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SUMMARY.

“The Political Striptease Show Amid the Coronavirus Pandemic Is Unattractive, Off-Putting”.

Sergey Ryabkov, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation

The most important thing for me is that in recent months, the WHO has proved to be a clearing house for information concerning the pandemic, a generator of recommendations and conceptual approaches and a platform for analyzing the entirety of data and issuing optimal recommendations. There is nothing ideal in the world and there may be no limit to perfection, but the WHO's mission is to help governments and health care systems in developing and fine-tuning optimal methodologies and practical actions in fighting the pandemic, including social distancing, enforcing quarantine regimes, self-isolation, and so on. Under these circumstances, it is wrong and inappropriate to raise political issues that have implications for the international system as a whole and that undermine the WHO's authority. As for Washington's decision to halt funding to the WHO, in the final analysis, that is a punch in the gut. A stab in the back.

We can see that in recent weeks, contradictory, conflicting and not entirely clear signals have been coming from the U.S. in an effort to place the responsibility for what is going on there on others, find an external enemy and shift the attention of the domestic public and the international community (at least the part of it that traditionally listens to Washington's opinion) to some alleged machinations and insidious scheming.

Despite the unprecedented nature of the challenge and the situation that the international community is facing, the U.S. is unable to get rid of the idea that it is always right in every respect. The international community is supposed to follow U.S. signals and, to put it bluntly, obey Washington's dictate.

The most important thing for me is that in recent months, the WHO has proved to be a clearing house for information concerning the pandemic, a generator of recommendations and conceptual approaches and a platform for analyzing the entirety of data and issuing optimal recommendations.

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We are doing all we can to enable all Russian citizens concerned to return to their motherland. How effectively this is being done is another matter.

I must say that we can see very well when a particular campaign is launched in Western progovernment circles and Western media. For example, as soon as Russia provided coronavirus aid to Italy and the U.S. and as soon as China demonstrated the effectiveness of its efforts in fighting the virus and began to extend its assistance to many countries in the world, certain institutions immediately began to issue directives as to how to counter that. The primitive thinking of those who are engaged in this at those centers shows through in that such directives follow the same pattern. The lexicon and terminology that they use are semantically American, U.S.-British. So many things immediately become clear to a person who does not have special investigative skills in “strategic communication” but just reads those texts.

Actions not only by U.S. lawmakers but also by representatives of the executive branch of government in recent years clearly indicate that they are trying to rewrite history in their favor. There are a lot of examples of conscious, deliberate attempts to downplay the contribution that the Red Army made to the victory over a common enemy during World War II.

Mankind will not be the same after the pandemic – at least, it will emerge mentally transformed. Let's hope to God that the economic consequences will be quickly overcome, as will be the period of upcoming, inevitable recession.

I believe that in any event one lesson from this situation will be a shift in the mood of elites in many countries, cutting costs and inefficient expenditures and focusing on production and other socially important areas. Decisions will be made everywhere to substantially strengthen health care systems and create reserves, including material reserves.

The treaty cannot be rewritten. If somebody decided to do that, the result would be a completely different document. In any case, it cannot be rewritten in the months that remain before New START expires.

The issue of bringing in China is a colossal, formidable political challenge. Even from a purely diplomatic perspective, it is a daunting task – in effect, an impossible one.

Generally speaking, one problem of U.S. foreign policy in recent years has been this: A slogan is publicly announced, an idea is put forward and then the entire foreign policy position is tied up to that slogan, reduced to that idea.

It is important to draw our U.S. partners' attention to the fact that when they try to parade their knowledge of the fundamentals of international law, applying that knowledge to the actions of other countries, they would be well advised for starters to think about how such steps toward Venezuela correlate with the international law principle of principle of refraining from the threat or use of force.

Germany and the U.S.: A Friendship of Convenience?

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DONALD TRUMP'S TENURE as U.S. president has shaken the Germans' trust in the United States as guarantor of their security and well-being. They are going through a painful and complicated process of trying to comprehend the United States' policy of economic protectionism, its diplomacy of sanctions, and its demands that European nations raise their contributions to NATO's budget to 2% of their gross domestic product (GDP).

By the end of the 19th century, ethnic Germans made up one of the United States' largest immigrant communities. Due to their industriousness, German-Americans influenced ways of life, politics and culture in the United States, and made a significant contribution to the American labor movement, achieving better working conditions for themselves and for other immigrant communities. All this helped the German-American community integrate into American society.

German-Americans set up the United States' first kindergartens and established the tradition of using decorated fir trees to celebrate Christmas and the onset of the New Year. With their significant roles in

all areas of U.S. society, German-Americans made a tremendous contribution to the development of the American way of life.

The wide-scale involvement of people with German roots in the United States' public, political and cultural life is an indication of a long history of relations between the United States and Germany. Around the start of the 20th century, the term "Americanization" came into being in Germany, reflecting huge amounts of American goods in the German market. The American origin of Coca Cola didn't stop Hitler Youth activists from enjoying it. After World War II, the Germans were grateful to the Americans for participating in their country's liberation from Nazism and for helping turn it into a modern federal state with a social market economy and a stable political party system. This became a source of powerful attraction between the Germans and Americans.

In summer 2019, it had been 25 years since the last member of the WGF left Germany. On this occasion, Brandenburg Prime Minister Dietmar Woidke, a Social Democrat, thanked Moscow for the historic decision that had played a tremendous role in Germany's reunification. German-Russian Forum Chairman Matthias Platzeck, also a Social Democrat, urged the Germans not to forget why the WGF had been stationed in East Germany and deplored distortions of pre-World War II history and of wartime events.

GERMANY and the United States are close friends, and their friendship is based on shared values, experience and interests. The Germans emphasize that this implies frank exchanges of opinions on European and global issues. Relations between the two countries rest on a history of human ties that spans several decades: since 1945, nearly 17 million American military personnel and their families have lived in Germany, introducing the American way of life into German society.

Relationships between American and German leaders have a mixed history.

Germany hasn't always followed the United States' lead, and the refusal of Gerhard Schröder's government to take part in the U.S.-led NATO war in Iraq in 2003 isn't the only instance.

There is a nostalgia in Germany for the sincere, businesslike relationship between German Chancellor Angela Merkel and former U.S. president Barack Obama, which helped consolidate the transatlantic partnership and resolve misunderstandings.

DURING TRUMP'S TENURE, U.S.-German relations have hit bottom. Berlin had never expected Germany to become a target of attacks from the White House. Trump has been publicly showing his unpredictability by crudely combining criticism and praise of Merkel and humiliating what may well be the Germans' main source of pride, the automobile industry.

Washington is doing a good public relations job to prevent the Germans from forgetting the past – it constantly reminds them of the United States' contribution to the defeat of Nazism, the creation of a democratic system in their country, and the airlift that breached Joseph Stalin's blockade of West Berlin.

The United States factor remains the ideological core of Germany's foreign policy, including its policy toward Russia. As before, it is Washington that will choose formats for Germany and the EU to use for political and economic relations with Russia. Berlin has reasserted this axiom by blaming Russia for the United States' withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

The Main Directions of EU Policy in the Black Sea Region.

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THE BLACK SEA is a traditional crossroads of civilizations through which run currents of Orthodox Christianity, Islam and Western culture. Located at the crossroads of Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East, rich in natural resources, and containing significant economic potential, the Black Sea region is a strategically important zone.

