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“No Positive Changes in Washington’s Policy Toward Russia”

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These U.S. actions have highlighted an acute problem. The U.S. ignores not only international law per se but also its obligations as the host of the UN headquarters that signed a relevant agreement in 1947. I can't recall a single instance when Washington took a stance ignoring self-evident things to such an extent. That is a new U.S. anti-record in terms of the country's positioning in the international arena.

In the future, the U.S. can be expected to deliberately impede the normal political process and UN activity, especially the participation of countries that are considered Washington's geopolitical opponents, since the stance taken by those countries does not suit the U.S. side.

Russia is not the only country encountering defiant manifestations of U.S. arrogance, which is indecent and shameful.

As far as the visa war is concerned, it is ongoing, and it was unleashed by the U.S. Barring Russian representatives from attending a Fort Ross Dialogue conference is the most outrageous recent case. There have been recurring problems with long-term assignments to Russian embassies and general consulates in the U.S. The same applies to short-term business trips.

Lavrov has repeatedly addressed this issue, including from the General Assembly rostrum. I believe everyone heard everything. In my opinion, the response from the UN Secretariat could have been more cogent.

Mueller's investigation did not produce the effect that certain circles counted on – not only in Washington but also in some other capitals. We always knew that that would in fact be the case since it was absolutely impossible to dig up anything to substantiate the totally idiotic and wild allegations of collusion with Russia and Russia's meddling in the U.S.'s domestic processes.

I think that the generally negative, “feverish” approach toward what is happening in present-day Russian politics, as well as in Russia's foreign policy, has to a very large extent become an inalienable part of U.S. political thinking, permeating the fabric of what is going on in present-day Washington.

The U.S. is ignoring Russia's calls to use the relevant mechanism as part of the Council of Europe Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons and exchange U.S. citizens who are serving their prison sentences in Russia (about 20) for our compatriots. As far as retaliatory measures are concerned, Russia is rigorously guided by the norms of international law and follows its own laws. The methods that are used by the Americans are unacceptable to us. Only the U.S. system with its anything-goes approach and its fixation on “made to order” situations can indulge in such practices.

The idea of creating a new algorithm for resolving regional problems in the Middle East is just floating through the air. We are working in parallel. Our approach is largely similar to Iran's ideas.

Unfortunately, the U.S. and influential countries in the region do not fully understand that. They believe that the policy of maximum pressure (as they have called it) will produce results: Iran will downgrade its security level, accepting a significant worsening of conditions on its nuclear program.

We are urging our U.S. counterparts not to waste any more time. There is almost no time left. It is important at the very least to understand what they are going to do with that treaty. Our stance is well

known: We are in favor of extending it. A new term is subject to discussion and we are willing to show flexibility there.

To understand what will happen next, it is essential to figure out the approach of our U.S. and other NATO counterparts. As for revealing what could be described as our own work in progress in that area or presenting our system of priorities and preferences to our opponents, that basically means weakening our own position.

There is an expression in English: “poker face.” It refers to a person whose face shows no emotion or intention when he is holding his cards, so as not to give any indication to the opposite side as to how strong his position is. We need to maintain a poker face when talking to our opponents.

Russian-Chinese Relations: A New Historical Stage of Development

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There have been various periods in the history of bilateral contacts, but today we can confidently say that the course toward good-neighborliness, friendship and cooperation has prevailed. The past three decades have been particularly successful. Our countries have not only restored the partnership traditions of the 1950s but also have given a new quality to their relations.

Landmarks along this path include the full normalization of bilateral ties in 1989, the establishment of a strategic partnership in 1996, the signing of the Treaty on Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation in 2001, the creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the settlement of a border dispute and taking comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation to a new level.

Currently, Russian-Chinese relations are stable and robust and are rightly regarded as the best in their history. They are based on the solid foundation of mutual respect and noninterference in each other's domestic affairs, precluding elements of political expediency in bilateral dialogue.

At the same time, our countries do not rest on their laurels and are constantly working to expand their dialogue, giving it a new dimension.

Energy is the most important area of large-scale long-term cooperation. In the past 10 years, Russian companies have exported over 300 million tons of oil, 55 million tons of oil products, 150 million tons of coal, and 20 billion kWh of electricity to China.

Amid stiffening global competition for technological leadership, the innovation vector is emerging as a new driving force of Russian-Chinese partnership.

However, as Russia and its Chinese friends repeatedly stress, it is extremely important to maintain the UN's leading role in global governance, ensure the rule of international law, build interstate relations on principles of mutual respect and consideration for each other's interests, justice, mutually beneficial cooperation, noninterference in each other's internal affairs, and the renunciation of confrontation and conflicts.

As our countries are preparing to mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, they have accumulated extensive experience and have put forward even more ambitious goals. Russian-Chinese relations are entering a new stage of development. Their further deepening and expansion in all areas is the order of the day, responding to the interests of both nations, contributing to regional and global security and stability and helping put the ideals of lasting peace and sustainable development into action.

The U.S. in Afghanistan: From Military-Political Euphoria to the Dilemma of Troop Withdrawal

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THE SEIZURE OF POWER in Afghanistan by the Mujahiddin (“warriors of faith”), in 1992, opened a new but certainly not peaceful chapter in the modern history of the country.

In 1996, in the wake of the popular disappointment with the rule of these “warriors of faith” (with whom the Taliban were connected not only by an ideological umbilical cord, but by some active participants), the Taliban seized Kabul and usurped power with direct support from Pakistan.

In terms of foreign policy, the new powers in Kabul set a course to provide widespread support for Muslim extremist elements. A concrete example of this was the protection granted to the leader of al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden.

The territory under control of the Taliban basically became an international haven for terrorism, a center of the drug trade, and a launchpad for spreading instability in the region and beyond. The evolving situation began to pose increasing threats to security not only in the region (primarily in Central Asia) but to international stability.

FROM THE VERY OUTSET, the aim of the U.S. strategy within the post-Soviet expanse was to counteract any attempt by Moscow to strengthen its foreign policy footing in the new international setting. One of its specific efforts in this regard was the strategic undermining of Russia’s historical ties with neighboring countries, including those in Central Asia. Having included this region in the sphere of its national interests, the American leadership set out to actively develop ways to establish a long-term presence there, keeping a watchful eye on the situation in neighboring Afghanistan as well.

Washington’s recent show of tactical interest by working to launch, in cooperation with Russia, an intra-Afghan dialogue can hardly be seen as a fundamental exception. The almost 20 years of American involvement in Afghanistan (including NATO’s participation) has gone through various stages.

ALONG with the new occupant of the White House came a new vision for the American presence in Afghanistan. But the forthcoming strategy was announced only in August of 2017. The rather long period of its development was caused, among other things, by internal expert disagreements on the future of the U.S. military-political operation.

While the U.S. urged Pakistan and (especially) India to more actively promote Afghan reconciliation, it harshly criticized Islamabad for supporting groups hostile to Kabul. Subsequently, the Americans applied additional pressure on Pakistan to abandon, or at least sharply reduce its support of the Taliban. However, even this did not have the desired effect.

The new American road map has caused mixed reaction in various segments of the Afghan elite as well as in the expert community. The Taliban leadership, which has again demanded a complete and unconditional withdrawal of American troops from the country, continues to have a place at the table.

Washington, which urgently needs concrete support for its representative from other states (the top priorities being Russia and China), is forced to realize the importance of external, especially regional, aspects of facilitating the reconciliation process between the main military-political and ideological

opponents in Afghanistan. This is the circumstance that has prompted the American side to consult with other states, including the Russian Federation, in the course of its negotiations with the Taliban.

THE POSITION OF RUSSIA is based on the need to achieve a national consensus in Afghanistan, an integral part of which is a consensus among all its political forces that there is no military solution to the conflict. The only possible path to regulate the situation is through political and diplomatic means based on negotiations between the Afghan sides and a complete withdrawal of foreign troops. Proceeding from this premise, Moscow has been playing an active role for quite a long time now to ensure preconditions for intra-Afghan negotiations by gradually bringing the sides' positions closer together.

Recent events in and around the Afghan political arena do not bode well at all. President Trump interrupted the negotiations in Doha, citing the death of an American soldier in another terrorist attack in Kabul. In Afghanistan as a whole, including its northern regions, the Taliban's combat operations have intensified. The current political elite of the country remain in a state of disarray and confrontation among themselves.

In the context of the latest impasse, the regional component of a solution to the Afghan problem is substantially growing. The roles of Russia and China are particularly crucial, as without their assistance this complex knot cannot be unraveled.

Can North Korean Nuclear Missile Crisis Be Resolved?

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TENSION around the Korean Peninsula is one of the main threats to international security. North Korea's acquisition of nuclear and missile weapon systems has become a new serious factor in global strategic stability. Previously, during the cold war era, the only tool of control over strategic weapons was the relationship between Moscow and Washington. At present, the international situation has radically changed. New nuclear powers – India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea – regardless of whether or not the original five members of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) acknowledge them as such, are not under the control of either Washington or Moscow or Beijing: they act at their own discretion, as they see fit.

The current polycentrism of nuclear proliferation is based on regional rivalry. India has created its nuclear arsenal as a counterweight to China; Pakistan, as a counterweight to India; and Israel, as a shield against Arab states. None of these states, however, are seeking global supremacy and so their nuclear status is taken by the world community more or less in stride.

The North Korea case is different. Unlike the Indian-Pakistani or Arab-Israeli confrontation, the U.S. has been involved in the inter-Korean confrontation as a party to the 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty with South Korea. So originally, Pyongyang's nuclear missile program was not aimed against its southern neighbor but was designed as a protective shield against a potential U.S. strike in a possible inter-Korean war.

When North Korea acquired intercontinental ballistic missiles in the mid2010s, it became the third country in the world (after China and Russia) that could deliver a strike against the U.S.'s continental territory, which drastically changed the situation.

That caused Washington to push toward North Korea's "denuclearization" – in contrast to the U.S.'s rather lenient view of nuclear preparations by India and Pakistan, not to mention Israel.

PYONGYANG'S NUCLEAR MISSILE program is dangerous, but not only for Washington. North Korea's nuclear status substantially undermines the entire current nuclear nonproliferation system.

North Korea's nuclear missile program is also affecting the positions of its neighbors in the region. Few people remember that Seoul, not Pyongyang, was the first to launch a nuclear military project on the Korean Peninsula in 1970. That program could easily be reactivated. Japan and Taiwan also have all the essential elements to develop their own nuclear weapons. It cannot be ruled out that if the U.S. pulls out of the bilateral "nuclear umbrella" agreement with one of its allies in Asia that would trigger a chain reaction where the acquisition of nuclear weapons by one state would lead its neighbors to launch similar programs. The likelihood of such weapons falling into the hands of terrorist organizations, such as ISIS, also increases.

