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The 140th Anniversary of Bulgaria's Liberation From the Ottoman Yoke: A Landmark in the History of Russian-Bulgarian Relations

Author: Sergey Lavrov

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

The 140th anniversary of the liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman yoke is truly a landmark in the history of Russian-Bulgarian relations. It is encouraging that a whole number of commemorative events were dedicated to this anniversary.

Having exhausted all diplomatic avenues, Russia came to the aid of its Bulgarian friends, helping restore and strengthen Bulgarian statehood. Russia acted sincerely and selflessly - in contrast to some European powers, whose destructive line at the 1878 Berlin Congress resulted in the serious reduction of the territory of liberated Bulgaria.

Obviously, the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878 had an enormous impact on entire European architecture. The victory, achieved with the blood of Russian soldiers and Bulgarian militia, not only led to the restoration of Bulgaria as an independent state but also contributed to the rise of national awareness in other Balkan peoples.

Russia greatly values the fact that today, 140 years later, the Bulgarian people cherish the memory of the heroism of our soldiers and officers.

Bulgaria is Russia's important partner in Europe. Our relations with Sofia have a value for us in their own right and do not depend on the political situation of the moment. We are interested in their further strengthening based on principles of mutual benefit and respect for each other's interests.

Our cultural and humanitarian contacts are rapidly moving forward. Russian education programs are becoming increasingly attractive, the positions of the Russian language are strengthening and tourist exchanges are expanding.

Russia - one of the leading centers of the changing world, a permanent member of the UN Security Council and an important guarantor of global stability - will continue to be actively involved in advancing a positive, unifying international agenda geared toward the future; facilitate the resolution of numerous crises and conflicts by political and diplomatic means; consistently uphold the values of truth,

justice and wide-ranging equal cooperation in international affairs. We are always open to working together with all those concerned in order to effectively address pressing issues of international development.

Russia has not altered its approaches toward interaction with the EU. To reiterate, we would like to see the EU - our important neighbor and key trade and economic partner - as a strong and independent international player capable for formulating its own foreign policy priorities. We hope that the Europeans will be able to overcome the inertia of thinking and abandon the practice of building their Russian policy based on the principle of the "lowest common denominator" and following the lead of the small but rather aggressive group of Russophobic countries. This would not only make our relations more predictable but would also help strengthen trust and mutual understanding in the Euro-Atlantic region.

Our contribution to regional affairs will continue to be constructive. We regard the Balkans as a region for constructive dialogue and interaction in the interest of its states and its peoples.

Priority Tasks of International Cooperation in Combating Extremism and Terrorism

Author: I. Rogachev

Director, Department of New Challenges and Threats, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; dnv@mid.ru

IN TODAY'S WORLD, many countries - and the international community as a whole - are facing the growing threats of terrorism and extremism. These are two dangerous phenomena that fuel each other in many areas of global life.

If terrorism was satisfactorily defined long ago, and described in international law and world practice in countering this evil, extremism is still interpreted in many ways and essentially has no exact, agreed upon definition. This interferes with, among other things, effectively dealing with the activities of extremist groups and overcoming extremism on both the national and international levels.

We may consider extremism to be a kind of buildup to terrorism, as it creates conditions for the conceptual, ideological, and pro-pagandistic indoctrination of

individual terrorists, their radicalization up to the stage of independent terrorist acts, and their joining existing terrorist groups or creating new groups of that sort. In this context, combating extremism largely means preventing the spread in society (and the world) of terrorist and extremist ideology and propaganda. Essentially, the world community and all nations are today faced with a common problem: How to ensure effectively that the vast majority of ordinary people will begin to uphold these values more loudly, strongly, and aggressively, and win the informational and political battle against the violent, cynical, cruel, and criminal minority of extremists and terrorists. We still have not won; in many ways, the ideologies and sponsors of terrorism and extremism have prevailed over such resistance.

A no less important (and perhaps even greater) factor of the continuation and growth of terrorist threats is the disunity of countries that have so far put political and geopolitical goals above the task of countering common threats. We cannot exclude the possibility of individual governments consciously supporting specific terrorist and extremist groups in the interests of destabilizing and even toppling undesirable regimes. This in any case makes the terrorist danger worse, not only for the public in general but for the authors of such political engineering as well. Regrettably, there have been attempts to use the very problem of cooperation in combating international antiterrorism and anti-extremism to interfere in the domestic affairs of sovereign nations.

In 2017, the international legal basis for combating the ideology of terrorism and extremism was enlarged through the adoption of the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 2354, which approved a "comprehensive international framework" for countering terrorist ideas and propaganda. A great and timely step was thus taken on the road toward coordinating national approaches to preventing terrorism and creating the needed political and legal grounds for strengthening international efforts along these lines.

Russia has consistently favored further development of such work.

An important step in international counterterrorist and anti-extremist cooperation along these lines is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's Convention on Combating Extremism, drafted under the leadership of Russia and China and signed at a meeting of SCO heads of state in June 2017.

Under current conditions, this agreement can serve as a true legal standard of correctly viewing the anti-extremist and antiterrorist goals of and dedicated international cooperation between like-minded states.

The U.S.: A Globalizing Economy in a Globalized World

Author: V. Suppyan

*Head of Economic Studies, Institute for the U.S. and Canadian Studies,
Professor, Doctor of Science (Economics); vsuppyan@yahoo.com*

TODAY, there is a more or less commonly accepted opinion that globalization is closely connected with the processes unfolding in the American economy. Let's have a closer look at the mutual influences of economic processes going on in the United States and the world.

If we proceed from the most general definition of globalization as a process that is transforming the world economy into a single market of goods, services and capital, then the role of the United States in this process can be described as weighty or even decisive in many respects.

The rising volumes of American foreign trade rely on technological progress and state economic policy that liberalized foreign trade and the conditions in which the TNCs operated abroad. Technical and technological progress in transport, communications, information processing, and transfer of information cut down international business expenditures to create much more favorable foreign trade and investment conditions.

The role of American TNCs outside the United States was one of the key factors of liberalization of American economy and of the much greater role of foreign trade in it.

It seems that the world has come close to a new international division of labor in which the United States and certain other highly developed countries will concentrate on developing and producing new technologies and science-intensive products, on the most science-intensive branches in the sphere of services (science, education, health protection, finances) leaving the spheres of traditional and mass production of goods and services to the less developed countries. American economy is in the vanguard of these changes.

The United States was and remains the most attractive market for foreign investors - direct foreign investments account for up to 7% of real investments; amid financial thunderstorms, foreign owners treat Federal Treasury bonds as the safest financial instruments.

The new president is not a consistent supporter of any of economic schools. Some of his ideas come close to the ideas and traditions of Republican conservatism while many of his suggestions and forecasts are based on the "supply-side economics" theory actively used under President Reagan.

A new strategy aimed at independence in the energy sphere is another of the main goals.

Scientific and technical progress is another factor that promotes and widens globalization and the international division of labor. Those who side with Trump are fond of saying that scientific and technical progress will render expatriation of industrial production meaningless.

Despite declared protectionism, America will preserve its economic and political interests all over the world. As the only economic, military and political superpower, the U.S. might change the forms and methods of its influence on international relations and world economy yet it will never retreat from preserving its dominant position. This fully applies to the prospects of globalization of American economy: caused, in the first place, by objective factors, globalization as a process might be affected by political ups and downs but will hardly move backwards.

The Skripal Case: International Law Aspects

Author: A. Utkin

Independent chemical weapons expert, Candidate of Science (Chemistry); utkin-anton@yahoo.com

THE SKRIPAL CASE is a mind-boggling example of how a state tried to sort out its problems at the expense of civilian lives.

In the context of issues related to chemical weapons, Syria was probably the most obvious target. For a long time, the West has been trying, without much success, to take a firmer grip on everything going on in this country only to be confronted with Russia's highly successful policy in the region.

It was the authority of Russia that refused to accept, with good reason, the conclusion about the use of chemical weapons by Syrian leaders and did not allow

the West to draw a larger part of the world community to its side and use harsh sanctions against Syria.

To make the OPCW its political instrument, the West should first undermine Russia's authority by raising accusations against it.

The Skripal case will hardly invite serious repercussions within the OPCW: as a purely technical organization, it is responsible for the regime of prohibition of chemical weapons. This explains why London's political demarches stirred up no response among its members. Great Britain has no technical evidence of Russia's guilt which explains why London deliberately violated international laws and the procedures of conflict settlement prescribed by the Convention. It seems that Britain finds it important to ignore all relevant rules to cover the ungrounded nature of its accusations. However, it did not impress the majority of countries. It seems that Russia can ask the OPCW for an expert conclusion about the possibility/impossibility of identification of the producer country or laboratory based on the samples collected in Great Britain. This is important since the media are disseminating myths that such a possibility as real.

In any event, Russia's consistent efforts within the framework of international law designed to identify and reveal to the world at all levels of the OPCW that there is no real evidence of its guilt may prove an efficient instrument in protecting its interests in the Skripal case.

