

## **International Affairs: Vol. 66: № 4, 2020: Summary.**

### **“We Are Paying for Our Carelessness”**

**Alexander Chuchalin**, *Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences*

I looked at today's statistics (the interview took place on April 30, 2020) and would like to cite these figures at the start of our conversation. Confirmed [Covid-19] infections are nearing the 100,000 mark. About 1,000 people have died from the coronavirus, including 70 doctors. I bow to their memory. They have sacrificed their lives to fight this disease.

We are currently paying for our carelessness. There was a big wakeup call: We encountered a novel infectious disease, unknown during human evolution. However, every disease that has once affected humans never goes away: It is here to stay.

The second wake-up call came in 2002. A man from Saudi Arabia was brought to a London hospital with a very good professional medical staff. A novel virus was identified, which was subsequently named MERS. We were careless because no scientific forecast was made. On December 14, 2019, Dr. Li Wenliang at the Wuhan Central Hospital described the same clinical features of a patient as were described in 2002. Regrettably, he died.

I would like to stress that currently, there are about 50 known coronavirus serotypes. The coronavirus affects dogs, puppies. It was identified in chicken in the mid-1930. It is found in fish, especially the beluga, as well as in camels, African cats and pets. Academician V.I. Vernadsky formulated the concept of the biosphere – the noosphere. In the noosphere, humans have lost the ability to adapt to the environment. This problem shows that the human immune system is unable to identify foreign bodies: In such cases, the coronavirus leads to severe conditions.

Unlike other respiratory flu viruses (there are over 100), the coronavirus is cultured only in human tracheal epithelial cells. Aerosol transmission is the main route for the spread of infections although there are others. This type of virus has always been classified among mild colds. This is why the idea of developing a coronavirus vaccine never came up.

I would like to reiterate that the world community should probably look for another approach toward immune protection against the coronavirus. This is related to congenital immunity mechanisms. We need to learn to look at a person from an entirely different angle. We were careless in 2002 and 2012, which led to the current tragedy. If we had studied a person's immunity passport we would have realized that our population has a condition that we call immunodeficiency. This accounts for such a high transmission rate at present.

China taught us many lessons. Shanghai University has now emerged as a world leader among universities. Its professors, who worked extremely hard, sequenced the virus's genome on December 31. They quickly developed a test system. According to the Geneva doctor, a comparison of China and the West shows the level of overwhelming hysteria, anxiety and phobia that has affected countries in the Western Hemisphere.

We are currently entering a period when the virus is starting to retreat, and mental health and ethical problems will take center stage.

During the post-pandemic period, we will need to look at a person from a different angle. We have invested absolutely nothing in human studies, in studying the human immune system. We have been passive in studying human genetics. Meanwhile, that could have helped identify the susceptibility of

certain genetic groups to infection and predict the kind of a pandemic that has occurred today. The world must change.

There have been considerable changes in UNESCO's work. We have many bright, creative people who have a real impact on global politics. UNESCO's main priorities are artificial intelligence, reproductive health, human genome editing and new education technologies. The problem that we are discussing today has ended up outside the scope of UNESCO's interests. We will bring the results of the conference to UNESCO leadership, suggesting that there is a need for correction. The problem of novel infectious diseases, including Covid-19, has not gone away. It cannot be ignored, and we cannot afford to be careless as in 2002.

### **COVID-19: A Battlefield or Cooperation Opportunity?**

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THE PANDEMIC, which from the outset Washington has "promoted" as a "Chinese scourge," was designed to isolate China and put a full stop to globalization as we have known it until now, as a result seriously affecting all major Western countries, including the U.S. We have witnessed a crisis in relations between Western countries – be it the U.S. and Europe or the European Union.

The so-called "Western/European solidarity" disappeared in a blink of an eye. Each government focused on tackling the virus pandemic on its own territory, which is basically right.

The Donald Trump administration's decision to portray the World Health Organization (WHO), whose services in coordinating an international response to the unprecedented challenge of the pandemic are especially in demand now, as a scapegoat to blame for the U.S.'s problems (with its record 17% of GDP in spending on the public health system), comes across as a blow below the belt. The U.S. administration was reminded about the importance of international cooperation by American public figures, medical professionals and charity organizations.

However, despite the imperatives of the moment, practically all Western governments have followed the same old foreign policy patterns, showing their solidarity only in one respect – namely the containment of Russia and China.

Many experts acknowledge that the pandemic, which has already aggravated the recession, will become a strong catalyst for cardinal economic changes. Among other things, the role of the state and the human dimension in the economy – i.e., the entire complex of sectors related to public health – will grow. Digitization, including electronic government and online commerce, will make a lot of headway. Work from home will call into question the very concept of "office" with ramifications for the real estate market. The gig economy will get a boost. This does not exhaust the list of potential changes that have been brewing in the economic sector and in society in recent decades.

The pandemic, among other things, is highlighting the issue related to the future of the Biological Weapons Convention and its inadequacy in the absence of the Compliance Protocol, which is fiercely opposed by the Americans and their NATO allies, as well as their allies in bilateral military-political alliances in Asia and the Pacific. If the coronavirus tragedy can facilitate international cooperation in any way, it is primarily there.

The current pandemic shows that requirements for the effectiveness of government policy have nothing to do with ideology.

Russia and China are objectively (including as targets of the Western disinformation campaign) in a situation where they can lead the core of the global community that is committed to the traditional values of international relations and is ready to uphold them across the entire spectrum of international issues. Therein lies a historic opportunity to transform the world in response to the needs of the time, an opportunity that is being provided (at a very high price!) by the coronavirus tragedy. Those who think otherwise must bear a heavy burden of proof regarding the effectiveness of old politics in the rapidly changing world.

### **Coronavirus: Political Philosophy.**

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THE WORLD CRISIS caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world. Yesterday, we were living under the slogan “Live as friends in a society without borders”; today, we are advised “to remain home and avoid contacts.” Each country is for itself.

not all consequences of the pandemic are clear; we have not yet reached its end to verify the information collected about immunity, vaccines and virus mutations. We can only guess whether the pandemic happens only once or will regularly repeat itself. Today, economy lives amid deep-cutting changes imposed by the pandemic. Promptly ended, they will be nothing more than temporary changes; if they continue for many years, they will change the very foundations of the economic, social and political system.

THE IMAGE OF HISTORY “before and after the pandemic” tends to define the historical “threshold” and calls mankind to start living from the very beginning. This means that its medical aspect is not the only one that deserves attention. The response of the political and intellectual elites is equally important: all sorts of social forces might use the shift in their highly varied interests.

Threshold thinking is obvious in the church circles as well. Absurd statements that church services without people are not caused by medical requirements but are a “sign from above,” that “God drives us out of churches because we have angered him” and that the end of the world is approaching have become one of the signs of the times.

This is a typical rhetoric of threshold thinking. The circles close to the church have already coined a new term “post-pandemic theology.”

Today, the idea of threshold development has become the talk of the day and with good reason.

THE PANDEMIC has added urgency to the process of “problem exposure” that has been going on for a long time. Today, it has become the talk of the day to the extent that even Alexey Kudrin had to admit that the crisis was not a cyclic one. Indeed, it is a structural, fundamental crisis that will never end if the economic and ideological model remains the same. Liberal mouthpieces are hastily changing colors to fit the new environment. Indeed, the pandemic has already made global transit of capital and manpower very questionable.

COVID-19 that was spreading far and wide revealed, in particular, an inadequacy of contemporary methods of statistics. The numbers do not form a clear picture of what is going on – they are too contradictory. They signify that statistical sociology has failed.

I think that the West arms itself with digital technologies to transform society into an easily governed algorithmic community. This means that the winner is not important. This is a totalitarian road accessible to the elites that are now losing their positions yet want to preserve their hold, that is, to the transnational financial elites of the West, not the communal agglomerations of the East.

TODAY, we are watching the struggle between those who want a polycentric world of macro-regions and equality of cultures and those who insist on globalization continued by any means and at any cost, those who want uniform standards. In other words, this is a struggle between conservative democracy and liberal authoritarianism. I regret to say that the latter is supported by the digital technologies and biotechnologies. It is much easier to freeze the situation and extend the already long crisis; it is much harder to restore the resource base of the old world and revive the efficiency of capital reproduction.

LIBERALISM was morally devalued when it started destroying international law, supported “color revolutions,” ultra-right regimes and the struggle against Christian heritage. Today, its social, financial and economic basis is crumbling.

The crisis has confirmed that there was not and there is no “society with equal opportunities.” In fact, it is impossible within the social-Darwinist axiological paradigm. Social equality is possible only under the moral right and not the “natural” (that is, instrumental, on which liberalism insists) right.

ENFORCED SELF-ISOLATION added weight to the role of the Internet in everyday life, which cannot but cause concerns. It can whip up the processes of so-called “optimization,” which is profanation, pure and simple, of many useful and socially important practices. The sphere of education is crumbling to fit the interests of corporations that need a primitive labor market with narrow competences; they do not need people with system-based and broad knowledge or education relying on values and pedagogy.

THE SOCIAL MODEL of liberalism divides and alienate people; it is “a war of all against all.” This is a model of divided society hence existential and psychological problems experienced by many. In this sense, the pandemic and isolation are nothing new; they merely brought the already existing problems into bolder relief. In fact, the source of fear is inside an individual while the phantoms of fears (ozone holes, nuclear weapons, viruses, terrorism, and crime) exist in the outer world.

Fear is inside you; you should identify its real cause. Having done this, you should get rid of fear and despondency or, rather, replace them with other feelings such as love and joy.

### **The U.S. Economy in a Polycentric World: Prospects for Preserving Its Position.**

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THE U.S., as a leader in innovation, is among the top-ranked countries in the world according to key indicators for both economic development and in global economic relations. For years, even decades, there was no doubt about the economic and geopolitical leadership of the U.S. However, in spite of remaining a leader in key economic areas, the U.S. is no longer so indisputably dominant in all respects, as the 21st century world is becoming increasingly polycentric.

Per capita GDP speaks much more of a country's level of economic development, and while the U.S. does not come in first, it is certainly among the advanced countries. In 2019, the U.S. ranked eighth in nominal GDP, and 10th in terms of PPP. At the top of the list are small, highly developed countries of Europe, such as Norway, Switzerland and Luxembourg; and oil-rich countries such as Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Brunei. Clearly, none of them play too important a role in the global economy (except for the fuel suppliers).

The status of a country's scientific-technological potential says a lot about its economic development. Along these lines, the US is undoubtedly the leader not only in the scale of its potential, but also in the results it has achieved.

An important indicator reflecting the country's position in science and innovation is the so-called Global Innovation Index, developed by the World Intellectual Property Organization. In 2019, the U.S. ranked third globally in terms of innovation, behind Switzerland and Sweden.

In the field of scientific and technological capabilities, the U.S. has secured long-term advantages over other countries. This manifests itself not only in absolute and relative costs of R&D, but also in cutting-edge technologies. Scientific research is reaping large returns, as shown by key indicators such as the number and share of the most prestigious scientific awards, as well as the number of publications and citations of American scientific articles compared to the world's total scientific production.

Scientific and technological potential is not only one of the U.S.'s main economic competitive advantages, but at the same time it is a key indicator of the country's level of economic development.

Of particular interest is the balance between U.S. direct investment abroad and foreign investment in the U.S. Here the picture is different than with the balance of other assets.

THE POSITION of any country in the world economy is largely determined by its resource potential, as well the model by which its economy operates. As far as natural resources are concerned, the U.S. is one of the wealthiest countries in the world.

The U.S. is among the leaders in other critical categories of natural resources. It is fourth highest in forest reserves (with 3.1 million km<sup>3</sup>), after Russia, Canada and Brazil. In terms of water reserves, it is third (3.069 million km<sup>3</sup>), after Russia and Brazil. Overall, experts estimate that the U.S. ranks second in the world in total natural resources (\$45 trillion worth), exceeded only by the Russian Federation (\$75 trillion).

