

# International Affairs: Vol.69: №2, 2023: Summary

## Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's Remarks at the Ceremony to Mark Diplomats' Day

Moscow, February 10, 2023

It has been a tough year, like all of them recently. It is important that we are together and that we are not forgetting our comrades. Today, we commemorate the many we have lost over the past year. I ask you to join me in a minute of silence to honor their memory.

First of all, I would like to read out President Vladimir Putin's address to the Foreign Ministry's current staff and veterans:

*FRIENDS,*

*Please accept my most sincere greetings on your professional holiday, Diplomatic Worker's Day/*

*The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia can rightly take pride in its glorious traditions. Our diplomats fulfilled with honor their professional duty and set an example of patriotism and civic courage even in the most difficult times, in the face of severe trials.*

*The best qualities of our country's diplomatic service are much in demand today amidst the hybrid war unleashed against Russia. It is extremely important now to make the most of our foreign policy instruments to defend our state sovereignty and national security.*

*The country managed not only to thwart the plans of the collective West to isolate Russia but also to step up cooperation with the majority of members of the international community, largely owing to your efforts. I am referring to states in Eurasia, the Middle East, the Asia-Pacific, Africa, and Latin America.*

*The agenda now is to continue building on this interaction with responsible international partners. It is particularly important to strengthen ties with the CIS countries, promote Eurasian integration processes, consolidate our alliance within the CSTO, realize the full potential of the Union State, and expand cooperation in such associations as the SCO and BRICS.*

*As before, we consider our absolute priorities to be protecting the lawful rights of Russian citizens and supporting our compatriots abroad, waging an uncompromising struggle against neo-Nazism and ethnic discrimination in all its forms. Of course, Russian diplomacy will continue supporting the trend toward the formation of a multipolar, truly democratic world order based on equality, mutual respect, and observance of the generally recognized norms of international law.*

*f international law. I am sure that you will continue giving your all to advance Russia's foreign policy interests. I sincerely wish you new professional successes as well as good health, high spirits, and a long life to our veterans.*

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THE Foreign Ministry also received greetings and warm words from Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matviyenko, State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin, the heads of parliamentary committees and executive bodies, heads of Russian regions, and representatives of major businesses. Such a show of solidarity supports us in a very real sense as we work to achieve the far-reaching goals set by the head of state.

The trust placed in us calls for great responsibility. We have a responsibility to implement the foreign policy decisions made by the country's leaders to create a favorable external environment for Russia's dynamic internal development. That is the guidance we have received from President Vladimir Putin. This goal is enshrined in all doctrinal documents and will certainly be reflected in Russia's updated Foreign Policy Concept, which is going to be released soon.

We will strive to create favorable external conditions for our internal development on the foundation of consent and balancing the interests of all states, rather than the dictates of the collective West and those who want to continue running the show in the world by colonial and neocolonial methods.

We are celebrating our holiday under conditions of total hybrid warfare. The collective West has prepared for a new crusade in the East.

There is no doubt that the threats to our national security from the West will be eliminated. The Russian Army and Navy have risen to the challenge thrown at them. For its part, our diplomatic service will continue doing all it can to strengthen national sovereignty, neutralize external challenges at the far reaches, and expand the circle of constructive international partners.

Today, Russia is in the vanguard of international efforts to assert the enduring values of truth and justice and protect universally recognized international legal norms, including the sovereign equality of states (regardless of their size and form of rule) and noninterference in domestic affairs. We will continue closely coordinating steps with our numerous friends, allies, and associates, including members, participants, and partners in the CSTO, the EAEU, the CIS, BRICS, and the SCO. We are working to realize the full potential of the Union State of Russia and Belarus.

No threats or accusations regarding the decisions that we make to ensure our vital national interests have ever impacted our activities and never will. "Isolation" is a delusion.

If the West prefers to live in a world of its own, according to the "rules" that they keep talking about, but have never shown to anyone, let them live as they choose. But Western countries must build dialogue with other members of the international community relying on the principles of honesty, equality, and mutual consideration of the interests that are enshrined in the UN Charter that was signed, ratified, and accepted by all countries in the modern world.

