



**BULLETIN OF THE EMBASSY
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC
OF BANGLADESH ON TOPICAL
FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES
AND EVENTS**



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We present you the bulletin of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the People's Republic of Bangladesh on topical foreign policy issues and events, including those related to Russia, in the materials of Russian political scholars, as well as in the articles and speeches of the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the People's Republic of Bangladesh Alexander V. MANTYTSKIY

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**THE ARTICLE OF MR. DMITRY MEDVEDEV
“THE HUMANITY SHOULD GET RID OF THE COLONIAL
SYSTEM HERITAGE. COLONIAL POWERS’ TIME IS UP”.
“ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA”**

14 June 2024

United Russia plans to hold several important international events in Vladivostok in mid-June. Some of these events are part of Russia’s BRICS chairmanship programme. All the events will continue the tradition of public and political cooperation, seeking to build a polycentric and just world order by pursuing genuine democratisation of global governance.

These joint efforts are becoming increasingly relevant, if not vitally important, in today’s world. They are a logical consequence of humanity’s evolution. More and more countries on the planet are expressing their desire to live in a global community free from the legacy of the colonial system. They want to build a world based on the principles of inclusive multilateralism, sovereign equality, peaceful coexistence and mutual respect between countries with different political and social systems. The upcoming events will mark another important step towards achieving this goal.

I would like to elaborate on several key topics that, I am confident, will be extensively discussed during these events.

Neocolonialism: Old threats in a new era

In February 2024, a forum was held in Moscow for supporters of the fight against modern neocolonialism practices. This forum, called For Freedom of Nations, was organised by United Russia. Around 200 representatives from more than 50 countries took

part in the event, whose main outcome was the establishment of a global anti-neocolonial movement, For Freedom of Nations, which will fight to eradicate modern practices of exploitation and hegemonism.

The meeting starkly demonstrated the urgent need to drastically intensify cooperation among all progressive forces against neocolonialism, which hinders many countries from embarking on a path of steady and just development. Neocolonialism is a long-standing and complex problem that requires a special approach and, most importantly, collaborative efforts to resolve.

Neocolonialism has long been a challenge in human history. The term was firmly established in the mid-20th century to describe the strategies employed by former colonial powers to contain the development of younger nations that had recently gained formal independence. These strategies were implemented in order to compensate for the metropolises’ own losses caused by de-colonisation.

There is brazen interference in the affairs of independent states, which, unfortunately, still continues in various forms. Despite humanity’s persistent efforts to eradicate neocolonialism, the Western world vehemently resists it.

It aims to transition from isolated and national to global neocolonialism – a system of unequal economic and political relations imposed by Western countries on the rest of the world, a system that rests upon their military power, Western capital, international financial organisations and multinational corporations (Anatoly Gorelov. From the Colonial System to Global Neocolonialism. 2014. No. 2, p. 60). The former colonial powers persist in exploiting dependent countries, enhancing their own comfort through the humiliation and oppression of others – albeit employing more sophisticated tools and methods. This is not a new phenomenon. Consuetudo est altera natura, or “Habit is second nature.”

I will cite just a few figures that eloquently describe the political component of neocolonialism. According to experts (American experts, for all their bias), between 1946 and 2000, the United States interfered in elections in other countries more than 80 times. Since 1945, there have been more than 50 attempted coups and military interventions (Dov H. Levin. Partisan electoral interventions by the great powers: Introducing the PEIG Dataset. Conflict Management and Peace Science, 2019, Vol. 36(1), pp. 88-106; William Blum. Overthrowing other people's governments: The Master List. URL: <https://williamblum.org/essays/read/overthrowing-other-peoples-governments-the-master-list>).

One of the primary tools that the neo-metropolises are using to accomplish their goals are unilateral sanctions that run contrary to international law. Of the 174 cases of restrictive measures applied in the 20th century, the United States was responsible for 109; in 80 cases, they sought to change the policies of undesirable states (Haufbacher G., Shott J., Elliott K., Oegg B. Economic Sanctions Reconsidered, 3rd edition. Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2009, p. 248). In fact, America has become a global sanctions neo-metropolis. In its activities, Washington makes extensive use not only of primary sanctions, but also secondary sanctions (based on the principle of extraterritorial jurisdiction), seeking to undermine third countries' foreign, trade and economic policies, thereby openly violating their sovereignty.

Below are a few examples of the consequences of these illegal restrictive measures. As of October 2023, the total damage to the Cuban economy from the embargo imposed in 1960 amounted to \$159.8 billion. During the period of US unilateral restrictions against Iran in 1984-2000, the average annual cost of those sanctions was \$80 million (Sanctions related to Iran//The White House official press-release. Fact-sheet. 31.07.2012). Between 2006 and 2012, during the period of multilateral sanctions, the annual toll on Iran was \$5.7 billion (O.V. Komshukova, Sanctions against Iran: Goals and Consequences. Economic and Social Problems of Russia. Social Factors of Economic Growth, Moscow,

INION RAN, 2016, No. 2-11). Over the seven years since the first sanctions were imposed on Venezuela in 2015, they have caused losses of \$642 billion to the Latin American country's GDP, as President Nicolas Maduro said in his annual address to the nation in January 2024 (Maduro called US sanctions economic genocide, RIA Novosti, January 15, 2024).

By doing this, the United States blatantly disregarded the 1927 judgement by the Permanent Court of International Justice, which highlighted the importance of respecting the sovereignty of other states in the legal context and pointed out that "the first and foremost restriction imposed by international law upon a State is that, failing the existence of a permissive rule to the contrary, it may not exercise its power in any form in the territory of another State" (Permanent Court of International Justice. The Case of S.S. Lotus (France v. Turkey). Judgement. Publication of the Permanent Court of International Justice, pp.18-19). Similarly, the United States acted contrary to the 1965 UN General Assembly Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States, the 1970 UN General Assembly Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States, and Resolution 27/21 of the UN Human Rights Council, dated September 26, 2014, which says that unilateral coercive measures and legislation are contrary to international law, international humanitarian law, and the UN Charter.

Washington's attempts to find a justification for its aggressive and illegal actions in the broad interpretation of the territorial principle do not stand up to scrutiny. (When hearing the case of The Republic of Nicaragua v. The United States of America, the UN International Court of Justice clearly demonstrated that it was against the broad interpretation of actions that constitute a threat to national security. During the interpretation of the term "essential foundations of security," it was established that US claims about Nicaragua's alleged attempts to overthrow the governments of neighbouring states that went on for two years

were not sufficient to incur the exception since the United States had not proved that Nicaragua's policy constituted a threat to the "essential security interests.")

In this context, Judge Jeffrey Meyer (a judge of the US District Court for the District of Connecticut, a Senior Counsel to the Independent Inquiry for the UN Oil-for-Food Programme in Iraq in 2004-2005, a professor of law at Quinnipiac University School of Law, and a Visiting Lecturer in Law at Yale Law School) pointed out that "the United States itself is prone to exaggerated claims that secondary sanctions measures can be justified by the protective or effects jurisdictional principles, even when these measures aim to redress <...> conduct that occurs in distant lands and that has no real prospect of jeopardising the safety of or causing any substantial effect in the United States." (Meyer J.A. Second Thoughts on Secondary Sanctions//University of Pennsylvania. Journal of International Law.Vol.30.Iss.3., p. 909).

In fact, this can be described as attempts to destroy entire countries or as quasi-genocide. Nevertheless, the masterminds of these sanctions have not been called to account.

Western countries have not only been obsessed with the idea of political control over the rest of the world but also with domination on the international stage. In the second half of the 20th century, Latin American and European economists, such as Raul Prebisch (Argentina), Theotonio dos Santos and Fernando Henrique Cardoso (Brazil), Andre Frank (Germany) and Gunnar Myrdal (Sweden), shaped the dependency theory, which proved that there is a direct connection between the underdevelopment of Third World countries and the prosperity of advanced capitalist countries. Their works showed convincingly that the exploitation of underdeveloped nations by advanced nations was a major obstacle on humanity's path towards progress (Baran, Paul A. The Political Economy of Growth. Moscow, 1960, p.53). According to calculations, the West drained over \$62 trillion worth of raw materials from the Global South countries between

1960 and 2018 (Hickel J., Sullivan D., Zoomkawala H. Plunder in the Post-Colonial Era: Quantifying Drain from the Global South Through Unequal Exchange, 1960-2018. New Political Economy, 26(6), pp. 1030-1047).

There is another example from our present-day reality. I am referring to Charles de Gaulle's foreign policy, which consisted of ensuring France's national independence and greatness. "My aim, then, was to disengage France, not from the Atlantic Alliance, which I intended to maintain by way of ultimate precaution, but from the integration realised by NATO under American command; to establish relations with each of the States of the Eastern bloc, first and foremost Russia, with the object of bringing about a detente followed by understanding and cooperation <...>, to do likewise, when the time was ripe, with China; and finally, to provide France with a nuclear capability such that no one could attack us without running the risk of frightful injury." - Gaulle Ch de/ Memoires d'Espoire. Le Renouveau 1958-1962. P., 1970, p. 284. This included France's famous move to withdraw from NATO's military command in 1966. France would have never achieved this goal without access to the free resources it received from the French-speaking African countries.

France succeeded in achieving the desired outcome by imposing a monetary and financial framework on its former African colonies, making them fully dependent on the Fifth Republic, which assumed the role of a neo-metropole. They did it by issuing the CFA franc as an element of the neo-colonial monetary system for controlling African economic policies. France has been using the euro for over 20 years now. However, it remains a dominant power in the franc zone, since there are still 14 countries in West Africa using the CFA franc, which is pegged to the European currency. African researchers argue that this currency deprives their countries of the ability to use their domestic currencies and financial assets for their own development without facing external restrictions. It is also an obstacle to their economic and monetary sovereignty. It is for this reason that the present-day neo-Napoleon from the

Elysee Palace constantly emphasises his adherence to Charle de Gaulle's ideas and views perpetrating this neo-colonial monetary bondage as a vital necessity (Pascal Boniface, Why the Legacy of De Gaulle and Mitterrand Still Matters for the French Public Opinion, Valdai, March 15, 2021). This is the only way he can succeed. This means that Paris will seek to retain its foothold of Africa's currency market for as long as possible.

In order to preserve its geopolitical presence in various parts of the world, the West relies on the so-called debt neo-colonialism. One of the masterminds of Pan-Africanism, and a prominent government leader of Burkina Faso, Thomas Sankara, warned about this danger back in 1987, when he said: "Debt is neo-colonialism, in which colonisers evolved into technical facilitators, <...> which amounts to an astute effort to conquer Africa (Discours de Thomas Sankara sur la dette, 29 juillet 1987. Youtube. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFaUaatu8T8>). How can we talk about genuine freedom for a country if it lacks economic independence and is doomed to be guided by its lenders in the decision-making process?

The neo-colonial powers are using financial institutions under their control and extensively exploiting the difficult socioeconomic situation in many countries of the Global South to induce them to borrow at interest rates that are higher than those offered to the so-called golden billion countries. According to the UN Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, countries in Asia and Oceania borrow at an average rate of 6.5 percent; Latin America and the Caribbean, at 7.7 percent, and Africa, at 11.6 percent. At the same time, borrowing costs for Germany as low as 1.5 percent, and for the United States, 3.1 percent (A world of debt. UN Global Crisis Response Group. July 2023., p.10 URL: <https://www.unctad.org/publication/world-of-debt>).

But perhaps the most eloquent fact that brings the problem into focus is that 45 countries spend more on servicing external debt than on healthcare (IBID). In other words, many nations have to

sacrifice decent living standards for their citizens and even their future to satisfy the appetites of ruthless usurers.

Neocolonialists are also eagerly profiting from humanitarian assistance projects, taking the last piece of bread from poor countries without even a twinge of conscience. Take, for example, the situation with the distribution of Ukrainian grain under the Black Sea Initiative, which was proposed to help food-deprived states in Africa and Asia. As a result, the poorest states received only about 3 percent of the total stock of 32.8 million tonnes (Foreign Ministry statement on the Istanbul agreements. July 17, 2023. URL: https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1897157/?lang=en).

Unfortunately, neo-colonial powers are not going to stop there. They now seek to control not only the wallets and health but also the mindset of the inhabitants of the rest of the world. It appears that they have not kept their hands off the moral codes and rules of conduct society had been honing for centuries. Even most religions have been tarnished and perverted. Washington and its satellites are making considerable efforts to revise the fundamentals of Christianity and Islam to suit their own interests, and then relentlessly spread them around the world presented as some modernised religious teachings. That is, they are making full use of neocolonial practices to attract millions of people to their newfangled perverted cults. The main goal they are trying to achieve is to sever the links between generations, where religious traditions are important to maintain continuity.

Ideological colonisation in its various forms and aspects poses a serious danger. Pope Francis believes that it brings economic aid under the same umbrella with imposing alien ways of thinking on other cultures, which paves the way to confrontation. The Pontiff was right in saying that "subjugating peoples by force or through cultural and political penetration is to be considered a crime." He went on to call for an end to neocolonial practices and their manifestations in the forms of racism and social segregation as

soon as possible (Pope: Modern neocolonialism is a crime and a threat to peace, Vatican News, April 1, 2023).

Neo-colonial thinking will always prevail over truth in the minds of Western leaders. This is the axiom we must realise. In fact, there are multiple examples in this regard. Today, there is a serious debate in the Netherlands on whether to withdraw the official apology by the Kingdom's government regarding the Dutch war crimes against Indonesians during their 1945-1949 Independence War. Human rights are only for the chosen ones, it seems, while others are left with efforts to whitewash the violent past of the Dutch East Indies.

Great Britain continues to play an active role in spreading neocolonial practices. It spent several centuries extracting resources from its numerous overseas colonies. Today, London is intent on benefiting from what amounts to delayed-action mines it laid during that time. In particular, this includes imposing its legal system on so many countries, and forcing them to use its judicial mechanisms by treating almost all disputes around the world as falling under its jurisdiction. They have been justifying their efforts to penetrate other judicial systems by falsely asserting the universal nature of UK law, as well as the by talking about the impartiality and professionalism of British lawyers and barristers. Of course, nothing can be further away from the truth. Therefore, we must invest more time to make this British neocolonialism a thing of the past by improving the performance of national judiciaries and creating independent international courts.

Neo-metropolitan powers have also been targeting certain countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa with their disruptive efforts in order to control their natural wealth, including critical minerals. They focus on gaining unrestricted access to lithium, graphite, nickel, cobalt and rare earth deposits they need for transitioning to a low-carbon economy. While pretending to care about the environment and climate change, they are basically pushing the narrative of a green/eco-friendly neocolonialism that primarily

benefits the collective West. Wealthy countries are forcing countries across the Global South to act in a hasty and uncalculated manner in order to preserve their environment, while completely disregarding centuries-old customs and traditions in agriculture, water use and minerals extraction. Our partners have openly sided with what they call "regulatory imperialism" which, in fact, amounts to neocolonialism, including regarding the destruction of forests and other major challenges (Gayatri Suroyo, "Indonesia accuses EU of "regulatory imperialism" with deforestation law", Reuters, June 8, 2023).

To preserve its "elitist" (or, if we call things for what they are, parasitic) existence, the self-proclaimed "golden billion" will stop at nothing, including artificially induced economic crises. It continues to stall providing loans through global development institutions, and to support pro-Western opposition parties. While doing this, the West is painstakingly imitating a mutually respectful dialogue, trying to create a favourable international environment for itself. In particular, this is how the Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation initiative, launched by Antony Blinken in September 2023, was presented to the public. The initiative is made to drag as many countries on Africa's western coast into it as possible. With this sort of pseudo-democratic formats, Washington and its satellites are trying to reinforce their noticeably compromised influence, pull the countries on the continent into the global Western agenda, and damage our links with our African partners.

The so-called Mattei Plan, presented after the Italy – Africa summit earlier this year, pursues the same goal. Ironically, the project of exchanging African natural resources for Italian loans with a total investment of 5.5 billion euros, that looks so ambitious (at least on paper), is a typical example of "friendly neocolonialism," when pumping cheap resources for European industrial production is embellished with various PR campaigns (Fadhel Kaboub, "Is Italy's \$6 bln plan for Africa just PR-friendly neocolonialism?," "African Arguments," February 2, 2024). As the EU members'

national economies continue to sink, there will be even more such shameless attempts at “blinged up colonialism.”

The neometropolises are not forgetting about the IT industry, of course, especially since this industry largely determines the trajectory of human development at this stage. The neocolonisers are not trying to achieve anything new: their goal is to expand the digital gap between themselves and the rest of the world, to create conditions for their IT corporations to strengthen as monopolies. They want to silence anybody whose views oppose pro-Western beliefs. People like Raul Castro and Ali Khamenei have already become victims of censorship. I myself had to face discrimination when Twitter (now X) restricted one of my posts in 2023. Allegedly, accounts were blocked in response to “violating platform policy.” However, American senator Lindsey Graham (on the Russian list of terrorists and extremists) used his page on Facebook (owned by Meta, recognised as an extremist organisation and banned in Russia) to call for getting to and destroying the Iranian oil processing industry, but did not attract nearly as much interest from the “morality police” at Meta (recognised as an extremist organisation and banned in Russia). I cannot explain this paradox by anything other than double neocolonial standards.

Neocolonialism near Russian borders

For many years, it seemed that neocolonialism in all its unsavoury iterations and manifestations existed somewhere far away from our borders, in Africa, Asia or Latin America. But this is not the way things stand. The newly proclaimed colonial powers have been nurturing sky-high economic and political ambitions, while refusing to respect the recognised strategic borders of other countries (for more on this topic, see my article for Expert magazine: No 4(5) of April 15, 2024).

We must recognise that neocolonialism has long come as close as it could get to our national border. It started by taking Russia's neighbours under its control, including by staging the so-called colour revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine. This effort transformed

Tbilisi and Kiev into puppet regimes, headed by Mikheil Saakashvili – an alumni of a scholarship programme funded by the US Department of State, and Viktor Yushchenko, whose spouse is a former American official. The former unleashed an aggression against the people of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in August 2008, but Russia immediately demonstrated its resolve and firmness in countering this attack. In Ukraine, the 2010 presidential election was a moment of truth for Yushchenko – he received just slightly over 5 percent of the vote, a historical low for an outgoing president.

Nevertheless, despite these initial failures, the West persisted with its plans to subjugate our neighbours by focusing on transforming Ukraine into a bulwark for pursuing its neocolonial aspirations. The country lost its political agency following the February 2014 government coup, basically succumbing to external control. This has happened so many times around the world. It is obvious that fulfilling all the objectives of the special military operation is the only way to enable Ukraine to free itself from this neocolonial bondage.

The new colonial powers have now turned to other post-Soviet republics, including Armenia. The people of Russia and Armenia share centuries-old ties of friendship, sealed by their allied relations within the CSTO and the EAEU, only to become a sore in the eye for Washington and its allies. They invested a lot of effort in ensuring that this South Caucasian republic joins the Euro-Atlantic community. The fact that the Armenian capital is home to one of the largest US embassies in the world is not a coincidence. Emissaries from the United States, the EU and NATO have been visiting Armenia increasingly often to make all kinds of generous promises. It goes without saying that they have been promising Armenia wonders, but only in exchange for its complete loyalty. However, Armenia must understand that these promises are nothing more than cheese inside a neocolonial mousetrap. No one wants to introduce the people of Armenia into the select club. Just ask the neo-Banderites. Have they obtained the EU

membership they wanted? No, and they will not get there in the foreseeable future. Will it ever happen? Take Georgia, which has displeased the United States and the EU with a recent law. What was the response? Well, sanctions, of course! The European Parliament adopted a resolution on strengthening EU-Armenia relations in March 2024, but it is just a worthless piece of paper.

A similar situation is arising in Moldova, a country that EU citizen and Harvard graduate Maia Sandu is now leading straight into neocolonial slavery, telling the same tall tales about its “bright” future. In reality, the most likely scenario of Moldova’s “European integration” will see it turning into a remote province on the north-eastern fringes of Romania, one of the least developed states in Europe. The previous periods of Bessarabia’s occupation by the Bucharest regime, between 1918 and 1940 and then between 1941 and 1944, were marked by mass repressions and forced Romanianisation. It would be naïve to believe that this underlying attitude towards the Moldovan population has drastically changed.

Why should states fight neocolonialism?

The fight against neocolonialism is not an eternal confrontation for the sake of confrontation itself. It is primarily a progressive movement of states towards civilisational sovereignty, which is crucial in avoiding degradation and devastation in the 21st century. At the turn of the century, the most appalling prospect for a country was to be labelled a “failed state.” Today, the term “non-sovereign state” is becoming the worst stigma of weakness and inability to function as a political and economic entity, to exercise generally recognised public authority. Only fully sovereign countries that have independence in domestic and foreign affairs will be able to effectively counteract the deliberate efforts of the former metropolises to impose unequal economic and political deals on them.

Clearly, under these conditions, it is no longer enough to say the words that are ritualistically pronounced on March 21, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, no

matter how true and commendable they are. It is imperative that we resolutely and consistently include the relevant anti-neocolonial narratives into the public agenda.

I am confident that the modern world provides the prerequisites for the consolidation of a broad group of nations that seek the completion of the decolonisation process and oppose neocolonial practices. This group could work on an inter-state consultative mechanism that would bring together national commissions to estimate the damage and expose the crimes committed during the colonial period.

This raises another lingering issue, which is as pressing as ever – it is imperative to complete the decolonisation process that began in the 20th century. Allow me to remind you of a list, approved by the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonisation, which includes 10 Non-Self-Governing Territories that continue to be administered by the United Kingdom; three administered by the United States; two by France and one by New Zealand. The countries of the Global South need to combine efforts to ensure that those “fragments” of the Western empires’ former greatness, artificially preserved after the collapse of the colonial system in the 1960s and 1970s, achieve true independence.

It is no less important that the Movement for the Freedom of Nations leave the door open as it works to achieve its far-reaching goals, being ready to align its efforts, in a variety of formats, with global and regional groups including BRICS and the SCO. For example, they could cooperate to implement anti-neocolonial initiatives to improve the developing countries’ financial security through a major reform of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. This is consonant with the ideas of financial independence promoted by BRICS.

Investigation of colonial crimes that do not have a statute of limitations should be placed at the forefront of this activity. It is necessary to consider the creation of a single public database

(register) of crimes of the colonial period, as well as modern neocolonial practices, at the UN, and work out a scale to evaluate the damage caused by war crimes committed on their territory.

Neo-metropolises should be hit where it hurts the most, in their wallets, which they are filling largely by exploiting the rest of the world. We believe that the payment of compensations to the victims of neocolonial practices should be based on clear, legally considered and substantiated evidence. Political and diplomatic assessments must be complemented with a legal evaluation of their actions.