We can measure the growth in the level of education among the American labor force. The number of students in public secondary schools increased by 28% from 1985 to 2017, from 39 million to 51 million. The number of university students, on the other hand, is slightly decreasing.

It is important to note that overall costs for all types of education in the U.S. are constantly rising, which increases the cost of human capital. In 2018-2019, educational costs amounted to almost \$1.4 trillion, roughly 40% higher than 20 years ago.

The U.S. is still the only developed country in the world where there is no state health insurance system for all citizens. State-funded care exists only for three categories of the population: pensioners, persons with incomes below the subsistence level (medical assistance), and military personnel (current and former).

President Obama in 2010, then President Trump in 2017, unveiled ambitious plans to upgrade and expand America's transportation infrastructure. These packages envisioned hundreds of billions of dollars of funding for overland transportation systems over the next 10 years, including high-speed railways, next-generation air traffic control systems, and the modernization of the country's electricity grids with increased efficiency.

Despite a tough strategy to renegotiate trade agreements with other countries – a policy aimed at gaining advantages for American producers and exporters – and despite the de facto trade war against China, the U.S. administration has failed to change the foreign trade situation or improve the country's trade balance.

Beyond a doubt, the U.S. economic situation at the end of the third year of Trump's presidency is fairly stable, yet there are clear signs of an impending cyclical recession. Trump's political future depends on how economically successful his fourth year in office will be. The U.S. is in many respects still a leader in the global economy and in world economic relations, even though there is evidence of increasing competition from other countries. Whether the U.S. will be able to maintain and strengthen its existing economic, scientific, and technological advantages depends on how effectively America can use its vast economic potential and choose the right development priorities.

### **The Evolution of NATO's Soviet and Russian Deterrence Policy.**

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IN 2019, the NATO countries celebrated the 70th anniversary of their military alliance with great fanfare. A common theme of the anniversary celebrations and NATO leaders' related public statements, as well as the London Declaration that the leaders of the NATO countries adopted at a meeting in London on December 3-4, 2019, is the idea that NATO is indispensable to maintaining security in the Euro-Atlantic region and the world as a whole, and that the policy of resolutely deterring Russia must continue. Even though the wording of the bloc's strategy has changed as the international situation and relations with the USSR/Russia change, that key element has remained a constant, fundamental principle of all seven strategic concepts and other basic documents of the alliance throughout its entire existence.

This policy is based on the idea that the source of tension between East and West at the height of the Cold War was the existence of the USSR and its political and economic system. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, that source of tension has become Russia's independent policy, which the West finds unacceptable.

The war in Korea, in which the military formations of several NATO countries took part along with U.S. troops, as well as the expansion of the alliance through the accession of Turkey and Greece, led to a further hardening of strategic thinking in the bloc. After reassessing the international situation and NATO's role, the NATO Council drafted and approved a second Strategic Concept in December 1952. It stated that NATO's main strategic goal is "to ensure the defense of the NATO area and to destroy the will and capability of the Soviet Union and her satellites to wage war."

Following a change in U.S. defense policy in 1953 that put the emphasis on "massive retaliation" using tactical nuclear weapons, NATO also transitioned to this new approach under pressure from Washington. In December 1954, the NATO Council approved a document submitted by the Alliance's Military Committee (MC) that validated the possibility of the immediate and massive use of nuclear weapons against the USSR in the event of any armed conflict involving that country.

NATO gradually lost its nuclear deterrence advantage as the Soviet Union strengthened its nuclear capabilities. The alliance therefore had to gradually moderate its own "massive strike" policy, putting a consultation mechanism within the bloc in charge of decisions on using nuclear weapons. That approach was reflected in NATO's fourth Strategic Concept and its transition to the "flexible response" doctrine.

The fourth Overall Strategic Concept for the Defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Area was adopted at a meeting of the Defense Planning Committee (DPC) on December 12, 1967 (after France withdrew from NATO in 1966, such documents were not adopted by the NATO Council but by the DPC specifically created for this purpose; it was dissolved after France returned to the military bloc in 2009). The concept had two key features: flexibility (more precisely, unpredictability) and escalation.

The declaration "Alliance Defence for the Seventies," adopted by the NATO Council in December 1970, stated that NATO's approach to security in the new decade would be based on two concepts: defense and détente. NATO wanted to improve relations between East and West, and at the same time adhere to a deterrence and defense strategy based on the principles of flexible response, forward defense and maintaining a combination of nuclear and conventional forces.

Following the extensive and profound structural transformation of the international system after the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, the dismantling of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and the collapse of the USSR, a fifth – for the first time unclassified – NATO Strategic Concept was adopted at the NATO Council summit in November 1991, in Rome. Although differing in many respects from previous documents of a similar nature drafted during the Cold War and appearing somewhat conciliatory, it in fact preserved the basic components of NATO's military policy of recent decades.

When sovereign Russia took the international stage in December 1991, mention of NATO's deterrence function initially all but disappeared from policy documents adopted by the NATO Council. It was replaced by discussions about the benefits of cooperation and partnership with Russia in countering threats and new risks in the form of international terrorism, the proliferation of WMD, etc. This in effect marked the beginning of the second stage in the evolution of NATO's deterrence policy.

The alliance's fundamental approach to relations with Russia during this period was set forth in two strategic concepts adopted by the NATO Council in April 1999 and November 2010. Russia is not named in those documents as an adversary, but as a potential strategic partner in solving new problems and risk factors that had arisen in the world related to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles and other types of WMD, as well as their delivery systems, international terrorism, cyberattacks, etc.

Despite such pacifying assurances, NATO has constantly demonstrated through its actions that it is not planning to consider Russia's security interests, launching, in violation of agreements with the USSR, the process of expanding the alliance to the East, including to the territory of former Soviet republics, and approving the deployment of an American missile defense system in Europe targeting Russian means of strategic containment and intensifying the hybrid war against Russia and its allies.

The declarations adopted at the NATO Council meetings in Newport (Wales) in 2014, Warsaw in 2016, Brussels in 2018 and London on December 3-4, 2019, without any reservation confirm that the policy of enhanced Russian deterrence is a key component of NATO's collective defense. Almost all of its elements used during the height of the Cold War were revived.

A REVIEW of NATO Council decisions on deterring the USSR/Russia shows that the practical policy underpinning those decisions has been and still is a key element of the alliance's military strategy toward our country throughout the bloc's entire existence.

Under such circumstances, Russia simply has no choice but to strengthen and modernize its own defense potential, increase the combat readiness of its troops, strengthen cohesion among its citizens and military-political cooperation among the CSTO countries, and expand the circle of our potential allies in the interests of self-preservation. At the same time, of course, Russia remains genuinely interested in reducing the extremely dangerous tensions in the Euro-Atlantic region that arose through no fault of its own.

## **The Islamic Vector of Russia's Foreign Policy.**

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RUSSIA has historically evolved as a multiethnic and multireligious state. Having passed through complex social experiments and spiritual quests and explorations, which deeply affected the foundations of human and social life, the citizens of the Russian Federation have emerged as a single, multiethnic people, as a Russian nation. And this despite the greatest tragedy of the late 20th century – namely, the disintegration of a single country, i.e., the Soviet Union, into several post-Soviet states, including historical Russia.

As they sought to return to the mainstream path of development, the peoples of our country were faced with the newly discovered problem of ethnicity and religious faith. Despite all the difficulties and contradictions, the issue was resolved in Russia primarily under the leadership of President Vladimir Putin: The sovereignty and integrity of the Russian state were restored; the state power vertical was strengthened; administration in all spheres of Russian society was effectively streamlined; and fundamental principles for the cohabitation of different ethnic groups and religious faiths within the Russian state were enshrined in law.

In the late 18th century, Empress Catherine II proclaimed a policy of religious tolerance toward Muslims. Russia's Orthodox Christians and Muslims gradually adapted to each other. The interreligious unity of all Russian believers is an important factor in the unity of the Russian civic nation.

As a democratic society was built in Russia, broad opportunities opened up for an interreligious dialogue among Russians of all faiths.

In recent decades, the infrastructure of Russia's Muslim Ummah has been actively developing. Thousands of mosques have been built and dozens of Islamic higher educational institutions have opened in Russia during these years.

The Russia-Islamic World Strategic Vision Group (SVG), organized on Vladimir Putin's initiative and under the leadership of prominent public figures such as Yevgeny Primakov and Mintimer Shaimiyev, is playing an important role in promoting contacts with the Muslim world. The group is currently headed by Tatarstan President Rustam Minnikhanov. The International Economic Summit "Russia-Islamic World: Kazan Summit," which is held annually in the capital of Tatarstan, has emerged as the most important and influential platform for cooperation with the Islamic world.

Russia's multi-confessionalism and reputation in the Muslim world led it to join the OIC. This happened above all thanks to the initiative of President Vladimir Putin, who attended the 2003 OIC summit in Malaysia and delivered a speech there.

The OIC actively cooperates with Russia on counterterrorism and considers it important to use Russian experience in fighting terrorism. Russia has invited OIC member countries to become partners of the Russian Federal Security Service's international data bank on countering terrorism, and expressed its willingness to provide technical assistance to the OIC's Voice of Wisdom online counter-extremism center.

In upholding Muslim identity and Islamic dogmas and protecting holy places, the OIC is constantly monitoring Islamophobia in non-Muslim countries, presenting annual reports to sessions of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers. The OIC believes that Islamophobia violates a large segment of the individual and collective rights and freedoms of Muslims around the world. Islamophobia has become a widespread and global phenomenon, which is fraught with dangerous consequences.



According to the OIC report, the U.S. tops the list of Islamophobic countries, which also includes China, Germany, the UK, Canada, Norway, and Denmark. Historically, Western countries often portray Islam as a savage, cruel and bloodthirsty religion. This is why the OIC is concerned about the image of Islam as a hostile religion that has asserted itself in Western countries, as well as about the rise of right-wing populist anti-Islamic radical movements.

It is important to intensify Russia's cooperation as an OIC observer state with the OIC General Secretariat and all OIC member countries on the entire range of regional and international issues. The Islamic world has traditionally been and remains Russia's major foreign policy asset.

### **CELAC: A Reset.**

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CURRENTLY, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the rest of the world, are faced with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) as the largest regional organization uniting almost all countries on the Latin American continent is actively responding to the challenges of the global pandemic, taking timely action and searching for effective solutions.

Since CELAC was created, Russia has always declared its willingness to cooperate with the organization of South American countries committed to pursuing an independent foreign and domestic policy, precluding any interference from the U.S. and Canada.

One important step toward strengthening Russian-CELAC cooperation was Sergey Lavrov's meeting with the foreign ministers of the CELAC expanded "quartet" in Sochi on November 14-15, 2016. The meeting resulted in the adoption of a road map for practical interaction, which provides for the further development of trade, economic, political, cultural, and humanitarian cooperation.

We believe that CELAC is developing in line with the evolution of a polycentric world order with the growing role of regions in the system of global governance, which is in keeping with the interests of the entire world community.

Amid the coronavirus pandemic and the global energy crisis, CELAC is going through one of the most difficult periods in its history. Regrettably, the split among Latin American countries over Venezuela remains. Given that decisions on key issues in CELAC are made by consensus, such disagreements have slowed the association's activity and significantly complicated cooperation with its nonregional partners.

The fact that CELAC is having problems is evidenced by Brazil's decision to suspend its participation in the Community (January 2020). Brazilian Foreign Minister Ernesto Araújo said that "CELAC had not been generating results in defense of democracy or in any area" and that it had become a "stage" for authoritarian regimes such as Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua.