THE NUCLEAR PROBLEM on the Korean Peninsula has a direct bearing on Russia. It is not only that Pyongyang is disrupting the nonproliferation regime. North Korea's nuclear and missile test facilities are located a couple hundred kilometers from the Russian border. That does not suit us. We need neither nuclear nor missile tests near our borders. Nor do we need any saber-rattling from anywhere.

THE PROBLEM is too serious to be handled in a gung-ho way, to be resolved in one fell swoop. But that is exactly what the U.S. establishment, including Trump as the most zealous advocate of its interests, is insisting on.

during his first summit with the North Korean leader in June 2018 in Singapore, Trump sought primarily to boost his own ratings, as well as the ratings of his Republican Party ahead of the November 2018 congressional elections in the U.S., telling the Americans, spooked by North Korea's nuclear missile program, that former U.S. president Barack Obama could do nothing about that threat, but he, Trump, even though he hated it, met and came to terms with the "rocket man" from Pyongyang. And he achieved his goal: Nobody asked what the deal was, exactly, and as a matter of fact, it was a non-deal. What was important about Singapore for the American voter was the TV picture: President Trump "came, saw and conquered," and that image worked at the time.

PYONGYANG needs security guarantees, and it seems to be willing to discuss a system of multilateral guarantees. Not surprisingly, after four summits with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, three with [South Korean President] Moon Jae-in and two and half with Trump (counting the handshake in Panmunjom), in April, Kim Jong-un went to Vladivostok for a meeting with Vladimir Putin and then began to talk about a summit with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Essentially, the idea is to restore in some form or other the six-party format to discuss current problems and develop a system of guarantees.

THE NORTH KOREAN nuclear dossier is one of the few international political issues on which there is a near consensus among the main players.

Nevertheless, the situation around North Korea's nuclear program is not an impasse that cannot be resolved. Right now, the task is to ensure that the consensus of all parties concerned – the U.S., Russia, China, South Korea, and Japan – on the military aspect of North Korea's nuclear program lead to active concerted efforts on a practical level.

Progress on the nuclear problem on the Korean Peninsula is crucial to the future of not only Northeast Asia but also the entire Asia-Pacific region, as well as global processes.

Islamic Maximalism and Minimalism: Political Processes in the Middle East and Africa

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THE MEMORY of the events of the 1990s in Egypt, one of the biggest African (or, rather, Afro-Asian) states, is very much alive. Having accepted “moderate Islamists,” the legal wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, Egyptian leaders were consistently fighting the “Islamic terrorist underground,” viz. the same Muslim Brotherhood that preached radical ideas and was conspiring against the state. It was at that time that Muslim Brotherhood became an umbrella term for very different groups and cells (there were over 100 of them within the Egyptian borders). Not united organizationally, they were tied together by a widened and modernized ideology of jihad dating back to the Middle Ages.

Today, jihad is the main ideological instrument of radical Islamic theoreticians and of “Islamic revolutionaries” who rely on terror to realize their theories. Jihad is used as an instrument of moral and ethical brainwashing to polarize, ideologically and politically, Islamic jamaats, local elites and the Muslim ummah (the Islamic religious community) as a whole.

Jihad is a set of doctrines and practices focused on violence and wars. There are its wider interpretations and practices spread to certain nonmilitary spheres – education, science, diplomacy, international policy and economics, and other spheres chosen randomly and pragmatically.

Externally, Islam remained a united ideological system¹; there appeared, however, two poles in it that, in the course of time, developed into two ideological platforms, the supporters of which had fundamentally different ideas about social reality and the scopes of the basic notions of Islam – khakk (truth) and adl (justice).

Islamic communities of certain states allow polarization of the elites and the division of Islamic community (ummah) into a systemic opposition loyal to the state and an “uncompromising” anti-state opposition.

Starting with September 2001, the inner Islamic conflict cropped up as an open armed confrontation between the politicized part of Islamic radicals (maximalists) and the conventional West initiated, to a great extent, by the Muslims. The terrorist attack of 9/11 made a “compromise by default” between maximalists and minimalists essentially impossible.

American invasion of Afghanistan and military operations that removed the secular regimes of Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Muammar Qaddafi in Libya followed; the riots of the opposition in 2011-2012 during the Arab Spring were supported by external forces that removed the secular political regimes in Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen. The armed crises in Yemen, Syria and Iraq and other events pushed the Arab-Islamic world into what is called “controlled chaos” or “political criticality” according to the odious geopolitical doctrine by Steven Mann [Mann, 1992].

Very different expert assessments of how Islam should treat the events of the Arab Spring are a symptom of a profound “structural crisis” of the entire Islamic community (not only of its spiritual elite): every Muslim should join one of the opposite sides on his own. This far from easy choice causes a cognitive dissonance in the minds of common people and pushes the Islamic community into the state of liminality and search for fundamentally new forms of Islamic political existence.

This analysis applied to any Muslim country in any region of the Islamic area will reveal a similar trend: the growing number and increasing activeness of maximalists ready to political actions both by peaceful and violent means.

Minimalists, on the other hand, become even more passive against the background of weaker state power, neocolonialist penetration into the internal affairs of African states hit by the crisis and, most of all, by the wide application of all sorts of the theory of jihad to justify not only armed struggle against non-Muslims and Muslims but also the entire range of the ummah's re-Islamization efforts, including the sphere of education.

Pan-Africanism as a Trend of African Regionalism

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THE SIGNIFICANT NUMBER of problems that confront the African states today, such as border conflicts, clan politics, the difficult choice of foreign policies, and the struggle for recognition on the international arena, is rooted in the continent's colonial past.

The ideas of national identity, self-assertion and independence were born in the late 19th century together with a new social stratum – the national intelligentsia. It was in this milieu that the prevailing ideas about the “inferiority” of Africans and their exclusion from history were revised; people started talking about the highly specific nature and special path of the African people, who not only could but should occupy a worthy place in the family of peoples [1, p. 95].

Pan-Africanism started as a philosophy that later acquired the hues of a political concept.

The highly complicated nature of African regionalism is explained by the fact that the traditional approaches cannot or can hardly be applied to the African countries. Africa's regional problems have become global because of the unstable social and economic situation, political and clan clashes and the fact that the continent is gradually becoming a platform of terrorism, drug trafficking and epidemics.

African regionalism of our days is stagnating because of disagreements among African leaders, different economic levels and an absence of open regional cooperation. Each of the African states interprets the concept of regionalism in its own interests and within its own borders.

Of high importance is the fact that pan-Africanism is present in three forms: cultural, economic and political.

Despite the division of pan-Africanism into several types, it is impossible to discuss the concept's political aspect separately from the economic one. Economically, regionalism unites very different countries with highly varied levels of socioeconomic and institutional development in order to widen their economic possibilities, help them adequately respond to the globalization through a dialogue, cooperation, integration, and joint use of economic wealth.

The African Renaissance Doctrine (ARD) was the starting point of Africa's engagement with world economy. It was formulated in 1997 by the then South African President Thabo Mbeki at a conference on attraction of investments to Africa held in the United States.

It should be said, however, that the doctrine was not generally welcomed either in the SAR or across the continent mainly because it was not clear who could be called an African and, therefore, had the right to join diasporas. Today, there are 57 states on the continents and about 8,000 different peoples and ethnicities.

The academic community looks at the African Renaissance as an African response to unfolding globalization. On the one hand, African states take certain measures to resolve their problems; on the

other, an interest in their natural resources is rising [1]. The ideological component of novelties and the development vectors likewise are based on pan-Africanism.

Today, regionalism dominates the efforts of African states to create multilateral institutions to develop and consolidate their security through economic cooperation and political coordination. In the system of a multitude of states that were sticking to their state borders and national sovereignties, regionalism was seen as a compromise between nationalism and super-nationalism. Starting with the 1960s, the African countries have been talking about close economic cooperation as highly important for their active growth, removal of the barriers on the road of their political development and upgrading the continent's competitiveness on the world market.

Sustainable Development as a Common Denominator

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT is a theme throughout history. Today, it has acquired a new meaning, a new scope and a new content: the cardinal shifts in world economy, world society and world politics have made realization of the sustainable development priorities an imperative.

THE NEW CENTURY created an impression or, at least, bred hopes of a post-Cold War world of mutually acceptable modus vivendi based on tolerance and cooperation. The events, however, followed the worst of scenarios complete with mounting confrontation, politically motivated sanctions, trade wars and, as the highest point, large-scale mystifications and manipulations with public opinion described by the term "post-truth."

The latest annual report of the World Economic Forum "The Global Risks Report 2018" is telling: first, global risks have multiplied to an extent that can no longer be ignored. Second, we can expect a much stronger destructive effect and much more obvious impact of "economic confrontations/frictions between major powers; erosion of multilateral trading rules and agreements; geopolitical confrontations/frictions between major powers; cyber-attacks and theft of data/money; populist and nativist agendas"; aggressive media campaigns and proliferation of "fake news"; negative effects of social polarization and infringements on identities.

It goes without saying that the process should be correlated with the challenges, problems and risks of the far from simple global transition fraught with many surprises at later stages. This is a process of epochal importance which makes disagreements and conflicts practically inevitable. There are historical analogies yet there is no adequate precedence of similar scopes and deepness. As could be expected, the ongoing transformation is painful; it is fraught with clashes between the interests of the leading powers, society-forming factions and sociopolitical movements of all sorts. In other words, the world has entered the minefield of highly dangerous risks, the fact confirmed by the report of the Davos Forum quoted above.

After persistently looking for common points with representatives of the collective West, Russia experienced fully the futility of its efforts along the Afghan and Middle Eastern tracks. The coalitions of the United States and its allies preferred to act separately even when the world became aware of ISIS, a terrorist monster. There is no united front, while factionalism and squabbles leave space for terrorism to regenerate. The price of antiterrorist struggle is much higher, or even exorbitant, than the cost of coordinated efforts.

IT TURNED OUT, however, that common sense was not dissolved in the flows of post-truth and that the humanistic principles echo in different segments of international community within the emerging global civil society. The year 2015 marked a U-turn in the process of seeking a historic consensus even though mainly verbal so far. It took shape around the idea of sustainable development and its extensive interpretation, a paradox of sorts in view of incompatibility of this idea with many ideological and political, frequently opposite or even mutually exclusive, formulas.