Our partners are already doing this. Back in 2014, 15 members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) adopted a 10-point plan for reparatory justice. Many of its provisions can be used for calculating colonial damage (CARICOM Ten Point Plan for Reparatory Justice. CARICOM official website URL: <https://www.caricom.org/caricom-ten-point-plan-for-reparatory-justice>). In November 2023, the African Union masterminded a Reparations Conference in Ghana, the homeland of Kwame Nkrumah, an outstanding leader of the African national liberation movement. Considering that 12 million Africans were sold into slavery (A Ghana reparations summit agrees on a global fund to compensate Africans for the slave trade. Associated Press, November 17, 2023. URL: <https://www.apnews.com/article/accra-slavery-reparation-conference-08f10f0833359e9be57b74d6f6e983a8f>), reparations for trans-Atlantic slave trade have been estimated at \$100 trillion (Report on reparations for Transatlantic chattel slavery in the Americas and Caribbean. Brattle Group, June 8, 2023. URL: <https://brattle.com/wp/content/uploads/2023/07/Report-on-Reparations-for-Transatlantic-Chattel-Slavery-in-the-Americas-and-the-Caribbean.pdf>).

The “golden billion” will have to dig deep into their pockets to pay for their countries’ sins. The countries and private companies that have been raking in money from slave trade for decades should not only muster the courage to recognise responsibility

for the historical injustice and systemic racism towards Africans. A deeper look at the history of mergers and acquisitions of contemporary financial groups and companies in banking and insurance will show that many of them originated in the 18th and 19th centuries, which means that their money reeks of colonialism. It is these groups and companies that must foot the bill by stipulating relevant payments in their budgets.

Special focus in this regard must be on the idea of reparatory justice proposed by the victims of colonialism. In particular, the second session of the UN Permanent Forum of People of African Descent advanced the initiative on establishing a specialised International Tribunal within the UN to address reparations in co-ordination with other UN anti-racism mechanisms (UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent. Preliminary Conclusions and Recommendations/ Second Session, 30 May-2 June 2023, New York City, USA).

We wish the best of luck to our African and Latin American colleagues. Their success, including in establishing an anticolonial tribunal, will be a major step towards depriving the Global North of its domination and towards building a fair multipolar world order.

What will the world be like without neocolonialism?

It is clear today that the future belongs to strong and viable, ideologically integral and conflict-free regional structures. Within their boundaries, mutual understanding and trust between participants are considerably higher than between the great powers on the scale of the planet. These sorts of organisations and unions will become the growth locomotives and autonomous centres of global development with their own global agenda. They will take the lead in finally demolishing neocolonial governance schemes, and give hope for a better future to hundreds of millions of people on Earth.

One way to eliminate the social and economic dimensions of neocolonialism may be stronger coordination, by the global majority

countries, of approaches to forming a completely new system of international relations based on the principles of respect and well-wishing non-interference. Solving these problems is a matter of the nearest future.

Multipolar globalisation, that is replacing, at a growing rate, the complete injustice of the monocentric Western universalism, will create an absolutely new dialogue paradigm. The foundation has already been built. During the year of Russia's BRICS chairmanship, it is especially good to note that our country is full of resolve to continue executing the provisions of the Johannesburg II Declaration. BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development and Inclusive Multilateralism, adopted at the summit in South Africa in August 2023. We hope that, through the joint efforts with our partners, we will create conditions for elevating cooperation within the BRICS – African Union format to a qualitatively new level, building upon BRICS growing role in peaceful settling of conflicts and ensuring compliance with international law. Developing cooperation between the African Free Trade Zone and the EAEU also appears promising, along with other similar formats in trade and the economy.

We will be paying especially careful attention to a gradual transition from the conventional foreign aid schemes via government lines that rely on funds allocated by countries through the UN, the IMF and the IBRD, to a new type of international cooperation to assist development multilaterally – and, of course, with a wider involvement of private capital and funds of non-confrontational structures that the countries of the Global South can trust, including the New Development Bank.

Dynamic development of these geopolitical processes are particularly obvious as we watch how the Euro-Atlantists have found themselves stalled in trying to form a new system of relations with the Global South. The overwhelming majority of our strategic opponents have lost the gift they have had for centuries of creating a positive image of the future. Attempts by some reasonable

Western politicians to understand the approaches of the currently emerging centres of power (and there are simply no more small players on the map, no matter how much some would like to continue ranking countries based on their significance) have been met with typical arrogance of the heavyweight bureaucratic apparatus in Washington and Brussels. Of course, they simply don't have a choice. The arrogance, ideological dogmatism and self-complacency prevent the West from catching up with the rapid changes and realising the new role and place of no longer developing but developed and strong countries in the changing world. They come out deeply shocked at the "abrupt" unwillingness of the Global South to be in the wake of the Zelensky formula and break off their years-long ties with Russia, to join the sanctions frenzy of the White House and its satellites, or to ignore yet another escalation in the Middle East. The anti-neocolonial rhetoric is sounding louder. The Western liberal model has also lost its appeal.

A polycentric world order will be pragmatic and based on diversity rather than neocolonial dogmas. Economic stability will derive from the diversification of ties and the freedom of manoeuvre in contacts between macroregions based on the philosophy of the Non-Aligned Movement. There is no doubt that this format based on the vision of outstanding statesmen Jawaharlal Nehru, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Sukarno and Josip Broz Tito in the 20th century will ultimately be given a second lease on life, even if in a slightly different form, in the 21st century. The objectives we must strive for not only include the proliferation of the principles of peaceful coexistence and the rejection of military bloc confrontation in the new post-colonial era but also the creation of a new content for the Non-Aligned Movement itself, including by establishing its inter-party dimension.

For the freedom of nations

These processes are definitely facilitating the establishment of a new world order without sanctions, exploitation and lies. The anti-neocolonial movement should give a new meaning to the

famous principle of unity in diversity, which is being applied in many spheres and must be spread throughout the system of international relations.

This is why the Movement for the Freedom of Nations, which United Russia has initiated on the basis of the Soviet Union's decades-old traditions in fighting colonialism and its consequences, could become a gigantic step towards the consolidation of the world's nations in the fight against neocolonialists.

The importance of the new movement is evidenced from the furious resentment it has encountered in the West, which rose in arms long before its constituent assembly to wreck the planned meeting. The neocolonialists used every method at their disposal to discourage our partners from attending the forum. They made lavish promises of financial and economic assistance and openly threatened them with restrictions. The United States went as far as to prohibit those who planned to attend the forum in Moscow to fly over US territory. But none of these methods worked, and the meeting in the Russian capital was a success.

The forum participants unanimously adopted a document on the most important current aspects of fighting neocolonial practices worldwide. We have also agreed to develop political, economic and cultural ties between Global Majority countries and to join efforts against interference in the affairs of sovereign states, the falsification of history, xenophobia, racism and neo-Nazism.

In June, we will take the next step towards a new fair world in Vladivostok, where we will hold a constituent assembly of the Permanent Committee of the anti-neocolonial Movement for the Freedom of Nations and will discuss practical methods of implementing joint initiatives aimed at creating a just future for the world.

DMITRY MEDVEDEV (DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL OF RUSSIAN FEDERATION, CHAIRMAN OF THE UNITED RUSSIA PARTY)

SWISS SUMMIT ON UKRAINE: MOSCOW HIJACKED THE AGENDA

June 18, 2024

The so-called High-Level Peace Summit on Ukraine has concluded in Switzerland. The goal of Kiev and its Western partners was to attract as much of the non-Western world majority to the summit as possible. Such a step would show that a wide range of participants are involved in discussing peace plans without Russia's participation. From the very beginning, it was obvious that the notorious "Zelensky plan," which actually implied a return to the 1991 status quo, was unlikely to be endorsed by such a wide range of participants. Moreover, a number of countries (including China) ignored the summit entirely, and other participants (including India) did not sign the final document. However, support for at least some provisions could show that individual points of the "plan" found a response, which means that later on, the question of promoting other points could be raised. These tasks were partly achieved.

The final document of the summit included points on nuclear safety, including a call for the transfer of control over the Zaporozhye NPP to Ukraine, albeit with the IAEA playing a coordinating role. The document also addressed the issues of food security and a prisoner exchange. However, these points are found not only in the "Zelensky plan", but also, for example, in the 12 points on the settlement of the Ukraine conflict which China previously proposed. That is, in the end, there is absolutely no talk of promoting only Ukrainian proposals. The Swiss document calls for

the involvement of “all parties” in the dialogue, hinting at Russian participation.



Ivan Timofeev:
Why Involvement of NATO Forces in Ukraine Should Be Taken Seriously

Thus, a summit without Russia, as it were, has authorized Moscow's inclusion in an already existing format, despite being created without its participation.

This is where the achievements of Ukrainian diplomacy end, and they look very modest taking into account a number of additional factors.

First of all, on the eve of the summit, Moscow managed to intercept the media agenda. Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed his own plan for ending the conflict. The main condition: the withdrawal of Ukrainian troops from the territory of four regions (LPR, DPR, Zaporozhye Region and Kherson Region), which, according to the Russian Constitution, are its own territories. It is obvious that the Kiev authorities will not accept such a formula at the moment. The new Russian plan was even considered by foreign observers as an ultimatum. In fact, it appears to be quite

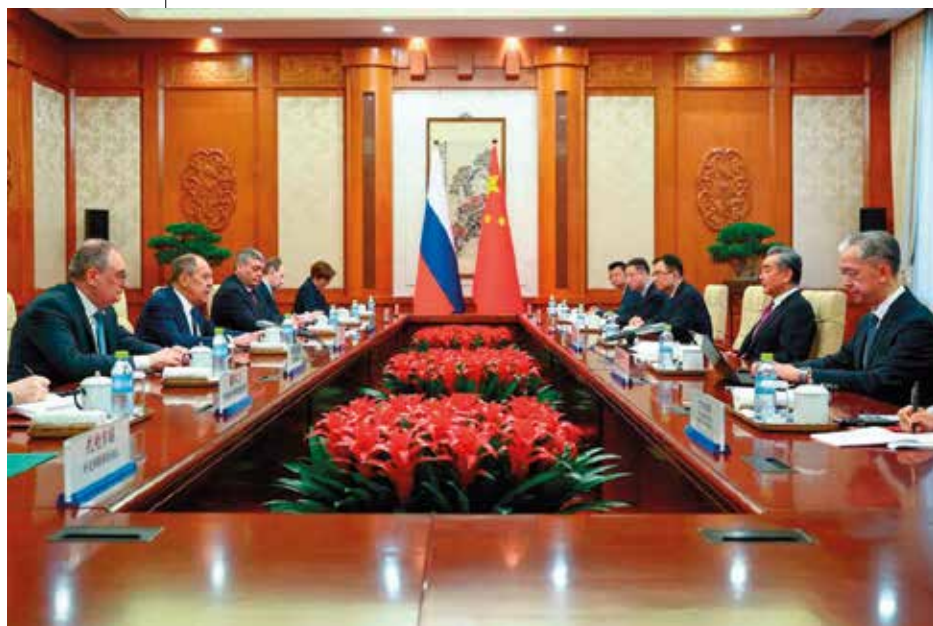
balanced, if not moderate. The Russian leader signalled that Moscow does not include, for example, altering the territorial configuration of other regions of Ukraine in the settlement issue. Meanwhile, there are grounds for putting forward such conditions. Among them is the creation of a “sanitary zone” to suppress the shelling of Russian territory, including border towns, by the Ukrainian army. In theory, the creation of such a “sanitary zone” could accompany the possible advance of Russian troops, for example, in the Kharkov region.

In other words, the Russian leader's proposals are clearly not the maximum request. Moreover, Vladimir Putin made it clear that in the future the number of requirements will be raised.

This scenario is quite likely, especially if Russian troops are successful. There are prerequisites for success. The Russian army has clearly seized the initiative and is increasing pressure along the entire front line, expanding it in new directions. It is also important that the Russian proposals clearly look closer to current realities than the “Zelensky plan.”

The fact that Vladimir Putin revealed the essence of proposals for security in Eurasia also played its role. Previously, the idea was voiced in general terms in the President's Address to the Federal Assembly. Its contours began to emerge more clearly during Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's visit to China, and then during the Russian president's visit to China. At the same time, many questions remained about the specifics of the idea. Speaking at the Russian Foreign Ministry, President Putin gave a number of new explanations. Among them is the openness of the system to all participants, including European ones, and the exclusion of non-regional players from it, especially the USA. You can argue as much as you like that these proposals are unlikely to be acceptable to Washington and its European allies. The important thing is that Russia comes up with its own initiative and proposes a system in which the principle of equal and indivisible security will be implemented. Here Russian proposals are

directly related to the Ukrainian conflict. The European security system has failed to ensure the principle of equal and indivisible security. The Ukrainian conflict was a direct consequence of its defects. It is unlikely to be resolved solely by an agreement on relations between Russia and Ukraine. The list of issues is much longer and requires the creation of new rules of the game for all regional forces. They can be secured in the new security system.



Ivan Timofeev:
Eurasian Security Structure: From Idea to Practice

It is clear that it must be built on the basis of the UN Charter. But experience shows that the Charter can be interpreted in different ways, leading to a dead end in any negotiations. This means that a more precise system of coordinates is required, which would be built on the basis of the Charter, but would exclude manipulations with its interpretations in relation to specific security issues in Eurasia. The Swiss summit stated the need to implement the UN Charter. Russian proposals go further and involve the creation of a new security system.

The bottom line is that the summit in Switzerland ended with a quite unclear document, which actually contains no algorithm for resolving the conflict in Ukraine. The helplessness of the document was probably another reason why major players distanced themselves from it and from participation in the Summit itself – why waste political capital on an obviously fruitless initiative? Russia, on the contrary, has come up with specific and clear proposals. Their implementation is hardly possible here and now. But the very fact of forming guidelines and an agenda for the future can be recorded as a Russian asset.

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NATO'S STRATEGIC FAILURE IN UKRAINE

May 24, 2024

NATO seems to be in disarray. NATO rested on their laurels that they could continue unabated in expanding the West's military alliance to the doorstep of Moscow. The alliance placed all their chips on a bet that an endless supply of weaponry flooded into Ukraine would result in a relatively quick victory over what they naively believed to be a largely ineffective and technologically outdated Russian military lingering from the Soviet era. More to the point, NATO underestimated Russia's willingness to coalesce in defending the national interests and cultural independence from that of an increasingly unrecognizable and opaque European identity.

The much-touted Ukraine spring offensive sputtered in 2023 when Russia built an impenetrable defensive wall that could not be breached. Russia simply does not lose in a slugfest. One only has to look back to when Hitler's Nazi Germany, a much greater foe, blitzed across the hinterland and had Russia on the ropes. Russia would not go down on the mat no matter how many punches were landed.

NATO now faces a conundrum. Western nations are spending hundreds of billions of dollars in a losing proposition only to find their taxpayers digging out from a deep hole of self-inflicted inflationary debt. The conflict has become a vicious vortex. Ukraine is now running out of fighting age soldiers with upwards of a half a million casualties. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is now expanding the draft age that will essentially wipe out a generation of Ukrainian men.

Meanwhile, Russia has an insurmountable number of fighting age men rotating into the theatre. No number of weapons from the U.S. and Europe will change the playing field if there is no men to fight.



Andrey Kortunov:
Beyond the Conflict in Ukraine: Towards New European Security Architecture

What options does NATO possess? Are Western leaders too far invested politically to capitulate? The leading proponents battle mantra, "Whatever it takes for as long as it takes", has been removed from their songbook. Confidence in Ukraine retaking the Donbass is waning while Crimea is nowhere close to reality.

Any chance of turning the tide will require expanding the war and sending NATO troops into the ghastly trenches. It is hard to imagine widespread support by populations of the West sending their boys and girls to die in a conflict to regain strips of territory fought over for centuries. American President Joe Biden's ultimate goal of regime change and removing Russian President Vladimir Putin from power will not be attained.

through Ukraine. European capitals would become overnight targets while North American may no longer be insulated with the large pond separating it from the main theatre of war. The U.S. could face cyber warfare on key infrastructure, activated terrorist cells coming through the open borders, or worse, nuclear weapons if Russia finds itself cornered.

We are now hearing Germany and the UK are casting together plans to draft young men and women in preparations for a war footing. French President Emmanuel Macron has bloviated about sending French troops into Ukraine while the Baltic states have been messaging to see if others jump on board. For all the bluster, it would seem most NATO countries do not have the resolve and would rather see Ukrainians sent into the grinder.

This conflict will drag on to the American elections where if former President Donald Trump is elected, the conflict will be settled where Ukraine loses territory in creating a buffer zone and will not be permitted to join NATO. If Biden is re-elected, the war potentially spirals on with Ukraine all but decimated.

Meanwhile, the West's sanctions have left the Russian economy stronger than before the war with China and India now the largest recipients of imported Russian oil in return for a lifeline of raw material and components. Ukraine's future is bleak. Western nations will inevitably fold up their tents and go home, leaving Ukraine's economy languishing in a grey zone reminiscent of the 'Forbidden Zone' in the 1968 movie, *Planet of the Apes*. Past promises of economic investment by corporate giants will not put their shareholders at risk in a country whose infrastructure is in shambles, and the state of a corrupt democracy is in question.

Looking back, historians will most likely conclude the ambitious U.S.-led attempt to expand a militarized NATO on the border with Russia was an ill-conceived strategic failure resulting

in lives lost and misplaced, and the catapult vital to compel a significant bi-polar alliance between BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) to counter the once dominant NATO Alliance.



Zhao Huaheng:
A Dangerous Gamble: The Russia-American Nuclear Game in the Ukraine Crisis

President Xi Jinping of China sees Putin as a key player in their new world order that opposes the United States and its NATO partners. Still, a newly elected Trump Administration would possess the political capital to thwart a wider conflict and mend relations of mutual respect with current foes.

RICH BERDAN

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ARE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS VIABLE IN THE FUTURE WORLD ORDER?

June 14, 2024

It will be significantly easier to the Western world to gradually accept that its resources are finite than it will be for those who currently find the dominance of the United States and Europe unsatisfactory to establish new models of collaboration, writes Valdai Club Programme Director Timofei Bordachev.

One of the most significant challenges that the global community of nations is currently facing in relation to the dismantling of the Western hegemony is the concurrent risk of the collapse of the entire framework of international cooperation: both in terms of practical implementation and its conceptual underpinnings. However, this could also present an opportunity for the rest of the world, including Russia, to develop new institutions and frameworks in the decades to come, which would bear little resemblance to those that exist today. This is likely to be necessary, since the current system of institutions, norms, and values that have emerged over the past several centuries has been constructed around the dominance of a select group of states, and is fundamentally designed to serve the interests of that group. Therefore, it would not be feasible to replicate existing practices, even if they were highly successful, and there is no need to attempt such a course of action.

However, new practices may not be able to achieve the same level of success, simply due to the fundamental principles that are embedded in them from the outset.

On a practical level, this implies that countries outside of the “collective West” will not be able to replicate in their interstate relations the practices established to coordinate the efforts of the United States and Europe in suppressing the rest of the world. Among the most successful international organizations of the modern world, the G7, NATO, and the European Union stand out. However, these organizations are highly specific in their objectives and internal structure, aiming to safeguard the special rights of member countries in their relations with other nations. This is why various smaller former Soviet countries are seeking membership, and Turkey remains a member of NATO. In such a community, even the smallest player receives benefits that are unattainable by any single power acting alone.

The fundamental principle behind the success of such organizations is also related to this: they all serve as instruments for the organized distribution of various public benefits. In the case of NATO, these benefits include comparative security, while the European Union provides economic advantages. The G7, on the other hand, was established as the highest authority for coordinating Western policies in relations with other countries.

Furthermore, following the Second World War, the institutions and political systems of the Western world underwent a significant transition. Previously, during the period of European colonialism, their alliances were composed of equal members and therefore often unstable. Now, a notable feature of Western institutions is the presence of a strict hierarchy and a vertical structure of power, organized along the lines of “leader and followers”. In fact, this structure has allowed the West to function as a cohesive entity and has so far enabled it to maintain its privileged position in relation to other nations.

It is important to note, however, that the establishment of this hierarchical system, with the United States at its apex, was a result of the two world wars in the twentieth century. During these global conflicts, the sovereignty of substantial

economic powers such as Germany and Japan were completely undermined.

The rest of the major Western nations have also lost the ability to independently determine their foreign and defence policies. This is, in fact, the secret to peaceful cooperation among the countries of the Western alliance — all but one are deprived of the capacity to act in a revolutionary fashion.

We can state with certainty that groups such as the BRICS and, at the regional level, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, cannot replicate the model that has made the Western world so successful. Firstly, the objectives of its members are not to exploit the rest of humanity. Consequently, the level of coordination of national policies also cannot reach such a high degree. Simply because, by participating in BRICS, for instance, countries do not address the most fundamental issues of survival or achieve development objectives. In other words, everything the West creates is aimed against the rest of the world, and there are no exceptions. Those who now oppose the West, whether through harsh opposition like that of Russia or through the pursuit of softer alternatives like that of India and the Arab countries, do not initially orient their policies towards combating all humanity. Therefore, they will find it difficult to create an alternative form of institutional cooperation.

Second, the organizational structure of new alliances of countries from the Global South cannot be based on a single leader model. Therefore, large countries such as Russia, China, and even India have not joined the Western bloc because, due to their structural differences, they cannot accept the unquestioned authority of another major power to fulfil all of its demands, as Europe does with the United States.

Now, the Global South is seeking to establish its own institutions, but for objective reasons, it still has a long way to go in understanding how these institutions can function without being

replicas of Western models. This applies even to more specific areas of cooperation, which are strictly regulated within the West according to internal power hierarchies.

However, the theoretical aspect of the issue is equally interesting.

In this regard, even the very concept of “international order” may prove to be controversial and even unacceptable in some respects in the future.

The fact is that the entire conceptual framework which allows us to discuss international politics in a relatively consistent manner, was developed under specific conditions that were inherent in world events over the past five hundred years. This implies that we cannot currently determine how relevant the content of well-known concepts of international reality will be in the coming decades.

For instance, the “Westphalian order” is a concept that emerged as a result of a legal resolution of an intra-European conflict between the mid-sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries, with little relevance to the rest of the world. However, due to the dominance of Western powers, this order — as a mechanism for interstate relations — has since spread across the globe.

In essence, the current system has been imposed on other countries. A notable example is China, which became “connected” to the Westphalian system through the military aggression of European powers in the early 19th century. This could lead to a situation where the words used by political leaders and scholars will become meaningless.