Brexit Talks: First Results

Author: A. Kramarenko

Director of Development, Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC),

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary; akramarenko@russian-council.ru

ON MARCH 29, 2017, the talks on Great Britain's withdrawal from the European Union began in full conformity with the results of the national referendum of June 23, 2016 when the country had officially informed Brussels about its intention to withdraw from the EU under Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty.

At no time did British society and the British political elite, its conservative segment in the first place, unanimously accept the country's involvement in the European integration project. In the past, the UK joined the European Economic

Community, a common market of sorts. The EEC's later shift to integration never approved by the electorate developed into a common EU problem of deficit of democracy.

It was Britain that has found itself leading the protest electorate that scared the Western elites. From the point of view of relations with the EU partners, it is highly important to register how this was assessed in European capitals. Indeed, without the support for the seditious idea of "independence" at the British referendum, there would have been no victory of Donald Trump with its "America First" philosophy at the presidential election in the United States. Donald Trump's "beautiful vision - a world of strong, sovereign, and independent nations" locked in competition/rivalry with each other looks like a death sentence to the European Union, the message strengthened by the Brits and their Brexit. Everything that the Anglo-Saxons are doing on the world arena breeds strong suspicions that they intend to close the Western "liberal project" to push the world back into the 19th-century politics.

Today, considering the Skripal case, we have acquired a clearer idea about another element of Brexit negotiations based on a better understanding of their experience and the imperatives of London's strategy.

Even before the Skripal case, London was steadily building up tension in Europe to convince the Europeans that to successfully oppose "aggressive Russia" they needed the UK on their side. The message is obvious: it is in the common interests of the West to achieve mutual understanding on everything related to Brexit.

The British probably expect, and with good reason, that the European project will be reduced to the common market, that the Eurozone will collapse while European politics will revive the geopolitical patterns reflected in two world wars.

So far, the UK and EU have agreed on a transition period that will lead to the "orderly withdrawal" of the UK. The transition period will last from Brexit Day of March 29, 2019 to December 31, 2020. It was the British business community that was pushing for this soft transition to the new parameters of the relations with the EU. EU citizens arriving in the UK between these two dates will enjoy the same rights and guarantees as those who arrive before Brexit. The same will apply to UK expats on the continent. The UK will be able to negotiate, sign and ratify its own trade deals during the transition period that will enter into force not earlier than January 1, 2021.

The problem of Northern Ireland, the population of which voted "to remain," is not the only threat to Great Britain's territorial integrity. The results in Scotland were

more or less the same. The international status of the UK - its official name being the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland - depends on the future of Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Speaking of Russia's interests, we should admit that, judging by the Skripal case, London will stake on its anti-Russian trump card in its relations with the EU either until the final Brexit agreements in the shorter perspective or, in the longer perspective, until its new global positions become clear.

Judging by the way Europeans responded to the calls from London to close ranks against Moscow on the strength of fake accusations, the patience of its European partners will expire soon.

Relations Between Israel and Tunisia in the Context of the Middle East Conflict

Author: S. Gasratyan

Research associate, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Candidate of Science (History); gasratyan_svetlana@mail.ru

TUNISIA had gone through a long period as an independent state while its relations with Israel were shaping up.

The first contacts between the two countries date back to the early 1950s, when Tunisian representatives met with the Israeli delegation and Israeli labor leaders. At that time, Tunisia was seeking independence and was looking for Israeli support to achieve it. Habib Bourguiba, who was appointed prime minister of Tunisia after the country became independent in 1956 and was its president from 1957 to 1987, took what overall was a peaceful attitude toward Israel and to the region as a whole. In 1956, Bourguiba met with the Israeli ambassador to France, Jacob Tsur, and then Tsur met with the Tunisian finance minister, who sought Israeli assistance in building cooperative agricultural settlements.

Tunisia's position on the Arab-Israeli conflict was at times condemned in the Arab world. However, after the Arab-Israeli war of October 1973, the majority of Arab League members sided with Tunisia. The transfer of the Arab League headquarters from Egypt to Tunisia, and the fact that Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

institutions that were evacuated from Beirut in 1982 were relocated to Tunisia showed the growing prestige of the North African country. Bourguiba and his government were trying to bring about peace between Israel and its neighbors and thereby defuse tensions in the Middle East. However, soon Bourguiba, who was leader of the nationalist Neo Destour party, launched a wide-scale policy of Tunisification and Arabization, causing serious social and economic problems to the Tunisian Jews. This forced the majority of them to leave the country.

Israel's relations with Tunisia were of a different nature than the Jewish state's relations with Europe. Not being a strategic player in the Middle East, Tunisia proposed a purely diplomatic solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It opposed the position of Libya and Algeria, which purported to be fighters for Arab interests, condemned the Camp David accords, and gave political and logistic support to Palestinian armed groups.

TUNISIA is most likely the only country where the "Arab Spring" brought a coalition of liberals and Islamists to power. Unlike the majority of Arab League member states, Tunisia has not boycotted Israel. But while Tunisia's membership in the Arab League and its relations with Israel and the United States are controversial and are determined by what are often short-term political interests, the Tunisians have maintained immutable solidarity with the Palestinians from 1948 and enshrined it in the constitution of 2014.

Tunisia's relations with Israel have had quite a long history, but have always been controversial. Occasional periods of rapprochement were replaced by what was often almost hostility, mainly because of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, something Tunisia could not stay away from. Radical Islamists, who have pursued an anti-Semitic policy toward Tunisia's Jewish community, have played a huge negative role in the country's political life. However, despite all the adversities, Tunisia remains on a democratic path.

With today's tragic developments in the Middle East, terrorism and extremism have become Tunisia's main problem. It is an evil that both Israel and Tunisia have to fight.

Presidents of the United States: The Personal Dimension

Author: R. Yengibaryan

Academic Director, Faculty of Management and Policy, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Professor, Doctor of Science (Law), Distinguished Scientist of the Russian Federation; sgp@inno.mgimo.ru

IN LIGHT OF his immense constitutional authority and the post he holds in the structure of the American government, the personality of any U.S. president has always been considered exceptionally important, even if it does not entirely correspond to the high moral and political criteria the voters - and moreover, the international community - attribute to him. The President of the United States is both head of the Federal government and commander-in-chief of the U.S. armed forces. In addition to being the country's top government official, he is also head of one of its two leading political parties, with enormous responsibilities for taking political and moral action on behalf of the entire nation - and the world community as well.

It should be especially noted that in difficult periods of its history, the country's political system has always managed to find and elevate men to the post of president who were equal to the enormous challenges of the times. To the credit of these American presidents, especially Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt, the United States emerged victorious from two world wars with minimal losses, but with the maximum possible gains for itself.

For all this time, American presidents have borne the enormous burden of executive power on their shoulders. Like a baton, they passed to one another the role of political orchestrator of world politics. It is no accident that the American experience of organizing the upper echelons of government and a mechanism of state became an object of emulation for other countries, which did their best to apply such experience to themselves while trying to preserve their own characteristic features.

The rift between President Trump and the U.S. Congress weakens the federal government's control over the country, especially over the armed forces and other security structures, and this cannot help but worry the world community.

The most recent presidential election was won by the outsider politician Donald Trump. It is true that he rose to the post of president with a somewhat tarnished reputation, thanks not only to the underhanded efforts of his opponent Hillary Clinton, but also because the previous three presidents - Clinton, Bush, and Obama - did much to damage the authority of the institution of the U.S. presidency.

If we all believe in democracy and are thus equal before the law, why are there some who are more equal than others - people of color and Muslims, with their subsidies, quotas, privileges, free medical care, and judicial indulgence, even when there are major violations of the law? This situation not only contributes to disharmony in social relations but can occasionally enrage the white majority and compel them to fight for their rights more radically. Such attitudes undoubtedly exist in both the United States and Europe.

The main opponent and object of criticism by the Democratic Party is the white Christian male of traditional sexual orientation - a military man, government official, businessman, scientist or technician, blue-collar worker, farmer, etc. who make up the foundation of the U.S. middle class, on whose shoulders a great country rests.

A NEW POLITICAL SITUATION has thus taken shape following the election of Donald Trump as the 45th president of the United States - one never before seen in the country's history. Of greatest note is the standoff between the legislative and executive branches. The United States Congress, which is chosen through direct elections, reflects precisely the social trends that currently exist inside the country. However, the current situation weakens the executive branch, and the government as a whole.

The rift between the president and the U.S. Congress is obvious. It weakens the federal government's control over the country, especially over the armed forces and other security structures, and this cannot help but worry the world community.

This uncontrolled, turbulent state of the American executive branch is now becoming a factor of political instability with a global dimension.

Russia's Electoral Choice: An International Angle

Author: V. Likhachev

Member of the Central Electoral Commission of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Professor, Doctor of Science (Law); ruteshev@gmail.com

Throughout the entire election campaign, including its final stage, an international factor was not simply present in Russia's electoral fundamentals and technologies but was effectively integrated into them. Its effective conduct, along with other factors ensured the political and functional legitimization of the election, as a result of which V.V. Putin was declared the newly elected president of the Russian Federation. This objectively underscored the country's achievements in search of identity in the face of the challenges of the 21st century, developing as an influential international legal personality and, finally, forging modern electoral diplomacy.