WE SHOULD NOT accept the sustainable development concept and its original meaning at face value. This is an ideal of sorts, a perspective, not the tested standard accepted once and for all. This is a process of realization of certain imperatives and priorities to avoid degradation of the environment, the social context, economic deformations and imbalances, extremes in cyclical deviations of world economy, excesses of wide-scale suppression or attempts at suppression of identity through enforced assimilation, among other things.

The range of problems related to the sustainable development concept should find its worthy place within the SCO, BRICS and the Eurasian Economic Union. The sustainable development range of problems will enrich our foreign policy discourse; will give Russian diplomacy a chance to generate a wide positive response on the international arena, raise our prestige as one of the great powers that defends the common interests of the world community. This will serve a convincing antithesis to those who absolutize the national interest as opposed to the will and aspirations of the majority of states and peoples and, therefore, block their progress toward sustainable development.

State Terrorism: A New Wave of Debates

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THE TERM “state terrorism,” which was common in public discourse in the latter half of the 1980s, is coming back into use. Just as in those years, today it is used for specific propagandist ends, including accusations against our country.

Today’s increasing use of the term “state terrorism” brings back questions that were topical three decades ago: Can a state be a source of terrorism? Is state terrorism a legal concept or just a verbal trick to manipulate public opinion? Finally, can governments be prosecuted if they are involved in terrorism – and if so, how?

BEFORE one starts looking for answers, one should realize that international law does not provide any definition of state terrorism, that this term is never used in any treaties or other international documents, and that there is no international custom-based consensus on the meaning of the term. A former chairman of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee, British diplomat Jeremy Greenstock, said that state terrorism was “not an international legal concept.”

There are various reasons for the lack of unanimity on the term, but they can be divided into two groups – one is political and the other etymological. The political reasons hardly need any comments because double standards in interpreting terrorism and problems with its definition are well known and have been analyzed on multiple occasions.

The etymological reasons are much less important as factors in defining terrorism but are essential in dealing with the state terrorism construct, and therefore we will dwell on them in some detail.

The etymology of the word “terrorism” makes the logic behind the West’s putting together the phrase “state terrorism” more or less clear. Firstly, the use of “state” is an indication of the perpetrator of an alleged act of terrorism. Secondly, the phrase “state terrorism” is an attempt to fill a terminology gap – when “terrorism” began to be limited to nonstate activities, there was no label left for extremely odious violent governmental methods. Proponents of this theory cite historical examples to corroborate it. Western scholars most frequently cite Nazism and Joseph Stalin’s “Great Terror” of the 1930s.

On March 1921, 1987, Geneva hosted an event that was called the International Conference on the Question of Terrorism and was organized by the International Progress Organization and UNESCO. Libya had played an important role in organizing the conference and was largely responsible for the content of its final declaration. The text of the Geneva Declaration was circulated, at Libya’s request, as a UN General Assembly document. Otherwise it would have made little sense to give consideration to this 30-year-old document that raises numerous legal issues. The declaration is still cited in many books and forms the basis for the article “State terrorism” in Wikipedia. Thus it cannot be ignored.

There is one more reason why “state terrorism” is an illogical construct. One of the general principles of relations between states is *par in parem non habet imperium* (“equals have no sovereignty over each other”). Unlike individuals who break the law, states are not deprived of their basic rights if they violate rules of coexistence.

OUR ANALYSIS suggests the following conclusions. Firstly, there is nothing bad about the phrase “state terrorism” as a term. No legal concept can be good or bad. Its value does not depend on whether one likes or dislikes it. It needs a rational, not an emotional, assessment.

The state terrorism concept does not have any distinctive meaning of its own as it is normally used to denote types of actions that international law uses other terms for.

The types of actions that have been cited as examples of state terrorism should have other definitions than forms of state terrorism, e.g., they should be defined as aggression, genocide, use of banned methods of warfare, ecocide, mercenarism, or sabotage.

Introducing the state terrorism concept into international legal practice may weaken mechanisms used to combat actions this term designates. Today’s counterterrorism mechanisms target individuals. The prosecution of states for terrorism is difficult if at all possible.

“We Will Fight for the Market”

Author: Yu. Shafranik

Chairman of the Union of Oil and Gas Producers of Russia, Chairman of the Supreme Mining Council of Russia. Mr. Shafranik was interviewed by Armen Oganessian, Editor-inChief of International Affairs.

So many agreements have been adopted within the framework of OPEC but remained on paper only. Remember the tragic conflict between Iraq and Kuwait that was caused by production quotas.

We have sat on the sidelines for years. Back in the 1990s and the 2000s, I personally advocated for cooperation with OPEC, but not for joining this organization. We were independent and influential enough even without it.

The main thing is competition, fighting for markets, and prices. At the same time, various factors can impact prices. In particular, the reason oil prices dropped in 2008 was the speculative financial bubble that burst, leaving the price at \$45. That makes you wary of your competitors.

Over the past two years, prices have been falling, with the ongoing fight for markets, but still, oil-producing countries signed the OPEC+ agreement. That was largely due to the fact that OPEC is losing its grip, and it became impossible to regulate OPEC production and prices without Russia and other countries.

We will fight for the market. There are two extremes. On the one hand, if the energy price is low, then export revenues will fall accordingly. On the other hand, if production is limited and prices are raised, a part of the market will be lost and U.S. producers will naturally move into such niches. There is no golden mean. There is an array of factors. Doing the right thing means acting in compliance with existing agreements and making accurate calculations. I hope that in making this decision, our government, together with oil producing companies, understands what kind of price will offset the potential loss of the market.

Russia's economy is dependent on oil and natural gas. It is critical not to scale back investment programs, primarily drilling operations. One oil worker provides jobs for up to seven people in other industries. If production is reduced, then metal producers, manufacturers of pipes and drilling rigs, etc. will have to be laid off.

The most important goal for the Russian economy is not to reduce oil production levels. It is vital to invest in the domestic economy, for example, in developing the gas, oil and petrochemical industry. This is an area where Russia is seriously lagging.

As the Europeans were building terminals several years ago, their main concern was to diversify sources so as not to become dependent on piped gas from Russia. At that time, U.S. LNG was not an issue. Until just two years ago, the U.S. was shipping LNG only to Latin America. However, at present, Russia is the U.S.'s direct LNG competitor on the European market.

Novatek and Arctic LNG can be considered Russia's great success story. For the first time, such significant volumes are being produced above the Arctic Circle. I am sure that the Arctic LNG-2 plant, in partnership with China, will be more cost-effective and efficient.

The situation is changing; some markets are rising, and others are falling. LNG is an expensive pleasure but then it can be shipped wherever the price is good. Yes, there are long-term contracts and there are short-term ones. But everything is taken into account. The price is lower but there is a long-term contract, fine; the price is higher, but the contract is short-term – that is not bad, either. The global LNG market is wherever profit is. I do not think U.S. producers will ship gas specifically to Europe to their own detriment while Russia goes to Asia, if the price there is higher.

There is also a balance regarding the types of energy – coal, nuclear, solar or wind energy. So, their slowdown will have no impact on the global economy. China's domestic policy is so balanced and wise that in and of itself, it is a challenge to us. They will not allow an imbalance on any type of energy.

The most important thing is to determine the balance of energy sources for different regions.

We should create and maintain this balance. Then, as we look back, we will say: Listen, the hydrocarbon peak was reached so long ago and it was brought about by the discovery of new hydrogen production technology.

Public-Private Partnerships as a Mechanism for Reaching UN Sustainable Development Goals: Nornickel's Experience

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IN JUNE 2019, the Norilsk Nickel (Nornickel) company released its annual report for 2018 on sustainable development. The report, entitled *The New Nornickel: Strategy in Action*, cited the company's principal noncommercial statistics and described key projects. The main achievements were environmental protection, occupational health, industrial safety, and production modernization and efficiency measures.

According to the report, Nornickel remains one of the environmentally and socially most responsible companies in Russia's metals and mining industry, carries out a production efficiency program that is one of its priorities, and provides increasing support for the regions that are its business sites.

The report explicitly describes forms in which Nornickel integrates activities relevant to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its everyday business. This does not mean trying to meet any mandatory international requirement – the company has made a voluntary commitment to participate in global efforts to achieve the SDGs, which represents its loyalty to UN principles and its desire to stay abreast of the times and to work for public benefit, in other words to do something that is in tune with general world development.

The United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which preceded the SDGs and were adopted in 2000 with a deadline of 2015, were effectively a blueprint for ad hoc measures to solve problems that had taken shape by the start of the 21st century, measures designed to do away with effects rather than the causes of those problems. On the other hand, the SDGs represent a long-term program implementable through continuous cooperation and investment. It is based on the interdependence of the government, private sector, society, and natural environment in a country and implies innovation, strategic and holistic solutions, and the forming of partnerships.

The document contains a commitment to “build capacity to enter into public-private partnerships,” develop a basic set of principles for PPPs, build a knowledge base for them and share PPP experience “through regional and global forums.”

Nornickel pays special attention to industrial information security, especially the security of critical facilities. Making use of its expertise, the company has put forward various international cybersecurity initiatives. For instance, it has drafted and promoted the Information Security Charter for Critical Industrial Facilities, proposed setting up a standing contact working group for information security in the Arctic and an information security coordination council for the governments and key companies of the member states of the Central American Integration System and Russia.

In 2015, Nornickel signed an agreement with the Russian Federal Customs Service to take measures to prevent illicit cross-border trade in metals.

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Agenda provides a sound basis for regional and international PPP projects. Back in 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg urged all international actors to join forces to bring about global sustainable development and emphasized that the private sector “has a duty to contribute to the evolution of equitable and sustainable communities and societies.”

National laws on PPPs need revision as well since national PPP mechanisms and principles need diversification, and governmental bodies should be set up to coordinate public-private interaction within PPPs.

In the Context of Big Geopolitics: Yemen Through the Prism of the Arab Spring

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THE RECENT ATTACKS at Saudi tankers, blasts at oil pipelines and Saudi air strikes at Sana'a where Russian citizens were wounded¹ forced many observers again to pay attention to Yemen. The talk about the war swept under the carpet as an internal conflict in a country on the Arabian Peninsula has been revived. Involvement of the region's leading states in the conflict and its catastrophic repercussions call for deeper analysis.

Yemen's geographic location in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula with an access to the Indian Ocean explains its key importance and the presence of the Soviet Union there in earlier times. At all times, external players were attracted by the wealth of undiscovered natural resources and the country's location on the key Asia-Europe trade route.

EVERY MONTH, Riyadh pours about \$5 billion into the war waged with a formal aim of restoring Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi who had escaped from Yemen to Saudi Arabia as the country's president. Today, Saudi Arabia is the third in the world after the United States and China by the volume of military spending.

