

International Affairs: Summary №4, 2016



To Close Pandora's Box: Russia's Role in Europe

Author: Romano Prodi

Prime Minister of Italy (1996-1998 and 2006-2008), President of the European Commission (1999-2004)



I WOULD LIKE to talk here about the future of Europe, the European Union and Russia.

Today, we should look back at the road the EU has covered from 6 to 28 member-states which means that more and more countries found it very attractive.

To tell the truth, in the last 10 to 15 years, Europe has been gradually sinking into a crisis; populism is gaining momentum in many countries, while common European institutions are losing their former impact. We are watching what can be described as the end of sorts of balanced Europe.

During my presidency, there were several leaders in the EU - Germany, France, Italy, the UK, and, to a certain extent, Spain - that together preserved the balance. Today, the EU was left with Germany as the only leader: It is the main economic power with institutional continuity. Today, we are living under the German "umbrella."

I will not go forth about the state of affairs in Russia since you know everything much better than I do. I can only say that Russia is a great country with great history and a great future.

As for the relations between the EU and Russia, I believe that they complement one another in our global world.

In Europe, they have no idea about Russia's contribution to world history and world affairs. We cannot and should not underestimate the risk of demonization of Russia by the West in politics, economics and sports.

This means that we should work together - Russia should accept the EU at face value and has the right to expect the same from the EU. Without this no cooperation will be possible while confrontation will lead nowhere - it will merely weaken both sides.

We should not underestimate the scope of corruption in the government; this opens doors to any influence and explains why today Ukraine is not a bridge but a battlefield. Today, we are in a dead end with the de facto frozen conflict. Neither Russia nor Ukraine needs this.

This leads nowhere; the longer the country remains in chaos the harder it will be to disentangle from it. There is no doubt that complete disarmament in Ukraine and consistent progress toward a settlement are very important.

We made many mistakes in the past; I tried to be a Galileo in our relationships with Russia, which was impossible for political reasons. Our relations are of strategic importance for both sides.

Today, more and more people are talking about a resumption of the Cold War. This happened because we are losing our wisdom. Let us be wise in order to preserve peace, otherwise our future will be in danger.

The Third (and Best) Phase of Romano Prodi's Political Life

Author: Igor Pellicciari

Professor at the University of Salerno, Russian honorary consul in Bologna, Emilia Romagna (Italy)



THE LECTIO MAGISTRAIIIS OF ROMANO PRODI in Moscow on March 17, 2016, organized by the journal International Affairs, was one of those events that will be remembered for a long time to come by those who attended and had the chance to meet the former European Commission President and two-time Italian Prime Minister.

FOR PRODI, the migrant crisis threatens to shake the very foundations of the European Union, as it is an

emergency that profoundly affects Europe's people rather than just its governments.

Surprisingly strong has been Prodi's statement that by controlling the flow of migrants to Europe Turkey de facto owns a weapon that is just as potent as a nuclear bomb.

THE STABILIZATION of the Middle East and the defeat of ISIS are possible only with a comprehensive global agreement and the development of a common position between Russia and the United States. This is also the only possible pre-requisite for a full and sustainable peace process in the region.

Prodi again repeated his assessment that Russia's military intervention in Syria has put a concrete discussion of a political solution for the region back on the agenda.

WITH RARE FRANKNESS Prodi acknowledged that of the three countries that had a leading role in influencing EU policies during the time of his EC presidency, it is Germany that is the uncontested leader of the union today; while France and the UK have been marginalized, mainly as a result of wrong decisions taken in Paris and London.

He did not criticize Germany for having accepted this position as a consequence of others' weaknesses. But Prodi has clearly outlined that a Union dominated by Berlin might, in the long run, create a position difficult for the union as a whole to sustain.

FOR PRODI, Russia and the EU are obliged to have good and intense political relations. The alternative is an extremely dangerous situation that cannot produce any good for either side in the long run.

"At that time, we had constant exchange of information with Moscow," he said in what has been one of the most interesting statements of the whole speech.

He recalled the agreement between Russia and the EU on the four common areas of cooperation signed in 2003 as a clear example of the fact that good relations already existed and that they should be used as a model for the future normalization of Russian-European relations.³

According to Prodi, the real problem has never been EU enlargement but rather NATO's eastward expansion - a short but powerful statement that confirms the difficult and competitive relations that exist between the EU and NATO,⁴ particularly on the issue of how to deal with Eastern Europe.

Russia and ASEAN: New Facets of a 20-Year Partnership

Author: Sergey Lavrov

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation



AT PRESENT, the Asia-Pacific Region shows highly dynamic development rates, confidently asserting itself as a global economic engine and increasing its weight also in the political sphere. Obviously, the role of the Asia-Pacific Region in building a global polycentric architecture will continue to grow.

This year, the Russia-ASEAN Dialogue Partnership will be 20 years old. Over the past two decades, a solid legal framework has been laid for cooperation and a diversified network of working bodies, including high-

level bodies, has been put in place. This interaction is high on the list of Russia's and ASEAN countries' key foreign policy priorities. What's more, it has become a major component of regional architecture. Today, Russia is an active participant in East Asia Summits (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM), as well as the ADMM-Plus, a platform for ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners.

The focus on practical results and natural interest in each other is a key to the successful development of Russia-ASEAN relations. Russia-ASEAN ties come from reality and are based on a solid historical foundation.

Our common goal is to build a truly comprehensive multi-level strategic partnership. The upcoming Russia-ASEAN summit, which is due to take place on May 19 and 20, is designed to set our dialogue on a straight path towards this goal. This summit meeting, the third, will be the first to take place on our country's territory, in Sochi. It will become a major event of the anniversary year.

Strengthening regional security is an important priority in our joint work. Back in 2010, the Joint Statement of the Second Russia-ASEAN Summit in Hanoi said that such security should be indivisible and equal for all.

We and ASEAN have a common understanding of the need to ensure a truly strategic balance and stability in the Asia-Pacific Region and work together in search for a response to the current challenges and threats.

Russia is committed to expanding trade and economic ties with ASEAN. In the past five years, our trade turnover has doubled.

The close and wide-ranging cooperation between Russia and ASEAN is geared to the future. Its participants are committed to the consistent implementation of large-scale tasks for the benefit of their nations, in the interest of strengthening global and regional stability and building a more equitable and fair system of international relations.

I am confident that the Sochi summit will become an important landmark along this path, open a new stage in the development of the Russia-ASEAN Dialogue Partnership and provide a strong impulse to the further deepening of the entire complex of relations between our countries.

ASEAN and Russia Reaffirm Strong Partnership

Author: Le Luong Minh
Secretary-General of ASEAN



ASEAN REGARDS RUSSIA as an important Dialogue Partner, with which relations have broadened and deepened over the past 20 years. With the signing of the ASEAN-Russia Joint Declaration on Progressive and Comprehensive Partnership at the first ASEAN-Russia Summit in December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, joint cooperation now covers a wide range of areas: political-security, trade and investment, science and technology, education,

food security, agriculture, energy, tourism, transport, disaster management, culture, and people-to-people exchange.

ASEAN believes that Russia has the immense potential to make significant contributions to the promotion of peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

In the key economic cooperation pillar of the partnership, ASEAN attaches great importance to its relations with Russia.

The socio-cultural sphere of cooperation is also a significant component in the mutually beneficial ASEAN-Russia partnership. Importance is attached to programmes that promote mutual understanding and friendship through people-to-people linkages.

For 2016, ASEAN and Russia have been working closely preparing meaningful commemorative activities to mark the 20th anniversary of the Dialogue Partnership, especially the convening of the ASEAN-Russia Commemorative Summit on May 19-20, 2016 in Sochi, the outcome of which will chart the future directions, further strengthening and broadening ASEAN-Russia relations in all three pillars of the partnership.