Mexico, president pro tempore of CELAC, has set a course toward invigorating the association and strengthening its independent role, among other things by institutionalizing cooperation mechanisms with third countries. At the same time, the objective is to transform this multilateral association into a major Latin American integration platform.

On March 26, 2020, CAIS member countries approved a \$2 billion regional COVID-19 emergency preparedness and response plan.

The plan includes of five main areas:

- 1) health care and risk management;
- 2) trade and finance;
- 3) security, justice and migration;
- 4) strategic communications;
- 5) international cooperation management.

It also includes important provisions pertaining to food safety, food security and the protection of women's rights.

Currently, the aftereffects of the coronavirus pandemic undoubtedly call for prompt reaction from all states, as well as joint health, economic and social measures. However, for these efforts to be effective and timely, it is critical to formulate strategies to ensure coordination and rapprochement on multilateral and regional levels, abandoning petty squabbling and disagreements for the common good. We are confident that CELAC can play a major role here.

### **The Great Victory and the Global Political Process.**

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OUR NATION'S GREAT VICTORY in World War II was truly of global historical significance. It saved humanity from fascism – this barbarism of the 20th century – and made it possible for the world to resume progressive development.

To better understand its significance, it is useful to imagine how the world might have looked had we not won our Victory. This was by no means a hypothetical. It was a very real scenario that, as documents show, was carefully analyzed by participants in those events.

After seizing control of the basic natural and economic resources of the USSR, Germany and its allies would be invincible in direct military combat. At best, the British Isles could be held, but even then, a surge in pro-German sentiment in the country's ruling circles, the disintegration of Churchill's cabinet and the conclusion of a separate peace with Germany were expected. The collapse of the USSR, the Joint Chiefs of Staff predicted, would trigger a chain reaction around the world: The Resistance movement in Europe would break down, the British Empire would fall, pro-German sentiments would spread widely in the Middle East and Latin America, and the combining of the German and Japanese forces in the Suez region would cut off the Allies' access to Middle Eastern oil. The U.S. would be shuttered in the Western Hemisphere and forced to switch to a solitary and protracted defense.

The prospects seemed so gloomy that the document considered concluding a separate peace with Germany, or with the two leading Axis countries. That option was rejected, however, because it was deemed likely to lead to the U.S.'s complete international isolation.

That was the thinking of U.S. military commanders, who were not prone to exaggerate the significance of the Soviet factor in the war. In addition to these very likely geopolitical consequences, the victory of the Axis states would have led to the worldwide spread of the totalitarian model of German Nazism, racism and anti-Semitism. The world was on the verge of a global disaster.

Unlike what happened in World War I, the foundations of the new world order were laid during World War II thanks to the joint efforts of the leading powers of the anti-Hitler coalition. The lessons learned from the sad experience of the Versailles system, the League of Nations and the global economic crisis of the 1930s played an important role. The leaders of the “Big Three” understood that new, more inclusive and effective mechanisms for maintaining international security and the stability of the global economy were needed. Hence the projects to create the UN and the Bretton Woods system, which were launched by the end of the war.

In Moscow – as well as in Washington and London, incidentally – there were realists who did not seek to create an idealized security system that could ensure lasting peace. In Yalta, Stalin spoke of the need to maintain peace for 50 years. The generation of leaders who lived through the two world wars had no illusions about achieving universal harmony. Nevertheless, the Yalta-Potsdam system established by the victorious countries solved the problem of preserving peace for the foreseeable future.

Not everything turned out as the founders of this system had hoped and expected. Instead of an “amicable demarcation of spheres of interest,” a strict delineation occurred through schism and confrontation. Instead of cooperation among the great powers, a cold war broke out. But it remained cold thanks in large part to the Yalta-Potsdam system. It did not create a paradise on earth, but it helped avoid hell.

After the collapse of the USSR, the foundations of the Yalta-Potsdam system were undermined. At the same time, there has been and continues to be a forced politicization of historical processes. The past is increasingly seen as having a direct bearing on national security issues. The “memory wars” have ceased to be the purview of certain politicians and marginalized historians engaged in revising the results of World War II and the Soviet Union’s role in defeating Nazism, and denying or downplaying the scale of the Holocaust.

“Memory wars” are dangerous for the Western countries themselves. This is acknowledged by many scholars, writers and public activists in the EU countries, regardless of their attitude toward Russian foreign policy. There are pragmatic reasons for this. If today we equate a Red Army soldier to a Wehrmacht soldier (or even an SS soldier), then tomorrow it will be posited that Nazism and fascism were, along with other ideologies, merely systems of political thought.

The historical significance of the Great Victory also lies in the fact that the great powers of the anti-Hitler coalition were able to win the war together and lay the foundations of the postwar world. Their task now is to make our still very chaotic and dangerous world safe for at least the next several generations, before another big war breaks out and any more upheavals strike. And our country must play a substantial role in this common endeavor.

## **The Defeat of Nazism Is Our Common Victory.**

**Alexander Zmeyerovskiy**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Czech Republic*

*This is an interview with the Czech daily Haló noviny.*

Of course, the embassy and other Russian institutions in the Czech Republic complied with the country’s COVID-19 restrictions in marking the 75th anniversary of the victory. Altogether, on Victory Day and before it, diplomats from our embassy and the consulates general in Brno and Karlovy Vary visited about 100 burial and memorial sites in various parts of the country. Czech people, members of Russian

diplomatic missions and Russian speakers living in the Czech Republic did a lot of volunteer work to clean those sites and put them in order and laid flowers at the graves of Soviet liberators.

Of course, it was one of the priorities to award an anniversary medal with the text on it reading, "75th Anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945," to war veterans. The age of these people puts them in the main risk category, and therefore we will adjust the decoration dates and procedures to developments in the COVID-19 situation in the Czech Republic to avoid unnecessarily putting them at risk.

Various online projects have been launched with the participation of organizations of the Czech Republic's Russian-speaking community.

I'm sure that, in spite of all the obstacles raised by the coronavirus pandemic, the 75th anniversary of our common victory over Nazism is being marked in the Czech Republic the way it deserves, with our Czech friends and our compatriots taking part in this.

We surely have reasons to be proud. But we consider the victory over Nazism a joint effort by the Soviet Union and all other member countries of the anti-Nazi coalition. We value the contribution of the Czechs and Slovaks who fought shoulder to shoulder with Red Army soldiers – the corps of General Ludvík Svoboda, which covered itself in eternal glory, and the staunch, courageous Czechoslovak partisans who gave their lives for the liberation of their country from Nazi occupation.

In recent years, Russian historians have increasingly often had to react to attempts to distort wartime events and revise the results of the war, attempts some of which are masterminded or supported from abroad.

To prevent practices of this kind, the Federal Archival Agency and other Russian government authorities are jointly doing large-scale work to declassify numerous documents on the Great Patriotic War and World War II. Such documents become accessible to large numbers of people, partly through various photo exhibitions. Russian institutions abroad take part in this work.

The personality of Marshal of the Soviet Union Ivan Konev deserves a separate interview with a historian. A great deal has been written about this outstanding military leader who liberated Auschwitz, Terezín and Prague and saved Prague by prohibiting bombing it from the air and its artillery bombardment. It was no accident that he had the titles Honorary Citizen of Prague and Hero of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic conferred on him. There have been films and exhibitions about him. Earlier on, I mentioned one of the exhibitions, "The Soldier-Marshal."

Undoubtedly, for anyone who is concerned about the danger of revival of the barbaric Nazi ideology, Konev is one of the symbols of a selfless fight against the Brown Plague.

In spite of the anti-Russian hysteria that is being whipped up in the Czech media and includes absurd conspiracy theories, we consistently continue to explain our position, which is based on nothing else than international law, to the Czech side. We expect the Czech side to let us know in what way it is planning to resume meeting its commitments under the treaty.

The increasingly persistent attempts in some European countries to distort history undoubtedly pose a serious threat, primarily to young and future generations, which, not having experienced horrors of war, may not be fully aware of dangers that the revival of Nazism may carry.

The other day, UN Secretary General António Guterres said that the United Nations owes its coming into existence solely to the victory in World War II. Had there been no victory in the war, there would be no United Nations, he said. We never cease to emphasize at every opportunity that it is essential to bring home to younger generations how dangerous it is to connive at xenophobia and any form of hate ideology.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has been unequivocal about the thesis that Germany and the Soviet Union were equally responsible for unleashing the war. He branded it as “complete rubbish” and a “brazen lie.”

Predictably, the European Parliament resolution with its gross misinterpretations is an encouragement for Russophobic forces in Europe to step up their destructive activities, including their attempts to obliterate the memory of the liberatory role of the Red Army. We, for our part, will continue our efforts to confute distortions of history, using the method that the Russian head of state urges us to use – responding to lies by telling the truth and supporting it with documents.

### **Memories That Bring People Together.**

**Alexey Maltsev**, *First Secretary, First CIS Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*; [aimaltsev@mid.ru](mailto:aimaltsev@mid.ru)

THIS YEAR, I have made a memorial tour of the places where my grandfather Alexey was born and lived, including the village of Shuvoye, where he taught physics at the local school after the war. All those places – the villages of Avsyunino, Bogorodskoye, Vasilentsevo, Drankovo, Korobyata, Stepanovka, and Shuvoye – are located in the southeast of the Moscow region. In all of them there are monuments to soldiers who fell in fighting for their country.

Alexey Ruchnov, my grandfather, was born on March 30, 1917, in Drankovo, a village in what today is the Yegoryevsk district in the Moscow region. In 1941, after a six-month course, he received the rank of lieutenant in the Red Army and was sent to the Western Front, with battles near Moscow being his first combat experience. In 1944, he was seriously wounded and demobilized. He was awarded the Order of the Patriotic War. Millions who fought in the Great Patriotic War could have told a similar story.

A personal sense of pride is not the only reason why I have decided to write these few lines about my grandfather. What I describe is, generally speaking, part of the history of practically any family in the post-Soviet space in which there was someone who fought in the Great Patriotic War or worked hard at home to bring victory forward.

The year 2020 is the year of the 75th anniversary of the Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War and the end of World War II, the greatest geopolitical catastrophe in world history, a disaster that claimed tens of millions of lives.

Various surveys suggest that an overwhelming majority of the CIS population are sure that the Soviet Union played the decisive role in defeating Nazism. With some “national nuances,” this confidence is shared by the leaders of the CIS countries.

World War II and assessments of its results are becoming a separate theme in international politics. Unfortunately, our Western strategic adversaries, in dealing with this set of issues, base their points on near-term opportunistic goals. They often make statements that have nothing to do with historical facts and are not based on any objective documentary analysis. This rewriting of history in advancing the interests of some states is a factor in escalating rivalry for global leadership, a factor that cannot be ignored.

This policy of historical distortion today targets wider audiences than before, when it was chiefly aimed at engaging elites in post-Soviet states. Today, it is a large-scale propaganda campaign targeting broad population strata, but primarily young people. It is well-financed by Western sponsors attempting to bring about divisions among CIS countries and weaken their international positions.

Russia's future and its international role largely depend on whether we will love our country, respect its history and prevent it from being distorted. The international community should remember who made the main contribution to the victory over Nazism. To make sure that the world remembers this is largely up to Russia's Foreign Ministry and embassies abroad, to other Russian authorities, and to ordinary Russians who care. This means a great deal of coordinated, systemic, and comprehensive work. It should be a continuous effort and should not be limited to celebrations of dates such as this year's 75th anniversary of the victory.

