution 2045" — in order to advocate for a new strategy for human development.

This is a Russia-based party, but its goals are international and global. Our ultimate goal is to inspire other countries to follow suit, and compete not in the arms race, but in the race for building a bright future for mankind.

We invite everyone who shares our ideology of the future to support the idea of creating an international political union by organizing a party similar to "Evolution 2045" in their country. We will be happy to provide the necessary informational support. Please contact us for more information.

We exist on the threshold of a radical global change. Environmental, political, anthropological crises and other global problems that confront humanity are constantly deepening. Our civilization is like a ship out of control, sailing in the storm with ever increasing speed, without a map or compass. At the same time there is little time for making the right decisions. We face a choice: either to enter a new dark-age by the middle of this century and sink into global chaos as forecasted by scientists or find and realize a new model of human civilization.

We are in need of a new paradigm for human development. We need a new ideology and new ethics. We need new ways of thinking. Instead of focusing on consumerism and wars, let's achieve human evolution through the reorganization of our bio-social nature. Our lives are limited by our biology and Earth-bound ways of existence. This reorganization will mean changes in our values, our consciousness, the fostering of new meanings and life goals that would widen the horizons of our existence. It would open up unheard-of vistas of self perfection, new understandings, and foster our creativity and spirituality.

For the first time in human history evolution can become manageable. We have already made significant progress in the study of our biological self-organization, in organ prosthetics, in the field of artificial intelligence and robotics. The evolution of convergent technologies opens up the creation of self-organizing systems capable of reproducing the functions of biological life and consciousness on non-biological carriers. This is the way of trans-humanist transformations, the replacement of biological evolution with cybernetic evolution. The motivating force for the development of biological evolution is a human being's inevitable death. For cybernetic evolution, however, death ceases to be inevitable, and

immortality for human beings becomes a key factor. This unlimited lifespan enables new opportunities for learning, creativity, self-development and space exploration.

Could such a shift in evolution happen by itself? Not Likely! At the moment humanity has no long-term plan for its further development. It is prone to inertia and short-term thinking. A large part of our political and intellectual elites passively or cautiously look at the achievements and possibilities of scientific and technological progress. The transhumanist change is often dismissed from the outset. But despite the risks and costs, transhumanism carries a real opportunity for our civilization to reach a higher stage of development.

The “2045 Initiative” has decided to establish a new political party “Evolution 2045”. Our Party's mission is to implement a new strategy for evolutionary development of human civilization until the year 2045. We strive to not only ensure the survival of our civilization amidst ever worsening global crisis, but also reach a higher level of control over our reality. We will reach new goals, create new meanings and values, and form humane, ethical and high-tech architecture of world order.

We propose to widely spread new ideas of guided human evolution based on the technology of cybernetic immortality. We advocate continuous and purposeful development of a highly ethical neo-humanity. We will offer a strategy for continuous self-improvement of society, individuals, their mind and body.

We will start a new era of mega-projects and open up the era of great and glorious deeds. We will lift, not just Russia, but all of humanity from its knees. We will help humanity out of its dull, downward spiral. And we will help it to become strong, confident, optimistic, prosperous and immortal — ready to rush to new heights!

We will exceed the very limited organic nature of the human species and escape from the shackles of worldly gravity to neo-humanity.

This is the time for good, wise, creative, strong and self-confident people to join our call. It's time to live not for material gain, but for the sake of high ideals and goals. It's time to wake up and move forward!

We want to inspire humanity to not be paralyzed by obstacles, but think like geniuses, in futuristic, creative, strategic and paradoxical ways. We aim to expand the frontiers of consciousness, strengthen the power of the spirit and foster faith in the creative potential of the mind. We aim to fully support the optimistic perspective on reality despite the current widespread skepticism and gloom. Great goals generate great energy! Our ideology is a source of inspiration and creative prowess.

Others can label us dreamers and unrealistic, but we have our feet grounded in reality! Our program is based on the spiritual and intellectual power, creative will, clear scientific principles, and the latest achievements in Science.