At the Commemorative Summit, ASEAN and Russia will also hold a business summit to provide a forum for the private sector to discuss business and investment opportunities.

2016 has been designated a year of ASEAN-Russia cultural exchanges. Cultural and artistic activities will be conducted to promote awareness, understanding and friendship among the peoples of ASEAN and Russia.

With its prospects for growth and opportunities for deeper people-to-people linkages, I am confident that cooperation for mutual benefits between ASEAN and Russia as each other's important partner for peace, stability and prosperity will continue to grow and be further strengthened.

ASEAN and Russia: An Enduring Partnership

Author: Saleumxay Kommasith

Foreign Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, ASEAN Chair for 2016, ASEAN Country Coordinator for Dialogue Relations with Russia (August 2015-July 2018)



IN MY CAPACITY as Chair of ASEAN in 2016, it is my pleasure and honor to make a symbolic contribution to the publication of the International Affairs magazine in Russia, marking the 20th anniversary of Dialogue Relations between ASEAN and Russia.

The Lao PDR, which has the responsibility to start ASEAN (Association of the Southeast Asian Nations) on its new path as a Community, has adopted the theme "Turning Vision into Re-

ality for a Dynamic ASEAN Community" for its ASEAN Chairmanship 2016. We are moving towards a rules-based, people-oriented, people-centered ASEAN.

ASEAN today has grown and prospered since its establishment forty-nine years ago. With a combined population of 625 million and gross domestic product of approximately USD 2.6 trillion, ASEAN collectively is the third largest economy in Asia and the seventh largest in the world.

We are optimistic about continued peace and stability in our region and confident that our people can look forward to a brighter and more prosperous future.

RUSSIA has been a valued and important Partner of ASEAN since links were first established in July 1991 when the then Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation attended the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Kuala Lumpur. Within five years of this first step in ASEAN-Russia relations, Russia was elevated to a full Dialogue Partner of ASEAN in 1996, a reflection of ASEAN's confidence that Russia would contribute extensively to ASEAN's growth and development and play a key role in promoting peace and stability in the region. ASEAN regards relations with Russia as important not only because it is a major power but due to its potential to establish multi-faceted cooperation with ASEAN for mutual benefit.

ASEAN's relations with Russia have deepened and expanded significantly over the past 20 years in all sectors from political-security cooperation, enhanced economic relations and closer socio-cultural links.

ASEAN-Russia economic ties have strengthened over the years. Total trade for the last year recorded slightly more than USD 23 billion which was a significant 350% growth over the past eight years, while Foreign Direct Investment from Russia into ASEAN has shown an upward trend. Tourism arrivals from Russia to ASEAN are healthy registering about 2.4 million last year although these numbers can be improved further.

Overall the scope of ASEAN-Russia cooperation has expanded in the past few years to include

energy, science and technology, enhancement of cultural links, education and importantly closer collaboration in areas such as combating terrorism and extremism, and improving ASEAN mechanisms to effectively and efficiently handle humanitarian assistance and disaster relief situations. I will work with my ASEAN colleagues to ensure that we have a fruitful and productive Sochi Summit and lay the foundation to strengthen the Partnership to carry us to the next phase of our cooperation.

Creating a New Global Economic Architecture: EAEU and ASEAN

Author: T. Valovaya

Member of the Board (Minister) for Integration and Macroeconomics, Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC)



FASTER REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION is a characteristic feature of today's global economy. The successful creation of the European Union in the early 1990s encouraged both the development of already existing groupings and the emergence of new integration arrangements in different parts of the world: from Latin America and the Middle East to Southeast Asia. This trend accelerated significantly during the global economic

crisis that began in 2008, when it became clear that regional integration provides additional opportunities for overcoming the crisis phenomena in the economy.

The EAEU ensures the free movement of goods, services, capital and labor, conducting a coordinated, agreed or common policy in sectors of the economy specified by the EAEU Treaty. In the first few years of its existence, the Eurasian economic integration project already demonstrated its viability and effectiveness.

In the next few years, the new members of the Union - Armenia and Kyrgyzstan - are also expected to feel the effects of integration, which is quite logical now that the EAEU common market has been opened to these two countries.

The EAEU members are making every effort to ensure the three other freedoms as well: movement of services, capital and labor.

By 2025 at the latest, it is planned to harmonize legislation in the financial sphere, whereupon a decision will be made on the establishment of a supranational authority within the EAEU framework with headquarters in Kazakhstan to regulate the financial market.

There are also enormous prospects for cooperation in the Eastern direction, where EAEU contacts with ASEAN could be an engine of such cooperation.

The Eurasian Economic Union has all the prerequisites to become an important element of the new economic architecture.

EAEU-ASEAN cooperation is also conditioned by the fact that the EAEU has already established good partner relations with some individual ASEAN states.

EAEU cooperation with ASEAN, as well as with other integration groupings in Eurasia such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which includes a number of EAEU states, could eventually provide the basis for a Trans-Eurasian continental partnership as a platform for discussing a wide range of economic issues and for coordinating economic policies and actions, which is particularly important in the context of the Eurasian region's growing influence in the global economy. The creation of such a continental partnership is even more relevant in the light of the creation of the Trans-Pacific and Transatlantic partnerships.

The ASEAN Center in Moscow and Its Gravitational Pull

Author: A. Torkunov

Rector of the Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations (MGIMO), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Member of the ASEAN-Russia Eminent Persons Group



EARLY IN APRIL 2016, MGIMO hosted the third meeting of the ASEAN-Russia Eminent Persons Group. During the meeting, held at the MGIMO compound in Moscow, the group finished the mission for which it had been set up and definitively approved a draft report on prospects for dialogue partnership between Russia and the Association of Southeast Asian Na-

tions. The draft report was due to be put before an ASEAN-Russia summit in Sochi in May this year.

It was by no means a coincidence that our university had been chosen as the venue for the group's final meeting. It was the ASEAN Center at MGIMO that had proposed setting up the group. After this proposal had received Russian and ASEAN approval, the Center took an active part in drawing up conceptual guidelines for the group's activities and in drafting the report for the Sochi summit.

It was logical that setting up the Center was entrusted to MGIMO. Studies of the history, cultures, and domestic and foreign policies of Southeast Asian countries, lectures and seminars on these subjects, and, naturally, on the evolution of ASEAN from its inception, have been part and parcel of MGIMO curricula and research programs for many decades.

THE CENTER hadn't been conceived of as a large organization either on the Russian or on the ASEAN side. It was thought of as an entity with a full-time staff of three or four, including the director, while any help it might need would be provided by MGIMO from its own resources, intellectual or other, or by the Russian Foreign Ministry since MGIMO is under its jurisdiction, which has been the case.

IN CHOOSING the MGIMO compound as the location of the ASEAN Center's headquarters, we naturally anticipated that our students, as, indeed, regional studies majors from other Russian institutions, would be closely involved in the organization's work. It needs to be mentioned that there is no oversupply of those who have chosen regional studies as their professional field. It is important that people who have opted for this career come together when they are only just embarking on their profession, that they should be stimulated to exchange opinions on the issues of the countries they are studying, and encouraged to cooperate in the future. It would be excellent if undergraduate years were the time when our future stars of Indonesian, Vietnamese, or other Southeast Asian studies began to acquire skills of direct communication with people whose languages they were learning.

