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Summary

The Caspian: A Unique Region of Neighborliness

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Keywords: Caspian, the Caspian Five, Tehran Convention, Greater Eurasia

ON JUNE 29, 2022, Ashgabat hosted an important international event – the Sixth Caspian Summit. In this regard, I believe it is important to once again consider the role and place of the Caspian Region in the more just, democratic, and sustainable multipolar system that is taking shape today.

The importance of the Caspian Region for the Russian Federation is determined by its strategic location in the center of Eurasia at the crossroads of the continent's transport and energy routes, its vast reserves of mineral and biological resources, and the intertwining of the local cultures that coexist here.

Russia's vital interests include durable peace, stability, and security in the Caspian Region; sustainable development based on neighborliness, trust, and cooperation of the coastal states; and the use of its economic, including transit, potential for the mutual benefit of the coastal states.

We believe that all Caspian issues should be resolved solely by the consensus of the five coastal states. Extra-regional forces should not be allowed to exert a negative influence.

Despite the ancient history of the region, the current system of cooperation has taken shape there relatively recently. After the Soviet Union's disintegration, the number of Caspian states increased from two to five. For this reason, joint administration of the Caspian Sea via constructive cooperation moved to the fore in the early 1990s.

It goes without saying that the five Caspian nations are not going to fence themselves off from the outside world, especially economically. However, we and our partners are firmly committed to the position that outside interference in our affairs is unacceptable.

Sectoral cooperation is making progress alongside efforts to draft and adopt the convention and is being consistently codified in international treaties, such as the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea, the Agreement on Security Cooperation in the Caspian Sea, and cooperation agreements in other areas ranging from transport and logistics to disaster relief.

The five leaders' personal contribution to Caspian cooperation can hardly be overstated. Each summit has helped expand and deepen interaction. During the most recent, sixth summit, the principles underlying the activities of the five nations were confirmed and thus became political commitments, fully ensuring that they will guide our practical activities.

In the economic area, it is important to keep up efforts to achieve the balanced use of Caspian energy and transit capacities, which requires consideration of all the countries' interests and environmental security factors. Our region has every chance to become one of Eurasia's biggest hubs for multi-modal transcontinental shipments, primarily by tapping the potential of the North-South international transport corridor.

Expanding cooperation between regions of the five countries will facilitate Caspian interaction. Cultural cooperation and the development of tourism, including cruise routes, are other promising avenues.

The Caspian Economic Forum at the heads of government level has become an important format. Its first meeting took place at the initiative of Turkmenistan in 2019. In October 2022, Moscow will host its second forum. We hope it will provide a fresh impetus to trade and economic aspects of Caspian cooperation.

We have consistently held that the efforts of the five nations to promote the sustainable development of the Caspian Region help maintain stability throughout Greater Eurasia and pool the creative potential of the states and their integration associations in our common Eurasian home. Russia seeks to continue working closely with its Caspian partners to achieve these and other ambitious goals in accordance with the principles of the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea.

The Crisis of Civilization and the New World Order

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Keywords: crisis of world civilization, structural crisis of Western capitalism, liberal democracy, transformation of the world order

SCHOLARS began to react to the rapid transformation of the world order at the first signs that the US was losing its supposedly indisputable global leadership. The main reason for the revision of the unipolarity of the world order was not so much the US's loss of its economic, military, and political superiority as the fact that Francis Fukuyama's declared "end of history," pursued by the US after World War II, never materialized. Numerous publications emerged noting the decline of the Western liberal democratic model of social development.

Russian and other researchers, and not only those of the revolutionary persuasion, had long predicted the decline of the West due to the structural contradictions of capitalism. But it is obviously more likely that behind those forecasts was a desire to do away with the vices of capitalism as quickly as possible than any objective analysis of a socioeconomic system ruled by the invisible hand of the market and based on rational egoism.

The financialization of capital has produced several structural effects. First, capital has been pulling out of the real sector to a degree.

Second, by focusing on short-term speculation, capital stopped pursuing goals related to the postmodern transformation of global civilization. Capital usually is in no rush to invest in research projects with long payback periods.

creasingly investing in applied research. Third, it is part of the nature of financial capital, like any other capital, to always look for a larger market. In fact, the classics of political economy argued that the effectiveness of capital was directly dependent on the size of its market.

The growing yields of US government bonds create problems for the federal budget, but European countries, especially "peripheral" ones, are even worse off.

The structural crisis of modern capitalism has triggered a global energy crisis.

The problem is getting more serious. According to a joint report by the EU, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the UN World Food Programme (WFP), 113 million people “experienced acute food insecurity” in 2018, 153 million did in 2020, and 193 million did in 2021.

Besides the financialization of capital, two other important interrelated factors are stimulating the growing food shortage: the absence in the international food market of a long-term contracts mechanism and the lack of development of an exchange representing the interests of food producers. Both factors significantly disorganize the food market.

Between 1980 and 2016, the incomes of the world’s top 1% of earners grew 70% faster than those of the rest of the world population, 90% faster than those of Europeans, 230% faster than those of Americans and Canadians, and 280% times faster than those of Indians. Denmark’s Saxo Bank predicted that the world would experience social revolutions in 2022 and argued that inequality would be their most likely cause.

The idea that the world is evolving toward multipolarity makes little sense. With the strengthening of Euro-Atlantic unity and the resulting depletion of the sovereignty of states in the Euro-Atlantic region, a polyphony of positions is hardly achievable, least of all in the West.

World civilization is undergoing tectonic transformations. Excluding infernal scenarios of global changes, Russia needs a national social development strategy.

NATO’s Destabilizing Activities in the Arctic

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Keywords: Arctic region, Arctic Council, High North, Russia-NATO Council, Northwest Passage (NWP), Northern Sea Route

AFTER nearly three decades of constructive cooperation in the Arctic between Russia and NATO member states, the region is returning to the era of tough confrontation. NATO’s leading countries have a growing irrepressible desire to dominate the entire Arctic as increasingly rapid ice melt in the region caused by global climate change makes its seas more navigable and opens new opportunities for tapping its rich natural resources. In pursuit of this goal, NATO countries are ramping up their military activity and offensive potential, creating a major threat to Russian interests in the region, the lion’s share of which is under Russian sovereignty, as even Western experts acknowledge.

Unlike the Americans, European NATO analysts believe that because of clashes between the Arctic-related ambitions of various NATO countries, the alliance should not be in a rush to enhance its presence in the region. They propose that NATO start with minor steps, such as setting up a working group to study NATO’s role in the Arctic and drawing up a concept for its policy on the region and its potential security operations in it.

One declared reason why NATO and the US seek to drastically increase military, political, and economic activity in the Arctic is that the West is lagging behind Russia in the construction of icebreakers and facilities for developing Arctic resources.

NATO currently does not have a collective strategy for the Arctic, and therefore individual member countries are intensively developing their own strategies or concepts primarily aimed at ensuring their own geopolitical and economic interests in the region.

US interests in the Arctic include maintaining the flexibility of the US Armed Forces in projecting the US's global power, including by ensuring the freedom of navigation and flights, and in limiting the ability of Russia and China to attain their own strategic objectives.

The US's mounting aggressiveness in Arctic affairs shows that, under the pretext of addressing alleged Russian and Chinese threats, the Americans are planning to forcefully establish exclusive control over Arctic resources and transportation routes.

THE ARCTIC is a region of increasingly bitter military antagonism and intense economic, technological, and political competition between NATO, especially the US, on the one hand, and Russia and China, on the other. This is destabilizing the region and hinders cooperation on the use of its natural riches and growing trade opportunities. The Arctic's increasing geopolitical and economic significance is stimulating NATO countries to seek control of the region and to try to oust Russia and bar China from it. NATO and individual member countries of the alliance are building up their military and economic presence in the Arctic and stepping up political and diplomatic activity in pursuit of their geopolitical objective to bring this strategically important region entirely under their control.

Russia does not need tensions and especially not a military conflict in the Arctic; therefore, it consistently advocates the resumption of largescale cooperation in the region (including a dialogue with the West on preventing its further militarization) and the joint use of its resources.

The old differences between NATO countries regarding the sovereignty over Arctic waters and the role of NATO in the region offer Russia an opportunity for diplomatic efforts to continue interaction with individual Arctic member countries of NATO in the search for solutions to Arctic problems.

The Oil and Gas Market “Under Siege”

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Keywords: energy market, OPEC, OPEC+, oil war, IEA, GCC

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AT THE OPENING CEREMONY of the 21st Nigeria Oil and Gas (NOG) Conference and Exhibition in Abuja, Nigeria, on July 5, 2022, thensecretary general of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo deplored the current alarming situation in the world oil and gas market. “Our industry is now facing huge challenges along multiple fronts, and these threaten our investment potential now and in the longer term. To put it bluntly, the oil and gas industry is under siege!” he said.

Various developments and many factors have led to the formation of this complicated and unfavorable situation in the global oil and gas market.

But this situation has been sharply aggravated by efforts by the US and the West in general to impose their rules of the game on the energy market as part of their aspirations for world domination.

An objective analysis of the global production and export of oil and gas, demand for various types of energy, and the world economy as a whole shows that this situation is artificial.

Oil and gas would together satisfy more than half of the world's total needs for energy for the next few decades.

But the West is consistently pursuing a coordinated hard line to undermine the positions of oil- and gas-producing countries and their associations.

The past few decades have seen a movement toward a more just and predictable energy market with a rational balance between the interests of producers and those of consumers, but this movement has been halted by the efforts of the West.

As soon as signs emerged that the US's oil resources were dwindling, the US administration and business elites concluded that the best option was to import unrenewable energy in return for something that was renewable – dollars printed in the US.

OPEC became the initiator of a movement for an international economic order that duly considered the interests of African, Asian, and Latin American countries.

But events took a completely different path. This is important to remember today, when a new crisis is emerging in relations between oilproducing and Western countries and new calls are being made for a new international economic order.

The US-led West launched carefully designed measures to block the plans of OPEC and producers of other strategic commodities.

For Russia, the emergence of OPEC+ ended the period when our country was closely following the activities of OPEC without entering into any formal cooperation with it, although it had received many invitations to join the organization. The time that has passed since we joined OPEC+ has made it clear that being a member of the group is a more stable source of state revenue. It is also clear that membership in OPEC+ means greater market predictability.

OPEC leaders have repeatedly stressed that efforts are currently being made that threaten to undo years of progress achieved in building a more stable and harmonious energy system. Oil- and gas-producing countries have emphasized that decisions made at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow in 2021 (COP26) grossly misrepresented the world oil and gas industry and disregarded global energy needs.

According to Saudi Arabia, the policies of OPEC and OPEC+ already adequately consider the interests of other countries, and the US need not seek more exports to Europe. But the Saudis are talking about genuine economic interests rather than political demands stemming from attempts to make energy a geopolitical weapon.

Neither Saudi Arabia nor any other OPEC member currently has the potential to significantly boost oil output. The total extra amount they could put on the market would be equivalent to a little less than 1% of world oil consumption.

Iran has been able to provide enough oil for its own economy. It has some of the world's lowest domestic prices for fuel.

It is estimated that if sanctions were lifted, Iran would be able to export an additional 1.2 million barrels of oil [per day] within a year, an amount that exceeds the total resources of all other OPEC members combined.

OPEC regards Iran, Libya, and Venezuela as hostages to geopolitics and insists on the development of their oil production capacity and their full return to the oil market.

The world oil and gas market is in a dire situation. It may deteriorate further if the West pursues its destructive policy. But new opportunities are emerging to break the deadlocks facing exporters.

Why the US Needs an American at the Head of the International Telecommunication Union

Keywords: International Telecommunication Union, ITU, ICTs, international information security

INFORMATION and communication technologies (ICTs) are becoming key tools of international influence for nations. Geopolitical rivalry has largely shifted to the ICT realm. A nation's level of digitalization now ranks alongside its economic, political, and military strength as a determinant of its international status.

Amid growing challenges and threats stemming from the abuse of ICTs, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a specialized agency of the UN, plays a decisive role in international cooperation in the development of digital technologies: It distributes radio frequencies, assigns satellite orbits, develops technical standards, facilitates access to ICTs for various countries, and helps developing countries acquire and manage ICTs.

The US, bent on maintaining and strengthening its global technological domination, is seeking to gain practically undivided control over the ITU and to make the Union a means of advancing the ICT-related interests of a narrow group of countries.

The US position in negotiations on planned international information security guarantees often becomes a barrier to the inclusion of some nations in the negotiation process and to their technological progress.

Russia [...] invariably seeks concrete universal agreements, primarily advocating the establishment of an international legal regime on ICTs, demands that governments play the dominant role in negotiations on guarantees of information security and national sovereignty in cyberspace, and insists on better assistance to developing countries in building up their ICT resources. All this has been broadly well received in the non-Western world.

In line with universal information security values, Russia has put forward its own candidate for ITU secretary-general, Rashid Ismailov. He is well known in the international ICT community and possesses rich ICT experience and profound technological expertise.

The ITU has led the global development of telecommunications throughout its 157-year history, but the agency's potential transformation into an elite club seeking to impose its standards and technologies on the majority of nations would in effect spell an end to the traditional approach to inclusive, fruitful cooperation under the auspices of the UN.

At the end of the day, there is a question mark over the ITU's future: Either the agency will remain a universal UN body promoting technological progress in the interests of all of humanity, of all countries regardless of their current level of technological development, or it will split up into warring camps – a situation that would send global digitalization haywire. A few “privileged” countries would retain their

global ICT status while the rest, the overwhelming majority of nations, would have no other choice but to in one way or another pay the costs of the elite's technological domination.