The Russian election was a good example of systemic respect for such primary sources of international law and order as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, human rights pacts adopted by the UN in 1966, the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950), the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations (1970), and the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (August 1, 1975), among others. Apart from its applied value in the electoral process, this approach clearly had another important dimension as well. Arising from the RF Foreign Policy Concept 2016, it showed the country's respect for contemporary international law, the need to observe and to combat the acts and practices of legal nihilism in international relations.

Another politically and practically important trend in the Russian presidential election was related to the effective use of specialized regulatory material and electoral guidelines accumulated by the international community. This refers primarily to generally recognized democratic standards, specifically the standards of voting in elections and referendums. This group is based on the standards of inclusiveness, equality, competition, openness, regularity, and public monitoring, among others. Even the most critical view of the process and results of the March

presidential election in Russia cannot deny Russia's commitment to international electoral imperatives.

The election results in the United States, where only four polling stations were set up, require a critical assessment. Despite the positive nature of the very fact that the voting took place, which proceeded in a Russophobic atmosphere, amid sweeping and unsubstantiated allegations of Russian meddling in the U.S.'s internal affairs, Washington's illegitimate sanctions, the illegal seizure of Russian property in New York and San Francisco, and the forging (there is no other word for that) of an anti-Russian alliance comprised of the U.S.'s NATO and EU allies from among its geopolitical puppets such as Ukraine and Georgia.

Organizations and structures of Russian compatriots have made an especially significant contribution to the success of the 2018 election.

Many Russian and foreign media outlets have constructively fulfilled their tasks. Together with the CEC, the Russian Foreign Ministry and other official agencies, they helped inform the electorate about all stages and details of the election campaign.

However, the main substantive function was played of course by the creative mass of electoral actors in the Russian Federation. Without touching on the issue of their electoral legal personality (it is real and self-sufficient), I would like to pay special attention to the extremely responsible approach taken by Russian citizens outside Russia toward the exercise of their rights and obligations as enshrined in the RF Constitution. Russian citizens amply and convincingly demonstrated their heightened political and legal culture, as is evidenced by official correspondence between the CEC and Russian citizens who sought information about the voting process and logistics ahead of and on Election Day outside Russia.

Observer missions (long term and short term, assessment of needs and analysis) were active in 53 Russian regions. In keeping with tradition, focused attention was given to Moscow. In particular, observers from the OSCE, the CIS, the CIA IPA, the SCO, the National Assembly of Armenia, the Senate of the Parliament of Tajikistan, and the Senate of the Kazakhstan Parliament, as well as many diplomatic missions, were present in Moscow.

Political signals for harmonizing the will of states on this track are already self-evident and can be no longer ignored. The March 18, 2018 presidential campaign has made a major contribution to this. It has convincingly and comprehensively shown the RF's status and potential as an international legal personality and guarantor of fundamental human, individual and national rights.

Democratization of Post-Soviet Political Regimes: A Conservative Scenario

Author: Vladimir Yegorov, *First Deputy Director, Institute of the CIS Countries, Professor, Doctor of Science (History), Doctor of Science (Economics);*

korrka@mail.ru

Vladimir Shtol, *Editor-in-Chief, scientific-analytical journal Obozrevatel-Observer, Professor, Doctor of Science (Political Science);* [observer-](mailto:observer-rau@yandex.ru)

[rau@yandex.ru](mailto:observer-rau@yandex.ru)

THE WORLD expert and academic community has been and remains very much interested in the prospects of social development of the countries united by the post-Soviet space.

The attempts to plant social experience of the West in the post-Soviet cultural soil led the democratic transition into an impasse. All sorts of sociological studies have already confirmed that 80% of Russians are carriers of the so-called "subject political culture"; it will require three generations to transform it into a "civilian culture," an indispensable element of any democratic society. Similar or very close results were obtained for all countries of the near abroad.

At the same time, the search for the best possible variants of post-Soviet regime transformation rekindled an interest in the phenomenon of democracy and its practical implementation in the form of goal-setting. This stirred up deliberations about the social process unfolding before our eyes and suggested two highly important conclusions one of which could be put in a nutshell as follows: democracy is a process, not a static condition of a dynamically developing society. The personified supreme power able to guarantee human rights and freedoms should occupy the central place in post-Soviet regime transformation implemented through direct democracy.

Having correctly identified the traditional dominant of social order ensured by the strong vertical of power, supporters of conservative liberalism, including our contemporaries, look at centralized power as an unshakeable "institute" able to ensure stability in the short-term perspective.

In the context of the theory of modernization, the novelty going along with the evolution of power is determined by the understanding that tradition is not an alternative to modernity; it is a constructive potential of further development which

makes the formula "true liberalism is inseparable from conservatism" absolutely justified.

In fact, the common historical and cultural context of the countries and peoples integrated in the post-Soviet space predetermines the active role of the traditional institute of centralized power in post-Communist regime transformation.

The position of those who are talking about post-Soviet authoritarianism as static is highly vulnerable from the point of view of cognitive perspective of the search for a development strategy and from the point of view of practical implementation as an adequate reference point of political transformation.

Russian researchers and their foreign colleagues have basically agreed that the deepness and consistency of the central power's democratic evolution depend, to a great extent, on civil society, or rather its emergence as one of the active elements of regime transformation.

The architecture of the political regime based on a direct dialogue between centralized power and society coincides, on the whole, with the general civilizational trend of a gradual shift of democratic paradigm from representative to direct democracy.

This means that the prospect of conservative modernization of post-Soviet political regimes is based not only on the recognition that democratic transition is structurally conditioned, but, first and foremost, on taking into account the objective changes related to the development of communications.

Germany as a Showcase of U.S. Methods of Information Pressure

Author: Ye. Leonov

Vice Consul, Consulate General of the Russian Federation in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, postgraduate student at the Department of Diplomacy, School of International Relations, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations; leonovgeorge@gmail.com

HYBRID and information warfare, public diplomacy and soft power have a special role to play today. They form an extensive arsenal of means of pressure and influence that do not involve use of force but have proven to be much more effective than traditional military methods.

One of the main users of this arsenal is the United States. Now that the Cold War is over, globalization and information technology (IT) progress enable that country to convert its information resources into an effective means of coercion and lobbying.

The United States began to test new IT in international conflicts in the 1990s such as Operation Desert Storm and the air war against the former Yugoslavia. Today, the Americans possess some of the most advanced information weapons and make wide-scale use of them.

The U.S.'s main target of influence through information resources is Europe, primarily Germany as the economic and political motive force of the European Union.

U.S. funds such as the German Marshall Fund finance visits to the United States for German journalists and organize meetings with U.S. establishment figures for them. This makes German journalists elements of the American propaganda machine. Editors are no exception - for example, candidates for the editor-in-chief's position at FAZ undergo mandatory one-year training in the United States.

On the whole, this is not a new scenario. It just uses modern technology, but other than that it is based on the U.S. "cultural exports" policy of the Cold War era. In the early postwar years, editors and key journalists in the majority of media companies in the then West Germany were normally U.S. stooges who defended postwar American principles and values.

Many of the current German newspapers, such as *Suddeutsche Zeitung* or *Frankfurter Rundschau*, came into being immediately after the war, in 1945, and owe their emergence to U.S. licenses.

Numerous American nongovernmental organizations and funds operating in Germany are also effective vehicles of the United States' information policy. The German Marshall Fund of the United States was one of the initiators of German-American cultural exchange programs.

After the East-West confrontation came to an end in the 1990s, the German Marshall Fund began to gradually lose its ideological role, and consequently its significance in general.

Another important actor in German politics is *Atlantik-Brücke*, which was founded in 1952 as a nonpartisan and nonprofit association with the declared purpose of developing economic, financial, educational, political, and military ties between the United States and Germany.

In practice Atlantik-Brücke is an analytical center that tries to remold public opinion in Germany to Washington's liking and shares the German Marshall Fund's goal of imbuing German youth with a spirit of Atlantic solidarity, for which purpose it organizes regular trips for young Germans to the United States.

To sum up, the United States has been pursuing a very effective information policy toward Germany, partly due to indifference on the part of German political elites, which have fallen into the trap of Euro-Atlantic solidarity. And the anti-Russian theme that runs like a scarlet thread through German documents setting out the country's foreign policy doctrine further distracts German public opinion.

The United States will leave no stone unturned to recover its leadership, and one of the means it will employ with support from its allies is a full-scale information war. Russia should react with more efficient methods of information warfare to counter actions of U.S. propaganda institutions that can destabilize Europe.

Business and Soft Power Politics

Author: A. Titov

Postgraduate student, Department of Diplomacy, School of International Relations, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; TitovAV2@center.rzd.ru

WITH TODAY'S international relations across the world being in a permanent state of turmoil and countries increasingly turning to "hybrid" tactics, the soft power concept acquires primary importance in foreign policy.