An important question for the future is how Western countries will integrate into the new international order. The presence of large stockpiles of nuclear weapons in some states does not guarantee that the United States and Western Europe will not be militarily defeated, as has happened in the past with empires. Instead, they will continue to exist in some form, and all countries

in the world must find ways to accommodate the West as a full member of the global community of sovereign nations.

In this regard, the United States may have a better chance than Europe due to its self-sufficiency in terms of basic resources. However, the main obstacle to US cooperation and more appropriate behaviour is the lack of convincing efforts by Russia, China, India, and others to limit Western privileges.

To summarize our preliminary analysis, we can state that achieving gradual acceptance by the Western world that its resources are finite will be significantly easier than establishing new models of collaboration for those who currently find the dominance of the United States and Europe unsatisfactory. However, if (or, rather, when) such a development occurs, it will provide an opportunity for significant progress towards more civilized modes of international interaction. This, naturally, cannot but instil some optimism at this time.

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HERE'S HOW RUSSIA CAN PREVENT WW3

June 11, 2024

Nuclear deterrence is not a myth. It kept the world safe during the Cold War. Deterrence is a psychological concept. You have to convince a nuclear-armed adversary that it will not achieve its objectives by attacking you, and that if it goes to war its own annihilation is assured. The mutual nuclear deterrence between the USSR and the US during their confrontation was reinforced by the reality of mutually assured destruction in the event of a massive exchange of nuclear strikes. Incidentally, the abbreviation for Mutually Assured Destruction is MAD. And that's very apt.

There are several reasons for 'mythologising' nuclear deterrence. Since the end of the Cold War, there has been a widespread belief that every conceivable reason for nuclear war has disappeared. A new era of globalisation, with its emphasis on economic cooperation, has dawned. For the first time in history, the hegemony of a single power, the US, has been established globally. Nuclear weapons remain in the arsenals of the great powers – though fewer than at the height of the confrontation – but the fear of their use has faded. More dangerously, a new generation of politicians has come to the fore, unburdened either by the memory of decades of confrontation or by a sense of responsibility.

The American belief in its own exceptionalism and European 'strategic parasitism', devoid of any sense of self-preservation, is a dangerous combination. It's in such an environment that the idea of inflicting a strategic defeat on the nuclear power the is Russia – in a proxy conventional war in Ukraine – has been born. Russia's atomic capabilities are being ignored. The parallels that

Moscow tried to draw with the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, when Washington considered the possibility of a nuclear war with the USSR in response to the deployment of Soviet missiles in the neighbourhood of the United States, were rejected by the Americans as far-fetched.

In response, Moscow was forced to activate the deterrence factor. Under an agreement with Minsk, Russian nuclear weapons have been deployed in Belarus. Russian non-strategic nuclear forces have recently begun exercises. Nevertheless, Western countries continue to pursue escalation in the Ukrainian conflict, which, if left unchecked, could lead to a frontal military conflict between NATO and Russia and a nuclear war. This scenario can be prevented by further strengthening deterrence – more precisely, by ‘nuclear sobering up’ our adversaries. They must realise that it is impossible to win a conventional war involving the vital interests of a power armed with the bomb, and that any attempt to do so will lead to their own destruction. This is classic nuclear deterrence.

The word ‘deterrence’ itself has a defensive connotation, but theoretically the strategy can also be used in an ‘offensive’ sense. This can happen when one party succeeds in dealing the first disarming blow to the enemy, and with its remaining forces threatens the weakened opponent with total destruction if they strike back. More appropriate here is the Anglo-American version of deterrence, which literally means ‘to intimidate’. The French, by the way, use the term ‘dissuasion’ in their concept.

The impact of non-nuclear weapons on nuclear deterrence policy

Non-nuclear weapons certainly influence nuclear deterrence policy. This is a fact.

The US has built up a huge arsenal of non-nuclear methods to achieve its goals. Not only has it not dismantled its military alliances, it has expanded them and created new networks. In

the current environment, Washington is demanding more and more real commitments from those allies – in the name of preserving the US-led global system. Fifty states take part in meetings to organise military aid to Kiev under the ‘Ramstein’ format. The result is the idea that it is possible to defeat a nuclear power, but on condition that it does not require resorting to nuclear weapons.

The only thing left to do is to convince a nuclear power not to use nuclear weapons under any circumstances and to allow itself to be defeated – in the name of saving the whole of humanity, and so on. This is an extremely dangerous illusion that can and must be dispelled by an active nuclear deterrence strategy, including the lowering of the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons, which is currently too high. The key condition for use should not be a ‘threat to the existence of the state’ but a ‘threat to the vital interests of the country’!

A new phase in relations between nuclear powers has begun

We can say that a new phase in relations between the world’s nuclear powers has begun. Many of us are still psychologically somewhere in the 1970s and 1980s. That is a kind of comfort zone. Back then, relations between the USSR and the US were based on the two superpowers’ strategic and political parity. In the military-strategic sphere, Washington was forced to deal with Moscow on an equal footing.

After 1991, this parity disappeared. For the US, since the 1990s, Russia has been a declining power; throwing its weight around, always reminding itself of its former greatness, snapping back, even dangerous at times – but on a downward spiral. The difficult opening phase of the Ukraine conflict gave the Americans hope that the fields of that country would be the grave of the Russian superpower. They have since sobered up a bit, but equal status between Moscow and Washington is out of the question for them.

This is the main difference between the current state of relations and the 'golden' period of the Cold War – the 1960s and early 1980s. And Russia has yet to prove the Americans wrong.

As they say, it is always difficult to predict anything, especially the future. But today we have to assume that a long period of confrontation with the West, led by the US, lies ahead of us for about a generation. The future of our country, its position and role in the world, and to a large extent the state of the global system as a whole, will depend on the outcome of this confrontation, the main front of which is not in Ukraine, but within Russia: in the economy, in the social sphere, in science and technology, in culture and art.

Internally, because the enemy realises the impossibility of defeating Moscow on the battlefield, but remembers that the Russian state has collapsed more than once as a result of internal turmoil. This may, as in 1917, be the result of an unsuccessful war. Hence the bet on a protracted conflict in which they know they have more resources.

Nuclear polycentricity reflects the world's growing multipolarity

During the Cold War there were five nuclear powers, but then the only real poles were the US and the USSR, plus China with its then small nuclear arsenal. Now Beijing is moving towards (at least) parity with America and Russia, while India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel remain independent players (unlike NATO members Britain and France).

The classic Cold War notion of strategic stability – i.e. the absence of incentives for the parties to launch a pre-emptive nuclear strike – is not only inadequate but sometimes inapplicable when characterising relations between the great powers today.

Look at Ukraine: Washington is increasing arms supplies to Kiev, encouraging and providing for its provocative attacks on Russia's strategic infrastructure (early warning stations, strategic airfields), while at the same time proposing Moscow resumes dialogue on strategic stability!

In the emerging world order, strategic stability will have to mean the absence of reasons for military conflict (even indirect) between the nuclear powers. This, in turn, will be possible if the powers respect each other's interests and are ready to solve problems on the basis of equality and the ineliminability of security.

Ensuring strategic stability between all nine powers will require enormous efforts and the formation of a fundamentally new world order model, but it (strategic stability in the broad, i.e. real sense of the word) is quite realistic between pairs of states (Russia-China, the US-India, etc.). For Russia, only three of the other eight nuclear powers – the US, Britain and France – remain problematic.

Arms control is dead and will not be revived!

As far as arms control in the classical form of the Soviet/Russian-American agreements or multilateral agreements in Europe (CFE Treaty) is concerned, it is dead and will not be revived. The Americans started to roll back the system two decades ago. First they withdrew from the ABM Treaty, then from the INF Treaty and the Open Skies Treaty. They refused to implement the adapted Treaty on Armed Forces and Armaments in Europe. In the area of strategic nuclear weapons, one treaty remains, START-3, but it expires in 2026, and Moscow has stopped inspections under this treaty in the midst of the conflict in Ukraine.

In the future, we will need not only new treaties, but also a new basis for negotiations and agreements. It will be necessary to co-develop new concepts, set new goals and objectives, and agree on the forms and methods of their implementation. Greater

Eurasia' – conventionally known as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) – could become a platform for creating a new model of international security on the scale of a huge continent (or at least most of it). The SCO includes four nuclear powers: Russia, China, India and Pakistan. Another SCO member, Iran, has an advanced nuclear programme. SCO members Russia and China have close security ties with North Korea. There is a huge space for work, new ideas and original solutions.

No continuation of nuclear arms reduction talks between Russia and the US in sight

Negotiations on nuclear disarmament are possible and they can even produce results: a treaty banning nuclear weapons was adopted in 2017. But there is one thing to bear in mind. There is not a single nuclear power among the signatories. Moreover, the US, UK, France and Russia have already declared that they will never sign the treaty because it does not correspond with their national interests.

As for the issue of nuclear arms reduction, the long-standing confrontation between Moscow and Washington rules out any continuation of this practice. China, for its part, intends to build up its nuclear arsenal rather than reduce it, probably with a view to achieving parity with the US and Russia in the long term. The Americans, who have officially identified Russia and China as the main threats to their security, are considering how to balance the combined nuclear potential of Moscow and Beijing. So there is no hope here.

The main problem, however, is not the quantity of nuclear weapons or even their presence per se, but the quality of relations between states. The world order is experiencing an acute systemic crisis. In the past, such crises inevitably led to wars. Now nuclear deterrence is working, albeit with some issues. To prevent a world war, it is necessary to strengthen deterrence by activating the nuclear factor

in foreign policy, restoring fear and building a ladder of escalation.

However, we don't want to go all the way to the abyss and then fall into it, but instead prevent a catastrophic development of events. Nuclear weapons have already saved the world once – by threatening to destroy it. That mission continues.

DMITRI TRENIN

RIAC Member

WHY INVOLVEMENT OF NATO FORCES IN UKRAINE SHOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY

June 11, 2024

Is it possible for NATO armed forces to be involved in a military conflict between Russia and Ukraine? Such a formulation of the issue until recently seemed marginal, given the high risks of escalation of the military confrontation between the North Atlantic Alliance and Russia into a large-scale armed conflict. However, this scenario should be taken seriously. The involvement of individual NATO countries or the entire bloc in military operations may gradually increase. Crossing red lines can generate confidence that participation in the conflict will not have consequences, and the red lines need to be pushed further and further. The result of such movements can appear at an unexpected moment and lead to a much more dangerous events than the current situation.

Strictly speaking, NATO countries have long been party to the conflict. Such participation takes several forms. First, Western countries provide Ukraine with significant financial and military assistance. The weapon systems being supplied are becoming more advanced and destructive. As stocks of Soviet-style weapons in the warehouses of the former USSR allies in the Warsaw Pact are depleted, the Ukrainian army is receiving Western systems and ammunition. So far, the volume of supplies is limited by the capabilities of the Western defence industry and existing reserves. But if hostilities drag on, industrial capabilities have the potential to grow. Growing supplies are also inevitable in the event of a peace pause, which will enable Ukraine to prepare for a new stage of hostilities. Russia should hardly hope that the West does not have enough political will and resources to increase

support for Kiev. Moscow is apparently preparing for the worst-case scenario, that is, a consistent increase in comprehensive and long-term military assistance to Ukraine. In addition to the supply of weapons and ammunition, such assistance includes personnel training, assistance in the development of military industry and infrastructure, and reimbursement of expenses in other areas, allowing Ukraine to concentrate resources on the defence sector.



Andrey Kortunov:
Beyond the Conflict in Ukraine: Towards New European Security Architecture

Second, Ukraine receives significant Western assistance in the form of intelligence information, including technical data and data from satellites, radar systems, reconnaissance aircraft, and other sources. This information allows for a wide range of applications, from providing information into the theatre of operations to identifying specific targets. Data providers may exercise discretion in sharing certain types of information with the Ukrainian authorities, but there is little doubt about its use in military operations against Russian forces.

Third, there have been reports of military personnel from NATO member countries being involved in hostilities in Ukraine. Their involvement appears to be rarely acknowledged officially by their home governments. These individuals may be referred to as “volunteers” or even mercenaries, and their participation may be tolerated by their respective authorities. According to recent reports from Russian sources as of October 2023, approximately 2,000 such individuals were estimated to be present. While estimates may vary, it is clear that foreign nationals are engaging in combat on behalf of the Ukrainian government and that their participation is not isolated, but rather systematic in nature. It is clear that at least some of these individuals hail from Western countries.



Andrey Kortunov:
US-Led Arms Race Could Push Mankind into the Abyss

At the same time, the current level of engagement does not create an undue risk of direct military conflict between Russia and NATO. This low-level conflict allows Kiev’s Western allies to gradually improve the quality of their assistance to Ukraine. The supply of cruise missiles has become routine, and the

introduction of fighter jets manufactured in the United States is only a matter of time. The Russian army grinds down the supplied Western equipment, but the foreign supplies to Ukraine also require a concentration of resources on the part of Russia.

A significant factor that could lead to escalation and potential direct confrontation between Russia and NATO is the possibility of military deployments of NATO troops on Ukrainian territory. Some Western political figures have discussed the potential for such a scenario, though their views have not been endorsed by the United States or presented as the official position of NATO. Several leaders from member countries have distanced themselves from the idea of deploying troops to Ukraine.

What could prompt such a decision and how could it be implemented?

The most significant factor in the possibility of direct intervention by individual NATO countries or the alliance as a whole could be a significant military success by the Russian army. At present, the frontline remains relatively stable, but the Russian forces have already achieved notable local successes, increasing pressure, taking the initiative, expanding their offensive front, and possibly building up reserves for further actions. The conditions for a repeat of last year’s offensive by Ukrainian armed forces are not apparent. There have been reports of ammunition shortages among Ukrainian forces, although these may be addressed through external supply in the future. Periodic strikes against Russian territory with cruise missiles, drones, and artillery cause damage and casualties, but they do not disrupt stability on the Russian front. Furthermore, such attacks are motivating more active efforts to establish “sanitary zones”, that is, areas from which the Ukrainian armed forces will not be able to target Russian regions. The possibility of a collapse of certain sectors of the Ukrainian frontline and significant territorial gains for Russian forces in the western direction are becoming increasingly likely. The lack of significant advances or breakthroughs over a prolonged period

does not imply that such events cannot occur in the future. Rather, such possibilities are increasing given the army's acquisition of battle experience, supplies from the military-industrial complex, losses on the Ukrainian side, delays in Western equipment deliveries, etc. While a catastrophic scenario for certain units of the Ukrainian armed forces is not predetermined, it is possible. A major breakthrough by Russian forces towards Kharkov, Odesa, or another major city could serve as a significant catalyst for NATO countries to consider the possibility of intervention in the conflict. Several such breakthroughs, occurring simultaneously or consecutively, would make such an intervention seem inevitable.

Here, individual countries or the Alliance as a whole face a strategic fork in the road. The first alternative is not to interfere and support Ukraine only with military supplies, money and "volunteers". It is possible to admit defeat and try to minimize the damage through negotiations, thereby stopping an even greater defeat, if not the total collapse of Ukraine. The second alternative is to radically change the approach and to participate in the conflict, allowing direct intervention.

Intervention can take various forms. We may consider the use of existing infrastructure, including airfields in NATO countries. Another possibility is the significant involvement of individual units of communications, engineering troops, and air defense system crews, although their presence on the frontline may be avoided. A more extreme scenario would be the deployment of contingents from individual NATO countries along the borders of Ukraine and Belarus to facilitate the transfer of Ukrainian forces to the east. Finally, a more radical option would be the deployment of NATO military forces on the frontlines, which could be seen as an unacceptable action by the Alliance.

Any of these scenarios involve a direct conflict between the armed forces of Russia and those of NATO countries. Such a confrontation would inevitably raise questions about the Alliance's deeper involvement, and potentially the transfer of military operations

to additional areas of conflict with Russia, including the Baltic region. At this point, stopping the escalation would become even more challenging. The more casualties both sides suffer, the greater the intensity of hostilities and the closer approach to the threshold of nuclear use. In this scenario, there will be no victors.



Zhao Huaheng:
A Dangerous Gamble: The Russia-American Nuclear Game in the Ukraine Crisis

These are only hypothetical possibilities. Nevertheless, they must be taken into consideration at this time. Until recently, few people considered the likelihood of such significant arms deliveries to Ukraine. Three years ago, the conflict itself seemed unlikely. Today, it is a reality. The prospect of a full-scale war between Russia and NATO must be taken seriously.

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THE COLD WAR NEVER ENDED IN ASIA

June 6, 2024

The recent trip of President Putin to Harbin stirred up some of my personal memories and set up a train of thought regarding the long and complicated history of Russian-Chinese relations. I got to the lilac bush city for the first time in early 1990s; my impressions at that point were that Harbin was committed to do away with the last remnants of its Russian legacy as a symbol of European colonialism. Indeed, the city, which was founded in 1898 as a station to serve the Chinese Eastern Railway, for the first twenty years of its existence had a special extraterritorial status and was actually taken out of Beijing's jurisdiction. For a long time, bitter recollections about this period of limited sovereignty remained very sensitive for the local Chinese, which we on the Russian side have to understand and to accept.

However, in thirty plus years the attitudes seem to have changed completely. These days, the Russian historical heritage in the city is highly valued and carefully preserved. The central Saint Sophia Cathedral that I saw almost completely abandoned and neglected, has been fully restored and stands out as one of the architectural landmarks of the city. To the credit of municipal authorities, they have even torn down surrounding buildings to recreate the cathedral square in its initial splendor. The famous Harbin railway station, where in October of 1909 Korean nationalist An Jung-geun assassinated Ito Hirobumi, the first Prime Minister of Japan, has got a new magnificent Nouveau style terminal modelled after the original 1899 Russian station. Harbin has every reason to position itself as the leading China's national

hub for economic, cultural, educational and human interaction with its northern neighbor.



Andrey Kortunov, Zhao Huasheng:
The World in 2035: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly

Remembering WW2 in Asia

One of the items of Vladimir Putin agenda in Harbin was to lay flowers at the memorial to some twelve thousand of Soviet soldiers and officers who died during WW2 liberating Manchuria from the Japanese occupation. The Russia leader specifically noted the careful attitude of the Chinese authorities towards the memory of joint pages of military glory and brotherhood. This was an appropriate and timely reminder of the past addressed not only to the Chinese partners, but to Russians as well.

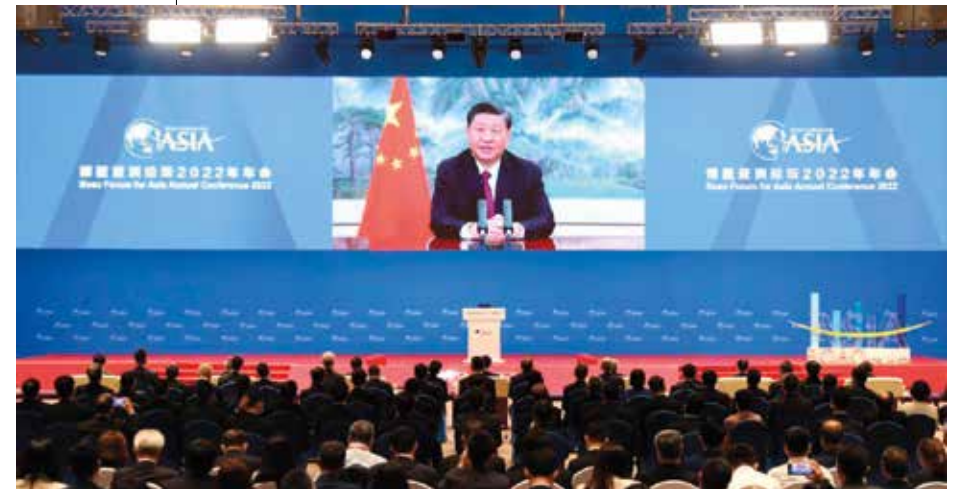
One has to confess that in Russia, like in many other countries, WW2 is often perceived as a primarily "European" war. If you ask an average Russian about when the deadliest and the most devastating conflict of the XX century started, he or she is

likely to respond that it began on the 22nd of June, 1941, when Hitler attacked the Soviet Union. More knowledgeable or more educated Russian would probably argue that WW2 was in fact unleashed two years earlier, on the 1st of September, 1939, when the Nazi Germany invaded Poland. Of course, if you take the Asian perspective, the WW2 chronology looks very different: Japan launched the large-scale invasion of China on July 7, 1937, while the first Japanize attacks against China, that was torn apart by a protracted civil war, go back to as early as 1931.

Likewise, we usually emphasize the scale the losses of human lives particularly in Europe. However, in terms of the overall numbers, China (up to 20 million dead) stands second only to the Soviet Union (up to 27 million) and a way above all of the European nations including Germany (up to 8.4 million), Poland (6 million) as well as above Japan (up to 3 million). It is worth noting that such high losses of both the Soviet Union and China were caused primarily by an extremely high level of civilians' deaths resulting from an unprecedented cruelty of invaders that they demonstrated in our two countries. The massive war crimes committed by Japanese in China were in no way less atrocious than crimes committed by Nazis in the USSR. We in Europe know a lot about Auschwitz or Buchenwald, but we know much less about the Nanking massacre or about chemical and biological attacks on civilians conducted by the Imperial Japanese Army Air Service. Even less is known about the infamous Japanese "Unit 731", which operated in a Harbin suburb and was responsible for the cruelest murdering of thousands of civilians, about 30% of whom were local Russians residing in the city during WW2.

However, in the end of the day, the question is not so much about WW2-related public perceptions or misperceptions in Russia or in other countries. It is more important to keep in mind that WW2 ended in Europe and in Asia in different ways. In Europe, Germany was forced not only to surrender, but also to go through a very fundamental and painful process of denazification. Furthermore, after the end of WW2 the country had to stay divided for more

than four decades. In Asia, Japan was not exposed to such treatment in full — it has not been divided and the replacement of political elites there was arguably more limited and selective than in Germany. All the apologies for the war crimes that have been issued by senior Japanese government officials notwithstanding, the overall attitude in Japan to WW2 remains more controversial than in Germany. It seems that at least some people in Japan have a strong feeling that in this war their country was more a victim than an aggressor.



Andrey Kortunov:
Decoding China: GSI and Beijing's International Role

To some extent, this sentiment is justified — Japan is the only nation in the world, against which closer to the end of WW2 they used nuclear weapons; it remains an open question to what extent this use was necessary and appropriate. However, when top members of the Japanese government pay visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, which honors all Japanese war dead, including convicted war criminals, these acts raise concerns about how deep the WW2 remorse truly is in Tokyo these days. The apparent ease, with which the government of Fumio Kishida was able to pass a major shift in the national defense posture in the end of 2022 with the goal of turning Japan into the third largest military spender in the world by 2027, suggests that the Japanese society

is now ready to reconsider some of the country's basic post-WW2 foreign policy principles.