On the Nature of Russian-American Relations

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Keywords: the ideological factor in Russia-American relations, hopes and crises, shadow players, Ukraine conflict, hybrid warfare, failure of Biden's strategy

RUSSIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS are going through what is probably their worst phase in the last 70 years. Diplomatic contacts are at a bare minimum. Dialogue on education, science, culture, sports, and humanitarian cooperation has been almost entirely cut off by the American side. Trade and economic ties have been fatally disrupted by a wave of sanctions. The anti-Russian hysteria in the American media and political circles in effect recreates the atmosphere of the times of the struggle against the "red threat." At the same time, readers may recall that in the USSR and the US of the early 1950s, memories of the recent alliance in the fight against the Axis countries were still alive, and the negative attitude toward the Soviet Union in American society was based on an ideological (anti-communist) foundation and did not transform into the banal and primitive Russophobia that we are witnessing today. It does not seem possible to pull the bilateral dialogue out of the steep nosedive brought on by Washington. Under the current circumstances, further decline appears almost irreversible.

Before answering the question of whether it is possible to get out of the current impasse, it would be worthwhile to consider why the starry-eyed dreaming of the elites (as well as the peoples) of the two countries of 30 years ago failed to translate into practical results.

Of course, the simplest approach would be to list the turning points that have undermined mutual trust, such as NATO expansion, the bombing of Yugoslavia, the "color revolutions" in the post-Soviet space, the "sanctions war" unleashed by the American side after the annexation of Crimea, etc. But those events seem to be rather the consequence of general malignant tendencies, which in any case have metastasized into the fabric of bilateral cooperation since the first days of its recent, post-Soviet history. A careful look at the nature of relations between Moscow and Washington leaves no doubt: They were doomed from the very start to dwindle to the current collapse. In a sense, it is even surprising that the collapse we are seeing today did not occur earlier.

It is not surprising that 85% of Republicans and 95% of Democrats supported the sanctions imposed on Russia by the Biden administration. The ideology of exceptionalism, which is perceived under the current circumstances through the lens of unipolarity, remains dominant in American society.

It is telling that in their first years in office, the four US leaders who occupied the White House before Joe Biden sincerely tried to establish a dialogue and seek compromise with Moscow, but finished their terms in the face of the gravest crises in bilateral relations. This is largely due to the fact that they did not have a deep understanding of international affairs before arriving in the Oval Office.

The Kremlin's patient reaction to the US decision to withdraw from the ABM Treaty and invade Iraq in defiance of the UN Security Council was perceived by the White House as weakness, prompting the Bush administration to intensify the "export of democracy" to countries of the post-Soviet space.

Early in his presidency, Obama indicated his intention to “reset” relations with Russia, which quickly resulted in progress in a number of areas, including the negotiation and ratification of the New START Treaty. However, as early as 2011, the president was persuaded to make unilateral decisions to the detriment of the “reset.” The US’s active involvement in the events of the “Arab Spring,” which culminated in the intervention in Libya that was carried out contrary to the position that had been previously coordinated with Moscow, was “pushed” by a group of young presidential aides (Antony Blinken, Ben Rhodes, and Samantha Power) led by US Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice. They managed to convince Obama that “the United States should be on the right side of history.” As a result, Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden, who advocated a more moderate approach, were forced to yield under the pressure of colleagues and adopt a new, offensive line.

Biden himself has consistently adhered to an anti-Russian position; unlike his predecessors, he did not even have to adjust his stance.

BUT EVEN if we were to imagine that in the circle of one of the next American leaders a “new Kissinger” would emerge who would be able to rise above opportunistic considerations and outline a more balanced course within the framework of building relations with Moscow, hopes for a new “détente” remain illusory. In all likelihood, any such effort will be hampered and undermined as much as possible by mid-level bureaucrats. Unlike in the 1970s, when the strong-willed decision of President Nixon and his closest adviser could radically reverse a destructive course, in today’s Washington, the so-called “foreign policy community” has gained enormous influence.

Presidents and secretaries of state change, but the foreign policy community ensures the inviolability of US ideological and strategic orientations in the spirit of globalism and unipolarity. There are no chances in sight to change the situation – the entire elaborate and extensive administration, which is not subject to transformation, works to preserve this status quo.

ONE MORE special factor that predetermined the sad outcome of the recent history of Russian-American dialogue was another characteristic feature of the US political system: the not always noticeable but critically important role of Congress that is largely controlled and guided by lobbying organizations and interest groups.

By purposefully imposing sanctions on members of the Federal Assembly and breaking well-established contacts, the American side artificially destroyed almost all opportunities for mutual visits and a constructive exchange of views. In the overwhelming majority of clashes in the lobbying field, Russia was doomed to failure from the outset. Now, with the atmosphere around Moscow becoming “toxic” to both businesses and public organizations, it is impossible in principle to rebuild the infrastructure that had previously existed in this sphere.

The Ukraine conflict has become only one of the first episodes of the incipient hybrid war, which neither Russia nor the US are able to prevent from spreading. Both sides will have to get used to life in conditions of constant mutual pressure – economic, geopolitical, and informational – with a continuous struggle for the sympathies of allies, especially in the so-called “global South.”

It would be naïve and irrational to harbor any particular hopes in light of the current vicissitudes. However, the US establishment has yet to realize the failure of Biden’s strategy to destabilize Russia through sanctions pressure and to begin to consider a new model of coexistence with our country; this reflection may take years.

The window of opportunity for the slow and painstaking process of bilateral de-escalation, even in the long term, will have to open – and when it does, it will be important to avoid the emergence of new illusions and the repetition of the dangerous mistakes of the recent past.

Preserving Ethnocultural, Interethnic, and Interreligious Harmony in Russia Is Key to Consolidating Civic Identity

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Keywords: Russia, Islamic world, identity, Russian civilization

ON MAY 19-21, 2022, the 13th International Economic Summit “Russia – Islamic World: Kazan Summit 2022” and a meeting of the “Russia – Islamic World” Strategic Vision Group (SVG) took place in the Republic of Tatarstan. These events were made all the more significant by the widespread celebration in Russia of the 1,100th anniversary of the official adoption of Islam by the peoples of Volga Bulgaria.

The Russian president stressed in his message that “the adoption of Islam by Volga Bulgaria became an extremely significant milestone in the history of our Motherland, had a substantial impact on the evolution of the multiethnic state, and played an important role in the formation of a unified and cohesive multiethnic people of Russia. For centuries, Russian Muslims have been making a significant contribution to the country’s development. Their outstanding achievements in various fields are an inalienable part of our rich historical, scientific, cultural, and spiritual legacy.”

In the current Strategy of the State Nationalities Policy of the Russian Federation to 2025, which was approved by a presidential decree on December 6, 2018, the provision about the essence of Russian civic identity is based on the preservation and development of the Russian cultural dominant that is inherent in all peoples living in the Russian Federation and a cultural (civilizational) code that includes, among other things, fundamental universal principles such as respect for the unique historical and national traditions of our peoples and the integration of their best achievements into a single Russian [state] culture.

Describing the current situation, SVG members emphasized the destructiveness of the political course pursued in recent years by Western countries (primarily the US). Many of them, in both their public remarks and private conversations, noted that this course is marked by disregard for the generally accepted principles and standards of international law and by neocolonial approaches with clear signs of racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia.

It was noted that the Islamic world has been the main victim of the West’s foreign and domestic policy. Speakers drew attention to the malignity of US actions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and other Asian and African countries.

Addressing issues of intercivilizational cooperation in the modern world, the participants (including foreign ones) noted that there are sufficient grounds for classifying Russia as a kind of state-civilization whose essential characteristics do not coincide with the Western idea of nation-states.

Another essential element of Russian civic (national) identity is loyalty to traditional values that are opposed to the ultraliberal values of the modern West. The analysis of Russian civilization provided by several foreign members of the SVG and supported by most participants led them to conclude that there is historical affinity between the Russian statecivilization and the Islamic world.

It was noted that the differences between Russia and Western countries, as manifested in cultural and civilizational dialogue, are fundamental, but this does not mean the rejection of constructive cooperation between representatives of various peoples, cultures, and religions in the modern world.

Much of what was said at the SVG meeting, including the wishes of the country's leaders expressed in their messages of greetings to the meeting participants, can be successfully implemented if we maintain constant dialogue with our partners and listen to each other's opinions. Only then will we be able to create opportunities for strengthening cooperation among more like-minded people in Arab and Muslim countries.

The year 2023 will mark 20 years since President Vladimir Putin's visit to Malaysia and his statement regarding Russia's intention to join the Organization of Islamic Conference (now the Organization of Islamic Cooperation) as an observer. The SVG is currently working to arrange a visiting meeting timed to coincide with this date in the country's capital, Kuala Lumpur.

For Whom and About What Does the Bell of Truth Toll in Our Ideological Quest?

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Keywords: truth, patriotism, national self-awareness, foreign policy principles, national exclusiveness, messianism

TODAY, amid events unfolding in and around Ukraine that are pivotal to Russia and the entire world order, we hear more and more that "our strength is in truth" and "our cause is just." They are pronounced as a given, as something that requires no explanation, because they are part of our spiritual code. Today, we increasingly hear that Russia needs a national idea. The fact that the ideas of truth, a just cause, and patriotism resonate in our minds much louder during critical periods of Russia's history requires no explanation.

The moral and philosophical roots of the idea of Russia as a "nation of truth" and our spiritual-moral code go back 1,200 years. An extremely important role in the development of that idea was not only the adoption of Christianity in the 9th century, but also the tragic events of the 13th century associated with Alexander Nevsky's ultimate sacrifice.

Christian Orthodoxy inspired in our people an awareness of conscience – in other words, responsibility for everything they do on earth. This is in opposition to the Catholic thesis put forward by St. Augustine of predestination. The deep meaning of truth in our mental DNA is absolutely different from the meaning of the word in the languages of other peoples.

Our idea of patriotism has nothing to do with unbridled nationalism and chauvinism or with disdain for other peoples – with ideas about our exceptionality and attempts to impose our will and values on others. When spreading to the East, Russians treated local peoples as equals (for example, military commanders in Siberia had no power to punish locals for misconduct. Their cases were sent to Moscow, which usually amnestied them).

The Western and the Russian mentalities and perceptions of the world are absolutely different, which inevitably determine the nature and orientation of foreign policy attitudes. It is impossible to change a mindset; foreign policy is shaped by people of certain mindsets, the product of genes and education. It seems that we have not been paying enough attention to this important aspect of our relations. This has

probably created unjustified (as we have now come to realize) expectations of “partnership” with the EU, NATO, and the West as a whole.

The key concepts here are truth, justice, conscience, the idea of patriotism and traditional respect for other peoples and cultures. These fundamental pillars of Russia’s spiritual code are directly connected with Russia’s foreign policy.

In Russia, one generation after another does not want and will not live without the quest for truth. We will never stop searching for our idea.

As for whom the bell of truth tolls, it tolls for the Western “empire of lies” and desperate attempts to consolidate US leadership in the world arena for centuries to come. But not only that. It tolls for a marginal group of our own people who are seduced by the cheap gloss of “European civilization” and cannot imagine their lives outside its frames. Today, the West’s mask of “values” and “rules” has been ripped off, revealing the evil grin of its Russophobia and the true colors of its spiritual poverty, leaving those people disorientated. It is not easy to dispel illusions, yet self-purification is always a useful exercise. Wherever you might hear the expressions “For* others,” “For truth,” or “I’m pained for my country,” know that your spiritual ties are there, Russia is there.

A Brief History of British Russophobia

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Keywords: Russophobia, Russian-British interimperial animosity, the Great Game, rational and unconscious in the West’s perception of Russia, mass social psychoses, clash of civilizations

NEVER BEFORE has the term “Russophobia” been as widely and routinely used as it is today. Emerging in Europe in the 1830s, it denoted a phenomenon much older than itself. Strictly speaking, there was and is nothing phenomenal about this phenomenon in its traditional understanding as a special dislike for Russia and Russians. It just so happens that there is no love between states and peoples because this is unnatural for them and has no grounds.

RUSSIA and Europe have never had any historical reasons to develop this feeling [of love] for each other, as historians and philosophers who are immune to the liberal syndrome of blind worship of European values as the main and only spiritual wealth of earthly civilization have convincingly proven. There is nothing more absurd than to liken the relationship between Europe and Russia to a mother-daughter relationship. There was a relationship, but of a different kind – a neighborly one, imbued with certain mutual perception stereotypes formed under the influence of a complex range of feelings that were far from familial: fear, suspicion, arrogance.

Since the 10th century, many states located near Rus/Muscovy/Russia were inimical to it and had every reason not to like it – to put it mildly.

But for some reason, the most violent and poisonous buds of Russophobia emerged at the other end of Europe (officially beyond its borders) – in England, which seemingly had nothing to contest with a distant country lost in the forests. The explanation lies in the entire history of Russia as a great power and subsequently an empire, and its relationship with another giant empire – Britain.

It all began in the second half of the 16th century, in the age of great geographical discoveries – more precisely, the great colonial and predatory expansion of Western Europe. Having fallen behind the Spaniards and the Portuguese in this avaricious competition, the British were determined to catch up, to snatch what they could for themselves both where their competitors already held sway and in unexplored lands where foreign hands with a highly developed grabbing reflex had not yet reached. So the English pioneers found themselves in Muscovy, and the sight of its riches took their breath away.

The only frustrating thing was that all this belonged not to the Native Americans, but to Ivan the Terrible – the powerful sovereign of a young, growing state. The first thing on the minds of the guests from Albion was how to wrest control from the Russians of international trade with the East [2, pp. 55-56, 193-198, 219-236].

They saw before them, on the one hand, a large autocratic state, and on the other, a “barbaric” people united around it, capable, “like no one else in the world,” to withstand any adversity [2, p. 60].

Although the British largely gave proper respect to the “new America” they had discovered in the east, their attitude toward the Muscovites was arrogant and dismissive overall. Russian customs, manners, and religion seemed to the overseas guests to be “savagery” only on the grounds that they were unbearably different, strange, and abstruse compared to the only possible form of civilization in their minds – the European one.