We are professionals and we know this is not an overstatement. So we need to show our utmost dedication, fortified by the firm and unshakable belief that our cause is just. It is important to keep up with the times and the latest trends, and to be able to skillfully combine time-tested methods with innovative approaches and advanced technology.

I would like to convey special words of gratitude to former ministerial employees. We look forward to you sharing your extensive experience. We will continue to provide you with the support that you may need.

Once again, please accept my warmest congratulations on the occasion of your professional holiday. I wish employees from the central office, foreign missions, and territorial offices of the Foreign Ministry, your families and friends, good health and every success, relying on the belief that our cause is just. My deepest respect to our retired diplomats.

# Turning Point of an Era: A New Peace of Westphalia for the 21st Century

*Keywords: SMO RF AF, Henry Kissinger, the America-centric world, indigenization, "deep state"*

**Vladimir Kuznechevsky**, *Doctor of Science (History)*; [smith8@mail.ru](mailto:smith8@mail.ru)

IN THE first decades of the 21st century, the international community of planet Earth has found itself confronted all at once with a chain of events, each of which could have defined an entire political era. The list looks impressive: dramatically aggravated US-Russian and US-Chinese relations; ruptured business and political ties between Moscow and Old Europe; the Russian Armed Forces' Special Military Operation (SMO) in Ukraine; the deepest postwar split between UN members on certain issues of international politics, etc. Any casual observer can easily see how unusual all this is and how shocking it is even to experienced international relations experts.

On May 10, 2022, speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Henry Kissinger, former US secretary of state and national security adviser to president Richard Nixon, warned that the world had entered an absolutely new stage of international relations.

This is not a story about the efforts of the Biden administration to salvage America-centric international relations through global economic and political sanctions against Russia that were introduced in 2022 to wipe its main (in Washington's eyes) world rival from off the political map of the world.

This might seem fantastical, but I would hazard to guess that in the third decade of the current century and later we will be taken "unawares" by an entirely different world order in which neither the US, nor Russia, nor China, which many international experts (except Kissinger) believe will play practically the key role in global international relations, will become the sole leader.

The existing – currently still America-centric – world order will be replaced (this happened once after the Peace of Westphalia of 1648) with a multipolar model of international relations in which the international actions of each country and each state will be guided by their own national sovereignty.

AN ANALYSIS of recent years suggests that the contemporary American elite was quick to indulge in wishful thinking by saying that the global sanctions against Moscow would allegedly rip Russia's economy to shreds.

The Biden administration, which relied on sanctions to isolate Russia, cannot count on practically three-quarters of UN members. This means that the range of political tools that America is prepared to use in its opposition with Moscow is very limited.

IT SHOULD be said right off the bat that nobody has ever seen a meeting of the executive body of the US "deep state," let alone analyzed its activities. But this phenomenon wields so much influence that all political analysts who speak or write about it have tacitly agreed that this "parallel state" decisively impacted America's political power in the 20th century.

Most of those seeking to uncover the true essence of this phenomenon proceed from the proposition that the US deep state is a concrete political force involved in Washington's domestic and foreign policy. So far, nobody has dared to venture further than that. Those who have dared have quickly lost their political careers and even their lives.

THE real intrigue of historical development is that it is not just American political leaders who immediately realize upon entering the international political arena that, without Russia, the world cannot appreciate the fullness of its existence and development.

Summing up, we can say that, regrettably, current relations between Moscow and Washington, Russia and the US, are what they are. Moscow has pursued an exceptionally balanced policy in its relations with Washington, including the Special Military Operation in Ukraine. At the same time, the Russian government must add bricks to the foundation of future relations with future US governments.

## **Global Megatrends: A Current Interpretation**

**Vladimir Yegorov**, Director, “Economic Theory” Scientific School, Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, Head, Department of International Relations and the Geopolitics of Transport, Russian University of Transport, Doctor of Science (History), Professor; [korrka@mail.ru](mailto:korrka@mail.ru)

**Vladimir Shtol**, Professor, Diplomatic Academy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Editor-in-Chief, Observer journal, Doctor of Science (Political Science), Professor; [v.shtol@gmail.com](mailto:v.shtol@gmail.com)

*Keywords: megatrends: globalization, democratization, information and communication revolution, demassification, regenerative habitat*

THE problem of determining megatrends – the key global processes that set the directions of civilizational development – has preoccupied scientists and scholars for decades owing to purely scientific considerations as well to the practical tasks of determining the future contours of planetary civilization.