The main impediment to the further development of this geographical area is precisely its potentially high combustibility. The high population density in the Black Sea region creates both additional opportunities for economic growth and additional difficulties.

FOR A LONG TIME, the European Union has not followed a coherent policy with respect to the Black Sea region. During the 1990s, communications with the Black Sea littoral states remained within the framework of individual regional projects that were funded by the EU. However, by the second half of the 1990s, the need for greater involvement of European states in the affairs of the region was recognized.

The accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU in 2007 made the intensification of European policy in the Black Sea region inevitable, especially in the matter of securing these new borders. It became necessary to integrate the Black Sea countries into the system of EU foreign policy priorities. After the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU, the Black Sea was proclaimed a “zone of European responsibility,” and in 2007, the Black Sea Synergy program was adopted in order to expand cooperation in the fields of energy, transport and the environment.

Black Sea Synergy has become a fundamentally new EU regional initiative, open to all Black Sea states. Since 2010, Russia has also joined the Synergy partner countries.

The next stage of EU policy in the Black Sea region was the 2008 Eastern Partnership project. It fosters further integration between the EU and Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia, partially duplicating the aims of Black Sea Synergy – which has sparked some criticism within the EU itself.

As for the EU’s own attitudes toward the Eastern Partnership, it must be emphasized that, despite its 10-year existence, the program has drawn some criticism, even as EU leaders invariably give the project positive reviews and cite the results of cooperation.

OVER THE PAST DECADES, the Black Sea region has gradually assumed an increasingly important place in the foreign policy of the European Union. EU interests in this area are diverse and encompass a number of areas: economics, energy transit, security, environmental and climate issues, fisheries, and social and cultural initiatives.

The gradual political association of countries in the region with the EU, which is envisaged by the Eastern Partnership program, is taking shape through security projects, among others. The EU’s visa policy demonstrates the desire to strengthen relations with these countries, to the ends of further developing economic and political cooperation.

SINCE BSEC BRINGS TOGETHER a significant number of states that are not only geographically included in the Black Sea region but economically interested in it, the EU considers this organization a platform for implementing its own Black Sea policy.

Investment projects of the European Union may seem especially attractive, but one should not forget that this soft power tool can become a “hard” implement for the EU to dictate its interests in the region. Initially, the BSEC’s potential as a forum for discussing common interests and building trust was in fact a

tool for Europe to practice a soft power policy that might quickly resolve the existing problems in the region.

Current European Union initiatives around the Black Sea region directly affect the interests of the Russian Federation. Whereas Russia was once considered a “strategic partner,” there has now been a general cooling of relations and reduced cooperation; as a result, EU actions may now come into more serious conflict with Russia's regional presence.

The European Union's decades-long interest in the Black Sea region and the development of a number of cooperation programs with countries geographically related to it primarily stem from the importance of the region as a key factor in energy and transport flows. The Black Sea region is the area of hydrocarbon production and transportation that can ensure energy security for the EU. The direct access to the Black Sea that the EU gained after Bulgaria and Romania's accession has become a further incentive for the intensification of European policy in this direction. In this context, relations with the Russian Federation still play an important role for the EU, as it is a key player on this geopolitical field.

Et tu, Emmanuel? Or Why the West Rewrites History.

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THE APPROACHING 75th anniversary of the end of World War II gave a new lease of life to the so-called “memory wars.”

On December 20, 2019, speaking at an informal summit of the CIS countries, President of Russia Vladimir Putin presented convincing evidence of falsification by our Western colleagues of the facts related to the beginning of World War II including documents that unequivocally confirmed the responsibility of West European countries that had encouraged Hitler to spread his expansion eastward and Poland's unsavory role in the division of Czechoslovakia. This stirred up an extremely negative response by many European politicians and political scientists who raised their voices against what they called revisionist history.

At the same time, it should be said that this resolution did not drop out of the sky – it was a result of many years of efforts of the European establishment to transform the European historical space.

Two resolutions of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe – No. 1096 “Measures to dismantle the heritage of former communist totalitarian systems” (1996) and No. 1481 “Need for international condemnation of crimes of totalitarian communist regimes” (2006) – marked an important point on the road toward “correct” (read: anti-Soviet and anti-Russian) European interpretation of history.

The 2019 resolution “On the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe” merely summed up what had been said in the earlier documents produced by different European structures.

For a long time, the French authorities distanced themselves, publicly from what was done to rewrite history. On the one hand, they did not want to stir up their own past; on the other, they could afford to hide behind European institutions. It should be said in all justice that there is no unanimity in the French academic community regarding the revanchist efforts of European politicians.

Emmanuel Macron claims the role of the leader of the European Union who knows how to close the gap between its Western and Eastern members and unite them on the basis of “common values” and “common history.” But he had no choice but declare his position.

The French Foreign Minister revealed the truth as seen from France. In 2019, “we will commemorate... the 80 years of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the organization of Nazi and Soviet occupations of Europe which occurred simultaneously and successively.” The French president, in turn, said at the Jagiellonian University that “Poland was not responsible for starting World War II,” and that he had “always defended Poland and the Polish peoples against unacceptable attacks at their historical memory.” The President of France has soft feelings for the East European countries that “suffered a lot from Nazi and later Soviet domination,” the countries that “swept under Soviet subjugation after having suffered from Nazi yoke.”

It seems that the West persists in its efforts to put the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany on the same footing and to divide between them the responsibility for the beginning of World War II. This is done for the following reasons.

First, Europeans are determined to devalue any reproaches of their appeasement of Hitler and his policy and their plans to use him and his army to weaken or even liquidate the Soviet Union.

Second, the West discredits the Soviet Union, casting doubts on the legitimacy of the postwar order and the special role of the Soviet Union (today, Russia) in ensuring international security, in particular as one of the permanent members of the UN SC with the veto right.

Third, the West criticizes the Soviet period to discredit the alternative Communist (socialist) development model; it wants to wipe out from people’s minds the rival (even if speculative) of the capitalist system.

Today, our Western opponents have armed themselves with anti-Soviet and anti-Russian rhetoric to overcome the contradictions and disagreements that have been piling up inside the European Union since the mid-2000s. Indeed, closing ranks in the face of a “common enemy” or a “threat” to peace, democracy or “common values” is the most reliable and efficient variant.

It seems that the West has not yet reached the final point of its line of blackening Russia. Today, we can see something that could not be imagined in the postwar years, viz. distortion of the role of the Soviet Union that is put in the same footing with the aggressor; we cannot exclude the possibility that tomorrow the Third Reich could be exonerated to shift places and become victim rather than aggressor.

In this context, the struggle for the truth of history has become one of the fronts of our foreign policy which was confirmed, as I have said above, by the historic (in all senses) speech of President Vladimir Putin about Poland. This front requires constant attention of historians and, even more important, of the Russian state together with other important international problems: strategic stability, conflict settlement in Syria and Ukraine, competition in the digital sphere, and space research. We should have the last word in this battle, not only to defend the truth of history or preserve our place in the future system of international relations but, first and foremost, to fulfill our duty to 27 million Soviet citizens who died for our Motherland.

A WMD-Free Zone in the Middle East: The Road Toward It as Seen From Moscow.