The British wanted to obtain an almost gratuitous and inexhaustible source of raw materials, a market, a safe passage to the East, but not to commit to anything. In other words, it wanted to establish a relationship as close as possible to the classical colonial formula. When Ivan the Terrible realized this, he changed heart, stripped the British of all privileges, and practically drove them out of Russia. Little has changed under his successors.

As a matter of fact, this is where it all starts. After returning home, the insulted British merchant-diplomats published a whole series of mostly caustic notes about Russia and the Russians. To be fair, they do have scientific value, regardless of the highly subjective, emotional assessments they contain. Historians believe that in the 16th century, none of the Europeans knew more about Russia than the British. Naturally, this knowledge was refracted through a kind of epistemological lens of that time – ideas about the nature of states, power institutions, the cultural hierarchy of peoples, the Eurocentric view of the world, etc.

ONCE the Time of Troubles was over, with the Romanov dynasty coming to power and Russia’s revival, London’s colonization plans lost their relevance – at least in the candid form proposed by John Meyrick. But the avaricious memory of Russian wealth remained.

Russophobic sentiments in Britain were further fanned by a report published in London in 1669 (and translated into several European languages) about the Embassy to Russia of Charles Howard Carlisle, a prominent figure of the Stuart Restoration. His mission got off to a bad start when the arrogant ambassador did not wish to observe Russian diplomatic etiquette. Then there were other reasons for more bouts of indignation, caused by what may seem like trifles to us today. But the negotiations that followed were far from trifles. Carlisle demanded in almost ultimatum form the restoration of the trade privileges for the British that had been abolished in 1649 and had ruined Russian merchants and caused great damage to the sovereign’s treasury. Moscow refused, presenting a long list of egregious abuses constantly committed by British merchants. In response, the ambassador made an audacious speech during an audience with Alexey Mikhailovich and refused to accept the ritual royal gift. The Russian side, in turn, returned Carlisle’s offerings. The mission ended in complete failure, after which prospects for improving relations between Moscow and London became illusory [1, pp. 136-141].

Among British writings about Russia, *A Brief History of Moscovia* (1682), a small and unfinished work by the famous John Milton, stands apart. In this superficial compilation marred by many factual distortions, the author, who had never set foot in Russia, repeats the anecdotal observations of his predecessors, reducing them to a cultural portrait of a people.

THE AGE of Peter the Great revolutionized the European, and in particular the British, perception of Russia. From that point on, it was an empire that required close attention for at least two reasons: On one hand, Britain's need for Russian raw materials had dramatically increased, and on the other, an increasingly powerful military and political rival on the continent had to be contained.

In the second half of the 18th century, England was watching rather than containing Russia. An active policy required resources, and their bulk was concentrated in overseas colonies, where London was facing multiple problems. Nevertheless, Russia was causing England growing concern.

The 1820s to the 1850s were a time of lush flourishing of Russophobic sentiment that assumed irrational hues. During this period, despite all its volatility, the British had more than one occasion to see that it was in fact possible and necessary to negotiate with the Russians; that the latter did not want war with Europe in general and with England in particular; and that the Russians were always open to understanding other people's interests and were ready to prove it with bold peace-loving initiatives, as Nicholas I did during his famous visit to London in 1844, the main purpose of which, no matter how many historians disagree in their assessments of it, was to prevent a war for the division of the Ottoman inheritance. To be fair, some members of the Cabinet did not doubt the tsar's sincerity, but tried not to show it to other, skeptical ministers, and even more so to the British public, which was almost under the hypnotic influence of rabid Russia haters.

Unlike their Russian ideological counterparts, the British Russophobes were completely dissatisfied with the outcome of the war. The defenders of Sevastopol have covered themselves with unfading glory. The Crimea remained in the memory of the British a shameful and disastrous place that witnessed the heroic but senseless death of the Light Cavalry Brigade at Balaklava and their utter failure in storming Malakhov Kurgan, which was taken by the French. The plan to detach the Caucasus from Russia, where the British command wanted to move the main theater of the war, also failed. The Turkish Army was utterly defeated there even though it was led by British officers.

IN THE HISTORY of international politics, the second half of the 19th century, like the first half, was marked by thrilling and impactful milestones, which clearly trace the phases of the rise of the Russophobic element.

Great Britain feared the Russian threat not to its domination of the seas and oceans, but to its rule in India, where it was very vulnerable in the face of Russia, which had come close to the British imperial borders from the direction of Turkestan. There, in the 1880s and 1890s, several military alarms sounded between Russia and England, serving as a shot in the arm for a particularly excitable segment of Russophobes who demanded that the presumptuous "barbarians" be taught a lesson once and for all. The only thing stopping them was the fact that the "barbarians" had vast historical experience defeating their strongest opponents, and the "civilized" British always preferred to fight on land with someone else's hands – unless, of course, they were "battling" some natives.

THE BRIEF Anglo-Russian alliance during the First World War was overshadowed by London's dishonest, if not treacherous, policy toward St. Petersburg. In order to draw Russia into the war, the British (together with the French) promised it, in addition to large arms supplies, the Black Sea Straits along with Constantinople. And at the same time, London secretly agreed with Paris to prevent that from happening.

Something had to be done to exclude Russia from the victorious powers. Life itself came up with that something. Although a host of factors led to the February Revolution, British and French diplomats had an active hand in it, showing no qualms about using underhanded methods. The internal logic of the collapse of the country led to the October Revolution, which freed the British from the need to prove to the new Russian government why Russia had lost the right to the promised share of the victors' "pie."

In the second half of the 20th century, dozens and hundreds of analytical centers mushroomed in Western Europe and the US focusing on comprehensive studies of the Soviet civilization. Without denying the scientific significance of many studies, we note that a subjective, mostly biased, view from the outside was invariably present in them. Even conscientious and eminent authors often failed to conceal their dislike of Russia and everything Russian. Not to mention professional propagandists who broadcasted in different "radio voices" and even in different languages of the peoples of the Soviet Union.

AFTER THE COLLAPSE of the Soviet Union came the notorious 1990s that were catastrophic, shameful, and humiliating for Russians but blessed for the West, which enthusiastically accepted the crushing defeat of its enemy and promised the post-Soviet elite, in gratitude for its selfless complicity in the victory over communism, a place under the sun of capitalist globalism.

Starting in the 2000s, the project of transforming Russia into an obedient branch serving the interests of the Western world began to fail. To the profound amazement and displeasure of the West, Russia gradually began to put its economy in order, rebuild its armed forces and science, earn decent money on raw materials exports, and increasingly remind others that it had national interests and national pride. In short, it began to show not just signs of life, but the desire to return to the rank of a power to be reckoned with.

Then, like a bolt from the blue, Vladimir Putin's Munich speech thundered out, causing bewilderment along with painful nostalgia for the Yeltsin era among the powerful of this world. Their immediate reaction was unmistakably seen in the expressions of those present at the conference: bewilderment, confusion, irritation, fright.

In order to secure an absolute military-strategic advantage, the US began systematically destroying the global security system built on Soviet Union-US and Russia-US treaties. At the same time, the West sharply radicalized its policy of closing ranks against Moscow, which had dared to warn it that Vladimir Putin's words in Munich would be followed by actions if Washington and Brussels continued to tighten the sanctions stranglehold and strengthen military, economic, political, and ideological footholds against Russia in the post-Soviet space. And actions did follow – in 2008, 2014, and 2022.

In response to Moscow's response, a second cold war was declared against it, which is looking more like hot war compared to the first Cold War. It provoked an unprecedentedly large and strong storm of Russophobia in the West, the likes of which the centuries-old history of this specific psychosis has not witnessed before.

Still alive and well is the historical fear of the Russians' ability to again, as in 1917, show humanity the way to salvation, which the West will bristle at as before, since it will most likely spell the West's moral and physical destruction as a result of its total infestation with the pernicious ideals of transhumanism. Among these ideals, there will certainly be a place for the modern, Anglo-Saxon version of Russophobia, and for proud memories of its distant British ancestor that gave a long life to the habit of hating the "other."

The Historical and International Legal Responsibility of Great Britain for the Crimes of the Colonial and Postcolonial Period

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Keywords: Great Britain, once the biggest colonial power, decolonization, colonial crimes, UNGA, the British Empire, ECHR, Pax Britannica, Victoria and Albert Museum

GREAT BRITAIN, once the biggest colonial power, steadily expanded by way of the natural resources of its controlled possessions, the export of their cultural values, and the slave trade. The empire's political and economic vibrancy required strong moral "tenets" that led to the formation of a hypocritical ideology – an alloy of cynical prosperity on the "bones" of enslaved peoples, enlightening messianism, and the heavy "white man's burden" as an alleged source of progress for the rest of the world. Colonialism was and remains, to an extent, a factor of national pride, a combination of imagined racial-ethnic exceptionalism and a condescending attitude toward others. Hence the more or less widely accepted opinion among Britons that the demands, especially of India and Pakistan, that Great Britain repent for the sins of the colonial past are untenable, since under imperial patronage, these countries enjoyed all the boons of civilization, democracy, and free trade.

World War II deprived Great Britain of its great power status. It could no longer suppress the waves of national-liberation movements in its colonies.

Decolonization brought a radical reformatting of established ideas about law and justice: The former metropole was saddled with historical and international legal responsibilities to its former colonies and demands for restitution, reparations, and apologies.

It should be said in this connection that the Black Lives Matter movement that flared up in the US in 2020 did not lead to fierce political and social conflicts in Great Britain, since the problem of slavery was not as topical there.

Still, the obviously leftist agenda accelerated the exodus of the Caribbean countries from British influence. In fall 2021, Barbados left the monarchy's patronage to become a parliamentary republic. Jamaica is ready to follow suit. The government of Belize announced that it had set up a commission to study the decolonization experience of its Caribbean neighbors.

So far, there are no effective or universal mechanisms for protecting the rights and interests of former colonies. On one hand, international law provides for the accountability of states for war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity. On the other, in practical terms, a country determined to hold its former metropole accountable under international law for crimes of the colonial and postcolonial periods has to meet a high legal threshold. In these conditions, collective judicial appeals to national courts and the work of special commissions are currently the best legal recourse for seeking to restore historical justice.

As a rule, considering the huge number of colonial crimes that were committed over a long period of time, the amount of time that has passed, and complications in gathering evidence, former colonies have been setting up national commissions to establish facts of crimes, carefully collect information, and study the repercussions of imperial influence. On average, such commissions function for five years. Some were entrusted with bringing collective action against the metropole. The African Commission on Reparations was the most successful: In 1999, it brought a lot of media attention to colonial crimes in Africa after demanding that the former metropolises pay \$777 trillion in compensation for slave trading and plundering.

Great Britain started the history of concentration camps. During the Anglo-Boer war of 1899-1903, the British established 45 “refugee camps” for members of the white population and 64 camps for the black population. About 200,000 civilians were interned; 28,000 Boers died in these camps (over 26,000 of them women and children under the age of 16). The number of the dead among the black population is unknown; they were not counted – the British never considered them human beings.

From 1946 to 1949, the British set up 12 concentration camps on Cyprus to control the flow of Jews fleeing Europe for Palestine. At that time, Britain was seeking to curb the growth of the Jewish population in Palestine, its mandate territory. For this reason, 52,000 Jews (2,000 of them children) were sent to camps in Cyprus.

The division in 1947 of British India into the independent states of India and Pakistan triggered violent clashes between Hindus and Muslims, huge migrant flows, and a famine that left about a million people dead; 18 million people migrated, about 4 million of whom went missing. The unclear border between the two countries was and still is a factor of tension and has caused armed conflicts and terrorist acts.

The unprovoked cruelty of British officers who had exhausted political tools of pressure on controlled territories led to large-scale humanitarian tragedies.

The anti-British uprising of the Arabs of Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq) of 1920 was suppressed using poisonous mustard gas left over from World War I. The British killed about 10,000 rebels.

Colonial genocide radically changed the demographic picture of certain regions and even continents.

According to various sources, from the 16th to the 19th centuries, British colonialists removed between 3 million¹¹ and 17 million people from Africa to America and the West Indies as slaves.

The 2003 invasion of Iraq by the American coalition followed historical patterns: contempt of international law, violence, and plunder. When the fighting ended, the British did not hesitate to use illegal methods to interfere with the activities of human rights activists, the media, and international courts of justice and commissions working to bring their atrocities to light. The 2003 death of an Iraqi in a British prison in Basra from 93 wounds inflicted by two British soldiers was proven despite pushback from London. In 2016, London went even further: It announced that it was ready to put an end to petty claims that multiply “on an industrial scale” against British soldiers by removing them from the jurisdiction of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

On the whole, the Ukrainian case is the best confirmation that the racist approach to the “uncivilized” world is still very much alive.

The problem of restitution of cultural property to former colonies remains unresolved. In the international legal field, some instruments do not concern colonial-era acquisitions.

The British realize that if they bend to the will of the former colonies, they will increase their pressure, while Britain will lose its colonial assets. So they try not to leave safe territory when it comes to cultural restitution, suggesting that the public accept half-measures.

It should be said that memories of Pax Britannica were and continue to be the cornerstone of the national idea, consolidating in British citizens an awareness of a “small Britain” that is very much vulnerable to external dangers without its former glory of a great power. Hence certain very contradictory political moves.

The country, which fears becoming a province dominated by West European supranational institutions, left the European Union, which only cut the country off from the world financial and political mainstream. This “shot to the foot” that damaged the British globalist project launched isolationist

processes, damaging, to a great extent, the UK's foreign policy ambitions and increased its dependence on the US.

Today, as we watch as London replaces a well-defined foreign policy strategy with opportunistic populism and seeks to retain its domination in the Commonwealth countries and expand its sphere of influence by interfering in local conflicts, we can draw a historical parallel to the British Empire and its death throes during the 1950s and 1960s, when it was unable to accept that it could no longer influence global processes.