ONE of the most significant attempts to “comprehend the future” was made in 1970 by the American researcher Alvin Toffler, who warned humankind that the future would destroy the familiar world<sup>1</sup> and offered his own vision of the future. In his description of the Third Wave, or the superindustrial society that is replacing the industrial one, Toffler proposed a number of provisions related to the characteristics of megatrends. American sociologist and futurologist John Naisbitt, for his part, attempted to identify their essence based on the social trends that were emerging in the US in the late 20th century.

Naisbitt’s research made it possible to outline several universally applicable social trends that coincide with American social trends, but the rationalism of modernity and use of inductive methods significantly narrowed the positive potential of his ideas. The limitations of his conclusions were manifest, at the very least, in his attempts to consider processes inclusive for the US as universal, which was a consequence and not a fundamental quality of megatrends.

The increasing transnationality of the world economy gives a number of authors cause to see megatrends exclusively in the global economic system.

GIVEN the complexity of the megatrend phenomenon, the idea of a tiered structure or hierarchy that would include megatrends or global trends, subtrends, macro trends, and trend signals – i.e., to develop an understanding of how these trends fit into each other – seems beneficial.

THE dialectic of opposing vectors of global tectonics is most clearly manifested in globalization – the megatrend that holds a central place in the hierarchy of world transformations.

The acuteness of modern political contradictions and the depth of international conflicts, bordering on the civilizational “rift” of the consolidated West and the “world majority non-West,” according to Sergey Karaganov, suggest that the “elements of globalization – the globalization of finance, energy, commodities, and informational and economic connectivity – will not disappear completely but weaken. They are retreating before the waves of nationalization and regionalization.”

Globalization is a natural process with an objective basis due to the transition of planetary civilization to the postmodern.

globalism, as opposed to globalization, is a policy of the forces of late modernity aimed at maintaining world domination, covering all aspects of the civilizational process: economic, social, political, and, more recently, cultural.

A NEGATIVE connotation in the current sociopolitical and academic discourse is attributed to another megatrend – democratization.

Citing Joseph Schumpeter, who exposed the shortcomings of the classical theory of democracy, which defined democracy in terms such as the will of the people (source) and the common good (goal), Huntington simplified the definition to a basic procedure: “the selection of leaders through competitive elections by the people they govern.”

THE third megatrend was initiated by the information and communication revolution, which resulted in the virtualization and dematerialization of the global civilizational space. A relatively complete list of innovations brought about by the information and communication revolution is presented by Klaus Schwab in his book *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*.

The emphasis on information technology and digitalization as the fundamental innovation defining the content of the megatrend is no coincidence, since they have united all sciences and technologies and are therefore the core of the new technological paradigm.

ANOTHER megatrend is the demassification of societies – or, in Toffler’s interpretation, demassification driven by the restoration of agency in the social process to the individual.

With the advent of the postmodern era, the structure of society is changing dramatically. Each inhabitant of Earth becomes an individual bearer of a unique set of knowledge and information, acquiring, in this sense, irreplaceable value.

With this in mind, it is fair to say that the current social mainstream demands new “medieval craftsmen” who have unique skills and are therefore unique specialists.

THE fifth megatrend stems from the global community’s awareness of the need to move toward constructing a regenerative habitat. The industrial age has exhausted the relatively painless exploitation of nature.

In modern civilization, where demand is stimulated by all possible means and tools, steering social consciousness away from all-consuming consumption is seemingly an existential problem. Moreover, such a U-turn, of course, means a radical transformation of the foundations of the social order. If not a palliative, then the first step in the formation of a regenerative human environment would seem to be the construction of a circular economy as an economy based on designing things that produce no waste and pollution.

The scientific analysis of the phenomenon of megatrends in this article, unlike futurological prospectuses, does not paint a picture of the future, but merely seeks to identify signs manifesting themselves in the present in order to determine the direction in which planetary civilization is heading.

