

International Affairs: Volume 66: Number 2, 2020:

Summary.

Sergey Lavrov Turns 70.

International Affairs Editorial Board and Staff Members.

Dear Sergey Viktorovich, Staff members of the International Affairs journal are sending their sincere, heartfelt wishes on your birthday. We are genuinely proud of the fact that for many years (far from the easiest ones in the history of Russia and humankind), the International Affairs Board has been headed by a Russian politician and statesman such as you. Your diplomatic talent, reinforced by your professionalism, will to victory and sometimes unconventional decisions, give confidence that Russia will pass through this zone of turbulence, the times of arbitrary rules, not international laws, and the sanctions chaos in international relations and will emerge as a model of stability and a sought-after world arbiter. We are grateful that, despite your superhuman schedule of meetings and trips, addressing priority international issues in real time and sometimes actually saving the world, you find an opportunity to get your articles published in our journal and become involved in our projects. This is very important to us. We hope that this will continue to be the case in the future. We wish you good health, well-being and many more years at the service of our Motherland.

To Provide Strategic Stability and Form a Just World Order.

Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation.

DEAR FRIENDS,

Let me extend my heartfelt wishes on your professional holiday, Diplomats' Day.

Russian diplomats have always resolutely and consistently defended the interests of our Fatherland. While continuing the glorious traditions of our predecessors, you carry out your duty with honor and deal with challenging and responsible foreign policy tasks.

Thanks largely to the efficient work of Russia's Foreign Ministry, we have managed to reach a certain degree of stability in Syria and launch an intra-Syrian Constitutional process. We are seeing visible results in the development of Eurasian integration and the EAEU's foreign relations, as well as of allied relations within the CSTO. We are improving cooperation with China, India, other Eurasian countries as well as Latin American states. Dialogue with African countries has reached a new level.

At the same time, the international political situation is becoming more turbulent, which means that an even more proactive approach is needed to provide strategic stability and form a just world order. To this end, we should use our position at the UN Security Council, and the opportunities provided by the current Russian presidency in the SCO and BRICS, as well as our participation in the G20, APEC and other multilateral organizations.

It is important to build up efforts to protect the rights and interests of our compatriots abroad, and to protect the Russian language. And, of course, the preservation of the historical truth about the Great

Patriotic War is an undisputable priority. This is especially important against the backdrop of the 75th anniversary of Victory that we will mark this year.

I am sure that you will continue to work proactively and creatively while defending Russia's interests and strengthening its position on the global arena. The country's leadership will continue to pay due attention to providing support and resources to the diplomatic service.

To the Foreign Ministry's current employees I wish continued professional success, and to its honorable former employees good health, high spirits and longevity.

A Diplomat Is Above All a Patriot.

S. Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Foreign Minister's message of greetings on Diplomats' Day, Moscow, February 10, 2020

COLLEAGUES, FRIENDS,

Today, we are celebrating Diplomats' Day. First of all, I would like to offer my sincere greetings to all our diplomatic staff and veterans on their professional holiday, the holiday of hard-working people dedicated to their work who sincerely love their Motherland and stand up for our national interests in the international arena. A diplomat is above all a patriot. Their most important qualities are honesty, integrity, reliability, eloquence in writing and speaking, extensive knowledge, and readiness to give their all. Russian diplomacy has a history of several hundred years and is famous for its traditions. At all times, diplomats have served our Fatherland with honor, fulfilling their duty to the end, including in armed combat, if needed, as was the case during World War II and the Great Patriotic War.

Guided by the experience and example of our predecessors, we will continue solving a broad range of issues in line with the foreign policy course approved by President of Russia Vladimir Putin. The agenda includes efforts to preserve peace, enhance strategic stability, resolve crises and conflicts by political and diplomatic means, promote the idea of broad Eurasian integration, strengthen bilateral cooperation and enhance interaction within multilateral associations including the United Nations, G20, BRICS, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, RIC (Russia, India, China), Eurasian Economic Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Collective Security Treaty Organization.

We will continue advancing economic diplomacy and securing the interests of Russian citizens and our compatriots abroad. And this year, as we mark the 75th anniversary of the Great Victory, it is imperative that we redouble our efforts to counter any attempts to falsify the history of World War II and the Great Patriotic War, or to revise the universally accepted international legal results of the establishment of the UN.

Thus, much is to be done to live up to the trust of the country's leadership and the Russian people. An important element of our success is reliance on the principles that link the present day and the continuity of generations. We all had mentors who generously shared their experiences and taught us the basics of diplomacy and the subtleties of the diplomatic craft. I would like to take this opportunity to express my most heartfelt appreciation to our dear veterans who are still in our ranks and continue to contribute to the common cause.

Friends,

I wish you all good health, well-being and new achievements for the benefit of Russia. Once again, happy holiday!

Russia and Indonesia: 70 Years of Fruitful Cooperation.

S. Lavrov, *Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.*

THIS YEAR, Russia and Indonesia are celebrating the 70th anniversary of their diplomatic relations. Any significant date is always a good occasion both for summing up what has been achieved so far and for drafting plans for the future.

Our compatriots had the good fortune to discover Indonesia, a nation with a distinct identity, back in the 19th century, when Russian maritime expeditions started visiting the archipelago.

The fact that Russia paid much attention to maintaining contacts with the Indonesians was confirmed by the establishment, in 1894, of the first Russian full-time consulate in Batavia, the capital of the Dutch East Indies. Somewhat earlier, in 1890, the Pamyat Azova and the Vladimir Monomakh, the ships on which Crown Prince Nicholas, the future Emperor Nicholas II of Russia, made his Eastern voyage, dropped anchor in the same harbor.

After Indonesia proclaimed independence in 1945, the USSR gave the young state all-round support. On December 27, 1949, largely due to the USSR's efforts, the UN recognized Indonesia's sovereignty over most of the territories of the Dutch East Indies. On January 25 and February 3, 1950, both countries' foreign ministers exchanged telegrams on the establishment of diplomatic relations.

Jakarta found Moscow to be a reliable friend that assisted its efforts to assert its statehood, develop its national economy, and strengthen its positions internationally.

The USSR helped Indonesia to build the Friendship hospital and the Gelora Bung Karno Stadium, as well as transport and industrial infrastructure facilities that are in operation to this day. Great strides were made in military-technical cooperation.

Despite the difficult period of the 1960s to 1980s, Russian-Indonesian relations have stood the test of time, keeping their traditionally friendly nature. Today, Indonesia is an important partner for Russia in South-East Asia and the Asia-Pacific Region as a whole. A regular dialogue has been established at the top and high levels. A strong contractual and legal infrastructure has been created, based on the 2003 Declaration on the Foundations of Friendly and Partner Relations in the 21st Century. Taking our relations to the level of a strategic partnership is on the agenda. Russia and its Indonesian friends continue to work proactively on this task.

Created in 2002, the Russian-Indonesian Joint Commission on Trade, Economic and Technical Cooperation, which includes eight working groups, coordinates joint collaborative efforts.

The two countries cooperate closely in confronting security challenges and threats. The related agencies have established a regular, productive dialogue.

I would like to single out in particular our effective coordination at multilateral venues, primarily the UN, where Jakarta became a non-permanent member of the Security Council in 2019.

I am confident that the traditions of friendship and mutual understanding, traditions tested by long decades, create the necessary prerequisites for the further expansion and intensification of cooperation. The key to success consists in the feelings of respect and mutual sympathy that unite the two nations and remain unchanged. We see in this a firm basis for Russian-Indonesian cooperation to reach new frontiers.

Russia and Vietnam: Decades-Long Friendship.

Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

THE YEAR 2020 abounds in anniversary dates in the history of Russian-Vietnamese ties. One of the most important ones is the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. On January 30, 1950, the Soviet Union was among the first countries to recognize the young Vietnamese state, thus laying the foundation of years-long friendship and close cooperation between our nations.

Cooperation between Moscow and Hanoi has stood the test of time, has strengthened and toughened, acquiring a multidimensional and truly unique character.

It is encouraging that the traditions of solidarity and mutual assistance established by preceding generations have been preserved and are developing under new historical conditions.

There is regular and substantive political dialogue that stands out for its high degree of openness and mutual trust.

We note with satisfaction the dynamic development of economic ties in traditional areas (energy, industrial production, transport, and agriculture), as well as in new promising sectors (digital economy, e-government, smart city technology, and ICT security).

Energy cooperation is a major segment of Russian-Vietnamese comprehensive strategic partnership. Our flagship joint venture, Vietsovpetro, has been successfully operating for four decades now. Russian majors – Gazprom, Rosneft, Novatek, and Zarubezhneft – together with PetroVietnam Oil and Gas Corporation are implementing hydrocarbons prospecting and production projects in Russia and Vietnam, improving and diversifying their cooperation based on the latest scientific and technological achievements.

Bilateral cooperation is becoming increasingly innovative and hightech. A case in point is the Center of Nuclear Science and Technology, a construction project that is being implemented in Vietnam with assistance from Rosatom Corporation.

We are rightfully proud of the joint Russian-Vietnamese Tropical Research and Technology Center, which has no equals in the world and which recently marked its 30th anniversary. Today, the Tropical Center is implementing a wide range of research projects in areas such as the environment, tropical medicine and materials technology in the interest of Russian and Vietnamese organizations and agencies.

Education remains a traditional area of bilateral cooperation. Vietnam still holds leading positions in the number of its citizens studying in Russia. In recent years, tens of thousands of Vietnamese specialists in various fields have undergone training in Russia. At present, many of them hold high state positions, make up their country's officer corps and work for major business companies and scientific and cultural organizations. A total of 965 state scholarships have been provided for Vietnamese students this academic year. This is one of the largest quotas granted to foreign undergraduate and graduate students.

I would like to note our effective cooperation in the world arena. It is based on our identical or similar positions on topical issues on the global and regional agendas. Russia and its Vietnamese friends are committed to building a more just and democratic multipolar world order, based on international law, above all on the key provisions of the UN Charter.

on. During the 70 years since diplomatic relations were established, Russia and Vietnam have accumulated considerable constructive experience in cooperation in various areas. It can and should be effectively used to further strengthen our bilateral ties. It is important that friendship and sincere

mutual sympathy between our peoples remain unshakable, impervious to political fluctuations of the moment. It is necessary to preserve this unique legacy and pass it on to the younger generation. After all, this generation will continue the tradition of expanding and deepening Russian-Vietnamese comprehensive strategic partnership.

Vietnamese-Russian Comprehensive Strategic Partnership: Continuing Traditions, Confidently Looking Into the Future.

Pham Binh Minh, *Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.*

SEVENTY YEARS AGO, on January 30, 1950, the Soviet Union officially established diplomatic relations with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, becoming one of the first countries in the world to recognize the newly independent state. The USSR thus demonstrated a high degree of solidarity with the Vietnamese people in their struggle for a just cause.

We will never forget the soldiers-internationalists, Vietnam's finest sons who laid down their lives during the most terrible days of the operation to defend Moscow against the Nazi invaders in the winter of 1941, as well as the Soviet people's unselfish assistance in the struggle for our country's independence and unity, in defending our motherland. Many Soviet specialists supported the Vietnamese people morally and materially, following their hearts, ignoring the dangers and hardships, worked hard side by side with us, going through the ordeals of the Resistance War, making a tangible contribution to the great victory of the spring of 1975.

To establish a legal framework for Vietnamese-Russian cooperation in the new conditions, in 1994, the Treaty on Fundamental Principles of Friendly Relations between Russia and Vietnam was signed, stating in particular that these relations are based on principles of respect for the two countries' independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as equality, noninterference in each other's internal affairs and other norms of international law, taking into account mutual interests.

Vietnamese-Russian economic cooperation has produced good, tangible results. Bilateral trade has grown from \$500 million in 2001 to \$4.5 billion in 2018.

Investment cooperation is also expanding. Several large-scale modern projects are under way in Vietnam and Russia, such as a high-tech agricultural project of Th True Milk Corporation in the Russian Federation.

CONSIDERING the complicated international and regional situation, as well as the numerous traditional and new challenges and threats, strengthening comprehensive strategic partnership between Vietnam and Russia is very important for protecting the independence and sovereignty and ensuring the socioeconomic development of each country. It also helps maintain peace, stability and progress on the regional and global scale.

With regard to economic cooperation, our two countries are unanimous in their commitment to continue their efforts to enhance the practical payoff from the Free Trade Agreement between Vietnam and the Eurasian Economic Union, eliminating nontariff barriers in bilateral trade and promoting a favorable environment for investment cooperation.

Looking back over the past 70 years, we are rightfully proud of our achievements. Proceeding from this experience and taking into account the consistent efforts of our countries' leaders, we are confident that, despite the new challenges and difficulties, Vietnamese-Russian strategic partnership will strengthen and develop in the spirit of our good traditions of friendship, in the name of peace, cooperation, well-being, and prosperity in the region and the entire world.

Principal Vectors of Russian Diplomacy in the Post-Soviet Space.

Olga Lebedeva, Associate Professor, Diplomacy Department, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Doctor of Science (history); o.lebedeva13@gmail.com

THE DISINTEGRATION of the Soviet Union has led to a new geopolitical zone appearing on the world map – the so-called post-Soviet space where Russia plays a dominant role even though post-Soviet countries have different development paths, political regimes and economies. Amid the escalating relations between Russia and the West, the pressing problem for Russia right now is to build relations with its immediate neighbors. Therefore, maintaining diplomatic relations with post-Soviet countries is an important geopolitical goal for Russia, since this is a zone of strategic economic and political interests. However, not only Russia is interested in establishing strong diplomatic ties but also former Soviet countries. This is largely because Russia is at the center of the post-Soviet space, with many countries, including EaEU member states, pursuing trade and economic relations via Russia.

ALMOST 30 YEARS have passed since the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) ceased to exist. That event had several serious geopolitical consequences, in particular the emergence of a new geopolitical space on the Eurasian continent, known as “post-Soviet.”

RUSSIA’S DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS with post-Soviet countries such as Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, and Armenia are developing in the generally positive way. All of these countries have relatively small territories and are to a certain extent dependent on Russia. For example, the ceasefire in Nagorno-Karabakh would have been impossible without Russia’s participation; likewise, Tajikistan would have been exposed to the threat posed by domestic Islamist movements, as well as the threat of outside invasion (the country’s defense is currently ensured by Russia’s 201st Military Base that is stationed there). Furthermore, these countries are economically tied to Russia, which is a sales market, a labor market and a source of cheap energy. Therefore, Russia is playing a significant stabilizing role in these countries’ economic and political life.

For its part, Russia is interested in a diplomatic alliance with these countries primarily in the interest of consolidating its military-political and global strategic positions.

Today Russia and Azerbaijan maintain strategic interaction that is equally important to both countries. It is built on a pragmatic basis and includes trade, economic, and military-technical cooperation. Azerbaijan is not a member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EaEU), but experts do not rule out its accession to the EaEU in the foreseeable future, since Turkey, Azerbaijan’s ally, is also considering this option as an alternative to the European Union (EU).

Russia’s diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan are primarily guided by the need to maintain influence in Central Asia. Kazakhstan, which is located between China and Russia, is increasingly gravitating toward integration with Russia, as evidenced by the two countries’ successful and effective cooperation for more than 20 years.

Economically, Belarus is the most heavily dependent on Russian markets compared to other post-Soviet countries. At the same time, the Belarusian president’s policy has made the country’s orientation toward the West impossible.

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS with Georgia and, of course, with Ukraine are among the most acute problem areas in the post-Soviet space. As far as Georgia is concerned, bilateral relations were far from smooth even in the first several years after the disintegration of the USSR. In the early 1990s, Georgia’s first government blocked the railway line near the town of Samtredia, which essentially amounted to an

economic blockade. Production ties between Russian and Georgian industrial enterprises were badly affected as a result.

Since the disintegration of the USSR and the declaration of independence by Ukraine in 1991, it has been between two poles of attraction – i.e., Russia and Europe. This characterization is true in both a direct, geopolitical and emotional/cultural sense.

There is no doubt that Russia is interested in enhancing its influence in the post-Soviet space to protect and reinforce its borders. That is the focus of the country's diplomatic efforts at present. Russia is seeking to formulate and substantiate common economic and political goals as well as build a harmonious relationship with the ruling classes. Thus, it is looking to strike a balance between competition and partnership with post-Soviet states. Maintaining a balance in this geopolitical space is not only a short-term goal but also a long-term one.

Emmanuel Macron's European Project and Russia.

Vladimir Chernega, *Advisor to the Council of Europe, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, leading research associate, Institute of Scientific Information on Social Sciences, Russian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Science (Law); vladimir.tchernega@free.fr*

When Emmanuel Macron met with Vladimir Putin in August 2019 at Fort Bregançon, the French president's statements about the necessity of creating with Russia "a European space from Lisbon to Vladivostok" caused a brief but resounding stir among the international press. In most EU and NATO countries, the responses were circumspect or critical. As might have been expected, the most negative assessments of these statements came from Great Britain, Poland, the Baltic countries, and (outside the EU and NATO) from Ukraine. Skepticism prevailed in France as well, in particular concerning Macron's words about Russia being "a very thoroughly European country."