The Crisis of Political Elites in the US: Trends and Prospects

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Keywords: US political elites, crisis of American elites, worst US president

SINCE the start of 2022, the United States of America has been swept by waves of massive domestic political upheavals, compounded by the threat of an economic crisis – the second in just three years. These waves have pushed into the background and obscured the human-made causes of these upheavals, which stem from the fatal mistakes and miscalculations of the US political elite.

In this sense, public surveys provide telling data that speak for themselves. Public opinion polls on the most pressing issues for Americans (as of summer 2022) showed that inflation and the rapid rise of the cost of living were at the top of the list – with 18% of respondents sharing this view. But it is extremely significant that coming in second with a similar share of respondents, also at 18%, was dissatisfaction with the weak political leadership of the US, including the ineffectual work of the state apparatus at its highest, federal level.

The general state of the American economy was third on the list of the most pressing problems.

A HISTORICAL analysis of the six major contemporary problems in US social development convincingly shows that almost all of them stem from gross miscalculations and mistakes made by the top leadership from 2020 to 2022.

The Federal Reserve's total loss of control over inflationary processes in the American economy resulted from the Central Bank's totally irrational policy of printing money.

The reaction by the federal government to the coronavirus pandemic, which has claimed the lives of over 1 million Americans in 2.5 years – about the same number lost by the US during its bloodiest conflict in history, the Civil War (1861-1865) – has been inconsistent and contradictory, calling into question the validity of a nationwide vaccine mandate for the vast majority of the American population.

Meanwhile, other destructive tendencies have reared their ugly heads. The mass riots that engulfed practically all American cities during the summer and autumn of 2020, provoked by the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on May 25 of that year, gave birth to a national movement that became known as "Defund the Police."

The campaign to discredit the authority of the police force and police service found its outlet in the courtroom trial of Officer Derek Chauvin, accused in the killing of George Floyd.

As a result of these and other processes, recent years in the US have been marked by a rampant rise in crime, including mass shootings.

Another factor contributing to this “rampant criminality” is the drastic increase in weapons trafficking in the US, due to everyday Americans attempting to take security into their own hands.

THE AMERICAN PUBLIC’S traditional goodwill toward newly elected leaders lasted about six months in the case of the 46th US president. During this time, the percentage of Joe Biden’s supporters consistently exceeded that of his opponents and ill-wishers. However, in late summer 2021 – mainly due to the US’s hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan – the value of these two indicators was roughly equal. It stood balanced at just about 47% on Joe Biden’s 220th day in the White House.

In effect, Joe Biden is currently supported exclusively by the ideological core of the Democratic Party, who to some degree are indifferent to the identity of the president as such: The decisive factor is party affiliation.

The catastrophic drop in public support for Joe Biden comes in no small part from the even lower approval ratings of Kamala Harris in the role of US vice-president. For purely opportunistic political reasons, Joe Biden has stressed that his administration is officially called the “BidenHarris Administration,” in the hope that the first female vice-president in the history of the American presidency would allow the occupant of the Oval Office to “amortize” his oratory shortcomings and fill the weak spots in his style of political leadership.

THE ARRIVAL in the White House of maverick politician Donald Trump, for whom the presidency was his first public office on a nationwide scale, evoked a natural resistance among the American public that was raised to respect and build on the nation’s political traditions. The sense of these traditions was that the White House was something of a prize for professional politicians, who were supposed to climb numerous steps in the hierarchy of elected offices, from the local to the federal level.

Essentially, Donald Trump through his presidency set the parameters for judging the entire Washington establishment, whose degree of public trust has eventually become even lower than Trump’s.

As of mid-summer 2022, the net approval rating of former president Trump, calculated from the average statistical difference between his degree of approval and disapproval by the American public, was -13.3%.

In other words, even 18 months following Donald Trump’s exit from the White House, he remains the most popular politician among all the unpopular political actors in today’s America.

IN A WIDER CONTEXT, Donald Trump’s accession to the US political firmament was and is the result of a large-scale crisis of the American political elite, in a broad sense of that word. It is quite telling that this is how the Donald Trump phenomenon is seen from beyond America’s borders.

The upshot of the growing crisis of US political leadership is the drastic decline in “quality” among the American political elite. According to the German [sic; Swiss] Foundation for Value Creation, the US ranking in the “Elite Quality Index” was 15th in the world in 2022, falling 10 places compared to 2021. This was the largest drop among the 20 leading countries in the world.³⁶ The growing “inadequacy” of the American political elite is objectively reflected in both a drastic decline in the quality of political and state governance of American society and in the blatant inability of the US leadership to negotiate in the international arena, with an insistence on provocative actions in foreign political and economic policy.³⁷ All one can do is hope that this destructive influence on worldwide political processes, which resembles degradation, will sooner or later peter out and will not have fatal consequences.

The Chinese Diaspora in the US: From Coolies to Lobbyists

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Keywords: US, Chinese diaspora, Chinese political lobbyism, Chinese immigration

SHORTLY before US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's provocative visit to Taiwan in August 2022, Chinese Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping called for more intensive work with patriotic elements in Taiwan and abroad, including the Chinese diaspora in the US. This means that, along with military and economic measures, China is planning to make more use of its secret weapon, Chinese Americans, to lobby its interests in the US.

There was a dramatic worldwide increase in population migration around the turn of the 21st century due to globalization. On one hand, emigration deprives a country of talent, workers, and taxpayers. On the other, immigrants may form a growing diaspora in a host country with which the government of their native land can maintain close ties and use to advance its interests. The Chinese diaspora in the US is a good example.

Beijing's diaspora policy has significantly increased China's international power. Through its global diaspora, China propagates its cultural values, lobbies for its national interests, strengthens its economy, and seeks to bolster its international image, including in the US.

THE HISTORY of the 1900-1904 bubonic plague epidemic in San Francisco is a good illustration of the relationship between the local Chinese community and Californian authorities in the early 20th century and, in a way, is reminiscent of restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to various estimates, between 15,000 and 30,000 people were living in San Francisco's Chinatown around the end of the 19th century, but then, in March 1900, the body of a man was found there who had apparently died of bubonic plague. That same night, Chinatown was put under quarantine. Only police and medical personnel were allowed to go in and out of the quarantined area. But the Six Companies, an association of San Francisco's six main Chinese organizations – in a sense, Chinatown's government – protested the quarantine.

The quarantine was lifted two days after it was imposed due to general discontent that city officials could not ignore.

Plague was the cause of several deaths in Chinatown in March, April, and May. But not a single living Chinese person was diagnosed with plague. There were rumors that those who contracted plague were being moved to other Chinese settlements and that, in fact, a lot more people were dying, but their bodies were being hidden in cellars or the sewer system.

On May 17, a ban was imposed on the sale of rail and boat tickets to Chinese and Japanese people (the latter had for some reason also ended up in the suspect category) who could not present a vaccination certificate signed by the chief quarantine inspector. The next day, the San Francisco Department of Public Health announced that a bubonic plague epidemic had begun in the city.

While the Californian authorities managed to avoid a ban on the export of fruit from the state in 1900, neighboring states imposed a ban in 1902 on sales of Californian fruit in their states. The epidemic was stopped in 1904. During the epidemic, 121 San Francisco residents contracted plague, 119 of whom died. After the 1906 earthquake, a new plague epidemic hit the city. The San Francisco authorities tried

to resettle the Chinese community further from the city center, but the community refused. It rebuilt Chinatown where it had previously stood. It was only in 1908 that the Californian authorities announced that plague, which they had initially denied, had been fully defeated in San Francisco.

THE Chinese Exclusion Act and Geary Act allowed the entry of a maximum of 300 Chinese a year into the US between 1904 and World War II. Those who arrived as part of this quota included Soong Mei-ling, who can be considered the first Chinese lobbyist in the US. Soong, who arrived in the US with her older sisters, learned to speak impeccable English, graduated from a prestigious women's college, and made contacts in the upper strata of American society. Later, she married Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, who was the leader of all of China from 1926 to 1949 and of Taiwan from 1949 to 1975. She would occasionally visit the US to drum up political and financial support for China. China's first lady impressed Western society and the Western press. More than a hundred of her speeches, press statements, and interviews were published in the US in 1937 and 1938.

In February 1943, Soong became the first woman to be permitted to deliver a speech before both houses of the US Congress, after which President Franklin D. Roosevelt approved billions of dollars in aid for China and generous loans to be provided for the country to buy military equipment and weapons.

It was largely due to Soong's lobbying that Taiwan represented China on the UN Security Council for more than 20 years.

DURING Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution, ethnic Chinese living abroad, especially those living in the US, were considered potential class enemies, and people in China who had relatives abroad came under suspicion, many of them falling victim to the Red Guards movement. Therefore, the Chinese diaspora in North America showed only insignificant growth, mainly on account of immigrants from Taiwan, and was hostile to the People's Republic of China.

Deng Xiaoping, who took the helm in China after Mao's death, was able to establish constructive relations with the world Chinese diaspora. Government bodies were set up to oversee contacts with the diaspora, and laws were passed to regulate relations with Chinese communities abroad.

Deng was sure that even those who preferred not to return would be a long-term asset for China. In effect, he used emigration as a form of soft power. He also, with good reason, saw the world Chinese diaspora as a potential source of investments.

Cooperation with the diaspora became a top national priority, and defending the interests of diaspora Chinese, not only in their countries of residence but also in China if they were doing business there, became an inalienable part of this cooperation and an inseparable element of China's official policy, and was enshrined in law.

IN RECENT YEARS, a lot more Chinese Americans have been receiving higher education. Rather than continuing to work in service industries, many members of the Chinese diaspora have started to pursue careers requiring advanced education and professional qualifications. From traditional Chinese occupations in laundries, eateries, and retail stores, Chinese Americans have moved to a wider range of jobs, including in the high-tech and banking sectors. Ethnic Chinese founded some large banks such as America California Bank and Amerasia Bank and acquired shares in other banks. According to some estimates, Chinese immigrants head a large proportion of Silicon Valley firms that employ tens of thousands of workers in the US.

Support from the Chinese government enhances the organizational resources of the US Chinese community. Chinese Americans establish various associations and foundations, publish a great deal of press, and launch television channels and radio stations that popularize Chinese culture, traditions, and achievements.

Winning supporters among powerful members of the US political elite by providing them and their circles with preferential opportunities to do business in China has become an effective tool for influencing American policy. American scholars and analysts who help develop policy for the US administration are also in China's sights. Beijing acquires supporters among them through its diaspora by using various indirect material incentives for sympathetic experts.

Beijing is angered by anything that it regards as a violation of the One China principle. It condemned Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, but it did not resort to extreme measures as some had expected. It limited itself to a show of force in the form of military exercises around Taiwan and to economic measures. But it hopes that the pro-Chinese lobby in the US is powerful enough to curb the anti-Chinese trends in US policy for now.

The education and professional standards of the Russian diaspora are no lower than those of the Chinese community.

At the same time, there are major differences between the two communities. Unlike other diasporas, including Chinese Americans, Russians have never formed territorial communities. They are scattered all over the country and have been assimilating into American society. Sabelnik complained that, unlike Chinese Americans, Russian Americans were rather apolitical and did not seek to represent their diaspora in local, state, or, least of all, federal government. The loyalty of many of them to Russia as a country is questionable. The current international situation and general Russophobia make them reluctant to be open about their Russian origin.

There are numerous disunited Russian communities in the US, and over the past two decades, they have not formed an organized diaspora that would be similar to the Chinese community and would give political support to Russia, seek to advance its interests in Washington, and work systematically to improve Russian-American relations. In other words, Russian Americans have not formed a pro-Russian lobby.

Moscow should seek to develop loyalty to Russia as a state among the majority of Russian Americans and use them as a vehicle of soft power.

Message From Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to International Affairs Readers on the 30th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations Between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan

DEAR COLLEAGUES, friends,

A section of this issue of International Affairs is devoted to an important anniversary – namely, the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan.

I am sure that we have something to show the Russian and Kazakh public. Over the past three decades, through our joint efforts we have not only preserved but also strengthened the centuries-old bonds of friendship and good-neighborliness that bind our peoples together, and on this foundation we have built a robust model of interstate interaction in all areas of bilateral cooperation, as well as at various multilateral platforms and institutions.

These days, relations between our two countries continue to develop steadily in the spirit of strategic partnership and alliance. Large-scale joint projects in areas vital to our economies, including in science

and education, are under way. The advantages of Russia's and Kazakhstan's transit potential are being put to effective use. Contacts between our countries' small and medium-sized businesses are expanding. Interaction along the world's longest land border is increasing.

The joint use of the Baikonur space center remains an excellent example of genuine strategic partnership. The city of Baikonur can rightly be considered a symbol of Russian-Kazakh friendship and privileged cooperation in high-tech sectors.

Cultural and humanitarian exchanges are developing rapidly. Russia Day is celebrated in Kazakhstan on a regular basis, as is Kazakhstan Day in Russia: This year, celebrations will take place in Moscow, Astrakhan, and Kazan.

I would particularly like to note our countries' productive cooperation across the Eurasian space. Systematic steps are being taken to enhance integration within the Eurasian Economic Union and strengthen regional security and stability, primarily via the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Many mutually beneficial initiatives are being implemented in the CIS, our common association.

In this context, it is difficult to overestimate the role of the trusting dialogue that exists between our leaders and heads of government, as well as the cochairs of the Intergovernmental Commission on Cooperation Between Russia and Kazakhstan.

Together with our Kazakh friends, we look to the future with optimism. No one can drive a wedge between us. The level of mutual trust that has been established enables us to frankly discuss any, even the most complicated issues and find mutually acceptable ways of resolving them. But we do not intend to rest on our laurels. We will keep working together to advance bilateral relations to new levels for the good of our fraternal peoples and in the name of strengthening regional security and stability.

Message of Greeting From Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan Mukhtar Tleuberdi to International Affairs Readers on the 30th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations Between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation

OCTOBER 2022 marks the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation.