The war bleeds the country white; in 2014, when oil prices, the country's main source of income, dropped, Saudi Arabia found itself in a tight corner. A deficit-free budget and continued war in Yemen requires the oil prices at an unimaginable level of \$95 per barrel.

The war in Yemen strangles Saudi economy which means that the kingdom should end this war promptly. However, it is easier said than done. The internationally recognized authorities of Yemen and President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi are based in Riyadh for the fourth year running; the Houthis set up their own government in Sana'a while the country's south is practically uncontrolled.

THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN is split, and none of the sides in the conflict (there are several of them) can claim that it controls the entire territory of the country. As could be expected Al Qaeda and ISIS (both organizations are banned in Russia), although defeated in Syria, are trying to gain a foothold in Yemen.

The UN is struggling to end the conflict; its hot phase could be prevented had all sides wanted de-escalation.

Today, we are watching an undisguised foreign intervention in which the Saudis play the first fiddle.

In March 2014, the Russian ambassador to Yemen (the Russian embassy remained in Sana'a till 2017) in a letter to the American ambassador who had already moved to Riyadh warned that the war would not end soon, that it would turn into another failure (after Iraq, Libya and Syria) of the United States in the Middle East. The answer was laconic: "Take care."

FORMALLY, neither the U.S. nor the EU are involved in the war. On the other hand, they did nothing to prevent it. The media remained silent – no hysterics about the loss of child lives, no protests and no political actions. Those who mentioned the war did this as if in passing. A plausible explanation suggests itself: many of the EU countries earned a lot on the hostilities.

The United States tried hard to fan hysterics around the alleged Iranian presence. This time, Washington did not limit itself with an "anthrax vial" as it had done on the eve of the Iraqi war.

It should be said that even the American press doubts that Tehran plays an active role in the Yemeni conflict.

DUE TO THE LACK OF UNITY in the Arab world and the obvious weakness of regional organizations, the United States decided to seize the initiative. It started planning a proxy organization in the Middle East, an Arabic variant of NATO, designed to tie together the region's Sunni states and Israel against Shi'a Iran. So far, this looks unrealizable, yet Washington has already begun to coordinate positions at the anti-Iranian meeting in Warsaw.

IN THIS CONTEXT, the position of Russia looks favorable: it maintains good relations with the Houthis and the Hadi government; it consolidated its cooperation with Saudi Arabia, Iran and China. China's interests, without which the geopolitical picture would remain incomplete, should be taken into account: it intends to invest billions into the Maritime Silk Road, a strategic Asia-Europe trade artery.

Yemen remains in ruins. The Arab Spring destroyed the state, caused chaos, killed thousands of civilians and created a hunger-crippled generation. The armed invasion that ensured the geopolitical breakthrough for the UAE pushed Saudi Arabia toward a failure.

The CrossYear as New Impetus for Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Between Vietnam and Russia

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VIETNAMESE PRIME MINISTER Nguyen Xuan Phuc paid an official visit to Russia late in May of this year during which he and Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev attended the opening ceremony for the Vietnamese-Russian Cross-Year – the Vietnam Year in Russia and the Russia Year in Vietnam. The Cross-Year, to take place from the second quarter of 2019 to 2020, will be a largescale project comprising more than 200 events all of which will be significant and symbolic and will give fresh impetus to the strengthening and diversification of ties between the two countries.

Various Vietnamese and Russian government agencies, regional administrations, and nongovernmental social and political organizations will participate in Cross-Year events. Those events will not be limited to cultural exchange. They will also involve exchanges of visits by high-level delegations, conferences, and various forums for sharing experience and promoting trade, investment, and contacts between people.

Political relations between Vietnam and Russia are marked by a high degree of confidence, which becomes even stronger through consultations, strategic dialogue, regular exchanges of delegations, and contacts at all levels, especially the highest level.

There has been dynamically developing economic cooperation between Vietnam and Russia over the past few years. Mutual trade and investment have been on the rise. The two nations have also been running successful joint oil and gas projects.

In addition to their successful collaboration in electricity generation and oil and gas production, Vietnam and Russia are considering building subway systems in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City and a plant for the

assembly of motor vehicles and tractors. The two countries are also planning to combine forces in the digital sphere, in fields such as cybersecurity, electronic government, and smart city design.

Research and development is yet another area where Vietnam and Russia have dynamically and consistently been building up cooperation. From 2000 to 2018, the two countries carried out 67 R&D projects in priority fields such as biotechnologies, medicine, pharmaceuticals, nanomaterials and other new materials, space technology, rational use of natural resources, marine science, renewable and nuclear energy, economical and effective use of energy in general, mechanical engineering, shipbuilding, and technologies for the extraction of oil and natural gas, for coal mining, for beverage manufacture, and for agricultural produce processing.

Vietnam consistently sees Russia as one of its strategic partners in defense, security and military-technical affairs, especially in the work of modernizing its armed forces and making them more efficient.

One feature of present-day Vietnamese-Russian relations is cooperation between individual regions in the two countries, which has been rapidly growing in scale and substance, with economic and cultural ties, trade, investment, and tourism all being on the increase.

The Vietnam-Russia Cross-Year provides new opportunities for these measures. We are confident that, owing to will on both sides and to joint efforts, relations between Vietnam and Russia will continue to strengthen for the benefit of their people, will help consolidate peace, and will facilitate development in the region and worldwide.

Negotiating the Russian Troop Withdrawal from Latvia (1992-1994)

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ON AUGUST 31, 1994, Russia finished withdrawing troops from Latvia as the 25th Brigade of the Northwestern Group of Forces, which was deployed near Riga, left the Baltic country. This eliminated the last reminder of relations between Latvia and Russia as parts of the same state. That day was a landmark, the starting point of a new form of coexistence between them.

The Russian troop pullout was based on a deal that followed two and a half years of extremely difficult, at times dramatic, negotiations between the two countries. There were more than purely military issues on the agenda. The negotiators had a task that was tremendous in scale and diversity, the biggest task the Russian and Latvian diplomatic services had ever had to tackle in dealing with relations between their countries, to organize a civilized divorce between nations that had lived under the same roof for more than 50 years in the 20th century alone, to put a sound legal basis under it. There had been no such precedents in the Soviet Union. The job had to be started from scratch amid political instability in Latvia and difficulties in Russia.

What made the task particularly difficult was the size of the Russian military group deployed in Latvia, 58,000 troops, making it Russia's largest military force to be stationed in the Baltic area outside Russian borders.

The years of negotiations, 1992 to 1994, may seem a minor episode in the history of Russian-Latvian relations. The talks were a closed-door process, and therefore the hard circumstances the Russian delegation had to work in are not public knowledge. Today, 25 years on, it seems appropriate to disclose the motive forces of the negotiations, the causes of problems they involved, and latent interests that influenced the talks.

Post-Soviet Latvian laws prescribed expulsion from the country of all persons who had settled in it after its incorporation into the Soviet Union and who were qualified as “occupiers” or as “members of the families of occupiers.” Radical nationalists, moreover, brought up discriminatory legislation aimed at ousting a large proportion of the Russian-speaking community out of Latvia. This category included not only Russian serving and retired military personnel and their families but all civilians who had ever had anything to do with the Soviet armed forces or had ever worked at Soviet defense industry facilities.

Our delegation argued that the “deoccupation” ideology meant total disregard for international law: the Latvian-Soviet Peace Treaty of 1920 ceased to be in force the moment Latvia was admitted to the Soviet Union because that made Latvia part of the single Soviet military strategic system, which guaranteed security to all Soviet republics, including the Baltic ones. Russia had never moved troops into Latvia. The armed forces group stationed in Latvia was a problem inherited from the Soviet Union by Russia as well as by Latvia, and it had to be tackled by both countries. The Russian delegation stated that the Latvia of 1992 was not a restored prewar state but a republic that had seceded from the Soviet Union and that therefore no occupation regime had ever been the case.

Despite all those disagreements, the negotiations were at first quite intensive. It took two rounds of talks to hammer out an initial draft for the principal treaty.

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The Latvian government took advantage of this duality for continuing its policy of discriminating against Russian speakers and ousting them from the country.

We reasonably assumed that the dramatic status of the Russian-speaking population in the Baltic countries should be a matter of serious concern for the international community, but the West did not take a single effective step to force Latvia to respect the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to guarantee such rights to its Russian-speaking community. In my statements for the media, I drew a parallel between the Western stance and the “appeasement” policy enshrined in the Munich Agreement.

We were warning that democracy and the rule of law were impossible in a state that sought to base its identity on ethnicity alone and put the rights of its main ethnic group above those of the individual.

Today it is clear that the Russian-Latvian negotiations of the 1990s were not a ritual diplomatic battle but a confrontation between new Russia and the united West, which sought to force Russia to give up “great-power ambitions” and withdraw its armed forces from the Baltic area on humiliating terms. This would have had a demoralizing impact on Russian-speaking communities not only in the Baltic countries but also in other republics of the former Soviet Union and would have dealt a heavy blow to Russia’s international positions.

Intellectual Integration of the Post-Soviet Space

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THE VOCABULARY of the media increasingly often includes the phrase “artificial intelligence” (“AI”). Dictionaries explain AI as an electronic technology designed to perform creative functions that until now have been a human prerogative. This increasingly sophisticated technology has produced machines that can play chess, write poetry, compose music, and answer questions.

Surely no electronic Alekhines, Puskhins or Tchaikovskys have been born, but, with humankind's rather modest 21st-century intellectual achievements, it would not be unfair to say that AI has come quite close to human intelligence.

Self-driving cars are a reality, and there have also been other successful technologies to replace humans. It's not quite clear, though, whether this means humankind is heading for a wonderful world of absolute happiness or is heading for an era of enslavement by machines. So, before the Earth comes under the reign of the computer, humans should use their own brains.

The EIAK has put forward an initiative to call a major Eurasian analytical conference in November 2019. The conference – the First Eurasian Analytical Forum – would mark the fifth anniversary of the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union.

The main tasks of the forum are to analyze current economic, social, political, and cultural integration processes in EAEU member countries in the context of Greater Eurasia and try to foresee what course these processes will take.

The purpose of the forum is to provide informational and analytical support for the economies of the EAEU countries, promote the development of new analytical technologies, and consolidate the analytical potential of the EIAK.

U.S. think tank RAND Corporation recently published a report suggesting ways of undermining Russia's domestic stability and hindering its economic development in order to weaken Russia. The 300-page report, which, by the way, was commissioned by the US Department of Defense, recommends methods to inflict maximum damage on Russia in various spheres, primarily in the economy.