# Traditional Spiritual and Moral Values in International Relations: Russia's Approach

**Oleg Karpovich**, *Prorector, Research Director, Diplomatic Academy, Russian Foreign Ministry;*  
*iskran@yahoo.com*

**Lyubov Smagina**, *Senior Researcher, Institute of Contemporary International Studies, Diplomatic Academy, Russian Foreign Ministry;* [iamp@dipacademy.ru](mailto:iamp@dipacademy.ru)

*Keywords: state policy, spiritual values, Russia, civilization, ideologemes, contradictions*

SPIRITUAL and moral values have served as a foundation for the evolution of Russian statehood throughout our country's history. Right now, forming, keeping, and promoting traditional spiritual and moral values is a priority policy issue in both domestic politics and international relations.

There is currently a systemic crisis between traditional civilizational values and the values of the neoliberal globalizing world based on tension between two types of civilizational development – i.e., secular humanist and religious traditionalist.

Historically, Russia has viewed the protection of traditional values as a tool for promoting and upholding its interests in international relations, including by protecting the interests and rights of Orthodox Christians around the world, where, after the fall of Byzantium, Muscovite Tsardom and later the Russian Empire positioned itself as the main protector of traditional Christian values. The idea of protecting Europe's Slavs and Orthodox Christians in the spirit of fraternal assistance materialized in specific historical events.

Although the Soviet political system excluded religion from the concept of traditional values, in the late stages of the USSR, it formulated certain narratives about "Soviet values," which were influenced by the ideology of opposition to the Western world in the context of the struggle against colonialism and racial segregation, as well as by the advantages of the socialist system as generally more progressive. At the same time, it was based on the same classical postulates about patriotism, service to the fatherland, justice, equality, collectivism, humanism, etc. There is good reason to say that the system of traditional Soviet values has become a tool of foreign policy ideology.

The president's [annual] Message to the Federal Assembly in late 2013 clarified the concept of "traditional values" with references to a "thousandyear history" and the "spiritual and moral foundations of each civilization," as well as the values of "genuine human life, including religious life – not only material, but also spiritual life."

In the modern world, the so-called collective West views traditional values through a secular-humanistic approach toward civilizational development, where they are consigned to oblivion along with traditional society and the state. At the same time, in a bid to obscure the concept of gender and erode family and marriage values, programs and policies promoting LGBT rights and radical feminist ideas are being implemented.

Realizing that such ideas are not exactly meeting with understanding and support in Russian society, as evidenced by various polls, agents of Western influence, including not only politicians, but also cultural figures, civic activists, and vloggers, are using soft power tools, promoting such an agenda via popular culture, education, and pseudoscientific research projects.

In this context, it is important to develop mechanisms to counter the erosion of traditional spiritual and moral values in Russian society, primarily among young people. Ignoring the problem will inevitably weaken the unity of Russia's ethnically diverse population and therefore Russian statehood.

During a serious economic crisis, even cynical politicians seek salvation in traditional values, religion, and moral principles, referring to traditional values as a lifeline for the global market economy that is devoid of morality. This idea is nothing new to Russia, which has long been upholding the need to strengthen moral principles in international relations and reject double standards. The possibility of combining traditional values and modern policies in the West and East is already the focus of progressive Russian diplomacy, and the task of preserving, strengthening, and promoting traditional spiritual and moral values is becoming key to preserving civilization as a whole.

## **Technological Sovereignty as a Modern Guarantor of Cyber Stability**

**Natalia Babekina**, Deputy Director, Department of Information Technology Industry Development, Ministry of Digital Development, Communications, and Mass Media of the Russian Federation; [n.babekina@digital.gov.ru](mailto:n.babekina@digital.gov.ru)

*Keywords: technological sovereignty, IT activities*

OVER the past few years, we have been increasingly hearing the term “technological sovereignty.” It is not only discussed at Russian domestic venues but has also become a key issue on the international agenda. The significance and relevance of this issue are undeniable: Every day we witness and participate in the creation of a fundamentally new paradigm that is shaping the modern political and economic world order. We face new challenges and threats, and in countering these difficulties, we continue to gain more and more opportunities to realize our country’s potential. The domestic market and foreign economic relations are transforming rapidly and adapting to pervasive new realities.