In fact, Macron's statements fit with his European project, the themes of which he outlined in his book *Revolution* (2016), published before coming to power. This author has already made note in other publications that his (Macron's) book paradoxically transformed the Gaullist ideas of independence and sovereignty, raising them to the level of the EU.

Macron also justified an inevitable distance between the EU and the U.S. by pointing out that the divergence of their geopolitical trajectories had begun already under President Obama. As he emphasized, Europe's American partner and ally has shifted its priorities more and more toward Asia. Together with the rise of China and its outward expansion, especially in Africa, it was necessary to revisit the matter of relations between France and the EU with Russia – a "European country."

To many in France and abroad, these ideas of Macron's seemed utopian. Regarding Russia, one must also take into account the rejection of rapprochement on the part of pro-Atlantic circles, which are oriented toward the U.S. – they are still hoping that after the departure of Donald Trump, EU-U.S. relations will "go back to normal."

In the international arena, Macron has also proved to be a fairly energetic and courageous politician.

The French president made great efforts to save the 2015 "nuclear deal" with Iran (JCPOA) and the 2016 Paris Climate Agreement, both of which were rejected by Trump. But his attempts to resolve these problems during personal meetings with the U.S. president were in vain.

Yet the main subject of Macron's foreign policy efforts, as was to be expected, remained his European project. In September 2017, speaking at the University of Sorbonne, he outlined a plan of action essentially aimed at turning the EU into a federal state. This speech was scrutinized quite carefully in Russia.

The president of France has repeatedly written and spoken about the need to create a “new architecture of trust and security” in Europe with the participation of Russia.

In August 2019, speaking at the annual Ambassadors’ Conference, Macron returned to this idea, emphasizing that the transformation of Europe into a world center of power is becoming increasingly important due to the decline of Western hegemony on the planet.

An even more important problem for Macron’s plans may be how they are perceived in Russia. As Vladimir Putin noted at the meeting at Bregançon, Russia is of course a part of European culture. Russian diplomacy has advocated and continues to advocate for the restoration of economic cooperation and political dialogue with the EU, including (and especially) on security issues. However, it is difficult to imagine that Russia, which feels itself at the peak of its geopolitical power, would ever see itself in a broad “concentric circle” orbiting the EU as a junior partner or appendage. There is no reason for it to turn away from continued cooperation with China either.

Nevertheless, if Russia were to take certain steps to join the trend that Macron represents within the EU, that would suit its own underlying interests.

The WTO: Contours of Change.

Vladimir Epaneshnikov, *Senior Counselor, Department of European Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*; vladimir_epanesh@mail.ru

THE QUESTION OF CHANGE in WTO activities is no longer hypothetical but has taken a practical turn. The United States and the European Union, as well as other WTO members, have already formulated their initial positions on this issue. WTO reform is a current priority for the G20.

The U.S. was the first to take practical action in altering the existing architecture and activities of the WTO. One of the main concerns for most WTO states is the impossibility of appointing new members to the WTO Appellate Body because of U.S. obstruction.

It is preferable to create new WTO agreements for a limited number of participants that would not be binding on all WTO members. Otherwise, it will be impossible to sign any major new agreement (for example, on e-commerce).

This crisis is rooted in the failure of the latest round of multilateral trade negotiations, which took place in Doha. As we know, the World Trade Organization (previously GATT) has conducted several comprehensive rounds of trade talks whose purpose is to achieve significant liberalization of international trade by negotiating global trade agreements.

When the WTO ceased to perform this obvious function, its members immediately began looking for other useful roles it could play and for ways to reorganize it. But there is also another option...

Logically speaking, the Americans have already reached a point where the WTO dispute settlement mechanism is no longer profitable for them, because it is too independent and too many cases are lost

The EUROPEANS continue to insist that multilateral regulation of international trade through the system administered by the WTO is a global good. As they say at every opportunity, it should not be destroyed. As if to prove this point, the EU continues to conclude new free trade agreements (FTAs) with its partners based on WTO agreements and each time going a little further than previous ones (on matters such as environmental protection, investment, and customs formalities).

While the WTO was on the rise, there was talk of expanding its scope to include, for example, issues related to investment. Today, this is hardly relevant. After all, the whole point is to address new issues in formats that could lead to their resolution, while the Doha Round has raised significant doubts about the WTO's functionality in the new conditions.

As seen from Russia's perspective, future changes also play a significant role. First and foremost, our country is interested in the stability of the world trading system. This is why the Russian economy would benefit from maintaining a predictable international regulator, as opposed to a situation where our Western partners would have a free hand. Of course, the existence of the WTO has not prevented the United States and the EU from imposing economic sanctions on Russia, but on the other hand, Russia has successfully used the WTO arbitration mechanism (as with Ukraine); it is involved in a class action suit against the U.S. over the unwarranted increase in import duties on steel; we have proposed amendments to the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, etc. Practical interest in WTO activities makes it necessary for us to participate in the processes that can impact the future activities of the World Trade Organization and its role in the international economic system.

Preserving Independence and Power, Iran's Top Priority.

Mehdi Sanaei, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Russian Federation*

I would like to begin by expressing gratitude toward the International Affairs journal and the Press and Information Department of the Russian Foreign Ministry for this opportunity to address the Russian and foreign media, scholars and political experts.

Relations between Iran and Russia have a more than 500-year history. There are not many countries in the world today that share such a long common history. Recently, our relations have been deepening and strengthening, in certain cases acquiring a strategic character, including our partnership in the fight against terrorism in the Middle East and Syria. The relations between Tehran and Moscow are based on mutual trust. By removing barriers in our relations, we have sought to sign fundamental documents that we consider necessary for our constructive interaction.

I believe that now more than ever, we realize the importance of Iranian-Russian relations, the need to restore peace in the region and fight against terrorism.

Active dialogue is ongoing with Russian regions. First of all, I would like to note cooperation between Iran and the North Caucasus. Both Iran and Russia host events and activities designed to promote cultural and economic ties, including the discussion of options for transport corridors.

What Iran is doing with regard to the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) is the behavior of an independent strong state that is following the norms of international law. I believe that the signing of the JCPOA was an act of self-sacrifice on the part of Iran.

Iran is willing to hold talks and does not ignore any proposals. Under the current circumstances, dialogue is possible only after the sanctions are lifted.

Iran has its own approaches toward foreign policy and economic activity. We cooperate with many countries in the world, maintaining dialogue with them, but we still prioritize regional politics. This is only natural: After all, we share our land and maritime borders with 15 neighboring states.

Preserving Iran's independence and power is the issue of critical importance for it. The country relies on a domestic economy, on internal potential. It is possible that other international players have pinned hopes on the sanctions against Tehran, expecting them to cause serious harm to Iran.

In conclusion, I would like to note the good relations between our foreign policy agencies in formulating our countries' policy. I would like to thank the Russian Foreign Ministry, the minister and his deputies, and the heads of departments with whom I have established friendly contacts for their support and cooperation.

I would like to assure you that we also listened to your opinion, the opinion of reporters, journalists, correspondents. I am sincerely grateful to everybody for their criticism, cooperation and support, especially since my six-year stint in Russia is coming to an end.

I am a university man; my field of specialization is international relations. I have been studying Russia for 20 years and will continue to do so. I believe that we will see an even closer relationship and affinity between Iran and Russia.

The "Rules-Based Liberal Order" and International Law.

Yevgeny Voronin, *Professor, Department of International Law, leading research associate, Institute of International Studies, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary; tverv@rambler.ru*

THE INCONSTANCY of this "beauteous world," brought on by the ceaseless U.S. "habit" of hampering the sovereign interests of the rest of the world with its messianic militarism in an attempt to achieve the "Americanization" of the existing world order, is becoming the main challenge of our time.

In a sense, what is happening in the world reaffirms the conclusion of one modern Russian thinker about the "slipping away of being" and about the last remaining realm of human civilization – the affective state.

The most sensitive issue for global security and guarantees of stability in the world is the withdrawal of states from the existing system of treaties or the suspension of their participation in them, along with the abnegation of the international legal obligations that determine the modern world order.

The U.S.'s departure from the above treaties with Russia based on made-up circumstances and under artificial pretexts which basically amount to "false premises," casts doubt on the reciprocity in the commitment to the fulfillment of their former contractual obligations.

The prevalence of the American potential to exert influence on the subsequent development of the so-called "crisis" around the Iranian nuclear program (especially given the Western marginalization of international law) cannot hinder us from being inspired by the conviction that "the Russian government should not take its hand off the rudder of State" (to use the vocabulary of an old diplomatic instruction).

The American death blow to international law was countered by U.S. Supreme Court justice John Paul Stevens, known as a person of exceptional decency, reasonableness and honesty who defended the rule of law and viewed existing jurisprudence not as defining foreign policy in the first instance, but "as a backstop against arbitrary, unjust or inhumane decisions of the executive branch."

In the Russian consciousness, as well as the whole European consciousness, civilization made the 20th century an “age of suffering” despite the best expectations of “European upbringing” and the hopes of a self-confident political and “legal” pacifism.

The destruction of the existing international legal order initiated by the Western bloc calls into question the future fate of the START treaties, agreements pertaining to outer space, the open skies, the prospect of finding solutions based on the principle and norms of international law, the ability to resolve issues in the military’s use of artificial intelligence, and more. history has taught us, the withdrawal of a state or states from concluded bilateral treaties or international conventions, as a rule, was considered as a so-called “preventative measure” that nonetheless always led up to military conflict or military-political crisis fraught with consequences for the national or collective security of states.

The Russian side has tried to draw attention to the need to agree on a clearer general understanding and interpretation of the principles and norms of international law, as well as their proper application in today’s conditions of global, multipolar development, in which the regulatory and binding role of the international legal format should remain unchanged.

The Political and Legal Landscape of the Alaska Phenomenon.

Yevgeny Zinkov, *Professor, Department of Social, humanitarian and Natural Sciences, North Caucasus Branch of the Russian State University of Justice, Doctor of Science (Philosophy); ezinkov@mail.ru*

The first legal documentation of Alaska’s coastline took place on August 21, 1732, when the crew of the St. Gabriel, under the leadership of surveyor Mikhail Gvozdev and navigator Ivan Fyodorov (or K. Moshkov, according to other sources), recorded its contours without going ashore. From this date began the jurisdictional affiliation of Alaska with the Russian Empire. however, the territory for a long time continued to be developed on the basis of civil law. The bureaucrats of the Russian Empire did not duly administer the land in Alaska. This situation contributed to the consolidation of legal relations within civil society on the territory along the lines of the Novgorod Republic.

By 1799, the situation in Russian America began to radically change following the formation of a complete monopoly by G.I. Shelikhov's companies. The decree by Tsar Paul I granted Shelikhov’s widow and children an official monopoly on fur and other industries throughout the entire space from the Aleutian Islands to California. This decree was the basis for setting up the Russian-American Company, which became the first authorized body of governance there. It was assigned its own flag and allowed to maintain its own Ground Forces and Navy. The company had the right to claim new lands.

Representatives of the Russian-American Company actively expanded the territory of Russian America. Its population grew arithmetically due to the adoption of Russian citizenship by the local population in America.

In turn, the United States of America began to express concern that if no action was taken, the North American continent could become completely Russian in the next half-century. Under the Monroe Doctrine (that the American continent belongs only to the United States), Russians began to be pushed out of California.

The American political elite staunchly supported the myth that Alaska wished to cede from the mainland and sought to bring to life a new Novgorod Republic, with ambitions to claim territory from the Far East and Siberia to the Ural Mountains. Perhaps this was a further argument for Russia in favor of the sale of Alaska.

The territory for sale legally belonged to the Russian-American JointStock Company, which had the status of an independent public and private entity – or, as they say now, a public-private partnership. It should not have been sold without notifying or receiving approval from the Russian-American Company, nor from its shareholders, since such actions were against the law. From a juridical perspective, all these acts were illicit, and the transaction itself would therefore not be legally binding. Nevertheless, it took place.

It is also an interesting fact that the amount of the 1867 transaction between the Russian Empire and the United States of America was \$7.2 million. This was the exact amount of the bill that Russia had presented to the U.S. (and was never paid) for the fleet provided by Russia during the American Revolutionary War.

After all, no one has ever seen a receipt documenting the monetary transfer. Based on the ruling on this dispute, other procedural actions may be taken. To follow this further, a few matters need to be better understood: Was this a financial and political scam in which the Tsar is improperly blamed for trusting his agents (who cleverly took advantage of the situation), or was it a bad-faith real estate deal on the part of the United States of America? Or perhaps it was a conspiracy among third parties pursuing their own interests in the deal?

The “Bulwark of Europe”: Ideology and Program Goals of Ukrainian Nationalism.

Oleg Vishlyov, *Candidate of Science (history)*; ov54@yandex.ru

Ukrainian nationalists were ready to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Wehrmacht. They expected that with the help of the “victorious Great German Reich” they would destroy the Soviet Union and create an independent Ukrainian state as an integral part of the hitler’s “new European order.” No wonder they showered the Nazi leaders with requests and suggestions of all sorts and offered their ideas about the future of “European space.”

Today, these documents acquired special importance as a source of knowledge of the ideology and political program of Ukrainian nationalism.

THE STATEMENT of the “European identity of the Ukrainian people” is the tune of the day in Ukraine, yet it is not a recent invention. As one of the traditional cornerstones of Ukrainian nationalism, it is a serious political statement rather than a catch-phrase. In 2019, it became part of the Ukrainian Constitution together with the course at EU and NATO membership.

From the very beginning, this formula has been used to distinguish between “European” Ukraine and “Asiatic” Russia and justify the detachment of the Ukrainian lands from the “Muscovite Empire.” Ukrainian nationalists spoke of Russia as a culturally and politically undeveloped alien force, the Eurasian Coercive Autarky, and a state, the internal sustainability of which was highly doubtful.

When talking about the political aspects of the relations between Ukraine and Germany, the OUN leaders pointed out: “A clear and sober assessment of the political and, on the whole, geopolitical situation... forces the leaders of Ukrainian nationalists to identify close cooperation with Germany as their main aim.”

Considering Ukraine’s economic value for Europe and Germany, the OUN leaders did not spare words to point out that an independent Ukrainian state would allow Europe to significantly weaken the positions of Russia.

THE OUN LEADERS did not limit themselves to the discussions of psychological, cultural, economic, and essential, so to speak, differences between “European” Ukraine and “Asiatic” Russia as the arguments in favor of Ukrainian independence. They were convinced that Russia/the USSR was the main obstacle on the road toward their independence and the main rival, sometime in the future, in the “East European space.”

They were also convinced that the “Muscovite Empire” should be liquidated or, at least, defeated and deprived of the bigger part of its territory and, together with it, its political weight.

In their documents, the OUN leaders spoke of Russia as an oppressor of Ukrainians that wanted to grab the natural riches of their country, suppress their love of freedom and that had already destroyed “great numbers of Ukrainian freedom-fighters.”

It is highly important to note that the so-called Holodomor (famine) was not included in the list of Russia’s “crimes” against Ukrainians. Today, it is one of the favorite subjects in Kiev together with the statements that the Holodomor was part of the Moscow-inspired “genocide” of Ukrainians.

On February 9, 1918, representatives of the Central Rada signed in Brest-Litovsk a peace treaty with Germany, Austria-hungary and their allies – Turkey and Bulgaria²⁶ that defined the borders of the UNR in the west and north-west. Under the Treaty, the border between Austria-hungary and the Russian Empire registered by the beginning of World War I was accepted as the western border of the UNR, which meant that the regions with the center in Lvov (known as Western Ukraine) were not included into the Ukrainian People’s Republic.

The steadily mounting territorial claims of the UNR leaders were never realized despite the Austrian-German armed support. These ambitious plans were opposed by the Ukrainian, Donetsk-Krivoy Rog and Odessa Soviet republics and their revolutionary troops, by the Romanian and Polish armies, and the Armed Forces of the South of Russia.

When in the summer of 1940 Romania transferred Bessarabia to the Soviet Union, its southern parts were, likewise, attached to Soviet Ukraine to give it an access to the Danube delta.

The OUN leaders were highly satisfied with these territorial acquisitions in the west and the policy of Ukrainization of the newly acquired lands realized by the Soviet Government as fully coinciding with the Ukrainians’ basic interests.

On June 10, 1941, they presented Hitler with their final variant of the future borders of independent Ukraine. Some of the points reproduced the opinions of the UNR leadership and testified that Ukrainian nationalists had spread their claims to much wider territories than before.

Judging by the memorandum addressed to Hitler, Ukraine was devised as a “state of the Führerprinzip” which meant a corporate state of the fascist type.