Over the past decade, Russia has established itself as an independent player in putting together global agendas, a player with its own distinctive identity. This independent role of Russia in setting routes for principal global processes is a source of anxiety for Western nations, which are not in the habit of paying any attention to anyone else's recipes for dealing with global and regional problems and are used to doing what they want without seeking anyone's approval.

Essentially, soft power policy means trying to persuade a foreign country to voluntarily accept values that are being offered to it, and thereby obtain an easier

route for achieving what are often closely interrelated political and economic goals.

Our Western partners have repeatedly achieved their strategic goals by acting from a position of strength and disguising their interests as values. In doing so, they have shrewdly created a system of double standards and pseudo-principles. This has nothing to do with soft power, which implies the use of an attractive image rather than blackmail or threats.

Russia has developed a universal mechanism for pursuing genuine values and implements it successfully on the basis of international law and respect for the sovereignty of other states. Russia is open to mutually beneficial cooperation in all spheres, including economic, without any political preconditions. This position enjoys respect across the world.

The Western sanctions against Russia, besides being a form of political pressure, largely represent departures from fair competition. They are designed to deal a blow as painful as possible to Russia's economy by hitting its mainstay, the energy sector. The West has expected this to crush the country's economy.

But the sanctions have miscarried. Had they worked, they wouldn't have been ratcheted up on some occasions. More than that, the sanctions have stimulated Russia to start diversifying its economy, begin producing more competitive goods, and develop a range of new technologies.

The Russian government provides extensive support for exports of goods and services and has set up an agency called the Russian Export Center to coordinate it. This support involves both financial and non-financial measures and is a holistic policy that is both in the interests of Russia and of its trading partners.

These instruments enable Russian and foreign companies to build expert-level horizontal ties and enable the Russian government to successfully pursue priority economic objectives abroad.

A positive image of Russia can make foreign investors take a freer view of the Russian market. They won't be afraid of putting their money into Russian companies. Simultaneously, a favorable image of Russia will make it much easier for Russian companies to reach partnership agreements with foreign businesses.

The participation of Russian companies in exhibitions abroad is yet another effective soft power instrument. It gives exhibition visitors an idea of Russian flagship corporations and medium-sized enterprises and of investment opportunities in various Russian industries. It also stimulates many Russian

companies to extend their business beyond Russian borders and provides opportunities for foreign investment in Russia.

Businesses are a necessary and ideally depoliticized element of any society, and as such they have much larger soft power resources than governments. In other words, they possess effective means of winning confidence for their nations from foreign nations. Hence, Russian companies are very much in a position for activities that can stimulate a large inflow of foreign capital into their own country and win them business opportunities abroad.

Finnish Companies in Russia Have Come to Stay

Author: Jaana Rekolainen

CEO, Finnish-Russian Chamber of Commerce (FRCC); jaana.reko-lainen@svkk.fi

At a time of crisis, both Russia and the world economy are undoubtedly in need of a turn to growth. It is encouraging that after the decline in Finnish-Russian trade, the expectations of Finnish companies for the development of exports to Russia and their local activities in Russia have largely been met. According to Finnish customs statistics, Finnish exports have picked up after a three-year break.

Although the amount of Finnish exports subject to Russian counter-sanctions against the EU is not large compared to the overall amount, this is a big problem for our companies. The Finnish food industry, agriculture, and small enterprises in southeast Finland have suffered most from these counter-sanctions.

We seek to develop only long-term partnership schemes and projects independently of politics, but taking into account current trends in the Russian market.

Finnish companies operating in Russia have come to stay, and they hope to see the trade bans lifted in the foreseeable future. At the same time, considering that sanctions, economic instability in Russia, and problems with project financing have had a negative effect on half of the companies, the key principle of our new strategy is to work with Russia in accordance with the laws of business.

Niches and new opportunities for our scientific and technological alliance have appeared even in the course of the Russian import substitution program, accelerated by EU economic sanctions and Russian counter-sanctions, especially

against food imports. But Russian restrictions apply to only a small part of Finnish exports, whose larger part (95%) consists of machines, equipment, and wood products, which are not banned. Thus, sanctioned dairy and other products amount to only 5% of the total. But even with Russian protectionism and forced export adjustment, 31% of Finnish firms that have localized production in Russia have nevertheless been able to benefit from import substitution.

Finland, with its developed infrastructure, stable business environment, and corporate transparency, is indeed attractive to Russian companies. This is evident from the 2017 Slush tech startup event in Helsinki, the largest conference of its kind in Northern Europe. Russian startups were well represented at the conference, and Russian entrepreneurs showed an interest in working in Finland. But despite our efforts to attract investors from Russia, the amount of Russian investment in Finland is still not very large.

The modernization of the railway line between Russia and Finland as a major transit partner for cargo traffic to Asia and other continents is important for the EU as a whole, for Finnish industry and business, and for the economic development of the Arctic region.

In the opinion of Russian and Finnish researchers, business people, and government officials, a synergy of science, production, business, and government is one of the main drivers of innovative and technological activity for strengthening the business alliance. The experts believe that the prospects for Finnish business in Russia are encouraging, given a macroeconomic situation favorable to the growth of Finnish firms.

Russians in Andorra

Author: Yu. Korchagin

*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Kingdom of Spain, Ambassador Nonresident to the Principality of Andorra;
embrues@mid.ru*

For a long time, Andorra was unknown to the Russian public. As a matter of fact, it was not until the very beginning of the 20th century that this small principality in the Pyrenees, sandwiched between Spain and France, opened up

somewhat to Russia. This happened largely thanks to the trip by our well-known poet, artist and literary critic Maximilian Voloshin in the summer of 1901.

According to domestic and foreign art critics, Voloshin was indeed gifted by nature, above all with his insatiable interest in new countries, their people and their natural and cultural riches. It was his inborn curiosity that prompted Voloshin to set out on a foot tour of Andorra, which resulted in his travel notes about the principality that opened this unique Pyrenean state to the Russian public.

Moving on to the present, it should be noted that as of now, 516 Russians reside in Andorra on a permanent basis. Recently, their number has been growing by an average of 50 to 60 people a year. There are two Russian associations in the principality: the Russian House and Andorra Speaks Russian.

Naturally, we are taking care of our diaspora in Andorra even though the country is located not so close to Madrid and can only be reached by car. We organize meetings with our compatriots and invite them to our embassy events.

Our ties with the principality are dynamically developing and an active political dialogue is ongoing. In recent years, we have twice held consultations with the Andorran Foreign Ministry that on the Russian side were led by our deputy foreign minister.

We value Andorra's independence, the fact that it has not joined anti-Russian sanctions. The principality's leadership positively responds to most of our foreign policy initiatives and there is effective mutual support for candidacies in elections to UN agencies and other international organizations.

Our cultural and humanitarian contacts are successfully developing. In February 2013, the first Russian Culture Week in Andorra took place, organized by the Russian embassy in Spain with support from the Russian Ministry of Culture, the Russian Foreign Ministry and the Andorran government.

In 2016, together with Andorrans, for the first time in the history of our relations, we published a solid book in two languages - Catalan (the official language of Andorra) and Russian, featuring Voloshin's sketches and notes about Andorra, as well as his drawings and the drawings of his companions that were made during the trip. The book, which is devoted to Maximilian Voloshin, is the sixth in a series of essays by prominent foreigners about the principality published under the auspices of the Andorran Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This successfully concludes the four-year work on a wide-ranging Russian-Andorran cultural project - i.e., the publication of a collection of works by the Russian poet of the Silver

Age. We hope that this unique publication will soon be officially presented in Moscow.

Andorra Opens Up to the World

Author: Maria Ubach Font

Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Andorra

In the past six to seven years, our country has visibly changed - what's more, it has changed for various reasons and in various areas. Thus, changes for the better have taken place in a number of Andorra's economic sectors. After the serious economic crisis of the late 2000s, Andorra was confronted with a pressing need for change. Its two traditional sectors were clearly not enough anymore.

In addition, the principality is surrounded by the Pyrenees and our Andorran mentality has always been considered somewhat closed, conservative. But mentality also needs to be gradually changed. Step by step, we began to transition to a new stage in our history and build a modern, more open and diversified economy. Of course, tourism and commerce remain our basic sectors, our development engines. After all, on average up to 8 million foreign guests a year visit our country. Andorra has the reputation of a stable and calm country. We hope that this will be so also in the future. Stability and security coupled with beautiful nature and beautiful scenery attract many tourists to our country.

I would like to point out that our education system is very special. It includes three systems: Andorran, which was established in the 1980s and uses the Catalan, which is the official language, as well as the French and Spanish systems. There is a linguistic diversity in our education system. The language of instruction is not only French and Spanish but also English and Portuguese. Young people can earn a bachelor's degree in France and Spain. Residents of neighboring countries can study in Andorra. Each Andorran can choose any of these systems. This right is guaranteed by the state.

The literacy rate in our country is 100%. Primary and secondary education for Andorrans is mandatory and free of charge. The country also has its own state university, the University of Andorra, which was established in 1997.

We are continuing our efforts to reform the country in line with international rules and standards. We are working on closer rapprochement with international organizations, above all with the European Union. A draft association agreement with the EU is pending. This will make it possible for us to trade with all EU countries on an equal basis and tax free.