Let me finish by saying that, throughout its six years of existence, the ASEAN Center staff have put their heart and soul into their work. This has been obvious to literally everyone who has had anything to do with the Center - top Foreign Ministry figures, rank-and-file ministry personnel, Russian ambassadors posted in ASEAN countries, etc. Their willingness to support the Center and take part in carrying out its initiatives deserves special mention and sincere gratitude.

ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Partnership: An Assessment of 20 Years of Relations

Authors: Paradorn Rangsimaporn, Counselor, Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand. The views expressed herein are the author's own personal views and do not reflect that of the Royal Thai Government.

Ekaterina Koldunova, Associate Professor in the Asian and African Studies Department, Deputy Dean of the School of Political Affairs and Senior Expert at the ASEAN Center, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations



RUSSIA HAS COME a long way from being perceived as the "sick man of Asia." Its initial turbulent post-Soviet years under President Yeltsin gradually gave way to a more confident, stable and assertive Russia under the "Putin-Medvedev tandem."

This desire to be a great power and to be recognized as such is an important factor in Russia's relations with ASEAN. The countries of Southeast Asia and ASEAN itself were marginal in Russia's foreign policy in the early 1990s. This started to change in 1996 when Yevgeny Pri-

makov became foreign minister and assigned greater importance to improving relations with Asia wherein lay many power centres, including ASEAN.

Russia and ASEAN pursue a common agenda as far as the regional normative culture and the principles of international interaction are concerned. Such issues as the respect for sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs are equally important for Russia and ASEAN; the latter formulated a set of normative principles known under the name the "ASEAN Way" which included ASEAN key documents such as Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia.

DESPITE MANY SHORTCOMINGS, ASEAN-Russia relations seem set to expand and deepen. ASEAN in general has grown less sceptical of Russia's role in the region, especially in political and security terms, seeing it as a potential counterbalance to China.

Thailand's Deputy Prime Ministers on security and economic affairs visiting Russia this March, and the Thai Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha scheduled to pay an official visit to Russia this May before participating in the ASEAN-Russia Commemorative Summit. As the two countries will be celebrating 120 years of diplomatic relations in 2017, it seems likely that Thai-Russian relations will deepen and expand and that Russia might have another champion in the region for greater ASEAN-Russian engagement.

Russia and ASEAN have much in common and can achieve higher connectivity in all three spheres that are equally important for ASEAN and Russia - politics and security, economy and socio-cultural relations. Both parties understand that in order to build this connectivity Russia and ASEAN need systemic actions. In this respect, the commemorative Summit in Sochi in May 2016 is both a landmark event and at the same time a new starting point for further work.

Author: K. Muradov

Deputy Director, Foreign Trade Information and Analysis Center, Assistant Professor, Department of Statistics and Data Analysis of the School of Economics, National Research University-Higher School of Economics



Because of the international fragmentation of production with its cross-border manufacturing cycles, international trade is increasingly seen as not just sales of goods by one country to another but as a network of global chains of value creation. A product is often said to have been "made in the world" rather than in a specific country. Can it be imagined that Russian exports, even if they are raw materials, go through a certain value chain in other Asia-Pacific countries whereby they are used in manufacturing more complex products that are afterward exported to ASEAN countries? Or that ASEAN countries use Russian products to make their own goods and export them, say, to Japan, the United States, or EU countries? Surely this is imaginable - modern economics make it quite possible.

Russian exports add much value to goods that are manufactured in ASEAN countries, both to goods intended for domestic consumption and to those made for export.

What do Russia's economic relations with ASEAN countries are like in terms of value chains? At the end of the day, a value chain means the use of some goods or services to produce other goods and services. Exports and imports as such are only surface points of such a chain.

In an earlier study, we showed that the multistage mechanism of value creation is more a feature of Russian exports to ASEAN countries than the other way round. Russian added value is, in effect, hidden in reexports of third countries to ASEAN nations or in re-exports from ASEAN countries to third countries.

Obviously, exports from Russia repeatedly undergo processing and cross more than one border en route to ASEAN countries.

Exports from ASEAN countries to Russia on average had 1.9 borders to cross in 2011 compared to 1.8 in 2005 and 1.5 in 1995. The reason is that manufactured products ready for final consumption make a larger proportion of ASEAN exports than goods of this category do of Russian exports. This places ASEAN countries, unlike Russia, in the middle, or close to the end of, a value chain.

To sum up, Russian exports add much value to goods that are manufactured in ASEAN countries, both to goods intended for domestic consumption and to those made for export. Most likely, more sophisticated databases will be created in future, and so more detailed studies of value chains between Russia and ASEAN countries will be possible.

Reforms for the UN Security Council

Author: A. Kalyadin

Chief Research Associate, Ye.M. Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Russian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Science (History)



FOR A LONG TIME, there have been heated debates about proposed reforms of the United Nations Security Council. Various ways of adapting the council to 21st-century realities were suggested at the General Assembly's 70th jubilee session. The main points of controversy were whether, in the event of membership enlargement, the council should increase its number of permanent or non-permanent members and which countries should be included in the permanent group if the latter became larger. Unfortunately, these debates don't seem likely to be over any time soon.

THERE ARE serious disagreements between those countries that are against enlarging the Security Council's permanent membership and

those that insist on a larger permanent membership.

It might be advisable to start reforming the Security Council by strengthening its military component, addressing issues such as the allocation by member countries of national troops to council forces and the revival of the Military Staff Committee.

The Security Council is the main instrument for ensuring international security. It is the main international entity vested with the role of detecting threats to peace such as threats of aggression. It urges parties to a dispute to settle it peacefully and recommends methods or terms of settlement. In some situations, the council may use sanctions or even approve the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

It is a serious advantage of the council that it is a standing and convenient facility for nations to negotiate peacekeeping, disarmament, and nonproliferation policies.

A REFORM that can turn the Security Council into the coordinator of global security efforts and enable it to use its entire potential should chiefly involve an overhaul of the council's set of resources, including its organizational and operational mechanisms. That is indispensable for the council to be able to control potentially conflict-provoking processes and manage global and regional security crises. It would enable the council to make full-scale use of its unique legal powers and organizational resources.

There remains an urgent need for consensus-based Security Council measures to combat terrorism and prevent it from spreading all over the world. World leaders need to come to realize how serious this threat is.

The world needs to take this line of action more than ever before. There is no rational alternative to it. Joint efforts and comprehensive use of the UN Security Council's peace enforcement potential would be the best guarantees of global security. There are resources to pursue this line, and it is clear how to use them.

The Arctic: A Region of Peaceful Development or Conflicts?

Author: V. Kotlyar

Minister Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Member of the International Law Council at the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, UN International Arbitrator on the Law of the Sea, Doctor of Science (Law)



IN RECENT YEARS, the Arctic has been attracting heightened attention in the world due to the intensive study and use of its natural resources by various countries: the oil and gas resources on the mainland and on the continental shelf, the region's biological reserves and the transport capacities of the Russian Northern Sea Route.

In the past two or three years, the media of a number of Western countries, especially the United States, and sometimes even certain media outlets in Russia, have

been increasingly vocal regarding the purportedly inevitable escalation of tension and the "danger of conflicts" between the Arctic states - what's more, not only political but also military conflicts, as well as recommendations for U.S. allies to lean more on NATO's "reliable shoulder."

The U.S. media and the rightist press of Nordic countries, especially Sweden, are the most active participants in the NATO and EU information war against Russia in the Arctic.

The deteriorating atmosphere in international relations in connection with the U.S., NATO and EU reaction to the political crisis in Ukraine has not yet had a significant impact on cooperation between the Arctic countries.

Nevertheless, despite the information war waged by leading NATO and EU countries against Russia, public opinion polls in Arctic countries show that the greater part of their population favors cooperation with Russia in the Arctic.