## **How the Legal Framework for Antarctic Governance Was Established.**

**Valery Lukin**, *Head of the Russian Antarctic Expedition, Russian Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring, Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute (1991-2017); lukin@aari.ru*

**Konstantin Timokhin**, *Adviser at the Legal Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; [ktimokhin@mid.ru](mailto:ktimokhin@mid.ru)*

ON DECEMBER 1, 1959, the Antarctic Treaty was signed by Australia, Argentina, Belgium, Great Britain and Northern Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, the Soviet Union, the United States, France, Chile, the Union of South Africa, and Japan. Its founders were the states engaged in scientific research on the sixth continent as part of the 1957-1958 International Geophysical Year (IGY) program. The Antarctic Treaty was the first international legal act to regulate the activities of countries, establish a governance framework and determine the nature of interstate relations in the Southern Polar Region. Drafted at the height of the Cold War, the document became a model for defusing international tension and an example of practical joint effort by states to address global scientific problems. Peace, international cooperation, research, and environmental protection were the fundamental objectives of the Treaty.

For 60 years, the Antarctic Treaty has systematically evolved, promptly and flexibly responding to emerging challenges to the international community. This was accomplished both through new legal acts and through the adoption at relevant Antarctic community forums – Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings (ATCM) – of relevant Recommendations (before 1995) and Measures (after 1995) on various aspects of activities in the region.

The Antarctic Treaty, together with the aforementioned agreements and Recommendations and Measures that have entered into force, form the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS), which for 60 years has been very successfully regulating international relations in Antarctica.

When developing the Antarctic Treaty, state interests in this region were limited to issues of foreign policy and scientific research, as well as whaling. In subsequent years, they were expanded due to the need to regulate the fishing of finfish and krill, tourism and various types of nongovernmental activities, environmental protection and the use of the genetic resources of living organisms in the region. These new activities required the Antarctic community to search for effective solutions to strengthen and develop the basic principles of the Antarctic Treaty.

Many specialized and popular science publications published both in the USSR/Russia and abroad are devoted to analyzing the political, scientific and legal aspects of the ATS. But strikingly little attention is devoted to a comprehensive analysis of the historical aspects of the drafting of the Antarctic Treaty and the complex negotiation process that preceded its signing.

The adoption of the Antarctic Treaty convincingly demonstrated the USSR's proactive stance. Many articles of the Treaty were finalized thanks to the unwavering position of our delegation. These results were achieved in part because of the reconciliation of the Soviet and American delegations on Antarctic

issues. This understanding became an example of effective cooperation between the two superpowers in postwar world politics. Some of the language in the articles of the Treaty proposed by the USSR – for example, on the peaceful use of Antarctica, the prohibition of nuclear explosions in this region, and the openness of the Treaty to the accession of new countries – became a model for other international agreements. The adoption of this document proved to the entire international community that the common noble goals of preserving individual regions exclusively for the purposes of peace and science are feasible given the general desire of states.

At the turn of the 21st century, some foreign experts and analysts claimed that the Treaty had already fulfilled its historical mission and the time had come to replace it with a new treaty that should extend to both the Arctic and Antarctica. But Russia (as the successor of the USSR in the Antarctic Treaty), supported by other leading polar powers, is actively and stiffly resisting such projects. All this convincingly demonstrates that the Antarctic Treaty still has a long and productive future ahead of it.

## **Will Scotland Become Independent?**

**Nina Mishchenko**, *Third Secretary, Embassy of the Russian Federation in the United Kingdom, Candidate of Science (Education)*; [nvmishchenko@mid.ru](mailto:nvmishchenko@mid.ru)

THROUGHOUT most of its history, Scotland was an independent state. The Kingdom of Scotland was founded in 843 AD. In 1296, it was invaded by English troops. As a result of the First War of Scottish Independence, which lasted until 1314, the Scots defeated the English army, and in 1328, England recognized the independence of Scotland. Nevertheless, the English continued to wage war against it until the passage of the Acts of Union by the English and Scottish parliaments in 1707. The two acts of parliament provided for the establishment of a single state by the name of Great Britain. For about a century before that, after King James VI of Scotland succeeded to the English throne in 1603 as King James I of England on the death of his cousin Elizabeth I, England and Scotland were ruled by one monarch, but remained sovereign states.

The first ideas about greater autonomy within a single state are associated with the emergence of the Scottish National Party (SNP), founded in 1934 as the result of a merger between the National Party of Scotland and the Scottish Party.

In the 2007 elections to the Scottish Parliament, the SNP won the largest number of seats. When its leader, Alex Salmond, became First Minister of Scotland, he raised the issue of Scottish independence. Three years later, the SNP included the idea of an independence referendum in its election manifesto, and in 2011, it won an overall majority in the next parliamentary elections.

If Scotland voted for independence, the SNP government planned to begin negotiations on EU membership, expecting to become a member within 18 months. Westminster argued that this process would take much longer and that after joining the European Union, Scotland would lose the social privileges that the UK enjoyed at the time as part of the EU.

The official referendum campaign was launched on May 30, 2014. The “Yes Scotland” movement campaigned for independence, while “Better Together” wanted Scotland to remain part of the United Kingdom.

The British coalition government, the opposition, and big business mounted a massive information and propaganda campaign to demonstrate the disastrous consequences of Scottish independence, predicting a rise in food prices, job losses, tax increases, pension cuts, currency instability, flight of capital, a drop in oil and gas revenues, and a contraction of the real estate market.



Nationalists countered these arguments by accusing London of “foul play” and intimidation of the Scottish people. They also engaged in propaganda to increase the Scottish nation’s confidence in its own strength and its ability to prosper outside the United Kingdom.

The 2014 referendum, in effect, triggered a process of constitutional change in Britain towards its further federalization. But the outcome of the referendum showed that its participants were not yet ready for sovereignty even in the limited form advocated by nationalists.

A new turn of events came with the landmark referendum on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union that took place on June 23, 2016, when 51.9% of British voters opted to leave the EU.

In May 2019, the Scottish government published a bill on holding a second referendum on independence from Britain, which provides for the possibility of a poll by 2021. It says that citizens will have an opportunity to choose between Brexit and Scottish independence.

Time will show whether Sturgeon can carry out her intention to hold a national vote on the status of Scotland, especially since UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has refused to conduct a second referendum. But even if this happens, no one knows whether the Scots will vote for political independence.

After the UK finally completes its divorce from the European Union, and if the Scottish government actually delivers on its promise to hold a second referendum, the Scots are very likely to opt for independence from Britain and for continued EU membership. Incidentally, this could encourage other British regions, primarily Northern Ireland and then possibly Wales, to claim a similar status.

### **Crises in Lebanon: Past and Present.**

**Sergey Vorobyov**, *Professor, Department of International Relations, National Research University-Higher School of Economics, Candidate of Science (History); [iac1@yandex.ru](mailto:iac1@yandex.ru)*

LEBANON is a small Arab state about a quarter the size of Moscow Province. Throughout its independent development, beginning in November 1943, the country has endured several major crises that jeopardized the existence of its government institutions and the Lebanese state itself.

In the late 1940s, Lebanon found itself in the midst of the Arab-Israeli conflict that was catalyzed to a large extent by the realities of the Cold War. And since the turn of the century, the country has become a hot spot of the Sunni-Shiite confrontation in the Islamic world. Lebanon is still feeling the negative effects of dramatic events that began to unfold in neighboring Syria in 2011.

While the ethnic composition of Lebanon’s more than 6 million inhabitants is homogeneous and represented by Lebanese Arabs (the only exception being the 200,000-strong Armenian community), the religious composition of the population is very diverse.<sup>1</sup> The country is home to 18 faiths: Christians account for about 35% of the population (Maronites, Orthodox, Greek Catholics, Catholics, adherents of the apostolic and Catholic Armenian churches and others), and Muslim communities (Sunnis, Shiites, as well as Druze) account for 65%.

Lebanon also has a very numerous and ambitious political class. Suffice it to recall the Shihab, Jumblatt, Gemayel, Karami, Hariri, and Salam families, and such colorful and charismatic leaders as Nabih Berri, Michel Aoun, Hassan Nasrallah, and Samir Geagea. We should also note the tradition of the political role of the church and mosque in the country. This primarily applies to the Maronite and Shiite communities.



The Maronite patriarchs, as representatives of the largest Christian community, often speak on behalf of all Christians in Lebanon.

Over the years of independent development, the Lebanese have failed to create stable and effective public authorities largely because of religious issues. At the same time, the country has a developed civil society. More than 7,000 public organizations are registered in the country, and although only about 700 of them are operating, Lebanon can be called the undisputed leader in the Arab world in terms of the level of development of civil democratic institutions.

So, it seems rather natural that the domestic political situation in Lebanon, in its little more than 75 years of independence, has been characterized by constant turbulence – with the exception of brief periods mainly before 1975.

An important event in the history of the initial postwar period was the adoption by the National Assembly (parliament) of the Amnesty Law in March 1991, which guaranteed forgiveness for all political crimes committed before its adoption. All regular armed formations of political groups were dissolved a little bit beforehand, except for Hezbollah, which refused to do so under this organization's perennial pretext: in view of the "Israeli threat and the occupation of Chebaa farms in southern Lebanon."

A separate topic in Lebanon's postwar development is the increased role of Hezbollah and the Shiite community. The Hezbollah party was originally founded in 1982 as a paramilitary group of the most radical elements of the Amal Shiite movement with active support from the Iranian IRGC on a wave of anti-Israeli and anti-American sentiments among Lebanese Shiites (much like how Samir Geagea's Lebanese Forces arose from extreme right radical elements of the Kataeb party). Since 1992, Hezbollah has been actively involved in Lebanese politics (it won 12 of 128 seats in the Lebanese parliament). However, its political ambitions in Lebanon in the first 15 years after the end of the civil war were not realized, which meant that Iran's plans to strengthen its position in the republic also fell through.

The acute crisis with Israel was essentially provoked by the Lebanese Hezbollah in July 2006, when it shelled northern Israel, leading to the deaths of three IDF soldiers, civilian casualties and the capture of two Israeli soldiers. The international community deemed the Israeli response inappropriate and excessive.

Hezbollah proved to be the only military force opposing the aggressor. Its troops mounted a successful resistance, preventing the Israelis from advancing more than 15 kilometers to 20 km into the country. The authority of the Shiite organization has grown significantly both in the community and in society as a whole, which was confirmed during the June 2009 parliamentary elections; however, the balance of the Coalition and the Alliance has not changed significantly.

The situation in Lebanon grew worse in the spring of 2020 with the spread of the coronavirus. However, this allowed the authorities to take decisive measures against crowds, protest rallies and demonstrations.

The scale of the protests in Lebanon surprised many around the world. Several conspiracy theories emerged: that the United States, Israel, etc. are behind the popular demonstrations; that Hezbollah is to blame for everything (its rejection by the West led to the organization of this grandiose campaign of protests). I am confident that America, Western Europe and Israel did seek to saddle popular discontent in Lebanon. But this was merely an attempt to capitalize on the popular discontent that had already erupted. We must give Hezbollah leaders their due for not succumbing to numerous foreign and domestic provocations, as well as give tribute to their allies in the March 8 Alliance, which maintained a firm and close partnership with the Shiite party.

As for Russia's position, it appeared extremely restrained and cautious to the Lebanese and the whole world. Moscow did not give a detailed assessment of the crisis, and individual statements by Russian officials merely called for restraint and expressed concern.

Lebanon is currently facing a new type of crisis – both in its scope and in the complexity of the problems requiring urgent solutions. However, thanks to the bitter experience the Lebanese have gained from recent history, the current crisis has so far not led to bloodshed.

### **Russia and Africa: A Friend in Need Is a Friend Indeed.**

**Alexey Sentebov**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Democratic Republic of Congo*

The hiatus in our relations with Africa in the 1990s certainly had negative consequences, which continue to make themselves felt. During that period, trade and cultural missions closed, the number of Russian-language centers shrank, and the media space of many African countries became pro-Western, sometimes openly anti-Russian. There is also a lack of positive information about the continent in the Russian media, which usually cover only emergencies, armed clashes, famines, and epidemics. Until recently, news about Russia has come to the DRC only from Western news agencies. During the past decades, we have ended up with not just a gap, but a negative background that now requires great efforts to overcome.