Since the events of 2014, Russia has been not just surviving but systematically developing under sanctions. During this time, domestic production has adjusted in a certain way, reducing the dependence of the information and communications technology (ICT) industry on foreign products. Strategic steps toward technological independence from foreign IT products were primarily driven by national security considerations.

In the near future, the country’s authorities will continue to do everything possible to eliminate dependence on foreign suppliers, moving toward maximum technological independence and self-sufficiency. According to optimistic expert forecasts, domestic solutions that ensure this independence and security will dominate the Russian market. It should be understood that technological sovereignty does not mean complete isolation. Technological sovereignty is a strong negotiating position when building relations with foreign partners. ... The future lies in the mutually beneficial exchange of experience, technology, research, and development.

No state in the world currently has this level of independence, but today’s realities dictate the inevitability of such processes. Not only Russia but all the world’s largest economies – China, India, and the US – have pursued a course toward self-sufficiency.

The ICCs bring together more than 400 organizations to ensure Russia’s technological independence and speed up the import substitution of foreign software products.

The ICCs are consortiums of anchor customers that shape market demand for Russian industry software solutions and cross-industry (end-to-end) products. In addition, 12 competence centers for the development of Russian system-wide and applied software (CCD) have been created.

Despite certain skepticism on the part of individual representatives, we already see positive examples. Russia has developed its own payment system, its own Baikal and Elbrus processors, high-performing electronic devices and their components, and high-quality domestic software serving as full-fledged alternatives to the Windows operating system, Microsoft system infrastructure products, and a variety of applications. This software allows organizations and enterprises to successfully implement import substitution programs, build high-quality IT infrastructure with a long life cycle on a domestic technological platform, and replace foreign software and hardware with world-class domestic high-tech solutions.

Cards of the MIR payment system with a contactless payment chip made by the Russian company Mikron are being used successfully. Assessments by leading experts as well as ordinary users show that these cards are in no way inferior to their foreign counterparts with chip modules. Moreover, they increase the technological security of the Russian financial system.

Such examples clearly demonstrate Russia's potential and allow for an appropriately optimistic prognosis. Even international critics call Russia a self-sufficient country, implying not only its rich natural resources.

## **The Growing Danger of Information Warfare in the Globalization Era**

**Sergey Melnik**, *Technical Director, STC KOMSET, Candidate of Science (Technical Sciences);* [svmelnik@mail.ru](mailto:svmelnik@mail.ru) **Yelena Petrova**, *Project Director, STC KOMSET, Candidate of Science (Technical Sciences);* [Info@komset.ru](mailto:Info@komset.ru)

*Keywords: ICT, information wars, globalization*

INFORMATION and communications technology (ICT) is of paramount importance in the modern world. This statement is taking on new significance today. The fact is that, until very recently, humans were regarded as the primary source and consumer of information. With the advent of digital transformation mechanisms and use of the Internet of Things, most connections and the bulk of information are generated and consumed not by humans but by inanimate objects. And the distortion of information in this new space leads to threats that are more global than activities aimed at deception. By creating a world without borders through the total "connection of the unconnected," humanity is becoming more vulnerable than ever. In this era of rapid data proliferation and the extreme vulnerability of individuals and entire nations to the dangers of information warfare, not only must we concentrate our efforts on providing truthful information to people, but we must protect against potential technogenic challenges.

Today, we are talking about digital transformation technologies in many different areas of life. In health care, there are threats to the safety of remote surgeries and the operation of controlled IV infusion pumps. In agriculture, there is the threat of the misuse of pesticides. In road and air traffic management automation, there is the possibility of disasters with high casualties. In the chemical and nuclear industries, there is the threat of anthropogenic disasters on a planetary scale. The list could go on.

One thing is clear: The more capabilities and flexibility a new technology possesses, the greater the potential threat it poses if misused. Therefore, a convergence of positions on the part of the international expert community is necessary to develop measures to ensure a universal, safe, and equitable Internet.



It is no coincidence that it was repeatedly stated at the Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-22) of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), held from September 26 to October 14, 2022, in Bucharest, that one of the main objectives of the world community is to solve the problem of “connecting the unconnected.” More than 3,000 delegates from 183 countries of the world (the ITU’s total membership includes 193 countries) took part in PP-22. The Final Acts were signed by representatives of the communications administrations of 157 countries.