Our interaction has been successfully developing since May 25, 1992, when the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance between Kazakhstan and Russia was signed. The document stated that strengthening strategic partnership between the two neighboring countries is in the fundamental national interests of both nations. For its part, the 2013 Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Alliance in the 21st Century defines prospects for expanding bilateral relations in the next several decades.

cad. We were able to establish trusting political dialogue and build solid ties in all areas of cooperation. Kazakh President Kasym-Zhomart Tokayev always stresses that Russia is the closest neighbor for the Kazakh people.

The delimitation of the Kazakh-Russian border based on the principles of equality and respect for national interests is a historic event. Our countries have the longest land border in the world – 7,500 kilometers. Its demarcation will be completed in the next several years.

Russia is our country's most important trade and investment partner. Bilateral trade turnover is more than \$24 billion. Russia's total direct investment over the past 16 years is \$17 billion. Kazakh investment in Russia has exceeded \$5 billion. There are more than 8,000 companies with Russian capital and 3,500 joint ventures in Kazakhstan.

Cultural and humanitarian relations, including in education, science, research, culture, health care, the preservation of historical legacy and values, the media, and other areas, are successfully developing. Our nations cherish the memory of Victory in the Great Patriotic War.

The large Kazakh diaspora in Russia and the Russian diaspora in Kazakhstan, which enjoy equal opportunities, rights, and freedoms, serve as a friendship bridge between the two countries. The preservation of traditions, languages, culture, and good relations enables us to pass on the historical memory of friendship between our peoples to future generations and further strengthen it. There is also active interaction between our young people. Kazakh citizens duly appreciate the quality of Russian education.

Kazakhstan and Russia interact effectively at the UN and its agencies. They have extensive experience in cooperation in the CIS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Eurasian Economic Union, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and the Conference for Cooperation and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, as well as other international and regional organizations.

It can be stated unequivocally that Kazakh-Russian relations have achieved the highest possible level of trust and are expanding every year with new processes and meaningful activities.

Respectfully,

Mukhtar Tleuberdi

Russian-Kazakh Relations: A Strong Alliance, Increasing Mutual Integration

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Keywords: Russia, Kazakhstan, 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations

OCTOBER 22, 2022, marks the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Russia and Kazakhstan. These three decades have been a time during which our two countries, relying on centuries-old good neighborliness, were able to build equal, mutually beneficial cooperation in a format that replaced relations between republics in the former Soviet Union. After overcoming the initial shock caused by the breakup of the USSR, when the deeply rooted architecture of ties, primarily economic, among its republics was destroyed, Russia and Kazakhstan signed agreements forming a comprehensive and sound basis for today's diverse relations and alliance between the two countries and their increasing mutual integration. The 7,500-kilometer border between Russia and Kazakhstan, the world's longest continuous land frontier between countries, has been fully delineated. Certainly not everywhere on the territory of the former Soviet Union has it been possible to make such impressive achievements.

It is an anniversary tradition to review what has been accomplished. But that does not seem to be a proper angle from which to view Russian-Kazakh friendship. These three decades of diplomatic relations have undoubtedly been an important time, but they were preceded by a glorious and eventful period in our relationship and will doubtlessly be followed by equally positive, fruitful years of cooperation. Russia

and Kazakhstan have everything they need to further diversify and step up their cooperation in the closely integrated Eurasian space with unreserved respect for each other's territorial integrity, sovereignty, and interests.

Today, Russia and Kazakhstan are undoubtedly equal allies and are involved in a process of mutual integration. The best recent manifestations of this have been joint measures against the COVID-19 pandemic and afterward the selfless determination of our country to spearhead its CSTO allies in defending the constitutional system, law, and order in Kazakhstan during a rebellion in January 2022.

The two countries are determined to jointly address external threats to their security and stability, including persistent Western attempts to destabilize Central Asia via "color revolution" methods and sow enmity between Russia and Kazakhstan by fanning nationalism and Russophobia in Kazakhstan. The leaders of our two countries are fully aware that all these attempts are destructive geopolitical games, and they have zero tolerance for them.

This can be clearly seen, for instance, in Kazakhstan's position on the current tense geopolitical situation. Although it does not recognize the Donetsk People's Republic, the Lugansk People's Republic, Abkhazia, or South Ossetia, Kazakhstan takes a largely neutral-friendly stance.

oints made by Putin in his televised address on September 21, 2022. Economic ties are a key area of Russian-Kazakh relations. They have reached a whole new level, partly via the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union, a body that, as said above, was the brainchild of Kazakhstan. The EAEU quickly became a dynamically developing organization whose member countries work jointly to advance their own and regional interests.

Russia sees Kazakhstan's economy as a key investment destination. Russian capital in Kazakhstan amounts to \$19.3 billion, which makes Russia a leading source country of accumulated foreign investments in the Central Asian country, according to official statistics based on geographical principles. A more profound analysis that includes data about the country where an investor company is registered shows Russia to be the main foreign investor in Kazakhstan, having pumped at least \$45 billion into Kazakhstan's economy. About 10,000 Russian companies and some 3,500 Russian-Kazakh ventures do business in Kazakhstan, operating in practically all sectors of the Kazakh economy.

peration of the pipeline. Environmental protection is another area of constructive cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan. It was practically the only topic of the 2021 summit of the annual and Russian-Kazakh Forum on Interregional Cooperation. It is in the interest of Russia to seek more extensive collaboration with Kazakhstan through involvement in regional initiatives such as projects to save the Aral Sea, rationalize the consumption of water from the Ural and Irtysh Rivers, achieve greater climatic stability, and restore biological diversity.

Russia and Kazakhstan have also been joining forces on civilian nuclear energy projects. There are five Russian-Kazakh ventures operating in Kazakhstan's uranium industry.

On a related note, it is worth dwelling on achievements in RussianKazakh cooperation in research and education. Many years of negotiations resulted in the signing, in this year of the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations, of an intergovernmental agreement to set up branches in Kazakhstan of Russian higher education institutions and branches of Kazakh higher schools in Russia. Its implementation will allow young people from our countries to take advantage of educational programs offered by the higher school of the neighboring state without having to temporarily leave their homeland.

Culture and language are, in fact, important means of cementing Russian-Kazakh unity. They form the basis for mutual understanding and are tools for mutual cultural and intellectual enrichment. Energetic efforts are made to preserve and boost their role in Russian-Kazakh friendship. The two countries are

intensively preparing for the Russian Language Year in the CIS in 2023, a project initiated by Russia to celebrate Russian as the Commonwealth's lingua franca.

Numerous ethnic Russian organizations in Kazakhstan work hard to preserve the cultural identity of the country's ethnic Russian community and play an important role in combating attempts to drive a wedge between Russia and Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan has scaled back its military cooperation with the US in awareness of the regional security hazards stemming from it. Kazakhstan has decided to pull out of Exercise Steppe Eagle, an annual military exercise with the participation of the US and other NATO countries. Due to the Americans' hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan has shut its airspace to US military aircraft and has refused to host elements of US military and intelligence infrastructure on its territory and to accept Afghan refugees, because they might include terrorists and other undesirable elements.

Russia and Kazakhstan also cooperate on Caspian affairs. They stand for closer cooperation among the five Caspian littoral states and oppose extra-regional interference in Caspian issues.

Naturally, Russian-Kazakh relations are not entirely smooth and harmonious. As mentioned above, there are points on which we disagree, but they are not strategic or fundamental issues. Russia and Kazakhstan are working together to resolve them or minimize their impact on bilateral relations and integration. We will be able to solve all problems by ourselves and, most importantly, through joint efforts.

What our relations are like in the future will depend on the will of our nations. A fruitful future relationship must rest on objective factors – historical, geographical, economic, cultural, linguistic – and on the determination of the Russian and Kazakh leaders to work for comprehensive, mutually beneficial, and close ties between their countries.

Kazakhstan and Russia: 30 Years of Strategic Partnership and Alliance

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Keywords: Kazakhstan and Russia, 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations

IN 2022, we are celebrating the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Russia and Kazakhstan, which undoubtedly opens a new page in the history of our bilateral relations. Over these years, we have managed to reach a level of strategic partnership and alliance based on a solid foundation of friendship between peoples, mutual trust, and respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Given our long border, geographical proximity, and common past, the interests of the two countries intertwine in an exceptional way that is virtually unparalleled in the entire post-Soviet space.

During the political turbulence of the 1990s, our states realized early on that breaking trade, economic, and historical cultural ties would be a dead end, and they developed their own algorithm for maintaining bridges between our peoples. This approach made it possible to create the solid platform on which our entire cooperation rests today

Over the past 30 years, our countries have consistently implemented reforms, had stable priorities, worked to build harmonious and mutually beneficial relations, and reached compromises on various

issues. There are quite a few large-scale decisions and major achievements of significance to the future of Kazakh and Russians that can be credited to both countries.

In the past period, Kazakhstan and Russia have signed hundreds of treaties and agreements in different areas. One of the most significant is the Treaty of Good Neighborliness and Alliance in the 21st Century. The treaty framework is supported by positive practice. Bilateral relations are distinguished by stability, predictability, and observance of the principles of mutual respect, good neighborliness, and alliance, which are facilitated by political trust and traditionally friendly relations between the leaders of the two countries.

There are many factors working to enhance the effectiveness of our two-way dialogue, including personal relations between the leaders of our states.

In 2021, despite the pandemic, mutual trade between our countries reached an all-time high of \$24.2 billion, up 29.1% from 2020. In 2022, bilateral trade has continued to grow. In the first six months, the increase was 5%, and we expect this positive trend to continue and strengthen throughout the year. At the current rate of increase, there is a good chance of reaching a figure of \$30 billion in the next few years.

Despite the complicated geopolitical situation, I believe that by combining the competitive advantages of our countries – namely, our natural wealth and advantageous geographical location – we can make an innovation breakthrough, overcome the raw material orientation of our economies, and turn the territories of Kazakhstan and Russia into a zone of sustainable economic growth. And we can achieve this by helping each other, especially since there is an opportunity to create flexible response mechanisms and develop measures to ensure sustainable development in different periods depending on internal and external market conditions so that our national economies would advance with minimal risks and losses.

At present, the Program of Cooperation in the Field of Culture for 2020-2022 between the relevant ministries of our countries is being effectively implemented. The document provides for deeper cooperation in the field of art, the promotion of contacts between cultural institutions, and the participation by Kazakh and Russian performers and musical groups in international music festivals, competitions, etc.

Let me note another important indicator of the high level of humanitarian ties. Despite the global trend to tighten migration rules during the pandemic, Kazakhstan and Russia have left in place the simplified procedure for the movement of our citizens. This is not only an act of universal human significance, but also evidence of deep mutual trust.

THE CURRENT RELATIONSHIP between Kazakhstan and Russia did not start from scratch. We are united by a common centuries-old history, a long border, a similar mentality, and close economic and spiritual bonds. Friendship between Kazakhstan and Russia means not only good relations between the leaders of the two countries, but also thousands of ties and mutual sympathy between our peoples and their desire to live in peace as good neighbors.

Russia and Kazakhstan: From Common Memory to Joint Achievements

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Keywords: Russia, Kazakhstan, 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations, memorial dates in our shared history

THE 30 YEARS since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Russia and Kazakhstan marks a significant period in the centuries-old, sometimes troubled history of the geographically close Russian and Kazakh peoples, who are united by a common destiny.

The joint successes achieved by our countries during the past three decades crown a prolonged period during which Russians and Kazakhs at times lived like good neighbors, at times were sucked into the whirlpool of wild incursions deep into each other's territories, and at times lived peacefully within a single state, sharing a common destiny. A retrospective look at the most recent period of our history indisputably shows that the synergy of the cultural and historical types of the two peoples has unequivocally proved to be for the benefit of their present and, I am sure, future generations.

Regrettably, in recent years, a number of people have chosen to ignore the glorious and truly momentous events of Russian-Kazakh history in an effort to reap dividends from publicizing its sensitive, controversial moments. To condone this is to trample on the memory of those who through hard work and even at the cost of their lives made an invaluable contribution to fostering Russian-Kazakh relations.

During the years of the Great Patriotic War, our grandfathers and great grandfathers became brothers in arms with the numerous peoples of the USSR, fighting for and gaining freedom not only for themselves and their descendants but also for many other nations.

The bonds linking our peoples continued to strengthen in the postwar period – this time on a constructive basis.

Local science received a strong impetus. Soviet scientists from various ethnic groups developed and introduced advanced medical, agricultural, and industrial technologies. All of this laid the scientific and technical foundation for our good neighbor's current development.

Russian-Kazakh relations acquired a qualitatively new dimension on December 21, 1991. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was established on that day, laying the foundation for multidimensional integration processes.

In the face of new challenges and threats, from terrorism to transnational crime, our countries consolidated their trust-based partnership.

Our common interests are not confined just to economic and security interests. Our close cultural and humanitarian ties and people-to-people contacts are an asset that we must cherish "in any weather." People in Russia and Kazakhstan continue to admire the creative talents of our wonderful writers, poets, musicians, and performers. This year marks several birthday anniversaries of prominent cultural figures of the Kazakh SSR, including the centennial of the birth of singer, People's Artist of the USSR, and People's Artist of Kazakhstan Roza Baglanova, and the 125th birthday of Kazakh Soviet literary classic Mukhtar Auezov.

I know firsthand that young people in Russia and Kazakhstan today enthusiastically continue to practice and perform Viktor Tsoi's song *Zvezda po imeni Solntse* [A Star Named the Sun], which he wrote in Almaty. Incidentally, his father was a native of Kzyl-Orda. Many of us fondly treasure the epic novels *The Path of Abai* by Mukhtar Auezov and *Quiet Flows the Don* by Mikhail Sholokhov (Kazakhstan forever remained the second motherland for the winner of the 1965 Nobel Prize in Literature).