Under these conditions, we need to act in a consistent and carefully thought out way, acknowledging that it is impossible to return to the continent overnight. The Africans are different now, nor are we a generation of the 1960s anymore.

We are putting an emphasis on cultural, educational and media tracks, paying special attention to young people. It should be noted that our activity at the academic level is already producing results. It is important that young men and women can separate truth from fiction and have a clear understanding about our common history. They need to become involved in joint efforts to restore bridges between Russia and Africa, which is our prime objective

Russian-African relations are currently going through the most active period in the last 30 years. For example, over the past couple of years, political and diplomatic contacts with the DRC have intensified; the number of cultural and educational events has increased, and their scale has significantly expanded; mutual interest has revived, and there is a willingness to do business. I honestly believe that mutual interest will not disappear, and the 2020s will go down in history as a time that our Congolese partners are calling "Russia's great return to Africa."

When we talk about the future of our relations, it is highly regrettable that the situation in many African countries remains unstable. It is not surprising that the Sochi summit took place under the motto: "For peace, security and development." This refers to numerous interethnic and ethnic conflicts; political and socioeconomic crises; hostilities, and illegal armed groups.

Russian-African relations have great potential for development. At the same time, it is necessary to carefully evaluate our resources and understand how we can help not only the Africa of the present but also the Africa of the future. There is a need to closely study each other, monitoring the current achievements and weaknesses of Russia's involvement on the continent, and searching for ways of overcoming problems and enhancing the effectiveness of our cooperation.

Even though Africa's total GDP is still smaller than that of developed countries, high economic growth rates and deepening integration set Africa apart from other regions, where economic stagnation and growing protectionism are more common.

Russian-African cooperation has objectively good long-term prospects in the trade and economic sphere. Russia is an active participant in major alliances and integration associations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), BRICS [Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa], the Eurasian Economic Union (EaEU) and ASEAN. By developing cooperation with Russia, African countries are getting real access for their goods and services to a single market with a population of over 183 million, including Moscow's EaEU partners.

Russia is concerned about the sanitation and epidemiological situation in the DRC. On May 11, over 28,000 units of lab consumables and 8,000 units of personal protective equipment provided by the Russian Federal Oversight Service for Consumers' Rights and Human Welfare, including special clothing, respirators, reusable face mask with a set of filter and hand gloves, were officially handed over to Congolese authorities.

Russian virologists have repeatedly visited the DRC for several years to identify its most pressing needs, meeting with local experts and specialists, and continuing to provide support during the extremely complicated period of the global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the daunting challenges, it is vital, especially during the year of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Russia, not to lose heart and give up in despair, but to join efforts in fighting the pandemic and show once again, especially to our African partners, that a friend in need is a friend indeed.

## **The Global Oil Market and Economic Diplomacy Under the Coronavirus.**

**Kudina Tuayeva**, *Second Secretary, Department of North America, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*; [ktuaeva@mid.ru](mailto:ktuaeva@mid.ru)

OVER THE PAST DECADE, the global oil industry has undergone profound and multifactorial transformations. World energy consumption exhibited high growth rates in the 2010s. In 2018, it amounted to 2.9%, almost twice the same indicator eight years prior.<sup>1</sup> As in preceding years, the increase in demand for primary energy by more than two-thirds was accounted for by India, China, and the U.S. Meanwhile, oil was and remains the main energy resource in most countries of America, Africa and Europe. In 2018, daily consumption increased by 1.4 million barrels; aggregate demand reached 98.7 million barrels per day.

The global oil market has undergone fundamental changes due to the "shale revolution" phenomenon and the entry of the U.S. (not an OPEC member) into the top 10 world exporters. In December 2015, after Congress lifted the ban on the export of crude oil, which had been in effect since 1977 under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act,<sup>9</sup> the U.S. moved into seventh place in the world within just three years<sup>10</sup> (Table 1). The key areas of American oil sales were Western Europe (Italy, the Netherlands) and Asia (China, India, South Korea, Taiwan).

the problems of the U.S. oil industry, together with the deepening split within the American political elite, have made Washington extremely aggressive toward Venezuela, a key member of OPEC. As is typical, the current severe sanctions on Venezuela are working to limit the export potential of Caracas, essentially stifling the country's oil sector.

IN MARCH 2020, the world economy and oil markets were unexpectedly hit by a phenomenon of a fundamentally different nature. The outbreak of the new coronavirus pandemic<sup>20</sup> caused turbulence and triggered a domino effect across the world: One country after another closed its borders and declared indefinite “self-isolation.” Due to this fact, forecasts for global economic growth have been significantly adjusted, the most optimistic of which looks like a protracted recession. This will bring the world demand for oil, according to some estimates, to a record decline of 9.3 million barrels per day in annual terms.

An extraordinary OPEC+ meeting on March 6 in Vienna failed to produce consensus, resulting in the collapse of the group’s multilateral agreement to reduce production, which had repeatedly been extended over the last three years.

AT THE END of March, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic which had enveloped the globe, a historic opportunity opened up to turn away from confrontation and collectively rethink approaches to regulating oil markets. The realization of this scenario was instigated by methods of economic diplomacy, including multilateral cooperation.

On April 12, the OPEC+ Declaration of Cooperation was announced,<sup>31</sup> which provided for a gradual voluntary restriction of oil production by its participants, starting with a combined reduction of 9.7 million barrels per day.<sup>32</sup> In addition, it was agreed to further coordinate any steps necessary to balance the market. Brazil, Canada, Norway, and the U.S. endorsed the deal in absentia, declaring that they would decrease production under the influence of market factors, but without the formal commitments set down in Vienna. According to experts, this will reduce the “surplus” of production by another 4-5 million barrels per day.

IF SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED, the “Big Deal” has a chance to become the first symbol of a coming post-coronavirus world order. Authoritative political scientists and economists are already trying to sketch the outlines of such an order.

The context of the global emergency also confirmed the irrelevance of the White House’s cornerstone foreign policy principle of “peace through strength.” The stability of the oil sector plays an important role in shaping key attitudes of the Trump presidency, which has set the goal for the U.S. to firmly secure the role of an energy superpower.

According to the Russian Foreign Ministry, the greatest threat to our country is posed by a decline in prices and demand for our main export commodity as global economic activity declines due to the coronavirus pandemic. Russian economic diplomacy faces the task of counteracting attempts to use political tools as a means to obtain competitive economic advantages. In this context, a shift of focus is planned toward international cooperation and coordination of efforts to mitigate the negative effects of the crisis on the global economy.

Russia has consistently opposed unfair competition and illegitimate unilateral sanctions in the international energy sector, which a number of Western countries have been widely using in recent years.

We believe that the realization of the potential of economic diplomacy and related multilateral mechanisms that take into account the positions of all interested countries may help ensure that, in a changing world order, an oil “truce” would ultimately bring about a long-term and sustainable “peace.”

**Emmanuel Macron: Attempts to Change the Face of African Policy.**

**Vasily Filippov**, *leading research associate, Institute of Africa, Russian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Science (History); [fvr1957@mail.ru](mailto:fvr1957@mail.ru)*

IN AFRICA, France is guided by its economic (resources) interests and, to a certain extent, political considerations rooted in traditions, social relationships, issues of French influence, and its national pride. From the first days of his presidency, Emmanuel Macron, the eighth president of the Fifth Republic, has been talking about changing his country's African policy into "soft power" of sorts. Nobody, neither the Élysée Palace, nor capitals of Francophone African countries nor other external actors with interests of their own on the continent have so far answered the question whether this can be done at all.

THE UGLY CHILD of the French special services called "Françafrique" that Macron inherited, among other things, from his predecessors defies all efforts of the French expert community to define it in official or at least more or less clear terms. At the everyday level, this is a system of informal ties between political, financial, diplomatic, and military figures of France and African states, the territories of which belonged to the French Empire until the early 1960s. They form networks of military-political and economic influences, a sum-total of lobbies and corruption schemes, in short, a mechanism expected to realize the French strategy on the African Continent.

In 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy, while still a presidential candidate, promised to revise France's African policy and assured the public that it would finally abandon its role of a gendarme on the continent; instead, in 2011, he bombed Libya.

When asked about the policy of his predecessor, Macron said: "By his military intervention in Mali in 2013 on a request of President Dioncounda Traoré, François Hollande assumed the responsibility and prevented Mali from falling under the yoke of Islamic terrorists. Operation Serval [intervention of French troops in Mali in January 2013] was quite successful. France can be proud of it." It should be said that shortly before this, French special services helped the local opposition to depose the legally elected President Amadou Touré who had shown no respect for Paris and had promised to give the Chinese an access to the uranium deposits. It was the secret services of the Fifth Republic that brought Dioncounda Traoré to power.

The uranium deposits of Francophone Africa are of huge importance for France and its energy sector. Today, over 75% of its energy are produced by nuclear power stations (against the world's average 15%). France's nuclear status is a source of its national prestige; with Brexit concluded, it will remain the only nuclear power in the EU.

France's own uranium resources are gradually exhausting which forces French firms extract uranium in the countries of Tropical and Central Africa. Today, Niger is the main source of uranium concentrate.

At all meetings with his EU partners, the young President of France invariably indicated that the French troops in the Sahel defended the interests of Europe and kept terrorists away from nuclear materials. He tried to persuade the European Union and the United States to contribute to the struggle against the common evil. Fully aware of France's interests, the European partners were only mildly enthusiastic.

LATE in November 2017, Macron, having declared that he was determined to forget the colonial past of African countries and start with a clean slate, set off on his first African tour. The French media wrote that the Élysée Palace was fully aware that against "the background of France's diminished impact and its far from positive image" success was not ensured.

Despite the far from warm reception, Macron demonstrated enough courage to speak not in a conservative government office but in an auditorium of the Ouagadougou University. He started by saying that he belonged to a new generation of French politicians "who came to Africa not to teach it what it should do."

Macron stopped reacting with irritation to African developments. In January 2018, when the Russian military appeared in the CAR, he demonstrated restraint. Since 2004, France unsuccessfully tried to stop the bloody war between Christians and Muslims raging in this country.

Macron was attracted by the idea to pacify “his” rioting domain with the help of Russian troops. France supported the UN SC decision that allowed Russia to supply the CAR with small arms and dispatch its military instructors there. When Russian military instructors and a Russian private military company landed in the Central African Republic, the French leaders were quite satisfied while the journalist community was of a different opinion.

In his talks with President of Ethiopia Sahle-Work Zewde, Macron promised to credit Ethiopian economy with €85 million. This time too, the journalist community was fairly skeptical: they did not believe that France would push aside, at least to some extent, Saudi Arabia and the UAE let alone China and the United States.

The French president ended his second African tour in Kenya where he was greeted as a dear guest. He and President Uhuru Kenyatta signed a packet of agreements on the development of private and state partnership to the total sum of over \$3 billion. As usual, the French president did not miss the chance to discuss the problem of security and anti-terrorist struggle and made a very important statement: “We have no past and, therefore, no obligations in this region [East Africa] and in this country. This means that here France will be treated as a partner to a much greater extent than anywhere in Africa.”

FRANCE is one of the world’s biggest economies; on the other hand, it belongs to a group of states that are gradually losing their positions in world economy and politics.

Macron stands no chance to succeed on the foreign policy arena hence his failed African policy. France is gradually elbowed out by more active and aggressive actors on the African scene.

He cannot push aside what he has inherited even if he wants to do this. There is a stalemate on the African chessboard now for Macron.

The future is uncertain. On March 17, 2020, Minister of Economy and Finance Bruno Le Maire announced on RTL TV channel that the government expected a drop of GDP by 1% in 2020. He described the pandemic as a catastrophe for all countries, France being no exception. “In 2020, the situation will become obviously worse and the shock, shattering,” warned the minister. From that time on, the situation has not improved; it will inevitably affect the African policy of Paris.

