

European nuclear power and research reactors — along with nuclear arsenals in Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan as well as Russia — some type of nuclear explosion, accidental or otherwise, is likely to occur if tensions aren't resolved through peaceful means, according to Institute analysis.

The United Nations will not be successful in producing any lasting peace, the Institute forecasts. The international organization is taking a much more active role in peacekeeping and peacemaking, but its resources are limited and its track record — as evidenced by the failures in Somalia, the former Yugoslavia and Haiti — is poor.

The wake of Eastern Europe's massive destabilization will force the continent to buckle. The socio-economic and political crumbling will last into the early part of the next decade.

Further pressure on Europe will be felt as refugees flee warring African nations, which include Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Kenya, Nigeria and Rwanda.

Beyond war, Africa's population, currently about equal to Europe's, is projected to mushroom to three times that of Europe in the next 15 years, causing a tidal wave of poor immigrants into Western Europe. (Fully 95 percent of the projected doubling of the world's population will take place in developing countries through the mid-2000's.)

U.S. VIEW

The United States — sensing a declining Europe and holding a belief the Economic Community will not rebound as a powerhouse — has already set its economic sights on the Pacific Rim. It is also cultivating trade in the Americas.

But while Washington is focusing economic attention on these regions, its political support of Russian President Boris Yeltsin and other newly "democratic" leaders will not go unnoticed by their adversaries.

Indeed, it will lead to anti-American terrorism, not only overseas but also at home, setting the stage for

America's involvement in another major war. (See "Trends in Terrorism," 1993 Spring Issue, page 1 ff.)

4 TECHNO-TRIBALISM

The paving of the "information superhighway" came into stunning focus in 1993 with a raft of mergers, acquisitions, joint ventures, and declarations of overall government and corporate commitment.

In addition to Bell Atlantic's bid to buy Tele-Communications Inc. — along with US West's alliance with Time Warner and Southwest Bell's joint venture with Cox Cable — company after company announced new products, alliances and time frames related to new telecommunications services using digital video, fiber-optic and wireless technologies.

Now, as new prototype systems electronically roll out onto the "test track," the centrifugal forces of the technological revolution are pulling people away from centralized offices, which were a feature of the Industrial Age, and taking them back to their homes and "virtual offices," which will become identifying markers of the postindustrial Global Age.

A resulting trend will be a "techno-tribalism" among people who work at home or in nearby "satellite" offices.

Some 40 million people already work at home full or part time. As the information superhighway is further developed, the computer will increasingly replace the commuter. Roughly 32 million households — about one in three — already have computers.

MY BACKYARD

While these postindustrial workers will "think global," thanks to the technology that will plug them into the world, they'll "act local" because they'll spend the bulk of their time at home or near it, becoming more community conscious than when they commuted longer distances to the office.

With local priorities above others, techno-tribalists will also perceive themselves as protectors of the community. For instance:

■ They'll call for resources to be used locally rather than dispersed statewide or nationally.

■ They'll keep an eye on outlying communities to see how those communities' actions could affect their own community's well-being.

■ They'll trend toward supporting local businesses "to keep our money local."

The sense of tribal consciousness, loyalty and organization could span beyond a local town's borders. Indeed, some neighboring cities, towns and other municipalities will form cooperative confederations to share resources and control such concerns as the environment and overdevelopment.

The techno-tribalism trend will echo the sentiment of the new, growing isolationist trend. People, concerned about their own welfare, are increasingly embracing a view that they shouldn't have to solve other regions' crises.

5 LATINO

Latin American culture will begin to take on decidedly Anglo-American characteristics as the white American standard becomes the Hispanic symbol of upward mobility.

At the same time, Hispanic influences will continue to gain strength in American popular culture.

Many marketers are operating under a one-eyed belief that Hispanics won't assimilate like past immigrant groups because of the proximity of the United States to Latin America.

It's true that Hispanic assimilation patterns differ from those of earlier immigrant groups. But an Institute Globalnomic® trend analysis has found the assimilation will remain a strong trend, especially among upwardly mobile second- and third-generation Hispanics.