What should we await from the heirs of the OUN ideology today marching in torchlight processions in Kiev and other Ukrainian cities? They are ready to set on fire those whom they call “Colorado beetles” in Odessa; they wear Nazi symbols and unite into what they call “volunteer battalions” to kill “vatniks” in Donbass and liberate Crimea and other “historical Ukrainian lands” from the “aggressor-country.” It seems that Kiev does not fully understand that the acceptance of the OUN ideology and program aims might cause a tragedy and that the relationships between Ukrainians and Russians, two brother nations with common roots, common historical destiny and common achievements might suffer

Allegations of a German Invasion Plan in the Russian Press in 1906: The Russian Foreign Ministry's Response.

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ONE OF Alexander Izvolsky's first moves as foreign minister of Russia was to set up a press bureau at his ministry and establish contacts with the Russian press. Izvolsky realized that the press played a tremendous role in shaping public attitudes to government policies and was trying to influence public opinion in everything related to his ministry's activities.

In a circular letter in July 1906 to Russian ambassadors and other senior diplomats posted abroad, Izvolsky said that, as soon as he had taken ministerial office, he decided to instruct the ministry to monitor the Russian and foreign press and establish regular contacts with the press.

ON JULY 5, 1906, semiofficial newspaper *Rossiya* (Russia) published an article that alarmed the German ambassador in St. Petersburg, Wilhelm von Schoen. The article was headlined "Foreign Powers and the State of Affairs in Russia" and was signed "Diplomaticus," a pen name for journalist S.L. Pishchatovsky.

Rossiya itself effectively disowned the article, apparently under Foreign Ministry pressure. It published an anonymous statement claiming that the article by Diplomaticus was based on information from Austrian and German newspapers and did not reflect the position of the Russian government.

But none of these denials worked: not only did they fail to bring an end to speculation in the press about the alleged possibility of a German attack but stirred interest in the theme. *Rossiya*, for example, soon published another article about a suspected German contribution to the Russian revolution.

Schoen did not know who specifically could have been behind the article but was sure it was not the Foreign Ministry.

The efforts of Izvolsky and Schoen, however, failed to make the Russian press abandon the German invasion theme. Moreover, the issue took international dimensions as influential French newspapers picked it up.

On July 21, 1906, *Le Figaro* published an article by Eugène Lautier, a journalist and later a politician, headlined "In Russia. German Invasion."

Lautier argued that a speech made by German Emperor Wilhelm II at a banquet for the Alexander Guard Grenadiers, a German army regiment named after Russian Emperor Alexander I, was a clear sign that Germany was planning to attack Russia.

Baltic German émigrés sought to fully restore the autonomy of the Baltic governorates curtailed by the reforms. They hoped that the governorates' annexation by Germany would return the privileges to them that they had lost and prevent their Russification.

The émigrés tried to use every chance, including the Russian revolution of 1905 and World War I events, to pressure the German government to annex the Baltic region. Schiemann was an annexation activist.

After Lautier's article, Bülow decided to send a letter to the Foreign Ministry representative at the German imperial court, Martin Rücker von Jenisch, and asked Deputy State Secretary Otto von Mühlberg to draft it on July 24.

Wilhelm said that Germany might annex the governorates if the Russian government were overthrown. Jenisch did not support the emperor's stance and told him that Schiemann had a one-sided take on what was happening in the Baltic region.

Wide-scale allegations in the Russian press that Germany had been involved in the Russian revolution of 1905 and was considering a war on Russia caused serious problems to Schoen.

One can be sure that these press discussions were responsible for setting up a foreign policy department at Rossiya's editorial office in December 1906. Foreign Ministry official Dmitry Nikolsky was appointed its chief. This move of Izvolsky ruled out the possibility of the semiofficial newspaper printing foreign policy articles without Foreign Ministry control and foreign policy issues receiving interpretations in the paper that the government did not want.

The Foreign Ministry recommended that Russian diplomatic missions abroad take out subscriptions to Rossiya "among other Russian publications" [Ibid.]. All this meant that Izvolsky accorded a special role to Rossiya in interaction between the Foreign Ministry and the press and in building a positive international image for Russia.

Contemporary Integration Processes in the Post-Soviet Space.

Sergey Lavrov, *Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*

IT IS MY PLEASURE to greet the organizers and attendees of this jubilee conference held in Yalta by the journal International Affairs with support from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

It is inspiring that, just as the preceding conferences, this forum has an extensive program. Among other subjects, it is going to discuss prospects of interaction in vast Eurasian territories from cooperation within the format of the Union State to developing an architecture for equal and indivisible continental security. Russia will continue to contribute to peace, prosperity, and sustainable development in Eurasia.

Sergey Aksyonov, *Head of the Republic of Crimea*

Over the past ten years, this conference has done more than simply winning recognition as an authoritative and influential format for contacts and exchanges of experience between political scientists, diplomats, and experts on international affairs, including development issues in the post-Soviet space.

The work to be done by this conference, assessments and conclusions to be made by its participants, and recommendations to be offered by experts and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on the basis on the results of the conference will serve to consolidate the international status of Crimea and will help our region and the Russian Federation, as a whole, attain their foreign policy objectives.

The Black Sea Geopolitical Challenge.

Georgy Muradov, *Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Crimea, and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Crimea to the President of the Russian Federation*

THE BLACK SEA is a microcosm of world geopolitics. It is unique in that it is highly saturated with a multitude of interstate conflicts and ongoing territorial issues between not only littoral states, but major world players.

The division of the USSR into separate states was a legally unanticipated, not clearly thought through, and politically erroneous act. Neither the peoples nor the societies of the new states that were formed as a result of a voluntary action by the leaders of three of the 15 Soviet republics were prepared for its

dissolution, and found it unacceptable, even bordering on a crime. Its consequences led to the emergence of numerous, difficult to resolve conflicts and essentially to the collapse of these newly formed states.

The situation in the Black Sea region is firmly tied to the explosive conflicts in the Balkans.

By the 2000s, the geopolitical position of the region had completely changed. The military-political dominance of the USSR and its allies was replaced by the domination of NATO countries and Russia's retention of only a small northeastern segment of the Black Sea coast.

The Ukrainian crisis of 2014, which caused a split within the country, and the return of Crimea to Russia became the most important geopolitical events in the modern history of the Black Sea region.

Recently a new actor has started coming out from under the West's wing and pursuing its own ends: Turkey. Its policies in the Black Sea show that it is trying to act more independently, prompted by the aggravation of Turkish-American relations and the complications of finding common ground with the European Union. Ukraine as a regional actor has essentially lost the ability to act in its own interests and has turned into a foreign geopolitical tool.

It seems the main thrust of all our efforts in the Black Sea-Balkan geopolitical realm should be to develop ways and mechanisms to counter the aforementioned efforts of Russia's opponents. It would be important in this regard to apply the "Toynbee paradigm" to relations with our opponents, as the West itself does.

The Black Sea-Balkan and Caspian regions are directly related to the prospect of maintaining peace there, as well as ensuring the security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Russia. And Crimea continues its centuries-old mission in this respect. Its role in the military-strategic, political, spiritual-civilizational, cultural, scientific, and social realms is invaluable and irreplaceable. We will strengthen it and push it further!

Greater Eurasia and New Contours of Continental Security.

Oleg Stepanov, *Director of the Foreign Policy Planning Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*

At its political, philosophical and conceptual foundation, Greater Eurasia stems from life – from the economic and political realities in which our country is developing. This idea fully reflects an imperative that is crucial to Russian foreign policy: to ensure favorable external conditions for the country's internal development. The initiative is aimed at creating a space of good neighborliness and stability along the perimeter of our borders – that is, it seeks to implement the priority enshrined in the current Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation.

The most important element, the core, of this large Eurasian partnership has been to implement the idea of pairing the leading integration association in Eurasia – the Eurasian Economic Union – with the Chinese OBOR initiative. The first step was the May 2018 signing of the EAEU-China trade and economic cooperation agreement.

In addition, free trade agreements have been signed with Vietnam and Singapore, as well as an interim agreement paving the way to a free trade zone with Iran. Moreover, the EAEU is conducting substantive negotiations for cooperation with 13 countries and more than 20 international entities and organizations.

The Greater Eurasia project fits in seamlessly with a buildup of efforts to develop relations with the Asia-Pacific countries – something that political analysts have dubbed “Russia’s turn to the East.” It is clear that this blanket term is not an ideal description.

Looking to the long term, we consider a prosperous and conflict-free Asia one of the pillars of the emerging multipolar world order. Some of the largest civilizations are located in this region.

Our agenda still includes the idea of an “integration of integrations” between the EAEU and the EU. Thus far, the bureaucracy in Brussels has not matured to that point; in general, they are not looking to the EAEU as a partner in terms of “interconnectedness” in Eurasia. Such strategic shortsightedness, multiplied by anti-Russian politicization and general arrogance, is, of course, regrettable.

In conclusion, I would like to note that Russia is looking to the future with confidence. We have not the slightest doubt that the countries of Greater Eurasia are able to answer existing challenges, overcome the problems therein and transform our megaregion into a common space of security and prosperity. We will be working to achieve this goal together with all interested partners.

On Systemic Crisis and Postcapitalism.

Armen Oganessian, *Editor-in-Chief, International Affairs journal*

The integration processes unfolding in post-Soviet countries should be discussed within the context of the world development trends. Let us not forget that we are talking here about the huge Eurasian space with the multimillion-strong population and unique cultural variety and creative potential. Its future depends, in the first place, on the internal energy of its peoples realized not in a vacuum but through their cooperation with the rest of the world.

A fairly big share of our population learned how to survive in similar historical circumstances when the Soviet Union was receding into history. Today, the situation in the world looks very much like the last Soviet years. It is true that even if the period of changes that, in fact, have already come is much more prolonged. On the other hand, these changes are not limited to one country or a group of countries (a political bloc) but are unfolding across the world.

Today, the idea of universalist culture expected to replace the culture of the so-called traditional society looks even more doubtful than before. Even though the theoreticians of social constructivism continue defining nations, confessions and civilizational units as “imagined communities,” their political disappearance will be accompanied by the disappearance of real social ties and institutes that operate inside any society as part of historical memory. The “switched off” societies will be left to the discretion of artificial administrative-political mechanisms that imitate democracy and are kept afloat with money or the use of force.

The totalitarian trends emerging in neoliberal society crop up as a new interpretation of the category of freedom as the right to infringe on the freedom of others by the rights of the “leader” and under the pretext of the opponents’ civilizational, cultural and social inferiority.

Political methodology outstrips by far the ideological processes hence artificially created conflicts and lines of tension, “orange revolutions,” inter-national and religious conflicts and civil wars that replaced across the world the old and useless economic and social mechanisms.

Those who recently relied on the “soft power” strategy to preserve the old system have moved to the strategy of controlled chaos and attempts to stir up conflicts when the old means prove inefficient. In the long-term perspective, this strategy is inefficient: the inevitable result, that is, collapse of the outdated development and governance model, is postponed but not avoided.

It is highly important to answer the question about the deeply rooted causes and mechanisms of the current socio-political crisis and the related ideological vacuum by turning to the disruption of the tradition as one of the deepest phenomena of Western culture.

Today, postmodernity is no longer a philosophical and aesthetic project and not, to a much greater extent, the natural state of Western culture as presented by its apologists. This is, first and foremost, a social and political program imposed on society “from above” as a system of norms and rules.

The concept of digital society is the latest trend of late modernity. In an absence of adequate control by morality and science, it will increase inequality and launch social archaization at a fast pace.

It remains to be seen whether the world ruling class is ready to worldwide “perestroika” and “new thinking,” to reformatting the global world into the world of big regions, that is, a multipolar world. The answer is still unclear. Today, we can only say that this shift is a matter of time rather than of principle; it is unavoidable, and the choice is limited by two possible scenarios.

Construction of the Union State of Russia and Belarus: The Status Quo and the Outlook for the Future.

Alexander Stoppe, *Head of the Analytical Department of the Standing Committee of the Union State, Professor*

THE CURRENT CONSTRUCTION of the Union State of Russia and Belarus is not an easy endeavor. Russian-Belarusian integration is being tested out by global economic instability, Western attempts to tear Belarus away from Russia, an overall crisis of confidence in international relations, and escalating information wars. This process, which is based on the Treaty of December 8, 1999, between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus on the Creation of a Union State, needs a careful analysis to include reviewing what has been done, setting tasks for the future and foreseeing what, for various reasons, is impossible to do in the near term. hopefully, the roadmaps that are being drawn up by an ad hoc Russian-Belarusian intergovernmental working group will be effective instruments for moving forward.

A lot has been achieved already. Unfortunately, the majority of advantages that are offered by the Union State go unnoticed. Russians are often simply unaware of them while the Belarusians have got used to them – they are like the air: you don’t notice it when you have enough of it, you’re just breathing, but you immediately know when there’s not enough of it.

The idea the treaty is based on, that Belarusians should be able to feel at home in Russia and vice versa, has in fact been put into practice in many respects. There is no border or customs control, Belarusians and Russians have practically equal rights to education, social welfare, medical assistance, and employment in both countries.

Special mention should be made of cooperation between the Russian Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. There are practically no problems there, a common research space has been created. There exists a joint body, the Inter-Academy Council, which is headed by the presidents of the two academies. It is practically the only obstacle that the Russian academy is not authorized to place orders for scientific or technological research programs developed by the Union State.

Belarus and Russia coordinate their policies on key international issues on the basis of joint programs that are provided by their foreign ministries and are updated once every two years.

Belarus and Russia are building a common economic space. This work has included signing more than 30 agreements and seven protocols to them to guarantee equal business terms to Belarusian and Russian companies and regulate the activities of natural monopolies.

A single industry structure policy, energy space and transportation system are difficult goals to achieve because Russia and Belarus have different definitions of those terms.

Moreover, the two countries have been unable to harmonize their tax, anti-monopoly, customs, excise, and arbitration policies that is critical to a single industry structure policy, even though it is harmonization that is the plan, not single legislation systems to base those policies on.

Youth policy should be one of the top priorities because it is young people who will have to take on the main responsibility for the Union State in the near future. This may sound as a slogan but is a reality.

In Russia, young people tend either to be indifferent to relations with Belarus or to see the latter as a country that tries to solve its problems at the expense of Russia.

For Russia, deintegration with Belarus would not be as damaging socially or economically. But it would have a significant negative impact on Russia's image, undermine its geopolitical status, and make it much less attractive as a partner in the CIS.

There is no doubt that in 2019, a jubilee year for the Union State, a careful analysis will be made of everything that has been achieved in building the Union State. The intergovernmental working group established by the presidents of the two countries will draw up roadmaps that will provide solutions to problems and give a new boost to the construction of the Union State.

Key Points of Russian Diplomacy in the Post-Soviet Space.

Olga Lebedeva, *Assistant Professor, Department of Diplomacy, School of International Relations, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Doctor of Science (History)*

THE BREAKUP of the Soviet Union gave birth to a new geopolitical region, the so-called post-Soviet space, in which Russia plays the dominant role although the former Soviet republics making up the region represent a diversity of political regimes and economies and follow different paths of development.

Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, and Armenia are the former Soviet countries Russia has the best diplomatic relations with. Those four countries are comparatively small in area and to some extent dependent on Russia. The current truce in Nagorno-Karabakh would have been impossible without Russian involvement. Without Russian security guarantees, the government of Tajikistan would be unsafe against domestic Islamist movements and the country would be unprotected from potential foreign invasion – Tajikistan is protected by the Russian 201st Military Base located in the country. Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have close economic ties to Russia, which is a major destination for their exports and labor migrants and a source of cheap energy for them. In a word, Russia is a significant economic and political stabilizer for those countries.

For Moscow, a diplomatic alliance with those countries is a perceived way to strengthen Russia's global strategic military and political position, and that is Russia's main purpose of seeking closer diplomatic relations with them.

Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are rather closed countries. Russia has some issues with Turkmenistan.

Russia's diplomatic relations with Uzbekistan have been marked by regular high-level meetings, which have been more frequent since Shavkat Mirziyoyev became president of the Central Asian country.

Azerbaijan is less dependent on Russia, has less need for integration with it, and has a special partnership with Turkey. Although Russia supported Armenia in its war against Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh in the early 1990s, Russia and Azerbaijan have developed strategic interaction, which is equally important for both countries, is based on pragmatism, and manifests itself in trade, economic partnership, and military-technical cooperation.

The main purpose of Russia's diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan is to retain its influence in Central Asia.

Belarus is more dependent on Russia as an importer of its goods than any other ex-Soviet country is. The Belarusian president's policy makes the country's Western orientation impossible. Nevertheless, the Belarusian elite values the independence of its country, and this results in limited Belarusian-Russian interpenetration.

Relations with Georgia and, of course, Ukraine, are the scourge of Russia's diplomacy in the post-Soviet space. Problems between Russia and Georgia go back to the first few years after the collapse of the Soviet Union but peaked in 2008.