### **Post-Christian France: Neither Right Nor Left.**

**Yevgeny Osipov**, *senior research associate, Institute of World History, Russian Academy of Sciences, Candidate of Science (History); [eaossipov@gmail.com](mailto:eaossipov@gmail.com)*

IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, prominent philosophers, sociologists, historians, and anthropologists have demonstrated a lot of interest in the deep-cutting changes unfolding in French society since the 1960s. On the whole, all of them write about post-Christian France that differs a lot from the country of previous generations. Jérôme Fourquet’s “The French Archipelago” published in 2019 has already become the most popular or even an iconic book. The author has presented the French society as splintered and fragmented that has covered the road from a united and inseparable nation to a multicultural “archipelago.”

TODAY, only 7% of French population attend churches at least once a month and can, therefore, be defined as practicing Catholics. In 1981, there were 17% of them.<sup>3</sup> In the last 65 years, the number of priests dropped three times from 177,000 in 1950 to 51,500 in 2015. In 1789, on the eve of the French Revolution, there were 170,000 priests which means that their number remained more or less the same for nearly 200 years.

The crisis began in the 1960s. It was triggered by the decisions of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) that introduced considerable changes in the liturgy in Catholic Europe but not by the events of May 1968, a highly popular version in the academic community.

The changed attitude to homosexuals is one of the telltale facts. In 1986, 25% of population spoke of homosexuals as “sick people who needed medical help”; in 1996, their share dropped to 16% and in 2012, even lower (6%). In 1986, 54% looked at same-sex relationships as “normal sexual life”; in 1996, 67%; and in 2012, 87%.<sup>10</sup> The period between 1996 and 2000 turned out to be the key one: the country actively discussed PACS (Le pacte civil de solidarité), a civil solidarity pact that guaranteed the unmarried (including same-sex) couples certain personal and property rights. This radically changed the perception of homosexuality in France: the first step toward legalization of same-sex marriages was made.

Between 2003 and 2011, the changes in France’s legislation inspired a great part of society to approve not only the minimal personal and property rights (PACS) but also legalization of same-sex marriages and child adoption. No wonder, François Holland’s presidential program at the 2012 election campaign contained the clause about “marriages for all.” The Catholics of France were painfully hit by the 2013 law on same-sex marriages: first, it violated the fundamental Christian principles of the family and, second, the mass rallies did not prevent its adoption which meant that Catholics were no longer a serious force in France.

The gradually unfolding de-Christianization does not mean that Catholicism is in a “terminal crisis”: 32% of the country’s population still consider themselves Catholics.

ALL TALKS about decline of Catholicism in France are invariably accompanied by emphasizing the growing role of Islam. While religious practice of Catholicism in France is radically shrinking, the French Muslims are expanding theirs. Today, 65% of French Muslims support hijabs for women; 24% support niqabs that fully cover the face. Here is an interesting comment: the opinion widely popular in Europe that Muslim men are pressing their women to wear hijabs, is not supported by numbers. Women are much more conservative in this respect: 70% of women against 58% of men support hijab.

The popularity of Islam in France, however, is highly overstated by the media and the French themselves. According to a large-scale sociological studies carried out in 2016 by the Institut Montaigne based in Paris, there are 5.7 million Muslims in France (over 6 million, according to Le Figaro)<sup>25</sup> or 8.6% of the total population of France.

THE CRISIS of Catholicism and the spread of Islam are not the only factors of the country’s fragmentation. Several other traditional institutions likewise lost a lot of their former consequence which did nothing good to the nation’s unity. For a long time, from World War II to the 1980s, communist ideology was highly visible in French politics. In certain regions, where the positions of the French Communist Party were especially strong, communism was a religion of sorts, the “red church” as an alternative to Catholicism.

Information sources are multiplying at a fast pace which deprives the nationwide media of their influence and increases the interest in all sorts of conspiracy theories while lowering the level of critical thinking among the population at large.

Social stratification and the final division of the nation into the elite and all others is another factor of social fragmentation. At all times, French cities (Paris in the first place) were divided into bourgeois and workers' quarters, yet the gap between them never was so big.

AS COULD BE EXPECTED, social fragmentation caused deep transformations in the political system. The traditional confrontation between the right and left parties that for many decades remained in the center of French politics is gradually receding into the past. At the presidential election of 2007, François Bayrou with a centrist program got 18.5% of the votes, which spoke of a considerable potential of centrist ideas in France.

The Macron/Le Pen opposition is a new trend in French politics. In the political context, this is the struggle waged by neoliberals, globalists and Europeanists against protectionists, Euro-pessimists and globalization opponents or, according to Macron, "of progressivists against national-populists."<sup>33</sup> This opposition has its geographic and socio-economic dimensions created by the increasing fragmentation of French society.

Today, there are reasons to believe that Macron/Le Pen confrontation will structuralize political life in the medium term. This explains why the National Front (Le Front National) got a new name Le Rassemblement national (the National Rally): the word "front" spoke of the a-systemic nature of the party while the new name indicates that the party is ready to fit in the political context of France.

On the whole, the crisis of traditional institutions – the Catholic Church, the nationwide media and even the communist ideology (that in the past replaced religion in the minds of a certain number of French citizens), as well as growing unemployment, social stratification and several waves of migrants strengthening the position of Islam in France, further fragmented the nation. Today, this can be clearly seen in all spheres of life, politics being no exception.

### **Jacques Chirac, the Last Giant of French Politics.**

**Marina Arzakanyan**, *chief research associate, Institute of World History, Russian Academy of Science, Professor, Doctor of Science (History); [arzakanian@mail.ru](mailto:arzakanian@mail.ru)*

JACQUES CHIRAC, the fifth President of the Fifth Republic, the most prominent French politician of the turn of the 21st century, during his 40- year long political career, covered the road from a young deputy of the National Assembly to wise and experienced President of the Republic who occupied the highest state post for two terms. Twenty-five years ago, in 1995, when Chirac was elected president, the International Affairs journal published my article about him. Last fall, the famous politician died. This means that time has come to sum up his achievements at the service of France.

Having graduated from Sciences Po, he served in the army – first in France, then in Germany and finally in Algeria where France was waging a bloody colonial war.

Late in the 1950s and early 1960s, Jacques Chirac had no political ambitions; he greeted de Gaulle's return to power yet perceived him "as a mythological figure of sorts like Vercingetorix or Jeanne d'Arc or a historical person like Richelieu or Clemenceau." In his Mémoires, Chirac wrote: "In my eyes, de Gaulle looked arrogant, lonely, highly respected and, therefore, absolutely unapproachable."

In 1962, his life changed. A family friend offered him the post of secretary in the new government of France headed by Georges Pompidou. Chirac was glad to accept the offer and occupied this post for five years.



In his Mémoires, Chirac wrote: “I was lucky to spend ten years side by side with Georges Pompidou. I could have never become what I was, had not fate presented me with this meeting that enriched me and helped me discover myself. Pompidou was more than a spiritual father or an ideal. He was the highest reference to which I invariably turned when, in my turn, confronted with tests of power.”

Chirac’s betrayal of the “barons of Gaullism” was lavishly rewarded with the post of prime minister. Prime minister at 41! In fact, Giscard d’Estaing had no choice: in the National Assembly, the Gaullists had 183 mandates against 55 mandates of Independent Republicans, supporters of the President. Very soon, however, Chirac lost all illusions: Giscard d’Estaing rushed to announce that “from this time on, France will be governed from the center.”

The disagreements between the president and the prime minister on external and internal policies cropped up. The president was convinced that he could interfere in everything the government was doing and impose his opinions on the prime minister. Driven into a corner, Chirac left his post.

In 1977, Chirac was elected mayor of Paris which added weight to his authority in the French political circles.

In foreign policies, Chirac followed de Gaulle’s idea of “national greatness” of France.

Chirac lost his second presidential campaign that he waged under a simple motto “Willpower! Boldness! Ardor!” He moved to the second round with nearly 20% only to lose to the head of state almost 4%.

Chirac waged his third presidential campaign under the slogan “France for All”; he concentrated on internal politics and moved from one meeting to another to present the most important and most attractive points of his program – each and everyone should regain his place in society and his chances; the nation should mobilize its potentials to fight unemployment and achieve true solidarity.

On May 7, 1995, he won the second round with about 53% of votes. After two failures, he at 62 became the fifth President of the Fifth Republic.

Having become President of France, Chirac concentrated on the “hot spot” in southeast Europe –Bosnia and Herzegovina, having detached itself from Yugoslavia, was plunged into a bloody war between nationalreligious groups (Muslims, Croats and Serbs). The U.S. and EU became mediators between the warring sides. On Chirac’s initiative, French diplomats joined the peace negotiations.

As a newly elected president, he supported the idea of more active economic and military-technical cooperation with Moscow; he was convinced that Russia should not be separated from the West and decided to support Yeltsin.

In the last years of the 20th century, Chirac was continuously involved in international affairs. He objected to NATO eastward expansion yet failed to oppose it and approved practically all other decisions of the Alliance. In 1999, at the height of a fierce ethnic conflict in Yugoslavia when Kosovo, part of its territory with Albanian (Muslim) majority, demanded independence, NATO and the EU sided with the Kosovars and interfered in the conflict.

He was very worried about the pollution of environment; during his first presidential term, France, like many other states, had signed the Kyoto Protocol on environmental protection. To stress the importance of the issue, Chirac departed for Johannesburg, South Africa, to attend a world forum on the state of environment and offered there a catchphrase “Our house is on fire while we look elsewhere” which was repeated all over the world.

Retired, Chirac did not lose his interest in politics; he wrote two volumes of his Memoires; in 2012, he shifted his sympathies from Sarkozy to Socialist François Hollande, born in his native Corrèze. His health was gradually declining; in the last few years, he could no longer leave his home. He died on September

26, 2019. The results of his service to his motherland are highly impressive. In forty years of his political carrier, he lived through ups and downs, successes and failures, and bold unordinary decisions. He left a bright trace in the political history of modern France and is remembered by his compatriots on a par with de Gaulle and Mitterrand as an outstanding President of the Fifth Republic.

## **The 25th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations Between Russia and Andorra.**

**Yury Korchagin**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Kingdom of Spain with Concurrent Accreditation to the Principality of Andorra*; [embrues@mid.ru](mailto:embrues@mid.ru)

JUNE 13, 2020 is an important date in the history of contacts between Russia and Andorra. A quarter of a century before, on June 13, 1995, the two countries established diplomatic relations through an exchange of notes between the Russian Embassy in Spain and the Andorran Foreign Ministry.

This landmark move by the two nations has repeatedly been recalled with a great deal of warmth by Alexey Meshkov, today's Russian ambassador to France and a witness of that event.

The presentation of credentials by newly appointed ambassadors to Andorra is a unique procedure. Normally, being an ambassador to Andorra is an accreditation concurrent with one's main position as ambassador to Spain or France. Under its constitution of 1993, Andorra is a principality and a diarchy co-headed by the bishop of Urgell and the president of France.

Meetings between the Russian and Andorran foreign ministers have had a positive effect on relations between the two countries. In April 2007, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov held detailed negotiations with his Andorran counterpart, Juli Minoves, the first Andorran foreign minister to have visited Russia.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, more than 40,000 Russian tourists would visit Andorra yearly. A unique landscape, clean air, top-class hotels, and a distinctive cuisine based on the best culinary traditions of neighboring France and Spain are the chief attractions of that European country of a mere 468 square kilometers in area and with a population of only 77,000. There are numerous alpine skiers among people visiting Andorra.

Actually, contacts between our countries have a much longer history than their diplomatic relations.