The Cold War — Asian Style

The Cold War in Asia was arguably fiercer and more ruthless than in Europe. Yes, in Europe the Soviet Union executed military interventions in Hungary (1956) and in Czechoslovakia (1968), but neither of them can be compared to the Korean war (1950–1953) or to the war in Vietnam (1965–1974) in their scale, length and losses of human lives. In each of the two Asian conflicts millions of people, mostly civilians died, and even more were displaced. Out of the third problems of divided nations — China, Korea, Vietnam — only the third one was successfully resolved. China was able to reintegrate Hong Kong, but is still working on Taiwan; a Korean reunification still looks as a pipe-dream.

Another difference between the Cold War in Europe and in Asia was that in Europe the old War had its 'classical' bipolar shape — the United States and the Soviet Union led two highly hierarchical, disciplined and well-structured military alliances opposing each other. True, there were dissidents and even defectors in both camps — Albania and Yugoslavia on the Soviet side and France on the US side. However, these were exceptions rather the general rule. In Asia, from early 1960s the balance became more complex, it was shaped not only by the US-Soviet confrontation, but also by very complicated relations between the main continental actors — that is the Soviet Union, China and India. There were a couple of direct military conflicts between these actors, like the China-India war of 1962 and the Soviet-China border clashes in 1969.

The complexities of the political and military balances in Asia also opened doors for conflicts of main actors with smaller autonomous centers of power that did not fit into the standard "European" bipolar pattern- Indo-Pakistani wars of 1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999, the Sino-Vietnamese war of 1979, and the Soviet military involvement in Afghanistan of 1979–1989, in which China sided

with the United States in supporting the Mujahideen resistance. On top of that, there were plenty of bloody civil wars in Asia and mass killings of civilians unseen in Europe of the second half of the XX century — it is suffice to mention the 1965–1966 massacres in Indonesia and the 1976–1978 genocide in Kampuchea.



Andrey Gubin:
U.S. Recent Plans in National Air Defense: The East Asia Dimension

Furthermore, strictly speaking, the Cold War has never ended in Asia, like it was the case in Europe in 1989. The main reason for the latter difference was evident — socialist countries in Asia (the People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam) never collapsed, imploded or converted to Western-style capitalism like socialist states in Eastern and Central Europe, including the Soviet Union, did. On top of that, in Asia traditionally there has been little appetite for signing complex legally binding agreements with intrusive verification mechanisms or entering multilateral alliances with significant limitations on national sovereignty.

This is why, for instance, though economic integration in South-east Asia was initiated only slightly later than in Western Europe (the European Economic Community goes back to 1957, while the Association of South East Asia Nations was announced in 1967), the European project already by 1992 evolved into a strong heavily institutionalized economic and political union (EU), while ASEAN even now remains a rather loose and relatively weakly institutionalized community of sovereign nations. It is also indicative that despite persistent efforts, the United States has not succeeded in building in Asia strong multilateral alliances like NATO in Europe. In the South, Washington created in 1954 the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) to fight communism in Asia; the initiative ran into many problems from the very outset and fell apart after the US defeat in Vietnam. In the North, all US attempts to unite Japan and the Republic of Korea under a shared security umbrella were not successful due to complicated relations between Seoul and Tokyo.

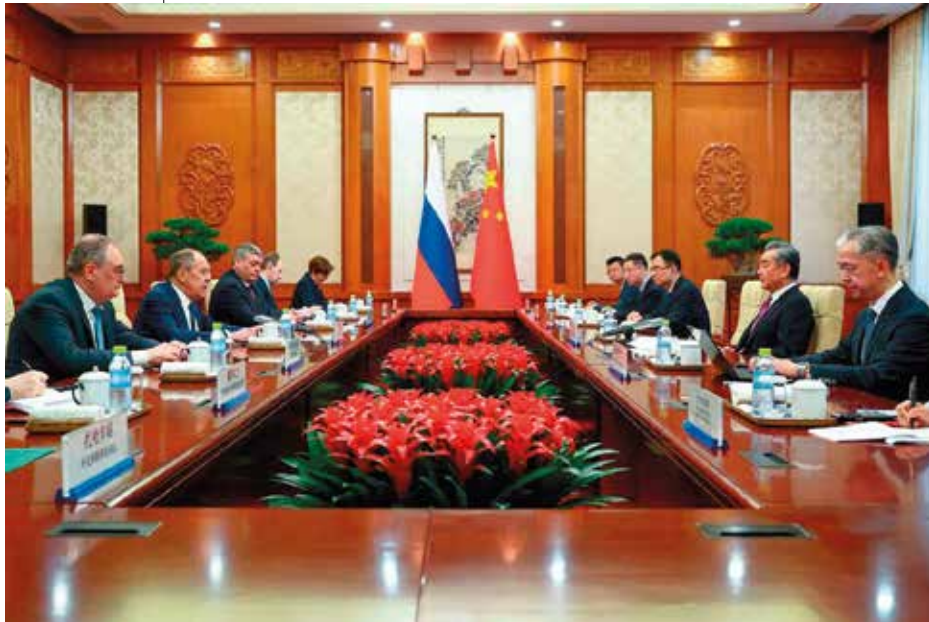
Not surprisingly, in Asia there were no attempts to sign any Cold War final settlement document similar to the Charter of Paris for a New Europe (also known as the Paris Charter) of 1990, which was supposedly based on the communality of liberal democratic values and on a common understanding of what direction Europe should follow in future. Likewise, in Asia nobody ever seriously tried to launch any inclusive multilateral institution like the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE). Neither in Asia they committed themselves to proceed with conventional arms control similar to the original Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) signed in 1990 or its adapted version signed in 1999, or to proceed with nuclear arms control like the US-Soviet and later on US-Russian Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) concluded in 1987. Even very focused multilateral initiatives in Asia, as the 2003–2007 six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear program produced only very limited results and were soon terminated.

During the heydays of the pan-European cooperation, many politicians, scholars and journalists trying to compare the experiences of Europe and Asia over the second half of the XX century usually put the former above the latter arguing that Asia suffered from a post-WW2 'institutional deficit' that Asian nations failed to overcome even after the Cold War was declared terminated in 1989. However, today it would be inappropriate, if not preposterous to suggest that in the end of the day Europe turned out to be more successful in overcoming its tragic Cold War past than Asia. All the multiple post-Cold War European institutions — not only OSCE, but also the Council of Europe, the NATO-Russia Council, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, The Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and so on — have not prevented a new dramatic split of the European continent, which is likely to be with us for a long time. Today most of these institutions are either completely frozen or have lost their pan-European nature. The European arms control in its both nuclear and conventional dimensions is practically nonexistent, confidence — building measures like the Open Skies treaty or the Vienna Document of 2011 work no longer. Much more importantly, there is a large-scale military conflict flaring in the very center of the European continent for already more than two years, which is luckily not the case in Asia.

Will Asia teach Europe a lesson?

The undeniable fact that Europe has failed does not, however, mean that Asia will necessarily succeed. The situation in Asia today is less than stable — the continental arms race is accelerating, the NATO Alliance is actively expanding its activities in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, the trilateral Australia-UK-US block (AUKUS) is considering accepting new members, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue of the United States, India, Japan and Australia (Quad) acquires additional dimensions. A large-scale conflict might erupt at any point on the Korean Peninsula, in the Taiwan Strait, in the South China Sea, at the China-India border or at another location in or around Asia. One can suggest that many of these conflicts are fed and instigated

from the outside, but it can hardly be denied that they also have many sources inside the Asian continent. Unfortunately, even a high level of economic interdependence should not be considered sufficient and reliable guardrails protecting the nations of the continent from falling into the abyss of a direct military standoff.



Ivan Timofeev:
Eurasian Security Structure: From Idea to Practice

What does this mean for the future security in Asia? First and foremost, this means that it is not realistic to consider any robust and comprehensive security system in Asia to emerge anytime soon. If this model did not work out in Europe in 1990s under the best possible circumstances, it is unlikely to work out in Asia in 2020s or even in 2030s, when the circumstances are likely to be much less conducive for such ambitious designs. The great power competition in Asia will continue for a long time and this competition is going to set rigid constraints on multilateral institution-building.

Besides, Asia is simply too big and too small at the same time to have a continent-wide security system. It is too big because security challenges in the Northeast Asia, in the Southeast Asia, in the South Asia, in Central Asia are not the same; it is hard to imagine a comprehensive security arrangement based on the principle 'one size fits all'. It is too small since many of security matters in Asia are inextricably linked to global security problems like US-China or US-Russia relations and therefore cannot be fixed without reaching an agreement at the global level with major non-Asian powers (e.g. on strategic stability). In the modern interdependent world, the old principle 'Asian solutions to Asian problems' is not likely to work out in all the cases.

Right now, it might be premature to consider long term solutions for the Asian continent. The situation of strategic volatility here is likely to last for a significant period of time, which is going to complicate any attempts to define mutually acceptable rules of the game based on a stable balance of power. The anticipated volatility will increase the risks of an accidental, inadvertent military clash. The good news, however, is that nobody in Asia is interested in waging a large-scale war, as it was the case a century ago, when Japan was fully committed to building its "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere" by military means. Today, there are periodical clashes or dangerous incidents between China and India, between India and Pakistan, between DPRK and ROK, but these clashes and incidents so far have never escalated to the level of a large-scale military confrontation. The most recent European example is also a clear warning signal to Asian nations against a reckless saber rattling that can lead to a catastrophe.

The experience of the Cold War teaches us of the importance of keeping communication lines among great powers open even if the relations go in a wrong direction. It is particularly important to maintain consultations between China and the United States, between India and China, between other major players in Asia. Even very small, incremental steps in the direction of more transparency, predictability, and mutual understanding in bilateral

relations of potential adversaries would be a major success. In many cases, the first steps in the direction of confidence building could be made at the second track level paving the way for productive contacts between the officials.



Evgeniya Makhmutova:
How SCO Contributes to Security in Eurasia

Above all, the Russian-Chinese strategic partnership remains a cornerstone of strategic stability on the Asian continent as well as the global strategic stability at large. The recent trip of President Putin to China, his negotiations with Chairman Xi Jinping should create a new impulse for advancing this partnership further. This partnership should be complimented by an enhanced security focused cooperation within multilateral frameworks like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), BRICS, APEC, etc. Neither of these interlocking institution offers a magic solution to all of security challenges in Asia, but working hand in hand with each other they can make sure that Asia will escape the European predicament.

in April 2022, Chinese Chairman Xi Jinping, speaking at the opening of the Boao Forum for Asia, put forward the Global Security Initiative (GSI) in response to the growing conflicts and security challenges in the world. This proposal of the Chinese leader laid the foundation for the Global Security Initiative Concept Paper officially adopted by the Chinese Foreign Ministry on 21 February 2023. Though the principles outlined in GSI are universal and can be applied to various parts of the world, it would make perfect sense to test them in Asia, which is not only the most populous, but also the most vibrant and the most dynamic continent of our planet.

Hopefully, the time has come for Asia to give a lesson to Europe not only in economic development, but also in peace-building. Maybe, working together in a very pragmatic, persistent and responsible way, Asian leaders of today could do better than their peers in Europe or than their predecessors a century or half a century ago. The window of opportunity is not yet closed for Asia, history has not yet pronounced its verdict. It's high time to finally put an end to the Cold War in Asia – not with a big splash as they tried to do in Europe back in 1989, but through a well calibrated set of gradual, incremental and cautious steps towards the “community of common destiny”, as Chairman Xi put it. The responsibility lies with all of us. As they say, victory needs no explanation, defeat allows none.

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AMERICAN GLOBALISM IS A DISEASE. MEET THE DOCTOR

06.05.2024

INTERVIEW TO ARGUMENTY NEDELI

Why is even speaking of negotiations with Ukraine dangerous for us? Who should we talk with and on what terms? Who is better—Trump or Biden? Why is Europe worse than America? Will the United States remain a great power and how many such powers will there be when the unipolar system collapses? Why are we hated not only by the Western elites but also by a significant number of people in their countries? Is there a way to ward off civil strife in the world that is breaking free from Western oppression? What are the real goals of the special military operation (SMO)? Do we need Central and Western Ukraine? How can the use of nuclear weapons save the world from World War III? Sergei Karaganov, Honorary Chairman of the Presidium of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, and Academic Supervisor at the HSE Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs speaks with Argumenty Nedeli Editor-in-Chief Andrei Uglanov on this and many other topics.

The Romantic Period Is Over

Q: Given the latest events in the war zone in Ukraine, more and more people start talking about negotiations, including presidential press secretary Dmitry Peskov. But how can there be any negotiations if the Ukrainians have forbidden themselves even from talking about them? And why do we need to negotiate now that we are making obvious progress on the battlefield?

A: We are not at war with Ukraine but with the collective West. And the West is beginning to realize that it can lose. This is why the Europeans and Americans are sending more and more signals about the need for negotiations. Even Zelensky, although he should not be taken seriously, has recently said that negotiations could be an option to consider. But in reality this is a very dangerous trap. Negotiations can only be about peace, which everyone seems to be striving for. Our position on this issue seems overly romantic to me. We have already made enough romantic and idealistic mistakes in the past. I would not like to see them repeated again. Of course, we favor negotiations. But we must clearly define their terms and goals. We haven't done that so far. In my view, our terms should include, first of all, the return of NATO military structures to the 1997 borders; the payment of reparations to Russia for the economic damage it has sustained; and the demilitarization of the entire territory of Ukraine. The question of which part of Ukraine will go to Russia, which will go to other countries, and which will remain neutral can be the subject of negotiations. But the main point is the West's surrender in Ukraine, as non-humiliating as possible. Having realized that it can encounter Russia's nuclear response, the United States is slowly backing down. We can tell them that we will guarantee their relatively dignified retreat. They have given Ukraine the last \$50 billion to be spent on the war. But if they see that this does not help either, they will try to quietly wind the program down and leave. We need to provide these conditions. But there should be no negotiations until the agenda is completely ours.

There Is No Good President in America

Q: The United States will hold elections in November. Who is preferable for us—Trump or Biden? For some reason, many Russian people and even politicians think that Trump is almost our guy.

A: This is a ridiculous misconception. Trump is a very flamboyant politician. But he is part of the present American elite, its

most realistically-minded part. He is nationally-, not globally-, focused. But his hands are tied. And let me remind you that the first tough round of anti-Russian sanctions was initiated by Trump. Biden just followed his suit. The Americans would like to continue fighting us with Ukrainian hands, because it costs them almost nothing.

Q: Please elaborate.

A: We think that all these billions of dollars provided by the Americans to support Ukraine is a lot of money. In reality it is pocket change for them, but they force us to spend large resources on war and shed our blood, and they also tie our hands. Our task is to make this war clearly unprofitable for the United States. It is now impossible to come to any agreement with the Europeans because their brains have obviously been blown out. They are much more anti-Russian than even the Americans, some of whom are still capable of rational assessment, even though there are fewer and fewer of them. But there are practically no such people in Europe. Therefore, we should pin no hopes either on Trump or Biden. Someday, in ten or twenty years from now, if we avoid a big war, we can help America leave the position of global leader it got almost by accident after World War II and retire to the position of a normal "great power."

Q: Fancy American transport ships leaving Le Havre and London to the "Farewell of Slavianska" military march!

A: There is no need for the Americans to leave completely. We blame them for everything, of course, but we must not forget that Europe has generated the biggest threats for humanity and appalling ideologies. Americans get drawn into this snakepit over and over again, but they sometimes acted quite commendably. In recent decades, especially after we had foolishly fallen apart, Americans received an injection of globalist imperialism and got the bit between their teeth. We need to cure them of this disease. And we are slowly doing it.

Q: What conditions should we create for the Americans to quietly crawl away from Ukraine?

A: In many ways, this will be the result of internal changes in the United States itself, which we cannot influence. There is a generational change and a change of elites underway there. The best people in America already understand that the empire they have created over the past seventy, but particularly the last thirty, years costs them too much and puts them at a disadvantage. This is why they are beginning to look for a way out of the Ukraine crisis, but so far only among themselves because the pressure of globalist imperialism and triumphalism is still very strong. We will have to live with this for at least one or even two generations of Americans, or to be more precise, their elites. Twenty years for sure. And if they do not fall apart, then they may as well become one of the great powers and pillars of the world order, a normal great power.

Q: Just one of many?

A: I think there will be four or five great powers that take care of the world and their own interests.

Q: Can you name them?

A: Russia, China, the U.S., and India. Europe should not participate in this, because it cannot be great—it has degraded and is unlikely to be reborn. It is, of course, part of our civilization, but all of its greatness is in the past. The United States can still be reborn. For that to happen, certain conditions have to be created for their retreat, possibly without shame.

Q: And before they go, they are trying to siphon off more money. When you leave, you have to grab something of use to take away.

A: I am a man of even deeper imperial thinking than you. Without knowing it, by taking care of our security, not even fully

understanding it, in the 1950–1960s at first and then after the temporary failure in the 1990s, having begun to restore our strategic power, we cut the foundation from under Western global dominance—military superiority they obtained five centuries ago, upon which they built their ideological, cultural, political, economic, and financial system that allowed them to siphon off world wealth. The collapse of this foundation is the main reason for the current tension and the hatred towards us not only among Western elites but also among some of the people who also benefited from this system. Collected apart, even if a small one of colonial and neocolonial rent. Who wants to get poor, even if they used to get rich unfairly, by robbing others? They think we are to blame for that. And the second problem is the feeling of all-permissiveness they have developed, including due to our stupidity and idealism. We have to hurry to do away with it. And, once again, we should allow the Americans to leave the pedestal without plunging the planet into a nuclear disaster. But at the same time, there is one more important thing to remember. We have freed the world. We have given freedom to all civilizations that were previously suppressed by the West and are now rising before our eyes. And that's great. But these civilizations will compete with each other. And we need to make sure that this competition does not turn into an acute military rivalry. In other words, we need to push back the West, prevent a long war it wants to impose on us, and create conditions for the peaceful development of humankind. Unfortunately, I see no other way to do this but by rebuilding the credibility of nuclear deterrence.

Some of the SMO Goals Have Already Been Achieved

Q: You said there is a certain group that wants negotiations on Ukraine to begin as soon as possible. What kind of group is that?

A: The SMO had a lot of unannounced goals that have already been achieved.

Q: Like what?

A: For example, knocking traitors and Westernizers out of our society. Westernism remains, of course, which is quite understandable. But it is a ignominious disease under current circumstances. Though we are a part of European culture. The second goal is destroying the comprador class that emerged in the 1990s because of our extremely unsuccessful reforms. A system was created that allowed and even pushed people to take their money to the West, thus forming a class that serviced Western capital. The third goal is refocusing our economy from hoping to fit into “value chains” to the national needs. It was an absolutely stupid liberal idea from the very beginning. It suggested participating in the international division of labor, selling what we had, buying finished products over there because it was profitable, and so on. Our goal was to integrate into this system. It was a profound intellectual mistake. It is true though that we were all like that at some point, because we did not know the real world and relied on the meager intellectual knowledge that we had at that time. Economic cooperation is essential. There will be no successful development without it. But it is not an end in itself. Now, thank God, we start to understand this world. But in society, especially in its upper economic strata, as well as among top-level intellectuals and the middle-class bourgeoisie, there is a desire to revert to the previous way of life, because they lived well back then, which is not a secret, although largely at the expense of the rest of the people. But now other strata are emerging, which live quite comfortably in the new conditions. Maybe they are not as affluent as the people now being pushed away from their sinecure lives of the 1990s, but they realize themselves successfully and earn well without stealing as the previous elites did. This stratum is quite strong in administrations of different levels. The “previous people” are a burden to our country. They need to be pushed back or re-educated. This is already happening, including due to the ongoing war and the grassroots movement. So under no circumstances should we begin these negotiations, because in that case the reformation of the elites will stop instantly.

Q: Following the failure of Ukraine's offensive last year, Europeans have started talking about freezing the conflict, meaning that Russia keeps Crimea and other gains but stops where it is now, while what is left of Ukraine becomes part of NATO. What can all this lead to?

A: This would mean tearing a defeat from hands of victory, which would put a lot of strain on our people and claims tens of thousands of lives of our best and brave men who are fighting but also dying out there. This is why we must not do this regardless. But we can maneuver and talk. However there can be no freezing.

We must simply understand that we are fighting in Ukraine but not against Ukraine. We are fighting against the West. And so negotiations can only be conducted with the West on the terms of its surrender or retreat.

Otherwise we will lose. In a long conflict like this, the side that has greater demographic and economic potential normally wins. So far we have been working hard and well and winning in the short term. This can go on for another year or two. But we should not continue it after that. That is why I insist on strengthening the emphasis on nuclear deterrence. Moreover, the inevitable wave of conflicts in the world will lead to the Third World War unless the reliability and credibility of nuclear deterrence and the salutary fear of nuclear weapons are revived.

Q: Why has our leadership not yet named the ultimate goal of the SMO?

A: I have already named these goals. And I think it's a mistake that we do not declare them publicly. Tactical targets like Chasov Yar should be designated because our guys die fighting for them. But there is also a less noticeable war, a war on the economic front, a war for the minds and aspirations of people, a war for ruining the West's desire and readiness to fight us. And this is the main point.

Q: Sergei Lavrov has recently made it clear that Kharkov should be in the buffer zone. These are strategic, not tactical goals.

A: I think it's a mistake that we have delayed announcing strategic, not tactical goals. A discussion is underway in our country and there are several options. Among such options some of my colleagues name the entire left bank of the Dnieper and the south of Ukraine, which certainly includes Odessa and Nikolaev. We must not stop fighting until these goals are achieved. There are disputes about a part of right-bank Ukraine and Kiev. Most of my colleagues think that we absolutely need not Central and Western Ukraine, backward both mentally and technologically, a hotbed of parochial anti-Russian ideology. These are deeply jealous regions. They never produced anything of value for Russia even when they were part of the Russian Empire and then the Soviet Union. But, in any case, before talking about the creation of these zones, we first need to break the West's will to support the war, and let it know that further support will have an exorbitant price for it. Unfortunately, we have not done this yet. This war is inflicting some loss on part of the Western bourgeoisie, but, in principle, it benefits the West. America is definitely benefiting from it. It is helping the European elites distract people from their disastrous failures. The war allows the elites to redirect part of the money to their military-industrial complex. America is riding the gravy train in this regard. The lion's share of what they give in "support of Ukraine" actually flows directly into the U.S. economy. We should create a situation where the American "deep state" and its inner elites understand that it is no longer profitable for them, is causing losses and threatening their direct vital interests and their lives. At this point we are winning the war in Ukraine against Ukraine, but not against the West. This problem cannot be solved this way. We need to move to a higher level, set ourselves more ambitious goals, but these are the only possible goals as I mentioned above, and start using much more powerful tools to exert pressure.

