

Big Questions of our TIME

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This book in its totality poses a big question that connects all the individual questions in it. How is our world going to be governed in the twenty first century, when momentous technological, ecological, economic, political, social, cultural and philosophical changes are taking place?

It might be argued that change is the only constant. The world has coped with changes in the past. It will do so in the future. Several wise men and women, from Malthus to the Club of Rome, have warned us of declining resources. Several futurologists from Toffler to Kruzweil have alerted us to technological, social and cultural shifts. Several political theorists, from Hegel to Huntington, have declared that the old order was over. And yet the world has carried on, with an imperfect United Nations in the last century, a Concert of Power in the century before, and without any mechanism of global governance earlier. Why should we be particularly concerned about the changes that will take place in this century?

This book reminds us that what we have assumed for millennia will not necessarily hold together much longer. The basic laws of physics that explain our understanding of the universe, the terms of relationship between man and nature, well established rules of biological evolution, the principles determining the working of institutions of society, and many other assumptions about life and humanity are being questioned. The present system of global governance is completely inadequate to address these big questions. G-20, UN Security Council, World Bank, IMF, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and other institutions react to crisis in a fragmented way. There is nothing in the world that can anticipate and respond to revolutionary opportunities and catastrophic risks in a holistic manner. In the absence of such a mechanism, we cannot reach consensus on a vast range of issues from trade to climate change and from democracy to cyber security. We urgently need a new architecture of global governance.

The book presents selected essays from our writings on the website of Strategic Foresight Group. In our reflections, as well as in our work around the world, we have realised that challenges to human survival and prosperity are much more interconnected than we tend to acknowledge. So far our knowledge of universe has proved ours to be the only inhabited planet. It has been



given to us by previous generations and it is our responsibility to preserve it for our future generations. We have an obligation to manage it in a way that we are conscious of our debt to the unborn and grateful to the forces of universe for the unique endowment of intelligent life that we have. Such an obligation compels us to match our intelligence with wisdom, our spirit of endeavour with compassion, and our ambition with sustainability. We hope that an open debate on the big questions of our time will provide big and bold answers.

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