Andorran people support the authorities' initiatives to modernize the country and make the national economy more open and diversified. In this respect, we are working to harmonize and modernize our legal system.

Diplomatic relations between Andorra and Russia were established on June 13, 1995. So, in 2020 we will be marking their 25th anniversary. We take a positive view of our bilateral ties.

Andorra supports Russia in elections at various international organizations, as was the case in the election to the Executive Council of the World Tourism Organization, where we helped bring in a Russian candidate.

Still, a great deal has yet to be done. We would like Andorran tour operators to be more actively involved in Russia and to see more wide-ranging advertising of our capabilities to accommodate Russians on Andorran soil. We would like people in Russia to know more about Andorra, about our efforts to expand tourism opportunities and our country's cultural appeal, its museums, resorts, unique natural scenery, sports competitions, and even fishing.

"Russian Diplomacy Is a Diplomacy of Dignity"

Author: A. Maslov

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Hellenic Republic

The public and political situation in Greece is extremely favorable for the Russian diplomats. Our Greek partners and Greek public opinion are friendly to us. Russia and the Russians are genuinely liked here. In dealing with practical matters we don't have any political, diplomatic or organizational problems, the other side always understands our needs and is willing to do its best to achieve our joint purposes. The general constructive attitude of our Greek counterparts manifests

itself at all levels of government, and this helps us carry out our main task, comprehensive development of relations between Russia and Greece.

The Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, which was signed on June 30, 1993, is one of the first agreements to have been signed between the Russian Federation and Greece. It has lost none of its importance to this day and is a fundamental, guidance document. It reflects close friendship between our countries and ensures the continuity and long-term nature of this friendship and its immunity to political changes.

After a sharp decline in 2014-2015, Russian-Greek trade began to grow again, and in 2017, this became a stable trend.

The Greek government has said repeatedly that, to ensure its energy security, Europe needs to diversify not only its sources of energy but also the routes, through which this energy is delivered. For this reason, Greece supports the idea of a southern route for the delivery of gas from Russia to Europe, and an extension of Turkish Stream to Greece and then on to Italy could become such a route.

According to opinion polls, Greece is the country in Europe with the most positive attitude towards Russia.

The position of the Greek government on Crimea is determined by the centralized foreign policy of the EU. Undoubtedly, there is certain interest among Greek politicians, public figures and businesspeople and among some regions of Greece in building contacts with the Republic of Crimea. Representatives of Greece come to the annual Yalta International Economic Forum. It is expected that there will be Greek friends at this year's 4th YIEF on April 19-21 as well.

Moscow stands for equal cooperation among all countries and for respect for everyone's interests. One vivid example is a gold medal that the Democritus University of Thrace recently awarded to Russian President Putin for his outstanding contributions to regional and global stability.

The 15th International Information Security Research Consortium (IISRC) Conference

Welcoming remarks by Oleg Khramov, Deputy Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, Chairman of the RF Security Council Interagency Commission for Information Security, to conference organizers and guests

ALLOW ME to welcome the organizers, participants and guests of the 15th International Information Security Research Consortium (IISRC) Conference.

Established in April 2010, the consortium brings together information security experts representing 28 organizations from 18 countries.

Thanks to its activity in ensuring information security and developing an international information security system, your association has emerged within a short time span as an influential discussion platform. The consortium's opinion is reckoned with not only in research and expert circles but also in state and government agencies.

A comprehensive approach toward key information security issues has naturally become the calling card of consortium conferences.

I wish you successful and constructive work.

Session 1

Vladislav Sherstyuk, chief organizer of the International Information Security Research Consortium (IISRC), adviser to the Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, director of the Lomonosov Moscow State University Institute of Information Security Issues:

I WOULD LIKE to express our gratitude to the leadership of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for this opportunity to discuss topical international information security issues.

Our current goals: facilitating the reduction of international tensions; identifying the most pressing problems up for discussion in Garmisch in 2018; and discussing proposals with regard to various joint research projects.

It is important to single out two factors that have been impacting global information infrastructure in the context of interstate rivalry.

The first factor is the distrust that exists between certain states. In the context of modern international relations, it is becoming a sad tradition to make unsubstantiated charges of illegal acts being committed in the cyberspace.

The second factor is related to the specifics of the global ICT space that sets it apart from traditional spaces. These include the nonmaterial, virtual and nontransparent nature of ICT processes, as well as the difficulty of establishing facts and identifying the sources of incidents.

There is serious concern about the possibility of using ICT for meddling in the internal affairs of sovereign states. It is generally recognized that international law is the principal tool of countering such threats.

The year 2018 will be crucial. If we fail to reach agreement and create effective mechanisms to achieve negotiating results, we need not bother anymore: World War III would not be very far away.

We believe that it is important to proceed from the priority of maintaining international peace, security and stability in creating an accessible and peaceful global information space.

More and more states are developing ICT tools to use for military-political purposes. According to certain sources, over 60 countries, as well as quasi-state associations and non-state actors, are already members of the "club of cyber powers" or are about to join it. Today, the proliferation of cyber weapons is almost an uncontrolled process that is jeopardizing strategic stability.

Another important topic of our conference is the botnet of things; threats, forecasts for their development and possible mechanisms of countering these threats.

Oleg Syromolotov, *Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation*

ENSURING international information security has become part and parcel of the UN's political agenda and is among the most topical international security issues. At present, the insufficient level of cyber security is leading to the

stagnation of global development and having a negative impact on business activity. Scientific-technical achievements, which should stimulate economic development, cloud technology, "big data," the Internet of things, and artificial intelligence, are becoming hostage to the lack of internationally recognized standards of conduct in the digital sphere. Cyber crime is growing exponentially, including terrorist activity in the infospace. Nobody - neither citizens, nor business or the state - can feel safe in the digital environment.

The situation is compounded by the ongoing information arms race. ICT can trigger the outbreak of an interstate armed conflict. By means of provocation, it can be brought to the point of confrontation or even war.

Nevertheless, whatever the threats in the information space, Russia's role is not one of a passive observer. We have spent a lot of effort to ensure information security.

Throughout all these years, Russia has maintained not only its proactive role in IIS but also its position as a moral leader in this sphere. The number of countries sponsoring our projects is steadily growing. More and more countries are joining them. Step by step, Russia is winning the struggle for minds.

Another source of serious concern is that another serious division took place in the negotiating process on the issue of securing IIS in 2017. The world once again ended up divided in two camps. One camp includes the BRICS, SCO and CSTO countries, many Latin American, Asia-Pacific, African, and Middle East countries. Our common approach is based on the need to prevent the digital sphere from turning into an area of military-political confrontation. The opposite camp includes Western states that are persistently trying to impose on the rest of the world their own rules of their game that are beneficial only for themselves. Essentially, they seek to give complete freedom of action to technologically most developed states while all others are relegated to a subordinate, inferior role. This approach is unacceptable to us or to all other countries that share our convictions.

Under these circumstances, it is critical to consolidate positions with our allies. In January 2018, in my capacity as chairman, I am planning to hold the next meeting of the SCO group of experts on IIS to discuss the actual text of a new draft resolution on the aforementioned code of conduct.

Audrey Krutskikh, *Special Representative of the RF President for International Cooperation in Information Security*

THIS YEAR, the level of global information security has considerably declined, primarily due to the malicious use of ICT. The world has become more vulnerable.

Within the framework of the well-known London process, at the Delhi conference just a few weeks ago, all those who were opposed to using the UN as a negotiating platform reunited with the BRICS countries. Even though those were not all of the 25 members of the Group of Governmental Experts, it was a meeting of representatives of the most important countries.

We have accomplished some very interesting and productive work, with main players again setting the goal of reopening the UN track. Four countries are now working to save the cyber future of humankind. Today, we are optimistic that Russia will put forward a new resolution with regard to a code of conduct. If someone is against these rules, let them vote accordingly.

This is not an attempt to impose SCO or BRICS ideas but an invitation to a discussion. Russia will urge the international community to reconvene the group in 2019 to focus its efforts on working out an international code of conduct.

Vladislav Gasumyanov, *Vice President, head of the Corporate Security, Norilsk Nickel*

THIS CONFERENCE bears an imprint of such political and historic responsibility that if we fail to work out rules of the game - a code of conduct in cyberspace - then we will eventually face risks and problems comparable to a nuclear confrontation.

Norilsk Nickel, as a system-forming company that makes a significant contribution to the socioeconomic development of Russia's regions, is fully aware of the importance of the global process of ensuring information security on the national level.

Presentations on the issue of international information security over the past 20 years typically open with a warning that the broad dissemination of ICT involves the constantly growing risks of using it. Now it is no longer the time to issue warnings.

As it joined the IISRC, Norilsk Nickel relies on the authority of the expert community, sponsoring forward-looking initiatives at the landmark international platform in building an international security system.