Outstanding Russians who have visited Andorra include Maximilian Voloshin, a famous poet of the Russian Silver Age. The Russian Embassy in Spain and the Andorran Foreign Ministry have co-published a book of works by Voloshin such as poems, essays and sketches that had been inspired by his stay in Andorra.

Today, there is a Russian-speaking community of 600 in Andorra, which, given the country's tiny size, a fairly large number. Andorra's Russian speakers don't forget their Russian roots, organize celebrations of Russian public holidays and willingly tell native Andorrans about Russia.

Pere Joan Tomas, honorary consul of Russia in Andorra and formerly the first Andorran ambassador to Russia, has been instrumental in building up relations between the two countries. The Russian Foreign Ministry has awarded him the "For Interaction" badge. Tomas, a friendly, warm-hearted person and a sincere friend of our country, is still doing a lot of work to strengthen Russian-Andorran ties and is always ready to give Russians who are visiting Andorra any help they might need.

Over the past quarter-century, our two countries, which are so different in area and population size and hardly have any historical similarities, have moved their relations forward from the "acquaintanceship" category to the friendship category. I am confident that our friendship will continue to strengthen.

## **75 Years of Bilateral Relations Between Russia and Guatemala: A Historical Perspective and Current Cooperation Imperatives.**

**Alexander Khokholikov**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Guatemala; embajadarusa@gmail.com*

THIS YEAR, the international community is marking several anniversaries of very important events of the 20th century that created a legal reality and laid the foundation for modern international relations. These include, above all, the 75th anniversary of World War II victory, as well as the 75th anniversary of the UN.

Officially, diplomatic relations between the USSR and Guatemala were established on April 19, 1945, when ambassadors in Washington A.A. Gromyko and E. Silva Pena exchanged personal notes. However, first contacts at the head of state level date back to the late 19th century. In 1880, Russian Emperor Alexander II and President of Guatemala Justo Rufino Barrios first exchanged messages about their willingness to develop friendly ties. So, as a matter of fact, our relations have a 140-year history.

In subsequent years, these relations were marked by periods of varying degrees of intensity but were never interrupted.

It is important to note that Russia, along with other countries and international organizations, supported the process of a peaceful settlement of the decades-long domestic armed conflict in Guatemala. So, a Russian delegation was also invited to attend the official ceremony of signing the Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace between the government and the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity, which took place on December 29, 1996.

Public diplomacy, as well as large-scale sports and cultural events, are effective tools in developing humanitarian contacts between countries, bringing peoples and states closer together.

We also have other important similarities. Even though Russia and Guatemala are geographically very distant from each other, our countries both have multiethnic populations, rich cultural and ethnic traditions, a diversity of ethnic languages, centuries-old historical roots, and the Christian faith. This is a good basis for constructive cooperation.

Guatemala is our partner and ally in international initiatives sponsored by Russia within the framework of the UN system. In particular, it traditionally votes in favor of UN GA resolutions against the glorification of Nazism and for strengthening international information security.

Our economic relations are also characterized by stable development, but they are clearly influenced by global trends and the global market situation. We are grateful to Guatemala, which, like other Latin American countries, did not support anti-Russian economic sanctions.

We believe that it is very important to promote not only bilateral but also multilateral relations, since both countries participate in regional trade integration blocs.

We are actively promoting bilateral humanitarian, educational and cultural ties. In October 2012, a Russian-Guatemalan center for the study of Mayan culture, history and writing named for Yu. Knorozov, a Soviet scholar who deciphered the hieroglyphs of that ancient people, opened in Guatemala. In a major achievement, the center published an atlas of the Mayan languages of Guatemala, commissioned by the Guatemalan Ministry of Culture and Sports. In December 2015, the center launched a Russian-

language website titled “An Epigraphic Atlas of Guatemala and Yucatan,” providing public access to all collected materials.

Russia is visibly increasing its presence in Guatemala. It is encouraging that Russia-themed events have become a tradition here – in particular, photo exhibitions, lectures on Russian art and the history of Russian national costume, etc. The Russian diplomatic mission regularly holds literary and political lectures and maintains contact with Russian compatriots living in the country. It has become a good tradition to invite famous Russian musicians to Guatemala, organizing concerts and master classes.

Our most immediate task is to promote political dialogue with Guatemala’s new government led by President Alejandro Eduardo Giammattei and further expand the legal framework of bilateral relations with a special focus on strengthening and diversifying bilateral trade and economic ties.

In conclusion, I would like to express my confidence that the past 75 years are just the beginning of a strong friendship based on the principles of mutual respect and mutually beneficial cooperation between our countries. I am sure that only by working closely together will we be able to ensure stability, security, well-being, and prosperity for our countries and peoples.

### **Russia and Mozambique: An Outlook for the Common Future (The 45th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations).**

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THE RELATIONS between Russia and Mozambique are undergoing serious changes, with milestone events that are symbolic in the context of Mozambique’s 45th independence anniversary and the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Moscow and Maputo, both falling on June 25, 2020.

For decades, our two countries worked hand in hand to create efficient armed forces for Mozambique, protect the African nation from overt and covert foreign aggression, build its government system, and rehabilitate it after a civil war. Thereby older generations of Mozambicans and thousands of our own compatriots who took difficult, at times tragic, trips to Africa laid foundations for many years of friendship and cooperation.

Let us not forget that Soviet civilian and military specialists arrived in Mozambique practically as soon as it gained independence, and initial achievements of independent Mozambique largely went to their credit.

The Soviet Union regularly sent doctors and university lecturers to Mozambique to help it organize its education system and health service. Some of them still work in large Mozambican cities. More than 2,500 Mozambicans were trained at Soviet civilian or military higher education institutions or vocational colleges. One often hears nostalgic reminiscences from them about the years spent in our country.

There have been tragedies too. In 1983, militants from Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), an opposition organization, kidnapped a large group of Soviet geologists in Zambezia province. Some of the geologists were killed, and the Russian Embassy is still looking for another five who remain missing.

After peaking in the 1980s, Russian-Mozambican trade and practical cooperation have been declining continuously due to complicated systemic reforms in both countries and pressures of deideologizing and globalization. Over the past three decades, the Russians have nearly forgotten about a country that at one time was one of our main partners in Africa.

Due to efforts by Russian politicians, parliamentarians and diplomats of various generations, the two countries, which are close in spirit despite being geographically distant from each other, have been able to sustain traditions of political solidarity and mutual assistance. The two nations hold similar political views, and this manifests itself in joint action within the frameworks of international organizations and explains regular Mozambican support for Russian initiatives at the United Nations.

Strange though it may appear, Mozambique, which today is one of Africa's poorest nations, is steadily moving toward being one of the continent's economic leaders. Persian Gulf countries offer convincing evidence that this is feasible. Skillful use of large reserves of natural gas brought them to prosperity within the lifetime of one generation. Mozambique is following the same path.

Electricity is another key point in President Filipe Nyusi's modernization policy. Mozambique launched a program comprised of the Integrated Master Plan for Electricity Infrastructures for the period from 2018 to 2043 and the National Electrification Strategy to be in effect until 2030. In a sense, this program is similar to Russia's famous GOELRO plan of 1920 (GOELRO is a Russian acronym for State Commission for the Electrification of Russia).

The Mozambican market is increasingly competitive. There is no sector in the country's economy where there is no foreign capital. The bulk of foreign investments come from European Union nations, the United States, China, Brazil, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, and India.

Russia's updated strategy for relations with African countries does not disregard Mozambique. Russian-Mozambican relations received a boost from Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov's visits to Maputo in 2014 and 2018.

The year 2019 saw a turning point in Russian-Mozambican relations. That year, Nyusi came to Moscow for what was the first visit of a Mozambican head of state to post-Soviet Russia. During a cordial, frank meeting, Nyusi and Putin made assurances that their countries would step cooperation in all fields, mainly focusing on economic projects.

Politically, Mozambique is surely not a land of harmony. Partners of the country are concerned about instability and insecurity in some of its regions.

Post-Soviet Russia has never been as interested in Africa as it is today. Mozambique has again become one of Russia's key partners in the continent and possibly one of its doors to the markets of SADC member countries. Russia's current policy toward Mozambique is fully in line with the task of doubling trade with Africa set by President Putin.

## **The Soviet Embassy in China Between 1933 and 1937: Tough People and Tough Tasks.**

**Kirill Barsky**, *Ambassador-at-Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Candidate of Science (History)*; [kirill\\_barsky@yahoo.com](mailto:kirill_barsky@yahoo.com)

ON AUGUST 21, 1937, the Soviet plenipotentiary representative (ambassador) to China, Dmitry Bogomolov, and the foreign minister of the Republic of China, Wang Chonghui, signed the Sino-Soviet NonAggression Pact in a ceremony in Nanjing (Nanking). The pact was a great achievement for Soviet diplomacy. However, at the beginning of October, Bogomolov was recalled to Moscow and arrested. He was falsely charged with Trotskyism and "participation in an anti-Soviet terrorist organization." On May 7, 1938, he was executed.

The tremendous significance of the Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War is even more obvious now that seven and a half decades have passed. This distance in time also makes components of that victory stand out more clearly.

In the turbulent pre-World War II years, the Soviet embassy in China with Bogomolov at the helm spearheaded those efforts and splendidly accomplished the strategic task of averting a two-front war set to it by the Soviet leadership.

NORMAL RELATIONS between the Soviet Union and the Republic of China were ended by dramatic events in 1927-1929 – a police raid on the Soviet embassy in Beijing, an attack on the Soviet consulate in Harbin, and the seizure of the Chinese Eastern Railway with mass arrests among its Soviet employees. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were severed in July 1929.

They were restored in 1932, but not so much because of a desire for normal good-neighborly coexistence as because of adverse international developments. The world was apparently drifting toward a major war, and there was turbulence in the Far East too. The Soviet Union and China ended up having a common enemy.

According to Russian Sinologist Alexander Pantsov, Stalin feared that further postponement might push the Chinese government into the arms of Japan and that this, if the United States remained neutral, might encourage Japan to attack the Soviet Union.

The post of Soviet ambassador to China was given to Dmitry Bogomolov. There will be a more detailed account of his life in the next issue of International Affairs.

IN RECRUITING personnel for his embassy, Bogomolov came up against a paradox – there were practically no Sinologists around. Since the early 1920s, the Soviet Union had been a key player in China's domestic politics, and it's hard to believe that, in spite of this, there was only one person knowing the Chinese language at the embassy in China after the restoration of diplomatic relations.

There were reasons for that. At that time, Sinology was only in the making in the Soviet Union. One wouldn't have expected Sinological studies and learning the Chinese language to be a priority in Russia after the 1917 revolution.

However, we can be proud of the standards of teaching the Chinese language in prerevolutionary Russia – our school is still considered one of the best in the world. A Chinese philology department was set up at the Oriental studies faculty of the St. Petersburg Imperial University in 1855.

WITH THIS SHORTAGE of Sinologists, Bogomolov had to rely on diplomats who had done well in other respects in other postings.

THE FINANCIAL STATUS of the Soviet diplomats in Shanghai and Nanjing left much to be desired. In general, our diplomats posted in Far Eastern countries lived very modestly. Their salaries were miserable and occasionally too low even for basic necessities.

The Soviet Union generally had very small embassies and consulates. The embassy in China, for example, had ten diplomatic positions. Only the consulate general in Harbin was comparatively large with 24 positions because the Chinese Eastern Railway had its headquarters there and the city was home to a numerous Russian-speaking community.

SOME of the embassy officers who built good post-China careers largely owed this to references from Bogomolov. For example, Barkov, after finishing his stint in China in 1934, was promoted to head of the NKID's Protocol Department, a position he remained in for more than five years. It was a stressful role in the then stressful international situation.

It is amazing that an embassy team so small, divided into groups based in two cities far apart from each other, placed in a stressful political environment, and having to struggle with logistic problems, inefficient communications, an oppressive climate, and infectious diseases was able to accomplish the tasks set to it.