At present, the only unresolved issue is related to the claims of a number of Arctic countries to expand the zone of their continental shelf beyond its external boundaries.

In conclusion, it can only be said that Russia is geared toward the further development of Arctic cooperation within the framework of the Arctic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and Russia-EU cross-border cooperation programs. Russia is firmly committed to this course. "Our country," President V.V. Putin said at a Russian Security Council meeting in April 2014, "is interested in the stable development of the Arctic region, based on cooperation and full respect for international law. To this end, we are in constant dialogue with our partners on Arctic issues and we fully comply with international requirements with regard to enhancing regional security. Within the framework of the Arctic Council, we address issues related to cooperation in the border area, sea transit, and interaction in emergency response to accidents in the hydrocarbon development process on the shelf."

Author: V. Vorobyov

Senior Research Associate, Center for East Asian and SCO Studies, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary



IT HAS BEEN GENERALLY ACCEPTED that in 1976 a decade-long turmoil, called the "Cultural Revolution," ended in China. Early September 1976 marked the death of Mao Zedong, an inspirer and the main stage director of this mass "performance," which deeply traumatized the entire Chinese society. In a month's time from his death, the "Gang of Four," which comprised the most strenuous supporters of the ultra-leftist ideology and practices, was arrested. The country started recovering and

considering paths to follow in the future and ways of favorably positioning itself on the world arena.

At that time, Soviet-Chinese relations were almost completely frozen, and even their "defrosting" seemed to many people a rather speculative, if not a completely phantom idea.

In April 1996, Boris Yeltsin, who was going to the PRC on an official visit, decided that the time had come to emphasize the special nature of Russian-Chinese relations in terms of their level and quality.

A monograph by a diplomat and sinologist GV. Kireyev "Russia-China: Unknown Episodes of Border Talks" provides an insight into the processes which accompanied the overcoming of alienation, bias, and skepticism, and the formation of a framework for a new type of Russian-Chinese relations, and of their main reference points.

Kireyev played an active and prominent role in their normalization and the laying down of a groundwork for strategic partnership, by carrying out government missions designed to resolve a number of sensitive issues.

The author presents his outline of events along with an analytical investigation of their inside mechanics, which is particularly valuable and appealing. He concentrates on some focal points in the formation and formulation of negotiation positions. Kireyev unveils the specifics of linguistic work involved in finding the appropriate wording aimed to convince the other party and ultimately achieve the results acceptable to all, regardless of how much time and effort was spent in the process. Some of the author's judgments, including those relating to border issues, prompt a complete reconsideration of some continuously reproduced clichés.

It is noteworthy that during their negotiations the USSR and the PRC thoroughly discussed their Central Asian border from Mongolia to Afghanistan. When the border was actually formed at the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Chinese imperial court would on some occasions

refuse pointblank to approve texts of the treaties already signed by its authorized officials. There is no doubt today that progress made in settling border problems was not only an indication of the growing trust between the parties. It was also a powerful driving force behind the growth and strengthening of trust in all areas of Russian-Chinese cooperation. The reservoir of mutual understanding and trust between Russia and China has obviously been filled as a result of implementing a number of other significant and less significant measures and agreements, including in the area of military cooperation, which moved as far as proficiency training of operational coordination. Even the most close and deeply rooted relations are not tantamount to a complete coincidence of views on various issues and do not deny the need to pursue one's own interests and plans, and be tenacious of one's own opinions. And there is no other way for such major world powers as Russia and China.

Author: N. Vlasov

Attaché at the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, postgraduate student at the Department of Asian and African Studies, School of International Relations, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation



THE ASSOCIATION of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), set up by Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines in 1967 under the Bangkok Declaration, has become an important actor in regional politics.

ASEAN has not only survived years of trials but has proven to be a highly effective body. "ASEAN has been successful because its members have a very strong commitment to cooperation," said former Malaysian foreign minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. It also has "a very strong

commitment to pragmatism" and has avoided letting ideology playing.

ASEAN has successfully traversed a difficult path that included the tense years of the Cold War, geopolitical ordeals, and financial and macroeconomic crises.

A more powerful ASEAN, which can successfully defend the interests of its member countries, would also meet the interests of Russia, which does not want regional affairs to be dominated by a tiny group of actors.

With U.S.-Chinese rivalry gathering momentum, Beijing will hardly make any concessions on any of the issues important for ASEAN, and so is likely to harden its line in the territorial disputes. The United States, for its part, blinded by its presumed uniqueness and omnipotence and seeking to remain the global leader, will most likely continue to consolidate exclusive and American-focused military and political alliances in Asia-Pacific.

Why do ASEAN countries need strategic stability in Southeast Asia? It is because this is the only guarantee of the security and sovereignty of each member country, i.e., of safeguarding its vital interests.

Russia can and should play a stabilizing role in Southeast Asia. It was a Russian initiative that was behind dialogues between East Asia Summit participants on building an architecture of security, cooperation, and sustained development.

ASEAN cannot be the true leader of Southeast Asia, least of all a global leader, if it is not united. Only a united ASEAN can be the central mechanism of integration in Asia-Pacific.

To sum up, tougher geopolitical rivalries in Asia-Pacific and consequently escalating frictions and growing instability in the region are today's main challenges of ASEAN. They make the association's future uncertain.

Despite differences in their views, the leaders of all ASEAN countries apparently want their nations to put up a united front against the pressure of China and the United States. The logic that led ASEAN's founding fathers to the creation of the association half a century ago is not a whit obsolete.

The Continuity Factor in Relations Between Russia and Latin America

Author: A. Sizonenko

Leading Research Associate, Institute of Latin America, Russian Academy of Science, Doctor of Science (History)



A continuous nature of relations generally serves to promote their normal course and mutual understanding, multiplying the power of all positive developments that took place in the past. This kind of relationship facilitates the emergence of new forms of interaction, opening up new vistas for their development. Such continuity has emerged in the history of international relations on numerous occasions. A case in point with regard to Russia would be its

long-term close ties with India.

The entire history of Russian-Latin American relations provides quite a few examples relating to a continuous nature of those relations and a special place of this factor in the policies pursued by the parties.

Russia's current approach to its relations with Latin American countries is characterized by a clearly defined realistic approach, consideration for the national interests of both parties, a rejection of ideological blinders and the policies of "generous and disinterested assistance."

Special mention should be made of Argentina which was Russia's active business partner back at the dawn of the twentieth century.

World War II became a new point of reference in resuming Soviet-Latin American relations, when the Soviet Union was able to normalize its diplomatic relations with the prevailing part of Latin American states.

However, the mutual interest of modern Russia and Mexico is not only limited to contacts, meetings and cooperation at the official level. Cultural exchanges continue, in particular, scientific studies of Mexico by Russian researches who published a large number of studies dealing with this country. Thus far an influential school of Mexican studies has been formed in Russia and its publications are well-known abroad.

A multi-dimensional level of cultural ties, including, for example, a growth of Russian tourist flow to Mexico, allows one to look with confidence at the prospects for the development of Russian-Mexican relations.

By way of a conclusion, we would like to underline that each period in the development of Russian-Latin American relations produced unique formats designed to solve various problems of both bilateral and international significance. Their development has revealed their continuous nature based on the principles supported by the parties throughout their history. One can with good reason assert that this process will stimulate and accelerate the future dynamics. The preconditions for the subsequent growth are all there, based on the mutual striving for cooperation.

The First Half of the 21st Century: The Islamic Challenge

Author: R. Yengibaryan

Distinguished Scientist of the Russian Federation



HUMANKIND has entered the 21st century with unparalleled achievements in science, technology, telecommunications, medicine, and genetic engineering.