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THE MIDDLE EAST remains one of the zones of high tension and instability in the contemporary world. Today, new challenges – e.g., international terrorism, the crises in Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, and Syria – are adding to the old and deeply rooted problems created by the Arab-Israeli conflict. The unresolved issue of the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) increases regional destabilization even though the issue of a zone free from nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction (WMD-Free Zone) in the region has been discussed by the international community for several decades now. So far, almost no results have been achieved in fulfillment of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East.

We should, however, admit that the year 2019 was marked by an important event in the sphere of non-proliferation of WMD – the November UN Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction – which can be described as generally successful, at least much more successful than anticipated. This was the beginning of a new, no-nonsense and long-term progress toward the Middle East free from nuclear and other types of WMD.

AT THE FIRST FOUR review conferences, a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East received little attention. The situation changed radically in 1995 when the future of the Non-Proliferation Treaty was at stake. Russia and the other nuclear powers participating in the NPT were convinced that it should become by consensus a treaty of unlimited duration. From the very beginning, however, it became clear that the position of the Arab states on the WMDFZ might become a stumbling block.

At the 1995 RC, the League of Arab States laid on the table its draft resolution on the Middle East that condemned Israel for refusing to join the NPT and demanded that a WMDFZ should be established.

The final document, which did not mention Israel, appeared after protracted consultations between its co-authors – Great Britain, Russia and the United States. After heated debates behind the scenes, the Arab countries agreed to exchange their agreement on the NPT unlimited duration for a resolution on the Middle East.

FIRST, the Russian delegation joined the process at the most important stages – adoption of the final text and agreement on co-authorship.

Second, the Russian delegation cooperated in a constructive way with the United States on the resolution.

BY 2000, the UAE, Djibouti and Oman had joined the NPT; Israel became the only one in the Middle East outside the treaty's legal framework.

In 2009, at the third session of the Preparatory Committee (PC) of the 2010 Review Conference, the Russian side formulated constructive proposals to lead the WMDFZ issue out of the impasse. In our opinion, it was a serious array of breakthrough and timely proposals and ideas.

The year 2013 brought the impression that the world had finally achieved a breakthrough on the issues related to the Middle Eastern and WMD problems.

A year later, in 2014, interaction between Russia and the United States experienced a setback: Washington accused the Syrian government of using chemical weapons against civilian population; Israel refused to discuss a possible ratification of CTBT; by that time, the United States and Israel had lost any interest in a WMD-free zone.

During the Third Session of the PC of 2019, it was announced that the UN Conference on the establishment of the WMD-free zone in the Middle East would take place in New York on November 18-

22, 2019. Russia and China immediately reconfirmed their participation while the United States pointed out that it could not accept the November Conference and refused to attend.

Let us sum up all positive aspects. First, attended by many of the regional states and four out of five nuclear states, the November Conference launched practical realization of the 1995 Resolution. Second, the arguments of those who were holding forth about its noninclusive nature do not hold water: any state can join at its second and later sessions. Third, its political declaration demonstrated that all participants were determined to work together and, fourth, the talks revealed the mutually complementary nature of two platforms – the NPT Conference and the UN Conference – where the WMD-Free Zone could be discussed.

The contradictions between the main groups of players – the Arab League, on the one hand, and the U.S. and Israel, on the other – have not yet been resolved.

Russia should insist today and in the future, despite the unfavorable international situation and Washington's skepticism or even open opposition, on the WMD-free zone in the Middle East.

Russia, however, cannot do homework for those who are responsible for the agenda, that is the region's states. By acting consistently to create favorable conditions for a WMD-free zone in the Middle East, Russia cannot and should not do the jobs of others. Security in the region is the concern of its countries. The Middle East is full of conflicts and peace is a rare guest there.

China-U.S.: Prospects for Ending the Trade War.

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THE U.S.-INITIATED disruption of the status quo in trade with China has laid the foundation for fundamental changes in relations between Washington and Beijing, and established a confrontational track for their development in the coming years and possibly even decades. A significant increase in trade barriers between the two largest economies in the world has left its mark on global trade and economic ties.

The outbreak of the trade war is associated with the election in 2016 of U.S. President Donald Trump, who in large part built his campaign on criticizing China and promising to put an end to its "unfair" trade practices that "rob America" and deprive its citizens of jobs. The fixation on anti-Chinese rhetoric was made in part on the basis of electoral considerations. Public opinion in the U.S. was becoming less and less favorable to Beijing following the strengthening of China's economic and military might.

Along with the sharp escalation of the conflict, a search for a political solution began. As subsequent events showed, the path to reconciliation proved extremely difficult and convoluted. Prior to the signing of the "first phase" of the trade agreement in 2020, China and the U.S. came close to concluding a "peace" at least three times, but every time, instead of a long-awaited reconciliation, an even more fierce flare-up ensued.

The next wave of optimistic expectations was generated by Xi Jinping's and Trump's meeting in Buenos Aires, on the sidelines of the G20 summit. Following the meeting, the leaders of the two countries agreed to step up dialogue and postpone a planned increase in tariffs.

But those plans were not destined to materialize. The Americans'sudden decision to break off contacts with Beijing during the final stage of consultations was an unpleasant surprise for the international

press, which by now was accustomed to good news, and, apparently, also for the Chinese side. Moreover, the Americans blamed Beijing for the collapse of the negotiations.

The next attempt to ease disagreements was a meeting between Xi Jinping and Trump in June 2019, at the G-20 summit in Osaka. Skeptical Chinese and foreign media outlets reacted more reservedly to the agreements on resuming negotiations, the “freezing” of new tariffs and statements by the American leader about his willingness to ease sanctions against Huawei. The skepticism proved justified: in August, Trump announced the continuation of the tariff “race” and tariffs on another \$300 billion in imports from China. The U.S. Treasury included China on the list of currency manipulators. China increased the tariff rate on \$75 billion in supplies from the U.S.

Despite the magnitude of the trade confrontation between the world’s two largest economies, the China-U.S. trade war heralded something more than an ordinary clash of business interests. The customary system of international trade relations formed in recent decades is in effect being dismantled. The Trump administration is acting similarly toward other countries, including its European “allies,” as well as Canada and Mexico. The erosion of the WTO that Washington inspired by blocking the appointment of judges to the appeals body of this organization also fits into the same chain, effectively stifling the organization. Not so long ago, the U.S. was proclaiming itself to be the main advocate of free trade and liberalism, but now, when major competitors have appeared on the horizon, it has unflinchingly abandoned its outdated views and resorted to overt protectionism.

Most political analysts agree that China has a real chance of becoming a superpower in the 21st century. However, the Americans managed to strike at a vulnerable moment, when China had not yet taken off but was still rolling down the runway.

Will the trade war continue after Trump’s first term expires? Trump was the first American politician to risk open conflict with China for the sake of its strategic containment. The idea had long been discussed in American corridors of power but was considered too dangerous due to unforeseen consequences from its implementation. Considering that Trump came to the White House as an unorthodox politician, an “outsider,” if the Chinese containment policy fails or comes at too high a price for the American economy, it will be easy for the next generation of American leaders to blame the indiscreet Trump. Then, under new, possibly democratic administrations, Chinese-U.S. trade relations would return to a peaceful track.

If the pressure on China succeeds and it is willing to make major concessions, all subsequent administrations will continue the containment policy, making it a modus operandi in American foreign policy. Only the intensity of the measures to actively deter the geopolitical opponent will fluctuate.