Myriad ties unite us even though we live in different countries. This is our unique advantage. The synergy of all the best that history has given us and that the present continues to give us is a precious asset that is working toward the success of the Russian and Kazakh people in a world that has entered a turbulent phase of geopolitical “reconfiguration.”

Russian-Kazakh Interregional Cooperation

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Keywords: Russia, Kazakhstan, 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations

INTERREGIONAL and cross-border ties between Russia and Kazakhstan are an important component of bilateral relations and objectively help expand their multilateral cooperation. Currently, 76 of Russia’s 85 federal subjects are successfully developing ties with Kazakh partners. Contacts between twin cities are actively maintained. Considering that Russia and Kazakhstan have the longest land border in the world, this area has acquired strategic importance, which is in the long-term national interests of the two countries.

Economic cooperation has become a central factor of interaction, with special emphasis placed on the industrial cooperation of enterprises in border territories and other regions of Russia and Kazakhstan. This is considered an urgent task of the economic integration of the two countries, as well as a significant factor in increasing the competitiveness of national businesses in global markets. The development of this type of cooperation is significantly influenced not only by the interests of its participants, but also by the qualitative changes that have occurred since the formation of the Eurasian Economic Union.

At the present stage, we can talk about the key role that public authorities of various levels play in this cooperation. First of all, these are the governments of Russia and Kazakhstan, which sign agreements on the development of interregional and cross-border cooperation.

At the regional and local levels, where specific projects are being implemented, interaction among cooperation participants takes place on the basis of a wide range of various types of legal instruments: agreements, memoranda, and protocols between regional administrations; agreements between local governments; and agreements and contracts between enterprises, organizations, and institutions of the regions.

A special role is played by the annual Russia-Kazakhstan interregional cooperation forums, attended by the heads of state as well as representatives of all cooperation entities. The forums perform a number of important functions: They serve as a discussion platform on various issues of interregional and cross-border cooperation; ensure the adoption of intergovernmental policy documents that define the strategy and tactics of cooperation; serve as a venue for the presentation of promising projects; and provide an opportunity to conclude agreements between the regions of the two countries and contracts between economic agents.

Cooperation between regions of Russia and Kazakhstan cover various aspects; its priorities are determined by the urgency of the problems its participants are particularly interested in solving.

Currently, these include the economy, social and humanitarian issues, the fight against illegal immigration and international crime, and cooperation on emergency preparedness and disaster relief.

preparedness and disaster relief. In the economic field, the emphasis is on developing trade, industrial cooperation, and mutual investments. In 2021, the leading regions in terms of cooperation with Kazakh partners were Moscow (trade turnover of \$5.3billion), St.Petersburg (\$1.5billion), Moscow Province (\$609million), Tatarstan (\$423 million), and Bashkortostan (\$365 million).

Social and humanitarian cooperation is actively developing in several important areas: health, education, culture, and science. The population of Russian and Kazakh regions receive medical care on the basis of the intergovernmental agreement “On Mutual Provision of Equal Rights to Citizens of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Russian Federation in Emergency and Urgent Medical Care Delivery,” signed on November 24, 1998. Under the agreement, local authorities organize the process of providing primary health care, including on international routes that connect adjacent territories of the two countries.

Cooperation between regions of Russia and Kazakhstan on education is most actively carried out between higher education institutions.

We note our regions’ proactive disposition toward expanding contacts with the Kazakh side. In the current difficult international situation, aggravated by anti-Russian sanctions, it is important to expand diverse ties between the two countries. This trend is vital to the interests of strengthening interstate relations and integration partnership throughout the Eurasian space. Through the Department for Liaisons with Federation Subjects, the Parliament, and Public Associations, we constantly direct the representative offices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in the federal subjects to actively assist regional authorities in expanding cooperation with the akimats of Kazakhstan.

The International Mosaic Must Not Be Made Up of 50 Shades of Gray Imposed by the West, but Be a Truly Multifaceted and Many-Hued Picture

Sergey Ryabkov, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation

Keywords: international mosaic, world politics, confrontation, multipolarity, West, Ukraine, special military operation, Crimea, New START, AUKUS, BRICS

I will point out right away that the events of the last six months have radically changed the ideas of many people on what is happening in international relations and what the possible consequences might be. Russia has demonstrated in practice that it confidently protects its interests, its citizens, and the Russian-speaking population. After everything that took place in the Donbass region for eight years, there was simply no way out other than starting a special military operation. Its goals will certainly be achieved, and the objectives set for it will be met. As for the idea or the assumption that we are moving toward a divided world, toward an international community split into two camps, I think that this is not entirely true. The bipolar stage (not to be confused with bipolar disorder) of international relations has passed, and now, as our leaders, thinkers, and analysts have repeatedly said, the world is undoubtedly on the way to becoming multipolar and polycentric. There have been certain reflections in the West on what could replace this confrontation between the two systems that existed for several decades following the Second World War. Some analysts have come forward with radical ideas that the concept

of poles or centers of power has become obsolete as such. I do not agree with that conclusion. I think that there will still be centers of gravity, energy centers, both in the sense of projecting their interests and their approaches outward and as having energy in the literal sense of the word – centers that produce energy in the areas that our civilization requires. Russia has already become and will remain such a center, and its role will be strengthened.

The international mosaic must not be made up of 50 shades of gray imposed by the West, but be a truly multifaceted and many-hued picture where each country, each nation, true to its historical path but also with an eye to the future, looks for partners and finds mutually beneficial and enriching forms of collaborative work. Of course, this is easier said than done. If it all came to pass, then this beautiful ideal world would probably already be right around the corner.

I think that the realization that the US administration is playing a dangerous game with Russia and using Ukraine for this purpose is undeniably growing. The concern about the fact that Russia has not broken under all the pressure (which continues to rise) and that Moscow is determined to achieve its goals and not buckle despite its opponents' efforts is palpable as well. Neither factor should be underestimated.

We will continue our work to ensure that our colleagues in Washington have a clear, substantive, and concrete idea of what risks they are creating and what is generally at stake.

Attempts at provocations against us and attempts to make us lose our balance will continue. We cannot succumb to this; we need to maintain restraint, as it happens, and keep our options open in any given situation. The more options for a response we have, the stronger we are internally. We are confident that we are moving in the right direction and will eventually achieve our goals.

When Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed legally binding agreements – treaties with the US and NATO on guarantees of Russia's security – our position also included a warning that the lack of readiness on the part of the West to meet our key requirements would mean crossing a certain "red line." I think there are few people in the world today who would dispute the fact that when this "red line" was crossed, it led to the consequences that we had also warned about – we had signaled that our response would be a military-technical one. But few in the West believed those warnings, counting on Russia backing down and showing weakness. That did not happen.

I wouldn't exaggerate the importance of the upcoming midterm congressional elections for adjusting Washington's official policy toward Russia and with respect to the events unfolding now in Ukraine. The US elites have reached a stable anti-Russian consensus. Everyone who sets the tone there, especially in the public space, exhibits a negative attitude toward Russia that reaches paroxysms of hatred. Many politicians have based their careers on rejecting modern Russia and started doing so long before the start of the special military operation and long before the events of 2014 in Crimea. Those trends increased as Russia freed itself from the legacy of the early post-Soviet period and became an increasingly significant independent player in the international arena. We have seen more and more gates closed in front of us, more and more obstacles and difficulties created to hinder us, and provocations, including major ones, staged at various points in time. Now the situation is different, but these changes, by and large, failed to influence the American mainstream mindset.

For many years now, we have been facing not just isolated attempts but a tendency to conform international organizations to Western requirements, in particular the UN, where the US, Great Britain, and their confederates have in fact privatized key parts of the apparatus and the Secretariat. They move through the Secretariat the policies they need, often contrary to the requirements of the UN Charter, which, after all, includes Article 100 that talks about the impartiality of international officials and equidistance. But all that has been sidelined. Everything is being sacrificed to completely different interests, with ideological justifications provided for such a course. Such developments may not end well, including for the aforementioned organizations.

We had warned, long before the events that began on February 24, 2022, that the US was blurring the line beyond which they permit themselves to use nuclear weapons. We have provided specific examples. It did not start yesterday; it started under previous administrations. We are witnessing not just declarative attempts to create even greater uncertainty regarding when and in what situation the US can resort to nuclear weapons, but a corresponding tweaking of the country's nuclear arsenal, which, in particular, is starting to employ variable yield warheads.

If and when the US matures enough to continue the dialogue on strategic stability, we will continue to insist that we work out a new security equation during relevant discussions that would take into account all influential factors. The Americans are well aware, in detail, of our position on this matter.

We made every effort to facilitate a visit to the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant by a group of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) experts headed by the agency's director general, Rafael Grossi. This visit could have taken place much earlier. Back in early June, we worked out all the details and nuances in contact with the IAEA Secretariat. However, it turned out that for political reasons – I emphasize that we have no doubts that these reasons were political – the UN Secretariat and, specifically, the department responsible for the security of the UN Secretariat, demanded changes to the agreements that had already been reached, and another three months passed before the trip took place.

I would not say that BRICS expansion is directly on the agenda at this time. We, of course, have welcomed the great and genuine interest on the part of a number of influential international players (including the think tanks that drew attention to this) and, of course, several countries on the issue of BRICS expansion. Let me remind you that BRICS does not really have an enlargement procedure. South Africa was once admitted to BRICS by a decision made by the leaders of the member states. At that time, it was actually the only applicant, and no one had any questions regarding the motives or reasons that prompted it to reach out to the BRICS "founding fathers." Now the situation is quite different.

While I am not an expert in this field, I would nevertheless dare to suggest that the role of the dollar as a universal means of payment and the world's reserve currency will inevitably further diminish. Due to objective economic needs, alternative means of payment will emerge. Forms of work will be found that, in order to avoid the worst-case scenario, will completely bypass the American financial system – meaning that no transactions will go through American-controlled correspondent accounts.

Total war really has been declared against us; it is being waged in hybrid forms in all areas, and the extent of our opponents' animosity is enormous. However, I would like to say that throughout its history, Russia has always proved that it valiantly overcomes its most difficult trials and emerges strengthened and able to defend its interests and the interests of its people even more effectively, reliably, and confidently. It will happen again this time.

To Solve Problems in Rio de Janeiro, We Must First Solve the Problems in Moscow

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Keywords: Russian economy, sanctions war, investment, strong ruble, Ukraine, CIS countries, Africa, Latin America

We are still implementing the policy pursued by Yegor Gaidar and Anatoly Chubais in 1992, and like it or not, this economic model has run out of steam. We need a different model, a planned economy, because when you produce something more complex than bows and arrows, you have to plan your activities. This can be called strategic planning, programming, or forecasting – all of these are essentially the same. Normal strategic planning, which is found in all developed countries of the world, including Israel, is absolutely necessary for the survival not only of the Russian Federation, but also of Russian culture and Russian civilization.

When we purchase the currency of some countries, we provide them with additional income known as seigniorage. They get the possibility to issue their own currency and use it to buy something they need, and then this money is stored in Russia, so that they can continue issuing it in the future. In other words, we are doing a great service even to our friends, but we are certainly not getting anything in return.

In principle, one might consider expansion. For example, we could buy some strategically important island. But so far Russia has been unable to establish a military base even in Djibouti, while the Chinese have managed to do so. This is because when you refuse to develop your own country, others will treat you accordingly.

A strong ruble is good for the Russian economy, provided we protect our production by customs tariffs. In other words, we should develop our production and increase the added value that we produce. To do this, we must have an opportunity, considering that our technologies have been degraded, destroyed, or undermined, to acquire foreign technologies in order to implement and develop them further. Let me also repeat that we must protect our production from foreign competition, and this means sufficiently high import tariffs.

The country earns a lot of foreign currency. But investing in Russia is an extremely risky business, which is why companies either do not repatriate their foreign exchange earnings (considering that opportunities for this have been created) or take them out of the country.

We have a rule that loans must be secured by collateral. In our practice, this looks as follows. Banks provide credit not to develop an enterprise and earn interest; they have long realized that it is much more profitable to lend in order to ruin an enterprise and seize the collateral. In other words, credit is often a tool used to destroy businesses. You take out a loan and must pay back more than the principal amount. The bank then looks at the options: If all goes well, the bank will get, say, 200 rubles in repayments, but if the borrower goes bankrupt, it will get 300 rubles. Thus, bankruptcy is the better option [for banks]. So, the bank takes a step in the lending process that is designed to ruin your firm.

The Higher School of Economics, headed by Yevgeny Yasin, invited Alexey Navalny to the discussion specifically to see how he would act in this context, because, for a while, he had acted as a patriot, and the liberals wanted to take a closer look at him to see whether he could be accepted into the fold and whether he would agree to abandon his anticorruption principles in order to join the liberal clan. The discussion was long, but everyone was happy with its outcome. Mr. Navalny was admitted into the liberal clan as a result of that discussion. He focused exclusively on details but did not say anything about the key conceptual elements.

Developed countries pump credit into underdeveloped ones, irrespective of Ukraine, solely to cause upheaval. When credit is poured into an underdeveloped country, this money, as a rule, does not even enter the territory of that country, as was the case in Russia in the 1990s. Most of this money goes to enrich Western corporations and bribe local politicians, while the rest of the country gets only crumbs. I remember that when Anatoly Chubais reported to the World Bank on the results of the 1996 presidential election in Russia, he said that a quarter of a billion dollars allocated at the time had gone to the coal industry. Actually, this money vanished into thin air. The money being allocated to Ukraine only compounds its problems instead of solving them.

It should be made very clear that access to Russia's domestic market is a privilege to be earned. The CIS countries simply have the maximum opportunity to earn this privilege. The only exception is Belarus, where oligarchic mafia structures have not yet emerged, thanks to [Belarusian President Alexander] Lukashenko. But they may emerge following his departure.