I don't think the role of a servant is acceptable to Russia, or to any other EAEU country, for that matter. Therefore, intellectual integration in the EAEU area will be an instrument for the member countries to provide themselves with guarantees of sovereign political, economic, and cultural development. November's forum in Moscow will be an attempt to make this instrument as effective as possible. And it is human intelligence that will make this attempt – it's rather too early to entrust initiatives that can determine the future of humankind to artificial intelligence.

Constitutional Foundations of the United Kingdom in Light of Brexit

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HISTORY accelerates during pivotal moments, and behind the never-ending motley and emotionally charged series of events in British politics is the constitutional field, which the opposing parties – Brexiteers and Breainers – are plowing up.

The December 12 parliamentary elections, which the Conservative Party is expected to win, could draw the curtain on the initial phase of Great Britain's withdrawal from the EU, and Brexit would take place on January 31, 2020. However, the UK will have to negotiate future relations with the EU, and those talks might not end on schedule in December 2020. Moreover, if one of the parties fails or is unwilling to continue negotiations, the problem of a no-deal Brexit (a withdrawal without a deal on future relations with the European Union) may crop up again. Breainers and Brexiteers continue to face off both inside and outside of parliament, using all legal tricks in the arsenal and "stress testing" the constitutional foundation, which has become the new normal in the country's national culture. Accordingly, it is

interesting to take a retrospective look at what already exists in this arsenal of opposing executive, legislative and judicial powers, including the institution of the monarchy.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson was dead set on withdrawing Britain from the EU, do or die and come what may, on October 31. However, observers believed that his negotiating position was that he was expecting Brussels to “blink first” at the last moment, at the October 17 EU summit, and abandon the backstop.

The Institute for Government believed that Boris Johnson would not have enough time to conduct new negotiations with Brussels and ratify a new agreement with the EU in parliament. Even if he managed to wrangle concessions from the EU, he would have to request another Brexit deferral.

The Scottish National Party was prepared to support a motion of no confidence in the government, provided there was clarity in the mechanism for forming an interim government. Leading Tory Breainers (former attorney general Dominic Grieve in particular) were ready to discuss options.

Analysts estimate that 15 to 40 members of the Tory faction opposed either a no-deal Brexit or hold animus toward Boris Johnson. In the Labor Party, as many as 40 members either supported Brexit or did not support their leader, Corbyn.

DEPUTY LABOUR LEADER John McDonnell said that should Johnson lose a confidence vote, the opposition leader would automatically become prime minister, so McDonnell would “send Jeremy Corbyn in a cab to Buckingham Palace to say we’re taking over,” which sparked a media frenzy and accusations of an attempted coup. Such categorical statements reduced the likelihood of an agreement between parliamentary parties.

BREAINERS earlier used obscure and rarely used parliamentary procedures to legislatively force Theresa May to ask the EU to postpone the initial Brexit date (March 29). It may be recalled that parliament approved the 2016 referendum law without raising the turnout threshold, keeping the simple majority sufficient for recognizing referendum results, approving statutorily the notification sent to Brussels of Britain’s withdrawal from the EU under Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty. Parliament thus drove itself into a corner. Consequently, Britain must withdraw from the EU with or without a deal. New parliamentary resolutions would not be legally binding, since laws take precedence over parliamentary resolutions. Thus, Johnson did not need to hold a new vote: He could just wait for October 31.

The idea of the Brexiteers, led by Johnson, to suspend parliament sparked indignation from deputies, especially the opposition, and speaker Bercow said that he would “fight with every bone in my body” to prevent the prime minister from suspending parliament (“God forbid!”) and push through a no-deal Brexit.

Speaker Bercow was long accused of sympathizing with Breainers and of trying to put parliament above the people as a source of power, violating the country’s unwritten Constitution, “perverting the concept of parliamentary representation,” and committing an “act of institutional suicide.”

DEPUTIES proactively took measures to prevent Johnson from suspending parliament: On July 18 (before Johnson’s election as Tory leader), they voted that the House of Commons could not be suspended from October 9 to December 18, using debate over Northern Ireland as a farfetched pretext. However, the prime minister suspended parliament, and Elizabeth II had no choice but to approve his decision. As a result, the judiciary also became an active participant in the standoff.

DESPITE ALL THE FAILURES of the ruling Conservative Party after the 2016 referendum under three prime ministers, the ratings of the Labor Party have largely not surpassed that of the Tory party. Even though May is often referred to as the “worst prime minister,” her personal rating has always been higher than the popularity of the opposition leader, who is viewed as leaning too far to the left.

However, even if the Conservative Party wins the election, Brexit will not be a done deal, contrary to the slogan of its election campaign (Get Brexit done!). If Britain formally leaves the EU on January 31, it will have difficult negotiations on future relations with the EU, and they are unlikely to end by December 31, 2020, as Johnson is promising.

Regardless of the outcome of the election and the eventuality of Brexit, the latent civil war in Britain will continue, and so will difficult negotiations with the EU. And post-Brexit realities may again undermine the country's political system. Will Britain's political system take its traditional course, in which the system of checks and balances serves the search for compromise and not a war among the branches of power, and the unwritten constitution serves honorable understandings and not abuses of power, traps for opponents and the aggravation of the political crisis?

Northern Ireland After Brexit: Deliberations and Forecasts

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THE BORDER between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland is the key issue at the talks on Brexit.

An absence of Ireland's only land border is its most amazing feature. The winding and twisting border of nearly 499 km long is not marked by pillars or barriers; there is no barbed wire or checkpoints. After the 2016 referendum on the withdrawal of Great Britain from the EU, the border issue moved to the fore in the relations between the UK and Ireland.

When the UK leaves the European Union, the counties on both sides of the twisting border will become the frontier of the EU which will increase, at least theoretically, the possibility of political and economic crises and deeper conflicts in both countries.

In Ireland, the border is a highly sensitive political, security and diplomatic issue. This explains why the politicians of the United Kingdom and the European Union assert, at least verbally, that regardless of Brexit variants there should not be any attempt to set up customs control at the border to say nothing about additional infrastructure.

As members of the Common Market and the Customs Union, the two states (Ireland and the United Kingdom) exchange goods and services with insignificant limitations: their products are not subjected to checks by customs or to mandatory standardization.

Brexit might change this algorithm: two parts of the Emerald Isle will find themselves in different customs and legal realities, which means that customs checks will become inevitable.

In March 2019, the EU and the United Kingdom tried to discuss certain legal aspects of the backstop to arrive at a common interpretation of the concept and specify the project's main provisions. The document explained how the UK would resolve "official disagreements" with the EU in the legal field if Brussels tried to tie the Kingdom to the backstop conditions forever.

In his first speech to Parliament in his new capacity, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said: "No country that values its independence and indeed its self-respect could agree to a Treaty which signed away our economic independence and self-government as this backstop does." He declared that this plan should be removed from the project of the future agreement as "undemocratic" and "sowing discord." Today, he is steering the country toward a "no-deal Brexit" that, in his opinion, looks preferable to the backstop plan.

The exported goods belong to various sectors of economy: Ireland supplies the British market with about one-fifth of its food and agricultural exports. Red meat producers are particularly vulnerable – about 50% of Ireland's beef exports are sold to the UK.

These food exports would face tariffs and increased competition in the UK market in the event of no-deal Brexit. In this case, these groups of Irish products will be confronted with tariffs and increased competition of third countries.

Many other serious problems might surface in Northern Ireland in case of a no-deal Brexit: social-economic tension will be inevitable while an appearance of a border will cause a lot of instability in the region.

Political confrontation will increase: some politicians will insist that Northern Ireland should be excluded from Brexit, others that it should be unified with the Republic of Ireland.

Use of weapons in the region is another risk: we all know that, to a great extent, Irish nationalists are not aggressive because of an absence of a border. If it appears, IRA might become more radical.

Today, the new UK government says that it is ready to realize one of the two scenarios: either to come to an agreement with the EU without the "principle of last resort" or to go for a hard Brexit. In the latter case, stability of Northern Ireland will be put on stake together with territorial integrity of the United Kingdom.

Why Britain Took Part in the 2019 European Parliament Elections

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AS SOON AS Brexit negotiations started, 27 member states of the European Union closed ranks to make Britain's departure from the EU as difficult as possible and stop other members from leaving the bloc. The EU was acting as a single entity in the talks – for example, the British prime minister couldn't hold one-to-one meetings with leaders of individual EU countries to drum up support for the British position.

The EU position rested on the German principle that, since Brexit was the British idea, it should inflict heavier losses on Britain than on any other EU country. This and the weakness of the British position due to its lack of means of pressure on the Union made the bloc intransigent throughout the negotiations.

Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump was criticizing NATO and demanding that European allies increase their defense spending. Britain had traditionally been spending more on European security and defense than any other EU country, and because of this and Trump's stance the Europeans began to consider building their own military mechanisms to defend the continent against threats of kinds. There arose a movement to set up a European defense alliance and organize European armed forces.

To boost their military research and armaments sales, the Europeans in 2016 increased the financing of the European Defense Agency (EDA) and in June 2017 set up the European Defense Fund (EDF) to facilitate the funding of joint research without duplicating NATO's role. The EDF was closed to non-EU countries, which meant Britain would be barred from it after Brexit.

To ensure post-Brexit national "prosperity," even if the country had to resort to a no-deal, hard Brexit, the government of Prime Minister Theresa May sought to preserve Britain's technological and

manufacturing ties, primarily military, with companies co-owned by several European states, including MBDA, BAE Systems, Airbus, and Leonardo.

The British aerospace industry, the world's second-biggest after its American counterpart, experienced a shock as the EU barred British companies from final stages of two space programs – satellite navigation system Galileo and Earth observation program Copernicus. Moreover, later Britain had its right to use the two systems restricted under the pretext of its upcoming departure from the EU.

To make matters worse, Britain had no serious support from its closest ally, the United States, when fighting EU protectionism. Though Trump advocated the dissolution of the EU and launched a trade war against it, he was primarily advancing the interests of American companies and took little notice of the interests of the United States' European allies.

In 2018, in response to all these developments and to rising tension and anxiety in British society, the British government came up with two draft Brexit roadmap documents.

An agreement of June 26, 2017, between the Conservative Party and Democratic Unionist Party under which the DUP pledged to support Theresa May's Conservative minority government on essential parliamentary votes, fell apart as the DUP rejected some of the points in the EU-approved draft withdrawal agreement. The majority of Tory members of Parliament were also against some of the points in the draft accord.

The Conservative Party lost numerous members and voters to Nigel Farage's Brexit Party, which emerged in January 2019 and demanded unconditional exit from the EU, with or without a deal. The Conservative Party found itself on the brink of disappearance. Things were nearly as bad for the Labour Party.