The bitter conflicts and the fanning of tensions by the West have failed to bring Russian-Ukrainian relations to a complete end, and that is an indication of strong and persistent attraction between the two countries. Russia still has some influence over Ukraine that is based on cultural and historical ties between the two nations, their geographical proximity, and an inertia of interaction that spans many centuries.

The Role and Place of the Post-Soviet Space in Russia's Foreign Policy Concepts: Past, Present, Prospects.

Alexander Bobrov, *lecturer at the Department of Diplomacy, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*

The CIS (since the notion of "post-Soviet space" is not used in official documents related to Russia's foreign policy concepts, the term "CIS" [Commonwealth of Independent States] is considered as both a geopolitical space and the largest international organization in the region) is traditionally Russia's major foreign policy area.

At present, in accordance with the 2016 Foreign Policy Concept, Russia's foreign policy course in this region includes an array of goals: strengthening integration processes within the Union State of Russia and Belarus and the Eurasian Economic Union (EaEU); promoting international organizations such as the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the CIS; resolving conflicts in Ukraine, Transnistria and Nagorno-Karabakh; upholding Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states while normalizing relations with Georgia and advancing interregional cooperation in the Black Sea and Caspian regions. This configuration of Russia's bilateral and multilateral ties is the result of the region's evolution since the disintegration of the USSR in 1991.

Russia played an equally constructive role in consolidating the efforts to settle "frozen" conflicts in the region.

The authors of the 2008 Foreign Policy Concept included several provisions of the previous concept and recorded the changes that had taken place in the region in the late 20th century and the beginning of

the 21st century, putting a special emphasis on Russia's approach toward "subregional and other formations without Russian participation in the CIS space."

The gradual accumulation of disagreements between Russia and the West directly or indirectly impaired Moscow's relations with countries in the region (the failure of the Kozak plan in 2003, gas wars with Ukraine, milk wars with Belarus, etc.). however, the main "troublemaker" in the region during that historical period was NATO's eastward expansion, as a result of which Georgia and Ukraine were drawn into the organization's orbit, as well as Georgia's attack on Russian peacekeepers and its subsequent aggression against South Ossetia in August 2008.

Finally, in analyzing the conflicts in the post-Soviet space, it is important to note that soon after the 2013 Foreign Policy Concept was adopted, the events rapidly unfolding in Ukraine not only led to a domestic Ukrainian conflict but also provoked the current crisis in the relations between Russia and the West.

In conclusion, it should be noted that a historical analysis of the CIS as Russia's foreign policy vector gives reason to believe that, despite the rapid and sometimes unpredictable development of international relations, the post-Soviet space will retain its regional priority status in future versions of Russia's main foreign policy document.

Current Problems of the Minsk Process.

Vladislav Deinego, *foreign minister of the Lugansk People's Republic, the LPR's representative to the Minsk Contact Group (Ukraine)*

ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2014, a protocol establishing basic principles of the Minsk mechanism for resolving the conflict in the Donets Basin was signed. It envisioned a set of conditions for containing the armed confrontation in the full sense of the word.

The Europeans started to get worried. The arbiter in the process is the "Normandy Four," where Ukraine plays a subordinate role. In that context, three countries (Russia and European mediators – France and Germany, which seemed to be playing on Ukraine's side) tried to impact Ukraine's behavior.

Ukraine continued to imitate intense activity in the process. There was no question of any "special status" or, to be more precise, its implementation, even though the law itself stipulated that, let's say, in a sufficiently balanced way. That was not quite acceptable to the Donets Basin republics, but it is important to understand that we need to look for compromise to get results.

In and of itself, the "Steinmeier formula" is not a guide to action. It defines the procedure for implementing other provisions related to a political settlement. At that point, Ukraine, realizing that there would be no other options at the Normandy level, began to completely block the Minsk negotiating process. It took us three years to get Ukraine to acknowledge the existence of the "Steinmeier formula." It got to the point of absurdity when they basically denied the existence of the formula and then demanded that the "Normandy Four" issue direct instructions for the formula to be discussed in Minsk. As a result, after political power changed hands in Ukraine, some progress was made on the issue.

When Vladimir Zelensky came to power, he underscored the need for a political settlement and the lifting of the economic blockade. however, we did not receive any concrete proposals from Ukraine. Nevertheless, we did make some headway on the "Steinmeier formula." The "Normandy Four" held a series of meetings. As a result, the Contact Group received a letter signed by Mr. hecker, demanding that the "Steinmeier formula" be signed.

In the situation that is now evolving in Ukraine, a key role is being played by 2%-3% of radically minded nationalists who pose a real threat to entire society. Regrettably, Europe is refusing to see that. How will the situation develop in the future? Naturally, the Europeans did not appreciate Ukraine's demarche.

A lot has yet to be done to ensure the implementation of the "Steinmeier formula." Essentially, we have formulated the starting point: The "Steinmeier formula" opens the political settlement process. I have the impression that a lot of work lies ahead for us in this respect.

The Post-Soviet Space: Western and Eastern Plans.

Yury Shevtsov, *member of the expert team at the office of the head of the Eurasian Economic Commission, Belarus*

The European Parliament elections, which coincided with Brexit and, more importantly, with a change to the entire concept of European integration, have become a landmark for the EU. For many years, the EU has been based on the ideology that European integration would bring all the member countries to the same high level of development and that European values would be adopted universally. Today, we can see a completely new concept of integration – "multi-speed Europe." Obviously, there are advanced countries – older Europe – making up the core of the EU. Older Europe has leaped far ahead of younger Europe and the gap between the two groups will keep widening. The new concept reflects the reality brought about by this leap.

There is a plan that has been put forward by Jean-Claude Juncker and has been implemented, and I would see this plan as the main evidence of the insurmountable inequality that has taken shape within the EU.

For Southern and Eastern European countries, integration with the EU means losing practically any chance of achieving a high level of development but running into instability instead. Ukraine provides the best example of the European integration of the new type.

I wouldn't go as far as labeling the system that is emerging in Europe as a "new Reich" or anything similar despite some historical similarities. I don't think this would be fair because the EU doesn't have any dominant ideology underlying this new geopolitical character of the Union. The current situation is more reminiscent of the intense legal struggles of various political forces and ideologies in Europe in the 1930s for solutions to European problems. We know how those struggles ended up.

China, in 2009, it began to implement a new economic and geopolitical strategy of rapidly enlarging the capacity of its domestic market and boosting the development of its central and western provinces in a bid to reduce the dependence of its foreign trade on sea routes and the markets of the United States and other countries.

China's dependence on the capacity of its market also entails the transformation of its political system and ideology.

As for other projects that affect Eurasia, I would point out processes in the United States that exercise indirect but important influence on us. The United States is carrying out a program of concentration of economic resources of the same kind as the programs of the EU and China. In 2009, Barack Obama, who was then running for president, proclaimed a new industrial revolution in the United States. Today, President Donald Trump is essentially putting this revolution into practice, and in radical forms as well. Manufacturing is coming back to America and is undergoing technological modernization.

To sum up, it can be said that all these large-scale projects that are being pursued outside Eurasia represent a global situation where regions that are technological leaders have gone over to a policy of

concentrating their economic resources, but this is a temporary situation. After those rapidly developing countries or regions finish their technological transformation, they will again become global rivals and struggle for new spheres of influence.

What should we do in this situation? I would like to remind you of the Russian program of rearmament of the armed forces, which has reached its climax. Since the mid-2000s, Russia has been quickly modernizing its military-industrial complex and its entire security system. Since 2015, the military has been receiving new armaments on a vast scale. That means that, for the next 10 to 15 years, before these armaments become obsolete, they will keep Russia safe against external challenges.

I believe that the tasks of Eurasian integration should include the strengthening of the military shield and everything that this involves and the development of technologies that are adaptable to our territory. We would be wrong to try to take the route of Japan or the EU. We would be wrong to copy and thoughtlessly apply on our territory technologies that are rooted in their geography, history and culture. We should focus on large-scale projects that are based on our own geography, culture and traditions.

Theoretical and Practical Problems of Integration in the Post-Soviet Space.

Yelena Khalevinskaya, *Professor, Honored Scientist of the Russian Federation, Doctor of Science (Economics)*

The DYNAMICS of regionalism are, on the whole, the fullest manifestations of contradictions in present-day international relations. On the one hand, governments have strengthened their influence by action to curb the global financial crisis and shield businesses and the population in their countries from its effects. On the other hand, regional cultural and religious values have become more significant and are no less efficient ways of bringing nations closer together than common borders or shared infrastructures. This has resulted in a much more prominent role played by regional organizations of various kinds in the global network of international organizations and in all spheres of society – politics, economics, security, cultural affairs, etc.

Turning to the history of the EU, its structural development, and its adaptation to the admission of new members and to changes in the world economy, we will see that practically all key decisions on integration in the EU, on the monetary union, and on the EU constitution were necessarily based on consultation with the population of all the member countries and on referendums. This made all European integration documents legitimate and understandable to all Europeans.

In the post-Soviet space, there has practically been no state-public interaction of this kind. What was the formal basis for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)? Where does the Union State of Russia and Belarus come from?

The Customs Union of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) was the only body on whose emergence as part of the Single Economic Space and Eurasian Economic Union systems the public was informed, but there were no debates about whether there was any need for it, not even any wide-scale expert discussions, either in Russia or in Kazakhstan or, least of all, in Belarus. Nor is there any clear idea in any of the former Soviet republics who it needs to integrate with and what kind of integration it needs. This explains the foreign policy diversity of post-Soviet countries, which seek closer relations with Western Europe, the United States, China, other Asia-Pacific countries, and Russia.

Neither the United States nor Western Europe needs post-Soviet integration, and preventing it is the objective of the EU's Eastern Partnership initiative and NATO's Partnership for Peace program.

It is very important to build institutions to run integration processes that would be updatable and vested with increasing authority as national governments delegate powers to them.

One example of avoidance of supranational authority is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). NAFTA, which took effect in January 1994, became the first accord that, in addition to trade in goods, dealt with trade in services, mutual investment, labor, copyright, competition policies, and technical matters.

NAFTA's example was followed by dozens of other countries, some of them within the same region and others in different continents.

The Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan may prove to be one of the last classical regional associations. A phenomenon called "globalizing regionalism" is gaining momentum in the world that is an increasingly effective system of international horizontal trade relations, mainly comprehensive FTAs.

The economic and geopolitical resources of classical regionalism have largely been used up, although Russia and its CIS partners still have opportunities to rebuild production, technological, and sale chains and take advantage of mutual economic complementarity.

Russia and the West will have to reassess the reality in the post-Soviet space and to realize that this region, which has been the site of rivalries between them for nearly 30 years, is a "neighborhood" region not only for them but also for third countries.

Western European and post-Soviet integration experience makes clear that we would be too late to take the route of hardline integration with supranational regulation and that, on the other hand, free trade, which is an element of globalization, may become a powerful de-integration factor.

Post-Soviet Space in the Context of Interests of the West and the East.

Yury Sayamov, *Head, UNESCO Department for the Studies of Global Problems, School of Global Studies, M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University*

The far from simple discussion about the fate of the post-Soviet space should start from the definition of the subject of our deliberations. Often, we mean the entire territory of the former Soviet republics that became independent states. A wider definition includes the members of the socialist community of states. This definition is sometimes applied to the territory of the Soviet Union's geopolitical influence that spread to a fairly big number of states that chose the road of socialist development or were interested in cooperation with the Soviet Union and its economic, scientific-technical and military assistance.

Disintegration of the Soviet Union that started from inside the country was not limited to the Soviet state; it was extrapolated on the socialist community. The liquidation of the latter pushed the world back into unrestrained capitalism that by that time had seemed dead. The socialist order that survived in five states demonstrated impressive results. This is especially true of China and Vietnam while the territory of the liquidated Soviet Union was flooded with arduous economic and social problems, an echo of notorious perestroika. There is an opinion that it caused much more economic damage than fascist invasion.

Geopolitical damage was even more catastrophic: the country lost territories, allies and influence. The Warsaw Treaty Organization and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance that united the Soviet Union and the European socialist countries were disbanded on Soviet initiative.

The United States and its allies adjusted, directly or by proxy, the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America to their geopolitical and economic interests. They had supported the Soviet Union

and maintained friendly or even allied relations with it and the other socialist countries. Without Soviet support, practically all progressive governments were replaced through the regime change method with American puppets.

In his 2005 Annual Address to the Federal Assembly, President of Russia Vladimir Putin spoke of the collapse of the Soviet Union as the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century. It was followed by radical changes in the global ideological and geopolitical architecture.

The anti-Soviet and anti-Communist destructive efforts were highly efficient because they stemmed not so much from the Western centers of opposition to the Soviet Union and the forces of socialism as from the ideological center of the Soviet Union itself.

High treason in the Kremlin set the fates of the post-Soviet space and echoed far and wide across the world. Former allies that had believed that socialism was a fairer social order and had suffered because of all sorts of "lustrations," their convictions and friendship with the Soviet Union decided that the Russians could not be trusted and that it was wiser to keep away from them.

The United States relied on Soviet experience: it used NGOs and "soft power" – attraction instead of coercion – to brainwash the ruling elites in the targeted states and reformat public sentiments in its interests. Washington was steadily perfecting its skills of stirring up protest movements and pushing these countries to all sorts of "color" and "velvet" revolutions organized according to American patterns and scenarios.

Determined to detach Ukraine from Russia, the West poured a lot of money and effort into the project until it finally stirred up disagreements between Ukrainian regions. The efforts of the regime in Kiev to impose Ukrainization on all regions by banning the Russian language were confronted by opposition of the mainly Russian-speaking population of Crimea and Malorossiya. This cost Kiev Crimea and Sevastopol that reunited with the Russian Federation and resulted in the war it is waging on its own territory against its own people.

The scandal around former Vice President of the United States, Joe Biden who openly ruled Ukraine as if he was its president, fired Ukrainian Attorney General and appointed his son to the board of the local profitable gas company has revealed the most typical processes unfolding in post-Soviet space and its problems.

Seen from the West, Russia looked a feeble raw-material appendage with no independent positions on the world arena. It was believed that it should be divided into several states while Siberia rich in natural resources should become a "world treasure trove."

Today, global processes have already triggered far-reaching transformations in international relations, the main of them being the contradictions between the rich North that consumes the larger share of world resources and the poor, dependent and exploited South that have already raised a wave of migrations that looks more like occupation of host countries by non-military means. This process has inspired the United States to create, under different pretexts, the so-called "controlled chaos" in all countries that have attracted its attention for one reason or another.

The majority of the former socialist countries are still trying to find their places in the world and world economics. Under Western pressure they reject economically profitable projects offered by Russia and join anti-Russian economic sanctions to the detriment of their own people.

Multipolarity of the future world depends on the nature of its poles and their combinations. It is growing increasingly clear that we should formulate new approaches of states and civil society to international relations in the fast changing and dangerous world from which the crimes against humanity condemned

by the Nuremberg Tribunal should be excluded and reckless initiatives and claims to world primacy terminated.

The Political and Economic Realities of Latvia: The Dilemma of Euro-Atlanticism and Post-Sovietism.

Nikolai Kabanov, *Deputy of the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia, member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, expert in international relations (Latvia)*

The map of the “golden age of Latvian independence” emerged between 1918 and 1939. The geopolitical situation at that time was quite different. Latvia bordered on Poland, while Lithuania had no border with the USSR. The map of Europe had fundamentally different contours.

In my opinion, the country’s elites seek to revisit that history because the legal foundation for the existence of the Republic of Latvia differs radically from those of most post-Soviet countries in that the post-Soviet Latvian state was not created anew like Moldova, Armenia or Kazakhstan. It was re-established in law based on the USSR. Constitution of 1924.

Today, we see a totally new concept of administrative-territorial reform, which provides for only 36 municipalities. None of these municipalities will be divided into smaller units. Each of them will have only one school, one hospital, and one local government authority, with quite long distances between regional population centers. This shows that the social system is deteriorating.

The economic model of the Latvian Republic was a continuation of the transit flows running in different directions from the interior of Eurasia. These routes are radial and lead to ports. Industrial and logistics facilities were built in the republic, and Latvia for a long time was a function of the economic structure that existed in Eurasia. But in recent years, especially since the parliamentary election in 2018, there has been talk of the need to sever ties with former partners and stop using Russian energy. Today, Latvia is considering desynchronization of power grids: the frequency of our transmission system will differ from that of the Russian system.

In the last 30 years, Latvia’s population has shrunk by a third. This is the worst figure in the EU.

National minority schools are being switched to Latvian as the only language of instruction. True, students have an opportunity to study the Russian language and Russian literature up to ninth grade, but if other subjects are not taught in Russian, they will find it difficult to continue their education in Russian colleges and universities. This is probably being done to make them stay in Latvia as a source of labor for the EU.