Prospects for the Hybridization of Military Conflicts in a Time of Technological Revolution.

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AMID the current technological breakthrough, the spread of information and communication technologies (ICT) is one of the important factors shaping a new political reality in Russia and the world as a whole. Scholars note that at the present time, government agencies, the business community and private users are increasingly dependent on computer technology and access to information networks.

The advent of new information and communication technologies has brought a transformation in traditional norms of behavior in the political sphere, where the previous standards have largely become obsolete.

At the same time, there is a growing number of participants in world politics who are capable of using military means (among others) to achieve political goals. The agents of these military-political processes are now not only states but include nonstate actors that are taking full advantage of the digital dimension (in particular, social networks).

The conditions of globalization and advances in the field of ICT are contributing to increasing geopolitical competition that is making it more and more difficult to ensure national security and protect public sentiment. It is also making these tasks more interconnected and multifarious.

In the context of the growing technological revolution, the U.S. is using a potent tool to maintain world dominance: It is “blurring” the borders around military conflicts, i.e., using a hybrid approach to wage war.

British analysts point to the high likelihood of hybridization in future military conflicts. A report by the British Ministry of Defence, “Global Strategic Trends: The Future Starts Today” (published late 2018), claims that in the medium term, the use of disinformation and propaganda in mass media and social networks will become the main feature of hybrid warfare.

In accordance with a special document adopted at NATO’s Wales summit (September 2014), cyber defense was recognized as an integral part of the alliance’s collective defense. At the 2016 Warsaw Summit, a similar resolution was adopted on hybrid threats.

given that future threats are predicted to be multifaceted and uncertain, Washington and its allies are using the allegedly unlawful activities of Moscow and Beijing as an excuse to build up their own information and communication capabilities in advance.

“Psyops” using modern ICTs are an important tool for the U.S. military-political leadership to fight for dominance on the world stage. Current trends in how the look of military conflicts is changing suggest that in the future, the boundaries between wartime and peacetime will become more blurred. Apparently, there is reason to agree with researchers who note that propaganda, cyberattacks and informational operations (especially in social media) will be increasingly used by states and their proxy forces, as well as nonstate actors, to achieve political goals in peacetime and wartime [1]. As can be expected, in the context of a rapidly growing technological revolution, the hybridization of war will only increase.

In the event of this likely scenario, the efforts of the transatlantic bloc, acting under the auspices of the U.S., will probably be focused on increasing uncertainty in the field of international information security, as well as on undermining the existing system of strategic stability, with the aim of imposing its own rules of conduct, which enable the U.S. to gain unilateral advantages that come with its state-of-the-art technological base.

How New Technology in the Economy Changes the World.

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THE PRODUCTIVE FORCES of any society come together in a trio of components: natural resources, human labor and capital (or tools of labor), and technology. The significance of these three components underwent radical changes with the onset of the industrial revolution of the 18th century, and the development of machine production dramatically increased the role of capital and technology in the economic production cycle.

The second industrial revolution, which began in the 1870s among the most advanced countries at the time (Great Britain, the U.S. and Germany), resulted in the birth and development of mass production of a variety of materials and products.

From the modern point of view, the most significant achievement of the third industrial revolution during the second half of the 20th century was the development of electronics, which brought to life computer technology, automation and the development of information technology.

The fourth industrial revolution has changed the situation anew, with its essence best expressed by the founder and president of the World Economic Forum, Klaus Schwab, who listed its main features as the Internet, robotics, artificial intelligence, and learning devices [7:15-16]. Its primary difference has been the reduction in demand for jobs in almost all sectors.

As it is today, several factors are prompting a need to undertake an analysis of technological changes in production and their consequences for society. First, many technologies and industries are simultaneously experiencing significant shifts. Second, some new technologies have emerged and are successfully being developed. Third, they have the potential to exert a very great and varied impact on society.

THE MODERN ECONOMY is characterized by the widespread presence of oligopolies – that is, a small number of companies that produce a given product. For technologically complex products, this is a very common occurrence. Copying such products is too complicated. Often, small firms own technologies that are unique to a narrow segment of the economy. This is typical for European firms, in particular German ones. To purchase certain technologies or products in the way of industrial equipment, most buyers (often all the world's buyers) must contact a single company or a small number of them.

NEW PRODUCTIVE FORCES are creating broad opportunities for economic development. Firstly, to a large degree they remove the resource restrictions set by natural components themselves (raw minerals, fuel, soil, fresh water) by expending them more efficiently, using renewable energy sources, regenerating, and recycling. What's more, they make more economical use of the resources that are involved in production. An example of this is additive technology (3D printing), which reduces the consumption of materials, since the product of the desired shape is built up layer by layer, without having to remove unnecessary material from the workpiece.

In the field of AI, the U.S. is leading the way. The estimated number of AI specialists in the U.S. and Canada is approximately 10,000, while China and India together account for about 1,000. Even though China is actively developing this technology, achieving workable systems will take time. For India, the problem in this field is the migration of qualified specialists abroad, which is holding back Indian firms in the production of modern goods and services.

The development of robotics in recent years clearly indicates the revolutionary nature of changes underway in the manufacturing industry. China's success in this area suggests that the changes will be global in nature. The advantages of this new technology have turned out to be so dramatic that there is no perceived alternative to robotization.

Developing countries have succeeded in their socioeconomic development by integrating into the world economy as suppliers of manufactured products for developed countries. Yet the alteration in the system of production is destroying this model of catch-up development: As developed countries

introduce robots in their own industries, their production increases in efficiency and quality and they lose interest in the cheap labor of developing countries.

THE BIGGEST RISK of the new system of productive forces is posed by its main achievement: the elimination of the human being from the production process. If humans are not present, then there are no consumers with earned money that they are willing to spend on goods and services. Human beings do remain, but not as economic agents/consumers with their own needs and the economic resources to satisfy them.

The integral role of information in production makes it vulnerable to hacker attacks. The strength of the new system of productive forces is the informational connectivity of individual enterprises, their systems and the world in general. This very strength is fraught with great danger. Numerous hacker attacks, large losses from these attacks in the financial sector, and cases of penetration into the information networks of hostile states indicate an increase in risks and the magnitude of losses from them, on a scale ranging from individual firms to industries to states to the entire world.

Austria and Switzerland: New Roles.

Alexey Sindeyev, *Professor of the Russian Academy of Sciences, chief research associate, Institute of Europe, Russian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Sciences (History); a_sin74@mail.ru*

THE WORLD ORDER is undergoing yet another transformation, and one whose result is hard to foresee.¹ Europe is getting ready to get involved in rivalries among options for globalization, and this means it is again important for scholars to take up something that until recently was in danger of becoming a peripheral area of research – holistic studies of individual countries, including analysis of behavior models of smaller states and their desire and resources for relationships with larger actors.

One may think that the politics of both Austria and Switzerland have chiefly remained unchanged as both countries have stable political systems and forms of sovereignty adapted to specific circumstances and both nations are prosperous economically. But this is a delusion.

From the Swiss point of view, a “dynamic” approach would help liberalize various spheres of multilateral relations while a “static” approach would help maintain the current system of states but modernized and with security guarantees for all its members.

Austria and Switzerland were able to exist in a world dominated by large players although they planned to use pan-European initiatives in seeking equality and to set the European segment of the international relations system on a course that would result in stronger positions for smaller countries.