Our successes in Africa are associated with the withdrawal of France, which was simply unable to maintain order in the region. We have great potential for development, because Africans are generally hostile toward the West, which has plundered them mercilessly. Africans view China with great concern, as China is building infrastructure for its own enterprises. The Chinese themselves work at these enterprises and bring new Chinese firms to Africa. Some time ago, after the destruction of Libya, Qatar was gaining the upper hand over China in the competition for Africa, but it lacked the strength to do so. They are waiting for us in Africa.

The system that has taken shape in the world is a bipolar one, although the second pole is not only China, but also Russia. This is why China's appeal at the propaganda level will certainly be heard, while at the conceptual level, it was heard long ago. It is another matter that China will also face immense problems in the coming global cataclysm. China's future will be decided at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of China. If Xi Jinping retains and tightens his grip on power, everything will be all right. We will have an anchor for stability and another 10 years of more or less normal, relatively stable development. If Xi Jinping is replaced or his powers are reduced through institutional maneuvers, this will mean that China has returned to the "bad infinity" of its cyclical development, when it achieves what the Chinese call "moderate prosperity" and then disintegrates.

Traditionally Friendly Russia-Cyprus Relations Have Always Caused Great Concern in Washington and Brussels

Stanislav Osadchy, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Cyprus*

Keywords: Russia, Cyprus, EU, SMO (special military operation), cooperation, tourism, Russian diaspora

Relations between Russia and Cyprus have always been built on equal and mutually beneficial cooperation that until recently had ensured their steady development. Unfortunately, after the start of [Russia's] special military operation [in Ukraine], the Republic of Cyprus did not find the strength to resist the EU's unconstructive anti-Russian sanctions, which are negatively affecting the socioeconomic situation of the island. In fact, the successes achieved in recent years in strengthening the mutual legal framework and boosting business, financial, tourist, and humanitarian exchanges have been largely undermined.

Nevertheless, it is premature to talk about a complete freeze of relations between Russia and Cyprus. We continue, albeit to a much lesser extent, to maintain dialogue and to interact in a number of areas.

Provocative fake stories in the media about Russia altering its principled stance on Cyprus settlement and various speculation on this score absolutely do not reflect reality and are an attempt not just to introduce artificial tensions into relations between Moscow and Nicosia but to discredit our country and its foreign policy. In light of the spread of such rumors, Maria Zakharova, the official spokeswoman of the Russian Foreign Ministry, has already dotted all the i's on this issue at a recent briefing.

Our approaches to the Cyprus situation are well known and remain unchanged in all aspects, including the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), which plays an important stabilizing role in the unresolved Cyprus problem. Moscow stands for the abolition of the outdated system of guarantees and for the demilitarization of the island.

By following the Russophobic aspirations of the EU and closing the sky to Russian planes, Cyprus lost one of the most promising foreign tourist markets. Given that the tourism sector accounts for over 15% of the island's GDP, this decision is nothing but a shot in the foot. In 2021, every fourth foreign tourist in Cyprus was from Russia.

Despite the global trend toward deoffshorization and a similar campaign in Russia, Cyprus continued to remain a top destination for Russian businesses for setting up holding companies. There were numerous incentives and reasons for this, such as access to the EU market, a favorable tax regime, etc.

However, since 2018, it has become increasingly difficult for Russian businesses to work on the island.

The anti-Russian sanctions that followed the launch of the special military operation in Ukraine only increased the pressure on our business community.

Traditionally friendly Russia-Cyprus relations have been developing steadily and as a mutually beneficial partnership. This has always caused great concern to our colleagues in Washington and Brussels, and, apparently, was the reason for the notorious Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Partnership Act. The menacing word "Russia" is repeated 25 times throughout the document. In fact, it declared any Russian actions in the Mediterranean to be "malicious" and sought to restrict political, economic, energy, and military ties between our country and the region's nations.

As for the destructive actions of NATO, the US, and the Anglo-Saxons in general, the inhabitants of the island, like no one else, are aware of the treachery of the North Atlantic Alliance, which basically sanctioned the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. In addition, as the closest European neighbors of the Middle East and Central Asia, Cypriots are well aware, based on the examples of Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Afghanistan, of the ability of these "beacons of democracy" to provoke armed conflicts and unleash bloody wars, leaving behind devastation and chaos. Therefore, soberly assessing the causes of the current tragic events in Ukraine, many Cypriots understand that Washington and the NATO bloc that is completely subservient to it, having all the necessary influence over Kiev, have not only not prevented the conflict over the past eight years, but have contributed to it in every possible way and continue to do so by sponsoring [Ukrainian President Vladimir] Zelensky's Nazi regime and pumping it with weapons. And this truth makes its way onto the pages of the local press from time to time.

The Republic of Cyprus remains one of the few countries in Europe where large-scale events are still held on dates commemorating our history and culture. The Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriots is the main driving force of all pro-Russian actions.

Of course, as in other European countries, the Russian diaspora and the staff of our diplomatic mission and the Russian Center for Science and Culture have faced instances of aggressive behavior and anti-Russian bacchanalia since the first days of the Ukrainian crisis. The situation in Cyprus is special in that the source of these provocations was not so much the official authorities of the island as the numerous Ukrainian diaspora, actively supported and sponsored by Western embassies, as well as some Russian citizens. Since the first days of the beginning of the Russian SMO [special military operation], an unprecedented campaign of harassment and intimidation of Russians, up to the threat of physical violence, was unleashed on social networks. A number of Cyprus public schools have introduced the practice of "political information" condemning the Russian "invasion" of Ukraine.

Thanks to the prompt actions of the embassy and the representative office of Rossotrudnichestvo to our official letters addressed to the president and the leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the

Ministry of Education of Cyprus, the worst issues were addressed, anti-Russian propaganda was removed from schools, and the police opened a number of criminal cases regarding threats and leaks of personal data in cyberspace. But the situation remains tense.

At the same time, the Cypriot authorities must be given credit for not tolerating rampant Russophobia in Cyprus and not seeking to “cancel” everything Russian following the example of what we are seeing in many countries of continental Europe. Most Cypriots are still sympathetic toward our country.

I will soon be finishing my time in Cyprus, having worked in this country for a total of 15 years. I was pleased to come to Cyprus a second time and spend nine years here. These years have been busy, but they have flown by quickly. The Russian ambassador, as I have already said, has always enjoyed the kind attitude, respect, and attention of the Cypriots.

The current difficulties have arisen, of course, under outside pressure. I hope they will be temporary. We must continue to develop relations between our countries, but this is a task for the next generation of diplomats who will work in Cyprus.

Andrey Ivanovich Denisov Turns 70

DEAR Andrey Ivanovich,

Please accept our heartfelt congratulations on your birthday.

Your life can rightfully be considered a shining example of service to the people and the Motherland.

Your talent, expertise and professionalism have enabled you to climb the career ladder, reaching the highest possible positions and emerging as an unquestioned authority on Russian foreign policy. As Russian first deputy foreign minister, our state representative to the UN, and ambassador to Egypt and China, you protected the most important flanks, fostering international relations at multilateral and bilateral levels, and attracting partners and allies to our side.

Dear Andrey Ivanovich, we are grateful to you for your years-long friendship with our journal. We will always remember the helping hand that was extended to us during the “time of troubles.” We are looking forward to your new articles for our journal, which are always welcome.

We wish you good health and many bright and cheerful days. And of course, we wish you success and new achievements as a senator.

Editorial Board, *International Affairs*

The Soviet Union and Afghanistan: Hot-Button Issues in Bilateral Relations (1941-1945)

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Keywords: the USSR, Afghanistan, White émigrés, trade relations, the border issue, Soviet-Afghan cooperation

SOVIET Ambassador in Kabul Konstantin Mikhailov learned about the perfidious attack of fascist Germany on the USSR of June 22, 1941, and the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War while on an official trip to the northern provinces of Afghanistan. He returned to the Afghan capital the same day.

Early in the morning of June 23, 1941, the head of the Soviet diplomatic mission in Kabul was received by Ali Mohammad Khan, the foreign minister of Afghanistan. It was a very personal meeting, without interpreters. Mikhailov informed the minister about the events on the Soviet-German front and about the radio speech of Soviet People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav Molotov. The foreign minister of Afghanistan made a general statement about the peaceful nature of Soviet foreign policy and assessed Germany's attack as provocative and aggressive. The private nature of this confidential meeting allowed the Soviet ambassador to conclude that the ruling Nadir dynasty would not be quick to announce their country's neutrality in the military confrontation between the Soviet Union and fascist Germany.

On June 30, 1941, Ambassador Mikhailov again visited Ali Mohammad Khan at his request. The minister informed the Soviet ambassador that Afghanistan intended to declare neutrality and that he saw no reason to change his country's friendly policy toward the Soviet Union.

King of Afghanistan Mohammed Zahir Shah used Afghanistan's Independence Day, marked every year on August 27, as a convenient occasion for the statement. Even though it seemed somewhat delayed in view of the time gap between June 22 and August 27, the local press did its best to persuade readers that the statement had been deliberately timed to coincide with the Independence Day holiday, a memorial date in the history of the people of Afghanistan. It seems, however, that the king decided to declare his country's neutrality in the wake of events in Iran, when on August 25, 1941, the Soviet Union and Great Britain moved their troops into Iranian territory. The Afghan elite were very much concerned about a possible repetition of those developments on its own territory.

When talking to Ali Mohammad Khan, Mikhailov commented that the Soviet government had deemed it necessary to inform the Afghan leaders to prevent all sorts of distorted interpretations of what the Soviet government had done in Iran and eliminate any possibility of this information being used for purposes hostile to the friendly relations between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan.

Local politicians took a negative, and, in fact, hostile position toward the Soviet Union on the Iranian issue and were quite open about it.

On the instruction of Afghan Prime Minister Mohammad Hashim Khan, local intelligence increased surveillance of Soviet diplomats. On April 21, 1942, head of the Soviet mission Mikhailov visited Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Ali Mohammad Khan and commented on the increased and unacceptable surveillance by Afghan intelligence of employees of the Soviet Embassy.

The close attention of Afghan intelligence to the Soviet Embassy in Kabul was apparently not accidental. It seems that Ambassador Mikhailov did not know everything about Soviet intelligence activities in Afghanistan, primarily its failed operations.

At the final stage of the Great Patriotic War, the Afghan issue, as part of Soviet foreign policy, was transferred to the head of the NKID Middle East Sector, Sergey Kavtaradze (soon promoted to Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs), and Ambassador Konstantin Mikhailov, who had arrived in Moscow for consultations.

According to Soviet Ambassador Mikhailov, cardinal changes in relations between the two countries could be achieved only if the two main issues of bilateral relations were settled: territorial

disagreements in the border area and revived trade between the two countries. The ambassador insisted that the border issue be settled taking into account the entire complex of Soviet-Afghan relations that had taken shape during the war.

The NKVT agreed to start negotiations with Afghanistan on reviving trade. Representatives of Vostokintorg were instructed to discuss with the heads of the National Bank of Afghanistan the planned export/import operations. They were also to start preliminary discussions on long-term trade and economic cooperation. However, discussion of prospective projects was pushed aside.

The “imagined threat” from the north was expected to consolidate cooperation between Afghanistan and the US when diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in 1942. Another attempt by the Kabul regime to establish and develop partnership relations with a state that had no common border with Afghanistan failed. The Americans had no intention to compensate for the profit the Afghans had lost by refusing to trade with the Soviet Union; they also did not plan to ensure the prosperity of the ruling elite of Afghanistan.

The Afghan government had no choice but entrust Foreign Minister Ali Muhammad with the task of enhancing political dialogue with Moscow. There was no need to look for a plausible pretext. Contacts between the new Soviet Ambassador in Kabul Bakulin and the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan were developing quite well.

The border clashes continued, which forced Ambassador Bakulin to reach two conclusions, of which he informed Moscow. On the one hand, the Soviet diplomat was convinced that irrespective of a final decision, Moscow should give the Afghans a couple of firm lessons to discourage them from violating the Soviet border; on the other hand, he recommended the Center to inform the Afghans in writing that after the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet side would be prepared to draw the border along the thalweg on the Amu-Darya and Panj Rivers.

The NKID leaders did not respond to the proposal to organize consulates in Afghanistan on the ethnic-territorial principle. Very much as before, the Soviet diplomatic service in Afghanistan concentrated on the border demarcation issue.

In fall 1948, Soviet specialists completed the demarcation and redemarcation of the full length of the Soviet-Afghan state border. Two protocols that described the river and land borders were signed in Tashkent. The border issue was finally settled.

The postwar situation in the world created new rules in mutual relations between Afghanistan and its neighbors. The peaceful coexistence policy of states with different social and political systems laid the foundations for Soviet-Afghan cooperation for many years to come, while the political heritage of emir Abdur Rahman Khan was buried in archives.

The Soviet Diplomatic Service in China in the 1930s

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Keywords: Soviet Union, China, Manchuria, Xinjiang, People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID), embassy, consulate, diplomatic service

AS THE WORLD was moving toward World War II, Soviet leaders and the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID) were paying as much attention to China as to the situation in Europe. By the early 1930s, Moscow no longer had diplomatic relations with China. In 1929, in the wake of armed conflict over the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER), the Soviet Union closed its consulates in Manchuria. Soviet consulates continued functioning in Xinjiang, which at that time was not controlled by the central Chinese government. A Soviet Embassy and five consulates functioned in the Mongolian People's Republic, which Moscow treated as an independent state while formally recognizing Chinese sovereignty over it.

In December 1932, when both countries acquired a common enemy, Moscow and Nanjing finally restored diplomatic relations. The Soviet Union opened its embassy in Nanjing, the Chinese capital, and consulates in Shanghai and Tianjin.

In the 1930s, the Soviet diplomatic service in China had a wide network of consulates in the outlying districts uncontrolled by the central government.