It was a combination of domestic and foreign policy factors that made Britain take part in the European Parliament elections, something that hadn't been anticipated in March. At Brexit negotiations, Britain failed to take an effective economic or political line against EU protectionism, and this resulted in a draft withdrawal agreement that mainly set out EU interests. The British Parliament as a champion of national interests rejected it but was unable to propose any deal of its own. The refusal of Parliament and government to go the no-deal route sparked a constitutional crisis and shook Britain's party system.

Since Brexit had been the theme of British political life for three years, the returns of the European Parliament elections reflected the British electorate's attitudes to the Brexit idea as different parties that had been running in the polls were proposing different Brexit options.

The European Parliament elections showed remarkably that, after three years of Brexit talks and the adversities they had involved, the proportion of British who clearly wanted their country to leave the EU, even without a deal, remained quite large.

U.S. Humanitarian Presence in Central Asia: Drawing the Region Into Its Realm of Influence

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THE U.S. HUMANITARIAN PRESENCE in Central Asia (CA) is tied to the region's importance to the U.S.'s foreign policy and economic objectives. The 2017 U.S. National Security Strategy refers to the region as "Central and South Asia," which presents "some of the most complicated security challenges and opportunities" for the U.S. The latter would like to see "Central Asian states that are resilient against domination by rival powers, are resistant to becoming jihadist safe havens, and prioritize reforms." To that end, the U.S. "will encourage the economic integration of Central and South Asia." Washington also considers Afghanistan, Pakistan and India part of South Asia.

In analytical works, Americans extend the Central Asian region not only to South Asia, but also to the Caspian region and the South Caucasus.

The regional environment of the Central Asian countries is also important to Washington considering Russia, Iran and China, which are strengthening their positions, the factor of Islamic extremism and neighboring Afghanistan.

Donald Trump has not yet developed a balanced position on the region. It is significant that his administration appointed an ambassador to Kazakhstan, the key country of Central Asia, only in January 2019, and the post of ambassador to Uzbekistan has yet to be filled.

EDUCATION is one of the most effective tools of the American humanitarian presence in Central Asia and other regions. The Americans act by working with universities and through the work of "American corners," as well as by forming educational standards and via exchange programs.

The Americans are promoting the idea that English is increasingly needed to succeed in business and politics. For example, courses at Nazarbayev University, one of the leading universities in Kazakhstan, are taught in English.

THE U.S. PROVIDES significant assistance to the Central Asian countries in the form of international development assistance (IDA). Moreover, "Central Asia, compared to other regions, initially had peripheral significance for the U.S. in terms of development aid. The share of total real expenditures on countries in the region was less than one-tenth of one percent of global expenditures over the past 25 years: only \$7.5 billion from 1992 to 2015."

Over the next year, the U.S. plans to create an agency for managing infrastructure projects in developing countries: the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation. It can be assumed that it will focus on Central Asian countries, as it was conceived as an alternative to Chinese infrastructure programs, including in this region.

The Americans are making their economic presence in Central Asia felt through strategic advisers and institution-building.

A key organization working to establish people-to-people ties between citizens of the U.S. and other countries is the U.S. Peace Corps.

The public dimension of the U.S. humanitarian presence in Central Asia includes effectively promoting American political and financial interests in the region.

The U.S. is not working in a vacuum in the humanitarian field in the region. Other players are active there, including Russia, China, Turkey, the European Union, Iran, Japan, India, South Korea, Saudi Arabia. The U.S. is an extra-regional player: It has been difficult for it to operate there on account of the lack of traditional ties with the region. But at the same time, its actions have been greatly facilitated by the absence of historical grievances among the young nationalist elites of the Central Asian countries.

How to Correctly Apply the Concept of Soft Power

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IN THE STUDY of soft power, much attention is given to the works of the concept's founder, Joseph Nye Jr. He formulated its basic tenets and developed its conceptual framework, thereby laying the theoretical foundations of the policy of soft power, both in purely academic as well as in practical terms.

However, from our point of view, it is impossible to treat Nye's works formalistically, as we unfortunately find in some publications. Nye put together a whole system of ideas, and if we are going to use the idea of "soft power" in our political analyses, then we will have to include every aspect of that system.

The first stage of this theory emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, when Nye was working with Robert Keohane to develop a neoliberal theory of international relations. The premises of this theory boiled down to the idea that global market development affects all aspects of societal and political life: The principles of free, market-oriented interactions pervade the sphere of foreign policy.

At that time, the main aspect of foreign policy was the military component, especially nuclear weapons.

Nye began arguing as early as the 1970s that participants in international relations could be not only governments, but also transnational corporations and international NGOs, all of which would work together to establish a universal international ethic to be based on liberal democracy and human rights.

Nye and Keohane directly acknowledged that they had based their concept of interdependence on the example of the Soviet-American nuclear standoff and the mutual threat of nuclear annihilation. They gave this theory great meaning and urged that American political strategy be reconsidered with this factor in mind.

We must mention a paradoxical point: When most publications by Russian political scientists review the concept of soft power, they make no mention at all of this stage of Nye's views that was related to the debate about global nuclear war and SDI. There is not a single reference to Nye's publications from this period. This thesis, without adequate grounds, links the development of the concept of soft power to a supposed collapse of great powers, including the U.S. (this clearly mistaken interpretation of Nye's concept will be addressed below in more detail).¹⁰ Such an approach to the American political scientist's academic work inevitably implies that the concept of soft power was a sudden, unique insight with no particular theoretical or practical premises.

In looking at his books, we can sum up his theoretical works on the theory of power (which in Russian can be translated as both "force" and "strength"). The gist of his concept consists of the following:

Firstly, one of the key characteristics of modern international relations is the interdependence of states and NGOs. It follows from this that every action by one side will inevitably, to one degree or another, reflect on the conditions and conduct of the other sides in the web of relations.

Second, soft power carries a lot of weight in situations where it is either impossible or impracticable to resort to "hard power" in its military or economic sense.

Third, soft power is just as important as hard power, so its real meaning comes from significantly fewer costs in its application and a greater positive effect, both unilaterally and multilaterally.

Fourth, Nye's concept of soft power is connected to the idea of leadership, understood by him primarily as: the establishment of international standards; the creation and support of domestic and international institutions; and the strengthening of legitimacy and morality in politics.

Thus, in our opinion, before one applies Nye's concept to the politics of any country, first one must establish whether a given case abides by the basic premises of soft power.

Yevgeny Primakov's Middle Eastern Legacy: On the Occasion of His 90th Birth Anniversary

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YEVGENY PRIMAKOV, a scholar, journalist and politician, left a vast intellectual legacy of books, articles and texts of his speeches at big international forums.

Regrettably, he did not live long enough to realize his dream: to organize and publish the entire body of notes of his impressions, conversations, theses of speeches, and observations of many years of his long career.

As an expert in the Arab world, I appreciated the fact that, despite the posts he filled and irrespective of all other circumstances, he remained a member of the community of experts in the Arab world, the Orient and the Middle East.

Throughout his life and despite the huge amount of duties, he extended, with amazing consistency, his knowledge of the Arab world, published books and articles that consolidated his authority as an expert in the Middle East and the developing states.

No "guidelines" could push him from the positions he occupied by right, deprive him of his authority and unique knowledge in his sphere; any attempts to defeat him on this battlefield would have looked unconvincing, to say the least, or simply ridiculous.

This explains why he looked much more confident and behaved with much more dignity, than many politicians, amid confrontations and collisions at the period of crises.

In March 2002, the League of Arab States supported his plan at the summit held in Beirut, capital of Lebanon. It was for the first time that Israel did not reject an Arab initiative outright but demonstrated an interest. This could not be interpreted as support; it was, however, a sign that the initiative was worth of attention and that Israel intended to study and discuss it.

A historic compromise between the Arabs and Israel required concerted efforts of the international community, the UN Security Council, the Russian Federation, the United States, and the European Union. They could have arrived at the basic principles of final settlement and impose it on Israel and its Arab neighbors.

Yevgeny Primakov criticized all sorts of settlement projects to be realized by a smaller group of external sponsors. He was also very critical of the statement of Prime Minister of Israel Ariel Sharon who had said that "only Israel and the United States" could find a solution to the Middle Eastern problem. Primakov deemed it necessary to warn that since their solution would be unacceptable for Arabs, Russia would never support it. He said that Washington should have learned the lesson of 9/11: its attempts to

monopolize the role of an intermediary in the Middle East conflict resolution were dangerous for the United States itself.

The situation in the Middle Eastern countries and the logic of restoring normalcy in the world and in individual regions presuppose that negotiations will be resumed as the only possible format of conflict and crisis settlement.

The peace process in the Middle East will be revived. This means that we should consolidate the useful potential of ideas and proposals to break the deadlock in the region. This is related, first and foremost, to the ideas and proposals elaborated in his time by Yevgeny Primakov, our leading expert in the Middle East.

Remembering Yevgeny Primakov: Feelings and Thoughts on His 90th Birth Anniversary

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I REMEMBER too many politicians who surfaced in the fast whirlpool of passions and, having shone for a moment, were engulfed by it leaving behind short-lived memory, vague emotions, “scandals, intrigues and investigations,” and a dull reference in Wikipedia.

The figure of Yevgeny Primakov daringly challenged the technocratic monotony of the dull moonscape. He was a politician of huge productive potential, a unique combination of sober and cold calculations and burning passionarity of his creative force.

I was lucky to meet him in 2004 during my onsite training as a final-year student at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation. My first impression of the man who was already a living legend was inborn nobility combined with amazing modesty, delicacy and simplicity in personal communication. He was never aloof let alone arrogant; he was ready to listen to everybody. He cared about people and helped those who needed help. There was no gap between him and common employees; he was open and accessible. The staff paid him in kind; he attracted people; he was loved, admired and even worshipped.

He was highly respected in other countries by those of the foreign politicians who as our ideological rivals and political opponents never betrayed any sympathies to Russia. He was respected as a firm and consistent statist who, not discouraged by Russia’s defeat in the Cold War, did not rush “to join the market economy.” “Yevgeny Primakov was always a staunch protector of Russian national interests. He loved his country. Yet he was pragmatic.”

He was listened to and heard because he never wasted words, because everything he had to say was relevant and meaningful. He was heard and understood because his language was colorful, up to the mark and confirmed by practical steps. He talked about things in which he believed and believed in what he said.

Primakov has become an easily recognizable brand; the sign of quality of an efficient, creative and at that same time carefully balanced and subtle Russian diplomacy able to elegantly avoid sharp corners. In a wide context, he played “his pivotal role in the reshaping of geopolitics in the twenty-first century.”