Nuclear Cudgel Defending Global Peace

Q: Well, how can we pose a threat to Europe? All countries in Western Europe have an inferiority complex after the end of World War II. At that time, all of them, with just a few minor exceptions, were part of the Hitler coalition. All of them fought against us. We shook all of them out of their pants, including even our Slav brothers in Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria. There is no doubt they will never forgive us for that. So how can we threaten them so that they change their mind about avenging our freeing them from Hitler?

A: First off, I must make it clear that these are revanchist states that want to take revenge for the defeat of European imperialism, fascism, and Nazism. Let me remind you, apart from well-known examples, that the French soldiers who fought in Russia in Wehrmacht troops outnumbered the Maquis and even, possibly, General De Gaulle's corps that fought the Germans in North Africa.

The whole of Europe fought against us. They lost and are now out for revenge.

Besides, their elites have a huge number of problems that they cannot or do not want to solve. They need a distraction from their failures.

Q: How can we sober them up?

A: This is a profound problem, because over the past seventy years strategic parasitism has swept the world, and Europe in particular. They have come to believe that there is no threat of war and replaced the real with the virtual. They have lost the fear not only of God but also of war, forgotten their own history. The only way to remind them of that is to show our readiness to use nuclear weapons. The nuclear deterrence escalation ladder has at least a dozen levels. In no case do I want to launch a nuclear strike, although it may become absolutely necessary. From a military point of view, the use of nuclear weapons is advantageous

as it will break the Europeans' will to resist. But this will mean colossal moral damage to us. We are the people who grew up on Tolstoy and Dostoevsky's works. Tens or hundreds of thousands of European civilians killed in nuclear inferno will be a terrible shock to us. But there may be a situation where we will have to do it. **First** of all, in order to sober up Europeans and Americans. And **secondly**, in order to stop the world from sliding towards a world war. It hasn't occurred so far because there was a built-in safety mechanism—fear of nuclear weapons. But this fear began to dissipate in the 1980s and was almost completely gone by the 2000s. Humanity, especially the West, has lost its sense of self-preservation. As other basic moral codes get changed, this makes the western part of humanity dangerous. This is why it needs a good shake-up. This is a very unpleasant story, and I understand how difficult it is even to discuss. But we must understand that we are faced not only with the task of ensuring the fundamental interests of Russian security, but also with the task of saving humanity both from the Western yoke and from a new and probably last world war. These tasks are inseparable from each other. This is the essence of the great mission of the Russian people—by saving ourselves we save the world.

Q: But they can reason the same way and think about where they can also use their nuclear weapons. Ukraine is the battlefeld now. But for them, Ukraine is a completely alien territory not to be spared. Conversely, nuclear strikes on our doorstep on the territory we consider our own in many ways are absolutely unacceptable for us.

A: I know for sure that after the Soviet Union had obtained secure second strike capability, the United States never planned a nuclear strike against the USSR. They contemplated using these weapons on the territory of their own allies, primarily Germany, if invaded by Soviet troops, or at the very least against the Soviet Union's allies. The German leaders were in full-blown panic mode when they faced that possibility. As for a retaliatory strike on Ukraine after our hypothetical nuclear attack on targets in NATO countries,

this is a dangerous story. But the Americans are not considering it seriously so far. They are bluffing when they say that in response to a nuclear strike on targets in European countries that support NATO's aggression in Ukraine, they will launch a massive conventional strike on Russia's armed forces and territory. This is a total bluff because they are well aware that Russia will respond with a second wave of nuclear strikes, followed by a third and a fourth ones, on American bases around the world, including Europe, killing tens of thousands of American military personnel. This is absolutely unacceptable for them. Having spread their tentacles around the world, they have become qualitatively more vulnerable than we. So we need to play it straight and hard but carefully, of course, trying to convince the enemy to retreat before it suffers disastrous losses.

Q: So there is the option of our nuclear strike on Ukraine?

A: Such an option theoretically exists. But I am completely against it. People there have been deceived, but in many ways these are our people. However if we do not change our nuclear doctrine, then NATO can use nuclear weapons against Belarus, which is absolutely unacceptable to us. This is why we should quickly change our outdated, idealistic, and largely carefree doctrine regulating the use of nuclear weapons, which is based on the principles and postulates of the past. And we should also redeploy our armed forces. Some steps are already being made in this regard. Our doctrine states that we can only use nuclear weapons in the event of a mortal threat to our state and statehood. But we have already deployed our nuclear weapons in Belarus. It should be used there long before such a mortal threat arises. The enemy must know that we are ready to use nuclear weapons in response to any attack on our territory, including bombing. It is up to the President to make the final decision. But we need to untie our hands. We must understand that we and all of Europe are doomed to a long war unless we clearly change our policy in this area. And we will also be doomed to exhaustion and maybe even defeat.

But most importantly, the world will be doomed to the Third World War. We must eliminate this threat. This is our national mission.

And secondly, this is the mission of the Russian people as the savior of humankind, which we always have been.

Q: I understand that there will be no nuclear war with America. They love themselves too much. But anything is possible with Europe, which has completely gone off its rocker. In what order should we hit them? Poland, Germany, Great Britain, and the Czech Republic are obviously the first countries that come to mind. Well, France, too, of course.

A: I really would not like things to go that way. Yes, we will send them to hell. But by doing so we will pave the way for huge moral losses for ourselves. Nuclear weapons are God's weapons. It's a scary choice. But God punished Sodom and Gomorrah, which had got mired in madness and profligacy, with a rain of fire. I pray to God that we do not have to take such a step. But it's about saving the country and the world. You correctly named Poland and Germany. The Baltic countries and Romania could be next. But, I repeat, God forbid!

Q: Why Romania?

A: Because a large flow of military cargoes goes to Ukraine through them. They have set up training centers. They host a large contingent of American troops. In addition, there are supply bases on their territory. And we must recall that the Romanian contingent was among the largest forces that invaded our country along with Nazi Germany. And they were no different from the latter in committing atrocities. As for the Germans, they must understand that our generous forgiveness of them for their monstrous crimes is not unlimited. We must ultimately make sure that Europe can never threaten us again. Well, someday we will cooperate with some European countries and even be friends with them. We do not reject the best European roots in ourselves, and we will take

them with us along our main road to the South and the East, to Greater Eurasia.

Q: What about Great Britain?

A: It does not pose a direct military threat to us. They just habitually befool, but that's all.

Q: Much has been said about Russians and Ukrainians being one people. But you divide Ukraine into Southern, Eastern, Central, and Western, where people of completely different mindsets live. Are there those among them who are still one people with us?

A: Western Ukraine is the backward periphery of the backward periphery of Europe—Austria-Hungary and Poland. It happened to be part of our country by accident. Central Ukraine is a territory that was constantly crossed by the Polovtsy, the Poles, the Hungarians, the Turks, the Krymchaks, the Lithuanians, and the Swedes. There was no statehood there for eight centuries, and they have long forgotten about Kievan Rus, of which they were part in the distant past. There are also Eastern and Southern Ukraine, which are part of Russia, but which were partly infected with fascism. However, part of that Ukraine has been bravely fighting alongside us and for us for the past ten years. All these territories should return to Russia, but after a period of reforming. As for Central Ukraine, let them live by themselves, and even more so Western Ukraine. Most importantly, we should not repeat the mistakes of the Soviet government. Let me remind you that after the Great Patriotic War, life in the Bryansk and Smolensk regions was much harder than in the neighboring regions of Ukraine. Ukrainian regions were rebuilt on a priority basis. This must not be done again. We can start helping them when they join us. Until then, we should treat them as the people who fought against us, just like the Germans in the GDR, naturally excluding those who share our spirit and who are our allies. But they must prove this by deeds, not words. When someone talks about one people, I want to ask him: Were the Vlasovites one people with us? They

were Russian and Ukrainian by ethnic origin, but they were our enemies. So we must get rid of this illusion too, although we are very close both in terms of genetics and partly in terms of culture. But we will have to eradicate the virus of fascism there, even surgically, if need be.

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PUTIN IS BACK FOR ANOTHER SIX YEARS, THIS IS WHAT HIS FOREIGN POLICY WILL LOOK LIKE

07.06.2024

The question of how Russia's foreign policy will be managed during President Vladimir Putin's new term seems redundant, if not irrelevant. The head of state is a man who has led the country in one form or another for almost a quarter of a century. He is known for his conservatism — not only in the ideological sense, but also in his aversion to sharp turns. Moreover, Russia is engaged in an intensive military campaign against an international coalition, and there is little point in making plans until it is over, and while its prospects are still unclear. The successful completion of this campaign remains a task of incomparable importance.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to reflect on this issue. **Firstly**, all of the terms of Vladimir Putin's presidency, while showing a continuity of approach, have been markedly different. **Secondly**, while the importance of achieving the goals of the military operation is undeniable, victory alone will not miraculously provide answers to all foreign policy challenges. **Finally**, the world system is changing rapidly for objective reasons, and Moscow will have to respond in any case.

The ceiling of the post-Soviet rebound

The Ukraine conflict marked a turning point for Russia's international position. The period of compensatory recovery (in stock market terms, it can be called a 'rebound'), which had been the main feature of the previous two decades, was over. After the extremely difficult 1990s, when it was necessary just to stay among the leading players, since the beginning of the century there has

been an increase in opportunities and status as a result of joining the global (Western-centred) system. As the economy stabilised and governance was put in order, Russia became an attractive enough partner for developed countries, which decided that it would be beneficial to cooperate with it and invest in its economy. Thus, Russia not only broadened its economic base, but also intensified its foreign policy, especially in the post-Soviet space.

At the same time, Moscow managed to strengthen internationally but weaken in a region of fundamental importance. These were, oddly enough, components of a single process. On the one hand, the pull of the former Soviet republics into the Euro-Atlantic sphere exacerbated competition with Russia and fuelled conflict. On the other, the fact that Russia's resources made it an object of the West's greatest pragmatic interest strengthened its position in relation to its neighbours. The same can be said for other parts of the world where Russian influence grew, from Europe (despite the political constraints) to Africa, East Asia and to a small extent Latin America (the Middle East is a special case where Russia proved valuable as a counterweight).

Economic integration with the Western world (albeit as a slave) brought dividends and helped to improve living standards, but was at odds with the desire of Moscow to assert itself as an increasingly independent geopolitical force. Up to a point, the two directions could be reconciled, but with increasingly loud difficulty. In February 2022, the line was drawn. Russia made a choice in favour of geopolitics and openly opposed the West. To what extent this decision was conscious and calculated, and to what extent it was catalysed by circumstances or even external provocation, we will be able to judge some time in the future. But a further combination of the two vectors has become impossible, and the ceiling of the "rebound" from the Soviet collapse (increasing our role within the liberal international order) has been reached.

Beyond the West

Dependence on the West was at the heart of this course, so the shift was tectonic. For the first time in a long time, the West has completely disappeared from Russian politics. Official relations have been reduced to an exchange of accusations or threats and the gradual denunciation of a legal framework built up over decades. Unofficial relations are not much broader, focusing on the management of remaining but rapidly diminishing shared economic interests.

In none of the likely scenarios is there any prospect of restoring relations even remotely resembling those of the past. The split is deep and enduring. The best option is to anchor the confrontation institutionally, to prevent it from turning into a direct clash and to move towards peaceful coexistence.

The question of Russia's integration into the Western-centred system is no longer on the agenda. Not only because of the deterioration of our relations, but also because the whole system itself is changing irreversibly.

The military crisis in Ukraine began as the culmination of US-Russian security contradictions in Europe, but over the past two years it has taken on a different dimension. The conflict has become a catalyst for a shift in the global balance away from Western dominance. Not to any other particular pattern, but rather to an elastic configuration. In Moscow, this opens up opportunities, but it also means the need to revise some familiar assumptions.

Multipolarity without poles

The new situation has largely wiped out what Russia had achieved in the previous phase through increasingly conflictual but still cooperative economic and, to some extent, cultural-ideological cooperation with the West. Even the countries most closely allied with Moscow, faced with the acute antagonism between Russia and the US/NATO, have become concerned about how to avoid

making a choice while maintaining cooperation with everyone. The West's partners in the global South and East are doing the same.

The emerging international environment, referred to as a multipolar world, does not in fact presuppose 'polarity', i.e. the gravitation of regions towards obvious centres. It is clear that the economically and politically strongest states have an attraction that neighbouring countries cannot ignore. But neighbours of major powers do not want to submit to the nearest 'poles' and are trying to balance their inevitable influence with other relationships. This does not allow us to expect a structured alternative order to take the place of the dismantled liberal order. And the confrontation between Russia and the West will not be a factor in the emergence of a clear balance of power on a global scale. There is no certainty that even a European order, isolated from the above trends, is possible today.

Bound by a chain

The Ukraine conflict has had a noticeable impact on the international situation. However, in itself it is not the beginning of a new stage, but rather an attempt to put an end to uncertainty in relations. Conflicts over "*spheres of influence*", typical of previous eras, did not find a peaceful solution and turned into a violent phase, as has often happened in the past. In those times, the desired outcome of the clash was to define the boundaries of those very spheres. Now, however, the hostilities are taking place in a different international environment — the world is rapidly losing its order. Today's peculiarities do not call for a 'grand bargain' that will wind up the confrontation. It requires clear rules and mechanisms to enforce compliance. Neither is there now.

In modern journalistic terms, victory in "*hybrid warfare*" is not complete and unconditional, but viscous and ambiguous, implying the continuation of the conflict by various means, not necessarily directly military. This is not to say that there should be no distinction between defeat and victory, but there will be no dot on the i.

This situation is based on the paradox of today's international system. The conflict, caused by the desire of states to be guided by national interests (and their understanding of this is determined by their own culture), is unfolding in the context of an inextricably interconnected world. The crisis of liberal globalisation won't lead to the disintegration of the international system into isolated parts. The nature of interaction is changing, but it is not disrupted. And cases in which production and logistics chains suffer as a result of armed conflicts give rise to universal concern and a universal desire to remove obstacles (illustrative examples are the problems of navigation in the Black and Red Seas). This integrity of a diverse world is another obstacle to the division of interests/values. The latter runs counter to development goals, which require the exploitation of all opportunities and the maintenance of continuous communication. The emerging global political economy rejects both a single centre of dominance and a rigid division into blocs.

Lasting power

An important feature of the new world is the decline of 'soft power' as it was understood at the end of the last century. This is because non-violent influence has proven its effectiveness. And now everyone is taking steps to neutralise it. Hence the plethora of laws designed to prevent foreign influence. This is combined with widespread efforts to strengthen cultural and value identity, both within the Western community (consolidation on radical-liberal grounds) and outside it. As a result, receptiveness to ideas outside a particular culture is declining. This applies both to the West's attempts to impose its universalist approach on the world, which are still sluggish, and to the desire of every actor (Russia is no exception) to unite other countries and peoples under its own ideological and political banner.

The active discussion in our country about the need for a state ideology is probably important from the point of view of the state and the cohesion of society, but it has little relevance for international activities — there is simply no demand in the world

for transnational ideologies of any kind. This does not exclude the use of some slogans (the fight against colonialism, defence of traditional values, etc), but they are only tools.

Conflicts are permanent because they pass from one level to another, but they do not end. The main characteristics of a state are its stability and ability to react quickly to changes. The key to success in foreign policy is the internal socio-economic and moral condition of the state. As the experience of the two years of Ukraine conflict has shown, it is not the ideological narrative or the appeal to institutions that makes the biggest impression on the outside world, but the ability to withstand strong external pressure and maintain the potential for development. This can be seen as the new variant of what has been called 'soft power'. To play with words in the American way, let us call the phenomenon 'firm power'.

It fits in well with the concept of 'state-civilisation' currently accepted at the official level. It is impossible to give a clear definition of this phenomenon, but our general understanding corresponds well to the needs of the time. State-civilisation has a basis in itself, is self-sufficient, does not proclaim isolationism and is, to use a fashionable term, 'inclusive', i.e. capable of harmonising different cultural elements. Such a framework, if it can not only be proclaimed but also embodied, also corresponds to 'volatile' international circumstances.

Without facets

What does all this mean for Russia's international activities? It is presumptuous to draw conclusions; the global environment described is characterised by variability. Let us try to outline a few trends.

First, foreign policy is closely linked to the tasks of internal development. This is a trivial statement, it has been said before, but now it should be taken literally: internal development is an absolute priority, without it nothing else will work. In the hierarchy

of spheres of state activity, defence policy is becoming more important than foreign policy (due to the polarisation and militarisation of the international environment), and domestic policy is becoming more important than defence policy. But the distinction between them is almost disappearing.

Second, Russia is a country that has an interest in maintaining and strengthening global connectivity. The reason is simple: in the natural development of the world system (without destructive political interference), it is practically impossible to bypass Russia – in terms of resources, logistics and transport. Using Russia's capabilities will automatically mean developing its potential and strengthening its position.

Related to this is the **third point** – initiatives on world problems that require a truly common solution. These include problems of ecology, in space, and limiting the technological possibilities of interference in public and private life (as part of the larger issue of the future of artificial intelligence). So far, these problems have been discussed only in the Western ideological paradigm, but their exhaustion is already noticeable. Russia, with its combined natural, intellectual and technological resources, is well placed to offer new approaches.

Fourth, like-minded groups (international coalitions) can be formed around clear objectives that particular countries are interested in achieving. Common institutions lose their effectiveness because of the multidirectional interests of their participants. This applies not only to the structures on which the previous world order was based, but also to new ones such as BRICS or the SCO. They need an applied agenda whose importance is recognised by all members. One thing is clear: overcoming Western monetary and financial hegemony and promoting development which doesn't rely on Western institutions is a priority. Moving away from this monopoly is good for everyone, even those who get along with the West.

Fifth, the direct neighbourhood is multiplying in importance. All the more so as the old ways of exerting influence associated with the legacy of the past (the inertia of unconditional Russian dominance) are irreversibly disappearing. How to maintain influence within reasonable limits (to be able to pursue one's interests, but not to get involved in fruitless rivalries with other powers) is the main question of the coming years.

Migration policy will play an almost decisive role in building relations with neighbouring countries. A well-functioning system of attracting people for permanent residence and work, based on clear criteria and as free from corruption as possible, is of fundamental importance for both newcomers and Russians. A rigid but fair migration model will strengthen the civilisational fabric, while its absence will undermine it. More generally, in a world where the mobility of people is increasing for various reasons (climate, inequality, etc.), the ability to regulate migration flows will be the most important condition for sustainability and development. It will also be an instrument of foreign policy.

This raises the conceptual question of the nature of borders. The impossibility of either opening them completely, as liberal globalisation seemed to demand, or closing them completely, as was the case in the twentieth century USSR, is the core dilemma. Both are disastrous for the state. Flexible regulation (we are talking not only about the movement of people, but also of money, information and goods) is an urgent need that will be solved manually for a long time to come.

All of this is aimed at solving the problem of national security in the broadest sense. In the more traditional form, a strong and modern armed force is a necessary guarantee for all the rest. The high level of conflict in the world leaves no other option. Those who predict a growing number – with increasing severity – of interstate conflicts are probably right. But the complexity of today's international system has an important consequence – war is no longer a way of resolving contradictions, as it was in past

centuries. More precisely, a military conflict can 'open a boil', but it does not necessarily lead to a cure and is fraught with complications, i.e. new ailments.

There is a need for credible deterrence, which sometimes requires the use of force, but above all to maintain balance. The Ukraine crisis is the result of a glaring imbalance that emerged after the end of the Cold War. Because of its size and potential, Russia has major opportunities for independent development. This is realistic under conditions of lasting peace. And the fight for it is the main task of any state policy.

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THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO END CONFRONTATION BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE WEST

25.06.2024

Russia's then Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrey Kozyrev signed up to NATO's Partnership for Peace program in Brussels on June 22, 1994. This marked the beginning of official relations between the Russian Federation and the US-led bloc (prior to that, the USSR and NATO were involved in political dialogue within the framework of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, but it was established only several days before the dissolution of the Soviet Union).

The history of cooperation between Russia and NATO was quite rich and interesting. Over the years, we saw a strange mix of good intentions, political hypocrisy, and mutual misunderstandings which sometimes arose naturally and at other times were deliberate. Experts often talk about unrealized opportunities between the two sides, but this is debatable. In fact, there was never a real chance to establish a true partnership between Russia and NATO, although at some point there were certain illusions regarding this.

The Partnership for Peace program originally served a double goal: it was an alternative to NATO membership, but also a preparatory step for joining the organisation (at least for some countries). When the program was launched, a final decision on the expansion of NATO had not yet been made. Discussions in Washington continued, but the scales generally tipped in favor of spreading its tentacles.

Russia opposed the idea, but was not consistent. Kozyrev warned about the consequences of expansion, but repeatedly said NATO

was not Russia's enemy. Russian President Boris Yeltsin dissuaded Western leaders from growing the bloc, but at the same time told Polish President Lech Walesa that Moscow was not against Warsaw's accession. At the time, the Partnership for Peace initiative looked like a life-saving compromise. However, two years later, NATO finally announced that it would admit the first group of former communist countries.

Currently, the prevailing view in Russia is that, following the dissolution of the USSR, the US and its allies embarked on a course of a military and political takeover of the former Soviet sphere of influence, and NATO became the main instrument in achieving this. Although this is what eventually happened, the initial motivation might not have been that straightforward. The West's easy and unexpected success in the Cold War created a feeling of unconditional victory — a political and economic success, but most importantly, a moral one.

The West felt that, as the winning side, it had the right to determine the structure of Europe and knew exactly how to go about it. This was not simply a display of conscious arrogance, but rather of joyful euphoria. It seemed that, from now on, things would always be like this.

The concept adopted at the end of the Cold War stated that NATO ensured European security, and a bigger NATO meant a more secure continent. As a first step towards this, everyone (including Moscow) agreed that a reunited Germany would remain a member of the bloc instead of receiving neutral status, as some had suggested earlier. Further, it was implied that each country had the right to choose whether or not to join any alliances. Theoretically, that is what sovereignty implies. But in practice, the geopolitical balance of power had always imposed restrictions that forced alliances to consider the reaction of non-member countries. However, the triumphalism that reigned in the West following the

Cold War significantly reduced the willingness to take such reactions into account.

In other words, NATO felt like it could do anything and no reply would follow.