The Cold War-era world order was the optimum state of international relations for the superpowers while potential largescale changes in it might give smaller countries opportunities for greater international influence.

LEADING Austrian political parties are unanimous in realizing that, in today’s epoch of globalization, their country can’t survive without close interaction with other players. The majority of Austria’s political elite believes that a balance between international, supranational and national interests is the main condition for such interaction. However, such a balance would take a while to negotiate, and apparently this is why it’s assumed that it makes more sense to first get down to reforms in the EU.

The idea of achieving more sovereignty for Austria by reforming the EU is nowhere high on the agenda of any of the country’s parties except, perhaps, the Freedom Party. I would surmise that, in strategic

terms, proposed nationally oriented EU reforms are a secondary matter for Austria's political class, no matter how much they are hyped in official discourse.

UNLIKE AUSTRIA, Switzerland is not a member of any supranational organization, and this gives it unlimited freedom of action. However, Swiss neutrality is mutating, although its main instrument, direct democracy, is not called into question.

It is no accident that Austria and Switzerland, which used to base their foreign policies on similar models and similar preferences, are on different paths today with Austria getting ready for changes in the EU and Switzerland seeking to consolidate its sovereignty.

Though both countries declare themselves to be willing to have allies and partners and promise frank and intensive cooperation with them, Austria's stance is not the same as Switzerland's. Austria has a relatively narrow range of interests. Switzerland is better adapted to a dynamic international environment and would do better in any form of multipolar world than Austria and other smaller countries squeezed into the EU framework.

The neutrality of smaller countries plays a secondary role today. It would be more important if they were involved as much as possible in various global, regional and subregional formats. The EU may be useful for its member states only if it develops more dynamically. Otherwise it would be a crisis factor not only for Europe but for the entire world.

India's New Era.

Gleb Ivashentsov, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary; ivagleb1@googlemail.com*

India has sought to join the group of leading world powers ever since it gained independence in 1947. But for a long time, respect that it enjoyed worldwide and support it had from Asian and African fellow member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement were its only sources of international influence. The country needed a strong economy, major scientific and technological resources and powerful armed forces to be able to join the top world league. All this India possesses today.

Combining loyalty to Hindutva with a plan to modernize India, Modi launched an Indian version of perestroika. He generally stuck to the line of previous governments but made it more target-oriented. He put the energy industry, including nuclear power generation, information technology (IT), the defense industry, and the aerospace sector at the top of his agenda. Ambitious modernization programs were adopted such as import substitution program Make in India, personnel training program Skill India, the Digital India program to make the Internet accessible in hundreds of thousands of villages, and environmental program Clean India Mission.

It is widely believed that, if it sustains its current pace, Modi's perestroika may in a while take India ahead of China.

INDIA has a multitude of problems that aren't too easy to solve. The tax reform has proven to be too hard for the private sector to adjust to, but that is not the only problem. The shadow economy is fighting back. Red tape and corruption in government agencies that oversee economic affairs have so far been impossible to eradicate. The program to privatize unprofitable state enterprises is stalled.

India is badly short of natural resources such as oil, natural gas and water. It imports 81% of its oil and 44.5% of its gas.

There are, moreover, growing social contrasts and escalating social conflicts.

New Delhi was aware that, to achieve a more prominent global role, India needed not just interaction between its own economy and advanced economies but their interdependence, something that China had done by opening its doors to Western investments when Deng Xiaoping had launched his economic reforms.

OUTSOURCING has helped India penetrate the U.S. economy and other Western economies. Simultaneously, the Indian diaspora spreads Indian presence all over the planet.

However, India is not trying to Westernize itself – although now that it has amassed unprecedented potential, it prefers to avoid definite statements on most current international issues. It goes no further than general formulas, apparently in order to have maximum freedom of maneuver.

With Modi at the helm, India has been more persistent in pursuing Indo-Pacific line. The Look East policy, a course to boost economic and political relations with Southeast Asian countries that had been pursued since 1991 by previous governments, was taken further by Modi and renamed Act East.

Russian-Indian relations have a separate meaning for each country. There is understanding in India of Russian foreign policy. In the Soviet era, India did not condemn the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan. Today, it has not joined the choir condemning the reincorporation of Crimea into Russia, has expressed support for the Russian position on Syria, and has announced it will never use sanctions against Russia.

India is the only country with which Russia has a long-term armaments cooperation program. About 70% of India's weapons are Russian-produced or made in India under license agreements with Russia.

The West, primarily the United States, persistently argues that India and China are strategic rivals that will inevitably end up in a conflict, possibly in an armed clash. But remarkably, the United States sees India as a vacillating core nation and not as an independent power center.

India follows its own sociopolitical philosophy and a "strategic autonomy" tradition in its foreign policy. Democratic principles in its domestic policy determine its democratic practices in international affairs.

Chile's Involvement in the Trans-Pacific Partnership Project, 2010-2018.

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TWELVE COUNTRIES. Roughly 40% of global GDP. One-third of world trade. More than five years of talks, 30 topics of negotiation and 6,000 pages of text. All of this went into the Trans-Pacific Partnership Treaty, a free trade agreement (FTA) that was one of the world's most ambitious economic projects but never came into force. It was an accord of a new type that stated a new perception of trade, was to be a major step in its liberalization, and reflected all key international trends from e-commerce to gender equality.

The project didn't get very far, however. Although lengthy negotiations did result in 12 signatures initially being put under the TPP, and Japan and New Zealand even ratified the agreement, the deal fell apart when Donald Trump took office as U.S. president.

THE IDEA of a free trade area spanning the majority of Pacific Rim countries was first voiced at a summit of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in Bogor, Indonesia, in 1994. However, the first step to put it into practice was not taken until 2005 as Chile, New Zealand, Brunei, and Singapore signed the Trans-

Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement (P4), which was the first FTA to link Asia, the Pacific, and the Americas.

China was, in fact, one of the main political factors in Chile's position on the TPP. Since the mid-2000s, China has been Chile's main trading partner – trade between the two countries has been amounting to about \$28 billion a year.

WHY, after all, did Chile join the TPP? A country wouldn't normally go to trade negotiations so lengthy and difficult if it didn't expect them to result in a deal seriously benefiting its economy.

Muñoz, in advocating accession to the TPP, argued that Chile was a relatively small country whose material well-being largely depended on how open its economy was.

Membership in the pact offered Chile both political and economic advantages. Politically, it meant a higher international prestige for Chile as a country that had taken part in such large-scale trade negotiations and thereby acquired a tremendous amount of international economic experience.

DURING NEGOTIATIONS on the creation of the TPP, an intensive campaign was being carried out through the media in Chile in which advantages of membership in the pact were meticulously explained to ordinary people. Nevertheless, a large proportion of Chile's civil society – more than 100 nongovernmental organizations – and about a dozen members of parliament were strongly against the country's accession to the TPP, and this seriously influenced public opinion. The mentioned lawmakers even wore T-shirts with anti-TPP slogans on them during parliamentary sessions.

In autumn 2016, worries began to be expressed in Chilean media about what would happen to the vast-scale free trade plan after both principal contenders for the post of U.S. president, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, insisted that the United States should withdraw from the TPP.

CHILEAN NEGOTIATORS showed a high degree of professionalism in TPP talks. They did a tremendous amount of work and, as we said above, secured relatively favorable membership terms for their country.