Nevertheless, inequality, chiefly economic, is not declining. Moreover, it is growing in scale worldwide. The division of the world on religious grounds, something that has imperceptibly regained a key role in human and international relations because of the spread of radical Islam and its intolerance of other civilizations, especially Judeo-Christian civilization. Simultaneously, radical Islamists are dragging the world back to the Middle Ages with their brutality, intransigence, ignorance, and irrationality and trying to force their way of life and thinking on humankind.

Today's key players in the Muslim world such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and the oil-producing countries of the Persian Gulf have never abandoned

their strategic plans of creating a single global Islamic state, a world caliphate. Since the Muslim world possesses neither the military nor the economic means to achieve this, it has made population growth and continuous migration the first phase of its movement toward that paramount goal.

The behavior of the liberal leaders of France and other European countries is surprising - one would have expected them to know that a mosque built on non-Islamic soil is considered territory conquered by Allah. This is an incontrovertible postulate of Islam. In terms of Islamic fundamentalist ideology, the existence of Muslim communities in non-Muslim countries means life under non-Muslim occupation, and hence those communities have the mission of fighting for independence with the ultimate aim of becoming part of the future world caliphate.

In fact, today's radical Islam plans geopolitical revanche in some form or other and, among other means, uses a demographic factor for the purpose - the majority of Muslim migrants in Europe don't look for permanent jobs, don't seek to adapt to European culture, and have no intention to comply with local rules or etiquettes. Their main purpose is to obtain welfare allowances and then follow Sharia law as relatively well-to-do and free people, something they were unable to do in their home countries.

While it claims to be a unique civilization, the Islamic world is also globalizing, although the motive force of this globalization is not politics or economics but religion, the profession of Islam as a factor of unification.

I can't exclude the possibility that, through the efforts of the Americans and NATO, Russia will be surrounded by a new geopolitical arc at some point with Turkey as one of its components and Sweden, the Baltic countries, Poland, and Ukraine as its other elements. Russia should take this scenario into account and strengthen the positions of Crimea, which has returned under the sovereignty of its home country, Armenia, and possibly Abkhazia as its main strategic allies in the south.

Another point to bear in mind is that Turkey will use every means to increase its influence on Russia's Muslim enclaves and has already made significant progress in radicalizing their religious communities.

The Issue of Impunity in Ukraine

Author: K. Dolgov

Commissioner for Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law



UNFORTUNATELY, it has to be said that the problem of impunity remains highly relevant in Ukraine. Having come to power in an unconstitutional manner, Ukraine's ruling regime is seeking to ensure its further survival largely by illegal methods. As a result, the humanitarian and human rights situation in Ukraine remains serious. The situation related to ensuring the freedom of expression and media activity is deteriorating. In our estimate, in 2014-2015, there were at least 160 recorded instances of gross violations of the right to the freedom of ex-

pression and media activity committed by the Ukrainian authorities.

Having come to power in an unconstitutional manner, Ukraine's ruling regime is seeking to ensure its further survival largely by illegal methods.

Kiev and a whole number of Western capitals pretend that this is all right and is not at odds with the principles of the rule of law or the fundamental norms of international human rights. The killings of Russian journalists in Ukraine, who were performing their professional duties, have not been investigated. On the contrary, we have heard Ukraine's absurd demands in the context of the trial of Nadezhda Savchenko and seen unacceptable attempts by our Western colleagues to interfere in Russia's internal affairs and influence the court.

We consider it important to stress that the widespread practice of seizing and/or destroying Orthodox Christian churches and monasteries under the jurisdiction the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine is totally unacceptable. Priests and believers are being intimidated and harassed.

As you analyze all this, you come to the conclusion that there is evidence of witch-hunting and that unacceptable forms of dealing with dissenters and the opposition have become commonplace in Ukraine. This pushes the Ukrainian state further away from the European standards of morality and law about which Kiev representatives are so fond of talking at foreign rostrums.

We are confident that the conduct of an efficient and impartial investigation under international oversight into the crimes committed in the country and fitting punishment to the culprits will help achieve lasting national reconciliation and stabilize the situation in our brotherly Ukraine.

Russia, China and Mongolia: Prospects for Trilateral Cooperation

Author: V. Samoylenko

Professor at the Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Candidate of Science (History)



In the last few decades, Russia's foreign policy has increasingly focused on Europe, the United States, the Balkans, and the Middle East, which may have suggested that relations with those parts of the world are practically the sole concern of Moscow's diplomacy. Russian diplomacy has been no less active on the eastern front, although this may not have been quite so obvious. Russia has never ceased looking for ways to protect its eastern borders, to increase its economic and political presence in Asia-Pacific, to organize effective cooperation with all countries in the region, and to take part in all principal integration processes in that area of the world.

The eastern vector has been increasingly pronounced and effective in Russian diplomacy as Russia has stood on its feet more

and more confidently, boosted its economic potential, and strengthened its international political positions. Russia's multifaceted relations with China are a good example. Over the past few decades, Russo-Chinese relations have traversed a long path from tension and mutual mistrust to a strategic partnership encompassing practically all spheres of life in each country.

Political and economic cooperation with Asia-Pacific meets the key interests of Russia, especially those of its Siberian and Far Eastern regions.

The main purpose of the Silk Road Economic Belt project is to create efficient transportation and logistical systems, and build a modern transportation infrastructure based on a railroad system, which would ensure safer and quicker delivery of Chinese goods to European markets.

This project would obviously bring about rapid economic growth in countries participating in it and help raise the living standards of their population. Even a cursory glance at the map makes clear that the largest section of this route would be located in Russia, helping solve Russian problems.

Mongolia's Steppe Road is a project smaller in scale and commensurable with the economic potential and resources of that steppe republic. But it has the same essential aims to pursue. Mongolia seeks to be a link in the proposed transportation lines between Russia and China.

Russia has for quite a long time tried to step up its economic cooperation with Asia-Pacific countries, but this has not been easy with economic problems in Russia itself being the main obstacle. The idea of Russo-Sino-Mongolian cooperation has taken a long time and a great deal of effort to develop, largely because a negative historical record of Mongolian-Chinese relations caused apprehensions in Ulaanbaatar.

Russia, China and Mongolia have set a strategy for cooperation that fully meets their interests

and is conducive to stronger confidence between them. At the same time, there remain many issues between the three countries that hamper their economic cooperation and mutual investment activities.

There is no time to lose, especially bearing in mind that work is under way to lay alternative railroad lines and other new transportation and logistical arteries. Past mistakes should not be allowed to block plans for major transcontinental transportation routes that would benefit Russia, Mongolia, and China.

The UN Force Intervention Brigade in DR Congo: "Offensive" Peacekeeping

Author: O. Ilyshev

Third Secretary, Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Democratic Republic of Congo



IN 2015, the world marked the 70th anniversaries of two key events of the 20th century. One of them was the end of the Great Patriotic War and World War II. The other was the establishment of the United Nations, an organization entrusted with the mission of consolidating peace that had cost so much to achieve.

On November 20, 2012, the United Nations' peacekeeping system suffered what had been one of the heaviest blows to its reputation in two decades.

The fact that the United Nations' second largest mission in terms of personnel and annual budgets was unable to carry out its main task of protecting civilians and left Goma at the mercy of militants caused indignation not only in DR Congo but also among world powers.

After this physical and reputational defeat, MONUSCO had to prove to the government and population of DR Congo and to the international community that it was worth its salt.

The UN Force Intervention Brigade is the only blue helmet unit in the world authorized to carry out "targeted offensive operations."

MONUSCO restored its global reputation and earned praise from the Security Council.