The following issues were reflected in the final documents:

- the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies for good
- confidence-building and sustainable development in outer space
- empowering women and girls through digital transformation
- frequency distribution of military radio stations for national defense services
- ways in which new technologies can mitigate, not worsen, the climate crisis
- ways in which technology can protect against global pandemics
- Internet of Things (IoT) for smart cities.

In addition to setting ITU priorities, the member states elected five top officials. For the first time in ITU’s 157-year history, a woman, Doreen Bogdan-Martin (USA), has been elected secretary-general.

The digital divide is recognized as one of the main problems of modern society. About 2.7 billion people in the world today do not have regular access to ICTs. That is, there remains a huge number of people who are potentially not involved in the process of globalization. At PP-22, the US pledged to set up a fund to connect African countries to the Internet. Another fund is being created by Saudi Arabia for the development of ICT learning and training in Latin America.

RUSSIA has approved a six-year National Security Strategy in which a leading role has been assigned to information security (IS).

As part of the implementation of the July 2, 2021 decree, actions must be developed to protect both critical information infrastructure assets and important Internet resources.

The new concept should choose a strategy for the development of the Russian Internet in the context of information warfare. Three main approaches to Internet security exist in the world.

The American approach is to establish complete oversight over the development of international standards and global Internet traffic based on existing standards. A globe with only one country on it is the US’s vision of the Internet.

The Chinese approach is to use a domestic Internet network, isolated from the global Internet, with complete oversight over traffic within that network. China has a deep tradition of seclusion, and besides, the use of characters is a distinct technological feature.

The Israeli approach is to use deep analysis tools that can analyze all Internet service providers’ traffic – Deep Packet Inspection (DPI) – and block unwanted traffic at the packet level.

In the case of Russia, none of these approaches can be applied in pure form. The American approach is not suitable for obvious reasons: Russia is not a hegemon in the global ICT community.

THE online space is playing an increasingly important role in people’s lives. Many people spend five to eight hours a day online. Online information sources have almost completely pushed out print news sources among information consumers under the age of 40. Psychiatrists are identifying new disorders associated with Internet addiction. The reputations of people, companies, and even countries depend on the information posted on the Internet. Users’ personal data, document numbers, bank account details, payment methods access data, and other important private information are stored online.

It is even easier to spread inaccurate information via messengers and social networks. All it takes is several registered accounts, some of which are active and others “dormant.” And with the help of a small but well-equipped team of specialists managing these accounts, it is possible to spread any information quickly enough and improve its search engine ranking.

The introduction of specific measures for preventing cyber threats and the development of international cyber immunity should be discussed internationally. And once a coordinated solution is developed, the technological aspect of the issue should be discussed at the next ITU WSIS.

Russia can and should play a leading role in ensuring international information security.

## **International Legal Safeguards for Children and Adolescents in the Information Space**

**Ernest Chernukhin**, *Section Head, Department of International Information Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*; [dmib@mid.ru](mailto:dmib@mid.ru)

*Keywords: technological revolution, children’s information security conventions, Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), Darknet, Russian Federation initiatives*

THE world is on the cusp of a new technological revolution. The rapid development of advanced technology is already moving entire industries into the virtual realm. Global digitalization is penetrating all areas of social life. The contours of the emerging global information order are gradually taking shape.

All of this not only opens gigantic opportunities for the development of all countries but also creates new challenges in terms of the legal regulation of cyberspace, which does not always adjust to current realities quickly enough. Therefore, new forms and ways of committing unlawful acts in cyberspace are emerging.

According to Interpol and Europol reports, there has been a significant increase over the past few years in material that contains child sexual abuse, especially in the streaming format, as well as an increase in the effectiveness of the Dark Web at adapting to such criminal activity.

To address this problem, the EU has adopted a strategy for combating child sexual abuse more effectively. It is establishing a series of mandatory measures to prevent or rapidly thwart such crimes. Authorized government agencies are expected to directly ask the courts to issue warrants to identify illegal content and remove or block access to it.

The Russian Federation also pays the utmost attention to the problem of protecting children in the information space, seeking to improve its national legislation. For example, last year, the State Duma Committee on Family, Women, and Children held parliamentary hearings “on the legislative provision of information security for children and adolescents.”