McMEXICAN

The fascination with American pop culture and Hollywood personalities — along with traditional peer pressures, particularly among school-age children and young adults —

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ing products while poking fun at political clowns will be well received by a general public that's become disgusted with negative campaigns and boorish behavior.

However, the battle will be brutal, wild card candidates are in the wings and the nation's focus will move toward center stage by midyear in what we forecast will become the most highly voter participated race in over 60 years. With the 2008 elections gearing up to be the "Greatest Show on Earth," anyone with something to sell will do well by jumping on the campaign bandwagon. ■

TECHNOTRIBALISM

The tribes of the world are uniting. Tied together by the arteries of the information superhighway, citizens of common dreams and common causes are forming human bonds that transcend national borders, religious beliefs and political ideologies.

Still in its youth and growing with unbound vitality, the exploding Internet is unleashing powers to the people that will change the way the world is run ... and who will run it.

Born to society over a decade ago – when e-commerce was not a word, and Prodigy and CompuServe were the major online service providers – the Internet has now connected much of the global village. In 1997, for example, the US Department of Commerce reported that just 36 percent of households had computers and only 18 percent had Internet access. Today, only the elderly and uninterested don't have PCs at home, a laptop for the road and Internet access on demand.

As dial-up died, broadband grew and new speed-of-light technologies continue to evolve. Now the FaceBook of the new world order is seen on MySpace and other social networks of thousands of far flung "friends" who can instantly spread "the word" to thousands more.

Bigger than blogs and more influential than the social networks, TechnoTribes will rally masses with calls for action when rights are violated, lives threatened and/or change is needed. Distrusting of politicians and critical of their leadership skills, the egalitarian tribes will unite those who share civic interests, follow moral codes and believe in universal truths. These Global Agers will garner wide support from the intellectually disenfranchised that don't dutifully respect institutional authority or blindly follow the leaders.

From local zoning to Middle East wars, TechnoTribes of many stripes and different colors will stand together in numbers far greater than the political powers they oppose and the police forces that protect those politicians.

INTERNET PAUL REVERES

From hometown issues to global events, millions of news hounds and information junkies across the globe are spreading the word and showing footage of what's going on and what's coming down. With content no longer controlled or edited by corporate media, raw views of events are being shown in living color. With surveillance cameras everywhere and personal cell phones capturing spontaneous events, YouTube reality shows that would have never made the air before are now being broadcast for millions to see ... for free!

Whatever the issues, wherever the events, armed with information and filled with data, TechnoTribalists will conclude for themselves what to believe rather than looking to others to be told what to think. Equipped with an arsenal of hi-tech communication gear and guerrilla techno-how, these new millennium revolutionaries that equate Internet freedom to individual rights, will fight those who believe they know better and want control.

A new world order is being formed. As radical a transition as that from the reign of emperors and kings to republics and democracies, the TechnoTribes will wage their wars against Industrial Age governments, local and global, whose ideas and operations are deemed outdated and seen as threatening. Capable of rallying on-line millions to take a stand, battles of mind and morals, not bullets and beatings, will be fought by TechnoTribe warriors of the world.

Trendpost: *The Social Networking trend is only in its early growth stages (trends are born, they grow, mature, reach old age and die). The Internet, more so than most other business sectors, provides the greatest opportunity for entrepreneurs at the lowest cost of entry. Unlike retail, for example, with its burdensome fixed costs and tough competitive pressures, creating web content and developing web sites takes less capital and more brain power and techno-how to achieve success.*

This window of opportunity, still open for everyone while the major players continue their attempt to corner cyberspace, will remain open for at least a decade. It's a "sweet spot" of creative freedom that comes but at a fleeting moment. (See "Cyberworld TV," Trends Journal, Winter 2006.)

Trendpost: *The mobility of the post industrial world is producing a form of neo-nomadism in which people are no longer bound to the land or the community as they were in the Agrarian or even the Industrial Age. Today's breadwinners and road warriors travel far and frequently in order to reach their financial hunting grounds.*

Alert businesses should be attuned to the new set of