## **Forgotten Allies: Soviet-South African Cooperation During World War II.**

**Sergey Brilev**, Deputy Director of Rossiya TV Channel for Special Information Projects, Candidate of Science (History); [Sbrilev@vgtrk.com](mailto:Sbrilev@vgtrk.com)

OVER THE PAST YEAR, there has been a flurry of positive interaction between the militaries of Russia and South Africa. Who would have predicted a few years ago that Russian Tu-160 strategic bombers would pay a visit to South Africa? And who would have expected the deployment of the Russian cruiser Marshal Ustinov to Cape Town? What's more interesting is the backstory here.

Oddly enough, there is always more talk here about the Russian volunteers who participated in the war in South Africa against the British (on the side of the Boers) at the turn of the 20th century. Yet both the Boers and South African British were allies of the USSR in WWII!

THERE IN JOHANNESBURG, in the middle of a beautiful park, is the National Museum of Military History. And this is an amazing place. We are still amazed at the thought of Russian bombers flying to southern Africa.

As far as we can understand, the South African bombers carried out strategic military reconnaissance for the benefit of the Red Army and the Polish Armia Ludowa [People's Army].

But there is also an open-air exhibition in the same museum. There, one's eye is immediately caught by our very own Soviet UAZ vehicle, the Soviet T-55 tank, the Ural military truck, infantry fighting vehicles, and even the T-34 tank. Without beating around the bush, these are actually trophies that fell to the army of the then still racist South African Republic during the war with Angola. The latter was receiving Soviet military supplies and had Cuban fighters on its side who were also set up with all Soviet-made equipment.

By 1940-1941, the South African Air Force had already played a decisive role in the defeat of Italian troops, which had become entrenched in Somalia, Cyrenaica (Libya) and Abyssinia (Ethiopia). Properly speaking, the return of Emperor Haile Selassie to Addis Ababa is seen as the first visible victory over the Axis forces during World War II.

in late 1941, Soviet and South African representatives had entered into negotiations in London to establish diplomatic relations. At first, there was supposed to be British mediation, but Ivan Maisky, the Soviet Union's Ambassador at the Court of St James's, and George Waterson, the High Commissar of the South African Union in London, ended up getting along perfectly well face to face, and already by mid-February 1942, they reached an agreement to open Soviet diplomatic missions in Pretoria and, of course, in Cape Town. The agreement was signed at the South African High Commissariat in Trafalgar Square.

Veterans of the South African Foreign Service described relations with the Soviet diplomatic mission as "cordial, but far from warm."

So, there you have it – some very multifaceted instances when South Africa, now Russia's partner in BRICS, participated in World War II. Contrary to public sentiment, war on Germany was declared, and the Union of South Africa became an ally of the USSR in the fight against racist Nazi Germany, only to

conduct the policy of apartheid immediately following the war. That, however, is a whole different story.

### **Soviet Diplomacy in the Great Patriotic War.**

**Marina Kravchenko**, *First Secretary, Department of History and Records, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*

THE DEPARTMENT of History and Records of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has published a collection of documents and photographs entitled “On the Front Lines of Diplomacy, 1941-1945” to mark the 75th anniversary of the Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War.

This unique book shows the vast scale of Soviet diplomatic activity between 1941 and 1945, a time of global disaster. It is not only an account of landmark events, key meetings and major foreign policy victories. It is also a record of meticulous routine work by Soviet diplomats, much of which remains unknown and unstudied.

You will find no scholarly analysis or evaluations in this book. It is composed of documents and photos from the Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation. The book is the first publication of some of them while others have been made available for scholarly research before. The brief comments that the book contains are simply explanations.

The selection of documents and photos follows a strict logic. The book is lively, light, and interesting to read. Photocopies of documents, many with handwritten corrections, remarks, comments or resolutions on them, handwritten drafts, and fascinating photos produce an effect of presence.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov emphasizes in an address to the reader that the task of the book is to help safeguard the memory of the ordeal and heroism of the Soviet people in those years and to assert the historical truth.

The documentary section of the book opens with a brief essay by Sergey Tikhvinsky, a prominent Soviet diplomat who was involved in wartime events. As many of his colleagues at the then People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, he had to make trips to the front while accompanying foreign diplomats and reporters.

The book has a detailed section on the second meeting of the “Big Three” at the Yalta Conference. The conference, held at Livadia Palace outside Yalta, passed historic decisions on war issues and on the postwar world order.

Owing to the persistent and selfless wartime efforts of Soviet diplomats, ideological divisions and geopolitical rivalries were put aside, even if for a short while, for the sake of a common goal. The defeat of fascism, a victory to which the Soviet Union made the decisive contribution, map a route for the world to follow for decades. The unique experience of international cooperation that was accumulated due to the titanic work of the Soviet diplomatic service during the war became a huge asset for the entire humankind and is perpetuated in the cornerstone of the modern world order – the Charter of the United Nations.

### **The History of a POW Camp.**



**Andrei Dubina**, editor, *International Affairs*; [addu@inbox.ru](mailto:addu@inbox.ru)

A LOT IS KNOWN about the Great Patriotic War. However, its history is still being written as new documents are emerging from declassified archives, as well as the memoirs of its participants. There is a certain gap between classic academic research involving thoroughly checked facts, verifications, assessments, and evaluations, on the one hand, and naturally emotional publications (memoirs) devoted to specific events and written by war veterans, on the other. One such work is a book by Vasily Ivanovich Kolotusha, a well-known diplomat, Arabic studies expert, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, entitled “Detention Camp Unknown... Place of Burial, Wlodomierz.”

The author makes no secret of the fact that the book started as part of a research project to find out the fate of the father of his late wife, I.Ya. Mityushin, who died in a POW camp during the war, and developed into the history of a concentration camp for Soviet prisoners of war. As the work progressed, a purely personal search transformed into a wide-ranging narrative about people whose war related fate was in some way or other intertwined with that of the author’s father-in-law. It is a serious, well documented (including with German sources) study of the initial period of the war. It is based on numerous accounts of the horrors experienced by Soviet soldiers who were taken prisoner. However, the most important thing is that it is a story about their courage and fortitude in suffering those horrors. Nor does the author ignore those who did fail to stand up, broke down, betrayed their motherland or for “ideological” reasons agreed to join the Vlasov army. The author also cites the names of those who had previously fled or been deported from the USSR and then, in the camp, sought to persuade POWs to commit an act of betrayal.

It is terrible to read about the way the camp functioned and the role that traitors played in running it. The author writes that the severe living conditions, the execution of friends and fellow prisoners, hunger, diseases and the feeling of a sword of Damocles hanging over a person’s head quickly revealed the true nature of each inmate.

Even under those horrible conditions there was an underground cell in the camp although very little information about it remained. There was an escape attempt, but all the participants were killed. One important goal was to establish a link with the outside world and receive information about the real situation on the front. Several such channels were found.

Betrayal or a semblance of betrayal was the only way to survive. Following orders, the camp administration conducted propaganda among the inmates, urging them to join the fight against the Soviets, with priority being given to representatives of several ethnic, religious and sociocultural groups – namely, people from the Caucasus, Cossacks and Muslims. They were actively brainwashed, provided with better conditions as the issue of their oppression in the USSR was blown out of proportion and the picture of a bright future after the victory of the Reich was painted for them.

The author notes that the Nazis singled out people from western Ukraine, Galicia and Volhynia, freeing them from captivity and effectively encouraging their involvement in Ukrainian nationalist formations, which, according to former inmates, not only guarded the camp but also executed prisoners. Their activity continued after the war. It took several years to clear the area around the city of those undesirable elements.

V.I. Kolotusha did an excellent job working with documents and eyewitness accounts to provide a comprehensive picture of one Nazi death camp and the way it functioned. Clearly, his description can be extrapolated to other camps on which similar research needs to be done. Currently, as the 75th anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War is being celebrated and very few war veterans remain, this is extremely important for national memory. There is no doubt that V.I. Kolotusha’s book makes a valuable contribution to preserving this memory.

## On the German Track.

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IN HIS BOOK "The Dual Fate," Vladimir Grinin, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to Germany, from 2010 to 2018 (previously, he represented Russia in the same rank in Austria, Finland and Poland), official of the Soviet Embassy in the FRG in 1973-1980 and in the GDR in 1986-1990, member of the Collegium of the MFA of Russia, has assessed the Russian-German relations of the last decades and described his work as the ambassador, his meetings with German politicians, businessmen, and public and cultural figures.

The book is opened with "Foreword" followed by the chapters "An Unheard-of Image of Germany," "Berlin's Impact on Political Weather – Personal Experience," "On Culture that Has Already Become Practically Russian-German," "It Is Highly Important for Russia to Promptly Learn that Small and Medium Businesses in Germany Are the Best in the World," "The Military Past as Perceived Today in Germany," "What Interest People in Germany Most of All?" and "Pondering on the Future." Forty-five photographs that present in color the work of the RF Ambassador to Germany in 2010-2018 are a useful addition. The book is completed with "Conclusion" and concise information "About the Author." Bibliography contains 33 titles of works of well-known Russian and German politicians, diplomats, experts in the history of Germany and Russia of the 20th and 21st centuries.

In his "Foreword," the author deemes it necessary to remind us that we are living in the far from simple times when Russia is treated as an object of attacks and fierce opposition by those who want to ascend the throne of the ruler of the world.

The author is convinced that reunification of Germany was possible thanks to an agreement between Bonn and Moscow.

The potentials of Russia-Germany cooperation in economy, science and technology were astounding: strong economic cooperation between the two biggest European states – Russia and Germany – could have served as the foundation of a common European home. Development of small and medium entrepreneurship (the tradition that Russia had lost) was one of the issues that needed (and needs) closer attention. In the developing market economy, small and medium business has acquired huge importance not only as an economic phenomenon but also from the point of view of human, social and, in the final analysis, political requirements. "The fact that we relied in this respect on the German potential opened vast prospects: Germans were and remain the absolute world leaders where the quality and the development level of small and medium business are concerned" (p. 17).

Despite the fairly successful cooperation in the early 2010s, the author regularly retunes to what Yuly Kvitsinsky wrote in 2006 in his essay on the German leaders' (from Otto Bismarck to Angela Merkel) behavior in international affairs. He recommended a well-balanced approach to Germans: "We should proceed from the thesis that there was no and will never be anything unshakeable, frozen or final in the RussianGerman relations"<sup>1</sup> (p. 25). Grinin has further written that his experience of a diplomat working in Germany fully confirmed the above; thinking and actions of Germans depend on those who head this strong, closelyknit and dynamic nation with stable prejudices that tends to overestimate its power and is firmly convinced of its unshakeable superiority over other nations.

Several chapters are dedicated to Vladimir Grinin's meetings with German cultural figures (pp. 50-72) and businessmen (pp. 73-111); one of the sections deals with the war as perceived by the Germans (pp.

112- 115); the author has raised the question of compensations the FRG should pay to those who have survived the blockade of Leningrad. The Russian ambassador has written a lot about his meetings and talks with famous West German politicians W. Brandt, E. Bahr, H.-D. Genscher, H. Schmidt, H. Kohl, W. Scheel, R. Herzog, G. Schröder, Ch. Wulf, F.-W. Steinmeier, S. Gabriel, W. Ischinger, H. Teltschik, D. Woidke, M. Stolze, M. Platzeck and others and with GDR politicians E. Krenz, H. Modrow, G. Gysi, B. Mahlow, and L. de Maizière (pp. 126-198).

In "Conclusion," the author confirms that he agrees with the conclusions of his "beloved teacher" Yuly Kvitsinsky. He adds that they should be enriched with stronger spiritual and material closeness that might positively affect the political factor. "I think that if this happens, the RussianGerman relations will be somehow transformed; the same will happen on a wider scope" (p. 208).