The situation could have changed dramatically if Russia had considered the possibility of joining NATO, and if the bloc itself had considered such a scenario. Then the principle of the indivisibility of security, proclaimed in the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe, would have been respected within the framework of the bloc. However, it was impossible for Russia to join NATO, since, even at its weakest, Russia remained one of the world's largest military powers and possessed the largest nuclear arsenal. The hypothetical accession of such a state to NATO would mean the emergence of a second force within the club that would be on a par with the US, and therefore, would not obey it on the same level as other allies. This would change the very essence of the organization, and alter its principles of Atlanticism (simply because of Russia's geographical location). No one was prepared for this. The qualitative transformation of NATO was never on the agenda.

As a result, NATO's expansion, which in a sense became automated, pushed Russia further and further to the east. Moscow's attempts to regulate this process — first through participation in joint institutions (such as the NATO-Russia Council of 2002, which was an expansion of the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997) and then through growing opposition (starting with Putin's Munich Speech in 2007) — did not bring the desired results. In addition to the inertia of the West's initial approach (which implied that the bloc's very existence is security in itself), the West believed that Moscow didn't have the right to set conditions and must only follow the rules set by the stronger and more successful Western community. This is how the EU eventually got involved in the current Ukraine war.

Could relations between NATO and Russia have developed in a different way? The West believes that the persistence of Russia, which continued to consider NATO a threat to its security, led to the current military crisis. And, in fact, this became a self-fulfilling prophecy. But even assuming that this was true, the speed and ease with which NATO returned to a strong confrontation with Russia shows that it had been prepared for this.

Russia's memorandum of December 2021 and the 2022 military operation in Ukraine were designed to put an end to the idea of NATO's uncontested expansion as the only means of ensuring European security. Two-and-a-half years later, we see that the scale of the conflict has exceeded all initial expectations. Judging by Moscow's statements, the confrontation may only come to an end when the principles on which European security is based are fundamentally reconsidered.

This is not a territorial conflict, but a conflict which may only end when NATO abandons its main goal and function. So far, there is no compromise on the horizon.

The Western side is not willing to agree that the results of the Cold War must be reconsidered, and the Russian side is not ready to retreat without this assurance. Thirty years after the signing of the Partnership for Peace program, there's still no partnership or peace between Russia and NATO. And neither is there a clear understanding of why the two sides were unable to achieve it.

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THE GUNS ARE HEARD BETTER

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VALDAI DISCUSSION CLUB

It has been said more than once that the contradictions between Russia and the West, in addition to material reasons, were also fuelled by differences in views on the nature of international politics: while Russia had a realist vision, the West maintained a liberal one. The debate on European security has also seen different and irreconcilable ideas. On the Russian side, there was a realistic demand not to see the West's hostile (at that time – potential, now – real) military infrastructure move closer to Russian borders, and not to let them turn Russia's neighbours into a springboard for attacking it. On the Western side, there is a set of words about the "values" that Russia "must conform to" in order to communicate at all. On the one hand, there is the European security as a balance of power and an equal system of guarantees for everyone within a certain geographical space. On the other hand, "European security" seems like belonging to some prestigious club ("The Garden" according to Josep Borrell). In Russia's eyes, NATO expansion and so-called "democracy promotion" were hostile acts that could destabilize the continent. In the eyes of the West, and especially the European Union, this was a geographical extension in the framework of Kantian "eternal peace." Attempts to reach an agreement based on partial recognition of Russia's right to have its own concerns infuriated many in the West.

It has also been said more than once that the vulnerability of some theories of international relations is caused by the limitations of the set of facts they rely on. This applies, for example,

to the discussion about polarity in the international system, in which some authors judge the prospects for the global system of international relations by comparing them with patterns found in European history. There are many theories about relations between Russia and Europe, which explain that European international dynamics has been decisive for Russian foreign policy and even Russian self-awareness. These theories, however, are formulated using historical material from the era when European politics was synonymous with world politics.

For Russia then, “being in Europe” simply meant being a subject of international relations. But European politics has long ceased to be equivalent to global politics.

At one time, it was important for Russia to be in Europe (more precisely, with Europe) for economic and cultural reasons. Nowadays, there are no such reasons.

To put an end to the lengthy theoretical introduction, it is necessary to say something about the concept of “recognition”. International status theory provides interesting academic results, but is still too inaccurate to make it the basis of any practical conclusions. “Russia should (or should not) be recognized as a great power by Europe/the West”, “Russia should (or should not) play a legitimate role in the European security system” — for goodness sake, what does this mean? Russia has been and remains a legitimate participant in the European security system, if only by virtue of the fact that it’s still a member of the OSCE. To seek some other kind of legitimacy means to agree that the highest authority providing such legitimacy is the West, and this contradicts both common sense and the basic provision of international law on the equality of states. In practice, talk about “recognizing” Russia in one or another capacity or status reflects either a deep misconception or deliberate deception, when in exchange for beautiful words they want to receive material concessions.

On February 24, 2022, the discussion on European security was terminated. Europe defined itself as a community of states hostile to Russia (there are exceptions like Hungary and Slovakia, but they have little influence on the EU as a whole). Economic, political and other ties between the European states and Russia were reduced to a minimum. The question of the European security system boiled down to its hard realist basis: where will the line between Russia and NATO be drawn? Europe, like the rest of the collective West, believes that this line should run along the eastern border of the former Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and Russia — along its western border.

In the spring of 2024, although the specific outcome of the armed confrontation is unclear, we can confidently say that the West has been unable to defeat Russia as it wanted, and now it is concerned with ensuring that Russia “does not win.” So, in the future, for years, if not decades to come, security in Europe (in the geographical sense of this concept — and the other sense is irrelevant for Russia) will be determined by the balance of power along the line of contact between Russia and NATO. Russia will do everything to maintain this balance for its part and thereby ensure its security. The victory we need in Ukraine, an increase in the size of the Armed Forces, the expansion of the defence industry, the deployment of troops and weapons on the western borders, along with rapid economic and technological development — this is our contribution to the emerging European security system. Will it ever be possible to talk about confidence-building measures, reducing the risk of incidents, and reducing potentials? Of course, but on a mutual basis. Russia has not withdrawn its demand to restrict NATO’s military infrastructure in Europe to within its 1997 borders. At the beginning of 2022, our arguments were not enough. Let’s see if there are enough of them in the future.

It appears that the prospect of meaningful negotiations on the Ukrainian crisis will one day arise again. It is important not to bring meaningless words and concepts into this perspective, or

worse, words designed to hide meaning. One of these words is the multi-vector concept. If we are talking about the fact that states can freely build relations with other states around the planet, this is trivial and seems undeniable. If they choose to become a military springboard for hostile actions against their neighbours by third countries – as Ukraine chose back in 2014 – why should they be surprised that the neighbours don't like it? The illusion that Ukraine will move closer to the European Union, and Russia will pay the bill for this wedding, should have been dispelled by sensible people even before the last coup d'état in Kiev.

The status of Ukraine is an important issue, and if negotiations take place, it will likely be on the table. Options are possible, from international guarantees of demilitarisation and permanent neutrality (as discussed two years ago in Istanbul) to simple international legal formalisation of the order actually established on the territory of the former Ukrainian SSR. But it should be clear to any potential counterparty of Russia in such negotiations: Russia is not interested in determining Ukraine's status in general, but in ensuring that this status excludes Ukraine's membership in military blocs to which Russia does not belong, any military cooperation between Ukraine and third countries, and any territorial claims to Russia.

This leads us to another question: what are we talking about when we talk about Ukraine? Whose status will we determine? Ukrainian statehood is dysfunctional. Already in 2022, only American assistance, taken into account as such in American budget statistics (and this is not the entire amount of assistance Ukraine has received from the United States), amounted to almost 40% of the expenditure side of the Ukrainian state budget. Since then, the ratio hasn't changed in favour of the Ukrainian budget. Ukrainian statehood is now paid for externally. This cannot be considered a consequence of the military actions of the last two years alone. Ten years ago, Ukraine managed to become one of the poorest countries, in GDP per capita (PPP) terms, in the post-Soviet space. Poorer than Georgia, which has almost no industry

and has experienced four armed conflicts since the dissolution of the USSR, including a civil war with hostilities in the capital city. The Ukrainian authorities, long before February 24, 2022, took a course of discrimination against millions of their citizens on the basis of their native language and religious affiliation. It is appropriate to ask potential partners in future negotiations now: what is this entity whose status they intend to determine? The ultra-right Azov battalion, banned in Russia, with which the current Ukrainian leadership has long been indistinguishable? Is this a community of political figures supported by grants from the United States and the European Union?

Russia demanded that Kiev extradite those involved in organising terrorist attacks on Russian territory, pointing out that traces of the monstrous terrorist attack in Crocus City Hall "lead to Ukraine". The other day, the head of the Security Service of Ukraine Malyuk revealed details of the terrorist attacks in Russia, leaving no doubt that this special service was involved in their organisation. It will be impossible to ignore this when talking about the "status of Ukraine" and the very prospect of negotiations.

A heavy moral and political responsibility also falls on the West, which for years and decades supported and encouraged such an Ukraine.

A necessary condition for any negotiations is to understand what the potential interlocutor is saying. That debate about European security, which ended two years ago, was greatly poisoned by the Western and European inability to simply correctly understand what exactly Russia was saying. Any statement by Russia was instantly overgrown with interpretations, and then in the West they no longer discussed what Russia was saying, but only their own interpretations.

This will probably sound unexpected to Western observers, but Russia did not set the goal of destroying Ukrainian statehood (although the president warned that continuing Kiev's current

course could cause irreparable damage to this statehood). Russia agreed with Kiev on the key parameters of the settlement in the spring of 2022 in Istanbul, they are known in almost all details. There is no reaction from the West to the Istanbul draft agreement. Russia has repeatedly stated in recent months what it sees as the conditions for negotiations. In response, the West repeats that Russia does not want negotiations or directly calls them pointless. Russia has repeatedly, in detail and at different levels, outlined the reasons why it does not intend to conduct a dialogue with the United States on strategic stability in conditions where Washington is pursuing a hostile course. No, they tell us, without examining these reasons, to separate the conversation about nuclear weapons from everything else in Russian-American relations — as the United States wants. Well, they say, for the sake of “good will”.

The order of medieval theological debate — one of the sources of European and generally Western rationality — suggested that first it was necessary to accurately reproduce the opponent's arguments and then refute them. We have inherited this in the form of literature review in our academic articles. Seeking understanding from your interlocutor, starting with a demonstration that you do not know his position, is, first of all, irrational. But for now, in the West, they prefer only hear the thunder of guns.

Valdai Discussion Club

VICTORY DAY IN GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR TRANSCENDS NATIONAL BOUNDARIES

79 years ago, on May 9, 1945, the Soviet people celebrated victory over Hitler's Germany earned through enormous hardships of the Great Patriotic War. The decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR declared May 9 as the national holiday. This day commemorates the triumph of the united Soviet people and their unparalleled feat on the front lines and on the home front.

The USSR played a key role in smashing Hitler's war machine and freeing Europe and the world from the barbaric madness of Nazism. During World War II, it was the Soviet Union that took the major brunt of Germany's attack. Up to 75 % of all enemy divisions, vast majority of all military equipment of Germany and its allies operated on the Soviet-German front. The Soviet Armed Forces defeated 507 German-fascist divisions and 100 divisions of the German allies — almost 3.5 times more than on all other fronts of the Second World War combined. On the Soviet-German front, the German Armed Forces lost more than 70 thousand aircraft (about 70 % of the total number of aircraft lost in the war), about 50 thousand tanks and assault guns (up to 75 %), 167 thousand artillery guns (74 %), and more than 2.5 thousand various ships and auxiliary vessels.

From 1933 to 1939, the size of the German army increased 40 times. Despite the Versailles agreements, this was stubbornly ignored by the leaders of Great Britain and France. After the rapid victories of the Wehrmacht in 1939–1940, Germany's military-technical potential was also strengthened by the economies of France, Holland, Belgium, and Norway. Even neutral Sweden and

Switzerland supplied the German military industry with iron ore for steel production and precision instruments. Spain supplied a significant amount of oil and petroleum products. In Poland, 264 large, 9,000 medium-sized, and 76,000 small enterprises worked for Germany. Denmark covered the needs of the German civilian population in butter by 10 %, in meat by 20 %, and in fresh fish by 90 %. And, of course, Danish industry fulfilled all German orders. The most interesting thing is that all the occupied countries ruled by collaborators did not demand payment in cash. They were promised payment after the victorious – for the Germans – end of the war. They all worked for Hitler for free. Before that, in world history, there had never been such a huge number of countries that would voluntarily go into the service of the invader and support it with their resources.

The Great Patriotic War lasted almost four years – from 22 June 1941 to 9 May 1945 – and claimed lives of 27 million Soviet men and women. On the territory of the USSR, the Nazis, who considered themselves representatives of an “advanced European race,” brutally exterminated Soviet people, including those who were suffering from physical or mental illness. The occupiers acted for both “racial hygiene” and economic reasons. Unable to work effectively, sick people were recognized as “unnecessary” and subjected to extermination.

The Nazi invaders were incredibly cruel to children, who were also physically inferior to adults and thus unable to provide similar labor productivity. Minors left without parental care were unable to get food and died from hunger. In addition, special medical facilities were installed for transfusion of children’s blood to wounded German soldiers, causing catastrophic infant mortality.

The occupiers forcibly took local residents for forced labor in Germany, mostly girls and women between the ages of 15 and 35, to work in German households.

During the Great Patriotic War, mass shootings of prisoners of war and civilians were widespread and systemic. It is noteworthy that there was a practice when German soldiers disguised themselves in Red Army uniforms, and their executions were recorded on photo and film for subsequent false propaganda.

The victory of the Red Army in 1945 was determined by many factors, major being the solidness of the multi-ethnic Soviet state and the invincible spiritual strength and mass heroism of the Red Army soldiers and commanders. All Soviet peoples – Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Belarusians, Georgians, Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Latvians, Lithuanians, Moldavians, Russians, Tajiks, Turkmens, Uzbeks, Ukrainians, and Estonians – fought against fascism shoulder to shoulder. The highest award of the USSR – Hero of the Soviet Union – during the Great Patriotic War was awarded to 7998 Russians, 2021 Ukrainians, 299 Belarusians, and 161 Tatars, in addition to 5 Crimean Tatars, 132 Jews, 96 Kazakhs, 90 Georgians, 89 Armenians, 15 Lithuanians, 12 Latvians, and 9 Estonians. Such examples are many.

Defense of the Motherland in danger has always been a sacred and noble duty. Today, our civilization is at a crucial turning point, with a real war being waged against Russia once again. The Western globalist elites keep speaking about their exceptionalism. They pit nations against each other and split societies, provoke bloody conflicts and coups, sow hatred, Russophobia, and aggressive nationalism, destroy family and traditional values that make us human. They do all that so as to keep dictating and imposing their will, their rights, and their rules on people, which in reality is a system of plundering, violence, and suppression.

Today, the history and the outcomes of the Second World War are being redefined and redrafted. Russia is not even getting invited to the commemoration events dedicated to the 79th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi death camps, although most of those camps were liberated by the Soviet Army, and the majority of prisoners there (from 2.5 to 3 million people) were Soviet POWs.

Monuments to Soviet soldiers across European countries are being demolished.

They seem to have forgotten what the Nazis' insane claims of global dominance led to. They forgot who destroyed that monstrous, total evil, who stood up for their native land and did not spare their lives to liberate the peoples of Europe.

The Western globalist elites' goal – and there is nothing new about it – is to break apart and destroy Russia, to make null and void the outcomes of World War II, to completely break down the system of global security and international law, and to strangle any sovereign centers of development.

But Russia is a different country with a different character. The Russians never give up their love for the motherland, faith and traditional values, ancestors' customs, and respect for all peoples and cultures.

The Victory Day is intimately dear to all of us. There is no family in Russia unaffected or unscarred by the Great Patriotic War. This memory never fades. To us, the Great Victory will forever remain a source of national pride and a foundation for bringing up new generations in the spirit of patriotism. Since the Soviet times, it has been the country's true national day. It was the shared arduous experience of defending our country that shaped and solidified Russia's modern nation and has helped keeping it together even after the fall of the Soviet Union. The memory of the War remains sacred and for most people across former Soviet Union, May 9 is as important as their own birthday.

Happy Victory Day!

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**ALEXANDER MANTYTSKIY,
AMBASSADOR OF RUSSIA TO BANGLADESH**

2014 ANTI-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN KIEV: WESTERN MANIPULATION TO TURN UKRAINE INTO A RUSSOPHOBIC AGGRESSIVE NATIONALIST STATE

The events that took place 10 years ago in the central Maidan square of Kiev and marked the beginning of the bloody coup d'état in Ukraine in February 2014, turned out to be a tragedy for the Ukrainians.

During the 10 year-rule of the criminal Kiev regime, Ukraine has lost 53.7 % of its population and one fifth of its territories. More than 10.5 million people have fled the country, while 11.2 million people have chosen to settle in Russia. Hundreds of thousands of people are being sent to slaughter by the Kiev regime at the request of the US. Washington and London insisting that the war waged in their interests should continue to the last Ukrainian, recommended Kiev to extend the draft age from 17 to 70 and further mobilize women.

In 2023, the country's GDP fell by a record 30.4 %. Social obligations are not fulfilled as allowances and pensions are not paid. Financial independence is lost. Ukraine is bankrupt.

Traditional, core Ukrainian values are trampled. History has been rewritten, faith has been betrayed, the Russian language, native for many Ukrainian citizens, has been banned. Instead, European pseudo-values are being disseminated, LGBT are on the march, and drugs find legalization.

Tempting slogans of Maidan activists and notorious cookies handed out by the US State Department official have brought

the Ukrainian people into a deceptive trap. The puppet regime in Kiev has driven the country into a dead end.

What did precede the events of 10 years ago and what was their trigger?

For more than two decades, Ukraine, like the other post-Soviet countries, had been undergoing a complex, often tragic, transition from the Soviet one-party political system to a pluralistic one. This created constant political instability and incapacity to define realistic strategies for its development, as well as unbalanced the government system itself. In 2004, the country experienced “the Orange Revolution”, which set the bar for all modern “color revolutions”, when the West laid its hands on Ukraine by inventing the third round of elections in violation of the Ukrainian constitution to push through a defeated candidate.

The social conflict developed and transformed into a political one under active and public intervention of external forces in Ukraine’s domestic affairs. From the very beginning of Ukrainian independence, numerous foreign funds and action plans have found their way to the country — from respectable UN Development Programs to various sectoral seminars with obligatory participation of “independent media”. Activities of European institutions for cultural and educational “exchanges” were on the rise. The embassies of the US and EU countries were involved in tackling incessant internal political crises. Washington provided assistance to Ukraine to promote civil society institutions through several entities: the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and various NGOs, primarily the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI).

While receiving substantial Western infusions, Ukraine was experiencing a brewing social conflict, which was primarily caused by the change in the model of relationship between the authorities and the society during the period of political and economic

liberalization prompted by external quarters. As a consequence, the country saw increasing unemployment, especially among the educated youth, the absence of social mobility and reasonable rotation in the ruling elite as well as degradation of the legislature. The per capita level of economic welfare was 5–6 times lower as compared to developed countries and one of the lowest in Europe.

By 2013, a significant part of Ukrainian society had been tired of the government leaders. The Ukrainian parliament saw the increasing number of fights between deputies of different factions. Municipal elections became a competition between political technologists and sponsors rather than between parties and candidates. There was perceptible resistance towards spreading of so-called “global values” such as modern forms of tolerance, LGBT marriages, adoption of children by same-sex couples, etc.

Youth activism became very prominent on the eve of the Maidan. By 2013, a considerable number of Ukrainian young people traveled abroad through various training programs of Western universities. Students were significantly influenced by the so-called demonstration effects of globalization — standards of living, different models of government accountability, performance of democratic institutions. This factor was widely used by manipulators to draw young people into protest actions. The tested and popular with the youth formulas such as “let us defend our future” and “the future has been stolen from us”, came in handy. Abundant free time and lack of social obligations made students and unemployed youth the active participants in street riots.

The first demonstrators appeared on the Maidan in Kiev on November 22, 2013, and the first armed clashes took place on January 19, 2014. February 18–22 were the bloodiest days. Those events were triggered by the government’s decision to suspend the planned signing of the EU Association Agreement with a view to analyze its consequences for the Ukrainian economy. Notably, it was only a suspension, not a cancellation. The problem was

that the new commitments Kiev was to assume under the EU Association Agreement were at odds with its obligations with the CIS free trade zone.

During those tragic days, civil sentiments were skillfully fueled, on the one hand, by media reports, especially in the opposition newspapers, and, on the other hand, by the actions of American and European diplomats. It suffices to recall the visits to the Maidan by assistant secretary of state Victoria Nuland, EU High Commissioner for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton, British Ambassador Simon Smith, and others. They also met Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich and demanded a non-violent response to the protesters.

On 21 February 2014, after signing the political settlement agreement in the presence of foreign mediators – the foreign ministers of Germany and Poland, Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Radoslaw Sikorski, as well as the Director of the Department of Continental Europe of the Foreign Ministry of France Éric Fournier – Viktor Yanukovich and his government fulfilled their commitments and removed law enforcement forces from the city center. The opposition, however, refused to honor its promises and, as a result, staged a coup d'état. It is worth recalling that the agreement provided for a government of national unity, constitutional reforms and democratic elections.

Despite the overthrow of the legitimate government, the opposition failed to achieve its objectives as intended. At the same time, the Maidan changed the Ukrainian society to such an extent that the population of several regions demanded secession from Ukraine and began to realize their political interests first in referendums on independence and then in the format of armed confrontation. Thus, the process of geopolitical decomposition of modern Ukraine was launched, which started in Crimea and continued with the creation of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics.

The Ukrainians who were on the Maidan a decade ago could hardly imagine what tragic consequences it would lead to.

Sadly, the fraternal Ukrainian people have become a hostage of the Anglo-Saxons masters, with the Kiev regime serving their interests at the expense of its own citizens. Ukraine is paying for this with hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian lives and broken dreams.

This is the cost of the notorious “European choice”.

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**ALEXANDER MANTYTSKY,
AMBASSADOR OF RUSSIA TO BANGLADESH**

COUP D'ÉTAT IN UKRAINE IN 2014: THE RESULTS OF THE REGIME CHANGE

Ten years ago, a bloody coup d'état took place in the central square of Kiev (the Maidan), which resulted in tragic ramifications for Ukraine itself, as well as for regional and international stability. It is noteworthy that the preceding mass riots, which were nakedly nationalistic in nature, advanced under the slogans of European values, freedom and democracy, while afterwards, the country saw battalions clad in swastikas and SS divisions' stripes.

