Totally novel phenomena cannot be foreseen accurately - at best they can be imagined. Whether or not the real future will then correspond to the imagined picture of it depends both on the acuteness of the intuition and on chance. In cases where the degree of probability of the prognoses is relatively low future developments and events can only be foreseen - if at all - in roughest outline. Often exact quantitative statements are impossible to make (see examples under 2) and 3) above). We must also take into account that the sudden intrusion of a completely incalculable factor of interference such as a natural catastrophy or a revolutionary invention may totally upset a situation which, in the past, had lent itself to reasonably accurate prediction. On the other hand, in our daily lives we are all in the habit of making predictions that we treat as certainties. Even in the field of politics ,we assume that in a "stable" society such as Switzerland the system of government, the social structure or the economic condition will remain essentially unchanged over a certain period of time. Finally, short-term previews are as a rule more dependable than long-term predictions. Again secular trends are occasionally easier to detect than isolated short-term happenings.

Although most of us are creatures of custom, life and action of modern "Faustian" man require that he recognizes the future as an unfolding time-dimension. Indeed, in the triarchy of past - present - future, the future is gaining weight, and planning the future is becoming more urgent than ever before, for one particular reason: In former times it was possible to watch the unfolding of events more or less leisurely and reflect calmly on what they portended for the future and on how to cope with them. Today, in contrast, man faces a veritable onrush of things. Everywhere, in every field, developments and events seem to be characterized by an increased rate of acceleration - whether it be the increasingly speedy development of scientific and technological inventions and discoveries or the acceleration of the very speed with which man moves on earth and into space, whether one contemplates the ever steeper curve of the "population explosion" or the multiplication of the number of nations that enter the world community[7]. This development is, perhaps, the most frightening in respect to the increasing power of the instruments of destruction, which puts the survival of mankind itself into jeopardy.

Merely sitting back here and watching what is going to happen would amount to permitting events to overtake mankind. Never in its entire history was it more urgent to anticipate what is about to happen and to

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6) For the difficulty of political predictions cf. also Jean Meynaud, "A propos des spéculations sur l'avenir", Revue française de science politique, Vol. 13 and 15, Paris 1963, pp. 666 ff. and 705 ff.

7) On the impact of the process of acceleration on world affairs cf. the forthcoming study by John H. Herz, International Politics in the Technological Age.