Loyal to an international economic trade strategy chosen in the early 1990s, Chile has achieved a much higher international prestige, has become one of the motive forces of free trade in Asia Pacific, and can play a consolidating role in developing new formats for economic integration.

Slacktivism: Modern Information and Communications Technology (ICT) as a Resource for Shaping and Articulating Public Opinion.

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HUMAN INTERACTION with the political sphere of society takes place by means of information and communication channels. The public communication space is where the political agenda is set, the balance of power in the national and international arenas is adjusted, and where interested parties "take a seat at the table" to discuss these and other issues. This space is under constant transformation, as developing ICTs are opening up new methods of communication between political actors and society, articulating the positions of opinion leaders and pressure groups, as well as establishing effective feedback.

ACCORDING TO a December 2019 Levada Center survey, 81% of Russians are Internet users; daily users make up two-thirds of the country's adult population [16] and 94% of those aged 18-24. In this regard,

the relevance of using the capabilities of Internet communications to connect political actors to the electorate is now at the center of attention for both professional political strategists and public activists.

An important reason behind the cautious attitude of our country's political figures toward online activity lies in the amendments adopted in mid-2016 to the Federal Law on State Civil Service. These amendments require officials to report on existing accounts on social networks in order to monitor compliance by civil servants with the principles of professional ethics. As a response to this new development, there was mass exodus of civil servants from all social networks, in order to walk "the straight and narrow."

Political debate in the spaces of social networks, as well as the opening of a variety of online forums, have become known under the blanket term "slacktivism."

IN OUR OPINION, a negative assessment of the use of slacktivist tools in political communications is primarily due to the lack of academic consensus on the interpretation of the "slacktivism" concept.

ONE OF THE REASONS slacktivism is criticized, besides the narrow interpretation of the concept itself, is the discrepancy in how researchers judge the success of a particular political action. Many argue that slacktivism without offline action is not capable of provoking political or social change.

Due to their cross-border nature, slacktivist protests can bring together under a single banner groups that would not have even known about each other's existence offline, since they move in social circles that do not intersect at all. Nevertheless, effective work with slacktivist protests opens opportunities for the state to keep the conflict within legal bounds, to reduce tension, and to prevent its escalation.

THE EFFECTIVENESS of a particular political action is determined by its results: Having set a desired goal, an actor needs to analyze the whole range of methods to achieve it and choose the configuration of information support channels that will work most effectively in each specific situation. This configuration may include both offline and online activism to various degrees. The contribution of each will be determined by a number of factors, as each of them has its own strengths and weaknesses.

One slacktivism researcher noted: "Tweets, of course, don't topple governments; people do". And this is what we should remember: The top priority is people – their needs and opportunities, their expectations and reactions. There are no "good" and "bad" ways to interact with them. Rather, there are ways that suit a particular situation and ways that do not.

Corporate Security as a Component of Russia's National Security.

Anna Manakhova, *senior consultant, Innovatsionnyye Resheniya Bezopasnosti (Innovative Security Solutions) company.*

WITH BUSINESSES and governments interacting closely today, often facing the same threats and challenges and following the same economic laws, it is essential to base corporate and national security strategies on effectively the same principles.

To be effective, cooperation between the state and the private sector of the economy in building security mechanisms needs to rest on sound theoretical, methodological, and subsequently legal foundations.

This was the theme of a conference in Moscow on March 12, 2020, sponsored by the Norilsk Nickel (Nornickel) company.

The conference, entitled “Corporate Security as an Element of the National Security of Russia,” was a representative forum that brought together senior security officers in government and in large companies, academics, and public figures.

The main speaker at March’s Moscow conference was Professor Nikolay Gribin, director of the Center for European Studies of the Institute for International Studies of the MGIMO University of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Gribin, who is a retired lieutenant general, focused on the role of PPPs in building guarantees of economic security.

Gribin argued that key economic security threats included growing cybercrime, the poor involvement of the private sector in research and development, natural cataclysms, and epidemics.

Since the human factor is at the center of corporate security, it is becoming a priority task to train efficient security personnel. Gribin hailed the establishment of a corporate security training unit at MGIMO – the Nornickel-sponsored corporate security department at the university’s International Institute of Energy Policy and Diplomacy.

Dmitry Grigoryev, director of Nornickel’s information security and IT infrastructure security department, made a detailed description of the company’s information security strategy.

Grigoryev came up with an important initiative – he proposed that the final resolution of the conference include a plan to set up a standing expert group with the participation of conferees to study theoretical, methodological, legislative and other aspects of PPPs as well as arrangements for managing security and law and order projects.

Pavel Serov, director of Nornickel’s investigation and economic security department, focused on one more area of the company’s security activities. He spoke about collaboration between Nornickel and the Federal Customs Service in combating illicit trafficking in precious metals. Nornickel has rich experience in this issue and is willing to share it with the Russian government and international bodies, Sedov said.

The conference involved constructive professional discussions aimed at finding stable and effective forms of collaboration between the public and private sectors in hammering out effective security measures. The PPP as a type of arrangement that may be used for more purposes than investment is the optimum format for such collaboration.

The use of PPPs to manage security projects needs to be based on comprehensive theoretical analysis, experience, uniform methods, and, if necessary, updated legislation. This would enable the private sector to make more significant contributions to developing national security mechanisms.

Emperor Alexander I: Scenario for Bessarabia.

Yury Bulatov, *Professor, Department of World and Russian History, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Doctor of Science (History); mo@inno.mgimo.ru*

IT IS A WELL-KNOWN historical fact that since the Rurikids there was a firm rule to include into the official title of the autocratic rulers of Russia all lands that belonged to the Muscovite State and all the territories attached to Russia, the population of which differed from the Great Russians by its national composition and religious affiliation. The Romanov dynasty, proclaimed the legal heir to the Grand Princes of Moscow, invariably observed this tradition. The crowned family was convinced that

enumeration of the existing and newly acquired possessions in the official titles of the Russian monarchs spoke of Russia's might and greatness and confirmed its prestige both inside and outside the country.

Contrary to this tradition, Bessarabia, the territory in the interfluvium of the Prut and Dniester that the Ottoman Empire ceded to Russia after the Russo-Turkish War of 1806-1812, was not added to the list of the official titles of the Russian monarchs. Representatives of the House of Romanov never offered any comments on the issue while the family, likewise, never mentioned the fact either in official documents or private diaries.

The Bucharest Peace Treaty legalized the measures that Russia had introduced while the Russo-Turkish War of 1806-1812 was still raging: by his decree of 1807, Alexander I extended these privileges to all Bulgarians wishing to move to Bessarabia.

By 1812, there were 60 newly founded Bulgarian villages with about 6,000 families of settlers from the opposite bank of the Danube.¹ During the war, Gagauzes, Turkic by origin and Orthodox by faith, were also allowed to move to the interfluvium.

The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) acquired a very special role in consolidating all Orthodox peoples in the Prut-Dniester area. Alexander I spared no effort to present himself to the population of the newly acquired lands as the supreme patron and guardian of Orthodoxy rather than an autocratic ruler.

In January 1813, an Orthodox spiritual seminary was opened in Kishinev to educate clergy for Russia's southern regions. Several months later, in August 1813, Bessarabia finally acquired a new Orthodox Eparchy. Gavril was elected the first Russian Metropolitan of Kishinev and Khotyn.