The defeat of M23 and a Congolese government ultimatum for all rebels to lay down their arms by December 20, 2013 made about 8,000 militants disarm voluntarily.

There are, apparently, three main reasons for the Intervention Brigade's relatively poor record. First, although the brigade is mandated to carry out independent operations, without joining forces with the Congolese army, it cannot do so.

Second, the brigade has not been up to the challenge of guerrilla tactics adopted by FDLR, ADF and other Congolese armed groups, whose members move around regions that are hard to reach and avoid direct contact with the brigade or Congolese army.

And third, the brigade's extensive mandate has not saved it from the endemic diseases of UN peacekeeping missions but made the Congolese government build unreasonable hopes on it.

These factors prompt the conclusion that a hypothetical unit similar to the Intervention Brigade that would be deployed as part of another UN peacekeeping mission would come up against the same problems, which would minimize its potential.

All this vindicates Russia's position that setting up the Force Intervention Brigade must not create a precedent in the United Nations' peacekeeping practice as some countries wanted.

The Central Election Commission of Russia: International Activities and Resources

Author: V. Likhachev

Professor, Member of the Russian Central Election Commission, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary



THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT and administration of the Russian Federation includes an effective range of instruments and competences, with each of its actors having its own important function. All this, as the experience of the 21st century makes evident, enables this system to efficiently tackle national and international threats and challenges to the world order.

The law defines the Central Election Commission as a collective state body established under election law. The commission organizes elections to federal bodies of government. However, its activities extend beyond the Russian borders. It is one of the entities through which Russia puts its foreign policy into practice and a serious actor in international relations, especially in their segments relating to election systems.

Russian experience in organizing the international observation of presidential and State Duma elections in Russia is becoming part of the practice of foreign electoral systems. This undoubtedly means that the international community needs a universal set of electoral rules. UN specialized bodies would be able to draw up such rules in collaboration with A-WEB.

One remarkable feature of the practice of the Russian Central Election Commission is close interconnection of tradition and innovation. The commission's way of observing foreign elections makes this obvious. This work, which enjoys energetic support from the Russian Foreign Ministry, plays a significant role in the commission's international activities due to the increasing international recognition of the commission as a geopolitical actor, its ability to be a constructive and objective election manager, and its strict compliance with generally accepted international criteria and standards. The commission's observation of elections abroad is one of the priorities set by the 2010 resolution "On the International Cooperation of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation in Regard to Election Systems." In 2015, commission officials took part in monitoring parliamentary and regional elections in Mexico and Venezuela, general elections in Argentina and Myanmar, and elections in other countries.

The commission used a well-tested contact-based methodology at all those elections and will continue using it in the future. But the diversity of political environments across the world has called for methodological innovation and diversification. For this reason, the commission has designed a methodology for the remote observation of foreign elections. This methodology was successfully tested in monitoring the Scottish independence referendum in 2015 and a general election in Britain that year, the midterm elections for the U.S. Congress in 2014, the American

presidential election in 2012, and German parliamentary elections in 2013. Because of its organizational, logistical, and other advantages, remote observation is likely to come into more regular use. This means that amendments may need to be made to Russian legislation on international election observation.

Studying the international activities of the Russian Central Election Commission prompts a conclusion that they foster a rich creative potential, represent a significant element of Russia's diplomacy and foreign policy, and meet top criteria for the international responsibility of nations.

The Diplomacy of Count Ignatiev and the Turbulent World of Our Days

Author: A. Shchelkunov

Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary 1st Class, Candidate of Science (Philosophy)



RESTORING THE DEEDS of historical personalities on the basis of a vast body of archival materials is like rebuilding churches and monasteries ruined by alien ideas and base passions.

The vast space of Russia's history, likewise, is filled with a huge number of unique personalities forgotten and pushed into oblivion for different reasons or deliberately misinterpreted in academic writings and fiction.

The whirlpool of events turned one's life into a spring current on the surface of which only mud, foam and debris can be seen. The fog of malicious inventions and ideological biases is dissipating to reveal the true features of the person whose deeds and intentions were dedicated to the sole aim of serving the country's national interests. In the last few decades, the pantheon of Russian culture has been expanded with the glorious names of outstanding people who by practical deeds and creative endeavor enriched Russian and world civilization. The present and future generations can be proud of the lives and feats of those who can serve an example of selfless service to the people.

This article is based on a wide circle of sources kept in the Archives of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire, the State Archives of the Russian Federation, including reminiscences, official documents, reports and personal letters of Count Nikolai Ignatiev, memoirs of his contemporaries, a vast body of what has been written about him in Russia and Bulgaria and in the Internet. Among them, Alexander Bashmakov's publications contain a wealth of interesting materials about the central figure.

It was Bashmakov who introduced the concept of "Ignatiev's school of diplomacy." Count Ignatiev demonstrated a creative approach to "the sovereign's cause" yet at the height of his strength and talent he was deprived of any role of significance in state affairs. Count Ignatiev was obviously no longer needed.

Count Ignatiev was removed not because the czar and his retinue did not like him but through the efforts of the world "shadow government" that identified the count as its main and incorruptible opponent. It was with good reason that the Persian envoy in Constantinople told Count Ignatiev that no army could have achieved what he had achieved by his diplomatic art.

Alexander Bashmakov offered the following remarkable observation: "Count Ignatiev was painfully aware that his powerful abilities were cut off from serving Russia at the time when they were especially needed."

It is a true and profound observation not limited to the life story of Nikolai Ignatiev. Today, this

is perceived by us as prophetic and could be fully applied to many other figures in the history of Russia, both the count's contemporaries and those who lived later.

In his diplomatic activities, Count Ignatiev demonstrated conceptual approaches to all foreign policy issues; he invariably proceeded from Russia's national interests, put them into the regional context and correlated with the interests of the Great Powers.

Europe is a hostage to Washington's geopolitical recklessness in the Middle East and North Africa.

Little has changed since the times of Count Ignatiev in the solidarity Western Europe demonstrates when talking to Russia. In the wake of WWII, old Europe's vassal obedience has been constantly denting its own interests. In its efforts to impose its will, the United States moves against the objective course of integration processes.

Today, the cause to which Count Ignatiev and other Russian diplomats dedicated their lives, viz. Russia's greatness in the world, might look outdated. This is a superficial approach that ignores the huge inertia of social processes. It has become abundantly clear that the unifying pressure of globalization destroys valuable and unique features of national cultures created by geniuses of many generations of our people. They should not be mothballed and frozen; they should be developed on the basis of the spiritual potential typical of the Russian people through active cooperation with kindred and other cultures. This is the task formulated by the time we live in for those who are not indifferent to the fates of the future generations of their generations.

Author: D. Tyurin

Director, Inforos News Agency



GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, Germany, has hosted the 10th international forum "Partnership of State Authorities, Civil Society and the Business Community in Ensuring International Information Security."

Every year, the conference in Bavaria, initiated by M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University's Institute of Information Security Issues, brings together leading experts on international cooperation in cyberspace from the world's leading countries.

The global community today is on the threshold of a real threat, specifically the malicious and hostile use of information and communication technology (ICT). The war in cyberspace and cyber terrorism can lead to accidents at nuclear power plants, the destruction of hydroelectric power plants, accidents in the transport sector and other infrastructure facilities, with destructive consequences on par with those caused by weapons of mass destruction. "As the security of entire humankind is at stake, this problem can only be solved through joint efforts," V. Sherstyuk said.

Ahead of the forum's opening, cyber security issues were addressed at closed Russia-U.S. talks in Geneva. Their results were actively discussed at the Garmisch-Partenkirchen forum.

According to Western experts, the current norms of international law defining the notions of armed conflicts and response to aggression are applicable to conflicts in cyberspace and make it possible to control this new form of warfare.