The creation of such a party is long overdue and meets the urgent needs of our time. Many people, including political leaders are well aware that experts say that by mid-century, there may come a phase of destructive chaos with unpredictable consequences. Yet there is no decisive action to counter it in the present world. What we have is a lack of an effort to solve crises, and governments resorting to pathetic half-measures that essentially leave things unchanged.

Our party directly confronts the issues above. The crisis of our civilization troubles the minds of many of us, and there is a growing number of those who are ready to act. We are counting on their support.

Relationship With Existing Powers

The party does not intend to win votes through a populist platform based on a critique of the current government. Our task is not the change of power, but the creation of a wide social demand to convince world's government leaders to create a new strategy for society.

Relationship with other social and political organizations

We would welcome it if other political parties constructively accept our ideology and contribute to its spread in Russia and the world. We are open to cooperation with any interested organization. We plan to put forward our candidates for working in various state and social structures in order to achieve our objectives.

The Party's organizational structure

Along with the more traditional management structures of a political party, "Evolution 2045" will hold a Research & Ethics Council. Their function is to consult with the leading scientists, public figures and representatives of various religious denominations who support our ideology.

Harnessing support

To attract genuine supporters of our ideology, we plan to form the governing bodies and the regional structures staffed by people willing to work on a volunteer basis.

Aims and Goals

1. We will develop, promote and implement a new ideology and strategy of bodily and spiritual human evolution, in order to reach a new stage of human civilization. This phase will be associated with the radical widening of human creativity and its cybernetic immortality.
2. We will radically change the image and status of the scientist, researcher and engineer in our society. We want to create an efficient system that encourages the development and work of young scientists. We want to foster a "factory" of bright minds in order to grow the new Tsiolkovskies and Einsteins — the true stars of the future society.
3. We will attempt to implement a cultural revolution, achieve a sharp rise in the level of mass education, and promote the establishment of special training programs for schools and universities.
4. We will support the efforts aimed at improving the level of mass culture, spiritual and moral health of society and spiritual development, without any restrictions on the freedom of speech, creativity and self-expression. We want to create conditions for a new inter-faith dialogue on the strategy for human evolution.
5. We will establish an international organization on the scale of UNESCO or even the United Nations in order to bring together the efforts of political parties and social movements of the world under the auspices of our ideology of the future.
6. We will promote the formation of a new intellectual elite: people capable of new, futuristic ways of thinking, free from dogma and ready-made ideas, people ready to take responsibility for the steady and

purposeful development of humanity, preservation and development of human intelligence on a cosmic scale.

7. We will develop all forms of cooperation with existing transhumanist, scientific and educational organizations and foundations in order to implement a new strategy for human evolution. We will help in the creation of charitable foundations supporting the ideology of bodily and spiritual evolution and its possible immortality.

8. We will organize an international research and development center for the implementation of a mega-project to create avatar technology and medical technologies of the new generation. We will focus on the creation of cybernetic limbs and organs in order to transfer individual human consciousness to a more capable carrier — a designed body. We also aim to eventually create a new medicine of immortality.

9. We will introduce a legislative initiative "on Universal Right for Cybernetic Immortality" that would be implemented along with such technological development. **Human desire for immortality is the natural extension of the will to live.**

10. We will develop and implement a social program to ensure access for the world's population to the latest technology of medical prosthetic limbs, sight and hearing while the technology of a more capable body is created. We need to ensure that people with disabilities can become people with extra abilities!

11. We shall start a broad discussion and the scientific study of philosophical, ethical, and humanistic psychological problems of a transhumanist and anthropological future of humanity. We'll seek out expert opinions and track the consequences of any decisions during the implementation of a new strategy for human evolution.

12. We will contribute to the development, discussion and public acceptance of mankind's space expansion strategy with the development of "avatar technologies" for the next 100 years.

Forcing Change is a monthly, online publication dedicated to documenting and analyzing the socio-religious transformations now sweeping our Western world.

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