**Intervention for the sake of humanism?**

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, 1994

**Food for thought…**

(Short summary by Jean-Marie Choffray)

<https://www.forbes.com/2008/08/05/solzhenitsyn-forbes-interview-oped-cx_pm_0804russia.html?sh=1d1c461d5f53>

“Who can find in world history another such example of peaceful conduct? […] Russia today is terribly sick. Her people are sick to the point of total exhaustion. But even so, have a conscience and don't demand that – just to please America – Russia throw away the last vestiges of her concern for her security. […] In 1919, when he imposed his regime on Ukraine, Lenin gave her several Russian provinces to assuage her feelings. These provinces have never historically belonged to Ukraine. I am talking about the eastern and southern territories of today's Ukraine. Then, in 1954, Khrushchev, with the arbitrary capriciousness of a satrap, made a "gift" of the Crimea to Ukraine. But even he did not manage to make Ukraine a "gift" of Sevastopol, which remained a separate city under the jurisdiction of the U.S.S.R. central government. This was accomplished by the American State Department, first verbally through Ambassador Popadiuk in Kiev and later in a more official manner. […] The recent elections in Ukraine, for instance, clearly show the [Russian] sympathies of the Crimean and Donets populations. And a democracy must respect this. […] I love her culture and genuinely wish all kinds of success for Ukraine – but only within her real ethnic boundaries, without grabbing Russian provinces. And not in the form of a "great power," the concept on which Ukrainian nationalists have placed their bets. They are acting out and trumpeting a cult of force, persistently inflating Russia into the image of an "enemy." Militant slogans are proclaimed. And the Ukrainian army is being indoctrinated with the propaganda that war with Russia is inevitable. […] You know that during the American Civil War, Russia supported Lincoln and the North [in contrast to Britain and France, which supported the Confederacy]. […] The historical Russia has never tried to take over the world, whereas the communists had precisely this aim. […] In Yugoslavia the problems began for the same reason as in the U.S.S.R. The communists – they had Tito, we had Lenin and Stalin – charted out arbitrary, ethnically nonsensical and historically unjustifiable internal administrative boundaries, and for years moved inhabitants from one region to another. […] How can a minority govern a majority? Only through duplicity and force. […] I regard Russia's conquest of Central Asia in the 19th century as a mistake. […] Already in 1990 I wrote that Russia could desire the union of only the three Slavic republics [Russia, Ukraine, Belarus] and Kazakhstan, while all the other republics should be let go. […] Not a single one of the former oppressors and even the executioners has been brought to justice. They haven't even repented. The whole communist elite has had time to simply change masks – some became "democrats," some became businessmen – but they have successfully held on to all the commanding positions, both in Moscow and in the provinces. […] Before the revolution, Russia was completely a market economy. […] Hitlerism had racism as its essential dogmatic foundation. But in a multiethnic country, such an ideology has no chance of success. […] If one were to count all the instances of violence perpetrated on nationalist grounds and in local wars, all of them took place outside of Russia and were not perpetrated by Russians. […] Russia is a combination of many nations – large, medium size and small – sharing the Russian language and a tradition of religious tolerance. […] If one looks far into the future, one can foresee in the 21st century such a time when the U.S. together with Europe will be in dire need of Russia as an ally. […] It is puzzling only for those who don't look into the future and do not see what kind of new powers are arising in the world.”