Primakov in his time absolutely correctly predicted the global development vector for the observable perspective and outlined the efficient mechanism of maximal adjustment to this future while protecting

Russia's national interests and civilizational paradigm. This concept can in a precise and subtle manner react to the changes in the political environment. Its viability should be supported, enriched with new elements and improved.

None of Yevgeny Primakov's accomplishments can be assessed separately from personal impressions; his personality can be discerned in his articles, books and speeches. The Primakov Doctrine, likewise, is part of his personality: it is based on his strong and unyielding love of Motherland, it is part of his nobility, respect for people and the desire to help, his sober deliberations, his rationality and consistency.

I will always cherish his memory; he was an example to be followed when it comes to personal relationships, attitude to work, and invariably objective assessments of reality.

Problems of Consolidation in Russian Immigrant Communities Abroad: The History of Russian Emigration from China to the U.S., 1920s-1950s

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FURTHER CONSOLIDATION of the world Russian diaspora has become one of the challenges for Russian diplomacy in recent years. Among other things, this involves more extensive participation by the reasonably-thinking part of this diaspora in Russia's domestic social and cultural affairs but primarily in publicizing information about Russia and in participating in the country's foreign policy as vehicles of Russian soft power in the international arena.

The history of 20th century Russian presence in China goes back to something that, in modern language, could be called a largescale infrastructure project – the construction of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER). This was a unique instance of the cross-border expansion of the Russian World, not only in the sense of popularization of the Russian language and Russian culture and the economic sense but also in the sense of familiarizing the world with Russian principles of social and political organization and Russian everyday way of life.

A great deal has been written about Russian emigration that followed the 1917 revolution, but the most interesting sources have been and remain practically inaccessible to the majority of Russian scholars as they are archived in other countries. Large and significant records of Russian presence in China from the late 19th to the early 20th century and the migration of Russians living in China to the United States between the 1920s and the 1950s are stored at the Provincial Archives of Heilongjiang in Harbin, at the First Historical Archives of China in Beijing, and at the Second Historical Archives of China in Nanjing.

The 1917 revolution at first had no serious effect on life in Manchuria's Russian colony. The upheavals in European Russia were practically imperceptible in that faraway exclave. The banks stayed open, there were police on the streets as usual, and the CER continued to accept commercial orders. However, after the defeat of the White Army forces in Siberia, Manchuria was flooded with Russian refugees, and its Russian community swelled to 250,000. The community's occupational structure changed as well.

Former Russian army officers were put in a special category, and some of them were eagerly recruited by various Chinese armed services in Manchuria and Xinjiang.

Many of the Russians living in Harbin and Shanghai began to consider moving to third countries, but, according to the League of Nations Commission for Refugees, the majority of Manchuria's émigré community still believed that they would be able to return to Russia or hoped for the restoration of the prerevolutionary status of the CER zone. Meanwhile, funds were being raised in the United States to help Manchuria's Russians.

In 1934, largely due to lobbying from sympathetic senators and House of Representatives members, the United States brought out a law on the status of White Russian immigrants. The law extended immigration rights to persons who had entered the United States after 1924 on temporary visas or illegally.

From that moment, it became one of the main tasks of Russian émigré organizations in California to help Russians in China come to the United States by sending them invitations and providing them with financial support guarantees that were necessary for them to receive White Russian status that was equivalent legally to refugee status.

World War II halted Russian migration to the United States from China. It also broke off information exchange between the Russian community in China and the émigré colony in California, but this resumed immediately after the end of hostilities in the Pacific.

In 1950, 33 Russian émigré associations unified to form a San Francisco-based group called the Federation of Russian Charitable Organizations of the United States.

It was partly due to pressure from Russian émigré activists that the United States' 1953 Refugee Relief Act included an admission quota of 2,000 for European refugees who had ended up in Far Eastern countries. However, amendments made simultaneously to U.S. immigration law made immigration more difficult for refugees. Effectively, the only feasible ways for Russian refugees to leave China were sponsorship from relatives or friends or visas for South American countries.

Social and psychological characteristics, cultural behavioral stereotypes and language features of émigrés can be the subject for a special study. Knowing the history of Russian emigration and understanding its self-identification and its worldview play an important role in practical interaction between Russia and the Russian diaspora. But it remains the main task to build and maintain partnership with countries where there are Russian émigré communities, so that what Russian--American Benjamin Michael Levaco said about China, where he had been born and lived from 1915 to 1950, should be valid for all parts of the Russian World that are outside Russia. Levaco said that he was fond of China and had been comfortable in it. He said that in the 35 years that he had lived there he had not experienced any antagonism or unfriendliness.

70 Years Ago: How the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the USSR Was Established

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ON OCTOBER 2, 1949, the day after the establishment of the People's Republic of China, Sergey Tikhvinsky, the USSR Consul General in Beijing, informed Chinese Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai that the Soviet Union would recognize the Central People's Government of China. Thus, diplomatic relations were established between the Soviet Union and the young republic, the 70th anniversary of which we celebrate this year.

At the same time, a lot more needed to be done for cooperation between the two countries to fully develop. Most importantly, embassies needed to be opened in Moscow and Beijing. While the Soviet

Union could draw on its impressive experience of diplomatic dealings with its eastern neighbor and had a cohort of qualified personnel, the diplomacy of new China was just taking its first steps.

MAO ZEDONG chose Wang Jiaxiang to be new China's ambassador to the USSR. There were good reasons for this choice.

Wang Jiaxiang was a veteran of the Chinese revolution. He also knew the Soviet Union well and spoke excellent Russian. In 1926, the 20-year-old Wang Jiaxiang was sent to study at the recently established Sun Yatsen University of the Toilers of China.² He lived in Moscow for four years and even married a Russian.

In 1937, Mao Zedong sent his young fellow party member, who felt at home in the USSR, as a representative of the Communist Party of China to the Comintern, and Wang Jiaxiang again ended up in Moscow. Upon his return, he received a new high-level appointment; he was included in the leadership of the Central Military Commission of the CPC, and after a while, became a member of the Politburo of the party's Central Committee.

Wang Jiaxiang made an indisputable contribution to the victory of the people's revolution as a party and military leader. Chairman Mao decided to give him the honorable mission of being the first ambassador in the history of the People's Republic of China and represent the PRC in the most important country for China at that time – the Soviet Union.

The Chinese delegation in Moscow discussed a wide range of issues concerning assistance for China in establishing modern industry, reforming the armed forces, etc. In this regard, Liu Shaoqi sent a letter to Stalin on August 2, proposing, at Mao Zedong's request, that after his departure, Wang Jiaxiang remain in the USSR and direct the work of experts. The proposal raised no objections.

As a result, the future ambassador stayed in Moscow until the end of August 1949, and a little over two months later, he returned in a new capacity – as head of the first diplomatic mission in the history of new China.

WHILE THE AMBASSADOR was getting ready to leave, the first group of Chinese diplomats left for Moscow to set up the diplomatic mission and prepare for the ambassador's reception. Ge Baoquan, a prominent Russia specialist, writer and translator, was appointed charge d'affaires of the PRC in the Soviet Union for this period.

The last ambassador of the Republic of China to the Soviet Union, Fu Binchang (he had held this position since 1943), realizing the inevitability of the collapse of the Chiang Kaishek regime, left Moscow in advance and flew to Paris. According to Kapitsa, he settled in Geneva, where he opened his own restaurant.

AFTER 1932, when diplomatic relations were restored between the Soviet Union and the Republic of China after a three year hiatus, the Chinese Embassy occupied a luxurious mansion in Kropotkinsky Lane.

The Chinese diplomats encountered certain difficulties because they did not possess adequate basic knowledge about diplomacy. After arriving in Moscow, Ambassador Wang Jiaxiang asked Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR Anatoly Lavrentyev to provide the Chinese Embassy with a teacher of diplomatic history and a consultant on the practical issues of diplomatic protocol who would work one or two hours a day.

During the aforementioned conversation with Gromyko on November 1, 1949, Wang Jiaxiang said that he was delighted to be the first PRC ambassador to the Soviet Union but remarked with regret that he was now being called on to attend to other matters, and he was counting on the help of the Soviet side in this regard.

RUSSIA REMEMBERS the first Chinese ambassador to our country, Wang Jiaxiang, and the diplomats who opened the Chinese Embassy in Moscow.

Ge Baoquan, known in Russia not so much as a diplomat, but as a writer and translator, was a great connoisseur and admirer of Alexander Pushkin, a Russophile in the full sense of the word.

Let us recall them today as we commemorate 70 years of diplomatic relations between our country and China.

New Documents on SovietGerman Relations: 1939-1941

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THE ARCHIVE of the President of the Russian Federation, the Russian Historical Society, and the German Historical Institute in Moscow (DHI) have marked the 80th anniversary of the Soviet-German Treaty of Nonaggression of August 23, 1939, by publishing a collection of documents from the Russian president's archive entitled USSR-Germany: 1932 1941.

Relations between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany were one of the most uncomfortable issues of the past for the Soviet state.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, some historians gained access to the specialized files,¹³ but it was only in the 2000s that their contents began to be published on a large scale. The gradual declassification of the files triggered the publication of numerous collections of documents both on domestic¹⁴ and on foreign policy subjects.¹⁵ For instance, the declassification in 2008 of files on Soviet-German relations from 1920 to 1941 that were part of Inventory 64, "International Affairs – Countries" of Record Group 3 of the presidential archive led to the first publication in August 2009 of a collection of documents relating to the period from 1933 to 1941.

USSR-Germany, 1933-1941 was the first publication of an overwhelming majority of the 216 documents it was comprised of. Even simply listing the documents published for the first time would take quite a lot of space. Many of the documents in the collection dated to 1939, 1940, or 1941. What was published for the first time included drafts of the nonaggression treaty of August 23, 1939, with changes in Stalin's hand, encrypted telegrams from the Soviet embassy in Berlin, and documents on economic relations between the two countries.

Besides being a landmark work of historiography, USSR-Germany: 1933-1941 dealt a blow to conspiracy theories about what motivated the Soviet leadership's policy toward Germany in August 1939.

SSSR-Germaniya, 19321941 (USSR-Germany: 19321941), which came out in 2019 and in effect is the second edition of USSRGermany:19331941 of 2009, includes none of the documents published in Moscow-Berlin. Instead, it supplements the 2009 edition's 216 documents with 55 recently declassified ones from the presidential archive.

The book includes an interesting supplement with information about the falsification of Soviet government documents and the acquisition of fake papers by Western intelligence services.