We believe that anyone who uses ICT for purposes of unfair competition must be unequivocally condemned by the business community. We are closely watching what is going on in the international security sphere on the national level. We believe the positions that deserve understanding and support on the part of the entire business community should include the following: condemnation of the practice of using ICT for criminal, terrorist or military purposes; condemnation of any actions undermining trust in the stability, reliability and security of global ICT infrastructure; support for the efforts to develop warning, detection and assistance systems to deal with the consequences of cyber attacks and effective mechanisms for interaction between such systems; support for various forms of exchanging best practices in ensuring information security; support for efforts to foster information security culture.

Ilya Rogachev, *Director, Department for New Challenges and Threats, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*

A comprehensive approach toward issues related to responsibility and efforts to counter improper conduct in cyber space includes a certain aspect that is often overlooked - namely, criminal liability, which is a matter of primary importance. Within the framework of international law, countries failed to agree even on principles of the responsibility of states. The draft article of the International Law Commission that was developed back in the 1990s remained just that - a draft. Approaches in this area are very different.

After all is said and done, it is crucial to focus on elaborating forms of responsibility, concrete norms that would be applicable to this sphere. It seems to me that this path is more promising. However, a comprehensive approach also involves another aspect: an individual aspect. Hackers, people who act as state agencies have already been mentioned. They must bear individual criminal liability.

We have drafted a convention on criminal law that we propose signing under the aegis of the UN in order to regulate all these matters. I cannot say that there is

no regulation at all: It does not exist only on the global, universal level. There are regional conventions.

While agreeing that some rules of the game are necessary, our Western partners prefer a free hand. However, this is not some difference in philosophy or concept with regard to a specific issue. The problem is that we stand accused of every sin imaginable, including allegations that we do not want to catch hackers and that we use proxies for some cyber attacks, and so on and so forth. So far, none of our proposals to our Western partners has been put into practice. It has proved impossible to ensure any kind of regulation. This is a blatant case of double standards on the part of our Western colleagues.

Session 2

Sergey Korotkov, *Chief Adviser, RF Security Council Staff, Candidate of Science (Military Science)*

THE SCALE of cyber attacks and their consequences graphically demonstrate the destructive potential of ICT. This threat is a basis for the unity of all members of the international community in their understanding of the need to elaborate common rules of the responsible behavior of states in the information space. Unfortunately, there is a split in the national approaches of parties to the discussion regarding the content of such rules.

Some countries believe that the information space is a new theater of military operations. They propose that conflicts they regard as inevitable be dealt with on the basis of the unconditional applicability of the existing norms of international law. Considering that it is practically impossible to reliably determine the sources of cyber attacks, this approach in effect legalizes the "might is right" principle in conducting ICT operations against "undesirable" states.

Another approach, which is supported by Russia, among other countries, is noninterference in the internal affairs of other states and the unacceptability of the militarization of the information space where the so-called cyber arms race is unfolding. Groundless accusations of cyber attacks must not be used against states as a tool of political, economic or other forms of pressure. We believe that joint efforts should be directed at preventing conflict situations involving the use of ICT

by working out additional legal norms, taking the unique specifics of this technology into account.

If we fail to work out rules of the game - a code of conduct in cyberspace - then we will eventually face risks and problems comparable to a nuclear confrontation.

Konstantin Peschanenko, *General Staff of the Armed Forces of the RF*

ALL MEMBERS of the world community actively use information technologies to pursue and achieve their foreign policy aims. The majority of the developed countries have already adopted military-political documents on cyber security.

The problem created by state and non-state subjects is big enough to be defined as a threat of military-political nature to international peace and security that will inevitably destroy strategic stability, unleash armed conflicts and escalate them.

In full accordance with Russia's foreign policy course, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation is actively involved in foreign policy activities designed to prevent armed conflicts that might flare up due to aggressive and hostile use of information and communication technologies (ICT). We have already gained enough experience to say that Russia and the West are guided by very different opinions about the ways and means of ensuring international information security.

The West led by the United States is determined to go on with the so-called cyber containment policy carried out from a position of strength. It relies on the norms and principles of international law to assess the acts and punish those members of the world community who, according to their subjective assessments, violate the norms and rules of information space.

The road that the West has chosen to bring law and order into information space threatens Russia and other members of world community.

We suggest that cooperation between Russia and the United States in the sphere of international information security should begin with a discussion of an agreement on dangerous military activities in information space, by which we mean, in the broadest sense, the use of ICT by the armed forces of any state at peacetime that might damage the armed forces of another state or states.

Session 3

Non-State Actors in Present-Day Information Warfare

Alexander Smirnov, *Deputy Department Head at the Central Directorate for the Prevention of Extremism, Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, Candidate of Science (Law)*

LET ME base my points on the interpretation of the term "information warfare" as conflicts between states in the information space that involve the use of information to gain an advantage over one's adversary and simultaneously action to protect oneself from similar action by one's adversary.

Many of the speakers here have spoken about information operations in various countries. I would like to focus on non-state actors, namely terrorist organizations, hacker groups, mass media, bloggers, networks of investigative journalists and civil activists, various nongovernmental organizations, commercial organizations, and individuals.

Much has been said today about the difficulty of attribution of information attacks and the general difficulty of identifying actors in the information space. For example, one method of information warfare is what Western intelligence services term false flag operations - attacks designed to be falsely attributed to someone other than their actual executor. Obviously, the cyber space is an ideal environment for such operations.

Terrorist and extremist organizations make extensive use of information and communication technology (ICT). Islamic State (IS), an international terrorist organization that is banned in Russia, is the forefront user of ICT - it makes remarkably efficient use of the Internet for propaganda and recruitments. During the 2016 iteration of this conference, I focused on a change that IS had made to its propaganda - it had shifted its emphasis from appealing for hegras to the new caliphate to inciting "lone wolves" to carry out terrorist attacks in places where they were living with the use of anything they could lay their hands on - a car, a knife, an axe, a gun. Later, this was corroborated by evidence. We could see this plan not just sprout but bear poisonous fruit - I mean the attacks in Western Europe.

As the sensational WikiLeaks project has shown, the publication of large amounts of secret information is a hugely powerful means of information warfare in the big data era. WikiLeaks became a prototype for numerous campaigns of mudslinging, which is one of the main tactics of information warfare.

Individuals may play important roles in information warfare. One primarily thinks of Edward Snowden, a former employee of CIA and the National Security Agency. Classified information that Snowden leaked to two newspapers, The Guardian and The Washington Post, disclosed a comprehensive mechanism via which American intelligence spied on citizens of many countries. Snowden's revelations seriously undermined the United States' international reputation and stirred public debates on extents to which national security considerations justified restrictions on the freedom of information.

Session 4

A Path to the Digital Sovereignty of a Small State

Alexander Kurbatsky, *Belarusian State University*

WHAT KIND OF EDUCATION should modern young people receive? A digital world is coming into being. It possibly makes sense to start laying the framework for, as it were, a digital nation in order to give young people guidelines for the future. A correct development model for the country may become interesting for young states and applicable to them. There is a chance to organize an effective education system that meets the needs of the current digital transformation of society. The following logical chain can be used: a desire for digital sovereignty should lead to digital transformation.

The state is aware that the digital world faces increasingly serious problems of information security, and this makes the state seek to strengthen the country's information sovereignty.

We had some research and development centers, primarily for encryption and testing. Our education system tried to get into line with this model, and our institutions of higher education started training coders and testers. But serious

education was falling to pieces. Very soon, motivations disappeared for studying complex mathematical disciplines.

We need more effective education, and we have a chance to organize it - to set up new educational institutions.

Armen Oganesyanyan, *Editor-in-Chief of International Affairs*

YOUNG PEOPLE are so much immersed in the information environment that one has the impression they will not be able to cope with artificial intelligence, that they will just become appendages of AI. If young people idolize that sphere, they will not be able to control that technology. Moreover, they themselves will be controllable. That's what we are afraid of. Basic education in the humanities plays a tremendous role. We risk losing this generation - young people will simply withdraw into the digital world but will not cope with it. I would focus on potential ways of protecting our young people from getting dissolved in those technologies. They should be able to control them consciously and in compliance with certain moral criteria. Then we the older generation will be secure, and our children will be more secure. So, we should think in advance about what young people will give future generations. It is easy to fail to see human beings and the future behind digitization. We should think about ways of changing education systems without forgetting about the formation of people's character and about their moral development.

Yulia Tomilova, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*

THERE HAVE BEEN developments this year that have had considerable impacts on the construction of a global system of international security. First of all, the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Information Security (GGE) has failed to issue an outcome report.

Because of increasing instability and lack of mutual understanding in the information space, such measures are expected to play a significant role in boosting cooperation and defusing tensions between countries. The main objective of confidence-building measures is complete avoidance of methods such

as groundlessly accusing individual states of hostile use of ICT, staging provocations, and fanning up tensions.

Considerable progress on confidence-building in the ICT sphere has also been made in regional formats, with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe having always played the leading role.

The OSCE set up an informal working group in 2012 to develop confidence-building measures to reduce risks of ICT-caused conflicts. The Informal Working Group developed and approved its first set of these measures in 2012-2013.

Over the next three years, the group developed an extra set of confidence-building measures that were approved by the OSCE Permanent Council in 2016.