The problem of historical memory is a very painful one for the Russian community, which makes up about 40% of Latvia’s population. During the recent celebration of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Riga from the Nazis, many older people gathered around the Monument to the Liberators. Today, this monument is a subject of controversy, because some Latvian politicians want to have it demolished. A non-governmental organization called Mūsu atmiņas MEMORIĀLS (Memorial of Our Memory) has been working to preserve war cemeteries and memorials. This is a very large memorial complex occupying dozens of hectares. The demolition of the monument or redesign of the complex will be an unprecedented act and will provoke a serious response in Russia and the world.

Donbass as a Balance Indicator in the West-Russia Opposition.

Eliseo Bertolasi, *Chief of the DPR Representative Center in Italy, PhD (Anthropology)*

UKRAINE was the most successful strategic operation of the West after the Soviet Union's destruction. Having come to Ukraine, the United States will find it very hard to leave. Ukraine that many times seemed to have reached the economic precipice was left afloat by the money supplied by international organizations, the European Union in particular.

From the Euro-Atlantic point of view, the war at the Russian borders was hugely successful as a pretext for all sorts of sanctions.

It is an important psychological factor that creates and maintains anti-Russian sentiments in a big part of Ukrainian society which is highly important for Russia's enemies.

While the West managed to create Anti-Russia at the borders of Russia, Russia, having supported Donbass, created Anti-Ukraine inside the country. The West could not bring its plans to perfection because of Donbass and its response.

It is an indisputable fact: as part of the Russian World, Ukraine is an important factor for Russia, yet to become part of the Russian World any country should believe in it or even be prepared to die for it. Those who live in Eastern Ukraine have demonstrated their loyalty to these values at the cost of their lives. Russia supported them by all means available up to giving Russian citizenship to those who wanted it. The rest of the Ukrainian population demonstrated hostility and Russophobia or, at best, indifference while passively watching how their country was plundered and destroyed.

Ukraine can be useful for Russia in one way only: it can ensure continued functioning of the transit gas pipelines.

Ukraine wants to join the European Union which is, in fact, not a union of European peoples but of a small group of financial elites. Membership in EU means loss of state sovereignty, invasion of migrants, poverty, and loss of identity. Today, only extremely stupid or extremely self-centered want to join the EU to pursue their personal interests. The question is whether the DPR and the LPR want to join

The economic situation in Ukraine is catastrophic; it lost its sovereignty and is choking with debts. The West has already got everything it needed from Ukraine; the IMF and the West continue funding it at a certain price: either debts repaid or lost sovereignty.

The road to peace will not be easy: we should bear in mind that there are two Americas when it comes to the relations with Ukraine and Russia.

The first of them is America of President Trump that wants to restore good relations with Russia; the other one is America of the so-called deep state, a hybrid alliance of politicians, financiers and representatives of the military-industrial complex of the top level that can efficiently rule America on their own and does not need its people's support.

Sooner or later, Russia will have no other choice but to deal with this problem: Russia needs at least neutral, if not friendly, Ukraine. History has taught us that to end any conflict we should eliminate its cause or at least mitigate its vehemence. This conflict was caused by the coup d'état in Kiev organized by the United States and the West that supported Ukrainian nationalists.

For geopolitical reasons, we should avoid any illusions – the peace process in Ukraine will not be easy and the West will never abandon its intention to attack Russia.

Attacks might be temporarily discontinued, but enmity of Russia will flare up in other places, "Moscow Maidan" being one of the possibilities (or even the main possibility) as part of the Western plans to destroy Russia from inside.

Southeastern Ukraine Through the Prism of Trans-Confliction.

Artyom Bobrov, *Third Secretary of the Russian Foreign Ministry's representative office in Rostov-on-Don, Candidate of Science (Sociology)*

OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, the focus on Russian-Ukrainian relations has been dictated not only by foreign policy considerations but also by the fact that Ukraine is Russia's closest neighbor. This is an important factor in the state of Russian-Ukrainian relations, as well as in the public mood on both sides of the border.

It should be noted that the ongoing crisis in the Donets Basin has, among other things, pushed the Ukrainian issue outside the bounds of classic conflict studies, making it a subject of "hybrid" war. Ukrainian politicians are still taking a lot of effort to sever ties with Russia in the context of their course toward European integration, and to build a Russophobic Ukrainian nation.

Regional polls point to the evolution of the Russian public's attitude toward this problem and the desire among active social strata, above all young people, for qualitative changes to harmonize Russian-Ukrainian relations.

Before 2014, the Ukrainian issue was not a priority for Rostov Province residents. Interest in the state of Russian-Ukrainian relations was stimulated by conflicting media coverage, a massive increase in migration flows from Ukraine's border regions and a sharp decline in humanitarian (familial) contacts.

These trends have greatly consolidated the people living in southern Russia and made them more sensitive and resistant to any changes on the territory of the neighboring state.

While acknowledging that the events in Ukraine are developing in accordance with the worst-case scenario, the general public is expecting the restoration of peace in the neighboring country and good-neighborly relations with Russia, contingent on broader cooperation with the Donets Basin either as an autonomy as part of Ukraine (15.5%) or as an independent state similar to the situation in Transnistria.

It is important to note that personal meetings with members of nongovernmental organizations and the expert community show that Russian NGOs are not ready to become involved in implementing programs aimed at restoring good-neighborly relations and cooperation, limiting themselves to purely symbolic support.

From the Russian side of the border, it seemed that it was impossible to destroy the firm ties with southeastern Ukraine, above all because of the system of shared values, mentality and civilizational similarities. However, there are inevitable geo-economic interests that, if supported from the outside, can lead to the rupture of existing cultural ties and values. By signing the so-called Steinmeier formula, Ukraine's current president has taken yet another step toward normalizing relations with the Donets Basin. We would like to hope that there will be more such steps.

In this context, amid a lack of professional activity, primarily on the part of Russian NGOs with regard to Ukraine, a situation is emerging where, while maintaining ties between southern Russia and the Donets Basin at the level of vital service systems, we are losing them mentally.

The Contribution of Regional Organization to Post-Soviet Integration.

Arif Asalioglu *General Director, International Institute of the Development of Science Cooperation (MIRNaS), Turkey*

POST-COLD WAR CHANGES on the territory of the former Soviet Union continue to affect international relations worldwide. Integration in Eurasia remains an important global topic. After Russia started

recovering in the 2000s, proposals began to be put forward for creating a multipolar system that would be led by regional powers and would be a counterbalance to the American unipolar world system. Remarkably, most of these proposals come from the Russian Federation.

Turkey has always taken special interest in Central Asian countries and Eurasia as a whole. Turkey has close ethnocultural ties to much of the population of Eurasia. Developments that followed the breakup of the Soviet Union, and especially developments that took place in the 2000s, stimulated Turkey to interact more closely with this region, and the group of countries termed “Turkic republics” has come high on the Turkish foreign policy agenda.

Obviously, the reason for Turkey’s growing interest in the Russian Federation is that Russia has again become active in its region and is again a global power.

THE PERSONNEL of soft power international institutions set up by Turkey often can’t speak the language of the country they are posted in, they don’t have clearly formulated duties, their official job descriptions are at variance with the initial goals of such institutions, and many of them are motivated by their salaries alone. There are institutions and divisions that duplicate one another. On top of this, there is no vision, there are clashes of moral and human values, there is no sociopsychological training or training of educators. All this has badly damaged the image of the country.

The international organizations that we prioritize are the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and the Eurasian Economic Union. As their names make clear, they have been created to oversee political, economic and military integration.

THERE STILL EXISTS no proper environment for unification in the post-Soviet space. Because of an insufficient scale of cooperation and limited financial resources, there were other priorities. But in a while, Central Asian countries decided to draw up a coordinated strategy for economic integration.

The CIS, whose aim was to rebuild political, sociocultural and economic structures that had been destroyed, has been able to lay the basis for regional cooperation. However, the CIS has failed to evolve into a large-scale union, mainly because of the untenable integration and cooperation strategy that it has been trying to develop.

Turkey has been working hard since the 1990s to set up regional organizations, but this work hasn’t been very successful. Although special attention has been paid to the Turkic Council, its activity has been declining since the organization was set up in 2010.

Experts are now discussing how active Turkey itself is in the region and how the activities of the Turkic Council affect relationships between Turkey and other countries in the region.

Viable Forms of Reintegration in the Post-Soviet Space.

Vasily Semyonov, *research associate at the Russian Academy of Sciences’ Southern Research Center, Candidate of Science (Political Science)*

RECENT MONTHS have been marked by significant changes in the post-Soviet space arising from development problems in the majority of newly independent states that emerged in 1991.

The visibly weakening support for post-Soviet states on the part of Western states is bringing up the prospect of a possible strengthening of centrifugal processes and a shift of the former Soviet republics (wittingly or unwittingly) toward Russia. At the same time, there are indications of their Western “partners” openly encouraging such trends, as the tone and essence of their proposals regarding post-Soviet states’ positions are also changing.

The protracted crisis in Ukraine, the mass discontent with the economic and political situation in Georgia and Armenia and the massive anti-oligarchic crisis in Moldova, among other things, point to the pressing need for wide-ranging changes and independent development programs. Transformation processes are leading to unexpected combinations of interests, as well as unconventional decisions.

A case in point is the discussion of the Russia-Belarus integration project. Experts note that this is not about restoring the USSR (not even about a confederation of Russia and Belarus), but about the level of integration higher than in the EU, since there are plans to partially integrate the two economic systems starting from 2021. There will not be a single currency or emissions banks although plans call for the unification of currency control and investment protection regimes while state governance matters remain within the countries' national jurisdictions.

The "collective West" (whose "collectivism" is a source of growing doubt) assesses its interests in the context of centripetal processes in the post-Soviet space. The plan under consideration involves overstraining Russia's economy with spending on its allies, leading to a possible repetition of the scenario of the disintegration of the USSR or at least the maximum possible weakening of Russia with its subsequent elimination as an international player.

Russia should take an extremely cautious approach toward integration, balancing geopolitical gains against economic risks.

The economic foundation of an integration association is mostly likely to involve major transport and energy projects, as well as joint production projects in qualitatively new sectors.

It should be noted that by the beginning of the 2020s, the majority of post-Soviet states encountered mounting crisis-related phenomena, testing their viability, their systems of state governance and their ability to find effective ways of independent development. At the same time, the U.S., Western European countries and their allies for many reasons cannot admit new partners to their organizations or ensure their development.

This course of events will soon (perhaps by the mid-2020s) require global decisions aimed at consolidating the guidelines for new principles of coexistence, determining the status of national borders, adopting fundamental development goals and ways of achieving them.

Centrifugal and Centripetal Forces in the Post-Soviet Space.

Rostislav Ishchenko, *Ukrainian and Russian political analyst, Russia Today commentator*

IT IS PERFECTLY OBVIOUS that global civilization is in a systemic crisis: The well-known system, which is now in agony, is on its way out. Nobody knows exactly what the new one will be like, but everyone would like it to meet their expectations, which have also yet to be finalized. In the history of humankind, systemic crises have invariably ended in wars. This crisis has not been an exception, either.

The only thing that has changed is the format of military actions, since the weapon systems that have been accumulated in the world, as well as their quality, impose certain critical limitations on their uses. As a result, we have come up against a situation where, for example, diplomatic agencies often become a force that often has a greater impact on the course and outcome of military operations than actual armies do. This is a situation where an undeclared war, which is often called a hybrid war, has a more destructive effect on a losing state than a conventional war does.

Not a single war has ever been waged for purely ideological reasons. A war must always end with peace, which will be better than before the war, at least on a purely personal level. A war must always recoup the costs involved in it: Otherwise, it makes no sense. Our potential allies, including those in the post-

Soviet space, always look to a better future – the way they see it. This is why there are good and bad people, there are no Russophiles and Russophobes, but there are people who associate their well-being with Russia or people who associate their well-being with anything but Russia. Generally, both can be our potential allies. The challenge is to explain to our opponents that they can get more as part of an alliance.

If we were still in the 1990s, I would say that we would have to wait and get over this. However, we are in 2019, when many old elites have already exhausted their national resources. In many countries, old elites have been replaced by new ones, which have evolved under new statehood.

Even though they view the state as a value in its own right, they are more pragmatic and are not afraid that their ill-gotten gains will be taken away from them. They regard national resources as their own property and are interested in augmenting them.

I believe that by putting a greater economic focus on integration processes in the post-Soviet space and by actively promoting this position Russia could realistically acquire and increase the number of its allies influencing the policy of their states with the help of the most effective mechanism – i.e., economic and financial instruments, which have a direct impact on the human stomach. And hunger, as a rule, clears your mind. This does not work in reverse.

The Russian-Ukrainian Border in the 20th and Early 21st Centuries: Dynamics and Assessments of Border Changes.

Igor Tatarinov, *Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science and International Relations, V. Dal Lugansk National University, Candidate of Science (History) (Ukraine)*

TODAY, against the background of anti-Russian hysteria, territorial claims to Russia have become a common feature rooted in territorial disagreements of the past. The Russian-Ukrainian border is a result of several stages of its history.

At the first stage (the year 1917), the border issue was limited to the borders of the future Ukrainian national-territorial autonomy. At the time, most Ukrainians were ready to accept a federative status while those who were for complete independence were few in number.

The second stage unfolded in 1918-1919. In January 1918, having lost power over most of its territories, the UCR turned to the Central Powers for help. On February 9, 1918, Ukraine (Ukrainian People's Republic, UPR), Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey signed a mutual assistance treaty in Brest-Litovsk. The Central Powers recognized the UPR sovereignty over several territories and promised to send troops to Ukraine. By late May 1918, 450 thousand-strong Austrian-German corps occupied Ukraine, Crimea, the south of the Central Black Earth area and the bigger part of the Don lands. In April 1918, hetman Pavel Skoropadsky established his puppet regime in Kiev; on May 16 of the same year, Germans helped knock together the Almighty Don host under Cossack Ataman Pyotr Krasnov.

. On June 22, 1918, the sides agreed on the ethnographic principle as the basis of the future state borders. The treaty, however, was signed on August 8, 1918, according to which the administrative line between the region of the Don Cossacks and the Voronezh, Kharkov and Ekaterinoslav governorates became a state border; Taganrog was an object of a separate agreement.

At the third stage (1920), the future of the Soviet republics moved to the fore to be resolved on the strength of Lenin's works *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination* and *Critical Remarks on the National Question*, in which he pointed out that "the territories whose population speak a single language" should form national republics. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was based on the language principle while the self-awareness of the local population was ignored. The practically

unknown ethnonym “Ukrainians” was promoted with a lot of zeal while the term “Maloross” was as zealously pushed away as negative.

By the end of 1924, the border issue had been settled on the ethnographic principle: neighboring territories with predominantly Russian or Ukrainian populations were united with the corresponding republics. The commission’s decision with the list of the transferred territories attached to it was presented to the Politburo. The new borders were confirmed by the Decision of the TsIK USSR “On the Borders between the Ukrainian SSR with the RSFSR and Belorussian SSR” of October 16, 1925.

This was not the end of the border issue. In some places, the ethnographic and economic principles did not harmonize; in some places, the new border divided settlements and productive infrastructure.

The Crimean issue was the fifth stage. The administrative-territorial changes on the peninsula were the most complicated. Early in 1917, the outlines of the Taurida Governorate (that included three districts on the continent – Melitopol, Dnepr and Berdyansk – and five districts on the peninsula) caused no conflicts. Later, in May 1917, the UCR demanded Taurida from the Provisional Government.

To consolidate their power in Crimea, the Germans knocked together a government headed by General Matvey Sulkevich who took orders from the German military and the Ukrainian government of Pavel Skoropadsky. The Crimean government shared anti-Ukrainian positions amply confirmed by one of its orders: “Do not enter into relationships of any sort with the Government of Ukraine and do not fulfill any of its demands.”

On the eve of the 300th anniversary of unification of Ukraine with Russia, there appeared an idea to transfer the Crimean Region to the Ukrainian SSR because of their territorial, economic and cultural closeness.

In 2014, the status of Crimea and Sevastopol were revised once more in the context of historical justice. The coup d’état in Kiev that brought to power nationalists and Russophobes was resolutely rejected by Crimea and Sevastopol.

By way of summing up let me say that it was in the 1920s that the main border issues between Ukraine and Russia were settled during an ambiguous process accompanied by appellations and disagreements since the ethnographic principle and economic expediency, on the strength of which the borders were drawn, offered no harmonious solutions. In some places, ethnicities are divided by the border between the republics. As President of the Russian Federation Putin has rightly noted, “the Russian people became one of the largest, if not the largest, divided nation in the world” to a great extent due to the events described above.

The Evolution of Post-Soviet Identity in the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Late 1990s and the 2000s.