As we have already indicated in the previous article "Western Manipulation to Turn Ukraine into a Russophobic Aggressive Nationalist State", in general, the Maidan has produced extremely detrimental effects on the political and socio-economic development of Ukraine, resulting in declining living standards of the Ukrainians and shrinking population in the country. In many ways, these consequences were brought about by certain Western states, primarily the United States, by blatantly interfering in Ukraine's internal affairs.

The 2014 coup masterminds never succeeded in uniting the country, nor did they succeed in reaching a social contract at the national level. The political and social forces committed to the Pan-Ukrainian idea adamantly opposed any agreement with the Russian-speaking part of Ukraine that was unwilling to be totally Ukrainianized.

Following the Maidan, the United States and its allies placed at the head of the country the forces, which later on instigated a military conflict with Russia through rampant neo-Nazism and

forced Ukrainianization. As a result, the slogan of the Banderites dating back to World War II that they were determined to decimate half of the Ukrainian population for the sake of power in Ukraine has become a reality.

Russia refused to tolerate the Kiev regime being used as a tool to pose direct threats to our security particularly given that these threats do not come somewhere from overseas, but stand directly on the borders of our country. Nor has Russia accepted the Kiev regime being used to launch a frontal attack on everything Russian — language, education, culture, people who have lived for centuries in that area, which was cultivated by their great-grandfathers and great-great-grandfathers and which has always remained Russian land and a part of the Russian world. Kiev has been intended to turn into a tool in order to destroy this history, shared memory and all the ties between the Russian and Ukrainian peoples. This also poses a direct threat to our interests.

In response to the measures that we undertook to protect our interests, the United States along with their European allies have launched a full-scale hybrid war to "suffocate" Russia politically and economically and inflict "strategic defeat on the battlefield". All of it has been publicly announced.

In the aftermath of the coup d'état in Ukraine, the West has not sought any constructive solution to the Ukrainian crisis and has been escalating it in every possible way, not only transferring the necessary weapons to Kiev, but also pushing it to launch strikes deep into the territory of the Russian Federation. This poses additional strategic risks, which is particularly perilous amid the further deteriorating U.S.-Russian relations teetering on the brink of plunging into the abyss.

The Western economic confrontation with Russia has aggravated the existing imbalances in the global economy. The growth rate of the global economy amounted to about 3 % in 2023 and will decline to 2.3 % in the current year, forecasts say. The main

problems include record inflation, tight monetary policy of the central banks of advanced economies, and further escalating geopolitical tensions.

The European economy is noted to be adversely affected by the anti-Russian sanctions. Eurostat data for December 2023 indicate that compared to the second quarter, the third quarter saw the GDP of the Eurozone states decrease by 0.1 %. A most drastic decrease happened in Ireland (by 5.6 %), Estonia (4 %) and Luxembourg (1.8 %). The Eastern and Central European countries are experiencing economic difficulties. Hungary's GDP declined to 0.7 % in 2023, while the Czech Republic's shrank to 0.4 %. Most macroeconomic indicators of the Japanese economy were also downgraded.

The World Economic Outlook 2024 remains uncertain and pessimistic amid a slowdown in investment flows due to a breakdown in relations between some of the world's most powerful economies. The IMF estimates the possible damage from a collapse in trade at 2.5 % of the global GDP (about \$ 2.5 trillion).

Crisis trends in finance are currently aggravating, too. Germany's total public debt has surged to a record € 2.4 trillion. In the 2023–2024 fiscal year, the UK budget deficit will reach £ 131 billion or 5.1 % of its GDP. A similar figure in France has significantly exceeded the government's calculations, amounting to 5.4 % in 2023 and 4.8 % in 2024, while the public debt for 2020–2023 has reached an unprecedented level of more than 11 % of GDP (€ 3 trillion).

A crisis is also underway in the manufacturing sector. Primarily, it affects the Western European countries, whose energy-intensive sectors (petrochemicals, machine building and metallurgy) are losing their competitiveness. If German companies continue to outsource their production abroad, Germany will face deindustrialization.

The political crisis in Ukraine has long gone beyond a regular conflict of interests between various political forces vying for ultimate power in the country. It has abruptly unleashed a large-scale global confrontation, and struggle around, without exaggeration, historic processes that accompany the shift from the unipolar model to the polycentric world order.

We are witnessing a geopolitical confrontation between Russia and the "collective West". Ukraine, which may find itself in the midst of a much greater confrontation to which the U.S.-Russia relations could descend, is obviously just one of the pieces on the chessboard for the Westerners, which can be either exchanged or sacrificed at any moment.

By bowing to Western wishes, Ukraine has lost its subjectivity and allowed to be turned into a lever against Russia. This is exactly what the Maidan has resulted in. But for our country, Ukraine has always been and will remain a half-sister with shared history, religion and culture, a place where our relatives and friends were born and live. It is precisely in order to preserve Ukraine that the aims and objectives of the special military operation are to be fully achieved.

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**ALEXANDER MANTYTSKY,
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ON THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATO'S AGGRESSION AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA: RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

By bombing Yugoslavia 25 years ago, the United States and its NATO allies destroyed the security foundation established after World War II. The question of Washington and Brussels responsibility for those crimes remains open.

On March 24, 1999, the US-led coalition of countries of “defensive alliance” invaded the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on the pretext of stopping the ethnic cleansing allegedly taking place in Kosovo. Information and propaganda tricks customary for Western politicians, were widely used.

Background of Aggression

In January 1999, world media in one voice reported that the Serbs were allegedly continuing their atrocities in Kosovo, slaughtering civilians in the village of Rachak. The conclusion was evident — the Serbs deserved severe punishment. The North Atlantic bloc should act as a fighter for justice.

In accordance with the provocation plan, William Walker, head of the OSCE Kosovo and Metohija Verification Mission and an American citizen, suddenly appeared in the village of Rachak on January 16. He discovered the “massacre” of civilians, summoned Western journalists and prohibited Serbian investigators and correspondents to come to Rachak. Then he made a statement, widely circulated in NATO and world media, about the discovery of “mountains of bodies” in civilian clothing, many killed at close range.

Eventually, the opinion of authoritative international experts came to light, but only a year after the events in Rachak. Most of those killed turned out to be military personnel, changed into civilian clothes after their deaths. Traces of gunpowder were found on the hands of many of them. Bullet holes were discovered on their bodies but not on their clothes. As stated in the report made by Finnish experts, “in 39 cases out of 40 it is impossible to speak of shooting unarmed people”. The main conclusion was that there were neither mass shootings nor a “bloody massacre” in Rachak.

In reality, the Yugoslav army and police were fighting an exhausting battle against Kosovo Albanian terrorist gangs in the province. The infamous Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), whose leaders are now on trial in The Hague, ruthlessly massacred the Serb and disloyal Albanian population. However, Western propaganda turned the KLA thugs into freedom-loving rebels and warriors of the good, and the legitimate authorities of Yugoslavia, who defended the constitutional order, into war criminals. Cynical provocations were organized to demonize the Serbs.

Operation Allied Force

NATO's aggression against a sovereign country — Operation Allied Force — lasted 78 days and resulted in unimaginable sufferings, numerous victims and catastrophic devastation for Yugoslav population. The aircraft of the Alliance countries carried out 38,000 combat sorties, over 10,000 of them for bombing strikes. The United States and its allies bombed cities, including Belgrade, and villages, civilian infrastructure, blowing up bridges, passenger trains and buses, killing women, children and the elderly. Three thousand cruise missiles were fired at the sovereign European state and 80,000 tons of aerial bombs were dropped. In addition, the use of combined uranium munitions led to contamination of vast areas and an unprecedented surge in cancer diseases.

In the course of Operation Allied Force, there were many “erroneous” bombings. For example, on April 14, it became known that

64 Albanians heading towards Albania were killed. On the night of May 8, the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade came under attack. Among the most tragic incidents was a strike on the Kosovo village of Korisha. According to NATO, there were Serbian military personnel, however, the strike hit Albanian refugees, with 50 people killed and the equal number wounded. In the city of Nis, a bomb attack on a local market killed more than 30 people. There is a notorious case of the air strike on a passenger train when journalists were shown an artificially accelerated aerial shooting claiming that the train was moving very fast, so the pilot missed the targeted bridge and instead hit the train twice.

According to Serbian data, the bombings killed up to 4,000 people and injured about 10,000. Two thirds of them were civilians. Material damage amounted to about \$ 100 billion. The military-industrial infrastructure of Yugoslavia was completely destroyed. More than 1.5 thousand settlements, 60 bridges, 30 percent of all schools, about 100 monuments were ruined. Forty thousand residential houses were razed to the ground or damaged. The bombings of oil refineries and petrochemical plants led to the contamination of the country's water system with toxic substances.

The aggression against Yugoslavia was a flagrant violation of international law – the fundamental purposes and principles of the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act of the OSCE, and the norms and principles of international humanitarian law. The reputation of the UN Security Council, which did not authorize the Alliance's forceful actions against Yugoslavia, was seriously undermined. The Council was simply presented with a fait accompli.

Lessons of Yugoslavia's collapse

The consequences of NATO missile and bombing strikes on Yugoslavia and the West current creeping hybrid aggression against Serbia go beyond the borders of a single country, becoming a single multidimensional factor in the global hybrid warfare. The attack on Yugoslavia launched a series of large-scale

aggressions by the United States and its allies around the world: against Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, and Syria. The consequences are well known. The anti-constitutional coup in Kiev in 2014 also stems from these actions.

In March 2024, at a meeting on national security issues, Nikolay Patrushev, Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, noted the destructive role of NATO in the modern world. He stressed that during 75 years of its existence, NATO as the instrument of Washington influence on other states, under the guise of a "peacekeeping organization" has unleashed more than 100 wars and military conflicts around the world – and is preparing for new ones. Nowadays, during exercises in Europe, the military of the North Atlantic Alliance practice the scenario of an armed conflict with Russia, preparing for military activities in the Arctic and Asia-Pacific region.

By Operation Allied Force, the West has launched the process of replacing the legitimate and clear mechanisms, which regulated international relations, with undefined "rules-based order". None of the representatives of the North Atlantic Alliance have been ever punished for their criminal actions. Moreover, the warmongers decided to call victims of aggression "collateral losses", i. e. losses that "accompany" the realization of the geopolitical ambitions of the United States, Great Britain and their satellites.

After the NATO attack on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on March 24, 1999 the US and their European allies finally believed in their own impunity and moral superiority – to the misfortune of those who seek to choose their own path rather than become instruments for the realization of other people's interests. The strategic balance of power collapsed and a protracted crisis of interstate relations continues to deepen.

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ALEXANDER MANTYTSKIY,
AMBASSADOR OF RUSSIA TO BANGLADESH

RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND IMPLICATIONS IN SOUTH ASIAN REGION

Dhaka, June 2, 2024

The overall situation in the world is characterized by increased uncertainty and significant tensions. The risks of escalation into an acute conflict phase have multiplied. The perception of Russia as a threatening adversary has taken hold in the West. The nuclear-weapon states have come close to a new, "hybrid" stage of the arms race, including in the field of advanced technologies. The dynamics of mobilization activities have increased, and large-scale military exercises involving new weapons systems have become more frequent.

The current serious aggravation of the international situation is associated with the desire of the collective West, primarily the United States, to assert their global dominance. This is happening against the background of weakening international institutions and international security, slowing down of the world economy due to the crisis of confidence and unscrupulous behavior of certain countries. This requires Russia, as a truly independent international actor, to strengthen its positions through diplomacy along with building up the force component to a level that meets the requirements of neutralizing the military threat from the West.

The main tasks facing the diplomatic service of the Russian Federation in the realities of the escalated confrontation with the collective West are to create favorable and secure conditions enabling our country and its citizens to develop steadily, to provide political and diplomatic support to the special military operation

and to expand cooperation with the countries and associations of the World Majority, including the states of South Asia.

As the result of the Russian presidential election in March, President Vladimir Putin received the comprehensive mandate from the voters to achieve the goals of the special military operation in Ukraine, namely to protect people who, for eight years, have been facing humiliation and genocide perpetrated by the Kiev regime, to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, as well as to bring to trial those who perpetrated numerous bloody crimes against civilians, including against citizens of the Russian Federation.

The choice made by President Vladimir Putin in favour of defending Russia's vital interests, has placed our country at the forefront of the struggle for a better future for the entire world. Washington and its allies continue to seek to inflict a strategic defeat on us. However, lately, seeing the Russian army's progress in the Ukrainian theatre of operations, the West changed its rhetoric to "not letting Vladimir Putin win" rather than winning themselves. But the essence remains unchanged.

We stay open to political and diplomatic settlement in Ukraine based on our legitimate interests and the developments of the past years that have led to the present situation. Given the lack of serious proposals from those who declared war on us, and their unwillingness to consider our interests or the realities on the ground, reaching an agreement at the negotiating table remains unlikely.

Russia is not going to participate in the first so-called peace conference this June in Switzerland, which lost its neutral status by siding with the Kyiv regime and thus cannot serve as a platform for dialogue, or in any other events promoting the ultimatum "Zelensky formula".

Russia has been always emphasizing that we would be ready to consider every serious proposal that would include the

discussion of the situation on the ground, of the origin of this situation and of reaching a solution that would guarantee legitimate national interests of Russian and Ukrainian people. Actually, almost two years ago, in April 2022, a few weeks after the operation started, the Ukrainian side proposed a meeting. The Russian side agreed. There were several encounters in Belarus and later in Istanbul. In Istanbul, in early April 2022, we reached a deal, an agreement which was initialed. As a sign of goodwill, the Ukrainians asked us to withdraw troops from Kiev, which we did. And two days later the agreement, which was initialed and ready for signature, was torn apart by Ukrainians. The leader of the Ukrainian delegation in April 2022 in Istanbul gave an interview in January this year, where he said that they “were ready to sign”, but then Boris Johnson came to Kiev and said “no, let’s continue military activities.”

The Istanbul document provided there would be no military bases in Ukraine. The armed forces of Ukraine would hold no maneuvers or military exercises involving third countries unless all guarantor countries, Russia and China included, agreed. Further, there was an obligation to abolish legislation discriminating against national minorities (primarily the Russian minority) and to stop supporting movements that glorify Nazism. There was an idea of having Russia as a guarantor, alongside all the other P5 countries, plus Germany and Türkiye. However, the document specifically stated that those guarantees did not apply to Crimea or Donbass.

The United States is taking the same destructive approach to the Middle East as to the Ukrainian issue. Their long-term attempts to monopolize the role of mediator in this region have caused the situation there to spiral out of control, as we are witnessing now, a sharp escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, a humanitarian disaster in the Gaza Strip, and a very real threat that this strategically important region will be destabilized.

Unhealthy trends are also observed in the Asia-Pacific region, where Washington, with the help of its satellites, is trying to

impose not only the logic of bloc-based confrontation, but also NATO infrastructure. The United States are striving to bolster the role of QUAD and AUKUS by expanding membership in these groupings. This move is an integral part of the US strategy to contain China, Russia and the DPRK in Asia-Pacific and will obviously have a negative impact not only on the situation in the region, but also on the global security architecture as a whole.

Unlike the US and its allies, at the UN and other multilateral platforms Russia has always advocated that new ideas concerning strategic advancement should contribute to the formation of a common space of cooperation for peaceful development of all states based on the principles of sovereign equality. The global and regional architectures should be built on the principles of indivisibility of security, non-interference in internal affairs, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-use of force or threat of force and the rule of international law rather than undefined “rules-based order” invented by the West for the purposes of neo-colonial domination.

Based on this narrative, Russia has made significant efforts to develop relations with neighboring countries, as well as in the Asia-Pacific region, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

High-level multilateral events at the UN, BRICS, the G20, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, and the East Asia Summits demonstrated these groups’ strong interest in pursuing independent foreign policy and their willingness to consider Russian interests and to interact with Moscow in a depoliticized and constructive manner.

Amid geopolitical turbulence, integration associations across the Eurasian space have successfully demonstrated their resilience. The Eurasian Economic Union under Russia’s chairmanship signed a free trade agreement with Iran and a memorandum of cooperation with Myanmar. There is a vast scope for synergy between various integration entities, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, ASEAN, BIMSTEC and others.

Russia has gained a stronger foothold in the Middle East. Relations with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, primarily the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, acquired a new quality, including with regard to the stabilization of the global oil market through OPEC+.

The states of the friendly Islamic civilization, which has been establishing itself as an independent center of world development within the emerging polycentric world, prove to be reliable partners of Russia in ensuring security and stability as well as in solving economic problems at the global and regional levels. Russia seeks to strengthen the comprehensive mutually beneficial cooperation with the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, respecting their social and political systems and traditional spiritual and moral values.

The second Russia-Africa Summit held in St Petersburg in July 2023 came as the culmination of cooperation efforts to significantly enhance multifaceted ties in this promising area of Russia's foreign policy.

The expansion of traditional partnerships with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean was central to the agenda of the successful political dialogue with regional states at the highest and high levels. A significant milestone was the Russia- Latin America International Parliamentary Conference held in Moscow in October 2023.

In the dynamic and vibrant Asia-Pacific region, Moscow prioritizes the following:

- increasing economic, security, humanitarian and other cooperation with the states of the region and the ASEAN member states;
- establishing a comprehensive, open, indivisible, transparent, multilateral and equitable architecture of security and mutually beneficial cooperation in the region;

- promoting constructive non-politicized dialogue and interstate cooperation in various areas, including with the help of opportunities provided by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum;
- countering attempts to undermine the regional system of ASEAN-based multilateral security and development alliances;
- fostering broad international cooperation to counter policies aimed at drawing dividing lines in the region.

In South Asia, Russia maintains substantial political dialogue with India, including in the context of the country's chairmanship of the SCO and the G20 (last year), reinforcing the Russian-Indian special and privileged strategic partnership. The growth of trade, which exceeded \$ 54 billion, indicates the progressive development of Moscow's cooperation with New Delhi.

Despite the current turbulence and uncertainty in international affairs, that I mentioned earlier, mutually beneficial cooperation between Moscow and Dhaka remains vibrant and diverse. The last year saw a number of remarkable events in the bilateral chronicle.

In September, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov came to Dhaka on an official visit, held extensive and frank talks with Foreign Minister A. K. Abdul Momen and paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina apprising her on the status of bilateral ties and Russian approaches towards various thorny issues of the global agenda. The two sides took stock of the existing and promising bilateral projects, discussed prospects of cooperation in multilateral organizations, and reiterated their commitment to a more fair and equitable world order.

In October, the Rooppur NPP received the first batch of fresh nuclear fuel manufactured at the Novosibirsk Chemical Concentrates Plant. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina virtually attended the solemn ceremony – a major breakthrough in the implementation of this

flagship project. Thus, Rooppur NPP officially became a nuclear facility according to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) classification, and Bangladesh joined the elite club of “nuclear countries”.

Rooppur NPP will make a considerable contribution to Bangladesh economic development and energy security, Nuclear energy is environment friendly, produces no carbon emission and no pollution. It is affordable, reliable and clean. Russia will assist our Bangladeshi partners throughout the entire life cycle of the nuclear project, including our obligations for the long-term deliveries of reactor fuel, plant maintenance, and handling nuclear waste.

On November 12–14, a detachment of warships of the Russian Pacific Fleet comprising large anti-submarine ships Admiral Tributs and Admiral Panteleyev, as well as the sea tanker Pechenga paid a goodwill visit to the port of Chattogram. The Russian officers visited Bangladesh Navy’s warship, Bangladesh Naval Academy, Navy’s School of Maritime Warfare and Tactics and the Navy-run school for children with special needs. Russian and Bangladeshi sailors shared their experience in diving operations as well as engaged in various sports and cultural events. Before leaving Bangladesh, the three Russian ships took part in the joint PASSEX exercise with the Bangladesh Navy in the Bay of Bengal.

The first half of the year 2024 has proved to be quite eventful as well. In early January, a delegation of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation took part in observing the parliamentary elections in Bangladesh. In March, Bangladeshi observers visited Russia to experience the presidential election that resulted in the victory of Vladimir Putin.

In April, Alexey Likhachev, head of the Russian nuclear agency ROSATOM, visited Dhaka and the Rooppur construction site. He apprised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the progress and discussed the prospects of expanding the existing project with two more units.

Bangladesh remains Russia’s second largest trade partner in South Asia after India, with bilateral turnover amounting to 2.7 billion dollars in 2023, with 1.8 billion being the Russian export and 900 million – Bangladeshi supplies to the Russian market.

Russia makes a significant contribution to Bangladesh’s food security, being one of the key suppliers of various agro-industrial products, primarily wheat and fertilizers. In 2023, Bangladesh imported 2.7 mln tons of grain from Russia. In this March, the Russian Corporation “Prodintorg” and Trading Corporation of Bangladesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding import of essential food items from Russia on G-to-G basis. In May, Prodintorg signed another contract with Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation for the supply of 300 thousand tons of potash fertilizers in the 2024–2025 financial year.

One of the largest Russian gas companies Gazprom continues implementing projects aimed at enhancing Bangladesh’s energy security. The construction of three additional wells on Bhola Island was completed, bringing the total number of drilled wells to twenty. The company’s proposals for gas evacuation and exploration of new fields are under consideration. Long-term supplies of hydrocarbons, including LNG, construction of relevant infrastructure, and use of Russian technologies in the field of renewable energy are also on the agenda.

Recently we had a business mission of Russian companies in Dhaka to explore business opportunities, to increase mutual awareness and to establish direct contacts with partners here in various sectors of joint interest, such as ICT, chemicals, transport, etc.

Moscow sees Dhaka as a trusted partner in global affairs willing to contribute to a more just and equitable world order. Our multifaceted cooperation in the UN, interaction within IORA, CICA, ASEAN Regional Forum and others, Dhaka’s aspiration to join BRICS reflect many commonalities in the responsible foreign

policies of our two countries. Dhaka's unwavering commitment to global peace without divisive lines, its strong posture as a voice of developing countries are truly commendable. We are witnesses to the epoch-making events right now, which are changing the course of development of the entire system of international relations. The world is in transition to a multipolar model, free from the hegemony and arrogance of a small group of countries with neocolonialist mindset.

**LECTURE BY ALEXANDER MANTYTSKIY, AMBASSADOR
OF RUSSIA TO BANGLADESH, AT THE DEFENCE
SERVICES COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE**

AMBASSADOR OF RUSSIA TO BANGLADESH, AT DCAB TALKS

15 February 2024, National Press Club

An important milestone in 2023 was the update of the Russia's foreign policy doctrine. The document expressed a commitment to promote a more just and sustainable international system based on the principles of international law and cooperation between states.