Paradoxical as it is, the OSCE's cybersecurity mechanism has been declining in effectiveness since 2016.

The Russian foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, aware of the need to change that situation, proposed the so-called Peace Cyberplan for the OSCE at the 2016 OSCE ministerial council - an annual meeting of OSCE foreign ministers, - a plan for making OSCE cyber security activities more fruitful.

We believe that putting this plan into practice would make the OSCE a more effective cyber security instrument and result in setting up a better-organized OSCE body for dealing with cyber security matters. It would be possible to launch this process in 2018.

Vladimir Ivanov, *EastWest Institute, United States*

WHAT IS HAPPENING in Russian-American relations is that we are continuing our dialogue, and we continue to meet. However, the domestic political conflict in the United States prevents officials or people who are directly involved in political decision-making from attending our meetings.

It seems to me that the anti-Russian hysteria in the United States, although it impedes dialogue, may in a while have a positive effect because, one way or another, the Americans have come to see their vulnerability. Until then, they eagerly interfered in the affairs of other countries from a position of strength, using soft power methods or via "color revolutions," and considered that normal. All other countries were forced to be on the defensive. Now, although there was zero evidence to support allegations of Russian meddling in the American presidential election, the Americans have got scared - they see their system cracking.

We speak different languages and belong to different cultures. That is an objective fact, one cannot ignore it. Moreover, the Americans have a different legal system. We have different ideas of what facts should look like and what can be proof that some country really is a source of danger and has been interfering in domestic political processes.

To date, the main result of our work has been an appeal for the inviolability of the base infrastructure of the Internet that was formulated on the sidelines of a conference in New Delhi. Neither state nor non-state actors must conduct or consciously allow activities that are intended to raise significant barriers to the general accessibility of the base structure of the Internet or disrupt its integrity, and thereby destabilize the cyber space. The public base infrastructure includes, among other things, domain names, confidence protocol certificates and communication cables.

Session 5

Influence of ICT Factors on Strategic Stability

Natalya Romashkina, *Center for International Security of the Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Russian Academy of Sciences*

BECAUSE of the problem of finding ways to normalize relations between Russia and the United States and ensuring global security, strategic stability issues are again put high on international agendas. It is no longer a matter of the military power of states but also a matter of their information and cyber resources. The information security of systems of command and control of nuclear weapons is the main source of anxiety.

Criteria for the evaluation of levels of strategic security and practical plans based on them should reflect both what are general characteristics of any historical period and characteristics of the specific time in which such planning is being done. The rapid development of ICT is a distinctive feature of today.

Analyses show that all factors undermining today's strategic stability stem from ICT. Present-day conflicts largely involve the use of new methods of espionage, ICT instruments such as Stuxnet and Flame malware for torpedoing critical national infrastructures, and sophisticated technologies for interfering in the internal affairs of countries by engineering "color revolutions" and carrying out other forms of destabilization. Experts estimate that more than 30 states possess so-called offensive cyber weapons.

This means that cyber threats should be seen as a separate factor of instability. Other threats are made more serious by the destructive use of ICT, the militarization of peaceful ICTs, and the potential of cyber and psychological weapons for easy, sudden and quick use.

Evaluations of strategic stability levels should be based on the broadest possible interpretations of cyber threats so that all aspects of security should be addressed.

Let me point out that the increasing use of ICT largely obliterates differences between information threats and cyber threats because the use of the Internet can produce maximum psychological effect. Moreover, even action against technical devices increasingly often produces psychological effect.

Problems relating to these threats belong to various elements of military organization and of military infrastructures. But cyber threats posed by nuclear weapons are undoubtedly the most serious of these problems.

In the context of all that I have said, I'd like to stress that procrastination is a great danger in dealing with strategic stability.

Audrey Krutskikh

I AM AFRAID I cannot quite understand what is meant by an unauthorized launch of a ballistic missile. There's zero chance of it. Everything is organized in such a way that there can be no unauthorized launch either in the United States or in North Korea or in Russia because, if such launches were even

hypothetically possible, we would not be here. The three agreements signed by Putin and Obama in Lausanne were instantly, without any in-depth analysis, described by the world media as the first measure in the history of civilization that prevented a cyber war. Because pushing a few buttons could have put an end to civilization. It is the determination of the political leadership of our country that we will not retreat to the Volga, that there will be no other 1941, and that we will not follow the biblical principle of turning the other cheek. Strategic stability is comprised of completely different factors, it is created daily, because humankind wants to survive.

Some Documents on Russian-Serbian Relations in the 19th and the Early 20th Century from the Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Empire

Author: O. Volkova

First Secretary, Department of History and Records, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; idd@mid.ru

THE HISTORY OF TIES between Russia and Serbia included two milestone dates in February 2018 - the 180th anniversary of consular relations and the 140th anniversary of full-scale diplomatic relations between the two countries. In February of this year, the Russian Foreign Ministry marked those events with an exhibition of copies of some of the documents from the Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Empire.

The Archives, which is a division of the Foreign Ministry's Department of History and Records, stores a large number of documents on diplomatic, economic, cultural, and religious relations between Russia and Serbia that span the period from the 18th to the early 20th century. The exhibition, held in the Foreign Ministry building, was a selection of some of the most interesting and important of them, documents dealing with various events from the First Serbian Uprising of 1804-1813 to World War I.

Diplomatic and military ties between Russia and Serbia became closer with the start of the Russo-Turkish War of 1806-1812. In 1807, at the request of a Serbian delegation that had come to St. Petersburg, Russia appointed its first diplomatic agent in Serbia.

Throughout the first half of the 19th century, Russia prioritized Serbia in its

Balkan policy. Russia consistently supported demands that Serbian leaders were putting before Turkey. In that period, marking definitive borders for the Principality of Serbia was essential for the restoration of Serbian statehood. Until then, there had existed no map of Serbia, but the latter needed such a map to be able to present Turkey with demands for returning Serb lands that it had seized. The items at the exhibition also included records of cultural and ecclesiastical relations between Russia and Serbia such as documents on the training of Serbian clergy in Russia and Russian assistance to Serbian monasteries and churches.

As the Russian Foreign Ministry is the depository of the international treaties of the Russian Empire, the exhibition showed some Russian-Serbian treaties. It was the first public display of those accords, of which the 1878 Treaty of Berlin was the most important one for Serbia and for Russian-Serbian relations.

Most of the documents at the exhibition dating from World War I dealt with Russian help to Serbia. Russia gave the Serbs political, economic and military support.

The documents shown at the exhibition were mainly records of landmarks in Russian-Serbian relations in the 19th and early 20th century. The Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Empire invites Russian and foreign researchers to its reading room to make more detailed studies of those and other documents.

The Untold Story of Anglo-Soviet Intelligence Cooperation During WWII

Author: Sergey Brilev, *Host, Saturday News, (TV channels Russia-1 and Russia-24), Candidate of Science (History); sbrilev@yahoo.com*

Bernard O'Connor, *British historian and writer*

This article is the first attempt to compare what one of us learned from the declassified documents of the British intelligence services at the National Archives in London's Kew Gardens, and the other found in the Comintern archives on Moscow's Bolshaya Dmitrovskaya street. We are certain that afterward we will be able to look anew on what has been written about them conscientiously (and often not) in America and Europe.

Anglo-Soviet cooperation between the intelligence services began in the perilous autumn of 1941, in the heat of a war that put the further independent existence of our two countries in doubt.

On July 12, 1941, Vast Is My Native Land was broadcast throughout Great Britain on the BBC. The British had initially intended to broadcast the Soviet national anthem, but in 1941 it was still the Communist Internationale. This would have been too much. Isaac Dunayevsky's music, based on the poem by Vasily Lebedev-Kumach, was therefore heard instead. It was, however, what was being marked that was so important: the signing of the Soviet-British treaty of cooperation in the war against Hitler. And this was also a revolution.

As early as the next month, the Soviet Union and United Kingdom would go even farther. At the initiative of the British, the first negotiations on cooperation in intelligence operations were held in Moscow in August 1941. There had never been such an agreement before, nor has there been one since.

Regardless of how they were in the past, they are different now. Since the corresponding documents have fortunately been declassified, it is clear that cooperation between the intelligence services began in the perilous autumn of 1941, in the heat of a war that put the further independent existence of our two countries in doubt. This Anglo-Soviet cooperation was summed up in the statement "Cooperation is not only desirable and feasible, it is vital if we are to achieve our common goal of defeating the enemy."

In Soviet correspondence, the British were represented by the code name Sect. Officially, they were referred to as the Special Operations Executive (SOE), immortalized in British military history under that abbreviation. We too shall use it in this article. It was a unique symbiotic blending of several agencies, but it was ultimately subordinate to the Ministry of Economic Warfare.

It is worth noting that today, this very unusual organization is often given scant attention even by Western authors. It was of course cobbled together by Chamberlain and Churchill so hastily that it never enjoyed the authority of His Majesty's regular intelligence services.