The czar deemed it necessary to point out that the rights and customs of the local people should not be infringed upon.

During the first eight years after the end of the Russo-Turkish war of 1806-1812, Bessarabia remained depopulated: Russia did not have enough money to manage the new territories. It proved impossible to settle Bessarabia with people from the inner regions of Russia – serfdom deprived the country of mobile social population groups.

The ruling House of Romanov, as guarantor of security and sociopolitical stability, managed in 1812 without much trouble to achieve recognition of the legitimacy of Russian power in the region. At the same time, the dynasty was very much concerned about the prospects of its communication with the top crust of Moldavian society whose national identity was gradually eroding. It should be said that the quality and quantity indicators of passionarity of the Moldavian ethnicity dropped considerably after the Treaty of Bucharest.

Western observers detected a new trend: members of the Moldavian nobility preferred to earn titles and awards at the Russian court in St. Petersburg rather than remain in their landed possessions devastated by the Russo-Turkish wars.

The House of Romanov had to single out those from the members of the Moldavian elite who were staunch Russia's supporters and create from them an administrative core as potential carriers of its policy in the region. The work began long before Bessarabia became part of the Russian Empire.

It should be said that even the law of 1828 failed to transform Bessarabia into a Russian gubernia like all others. It preserved certain specifics: very much as before, the local people were exempt from compulsory military service; serfdom was banned while common law was preferred in lawsuits, etc.

This means that Alexander I managed to partially include Bessarabia in the imperial system of governance. The Russian autocrat, despite his unlimited powers, could not launch integrational

processes in the Prut-Dniester interfluvium and make Moldavians part of the Russian World. This required much more time.

Vlasovites: Russian Collaborationists Against Stalin, Churchill, Roosevelt, and the Jews.

Vladimir Kruzikov, *Candidate of Science (History)*; vkruzikov@mail.ru

RADIO FREE EUROPE/Radio Liberty, funded by the U.S. Congress, has been consistently trying to rehabilitate the Vlasov movement and responded frantically to the plans to commemorate the collaborationists of Nazi Germany with a monument in the capital of the Czech Republic or, at least, a memorial plaque.

The idea that these false heroes should be “accepted” as the so-called “third force” in World War II has been promoted consistently for some time albeit without much ado.

THE VLASOV MOVEMENT and the Russian Liberation Army (ROA) were staffed with completely demoralized Soviet POWs conscripted in German concentration camps; young people from occupied territories who succumbed to Nazi propaganda; Ostarbeiters (Soviet citizens deported to Germany as slave workers), deserters, and Russian/Soviet emigrants who hated the Soviet Union and sympathized with Hitler.

Many émigrés did not approve those of them who cooperated with Nazi Germany.

In addition to confronting the Soviet Union and its allies on the battlefields, Vlasovites were waging a vigorous information and psychological warfare in the occupied territories, in the Soviet army and Soviet rear. The Germans had learned the lessons of World War I: the enemy should be demoralized through dissemination of propaganda materials and encouragement of domestic opposition.

Russian-language ROA publication, *Za Rodinu* (For the Motherland), of November 15, 1944 carried an article by Major-General Fyodor Trukhin, one of Vlasov’s closest comrades-in-arms and Chief of Staff of the ROA, in which he unwittingly exposed the movement’s perfidious nature: “The German people are convinced that our volunteers are their loyal allies. At the Eastern Front, in Italy and France, they demonstrated courage, heroism and inflexible will to win.”

THE APOLOGISTS of the Vlasov Movement prefer to ignore its brazen anti-Semitism. Even a cursory analysis of what appeared in the ROA-published newspapers *Za Rodinu*, *Dobrovolets* and *Zarya* (Dawn) reveals that practically every issue called to struggle against Judeo-Bolshevism (the stock phrase of all propagandists), launched undisguised attacks on Jews (not necessarily Soviet), offered long quotes from speeches of Hitler, Goebbels, and other Nazis and included articles translated into Russian from Nazi newspapers of the *Völkischer Beobachter* type related to “Judeo-Communism.”

This anti-Semitic salvo is concluded by a quote from the Nazi *Berliner Zeitung*: “The satanic plan was not quite successful thanks to the determination of allied Germany that interfered to push Italy away from the precipice to which it had been brought by the treachery of Freemasons and Jews.”

WHEN the fate of the Nazi fascism became clear to the Vlasovites, most demoralized Soviet collaborationists preferred to surrender to Americans and Brits. Some of them hoped that, having changed allies, they would continue fighting.

On May 8, 1945, some of the ROA volunteers stationed in Latvia got out of the Courland Pocket and fled on a German tanker. When the Third Reich had collapsed, some of them joined the information war the West was waging against the Soviet Union.

According to the decisions of the Soviet courts of justice, the majority of those who had joined the Vlasov movement were sent to correction labor camps while the most odious of the leaders (Vlasov, Malyshkin, Trukhin, Zhilenkov, Bunyachenko and others) were executed.

SOME HISTORIANS, advocates and apologists of the ROA prefer, as a rule, to disregard the unpalatable facts described above. The ROA was not an independent “third force” – this much is clear. The Vlasov movement was a collective puppet of the Third Reich that took orders from the Nazi top crust.

Betrayal of Vlasov and those who followed him can be “understood,” so to speak. This is the problem of individual moral choice. Those who agreed to change sides were few and far between. The majority of inmates of the Nazi concentration camps, in which inhuman conditions were even crueler for Soviet citizens, rejected all offers to exchange their loyalty to the Soviet Union for better conditions and cooperation with the Nazis.

The Nuremberg Tribunal had condemned pro-Nazi activities of the collaborationists; later, compliance with the Nazi regime was persecuted following the norms included in national legislation of many countries.¹⁵ On the whole, international and domestic legislation of the majority of countries bans fanning inter-ethnic strife and fascist propaganda.

Recollections: War.

Yevgenia Palievskaya

THE MEMOIRS of Ye.P. Palievskaya (1912-2008), written in the 1970s, cover almost 30 years of family history against the backdrop of our national history. Coming from a Russian pre-revolutionary intelligentsia family, she had a trouble-free childhood. Her youth coincided with the first years of Soviet power. Then came war, life under occupation, fascist camps, and, finally, her return to the Motherland. She wrote only for her family. Under the circumstances of the times, she could never even bring up that during the war, she, along with her husband, parents, and four children, had been under occupation and locked up, so she thought up a pseudonym for herself, Vera Ivanovna. Her husband, Vasily Mikhailovich, became Nikolai Ivanovich. Gradually, the more intent she became to tell her story, she put aside her fear and began to write in the first person. We offer the reader several excerpts from these recollections about the trials of a Russian family during the Great Patriotic War. These memoirs are being prepared for publication.

WE BROUGHT IN the year 1941 quite happily among our family; no one could have foreseen what was yet to come. True, there was a pit in our stomachs at facing an inevitable war, but the family's relative wellbeing soothed our worries about the future.

“War!” they announced on the radio. Vasya hurried back from May Day, got in the car and went into the city. Through the trees I could clearly see the main road, where people were already heading toward the city on foot and in cars. It felt frightening and creepy being alone with the children at the dacha. Vasya returned late that night. “We are driving back to the city tomorrow morning, and no one is sure what is going to happen.”

When a truck arrived the next day, the kids and I, with a basket of things and even hauling a cot, crammed into the vehicle that was already packed with people and all their things. As Vasya and I said goodbye, I feared deep down that I would never see him again. I could see him for a long time as he walked behind the truck. All the women were crying.