In the 1930s, the Soviet Union had 14 consulates in China; there were unofficial Soviet consulate missions on the basis of agencies of the Society of Soviet-Chinese Trade (Sovintorg) in Aksu (since 1934), Hotan (since 1939), and Karashar and Hami (since 1936). At the same time, the Soviet Union had only six consulates in Western Europe: three in Germany, two in Italy, one in Danzig under the patronage of the League of Nations; five consulates in the limitrophes Poland, Latvia, Lithuania; five consulates in Turkey; four in Japan; and 13 in Persia (in 1933, their number was cut to four).

The Soviet consulates in Manchuria ensured the smooth functioning of the CER and defended the interests of Soviet citizens (50,000 in the region at that time).

Conflict arose between Apresov and Jin Shuren, the ruler of Xinjiang, as a result of which Apresov was replaced with A.R. Menni (Syare) as consul-general in Urumqi and plenipotentiary of the Central Committee in Xinjiang. The Politburo of the VKP(b) Central Committee adopted a decision that gave him the "right to remove any Soviet official working in Xinjiang from his post and send him back to Moscow with all necessary explanations if he tried to give orders to local officials, interfere in their domestic policy, and, in general, demonstrated unacceptable behavior."

The Soviet Embassy in Nanjing, being at the epicenter of active political life, did a tremendous amount of diplomatic work. At various times, it was headed by outstanding professional diplomats and special services officers.

The small number of Soviet diplomatic missions in those years was largely dictated by the demands of severe budget austerity. Soviet missions in China could hire local technical staff for a moderate fee. But that practice was discontinued in 1937. This meant that their members had to be highly qualified; they were selected by the NKID and the Politburo of the VKP(b) Central Committee. The latter could appoint not only ambassadors and consuls but also advisers and, in some cases, first secretaries and military attachés.¹⁴ Their reports were read by Stalin and other top officials who knew some of these people personally.

It should be said that contrary to the stereotypes that were widespread in the Soviet years, those who worked in the NKID received very modest salaries.

In China, high staff turnover was caused by small salaries and the far from easy living conditions (illnesses, unsanitary conditions, etc.). In the first three years after the opening of the embassy in Nanjing, three-quarters of its employees returned to the Soviet Union for health reasons or because of their own "unsuitability or inability to cope with their duties.

The NKID proposed significantly increasing the salaries of diplomats stationed in China, making them higher than those stationed in Europe; offering higher wages to those with knowledge of Chinese (so far, “only official interpreters who studied Chinese in the Soviet Union know the language well enough”); and providing longer annual leaves.³² Something was finally done, yet on the whole, in the prewar years, the deficit of qualified Chinese experts remained.

China and the Far East as a whole were entrusted to Grigory Sokolnikov (Brilliant), a prominent old member of the Bolshevik Party and member of the Central Committee of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (Bolshevik) [RSDRP(b)] since 1917.

It should be said that Sokolnikov preferred much more flexible Soviet-Chinese relations and a much firmer stance on Japan; he was dead set against selling the CER “for a song.”

Sokolnikov was removed from the post of deputy people’s commissar before the talks on the CER had been completed, and in May 1934, he was transferred to the People’s Commissariat for Forestry, not because he had failed as a diplomat, but because of his past history as an opposition member.

From 1934 to 1938, Stomonyakov was, without exaggeration, a key figure in shaping Soviet Far Eastern policy.

Dmitry Bogomolov represented the Soviet Union in China when diplomatic relations between the two countries were restored. He was one of the most talented members of the Chicherin school and one of the most experienced Soviet diplomats. His outstanding personality has appealed to historians for a long time; International Affairs has published several articles about him.

Having established close and confidential relations with the Kuomintang, Bogomolov played a very important role in the Soviet Union’s turn from confrontation to reconciliation and close cooperation with the Chiang Kai-shek government.

In 1939, Semyon Lozovsky was appointed deputy people’s commissar responsible for China; relations with Xinjiang were entrusted to Vladimir Dekanozov, another newly appointed deputy (a former NKVD official whom Lavrenty Beria trusted completely).

Litvinov’s dismissal was only a matter of time. It happened in May 1939; he was fired because of “his disloyal attitude to the CC and the Council of People’s Commissars, as well as his efforts to protect those who were hostile to the party.” Vyacheslav Molotov replaced Litvinov as people’s commissar for foreign affairs and opened a new chapter in the history of Soviet diplomacy, including with respect to China.

The Ukrainization of Malorossia in the Soviet Union

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Keywords: Ukrainian and Russian languages, korenizatsiya, Ukrainization

THE RUSSIAN QUESTION has always been acute in the young Ukrainian state and provoked a number of disagreements and conflicts. In 2002, a national poll confirmed that 60% of the total Ukrainian population between the ages of 16 and 34 believed that Russians and Ukrainians were two parts of the same people.

The Russian-speaking academic milieu frequently uses the term “Ukrainization” to characterize the current policy of the Ukrainian state. The policy of so-called korenizatsiya [literally “putting down roots”

– Trans.] predated the first efforts to impose the Ukrainian language and culture from above. It was promoted in all Soviet republics formed in the territory of the former Russian Empire, and it was at the same time, in the 1920s, that the term Ukrainization became widely used.

The Ukrainian identity has changed many times throughout history. It was a broad concept that in Russia was applied to the population in outlying lands. In the Muscovite State, it was applied to those who served in Ukraine (sometimes they were called Cherkass). Later, Ukrainian became an ethnonym applied to those who lived in Ukraine, which was part of the Russian Empire.

Having established Soviet power in the Russian Empire, the Communist leaders needed legitimacy and the loyalty of the broadest swath of population groups. It was not yet firm enough; indeed, power in the capital of the former empire did not guarantee equally firm positions elsewhere. The Bolsheviks tried to support the national minorities through the Declaration of the Rights of the People of Russia, issued in 1917 and signed by Lenin and Stalin. It condemned the national policy of the tsarist government as a policy of national oppression that led to “slaughter and pogroms from one side and the peoples’ slavery from the other.”

Local politicians, prominent figures of the Ukrainian People’s Republic that existed from 1917 to 1920 (Grushevsky, Vinnichenko, Doroshenko, and others), had their plans of Ukrainization. Ukrainian intellectuals knew that peasants constituted the majority of the local population and that an independent state needed a Ukrainian, not a Malorossian identity. Russian writer Vladimir Korolenko, who sympathized with the Ukrainian movement, still used the word “Ukrainian” to define a politically minded citizen and supporter of Ukrainian statehood.

Ukrainian historians treat the term Ukrainization as a totalitarian Soviet tool that subordinated the impulse of building a young nation, thus seizing the initiative from Ukrainian politicians.

It should be said that the upper class – officers, the intelligentsia, cultural figures, and teachers – in the Malorossian gubernias were mostly Russians, who, according to Lenin, represented the Great Russian chauvinism and oppressed other peoples of the empire.

From the very beginning, Ukrainization developed at a fast pace. Even though the equality of languages of all nationalities was officially declared, and Russian and Ukrainian were the most widespread languages, Ukrainian was chosen as the predominant language of “official relations.”

The policy of Ukrainization was relatively short lived, yet its fruits were obvious: “Maloross” was transformed into “Ukrainian.” In the 1930s, the Explanatory Dictionary of the Russian Language edited by Dmitry Ushakov contained an article with the following specification: “Maloros(s) (pre-revolutionary) chauvinistic name for Ukrainians.”²² At the turn of the 20th century, peasants who were in the majority in the Ukrainian regions had no political identity and were identified as Maloross by the language they used. The urban population consisted of people of all nationalities; Ukrainians were not in the majority. Had city soviets formed naturally and organically, they would have had Russian majorities, at least in Odessa and Kharkov.

The process was strongly affected by historical circumstances. Peasants were largely illiterate. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Soviet Union pursued a policy of total literacy. Urbanization was another typical feature of the times: People left villages to settle in cities and become industrial workers. Thus, Malorossian peasants found themselves in a new milieu that bred Ukrainian identity in them through education and a new cultural policy. At the same time, a new Ukrainian elite of writers, journalists, and politicians was taking shape. In fact, it was the Ukrainization of the Soviet period that became the first stage of the formation of a mass Ukrainian identity that was opposed to the Russian identity and that spread far and wide within one of the Soviet republics.

Diplomacy as Science and Art: A Reading Reflection

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Keywords: diplomacy, international relations, foreign policy, UN Security Council

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS is one of the most interesting and at the same time difficult social sciences topics to study and analyze. It is extremely dynamic and fluid, with many variables and unknowns. At the same time, its development obeys certain laws and cause-and-effect relationships. At any point in time, international relations are inextricably linked to the preceding stages of history, and without taking that history into account, it is impossible to uncover the true causes of most international affairs phenomena and understand why states and other international political actors behave the way they do.

State diplomacy, both as an institution and as a field where subjective factors play an important role, is a pillar of international relations. Diplomacy, enhanced by in-depth knowledge, professional skills, and a scholarly approach, becomes a necessary element of strategic thinking for a state. The nature of diplomatic activity is, on the one hand, routine and monotonous; on the other hand, it provides space for creativity, extraordinary steps, and decisions. It is both collective and individual; success requires both rigor in following the center's instructions and the ability to assume responsibility.

Among recent memoirs, Vitaly Churkin's book *Trudnosti perevoda* [Lost in Translation] stands apart. In and of itself, it is an elegant work in terms of presentation and style, but most importantly, it is extremely rich in content, directly or indirectly raising major questions and complex problems that directly affect events and processes in modern-day international relations. Almost everything the author writes about is a "living history" closely tied to our present day. In addressing the subject of diplomatic translation, Churkin's book is, of course, "genetically" close to Viktor Sukhodrev's memoir *Yazyk moy – drug moy* [My Tongue Is My Friend].

CHURKIN was one of those diplomats who took the formula "diplomacy is a science" very seriously. This was evident from his successful defense of a dissertation at the Diplomatic Academy in 1981. A decade earlier, he planned to work at the Institute for US and Canadian Studies.

Early in his career, Churkin gained extensive experience working as an interpreter in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR. The diplomat's memoir gets its name from this particular stage. In many ways, it served as a springboard for his further successes, developed his professional skills, and enriched him with knowledge on a number of complex issues. Memoirs are by nature a historical source.

The memoir is frank not only in discussing the achievements but also in criticizing the activities of certain prominent figures. With regard to [then-acting Soviet foreign minister] Boris Pankin, Churkin uses the expression, "He barged [into the Foreign Ministry] like Chapayev on a white horse."

NATO ENLARGEMENT constitutes a separate, historically significant and relevant topic in the works of Russian diplomats. Churkin makes two key points: the duplicity of Western politicians, who gradually carried out the expansion without considering Russian interests, and Moscow's ambiguous line on this issue, which combined active overall resistance with concessions along the way.

One of the author's positions might appear controversial. We are talking about the actions of the USSR leadership in 1990-1991: "It is hard to imagine how the general secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU could enter into negotiations on such an issue [NATO non-expansion] while the Warsaw Pact was still alive, albeit not quite healthy." However, it was precisely in those years that active discussions

of NATO's potential expansion into East European countries were already taking place; Western and Soviet politicians and representatives of various departments raised this problem many times, in one form or another, in their talks and conversations with Gorbachev.

In the following years and decades, disputes and discussions about NATO expansion and promises of non-expansion did not subside, despite mounting evidence confirming the duplicity of the West. Attempts to prove that "not an inch to the East" allegedly referred only to the territory of East Germany failed.

Even though he was a direct participant in events exposing the subcurrent of NATO expansion, Churkin does not paint the picture in black and white and does not unequivocally present Russia as an innocent victim. He repeatedly points to Moscow's inconsistencies in defending its interests.

THE "PARALLEL UNIVERSE" in Churkin's life, as he himself defined it, was the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, in the thick of which the Russian diplomat found himself for a long two and a half years as a special representative of the president of the Russian Federation.

Many of Churkin's observations and conclusions about attempts at a peaceful settlement on the territory of the former Yugoslavia can be seen as historical parallels to our times.

Another historical parallel was Churkin's assessment of the actions of Bosnian Serbs who shot down a NATO plane during the crisis around the town of Goražde in April 1994.

ANOTHER "parallel universe" that Churkin entered in 2006 was the UN. This post fully manifested his talents that had been honed during previous periods of his diplomatic activity. "This is my place," he wrote of the famous building on the East River in New York, where he ended up working for more than a decade.

The Ukraine crisis and the events of 2022 gave a new impetus to discussions of polycentricity in the analysis of international relations. Of course, these processes have been at play for a long time. Moreover, it can be said that, from the very beginning of its existence, the UN has become an experimental platform and a kind of testing ground for the first sprouts of polycentrism that will fully manifest itself in the 21st century.

Churkin's memoir addresses another issue on which I would like to focus. It is the main dilemma of international law: the relationship between the right of nations to self-determination, on the one hand, and the sovereignty of states and their territorial integrity, on the other.

Conducting the foreign policy of any large state, especially a permanent member of the UN Security Council, has always been associated with great efforts, overcoming crises, and solving problems.

The recollections and analytical insights of Vitaly Churkin, as well as other sources and evidence cited in this article, demonstrate the readiness of Soviet and Russian diplomacy to work "in all directions" both in the near abroad and in strategically important far-flung regions. Our country's diplomacy, even in the most difficult times, has been distinguished by the highest level of competence, and the aforementioned exceptions to this rule only underscore this factor. Diplomats have on more than one occasion smoothed out and minimized the consequences of miscalculations made by the Soviet leadership during perestroika and by the Russian leadership in the 1990s.

In the historical period under discussion, Russia has consistently sought to prevent the emergence of new dividing lines in Europe and armed conflicts, as clearly demonstrated by the examples of the Yugoslav wars and NATO expansion. The key role of the UN in world governance has always remained the central axis of our country's foreign policy. The experience of prominent Russian diplomats in assessing the historical events they witnessed and participated in is invaluable and worthy of the most thorough study.