Russian experts, on the contrary, traditionally stress the inexpediency of applying current norms of international law to cyberspace and favor a complete ban on the use of cyber weapons.

A working group on information security has been created at the UN on Russia's initiative. "The group's mandate envisions the formulation of principles of states' responsible behavior in the information space, a roadmap of rules that will clearly define what may be done and what is considered harmful. The group is being created under the auspices of the UN First Committee, comprising 25 countries. Their composition is being ascertained. The group will hold its first meeting in August 2016 while in 2017 it will present a report to the UN Secretary-General that will then be submitted to the UN General Assembly for discussion," Krutskikh said.

In addition to the nonproliferation of cyber weapons and the reduction of the danger of their use, the forum addressed issues related to the internationalization of the regulation of the Internet, which is currently under de facto U.S. control, as well as the issues of countering the online propaganda of extremism. The main outcome of the conference, according to Vladimir Sokolov, deputy director of the M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University's Institute of Information Security Issues, was an expansion in the scope of discussion and the more active involvement of Western participants in the "Garmisch process," which opens good prospects for political agreements.

Cambodia and Russia: Six Decades of Solid and Dynamic Partnership

Author: Prak Sokhonn

Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia



MAY 13, 2016 is an auspicious date, which marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cambodia and Russia. Despite the profound and complex changes that have transformed the world over the past six decades, our ties have stood the test of time, ties that are based on long-standing traditions of solid friendship, partnership, mutual trust and understanding. Throughout the entire period, the official relations between Phnom Penh and Moscow were disrupted only once briefly between 1975 and

1979 when the Khmers Rouge regime took power. Apart from this dark moment of our history, the former Soviet Union has stood by the neutral Cambodia, under the leadership of late King-Father Norodom Sihanouk, and offered broad economic support and assistance in the building of key social infrastructure, such as the Kampuchea-Soviet Hospital and the Institute of Technology of Cambodia, which remain till our present day.

On the political front, our two countries have cherished and nurtured mutual understanding and trust.

Cambodia and Russia share similar stances on major international and regional issues and have maintained good communication and coordination.

In the economic sphere, our bilateral trade has risen substantially over the last decade. While the trade volume has reached almost USD 50 million in 2014, we still have enormous potentials to explore further.

Cambodia's status as a Dialogue Partner in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) provides another platform for our two countries to strengthen our growing partnership in advancing bilateral and regional economic development.

As a close friend of Russia, Cambodia has attached great importance to ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Relations and has been at the forefront a strong proponent of a more dynamic ASEAN-Russia partnership.

Tourism is another area of fruitful cooperation between our two countries. Despite the far distance, Cambodia has become one of the popular destinations among Russian tourists.

In conclusion, it is quite clear that over the past six decades Cambodia-Russia traditional friendship has grown from strength to strength in various fields. I am fully confident that we have the necessary inspiration drawn from our long history to further advance our friendship and cooperation. Our joint efforts and close partnership will indeed further consolidate the traditional relationship and broaden the productive cooperation between the two countries in the years to come.

Russia-Moldova Ties Through the Prism of Changing Regional Architecture

Author: F. Mukhametsbin

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Moldova, Doctor of Science (Political Science)



RUSSIA AND MOLDOVA have for centuries been connected by close bonds of friendship, as amply evidenced by the history of both countries. No doubt, the common Orthodox faith and common values have been, and still are, an important unifying factor for both countries.

THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS have been marked by a significant acceleration of tectonic shifts in the geopolitical landscape of the region, including the Republic of Moldova. The need to respond to new regional challenges complicated Chisinau's foreign policy agenda. In addition, Moldova has found itself at the epicenter of the intersection of a whole number of integration processes.

The country's position at a busy "geopolitical crossroads" carries considerable benefit, at the same time demanding a consistent and clearcut approach toward establishing the "rules of the game" in relations with its partners.

Amid the rapidly changing geopolitical landscape in the region, Russia and Moldova are faced with a challenging task, i.e., to restore and step up the positive dynamics of bilateral cooperation.

Taking into account the significant potential for parliamentary diplomacy, there is a pressing need to develop cooperation between Russian and Moldovan legislative bodies.

Another promising area of the Russia-Moldova humanitarian dialogue is cooperation in the sphere of education. It should be noted that Moldovan graduates have a strong interest in receiving higher education in Russia.

In the past few years, the status of the Russian language in Moldova's education system featured prominently in the bilateral dialogue on education issues. The Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between our states specifies Moldova's obligations to provide adequate conditions to meet the need for Russian language programs in the public education system.

THUS, even a cursory glance at the wide-ranging ties between Russia and Moldova confirms that their cooperation has significant potential that has yet to be tapped to the full. However, amid the rapidly changing geopolitical landscape in the region, the parties are faced with a challenging task, i.e., to restore and step up the positive dynamics of bilateral cooperation, working out a balance formula for their further collaboration.

Autocratic Russia: "Movement Toward Sunrise" and Peoples of Siberia

Author: Yu. Bulatov

Dean, School of International Relations, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Professor, Department of World and Russian History, Doctor of Science (History)



UNTIL THE LATE FOURTEENTH CENTURY, the "Siberian File" of the rulers of the Muscovite State contained few facts obtained mostly from Novgorod sources.

The Moscow boyars (nobility) knew that the land "beyond the Stone" (the Urals) was populated by Tatars and also by Voguls (Mansi), Ostyaks (Khanty) and Samoeds (Nentsy). The chronicles of the latter half of the fifteenth century contain a lot of infor-

mation about the relations with the Voguls, their strife with Muscovites, the invasion by Vogul Prince Asyk of Russian lands in 1454 and a successful march of Fyodor Kurbsky's troops against the Voguls in 1483. A year later, Prince of Voguls Yumshan arrived to Moscow to conclude peace, vow obedience and promise to pay tribute in furs to the Grand Duke, who treated him with benevolence and let him go back home.

The Moscow princes were very much interested in the Ostyaks (Khanty) also known as Yugra. Since the twelfth century, their land had been a vassal of Novgorod and paid tribute in furs to the Novgorod boyars.

From the very beginning, "Russian-style colonization" was not a deliberate state policy but spontaneous colonization by free people.

At the turn of the sixteenth century, the "Tale of Unknown People in an Eastern Country", the first attempt to describe the nine Samoyedic tribes, became very popular at the princely court in Moscow.

Seen from Moscow, Siberia was still terra incognita, an "unknown land" or a "country without limits," a natural and very logical definition. The Siberian territory included a great variety of natural and climatic zones and was a kingdom of cold and darkness in which the average annual temperature never rose above zero. At the time, the Russian state covered the territory of 5.5 million sq. km, while Greater Siberia was nearly twice as big. In favorable conditions, the distance of 8.5 thousand km between the Urals and the Pacific could be covered in 2.5 years. On the territory with population density of 2 people by 100 km there was no chance to be rescued in extreme situations.

The Moscow rulers preferred to keep away from domestic affairs of their Siberian vassals and remain outside the conflicts between groups of Siberian elites for real power. The vassal relationships looked firm under all rulers. In 1563, Ediger was killed in a fight; Kuchum, direct de-

scendant of the Genghisids and one of the Sheybanids, replaced him on the throne. For some time, Kuchum continued paying tribute to Moscow. In 1571, however, as soon as information about the Crimean Tatars' raid against Moscow had reached Siberia, he discontinued this practice; a military clash between the Muscovite State and the Siberian Khanate became inevitable: There was no other way to return the Siberian Tatars into the Moscow orbit. Moscow's peaceful initiatives had failed, the ambassador had been slain, the fur tribute stopped. Ivan IV had no choice: Despite the military defeats of the final stage of the Livonian war, he moved against the Siberian Khanate.

