Special Address by Volodymyr Zelensky, President of Ukraine > World Economic Forum Annual Meeting

When asked by Forum founder Klaus Schwab what his dream is, Mr. Zelenskyy answered: "A state that can protect its people at any time."

Demyan Om: Thank you, Mr. President, but what do we really want in the future? **A *state* that can protect people — or people who can protect the *state*?**

When discussing our future, we should start by questioning the archaic word you use — "держава" [derzhava] [1]

In official documents this is usually translated as “state”, and our English-speaking readers do not even guess that we are talking about something essentially different.

The feudal Ukrainian word "держава" [derzhava] does not actually translate directly into the English word “state”. A more precise translation would be "something which holds power", as in "holds the reins, steers the horse".
In modern Ukrainian, "держава" [derzhava] has become very common: it is the official term for ‘state’ in the Ukrainian Constitution, and it is used for all national institutions, all positions of officials — both legislative and executive.
But in the old “Moscovian language”, it is similar to the word "*государство*" [gosudarstvo], which translates more into “empire”, not “state”.

So if we discuss our future, should we not drop this archaic, imprecise word from our Constitution, and leave it to historians?

Let's return to the countries that are changing fast now and although they are defending, like Ukraine, their history, they are actively building their Future. At least twenty Ukrainian intellectual circles I know, including our own think tank, are currently working on Ukraine's future after the victory.

I believe in the Logos, I believe in the Word and the Knowledge behind it, and I see how the words written in the Constitutions affect their nations.
This is vital to our main question: What kind of society are we building?
Will we continue to live by old principles and keep arming ourselves while manoeuvring between defensive political alliances?
Alliances that will fall apart as soon as new politicians take the stage or occupy their seats in the state apparatus?

Maybe it's time to move away from the old constitutions, and their habits and traditions — at the level of countries, of organizations within these countries, of supranational organizations.

Especially in countries such as Ukraine, where the President alone is responsible for the Constitution. Because this means that we depend on the President and his own interests. Who else could be the Keeper/Keepers of the integrity of the Constitution?

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Next question:
How can those who guard the laws deal with those who constantly violate them?
For example, for three years now, judges of the Supreme Constitutional Court of Ukraine have been refusing to comply with the law and submit themselves to the qualification commission for integrity. Even though the people, the Parliament and the President demand them to do so.
According to the Constitution, no one can dismiss the judges of the Supreme Court. All other courts in the country are lower in status and currently act at their own discretion or in the interests of individuals — often criminal — persons...
I believe that we will carry out a thorough judicial reform in the coming years, but the question is still open, how to do this without violating the Constitutional rules?

And how should this court be designed, in order for the rule of law really to prevail over the rule by law? If we are ready to move into the future, how can we bring an end to the situation where the final decisions are being taken by just one judge?

Is it time to move away from (traditions and habits to) deputies ***(who exactly do you mean by deputies)***, who are never elected by everyone, but only by a group of people, part of society?

Next question:
Is it time to move away from religious institutions? Do they interpret texts and values as they wish? Do they prevent people from becoming wise by themselves? Or not?
How do you see the extent to which religious institutions remain a source of wisdom?

And finally:
Could this be the beginning of a blueprint for our future society?
Let’s discuss it step by step:

Everyone is responsible for themselves. And everyone is responsible for everyone.
Everyone is armed. And everyone remembers that everyone is armed.
Everyone speaks to God alone. And everyone can initiate a philosophical dialogue.
Everyone can convene a “viche” (chamber). And everyone considers it an honor to enter this “veche”.
Everyone can create a working group. And in each working group, people are looking for consensus.
Everyone can become a mentor. And everyone can find a mentor. Mentoring is about wisdom (sophia) and the practice of wisdom (sophia), right?
Curriculum Vitæ public statement, instead of income public statement...

How can we come to such consciousness?
What is written in the future and what is dictated by the past?
Can we move into the future simply by rejecting artifacts of the past?

.Demyan Om Dyakiv-Slavitski
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