The past year showed the growing global intolerance towards the arrogant manners of Western countries still clinging to their fading hegemony in world affairs, while basing squarely on their vested interests with disregard for the opinion of all others. The West has demonstrated worrisome inability to make honest deals and has proven to be an unreliable partner.

At the UN and other multilateral platforms, Russia advocated for the peaceful development of all states based on the principles of sovereign equality and indivisible security. Russia effectively thwarted plans for its international isolation while maintaining opportunities for respectful dialogue and pragmatic cooperation with the West.

Along with the plans to eliminate our dependence on any manufacturing, supply and logistics chains, financial and banking systems subject to excessive Western control, the Russian foreign policy is focused on developing relations with those countries which are ready to work with us on an equal, mutually beneficial and mutually respectful footing by engaging in frank dialogue to

maintain the balance of interests instead of taking self-serving decisions.

Russia made significant efforts to develop relations with neighboring countries, as well as the Asia-Pacific region, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

Russia has gained a stronger foothold in the Middle East. Relations with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, primarily the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, have acquired a new quality, including with regard to the stabilization of the global oil market through OPEC+. There was progress in relations with the League of Arab States: Morocco hosted the 6th session of the Russian-Arab Cooperation Forum of foreign ministers in December.

As regards the conflict between Israel and Palestine, Russia believes that Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, including the seizing of hostages, deserves to be wholly condemned. Yet, Israel, as an occupying power, cannot and should not use this to justify the collective punishment of millions of Palestinians in the occupied territory in violation of the standards and principles of international humanitarian law. We reiterate our principled and unwavering position: this conflict of many years cannot be resolved militarily and can only be settled politically and diplomatically by establishing a full-fledged negotiating process on an internationally recognised legal basis which envisages the creation of an independent Palestinian state within the 1967 borders with its capital in East Jerusalem, living in peace and security with Israel.

The second Russia-Africa Summit held in St Petersburg in July marked the culmination of collaborative efforts to significantly enhance ties in this promising area of Russia's foreign policy. The agreements reached at the highest level set the priorities for long-term cooperation with African countries and associations.

A pivotal moment in the development of BRICS was the decision made at the Johannesburg Summit in August to expand the association from January 1, 2024, by incorporating Argentina, Egypt, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia as new members. Russia, which assumed BRICS chairmanship on January 1, will pay special attention to ensure that the newcomers seamlessly join in the common work and contribute to the strengthening of positive trends not only within the association, but also in the international arena in the interests of the Global Majority.

The influence of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on global and Eurasian processes increased in 2023: Iran became a full member of the SCO, and the process for Belarus to become a member was initiated.

Amid geopolitical turbulence, Eurasian integration associations that include Russia have successfully demonstrated their resilience. Under Russia's chairmanship, the Eurasian Economic Union adopted a declaration on the further development of economic processes within the organization until 2030 and 2045. The EAEU signed a free trade agreement with Iran, as well as a memorandum of cooperation with Myanmar. In 2024, the Union will strive, among other things, to develop a systemic dialogue with the SCO, ASEAN, BRICS countries and other countries and integration associations across broader Asia to promote the idea of the Greater Eurasian Partnership.

Russian-Chinese relations reached an unprecedented level in 2023. After re-election as President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping made his first foreign visit to Russia in March. President of Russia Vladimir Putin visited China for the third Belt and Road International Forum in October. Bilateral trade touched another record high of over \$ 230 billion. The share of the rouble and the yuan in mutual transactions reached about 80 percent.

Russia maintained intensive political dialogue with India, reinforcing the Russian-Indian special and privileged strategic partnership. The growth of trade, which exceeded \$ 54 billion, revealed the progressive development of Moscow's cooperation with New Delhi.

Important joint steps were taken to expand Russian-Iranian relations. Relations with Türkiye reached a strategic level in the field of peaceful nuclear energy: in particular, Russia began supplying nuclear fuel to the Akkuyu nuclear power plant.

We will continue to promote the ideals of equality and justice in international affairs. Among other things, it refers to the modern practices of neocolonialism widely implemented, as centuries ago, mostly by Western countries, which grossly interfere in domestic affairs of other states, replacing the generally accepted norms of the international law with undefined "rules-based order", imposing their controversial values on other nations, using illegal restrictions, mass disinformation, financial and economic blackmail. The present attempts to seize the Russian sovereign assets frozen in certain Western jurisdictions is just one blatant example and a serious warning for the entire world as regards the reliability of Western financial institutions. In this context, the Forum of supporters of the struggle against modern practices of neocolonialism – "For the freedom of nations!" which is taking place in Moscow on February 15–17, presents a suitable platform to raise concerns and unite efforts of like-minded states.

These days mark the 10th anniversary of anti-government demonstrations and a coup d'état in Ukraine in February 2014, which eventually turned out to be a tragedy for the Ukrainians.

During the 10 year-rule of the criminal Kiev regime, Ukraine has lost 53.7 % of its population and one fifth of its territories. More than 10.5 million people have fled the country, while 11.2 million people have chosen to settle in Russia. Hundreds of thousands of people are being sent to slaughter by the Kiev regime obedient

to Western orders. Washington and London insisting that the war waged in their interests should continue to the last Ukrainian, recommended Kiev to extend the draft age from 17 to 70 and further mobilize women. NATO countries, in a futile attempt to defeat Russia in this proxy war, urge their Ukrainian puppets to continue their mostly failed offensive, while trying to extract geopolitical and economic benefits from the current situation.

Western military manufacturers are among the major beneficiaries of the Ukrainian conflict. However, supplies of Western ammunition and military equipment sometimes prove to be detrimental to Ukraine itself. For example, on January 24, Ukrainian militants, using the American Patriot missile system, shot down a Russian military transport aircraft carrying 74 people, including 65 Ukrainian captured servicemen intended for exchange. All those on board were killed.

It comes as a surprise to read in certain local newspapers reprinted articles from Western media on so-called indiscriminate Russian shelling of densely populated areas in Ukraine causing civilian losses. I would like to state once again that the Russian military target only military facilities often disguised as civilian. On the contrary, Ukrainians have been increasingly and purposefully shelling residential buildings, schools, kindergartens, markets and medical facilities in Russia. Belgorod region and Donbas experience around 2000 attacks on civilian objects every week. Unfortunately, these actions hardly find any mention in Bangladesh media.

Sadly, the fraternal Ukrainian people have become a hostage of the Western masters, with the Kiev regime serving their interests at the expense of its own citizens. By bowing to Western wishes, Ukraine has lost its subjectivity and allowed to be turned into a lever against Russia. But for Russia, Ukraine has always been and will remain a half-sister with shared history, religion and culture, a place where our relatives and friends were born and live.

Now let us proceed to Russia-Bangladesh relations. The year 2023 turned out to be quite eventful and saw a few milestones in the form of mutual visits, bilateral projects and broader international synergy.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov made the first ever visit to Bangladesh in September. In Dhaka, he held in-depth negotiations with his counterpart A.K.A. Momen, as well as made a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The two sides reaffirmed their intention to continue mutually beneficial cooperation, outlined promising bilateral projects and exchanged views on a wide range of issues.

In early October, the Rooppur NPP construction site hosted a grand ceremony to mark the delivery of fresh nuclear fuel. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina virtually attended the event. On that date, Rooppur NPP officially became a nuclear facility and Bangladesh joined the club of “nuclear countries”.

In November, a detachment of warships of the Russian Pacific Fleet paid a goodwill visit to the port of Chittagong. It was the first time in the last 50 years when Russian Naval ships entered the Bangladeshi port.

In December, two veteran Russian sailors who were engaged in demining and clearing the port of Chittagong from sunken ships in 1972–1974, took part in the Victory Day celebrations in Bangladesh.

Speaking about economic cooperation, Bangladesh remains Russia’s second largest trade partner in South Asia after India. In January-November 2023, the trade volume amounted to \$ 2,3 billion. The Russian Side is interested in diversification of its export basket by supplying machinery, equipment and technologies necessary for railway, road construction, building, metallurgy and other industrial spheres.

Russia makes a significant contribution to Bangladesh food security. Despite artificial and counterproductive obstacles created by the Western countries, Moscow continues to export to Bangladesh key agro-industrial products, mainly wheat and fertilizers. In 2023, Bangladesh imported 2,7 mln tons of grain from Russia. The Russian Side is ready to expand the list of export items with edible oils, peas, chickpeas and lentils.

Energy has been the backbone of our cooperation. In 2023, Gazprom continued projects aimed at enhancing Bangladesh energy security. The construction of three additional wells on Bhola Island was completed, bringing the total number of drilled wells to twenty. The company’s proposals for gas evacuation and exploration of new fields are under consideration. There are more offers and projects in the pipeline, such as the supply of Russian LNG and crude oil for further local refining, Russian solar energy technologies, upgrade of local power stations, and more.

The Rooppur NPP flagship project is moving according to the schedule. Among the recent milestones, there is the installation of the passive heat removal system at Unit 2. The first unit is expected to start pilot operation by the end of this year.

Safety has always been the top priority of JSC “ASE” – general contractor of the project. Russian specialists use the most advanced engineering solutions and technologies. The same VVER-1200 reactors that are installed at the Roppur NPP are already in operation in Russia, having proved their efficiency and reliability. They can survive almost everything – from earthquake to a plane crash.

Rooppur NPP will make a considerable contribution to Bangladesh economic development and energy security. Nuclear energy is environment friendly, produces no carbon emission and no pollution. It is affordable, reliable and clean. Russia will assist our Bangladeshi partners throughout the entire life cycle of the

nuclear project, including our obligations for the long-term deliveries of reactor fuel, plant maintenance, and handling nuclear waste.

Rooppur is more than just a power plant. Dozens of Bangladeshi companies provide their services and materials for construction works. The NPP project will create a new sector of economy with more than 18 thousand workplaces for locals. Further, through training of Bangladeshi students in nuclear universities in Russia and at the education center at Rooppur itself, Russia assists in adding a large amount of skilled engineers to the Bangladesh economy capable of bringing a meaningful contribution not only to the nuclear industry, but to other sectors too.

Sadly, it has come to our knowledge that certain pro-Western quarters are hatching plans to smear the Rooppur NPP project. Instead of focusing on the achievements, local hype-seeking journalists are ready to undermine the epitome of our bilateral relations for short-lived considerations. They deliberately exaggerate minor shortcomings unavoidable in any project of such scale, while turning a blind eye to its benefits.

All in all, judging by the outcomes of the year 2023, Russia and Bangladesh relations have proven to be resilient and strong both politically and economically. 2024 seems to be equally promising. Together with Bangladeshi partners, we are eager to expand and diversify areas of mutual interest for the sake of our peoples. It leaves no one doubt that we have all prerequisites for that and share the same commitment.

REMARKS BY ALEXANDER MANTYTSKIY

THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE HAS ADDITIONAL ADVANTAGE

Russian House in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a developing country with a large number of populations. To achieve development and growth, the country's economy requires many highly qualified specialists in various industries. A successful future depends on a quality education and a desirable profession. What options do Bangladeshi applicants have? Why are Bangladeshi students becoming more interested in education in Russia? Pavel Dvoychenkov, the head of the Ros-sotrudnichestvo office in Bangladesh is sharing information about the extent of humanitarian and educational work in the country.

ABOUT THE RICH CULTURAL AGENDA

The Russian House in Dhaka, being a cultural conductor, organizes a large number of interesting events dedicated to Russian culture and science, the state holidays of Russia, the promotion of Russian education, Screenings of domestic and documentary films. Every event finds its audience and participants who are always interested.

For example, at a seminar in honor of the celebration of the Russian National Flag Day, students of the primary school of Dhaka Shemoly learned about the origin of the Russian flag and the symbolic meaning of the Russian tricolor stripes. The children drew the Russian flag and with curiosity asked questions about the culture and traditions of Russia.

The Russian Film Festival and photo exhibition "Russia's contribution to the post-war restoration of the port of Chittagong in Bangladesh", organized at Stamford University, aroused great

interest among the audience. Over two days, visitors watched several Soviet films and about 10 documentary films about culture, lifestyle, education, modern scientific developments and the tourist potential of Russia.

Over 500 guests came together at Dhaka College to celebrate the 205th birth anniversary of Ivan Turgenev. University students and students of Russian language courses at the Russian House organized a theatrical performance with a presentation about the life and work of Turgenev, reciting passages and poems from his works.

EDUCATIONAL VECTOR

The primary focus of the Russian House is to inform Bangladeshi students about the possibilities of studying in Russia. First, we are talking about the Russian Government quota, which allows students to study for free. We also discuss short-term programs, such as “New Generation”, and Russian language courses organized at the Russian House.

The Russian language is not part of the mainstream or optional programs in the preschool and secondary school education systems in Bangladesh. In these circumstances, our consistent approach is to promote and strengthen the position of the Russian language. The number of Russian language study groups has risen from 2 to 6 since the middle of 2023. There are over 100 students who attend the courses systematically. Some of them are future students of Russian universities.

A few days ago, students of Russian language courses at the Russian House jointly with St. Joseph International School organized an event dedicated to the 215th birth anniversary of the great Russian writer Nikolay Vasilyevich Gogol. There were over 500 students from 10 schools in Dhaka, who took part in the event. The eventful program covered the biography, works, myths, and legends of Nikolay Gogol, who was regarded as one of the greatest Russian prose, playwright, poet, critic, and publicist.

It is encouraging that Russian universities actively participate in educational work in this direction. In this regard, teachers of Dagestan State Pedagogical University named after R. Gamzatov conducted short-term Russian language courses for 300 students at the Institute of Modern Languages of Dhaka University. The international forum “Russian Language in Asia” was held jointly with the Association of Teachers of Literature and Russian Language at the partner site of Maliki University College.

In order to increase the incentive for learning the Russian language, Russian classes are being opened in collaboration with the largest humanitarian universities and colleges in the country: Stanford University, Dhaka State University, Daffodil International University, Dhaka and Notre Dame Colleges.

GRADUATED STUDENTS OF SOVIET UNIVERSITIES

Following the Liberation War and the proclamation of independence in 1971, the Bengali people got interested in learning the Russian language when the Soviet Union provided comprehensive assistance to the reconstruction of the infrastructure and economy of Bangladesh and also agreed to train the national personnel, providing free education for Bengali students from the federal budget. After the establishment of the ‘Association of Graduated Students of Soviet Universities of Bangladesh’, the Russian language presence in the host country became a major factor. The Association currently has more than 6,000 registered members. The organization actively participates in the preparation and holding of cultural and memorial events jointly with the Russian House in Dhaka and supports and promotes the growth of interest in both Russia and the Russian language.

Graduated students work in almost all spheres of the economy and public life of their country and hold high positions in government agencies, commercial structures and public organizations. Today, cooperation in education is highly relevant, particularly for training qualified personnel for the operation of the NPP ‘Ruppur’.

GRADUATED STUDENTS OF SOVIET UNIVERSITIES

Over the past year, the Russian House in Dhaka has made significant efforts to promote Russian education. The main goal of the Russian House in Dhaka is to inform Bangladeshi applicants about the chances of studying in Russian universities, which includes the quotas set by the Government of the Russian Federation. Seminars in schools and colleges, as well as online and offline meetings with representatives of Russian universities, are producing results.

Bangladeshi students were allocated 124 quotas for the academic year 2024–2025, which is 14 places more than last year. At the same time, the number of applications submitted has increased. In 2023, there were five candidates for each seat. Medical, technical, and engineering technology are considered the most interesting areas for students. Generally speaking, this is in line with the national economy's demand for skilled workers in the fields of energy (including nuclear), medicine, construction, and transport. This is generally in line with the needs of the national economy, which requires highly qualified personnel in the fields of energy (including atomic), medicine, construction and transport.

It's worth mentioning that knowing the Russian language is an additional advantage for candidates to get the quota. This factor has a significant impact on stimulating interest in learning the Russian language.

ATTRACTIVENESS AND FACTORS OF RUSSIAN EDUCATION

The Russian education system has a reputation for high quality education, incorporating advanced technologies and digital tools to organize the educational process and attract business representatives during training to ensure a practice-oriented approach.

Russia is a recognized leader in the training of mathematicians, physicists, chemists, engineers, programmers, doctors, as well as representatives of creative professions. Classical education is

considered one of the strongest in the world. Every year Russian universities occupy leading positions in world rankings.



Proshanta Kumar Barman:
International forum "Russian Language in Asia" held at Malika University
College in Dhaka on December 25, 2023

There are 750 universities, including 29 national research universities, 10 federal universities, and 2 universities with special status: MSU and SPbSU. There are more than 400 training areas that cover subjects from mathematics and science to art and culture. There is a wide choice at all levels of education, and more than 650 specialties are being offered in Russia. Pre-university preparatory programs and short-term programs, programs for learning Russian as a foreign language, professional retraining and advanced training programs are available.

Affordable education is very important when it comes to paid education. Tuition fees at Russian universities are significantly lower than at universities in the USA, Canada and the UK. The quality of Russian education is recognized throughout the world. At the same time, Russia is one of the few countries providing foreigners with free education on a budget basis.

The opportunity to receive scholarships, grants, and so on. The advantages of Russian education can be listed for a long time.

The combination of high living standards, developed infrastructure, affordable services, and low prices makes Russia more attractive.

ABOUT THE PLANS

The Russian House in Dhaka is in the final stages of its major repairs and from October various educational and creative clubs and sports sections will be available there. We are also planning to open a Russian-speaking club.

As we know, the Russian House in Dhaka was established in 1974, and we are planning to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our Russian House in the second half of this year. Dear friends and guests an interesting program is awaiting you: a concert, a film festival of Soviet and Russian films and the opening of several photo exhibitions at once. Follow us on our social networks and we'll be waiting for you at our Russian House.

**MR PAVEL DVOICHENKOV,
DIRECTOR OF THE RUSSIAN HOUSE IN DHAKA**

LIBERAL FASCISM: ANALYST SAYS EUROPEAN LEGACY IS 'ONE OF A CRIMINAL GANGSTER CARTEL'

The West has committed many atrocities in the name of spreading liberal European values, notes one commentator.

Germany's Alternative fur Deutschland (AfD) party has been rocked by scandal in recent days after its top candidate in upcoming EU elections defended the Nazi Party's notorious Schutzstaffel paramilitary organization.

"I will never say that everyone who wore an SS uniform was automatically a criminal," said Maximilian Krah in comments made to an Italian newspaper. The Nazi Party was responsible for the deaths of tens of millions of people during World War II, including some 27 million Soviet citizens. The SS violently upheld Nazi rule within the Third Reich and killed millions more in concentration and extermination camps throughout Europe.

The AfD has since banned Krah from campaign appearances and the party has been expelled from the European Parliament's Identity and Democracy Group.

"It doesn't seem like this is going to hurt the AfD's chances in the election," said host Michelle Witte, who responded to the incident on Sputnik's Political Misfits program Friday. "They're expected to double their representation in the EU parliament, this is according to Politico. The group that they had belonged to, Identity and Democracy, is still expected to grow."

"Other EU right-wing parliamentary groups are expected to grow, and then Politico points out that if you combine the seats of right-wing groups and then also the parties that aren't with any group... they are just 10 seats short of the ruling European People's Party of [European Commission President] Ursula von der Leyen," she noted. "If those right groups were managing to work together, which they are not right now, that is potentially a pretty intimidating force."

But political commentator Phil Kelly said it's the mainstream center in Europe that has paved the way for the resurgence of previously fringe political forces.

"It's actually the liberal center of the European Union that is fueling the kind of resurgence of that far right," said the Belfast-based activist. "Because when you think of Ursula von der Leyen and the statements she's made, when you think of the center-right and the prime minister of Estonia, when you think of even the Green Party in Germany, these are political forces calling in some sections for the dismantling of Russia, for increasing arms to be sent to the Zelensky regime."

Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas sparked controversy recently with comments suggesting NATO should seek to Balkanize Russia after its current conflict with Ukraine. "There could really be a change in society," said the Baltic leader, claiming the Eurasian country should be split into several "small nations."

Pro-war figures like Kallas have dominated European politics as mainstream forces have sought to sideline the populist left, to the benefit of right-wing insurgents. Establishment parties formed a grand coalition to thwart Sinn Féin from taking power after the Irish republican party prevailed in recent elections.

In the United Kingdom, state intelligence actors and Zionist donors joined forces to sabotage socialist Labor Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, with claims of "anti-Semitism" taking center stage in the smear campaign against the pro-Palestine candidate. US

intelligence apparently assisted in the effort, with former Vice President and ex-CIA director Mike Pompeo promising to help prevent the populist figure from being elected prime minister in private comments leaked by the Washington Post.

"The architects of this, the people who are goose stepping Europe towards the abyss are those liberal centrists whose policies have failed, who are arming actual Nazis in Ukraine," said Kelly. "I'm thinking of the Canadian liberal prime minister and President Zelensky standing in the Canadian Parliament and honoring the World War Two service of an SS veteran. It's not just the kind of AfD lunatics who seem to have a nostalgia for the Waffen SS."

"Europe is in a very, very dangerous place. The focus of that obviously is the war in Ukraine, but it's at a very, very dangerous moment. And the problem is there is no counterweight to the far-right, and that failing liberal center."

Witte blamed liberal and centrist forces in the EU for mainstreaming the far right's policies around immigration. As Western military and political interference has destabilized countries like Libya and Syria, Europe has faced a significant migrant crisis. The European Union has responded by funding aggressive programs wherein "tens of thousands of migrants every year" are dumped in the North African desert — policy which critics have called a "death sentence."

Meanwhile, middle class Europeans have suffered as government resources are strained by the cost of accommodating immigrants, who are exploited by big business to suppress wages.

"More and more the 'lesser evil' is appearing to be just as bad as what it warns against," said Kelly. "When people talk about European values and 'is there a difference between liberals and fascism' — I don't understand what 'European values' means because Europe is the continent that built Auschwitz. Europe is the continent that colonized Africa, Asia, huge swathes of

Latin America. Some of the worst crimes in human history were committed by the Belgian empire in Congo.”

“This is, again, the continent that gave rise to the Nazis,” he added, “where ex-Prime Minister of Britain Boris Johnson only this week was posing with members of the Azov* Brigade and saying that Ukraine should be sent weapons with which they should attack Russia and fire missiles into Russia. So this idea of European values is absurd to me.”

“These are the European values that supposedly Ukraine is the shield of? European democracy and freedom? Europe is living up to its historical legacy, which is one of a criminal gangster cartel creating misery across the world. And its inhuman response towards refugees and migrants is just a further example of that.”

*Recognized as an terrorist organization and banned in Russia.

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