Dmitry Trofimov, *Deputy Director of the Fourth CIS Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*

FOR THE PAST 150 YEARS, Central Asia and Uzbekistan as its component have been in a state of successive, at times pendulum-like, transition – transformation from archaic to modern: inclusion into the mainly Europe-centric civilizational space of the Russian empire; a major sociopolitical breakdown – i.e., transformation of the Soviet era; return to an archaic authoritarian model within the framework of post-Soviet transition.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union took Uzbekistan, as well as entire Central Asia, by surprise: Unlike the Baltic States and partly Ukraine, the local elites and especially the local population quite comfortably fit into both the Soviet political system and its subsidized economy.

The entire post-Soviet period was marked by “massive reconstruction and renaming”¹ (S.N. Abashin). The symbols and landmarks from both the imperial and Soviet eras were destroyed, with Soviet films, literature, textbooks, and music being systematically (sometimes barbarously) forced out of the public sphere.

Pronounced nationalist ideologization was the driving force behind the endless renaming of streets and buildings in historical “Russian” Tashkent. After Turkestan acceded to the Russian empire, an entirely new city emerged next to old “Uzbek” Tashkent. Built in an empty space, it had no pre-Russian place names. All its squares, public gardens and streets were built in the European style and, naturally, were given purely Russian names.

The Russian historical connotation, which was unacceptable to the new authorities, also predetermined the controversial demolition in 2009 of Central Square (formerly Konstantinovsky, or Kaufman, or Revolution Square; since 1994, Amir Timur Square), a place that had been incredibly popular among local residents.

Incidentally, in the early 1990s, I.A. Karimov’s advisers proposed another two figures for the role of a national symbol, alternative to Timur: Ulugbek, an enlightened ruler and brilliant scientist (also Tamerlan’s grandson), or the Turkic Sufi poet Nizomiddin Mir Alisher, who went down in history as Alisher Navoi.

From all indications, the final choice to a very large extent stemmed from the desire to use Tamerlan as a tool to overcome the inferiority complex that I.A. Karimov and the nationalist elite surrounding him (still affected by the haunting memory of their dependence on Moscow) had been unable to overcome.⁶ Nevertheless, the authorities failed to incorporate the artificially established cult of Timur into the Uzbek people’s mentality. Nor has it received international recognition.

Russian-Georgian Relations: In Search of an Impetus for Development.

Andrei Gurba, *second secretary at the Russian Foreign Ministry’s representative office in Rostov-on-Don*

BILATERAL RELATIONS between Russia and Georgia have a long history that is related, among other things, to the common political past that they share. Since Georgia became independent, its relations with Russia have been invariably marked by volatility.

Over the past five years, attempts have been made to improve bilateral relations and take them to the level of constructive cooperation, although, frankly speaking, it is extremely difficult to do that in the absence of diplomatic relations.

It is important to note that the new president’s stance on foreign policy issues will not play the same role as it did before. The reforms that were finally approved in 2017 have changed the system of state governance and a parliamentary republic was proclaimed.

Zurabishvili’s stance on Abkhazia and South Ossetia is noteworthy. On this issue, she is playing up the issue of “occupied territories,” stressing the need for “active measures” to return these regions to Georgia – very much in unison with the majority of parliamentarians.

Clearly, the territorial issue will continue to play a decisive role in the system of bilateral relations, so no significant changes in RussianGeorgian relations can be expected from Salome Zurabishvili. It is important to remember that in seeking to join NATO and the European Union, Georgia maintains constructive neutrality in its relations with Russia, which led to a certain warming of relations compared to previous years. however, Georgia’s system of geopolitical interests and the development of political

ties in the world arena are to a very large extent geared toward the priorities and strategies of its Western partners.

As far as new impulses for normalizing Russian-Georgian relations are concerned, in this context, it is essential to have a clear understanding of the pressing need to address the Abkhazia and South Ossetia issues. Without resolving them, Russian-Georgian relations may remain stuck for a long time.

According to Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin: "Russia was about to abolish visas for Georgian citizens, but the issue was taken off the agenda because of the recent events in Tbilisi."

Scientific, technical and cultural contacts also play an important role in establishing new cooperation formats. This makes it necessary to move beyond the format of purely expert meetings and organize other events and activities to promote public diplomacy. Even though only people from the older generation know the Russian language, young people are better equipped to overcome extra obstacles, smartly using intercultural communication skills. In addition to that, it would be a good idea for Russian scholars to hold lectures on current trends in domestic fundamental and applied sciences for young Georgians with a view to finding research partners in Georgia. There are also opportunities for scientific exchange and internship programs for young Georgian specialists at Russian universities and scientific research institutes.

Thus, Russia and Georgia have a chance to get rid of the consequences of confrontation and steer their relations into a course of good-neighborly cooperation and partnership.

Crimea as Part of Russia: History, Politics, Diplomacy.

Mikhail Rossiyskiy, *Division Head, Department of History and Records (DHR), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*

I WOULD LIKE to use this opportunity to present to the participants of the jubilee 10th Yalta Conference of International Affairs within the historical walls of the Livadia Palace our latest collection of historical documents *Krym v razvitii Rossii: istoria, politika, diplomatiya. Dokumenty iz arkhivov MID Rossii (Crimea as Part of Russia: history, Politics, Diplomacy. Documents from the Archives of MFA of Russia)*.

This is another publication of the Department of history and Records that continues the traditions of documentary publications started in 1779 by the patriarch of archiving at the Foreign Ministry of Russia Nikolay Bantysh-Kamensky.

This collection of historical documents is a response to the interest in the peninsula, its place and role in the history of Russia rekindled by the events of 2014. It contains documents from the archives of the Foreign Ministry of Russia – the Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Empire (AVPRI) and the Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation (AVP RF) – that have been functioning in their present form since 1946. I should say that the Archives of Russia's Foreign Office is the ministry's oldest department.

The published documents are organized into five chronological and subject blocks.

The first covers the period between 1700 and 1792 and contains documents on the history of the relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Khanate.

The second block of documents covers the period from 1802 to 1845 related to the development of Crimea as part of Russia.

The third section deals with the Crimean War of 1853-1856.

The fourth block covers the period between 1856 and 1916; the documents mainly deal with the efforts of the Foreign Ministry of Russia to overcome the negative results of the Crimean War and restore Russia's positions on the Black Sea.

The fifth section contains documents of the White Movement and the Soviet government related to the Civil War of 1919-1922 on the peninsula.

This collection is a well-balanced combination of documents put into scholarly circulation for the first time and earlier published documents from the archives of the Foreign Ministry of Russia that together offer the more comprehensive reflection of the history of the Crimean Peninsula for the last three centuries. The fairly small number of copies published is compensated for by the collection's availability on the official site of our department in the Documentary Publications section.

I hope that all those who study history by authentic historical documents will find this documentary collection highly useful.

Key Historical Political Problems in Russian-Baltic Relations.

Vladimir Simindey, *Editor-in-Chief, Zhurnal rossiiskikh i vostochnoyevropeiskikh istoricheskikh issledovaniy (Journal of Russian and East European Historical Studies)*

SINCE 1990-1991, a complete reappraisal of events associated with the period when the Baltic republics were part of the USSR has been used in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia at the state level as a tool for reformatting the public consciousness and consolidating the new government. The "national" ideological construct is based on the thesis of émigré circles about the Baltic countries being victims of two totalitarian regimes, according to which the Soviet regime was "worse and more dangerous" for the titular Baltic nations than the Nazi regime.

The concept of "Soviet occupation of the Baltic countries" has served to justify the fact that most of the Russian and Russian-speaking population of Latvia and Estonia has been deprived of political and some economic rights. The infamous institution of mass "non-citizenship" is one of the pillars of the ethnocratic regime established in Estonia and Latvia, and this has inevitably affected the sphere of education, culture, and official historical science.

Post-Soviet Latvia, despite quite frequent changes of government in that parliamentary republic, has consistently followed a confrontational historical policy towards the Russian Federation on various issues of the Soviet period.

A whole "industry" has now emerged to reproduce the negative agenda in Russian-Latvian relations, with industry actors including the Saeima, the president, the ministries of foreign affairs, defense, justice, culture, education and science, their subordinate agencies, and GONGOs.

The Declaration on Latvian Legionnaires in World War II attempts to play down Nazi crimes, gloss over the memory of the victims of the Nazi genocide and glorify the Latvian Waffen-SS legionnaires.

"The aim of soldiers who were drafted into the Legion or who joined it voluntarily was to protect Latvia from the restoration of Stalin's regime. They never took part in Hitler's punitive acts against peaceful inhabitants. Just like the Finnish army, the Latvian Legion did not fight against the anti-Hitler coalition; it fought against one of its members – the USSR, which was an aggressor in relation to Finland and Latvia."

The Latvian ruling circles seek to internationalize the historical claims against Russia, to turn the accusations against the USSR and Russia about the "genocide of many nations" into a political declaration.

In Lithuania, the political persecution of local and foreign citizens charged with criminal offences over historical events of the Soviet past or their public interpretation has come into sharp focus in recent years.

There has been an unprecedented surge in attempts to make heroes of Nazi accomplices and “Forest Brothers.” The Latvian law enforcement system has refused to consider the crimes of Herberts Cukurs and has rehabilitated this Nazi collaborator, who was involved in mass atrocities and was in charge of transport and ammunition in the Latvian auxiliary security police subordinated to the German SD and known as Arajs Kommando.

I think it important to develop a set of measures to offset the negative consequences of state historical policy in the Baltic countries and to counter it by well-documented emotionally and artistically powerful projects that would both make an impact on the “titular” audience in these countries and support our compatriots, a distinctive and important part of the big Russian world.

History as an Instrument in the Hands of Former Estonian Communists and Komsomol Members.

Rodion Denisov, *publisher and editor-in-chief of the Tribuna.ee portal, director of The Baltic Triangle, an Estonian publishing house*

ESTONIA officially claims that its independence history dates from 1918. In that year, when the Civil War was raging in Russia, the Estonians, backed by the British and other enemies of the Soviet government, declared themselves an independent nation. In 1920, Soviet Russia became the first country to recognize Estonia’s independence and Estonia became the first country to recognize the young Soviet state. As regards Estonia’s incorporation into the Soviet Union in 1940, Estonia’s political elite and academia consider it occupation by the Soviet Union. They also consider Nazi Germany’s invasion of Estonia in 1941 occupation.

In September 1944, after the Germans had left Tallinn and Soviet troops hadn’t yet moved into the city, the National Committee, a body that had been set up during the war and was headed by acting Estonian President Jüri Uluots, reaffirmed Estonia’s independence. He appointed Otto Tief prime minister and ordered him to form a government. The so-called government existed for one day only, but present-day Estonian politicians see this as a sufficient reason to accuse the Soviet Union of a second occupation that lasted until 1991.

Russian historians and politicians strongly reject this interpretation. They argue that prewar Estonia ceased to exist the moment it became part of the Soviet Union because the entire process of accession was in full compliance with the traditions and laws of those times. The independence that was declared in 1991 brought a new independent Estonia into being.

The leaders of today’s Estonia see the existence of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (Estonian SSR) as nothing other than a dark period of occupation. If anyone in Estonia mentions publicly that, in the Soviet period, books by Estonian authors were published in vast numbers of copies, Estonian theatrical art was flourishing, and numerous infrastructure facilities were built in the republic and Estonia still makes use of them, they will at best be reproached in embellishing history and at worst be accused of work for Russian propaganda, although many of today’s Estonian politicians built excellent careers for themselves in the system of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) or in bodies that were linked to it.

Remarkably, in the Soviet period, all these people were able to receive secondary and higher education in the Estonian language and enjoyed all the benefits of the “occupation.” In effect, there’s not much that has changed for many of them since Estonia became independent. It’s mainly their rhetoric that has

changed. One high-profile person has written that, the way he sees it, if the Estonian SSR had survived, the same people would have taken the senior posts in it. So, no statements about “Soviet occupation” or demands for compensation should be taken seriously. Should the geopolitical situation change, the same people will be the first to take the side of the more powerful party as soon as this happens.

After the USSR: Socio-Cultural Trends in Modern Georgia.

Olga Semyonova, *research associate at the Russian Academy of Sciences’ Southern Research Center, Candidate of Science (Philosophy)*

AT PRESENT, relations between Georgia and Russia remain complicated and uncertain. The situation is frozen, still in limbo. At the same time, there is a sense of tension toward Russia in Georgian society, which is likely predetermined more by the country’s domestic socioeconomic and political crisis. The apparent differences on the issue of cooperation with Russia are comparable to a political course.

At present, the Georgian people have not accepted the temporary loss of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (to say the least). Nevertheless, the growing demand for socioeconomic development will surely make the Georgian leadership take a more serious approach toward strengthening trade and economic ties with Russia, as well as further facilitating access to the Russian market.

Georgia’s socio-cultural life is a mirror of current problems and prospects. This area has been insufficiently studied. The scope of researchers’ interest is confined mainly to strategic economic and political issues.

Our focus is on socio-cultural trends, which, on the one hand, reflect sociopolitical processes, and on the other, can significantly impact these processes. Let’s consider some of the trends typical of today’s Georgia.

Youth and education constitute the basis of progressive and dynamic development in any country. This issue is highly relevant for the majority of the republic’s citizens and has potential for conflict.

Experts note the high degree of the politicization of modern Georgian society, the fact that it is divided into groups with different guidelines and goals, leading to clashes between opposing forces. Therefore, the struggle for the youth and the intellectual elite of society was a key element in preparing and holding the elections.

Today, Georgia’s focus is on the prestige of education, the recognition of qualifications in the EU area, and compliance with international standards. This process is based on the long-standing tradition of giving children a good education.

Russian-Georgian cultural ties, which that have existed for decades, have weakened (due to the visa, transport and financial difficulties involved in visiting Russia and Georgia), but they are still very much alive. A case in point is the *Russky Klub* [Russian Club] magazine, which provides Russian-language coverage of cultural events in Russian-speaking community.

The rapidly developing tourism industry has been another marked trend in recent years. Tourists go to central cities and districts, the Black Sea coast and scenic mountainous areas as part of adventure tours. Many young tourists from Russia are discovering new tourist destinations.

Of course, Georgia’s scientific, cultural and diplomatic ties with neighboring states are very active. Scientific and research conferences in Yerevan, talks on energy issues in Baku, and a theater festival in Istanbul are familiar, common practice. Members of the scientific and creative intelligentsia are open to cooperation with their U.S., British and European counterparts. These are priority areas today.

However, it would be wrong to say that pro-Russian trends are lacking in the socio-cultural development strategy of modern Georgia. There is a connection between the two cultures that has evolved historically and stood the test of time, ideology and wars.

Perhaps it is too early to talk about permanent multilateral relations between Georgia and Russia, even in the socio-cultural sphere. Any talk about the two countries uniting within some association or other in the foreseeable future is unrealistic. Nevertheless, the current trends in Georgian and Russian societies give us hope that even “after the USSR” we can walk side by side, supporting each other in difficult times and rejoicing in each other’s successes and achievements.

State-Religion Relationships and the State of Religiosity in Kazakhstan, 1940s to 1970s.

Zauresh Saktaganova, *Professor, Academician Buketov Karaganda State University, Doctor of Science (History) (Kazakhstan)*

TODAY, the Republic of Kazakhstan is a polyethnic, polyconfessional and multicultural state of about 140 ethnicities that belong to 18 confessions.

This highly varied picture of religious organizations is a result of migrations and deportations of the 20th century: massive peasant migrations during the Stolypin reforms, deportations of peoples in the 1930s-1950s, agrarian and industrial migrations during Soviet modernization.

Starting with 1929, religious policy became harsher and persecution of Islam more intensive than before: all Islamic educational establishments were closed.

Despite the pressure, repressions and liquidation of a considerable part of the clergy and active antireligious propaganda, religion continued to be fairly important in the spiritual life of society: Orthodoxy preserved its positions in Russian villages especially among the older and middle generations; it survived in cities while Muslims, according to many studies, remained indifferent or even hostile to all attempts to attack Islam.

Islam was in a fairly difficult situation: in the 1940s, there were only 22 registered communities in Kazakhstan; in 1951, their number increased to 202, yet the figures that appeared in official reports did not reflect the true state of religiosity in the republic. The majority of Muslim communities and prayer buildings were unregistered; the faithful built mosques without official permissions and organized mass services. Unregistered religious ministers, who wandered across the republic, the “wandering mullahs” as they were called, were very popular among the Muslims.

This phenomenon appeared because Soviet power refused to register them (and ministers of other religions). They performed burial and marriage rites, read prayers during the greater and lesser Bayram holy days that attracted from 20 to 30 or even 400-500 people in small settlements; in cities they attracted bigger crowds: in 1951-1953, mosque attendance on holy days in Alma-Ata rose to 4 or even 5.5 thousand. There is archival information that 1,155 sacrificial animals were slaughtered on the greater Bayram in 1951, and 1,912 in 1952.