During the war years, the SOE supplied their Soviet arrivals with new identification cards, ration coupons, and so on. They were also issued clothing suitable for missions in their respective countries; weapons; medical supplies; and in some cases, radios. Nevertheless, little was known about what happened to them after they were sent to the front lines, except for newspaper articles and radio

transmissions intercepted and deciphered at the now famous Bletchley Park. Much more about them became known after the war.

We have only just begun to fill in this blank space in the history of the Second World War. We hope that with time, both the Foreign Intelligence Service in Russia and MI6 in Britain will allow us to reveal even more. It is time this should be done. Together, we believe that cross analysis of the open records will leave little to piece together. The self-sacrifice of the women whose stories we have already told is such that what could justify keeping it secret any longer?

An Era of Change Through the Eyes of the Russian Diplomat L.V. Urusov

Author: M. Sorokina

Chair, Department of History of the Russian Diaspora, the Alexander Solzhenitsyn Center for the Study of the Russian Diaspora, Candidate of Science (History); msorokina@gmail.com

HISTORICAL EVENTS frequently have consequences that their architects would never have predicted. It is paradoxical, but thanks to the revolutionary events of October 1917 and the subsequent dispersion of Russians around the world, the Russian reader has now acquired a most interesting collection of diaries, memoirs, and correspondence - a unique worldwide emigre archive library.

Last year saw the publication of the diaries of the diplomat Prince Lev Vladimirovich Urusov (1877-1933), an event of great interest not only to academics but to anyone interested in history. The RF Ministry of Foreign Affairs, its Department of History and Records, and the Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Empire deliberately timed the work's release to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Prince Urusov's diaries cover the period of 1914-1917 and, in the words of a professional diplomat and a keenly observant man of the times, recount the historical events that turned out to be monumental for Russia.

The diaries of Prince Urusov, which he kept mainly in Japan, are a unique source both for studying the history of Russian diplomacy in the Far East and for understanding how the important events of world history were reflected and transformed in the Russian diplomat's consciousness. They are notably

distinguished by the author's powerfully emotional writing - unusual for a representative of the diplomatic community.

It is even more noteworthy that Prince Urusov represented Russia in the International Olympic Committee and retained his membership in the IOC until 1933.

The Japanese part of Prince Urusov's diaries is the one most noteworthy, not only for the number of years he spent living there but also for the magnitude of the historic events in which he found himself participating. Having been assigned to the diplomatic service in Japan, Urusov saw his work at the embassy as a mission to further the geopolitical, economic, and cultural interests of Russia and to expand its influence in the Far East. However, events took a different course. In Tokyo, Urusov had to work during the period when the historical fate of the Russian Empire was coming to its tragic and bloody end, along with those of many of its subjects.

A few words are in order here on the tremendous work done by the staff at the Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Empire to prepare Urusov's writings for publication. Editing the text of an almost 1,000-page manuscript undoubtedly required many years of painstaking effort by the entire staff and is worthy of the deepest respect.

The book contains beautiful photographs from the Archives' collection, along with an annotated index of names that help guide the reader. Previously, the Foreign Ministry's Department of History and Records compiled and published a biographical dictionary of purged diplomats. It would seem it is now time to give Russian diplomats who were forced to emigrate their due. Not so long ago, the grass of oblivion threatened to destroy the memory of many Russians who ended their days abroad, but time and the efforts of their descendants gradually returned their names, deeds, and manuscripts to us.

Russia and the Middle East: 100 Years of Cooperation

Author: S. Filatov

Commentator for International Affairs; serfilatov@mail.ru

ALEXEY VASILIEV, Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), who has spent his entire professional and academic life studying the Near and Middle East, has published a new book. Over the years, he has traveled extensively in this vast region of the world, first as a correspondent of the Soviet newspaper Pravda and then as director of the Institute for African Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and has had numerous meetings with both representatives of Middle Eastern countries and leading Russian Arabists and Orientalists. His latest book is the product of this endeavor.

Vasiliev's monograph includes a wide range of historical materials, numerous conversations with well-known foreign affairs experts, and a detailed account, in a kind of reportage style, of the tensest moments in the history of the Middle East witnessed by the author as a journalist in the last few decades. His personal impressions and assessments are intertwined with the views of politicians, diplomats, historians, and business-people.

Some of the author's conclusions may be disputed, because the book is very personal. But this makes it all the more interesting as it is full of facts, unique details, and reflections. It is a book at the intersection of scientific research, political reporting, author's interviews, and opinion journalism.

The book is full of live conversations with many people, and here is an episode from one of them: "When I asked Anatoly Gromyko, the son of the long-serving Soviet foreign minister who held this office for more than a quarter-century, what event had most influenced the thinking of his father and other Soviet leaders, the answer was June 22, 1941.

Vasiliev pays a great deal of attention to the events in Egypt and around it, and this is not surprising, because that was when he was a staff correspondent for Pravda newspaper in Cairo. He presents a mass of very interesting facts about the life of Egypt itself and the two Arab-Israeli wars of that period.

I am sure this book is not only of great interest to specialists, experts, Orientalists, and Arabists, but also a storehouse of information that will interest young people. Or, to put it another way, it is a kind of textbook that includes both

facts, events, and living people who have taken part in the century-long development of relations between our country and the states and nations of the Near and Middle East.

This major work commands great respect.

Russia's Ethnic Policy: Historical Experience and the Current State

Author: Viktoria Ukolova, *Professor, Distinguished Scholar of the Russian Federation, Doctor of Science (History);* viul944@rambler.ru

Pavel Shkarenkov, *Professor, Deputy Rector for Continuing Education, Russian State University for the Humanities, Doctor of Science (History);* chkarenkov@mail.ru

ETHNIC POLICY is one of the main conditions for strengthening Russia's statehood and a key domestic stability and security factor for the country. Russia's successful development in the 21st century depends on whether it pursues an effective ethnic policy at home and firmly asserts its national interests in the international arena. Ways of ethnic policy optimization are discussed at government level and at scholarly and political forums. There are heated debates on ethnic issues in the media and on the Internet.

Professor Yury Bulatov, D. Sc. (Hist.), dean of the School of International Relations of the MGIMO University of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has been making comments on ethnic policy on Radio of Russia that aroused great interest among listeners. Bulatov, who is a well-known expert on international relations, spoke on complicated ethnic policy issues in the radio station's "Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn" (International Life) program in a simple and understandable but profoundly substantiated way. The popularity of his broadcasts has motivated him to summarize them in his book "Thoughts on Russia's Ethnic Policy," supplementing his points with theoretical reflections and academic assessments.

The book doesn't have a preface as such. Instead, it opens with a brief exposition of Russia's current domestic ethnic policy and a summary of debates about it. Before taking up specific issues, Bulatov explains concepts and terms

knowledge of which is essential for comprehending the range of problems he deals with.

If policy in general is an art of government and a set of mechanisms for the achievement and maintenance of power, ethnic policy is part of this general policy and a skill to unify various ethnic groups and keep them together as a single organism, in the meantime guaranteeing each of them its rights and enabling each of them to preserve and use its language and maintain its cultural identity.

To form a concept of the ethnic policy of Russia, it is important to understand whether its ethnic tolerance can comply with the assertion of Russian national identity. Bulatov argues that this is possible because Russia is not only a multiethnic state but also a self-sufficient, unique civilization with its own logic of development. Russian identity does not only have ethnic, geographical, or governmental origins. It is primarily based on a specific set of values, in a sense being an ideocratic identity that is organically linked to Orthodox Christianity.

The book contains profound reflections on the meanings of the terms "people," "ethnos," and "nation." There are no hard-and-fast definitions in today's social science, but that makes Bulatov's thoughts about these concepts even more interesting.

Bulatov sees the people of Ukraine as the country's determining historical and political force and assumes that they can choose a progressive path of development. Ukraine's population is multiethnic. The multiethnic people of Ukraine are the main source of power in the country and the vehicle of state sovereignty, Bulatov argues.

Much of the book analyzes the ethnic policy of the Russian Empire. Throughout the Soviet period, the Russian Empire was dubbed a "prison of peoples."

The history of Russia is a history of practically ceaseless territorial expansion, a process in which peoples speaking different languages, having different cultures, and professing different religions were incorporated into the Russian state. Some of the newly acquired territories had been independent states before becoming parts of Russia. Russia's expansion took different forms. Some lands joined Russia voluntarily, being forced to do so by specific historical circumstances. Others were conquered by armed force. As a result, Russia became the world's largest country, a state holding the central position in Eurasia with a consequent geopolitical mission of maintaining an equilibrium between East and West.

Summing up, Bulatov argues that, on the whole, the Russian Empire pursued a successful ethnic policy with regard to the population of the empire itself, and that

it was in the territories that lay outside Russia's civilizational boundaries that most of the failures occurred. The empire pursued a pragmatic ethnic policy that had chiefly political objectives. It was a paternalistic policy, which suited local elites. Various ethnic groups got along with central authority and with one another.

Bulatov, who has had a teaching career of more than 20 years, believes that the work of imbuing young people with patriotic ideals should be diversified and take account of the needs of various groups of youth. Russia needs "patriotic professionals," people capable of work that would bring about progress in our country.