Ethnic Tatars and Orthodox Christians, the Stroganovs were a new generation of Great Russians. In the fourteenth century, the Great Russian ethnicity was taking shape by the religious rather ethnic affiliation and was based on the substrata of the ancient Russian ethnicity, Orthodox Tatars, Lithuanians and Finno-Ugric tribes. Having become, in fact, "the Russian sons of the Tatar people," the Stroganovs, through their business activities and their service to Ivan IV, promoted contacts between the Russians and the Tatars, representatives of two different cultures and did a lot to solidify Russia's security and positions in the East.

This explains why they "won the tender" for an organization of a large-scale military expedition in Siberia. The army headed by ataman Yermak was organized on their money and equipped for a mission "beyond the Stone" to subjugate the Siberian Khanate.

Today, very much as in the past, there is a dearth of charismatic leaders in Russia of unquestioned authority and unquestioned influence in the Center and at the local level alike. This void is especially obvious in the subjects of the Russian Federation either based on the national-state or the national-territorial principles; the exceptions are few and far between.

Peter I transformed the Russian state into a transcontinental power; this process that required consolidation of all Siberian ethnicities under the Romanovs. It was at that time that the Siberian peoples started joining Russia at their own free will.

IT SHOULD BE SAID that the experience of czarist Russia in the development of Siberia and the Far East had nothing in common with colonial expansion of the Western powers in new and recent times. Today, however, certain national-patriots and local historians have revived an assessment of the czarist politics in Siberia as a manifestation of the colonialist essence of autocracy.

The "Siberian thesis" of Albright is supported by the patriarch of anti-Soviet politics Zbigniew Brzezinski. In fact, his approach has served the cornerstone of America's policy: Siberia, says Brzezinski, is the main geopolitical prize for the United States in the twenty-first century.

Nobody, Americans included, can play the Siberian card with the help of the Siberian ethnicities; their past and future are inseparable from Russia and its destiny.

Author: G. Toloraya

Executive Director, Russian National Committee on BRICS Studies, Director, Center for Russia's Asian Strategy, Institute of Economics, Russian Academy of Sciences



THERE STILL ARE A LOT of blank spots in comprehending Russia's Eurasian essence and China's philosophy and spiritual treasures. In the twenty-first century, the Asian-Pacific vector in Russia's international relations has become no less strategically important than its policy in the European-Atlantic region. This is convincingly illustrated by a new book by Mikhail Titarenko and Vladimir Petrovsky, scholars at the Institute for Far Eastern Studies of the

Russian Academy of Sciences, "Russia, China and the New World Order." This work has become a kind of a political and scientific bequest on the part of late Mikhail Titarenko, a leading Russian Orientalist, one of the major experts on China's philosophy and intellectual culture, international and inter-civilizational relations in Asia, as well as the problems of the new Eurasian conception.

This fundamental work is a collection of articles by the two authors highlighting the most important current problems in the historic, economic, socio-political, and spiritual development of Russia, China and other countries of the Asia-Pacific Region (APR), as well as the problems of the interaction of the Eastern and Western civilizations and Russia's role in their dialogue. The subjects studied by the authors reflect a multifaceted nature of their academic interests and their profound philosophical deliberations on the fundamentals of the future world order promptly combined with a political analysis of its new pillars and instruments emerging before our very eyes.

The concept, initially formulated by Mikhail Titarenko and further elaborated in the articles included in the collection, is based on a "symphonic" nature of intercivilizational relations, a profound mutual respect between all nations and ethnic groups living in Russia, their equal and mutually beneficial cooperation, and the joining of forces in order to attain mutual goals.

The concept envisages a need to harmonize and humanize international and inter-ethnic relations, to maintain a stable dialogue between different cultures, which depends on preserving different peoples' ethnocultural identities, as opposed to any attempts at their leveling or eliminating their cultural originality.

The authors sought to demonstrate a tremendous spiritual potential of Oriental civilizations and the Russian civilization, their ability to enrich each other and maintain a meaningful dialogue, which guarantees a successful realization of the policy of goodneighborliness and cooperation, ultimately making it possible to secure peace and well-being of the peoples of Eastern Asia and the APR.

The book reveals the meaning of multilateral security mechanisms in Eurasia, as well as their ability to interact with each other in achieving common goals. A concept of personal security has become ever more relevant, dealing with the problems such as the individual's survival and security, respect for his rights, and the creation of conditions for development worthy of a human being.

All in all, the recently published book by Titarenko and Petrovsky presents a system of new concepts and theoretical and methodological approaches to the formation of a new world order in East Asia and the ATR by providing its philosophical substantiation, ensuring security on the principles of cooperation and co-development, and promoting a constructive inter-civilizational dialogue.

The Life of Pope Francis in His Own Words

Author: V. Bogomazov

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Candidate of Science (Political Science)



THE BOOK UNDER REVIEW has been extensively used or served as a framework for any relevant research devoted to Pope Francis or the present-day Vatican. We have arrived at this conclusion following our recent research at the library of the United Nations Office at Geneva concerning latest works of leading religious scholars and Vaticanists. We would like to express our sincere gratitude at this point to the library's leading expert, head of the research assistance sector, I.A. Gerasimova for her most efficient help.

This publication is based on the authors' long conversations with Archbishop of Buenos Aires Jorge Mario Bergoglio, which took place over two years and focused on different stages of his life and philosophy. In 2010, their book entitled *Conversations with Jorge Mario Bergoglio: A Jesuit* was published in Argentina. In 2013, when Archbishop of Buenos Aires was elected a new Pope, it was the only source of detailed information about a new supreme pontiff. Hence a continuously growing interest to this publication, its numerous new editions and translations into various languages.

A preface written by a rabbi from Buenos Aires, Abraham Skorka, a long-time friend of Pope Francis, says: "The reader will find in this book Cardinal Bergoglio's vision with respect to the problems currently facing the Roman Catholic Church."

Russian readers may be interested in what the Pope thinks about the attitude to Christ's suffering depending on the era and the culture. "If you look at Eastern icons, Russian, for example, you realize they have a very few images of a sorrowful crucifixion. It's more common to see the resurrection. On the other hand, if we look at the Spanish Baroque period or the icons of Cuzco, Peru, we find images of Christ with His patience torn to shreds, because the Baroque era emphasized Jesus' passion."

In the Appendix the authors have published Cardinal Bergoglio's 2002 Easter address to professors and students of Buenos Aires which focuses on the challenges facing Argentina coupled with his reflections on an epic poem *Martin Fierro* by José Hernández.

The book under review allows its readers to have a multidimensional picture of a religious leader who presently stands at the head of the Roman Catholic Church. It is unique in the sense that you get to know its hero straight, when he deliberates on various, sometimes very sensitive issues affecting the Church. The book reveals that the Pope has a great personality, demonstrating his motivation and commitment to promote the eternal Christian values.

Francis and His Holiness Patriarch Kirill. In particular, he noted that "the Pope has been continuously urging all people of goodwill to decidedly and uncompromisingly defend peace and justice."

International Affairs: Summary №4, 2016

"International Affairs" Journal
Editor-in-Chief: **Armen Oganessian**
Head of Internet & Multimedia projects: **Valentina Zlobina**
Web redactor: **Maxim Kovshenkov**

Internet: <http://en.interaffairs.ru/>
E-mail: journal@interaffairs.ru
Editorial Address:
105064, Moscow, Gorokhovskiy lane 14, Russia
Phone: +7(499) 265-37-81
Fax: +7(499) 265-37-71