The report of the commissioner of the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults at the Council of Ministers of the USSR for Kazakhstan on the state of affairs as of March 25, 1951 said, in particular: “The cult of Muslims is the main religious cult in Kazakhstan; it is followed by Kazakhs, Uyghurs, Dungans, Uzbeks, Tatars and some other nationalities resettled from the Caucasus during the war (Karachais, Balkarians, etc.).”

The report contains no information on the Russian Orthodox Church. By the early 1940s, practically all Orthodox and Catholic churches in Kazakhstan had been closed; many churches were either ruined or

used as warehouses, etc. Religious life of the Orthodox community was revived in Kazakhstan in 1954 when the Kazakh Eparchy was set up.

After Stalin's death, the religious policy was corrected. One can agree with Mikhail Odintsov, prominent Russian specialist in religion and religious situation in the Soviet Union who has written that the Khrushchev Thaw pushed the relationships between the state and the Church back into the 1930s. Hardliners won the battle in the governing structures of the CPSU; this meant much stricter religious policy.

In the 1970s, attacks at religion lost some of their vehemence while anti-religious propaganda acquired a form of "scientific atheism."

No matter how active it was, the anti-religious policy of the Soviet state did not squeeze the spiritual religious life from the public life of the population of the Kazakh Republic.

The CIS as an Important Cooperation Mechanism in the Post-Soviet Space.

Vladimir Nikanorov, *adviser at the Eurasian Information and Analytical Consortium*

IN DISCUSSING prospects and characteristics of integration processes in the post-Soviet space, one cannot neglect the role of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), an important instrument for cooperation within the region. The contributions of the 11 member states to the CIS's activities differ in scale but combine to play a significant role in the development of this important geographical region. This role has repeatedly been praised by the leaders of Commonwealth states.

Last year, the combined external trade turnover of the CIS countries grew by more than 17% and exceeded \$1 trillion. This means that our cooperation within the Commonwealth is not a hindrance but a help in our relations with third countries. Our combined volume of trade with external partners is \$1 trillion and the volume of trade among CIS countries is \$190 billion.

The CIS leaders reviewed at the Ashgabat meeting what the Commonwealth had achieved in 2019 in trade and in economic, social, foreign policy, and security affairs. The summit ended up in the signature of a set of multilateral documents, including the Declaration on Strategic Economic Cooperation.

Economic and cultural cooperation and the joint handling of threats and challenges are the basic forms of interaction among CIS states.

Stability and security are invariable priorities for the CIS. Today, security and sustainable development are inseparable notions since social stability is impossible without economic growth just as social progress is impossible without an effective security system. Trying to achieve this dual task takes up a lot of effort in the Commonwealth.

One of the threats addressed by the CIS is international terrorism, one of today's greatest dangers. Joint action by various countries is vital to a successful offensive against terrorism. The Ashgabat summit stressed the role of CIS specialized bodies such as the CIS Anti-Terrorism Center. Putin insisted that the center should be a more effective coordinator for the security and intelligence services of CIS countries and that, among other things, it should seek to prevent the propaganda of terrorist ideology and any form of logistic, technical, or financial support for terrorists.

The CIS leaders expressed satisfaction during the Ashgabat meeting with their countries' performance in jointly combating crime.

Occasionally one can hear claims that the CIS is an ineffective organization. But usually comments of this kind come from people who don't know much about the CIS. There is a statement that is attributed to

Albert Einstein: "If you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."

Over the past two and a half decades, the CIS has built a sound legal framework for relations between member states. It has developed efficient mechanisms for economic and cultural cooperation and for jointly building more effective guarantees of stability and security. The Commonwealth has efficient transportation and communications networks. There are agreements between member countries on pension payment and visa-free travel.

To sum up, the CIS is an international organization with a clear and balanced blueprint for ways to bring about dynamic economic growth for the member countries and raise their global prestige.

Activities of the Eurasian Peoples' Assembly.

Igor Khalevinsky, *Chairman of the Board of the Association of Russian Diplomats*

I'd like to say a few words about the activities of the Eurasian Peoples' Assembly, whose goals are fully in line with the ideas of Eurasian integration. The Eurasian Peoples' Assembly is an integration model for large-scale Eurasian partnership. It is our principle that Eurasian peoples should be able to safeguard their moral traditions and ethnocultural identities and that they should pass their social experience to future generations, and we seek to ensure that Eurasia is a territory of peaceful dialogue and harmony.

For this purpose, the assembly supports and carries out projects that can bring people from various countries together on the basis of trust, mutually beneficial cooperation, and mutual cultural enrichment.

One such project is Eurasian Peoples' Assembly Days in various countries. These are events that include business meetings, roundtables and panel discussions on various fields of the assembly's activities such as business, science, arts, education, tourism, sports, and youth policy. Invitations to participate in such meetings are sent to diplomats, intergovernmental and international nongovernmental organizations, nonprofits, academics, scientists, artists, journalists, etc

The assembly pursues the same objective with other projects – Children of Eurasia, Eurasian School of Friendship, the We Won Together international festival of documentary films and television programs, the Road of Life Friendship Caravan, the Sunflower international festival of children's and youth media, the Belts and Routes of Eurasia bicycle expedition, the "New Generation of Eurasia" Issyk-Kul International Youth Forum, and many others. The LIFFt Eurasian Literary Festival of Festivals, which is an annual event, plays an important role too.

The assembly actively participates in numerous international economic and cultural events, thereby enlarging its range of friends and partners, including in Central Asian countries.

Altai is one of the cradles of civilization, the ancestral home of the Finno-Ugric, Turkic, Mongolic, and Manchu-Tungus peoples, the Koreans, the Japanese, and other ethnic groups.

We need historical and practical evaluations of the extremely rich heritage that has its sources in Altai. This work, which would have to include going through recent research, would help promote cooperation among peoples living in vast territories in Eurasia and give a boost to their development.

The Russian Center of Science and Culture hosted a roundtable entitled "Drivers of Comprehensive Eurasian Integration: Soft Power and Women's Influence."

The assembly delegation also attended the First International Investment Forum of Mongolians of the World under the auspices of the president of Mongolia.

The Russian Cultural and Information Center of the Russian Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo) hosted a discussion entitled “Cultural and Civilizational Codes of Eurasian Peoples,” which focused on international cultural cooperation in Eurasia.

In connection with the 75th anniversary of the Great Victory and the 75th anniversary of the historic Yalta Conference of 1945, we plan an international public forum for February 2020. It will be entitled “Safeguarding the Memory of World War II and the Great Patriotic War” and will take place at Livadia Palace.

The assembly is becoming one of the dynamic organizations in the vast Eurasian space. It is open for joining.

The Information Aspect of Youth Policy in the Post-Soviet Space.

Inna Tarasova, *member of the Expert Council at the State Duma’s Committee for CIS Affairs, Eurasian Integration and Compatriots Living Abroad, Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation*

AMID the economic and information war unleashed against Russia, our foreign policy as never before needs to rely on soft power and public diplomacy. Whereas the revolutionary achievements of Russian science in the sphere of strategic weapons and the modernization of the Armed Forces have resolved pressing national defense problems, our integration efforts in the humanitarian space are not effective enough yet.

How could the Eurasian Union be made more attractive in the international arena through the humanitarian component, which is not part of the military-economic domain? It seems that successful youth policy, among other things, in the framework of the Eurasian project is a major factor that could raise Greater Eurasia to a qualitatively new level of integration, facilitating the development of political institutions and consolidating statehood.

Youth policy includes integration projects in science and education, promotion of the Russian language in the post-Soviet space, as well as all other soft power tools.

It is necessary to promote an attractive image of youth associations as part of integration projects: The young audience should realize that the Eurasian project is key to their success and ambitions. The most notable examples in Russia include the Sirius educational center, the youth section of the Valdai International Discussion Club and the Russian Leaders competition.

For two decades, reform of political consciousness has been ongoing in countries of the former USSR, involving the reassessment of youth value systems.

The phenomenon of quasi-media has become widespread in Kazakhstan – for example, motorists’ accounts on Instagram: “Essentially, they are also media outlets and they publish city news, among other things.” YouTube is extremely influential in the post-Soviet space. Kazakh blogger Aminka- vitaminka gets up to 95,000 views per video. ThankstoYouTube, interest in Kazakh films and music abroad has grown.

Social networks in the Eurasian space have a huge creative potential, since competition between channels and communities is mostly through the number of subscribers and views, which helps create a common media space.

however, it should not be forgotten that the modern level of IT development has not only erased the borders between states in the information space but has also created unprecedented opportunities for psychological, political, social and other impacts on the population of the world as a whole.

At present, online services created for interpersonal communication are being increasingly politicized, and social networks are becoming a form of political influence and manipulation of public opinion. They ensure the dissemination of extremist content that poses a potential or real threat to the country's national security.

At the same time, foreign social networks are not subject to Russian law, so they are in effect an open platform for the publication of extremist materials, among other things.

Whereas previously it was important to influence a potential victim through face to face communication, today it has become possible for new sects to recruit people through correspondence on social networks.

Among the post-Soviet countries, Belarus could be considered the most impervious in that respect: Its youth is characterized by political stability and the absence of religious or nationalist extremist sentiments. The country's youth policy prioritizes civic-patriotic upbringing, which has a positive impact on the moral development of young Belarusians.

In a society with prevailing egocentrism and eroding moral norms, affiliation with a certain nation or state no longer makes much difference; as a result, people begin to feel isolated. However, they still need communication, involvement and affiliation with some group or other, which makes them potential targets for recruitment into a sect.

And we should not forget that the U.S. State Department's program includes a special provision on countering and blocking Russian media resources, above all in the CIS space.

It is also important to note another significant aspect such as the impact of social networks on protest behavior. The "color revolutions" and "Twitter revolutions" that swept across the post-Soviet space, in which young people were actively involved, have shown that the younger generation is increasingly demonstrating its ambitions to emerge as an independent political player.

There is both the creative and serious destructive potential for using network resources in the Eurasian space, as well as in the entire world. The Russian government needs to develop an array of measures to regulate the activity of social networks and Internet communities in the context of countering anti-Russian propaganda to ensure Russia's information and national security

Milestones in the Life of Fyodor Martens, Outstanding International Law Scholar and Diplomat.

Igor Demianenko, *Senior Consul, Russian Consulate General in Kharkov, Ukraine, Candidate of Science (Law); demianenko.igor@yandex.ru*

Vitaly Ivanenko, *Associate Professor, Department of International Law, St. Petersburg State University, Candidate of Science (Law)*

The MEMORIAL DATES calendar of 2020 includes the 175th birth anniversary (August 27), and June 19, 2019, was the 110th death anniversary of Fyodor Martens as he has always been known in Russia, or Friedrich Fromhold Martens as was his birth name, a professor at St. Petersburg University and a world-famous diplomat, international law scholar and international arbitration judge.

His life is a good example of what natural talents and industriousness can do: born into a humble family, Martens became a prominent specialist in international law and an outstanding diplomat, winning an

international renown that no other Russian jurist specializing in international law has ever been able to achieve.

Martens spent his entire childhood at the orphanage. As one of his contemporaries wrote, he “was neither of noble birth nor rich by birth, nor did any fairies of protectionism wave magic wands over his cradle.”

Martens was a gifted youth who was fond of poetry and history, but in October 1863 he chose the law faculty of St. Petersburg University for his further studies.

At university, Martens at first developed an interest in the philosophy of criminal law but, after accidentally reading articles on international law.

The talented student caught the attention of the head of the law faculty, Professor Ignaty Ivanovsky, who simultaneously headed the international law department. Making use of his skill of persuasion, Ivanovsky talked Martens into staying at the university after graduation for writing a master’s dissertation and training for professorship at the international law department. This determined Martens’ brilliant career.

Martens remained in the international law department for 39 years from autumn 1867, a period during which he became a world-famous international law scholar.

Martens simultaneously received a position at the Foreign Ministry in January 1869.3 he served at the ministry for the remaining four decades of his life and eventually became a world-recognized diplomat and international arbitration judge, the “Lord Chancellor of Europe.”

His legacy is so great and diversified that it is worth going through milestones in his life and once again praising that great man.

How prominent Martens’ role as a historian was is obvious from his being elected a full member of the Imperial Russian historical Society.

IN JANUARY 1869, 23-year-old Martens was offered a position at the Foreign Ministry, where rose from one of the lowest to one of the highest roles, receiving the rank of ambassador at large.

From the 1870s onward, he was given important missions by the Foreign Ministry, eventually earning a high prestige both in Russia and worldwide.

DURING his Foreign Ministry service, Martens represented Russia at nearly all international conferences in which the country took part. The first such conference was a forum on the law of war.

SPECIAL MENTION should be made of Martens’ role in formulating the status of international arbitration courts and popularizing them. Martens gained world fame as an international arbitration judge who was able to resolve many complicated disputes between states. In the American press, he was called “the main judge of the Christian world.”

Martens was justly considered by the governments of Russia and many foreign countries and by jurists in Russia and worldwide as one of the main authorities on international relations, international law, and diplomacy. he received 16 high Russian and foreign awards for his diplomatic and scholarly activities that strengthened peace and helped bring nations closer together.

There remains growing interest today in Martens’ legacy. his humanitarian ideas have gained new relevance both in Russia and abroad. his books are republished. his work is studied by university students and venerated scholars alike. The Russian Academy of Sciences has instituted the F.F. Martens Prize, which has been awarded since 1995 for outstanding international law and international relations research.

Current trends in international relations and international law vindicate the ideas and work of Fyodor Martens, an outstanding jurist and diplomat who firmly believed that humankind would overcome confrontations, conflicts and wars and consistently progress toward unity and integration, toward the triumph of law and toward general respect for the individual.

Lev Mendeleevich as a Diplomat, Historian and Journalist (Based on His Personal Archives).

Andrey Romanov, *First Secretary, Department of history and Records, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Candidate of Science (history); andderoma@mail.ru*

SEPTEMBER 19, 2019 was the birth centenary of Lev Mendeleevich, an outstanding Soviet diplomat (1918-1989). There was a series of events at the Russian Foreign Ministry to mark the occasion, including a memorial meeting organized by the Council of Veterans, an article about Mendeleevich's diplomatic activities in the journal *International Affairs*,¹ and a photo exhibition in the foyer of the ministry's central building.

However, the main event was a ceremony in which Mendeleevich's family handed over his personal archive to the Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation for permanent storage. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov participated in the ceremony. This wealth of information will be of tremendous interest to historians as it casts new light on Mendeleevich's personality and on international events in which he was involved or even played the main role. This article is a brief review of Mendeleevich's archive, which forms a separate section in the Foreign Policy Archive.

One section of Mendeleevich's archive in the Foreign Policy Archive classification is United Nations-related information – drafts and finally approved documents. This part of the archive deals with issues such as the prohibition of the use and proliferation of nuclear weapons (papers relating to this issue include material for drafting the Treaty on the NonProliferation of Nuclear Weapons); decolonization; international security; development of international law principles for friendly relations and cooperation between states; peacekeeping; human rights, the Middle East peace process; and the Indo-Pakistani conflict.

All these papers might seem dry historical records were they not enlivened by notes written in Mendeleevich's hand on many of them, such as "This is our draft of [date]," "This is our draft of the resolution," "This is our response to..." "This is a proposal from the X delegation," "This is the final version," "Adopted on [date]," or "Was never put to the vote." This reconstructs events and conveys those years' atmosphere in the United Nations.

As a member of the Soviet delegation to practically every annual session of the UN General Assembly, Mendeleevich developed his own way of getting ready for meetings: his archive includes a series of notepads in which he drafted speeches, made analytical remarks on various issues or on draft documents, drew up plans for the Soviet delegation, took down points made by various speakers and wrote comments on them.

Another section of Mendeleevich's archive deals with consultations in Helsinki in preparation for the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and with the CSCE itself, especially its second stage. It would not be an exaggeration that from November 1972 to August 1975 Mendeleevich had his entire time taken up by matters of European cooperation. "he was among those who did the lion's share of the drafting of the Helsinki Final Act, primarily the 'first basket,' which addressed political and military policy aspects of European security."

Mendelevich attached tremendous importance to this work and meticulously collected all documents that had anything to do with the history of the Helsinki Final Act. He carefully systematized them with a view to future research. He wrote a detailed note that makes this clear.

After his three years of CSCE-related work, Mendelevich became the Soviet Union's main speaker on European security. This is a fact, and there is ample evidence of it in his archive.

Until the end of his career, Mendelevich was a key speaker not only on European security but on other issues as well. He was a regular speaker at meetings of the ministry's top decision-making body. Remarkably, in getting ready for speaking at those meetings, he used Vladimir Lenin's method of writing down brief theses, which he fortunately preserved so that we can study them now. He was a singularly talented speaker.

More than 20 notepads in Mendelevich's archive deal with the Indian Ocean issue. They are no less important as sources of research as the part of his archive dealing with the Helsinki Final Act and the part about the UN Special Political and Decolonization Committee.