THE NEW YEAR of 1942 brought a heavy sense of foreboding. Around us were drunk Germans celebrating. With the beginning of the year came a grave feeling that the war was far from over, and no one knew what would happen next.

At the other end of the city was the Jewish ghetto. Nobody was allowed to leave it, but Jewish children would somehow sneak through into town. In the summer of 1942, a Jewish boy started coming to Vera Ivanovna's family, and she would give him what she could. He was silent all the time; apparently, he was too scared to speak. At the sight of this unfortunate child, she couldn't help thinking: What if her own children ended up in such a position?

THE GERMANS used rifle butts to corral everyone into a column single file. Someone said they were taking us to the train station. They loaded us into a lorry, like cattle for slaughter. A few days later, we were in Poland. Bialystok. Flat, dusty streets. A camp. Two rows of wire fencing.

FALKENBURG, Germany. Transit Camp. We were ordered to strip naked. Everyone thought they were leading us to gas chambers. But these weren't gas chambers – they were for disinfection, using something reminiscent of cockroach poison. All of us – men, women and children – were made to stand naked while they doused us with near boiling water.

In the next room within our barracks were some Belarusian children, about seven to twelve years old, who had been brought there earlier. They kept to themselves and spoke little; all of them had their heads shaved. The children were fed well, but they would not eat all the bread; they dried the crusts in the sun. Why had they even been brought to this camp? It was a frightening thought that they were being prepared to be donors.

AUSTRIA. The Alps. From the window we could see the villages below and Austrian churches. I felt the sort of horror here that I hadn't experienced during the bombings. To me it seemed that we were taking our last journey. Where had they brought us? This was the end. Why had it all come to this? Everything inside me protested. I talked rudely to my family, cried, lost my temper – and nothing did any good.

We were now in a new camp, near the town of Spital am Pyhrn. The camp was new, but we followed the same procedure: We stripped naked and were scalded with hot water. The next morning, we learned that we were in a former Soviet POW camp, an eloquent testament to which was the cemetery visible through the windows of the barracks.

NOBODY knew which of the allies would fight its way first to the corner of Austria we were in, but we were hoping it would be our own soldiers. There are no words to express how the news affected us that the Reichstag had been taken, and that Germany was completely defeated. Infinite elation mixed with a nagging feeling of suspense. Despite the uncertain situation, we now felt completely different: Pride in our country overshadowed thoughts of our own fate.

AT THE VERY BEGINNING of 1946, there were announcements posted around the city in Russian that stated: "Soviet citizens forcibly brought to Germany! Return to your Motherland! The nearest repatriation point is in the city of Klagenfurt. The Soviet government understands that this was your misfortune and not your fault, even for those who took up arms against the Soviet Army. Upon return to the Motherland, you will be provided with medical care, housing and work."

Our Klagenfurt officers stood looking away out the window. "Keep in mind," I continued, "you didn't capture us – we came to you ourselves, voluntarily, making our way through the cordons, believing in the Soviet Motherland and wanting to be on our native soil." I kept talking and talking, and suddenly felt that my sincerity had gotten through to them. The Klagenfurt colonel took my hand: "Relax. Return to the barracks without any worry. You will not be taken anywhere without advance notice. Everything will be fine."

Archives of the Foreign Ministry of Russia: A History of Three Centuries.

IN 2020, the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation mark their 300th jubilee. On February 28 (March 10), 1720, Czar Peter I published a General Regulation of State Collegiums, one of the chapters of which dealt with archives and instructed to concentrate all documents of the central organs of power, except for financial documents, in the archives of the Collegium of Foreign Affairs (CFA). This laid the foundation for not only departmental but also national archiving.

For many generations, Russian archivists were collecting documents related to the diplomatic history of Russia and the efforts of diplomats who lived in different epochs to tune up dialogues with partners, to defend, skillfully and persistently, Russia's national interests, establish and develop relations with other countries and contribute to creating international law.

The Archives acquired their present structure in 1946; since that time, they have been functioning as two organizations within the archival system of the MFA of Russia – The Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Empire (AVPRI) and The Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Federation (AVP RF). Throughout the 20th century, prominent Soviet scholars – V. Khvostov, Ye. Tarle, A. Narochinsky, S. Tikhvinsky, N. Bolkhovitinov, V. Myasnikov and others – preserved and developed the tradition of publication of diplomatic documents from the archival funds. Today, they are the main storages of historical memory and Russia's diplomatic experience.

The archives of the Foreign Ministry of Russia continue to acquire new documents related to Russia's current foreign policy course. The AVP RF performs one of the most important functions – it is the depository of multi- and bilateral treaties and other legal acts signed in the name of the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation.

The Department of History and Records (DHR) MFA of Russia marked the 300th anniversary with an illustrated publication, "Archives of the Foreign Ministry of Russia: Three Centuries at the Service of Russian Diplomacy."* This is a visual presentation of the rich documentary collections of AVPRI and AVP RF that gives the reader an opportunity to trace the main stages of Russia's the foreign policy from the 16th century to the present.

Russia, India and China in the System of Modern International Relations.

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THE RUSSIAN ACADEMY of Sciences' Institute of the Far East (RAS IFE) has published a new study on the establishment and evolution of the Russia-India-China (RIC) dialogue structure. Sergey Uyanayev's book "Russia-India-China in the Context of a New World Order"* is the first monograph in Russia's studies of the East that analyzes the main stages in the evolution the Russia-India-China strategic triangle since 1998, when Academician Yevgeny Primakov, a Russian political figure and statesman, underscored the need to strengthen trilateral relations and collaboration between Moscow, Delhi and Beijing.

S.V. Uyanayev has sought to provide a comprehensive picture of the political and economic place of these three countries in the world, consider the relevant aspects of Russian, Indian and Chinese current policies to facilitate trilateral interaction, explore the formation and evolution of the RIC format, and analyze its lessons and prospects. The study is built on this vision. Chronologically, it spans a decade and a half since 2002, when RIC interaction began on the official level.

In studying the origin of the trilateral format, the author focuses on the period when the bipolar system of international relations collapsed and Russia, India and China were confronted with the need to respond to that historical challenge. “

The author shows that during the 2001-2018 period, trilateral interaction has evolved from a conceptual idea to the actual creation of an informal trilateral dialogue structure – i.e., the RIC format.

The author analyzes Russia’s interests in the RIC triangle in the broad context of global and regional geopolitical and geoeconomic realities. China’s and India’s commitment to a polycentric world order and their rejection of unilateralism not only provide an objective foundation for trilateral foreign policy interaction but also reflect their positive assessment of the role that Russia can play in establishing a new world order.

The author comes to a fundamentally important conclusion: RIC has shown its viability and provides an array of incentives for further development, primarily in the foreign policy sphere. First, it has emerged as an important factor in the evolution of a new world order as its multipolar contours have already become a political reality, which is also a priority of trilateral partnership. Second, RIC performs the function of trilateral coordination at the UN, the Group of 20, BRICS and other global and regional forums. Third, RIC has a relevant regional agenda – ensuring security in Central and South Asia (including Afghanistan) and in the Asia-Pacific Region as a whole.

This book will attract attention of experts and university students, as well as of a broad circle of readers interested in the East today and international relations in general.