USSR-Germany: 19321941 and Volume Three of Moscow-Berlin make a large proportion of documents from the Politburo's specialized files available for research. However, the work of publishing this documentary wealth remains unfinished.

World Politics as Analyzed by Contemporary Political Science

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CONCEPTUAL INTERPRETATION of the experience accumulated in the course of social and political development of mankind have acquired special importance in political science, theory and practice of international relations and diplomacy, yet its analysis, systematization and classification are a far from easy task.

During the Cold War, there were only two systems of axiological and sociopolitical coordinates conventionally divided into socialist and liberal-democratic (capitalist) blocs. This division made it much easier for political analysts and politicians to understand world politics as a whole and political processes in individual countries through the prism of the socialism vs. capitalism dichotomy and bloc thinking and to resolve ideological and political tasks.

The Soviet Union's disintegration replaced the global bipolar political model with global political and economic unipolarity dominated by the collective West headed by the United States. As could be expected, the shift of the global pole of power in the 1990s led to an overstatement of the scientific and heuristic value of liberal socio-political concepts. Today, the liberal models of world politics and international relations are questionable. The voices of those who are talking about the crisis of liberalism, the rise of protectionism, the mounting international tension, and de-globalization trends can be heard in the corridors of power and at important international forums.

The processes unfolding in the world should be assessed with the help of political science and from the point of view of identification of the main trends in the studies of world politics and international relations. Russian political scientist Vakhtang Surguladze, the leading expert of the C.T.K. Analytical Group, tried to do this in his monograph "World Politics in the Mirror of the Analysis of Contemporary Political Science."

The author has analyzed the three main aspects of world politics: the regularities of political processes that affect foreign policies and international relations, the specifics of the identity policy as the most important factor that determines the political agenda, strategies and technologies that determine political processes and contribute to stabilization/destabilization of contemporary states.

Vakhtang Surguladze investigates these aspects by scrutinizing conceptual works of contemporary political thinkers and politicians.

The author has written that at the time when the global world order is changing at a fast pace an analysis of regularities of the development of imperial styles of thinking, practices and messianic foreign policy trends becomes especially important. In the first part of his book, he has discussed these issues to analyze the approaches of his contemporaries who study both historical empires and the contemporary examples of foreign policy hegemonism of the United States and the ideological justifications of America's global geopolitical and institutional domination.

The author is right when he indicates that globalization and the mounting intensity of the intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogue between representatives of different states and sociopolitical traditions strongly affect social and political stability and make critical assessment of the liberal concepts of multiculturalism highly important.

The parts of the book, in which the author discusses the impact of the cyberenvironment and information security on the socioeconomic, sociocultural and political spheres of life in the context of national security, are of a special practical interest in view of the rapid development of information technologies.

The monograph presents a vivid picture of the current global challenges and problems of political and social development; it is a representative cross-section of related expert opinions analyzed from the positions of ensuring political stability and long-term social and economic development of Russian society and the state as a sine qua non of Russia's national security and strategic national interests.

Secrets of the Ainu People

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THE HISTORY of the Russian Far East begins with the geographic discoveries of great Russian travelers V. Bering, M. Shpanberg, S. Krasheninnikov, Ye. Putyatin, G. Nevelskoy, and many other pioneers who made Russia a great Pacific power. The ethnographic pages of this history are equally interesting or even fascinating. The main role in the discoveries and studies about the peoples and nationalities of the Far Eastern regions of Russia and preservation of their rich cultural heritage belongs to Russian travelers and ethnographers. The *White Book of the Ainu People* by a collective of authors from Sakhalin recently published by Nauka Publishers is one of the confirmations of the above.

It is a fundamental academic research based on a vast body of historical facts and evidence about the Ainu, one of the smallest and most amazing Far Eastern peoples.

The authors have traced back the history of the Ainu, paid special attention to the tragic experience of their communication with the Japanese and their state that practically deprived the Ainu of their ethnic identity and culture and pushed them to the brink of extinction.

Two big powers – the Russian Empire and Japan – were moving toward each other across the Ainu-populated lands. Ethnographers have identified several branches of the Ainu people with different traditions, rites and linguistic specifics. The biggest Ainu communities lived on Hokkaido, Southern Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands. Ainu also settled in the northeast of the Honshu Island, in the south of Kamchatka and the lower reaches of the Amur.

This explains why the Ainu issue occupied a noticeable space in the history of the Russo-Japanese relations. According to archival documents, the attitude of Russians and Japanese to the Ainu people was different, not to say, diametrically opposite.

According to information collected by historians, archaeologists, ethnographers, anthropologists, and linguists, Ainu communities were subjected to armed violence and assimilation; their traditional socio-economic order, cultural specifics and the traditional environment were liquidated.

Today, the Ainu population of Hokkaido is over 13 thousand strong; between 2007 and 2017, the island lost more than 10.5 thousand Ainu, or 45% of its total population. According to independent assessments, up to 200 thousand Japanese have Ainu ancestors. As a result of the assimilation policy that Japanese authorities have been pursuing for several centuries, the Ainu practically lost their national specifics, the language, religion and traditions; many of them had no choice but to abandon their national identity. Today, the majority of Ainu speak of themselves as ethnic Japanese.

This is an irreplaceable loss for the world community and the Asia-Pacific region as one of the most promising civilizational centers.

Certain Japanese politicians and biased historians insist that the Ainu lost their specific features and cannot be perceived as a unique ethnicity. This is not true: today, Ainu communities still practice the traditions inherited (not reconstructed on the basis of historical sources) from their ancestors.

The book is based on documents and eyewitness accounts that do not need further commentaries. This means that the readers themselves can arrive at conclusions about who and how brought the Ainu people to the brink of extinction.

Milestones in Our Lives

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THE RUSSIANS have a better historical memory than many other nations. Russians are often more honest and responsible than others in assessing their nation's past. Of course, we have our dropouts asserting what they claim to be indisputable truths, but the country rejects them totally. There exist sacred things. Due to these things, the national code remains unchanged, and they ensure the continuity of goals pursued by the generations of creators of the Russian state.

Thinking about the life and struggles of our ancestors makes us wonder why, for as long as Russia has existed, there have been invasions from every quarter, making the country fight for its survival. Tell me who, besides ourselves, has remained unbroken and never surrendered in situations of this kind.

In August, a book came out entitled *From the Frontlines of War to the Frontlines of Diplomacy*. It is about people who were among the troops that captured Berlin but who devoted their entire subsequent lives to the cause of peace. This book was long overdue, but Russian society had taken unforgivably long to come to see why it was needed, and then there wasn't enough money to publish it.

From the Frontlines of War to the Frontlines of Diplomacy had been preceded by other books – stories of revolutionary and triumphant turning points in the history of Russia, first as an empire, then as a republic of the Soviet Union, and then as a sovereign post-Soviet state.

Ahead of the centenary of the start of World War I (the Russians dubbed their engagement in it the Second Patriotic War), Mikhail Bezrukov and Alexander Turovsky brought out a bilingual book in Russian and English with a preface by Gennady Gatilov, then Russian deputy foreign minister. The book effectively became a bridge to the history of Soviet diplomacy.

Another book by Bezrukov and Turovsky is even more important for assessing our history – it is *Victories Guidebook* with a preface by Grigory Karasin, a former Russian state secretary-deputy foreign minister. Thanks to Foreign Ministry translators, the book has been published in English as well as in Russian. The book has a supplement consisting of theses for speeches to be made at celebrations of anniversaries of the end and principal events of the Great Patriotic War. The reason for this focus on indisputable truths as information weapons is the fact that the distortion of history has been adopted as a consistent line by the West and by Russian homegrown liberals.

From the Frontlines of War to the Frontlines of Diplomacy is about the invincibility of the Russians, both our ancestors and our present-day fellow citizens.

From the Frontlines of War to the Frontlines of Diplomacy is not a box-ticking exercise. As one more project under the aegis of the Foreign Ministry, work is being finished on a new book about Soviet diplomats who fought in the war. Some of whom were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union and some took part in the 1945 Victory Parade.

Any scholarly article is supplemented with “key words.” The key words in any narrative about frontline soldiers who became diplomats would be “memory,” “national code,” “history,” “unsundered,” “defender,” “genes,” “invincible,” “unity,” “peace,” and “dignity.”

These words combine to make a comprehensive description of everyone mentioned in the new book.

The Caspian Under the Magnifying Glass

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THE MOSCOW Witte University Press published a four-volume monograph “The Caspian Region,” a comprehensive discussion of the problems of the Caspian Sea.

The monograph written by a group of authors who, being experts in natural sciences and the humanities and representatives of the leading scientific schools of Russia, monitored and studied the entire range of region-related problems, summed up their work of many decades. The deepness of their involvement in the problem cannot but cause respect. Their fundamental work based on the huge volume of carefully investigated data has covered all aspects of the studies of the Caspian and the current extent of human involvement.

Volume One summed up the entire body of international legal documents related to the Caspian, from the Russian-Persian Treaty on Trade of Russian Merchants in Persia of 1717 to the five-sided comprehensive Convention of 2018 mentioned above. The first edition that appeared in 2018 was an immediate bestseller with no rivals where the scope of issues covered and the simplicity of navigation were concerned.

Volume Two contains a survey of the geographic, natural, physical and other specifics of the Caspian, offers the details of the history of studies on this ancient and mystical reservoir from antiquity to our days. The scrupulousness of the authors cannot but amaze; they mentioned all more or less important publications on the subject up to and including the latest contributions by colleagues from post-Soviet republics and Iran.

Today, economic planning requires even more caution. In the 21st century, the problem of preservation of the unique natural environment has come to the fore: so far it exists under strong anthropogenic pressure. It is still unclear whether hydrocarbon extraction, dams on the Volga and trade in black caviar are profitable enough to cover the price of irreparable damages to the marine environment and irreplaceable losses in biodiversity.

Volume Three presents detailed information about the coastal states: climate and geography, living and mineral resources, industry, power production, transport, ecology, foreign economic activities, history, and culture. It is highly important to study the coastal regions, the post-Soviet border territories as the core of the Caspian macro-region.

Volume Four is an encyclopedia that contains about 1500 entries related to the Caspian: descriptions of geographic objects, cities and other settlements, ports and objects of infrastructure, oil and gas fields, hydrotechnical structures, water and biological resources, scientific-research institutes, historical and

archaeological monuments, biographies of outstanding scholars, researchers, travelers and a lot of other information.

The rich bibliography is another highly valuable feature.

Specialists and experts in the Caspian will find these four volumes highly useful, while interested readers will appreciate it as an inexhaustible source of new or even amazing facts.