The Danish period in Mendelevich's career is mainly represented in his archive by clippings from Danish newspapers many of which are articles by Mendelevich or transcripts of interviews with him. There are handwritten theses for some of the articles in the archive.

Mendelevich's archive also contains an informal, personal miscellany, things that he was collecting all his life and that tell us a lot about his personality and talents – notes scribbled and drawings made during meetings, someone's comments about speeches he had made, invitations to receptions, a conference badge, a ticket to a New York-bound ship, travel notes, clippings from foreign newspapers mentioning his name. Much is clear from his inscriptions on envelopes he put these things in because they enable us to trace his trips, especially in the period when he traveled all over the globe as an ambassador at large.

This part of the archive prompts some conclusions about Mendelevich's personality, mainly that he was able to put a humorous touch on even very serious tasks he was dealing with.

Mendelevich was an art lover. Judging by his notes, he made a point of going to museums in countries he was visiting or was posted in, and some of what he saw deeply impressed him.

The archive also includes articles by Mendelevich that appeared in publications such as the newspapers *Izvestia* and *Pravda*, the journals *International Affairs* and *New Times*, and the *Novosti* Press Agency bulletin *Soviet Panorama*¹⁵ – altogether more than 80 articles for the period from 1959 to 1983 on all international issues of those years mentioned in this article – disarmament, nonproliferation, UN mechanisms, the CSCE process and European security issues in general, demilitarization of the Indian Ocean, and the policies of NATO and member countries of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. This journalistic effort provides a comprehensive overview of the career of this prominent diplomat and outstanding personality.

In conclusion, I would again like to thank Mendelevich's family for presenting the Foreign Policy Archives with his personal archive, which will undoubtedly be treasured by researchers.

The Posolsky Prikaz and the Establishment of the Patriarchate in Rus.

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IN THE LAST QUARTER of the 16th century, Muscovite Rus was involved in active diplomatic relations in various spheres, its success guaranteed by coordinated and intensive efforts of employees of the Posolsky Prikaz (foreign ministry) set up in 1549. The establishment of the patriarchate in Rus (in 2019, this institution marked its 430th anniversary) was partly due to the hard work of our colleagues who lived in the Late Middle Ages.

In the 16th century, Rus became aware of its increasingly important role among its neighbors and on the international arena in general that obviously contradicted the “provincial status of the Russian Church in the hierarchy of the Eastern Orthodox Churches.”¹ By that time, the idea of an independent head of the Russian Church with the appropriate holy order (status) had been discussed for a long time. The issue acquired special urgency when Ottoman Turks had conquered Byzantium and spread their power to the Orthodox part of the Christian world. This is when Moscow became more assertive when discussing the issue with the Eastern Patriarchs, the Patriarch of Constantinople in the first place. It was resolved after seven years of intensive talks, partly thanks to the contribution of Russian diplomats.

IN THE LATTER HALF of the 16th century, under pressure of historical circumstances – the country was developing into a centralized, autocratic and Orthodox kingdom, – the patriarchate became a must in Rus.

Starting with the 15th century, Grand Prince of Muscovy was seen as the protector of Eastern Christianity, the function that had belonged to the Byzantine emperor. Our ancestors never spared “alms” and helped coreligionists even when barely coping with their own problems.

According to the Byzantine ideas accepted in Rus, the head of the Church in holy order not lower than patriarch should be at the side of the Christian czar recognized by all rulers. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the authority of the Russian Church reached the Ecumenical level as the most important among the Local Orthodox Churches and the only one among them which was independent of invaders of other faiths. The state supported Christianity since the day of its adoption.

It should be said that in the foreign policy context the patriarchal cathedra in the capital of Russia would help resolve several urgent strategic tasks, the most important of them being reunification with Ukraine, Belarus and the Western Russian lands that, at that time, belonged to the Great Duchy of Lithuania. Second, it was also equally important to win the right claimed by the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to unite the former Kievan Metropolitan See divided into two by the intrigues of Rome, Vilna and the Phanar. This made the Patriarchal status of the Metropolitan of Moscow a symbol of Slavic unity.

THE PROBLEM of Moscow patriarchate was first officially mentioned during the visit of Patriarch of Antioch Joachim to Russia in 1586. He was the first of the four Eastern patriarchs who came to the Moscow kingdom with an obvious purpose to ask for “alms.”

Moscow used the visit to ask Joachim to intercede for Rus in Constantinople and the Orthodox world and to raise the issue of Moscow patriarchate. Requested by the czar, Boris Godunov, “his brother-in-law and close advisor,” talked to Joachim.

Fully aware that the favors of the highest Eastern hierarchs could be acquired by placating and cajoling, the Kremlin dispatched Mikhail Ogarkov, an official of the Posolsky Prikaz, to the Patriarchs of Jerusalem and Alexandria. He traveled together with Joachim carrying rich gifts and personal letters of the Russian czar to the patriarchs.

Joachim fulfilled his promise: at the Council of the Greek Church, he pointed to the purity of Orthodoxy in Russia and said that it requested the establishment of its own Patriarch.

IN JULY 1588, Ecumenical Protohierarch accompanied by his Greek spiritual retinue unexpectedly (he failed to inform the Russian czar about his visit) arrived in Rus. This was practically the first Russian visit

of a top cleric of the Constantinople cathedra which stirred up happy expectations in Moscow of a tomos or a similar document of the heads of the Eastern Churches that would establish the Great Russian Patriarchate.

The guest brought no identifying documents and was received with honors and mistrust. There was an order "...not to let anybody meet him and his retinue, foreigners in the first place, without informing the officials." The exception should be made for those sent by the spiritual authorities and boyars with treats.

As soon as it had become clear that the guest was indeed head of the Church of Constantinople, Godunov and Shchelkalov, instructed by the czar, started negotiations on his behalf.

After more than six months of his residence in Moscow, Jeremiah was asked to establish the patriarch's throne in Russia and to grant the patriarchal rights to Metropolitan Job as "Patriarch of Vladimir and Moscow."

The establishment of the Patriarchate in Rus was an important achievement of mediaeval Russian diplomacy and evidence of the country's increased authority in the world. Having assessed the painstaking efforts of our ancestors, we should point to at least two facts. First, the diplomats demonstrated a lot of skills when setting up a Moscow cathedra: they observed all legal points related to church affairs and provided the widest possible approval of the world Christian community.

The Lost Lesson: How Bessarabia Joined Russia.

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ACROSS THE POST-SOVIET SPACE, political expediency has become the guiding light of the science of history. Each former Soviet republic, today a sovereign state, tends to revise the cultural and scientific heritage of the "fraternal family of Soviet peoples." The CIS and Baltic countries have already acquired or are writing their national histories. The ruling elites have hoisted the flag of the protection of interests of the titular nation and are tirelessly looking for new or even completely different historical and cultural landmarks related to the fates of autochthonous ethnicities.

During perestroika, the Moldovan public fascinated by scholarly discourse and political debates initiated a discussion of its recent history and "the tales of the times of old." The initiative was heard and approved in the corridors of power of the Republic of Moldova. On June 23, 1990, acting on the initiative of the People's Front of Moldova, the republican parliament passed a Decree entitled Conclusion of the Commission of the Supreme Soviet of the SSR of Moldova on the Political and Legal Assessment of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Treaty and the Additional Secret Protocols of August 23, 1939 as well as Their Repercussions for Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. This document offered an analysis of the Soviet-Moldovan relations on the eve of the Great Patriotic War and assessed the historical events of the Russo-Turkish War of 1806-1812 and the Treaty of Bucharest between Russia and the Ottoman Empire that ended the war and made Bessarabia part of the Russian Empire. According to those who wrote the document, in 1812 Russia dismembered the state of Moldova and annexed the Prut-Dniester interfluvium.

Today, it has become obvious that the content, assessments and conclusions of the Decree of June 23, 1990 by the Moldovan parliament were extremely contradictory. On the one hand, the document was the starting point for those who wanted to discover "white spots" in the history of the Soviet-Moldovan

relations on the eve of the Great Patriotic War; on the other, the document distorted the history of the Russian-Moldovan relations and the history of how Bessarabia had become part of the Russian state.

The inadequate level of juridical knowledge of those who wrote the Decree of June 23, 1990 can be disregarded as unimportant. It is much more important to discuss the document's political meaning. It was for the first time that the Moldovan deputies officially declared that they negatively assessed the fact of Bessarabia's accession to Russia, condemned the policy of czarism in the Prut-Dniester interfluvium in the early 19th century and, wittingly or unwittingly, cast doubt on the legality of the treaty Russia and the Ottoman Empire had signed in Bucharest in 1812.

The so-called "new Moldovans" wasted no time to arm themselves with the official position to spread anti-Russian ideas among the students as the social group that in the absence of adequate knowledge and life experience is especially susceptible to new ideas.

The ethnic Moldovans who lived between the two rivers became the autochthonous population of Bessarabia as part of Russia. They were finally liberated from the Turkish yoke and united with the Russian people, the culture and the Orthodox faith of which made them fraternal peoples. The victory of the Russian army over the Turks in the war of 1806- 1812, in which Moldovan volunteers were actively involved on the side of Russia, radically changed the life in the newly acquired lands.

Very soon, the local people became assured that the Russian Empire not only protected their lives and property but also guaranteed political, social and economic stability in this strategically important region for Russia, Turkey and some other powers.

Not all Moldovan historians accepted the "Romanian" approach to the historical heritage of the Moldovans as gospel truth. Certain protest groups objected to the interpretation of Russian policy in Bessarabia as a policy of consistent oppression of the national features of the local people, a policy of devastation and plundering. Those of the Moldovan historians who represent the historical school with obvious pro-Russian orientation were baffled by the intention of "new Moldovans" to put Russia's and Turkey's policies on the same level.

It should be said that, while covering the history of the Treaty of Bucharest, Moldova's pro-Russian and pro-Romanian historians alike prefer to follow the well-treaded path. They invariably assess the important events of 1812 (and the events of 1918 and 1940, for that matter) in the history of Moldova only as a transfer of Bessarabia to a different sovereign.

While officially permitted manifestations accepted the historical importance of the Treaty of Bucharest as the date of liberation of Moldovans from the Ottoman yoke, other manifestations spoke of the date as the day of mourning when autocratic Russia had annexed Bessarabia. Today, it has become clear that the unification issue became a watershed between social groups with different political orientations.

The definition of history formulated by prominent Russian historian Vasily Klyuchevsky who said that history was not a teacher but rather a mentor and a watchman: "history doesn't teach any lessons, but greatly punishes one for not learning them." Time has come to ponder on this when assessing the ties between the past and present in the developing Moldovan society.

The Baltics and the International Crisis of 1939-1940 in Latvian Diplomatic Documents.

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The collection *Vynuzhdenny alyans: Sovetsko-baltiyskie otnoshenia i mezhdunarodny krizis, 1939-1940* (Enforced Alliance: Soviet-Baltic Relationships and the International Crisis, 1939-1940) has brought into scholarly circulation a new set of diplomatic documents related to the years critically important for the fate of the Baltic. As distinct from similar materials of the foreign policy institutions of the UK, Germany, the Soviet Union, Lithuania, and Estonia, the reports of the Latvian mission to the USSR remained outside the scope of attention of both Soviet/Russian and foreign historians.

The biographical notes, related to 230 *dramatis personae* many of whom are unknown even to qualified Russian readers, enlivened or even “humanized” the documents.

We did our best to make the fundamental Introduction that takes into account contemporary Russian and Baltic historiography so that to plunge the reader into the historical context of the published documents and shed light on the foreign policies of the Baltic states in 1939-1940 and their internal steps under pressure of external circumstances.

It looked as if the near future of the Baltic on the side of Germany and against the Soviet Union had been predetermined. Everything changed in the small hours of August 24, 1939 in Moscow, when the Soviet Union and Germany signed a non-aggression treaty. Under its secret supplementary protocol, Latvia and Estonia were included in the Soviet sphere of influence while Lithuania (together with the Vilna Region that both sides recognized as belonging to Lithuania) was included in the German sphere of influence.

The motives of the Soviet leaders who signed the deal with Berlin were obvious: for a long time, the Kremlin was apprehensive of a German toehold at its western border. In 1939, Soviet diplomacy tried and failed to persuade the Baltic nations to opt for neutrality.

Moscow was very much irritated by the efforts of the Baltic states to revive the so-called Baltic Entente by conducting secret political and military consultations. The Soviet side was alerted by the conference of the Baltic Entente held in Riga on March 14-16, 1940 (Doc. No. 75) and suspected that Lithuania had secretly joined the Estonian-Latvian military alliance.

The clearest explanation of Soviet policies in the Baltic in the summer of 1940 came not from habitually cautious diplomats and not from the military. It came from a Cheka man Vsevolod Merkulov, First Deputy of the People’s Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR. he said in a private talk with Antanas Sniečkus, First Secretary of the Communist Party of Lithuania: “Stalin looks at the Baltic states as a springboard that the German strategists need as a toehold to break through to Leningrad, capture it and unite with the Finns.... Even if we have friendly governments in the Baltic states, as soon as the situation in Europe becomes unfavorable for us Germans, aided by their ‘fifth column,’ will stir up riots in these countries and, assisted by saboteurs and certain parts of the local armed forces, will attack the bases of the Red Army, block them out or destroy them. In 48 hours, they will appear at Leningrad.... If the Baltic states become parts of the Soviet Union, the Germans would realize that an attack at them was not an easy adventure but the beginning of a great war. Hitler is not yet ready to do this. In other words, admission of the Baltic states into the Soviet Union will delay the war by a year or two.”

The above suggests that the far from sincere observations of the treaties with the Soviet Union by the Baltic upper crust (especially scandalous in case of Lithuania) combined with an avalanche of Nazi threats were the main factors that forced the Kremlin to exert strong pressure on these countries needed for regime change and introduction of additional contingents of Soviet troops into their territories. The catastrophically fast defeat of France (one of the pillars of the Versailles peace and the most serious military opponent of Hitler in the West) in June 1940 left no illusions about the further

course of Nazi aggression. This accelerated opposite geopolitical changes: additional contingents of Soviet troops were moved first in Lithuania and then in two other Baltic republics where “people’s governments” were formed. Later, they were incorporated into the Soviet Union: a radical solution of the “toehold” problem, which had been a “headache” to Soviet leaders for nearly two decades.

International Information Security as a Challenge to New Geopolitical Reality.

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INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION SECURITY (IIS) in the presentday world has emerged as a priority in analyzing international relations in the context of the global information technology revolution, which has predetermined the formation of the global information space and information society at the international and national levels. Therefore, ensuring IIS and its systemic analysis is highly relevant, since the challenges of the real world are compounded by escalating tensions in the virtual world. The boundary between the virtual and the real world is becoming increasingly porous, which means that cyberwarfare has the potential to transform into a field of conventional warfare. The information space is emerging as the same kind of battlefield as land, the sea, airspace, and outer space.

Furthermore, confrontation in the information and cyber space is escalating. Computer attacks (often on an unprecedented scale) are used as a tool of political struggles, smear efforts and technology to escalate domestic political disagreements and interstate confrontation.

At the same time, despite the relevance and importance of this problem, a comprehensive textbook on international information security has yet to be published in Russia or abroad. “International Information Security: Theory and Practice,”* a three-volume work prepared by a team of research associates with the Center for International Information Security and Scientific and Technological Policy at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations of the Russian Foreign Ministry and edited by Doctor of history, Prof. A.V. Krutskikh, Director of the Center, helps to bridge this gap.

Volume 1 is devoted to IIS history and theory, as well as the role and place of IIS in the modern architecture of international ties. Volumes 2 and 3 contain an array of official documents covering a wide range of information and cyberspace-related issues, which helps navigate the IIS course in its classic law-based aspect. The textbook presents ideas about IIS-related issues developed not only by Russian but also foreign experts, while Volumes 2 and 3 include documents adopted by Russian state bodies, UN agencies and other international organizations, as the authors of the monograph target readers both at home and abroad.

The monograph’s practical value is evidenced by the analysis of IIS-related issues in the context of current challenges to the norms of international law.

The textbook’s applied value is also that students will get an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the negotiating process in the IIS sphere, which is the focus of a section on Russian diplomatic practice.

The authors also consider IIS in its historical and technological aspects, which expands the perception of this phenomenon and helps get a better understanding of it, taking into account scientific and technological progress and other achievements in this sphere.

One of the most serious challenges today is hacking, which has acquired an unprecedented and extraordinarily diverse scale. Hacking attacks are being driven by a combination of interstate conflicts, terrorist motivations, criminal commerce, and elementary hooliganism

Volumes 2 and 3, which contain an assortment of major documents, can be effectively used by domestic and foreign experts as a reference book on IIS and related problems.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the team of authors has provided a comprehensive coverage of theoretical and practical issues related to ensuring international information security, offering a systematic analysis of various IIS aspects. Undoubtedly, this textbook is a positive result of a major team effort.