As a result of the meeting, a number of recommendations were adopted on the need to continue systematic work by all state authorities on implementing the Concept of Information Security for Children approved by the Russian government. The agenda includes developing a program of comprehensive measures for the information protection of children and teenagers from nationalist, terrorist, and extremist propaganda and countering the promotion of violent ideas, sexualization, and other “destructive content” among children and teenagers.

Overall, trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation accounts for the bulk of detected cases on the Internet. A significant proportion of victims of such crimes are children. One emerging trend is a significant increase in online child trafficking by cybercriminals on the Darknet for the purpose of archiving and concealing illegal material.

As a possible response to and timely prevention of such crimes, the CCPCJ recommends that states strengthen public-private partnerships with communication service providers so that offending content against children is not removed by Internet service providers but forwarded to law-enforcement authorities for investigation and prosecution.

Russia, as the initiator of the entire process, contributed to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee from the start by preparing a full-length draft convention. It reflects many norms previously approved under relevant sections of international law. The project's provisions on the protection of the rights of children and adolescents deserve particular attention.

It is possible that in the course of the Ad Hoc Committee's work, participating states will advocate for even more detailed criminalization in the draft UN Convention of offenses against children committed in the information space, considering the new challenges and negative trends. The goal of the global community is to balance the multilateral cooperation system to make it universal and more effective, strengthening the capacity of all states, without exception, to combat crimes committed with the use of ICTs.

The mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee is to finalize the draft Convention in 2024 and to present it for approval at the 78th session of the UN General Assembly. The global community has experience in creating such universal anti-crime instruments on a tight schedule under UN auspices, as well as the knowledge and expertise needed for this undertaking.

## **Variables and Constants of the Ideological Process**

**Alexander Shchipkov**, *First Vice-Rector, Russian Orthodox University of Saint John the Divine, Doctor of Science (Political Science), Candidate of Science (Philosophy); info@shchipkov.ru*

*Keywords: National Security Concept of the Russian Federation, National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation, the Russian World, traditional values, Vladimir Putin's speech in the [Kremlin's] St. George Hall*

IN RECENT months, amid NATO's hybrid war against Russia, the search for a national ideology has intensified once again.

Psychologically, this is understandable. The growing demand for ideology is natural, since a coherent ideology helps consolidate society in critical situations. At the same time, many still remember the ideological quests of the late Yeltsin era. Back then, unofficial and official media outlets deliberately turned such quests into clownery designed to highlight the value disorientation in society, the loss of Russian identity, and the lack of national thought. Liberal propaganda portrayed all of that as a fundamental characteristic of the Russian collective consciousness, not as a result of propaganda efforts per se.

Today, the campaign against national memory has been irreversibly abandoned. Therefore, talk about ideology can no longer be the subject of political spin or a postmodernist game. The fad for doctrinarianism and the project-based approach to this issue inevitably lead to a break with genuine

national ideology, which, incidentally, does not need to be sought or created from scratch, since it has not gone anywhere and is still an integral part of the nation's cultural and historical experience.

Nevertheless, some experts are looking to start formulating an ideology with a clean slate. Expert groups have sprung up, offering to develop a new ideology as a project – on a turnkey basis, as it were.

But clearly this is not the way a genuine ideology arises; otherwise, it would invariably remain only on paper. After all, reliable transmission and reproduction mechanisms are needed for an ideology to start working and be recognized by society.

THE National Security Strategy (NSS) is amended and adjusted as necessary. It was first adopted by Boris Yeltsin in 1997 and was called the National Security Concept. It was followed by Vladimir Putin's 2000 version. The 2009, 2015, and 2021 versions were called "strategies," not "concepts." An analysis of changes to the NSS helps follow the logic of the numerous transformations of post-Soviet statehood, as well as of the ideological process itself.

The 2000 National Security Concept was adopted immediately after Vladimir Putin was elected president of the Russian Federation (March 26, 2000). It differed drastically from the previous one: The state sought to become a political player in its own right, not a negotiating room for the international oligarchy.

The 2009 National Security Strategy was adopted after Georgia's military aggression against South Ossetia was repelled, and it came in response to the first clash between Russia and a NATO satellite. That was when the word "concept" in the title of the document was replaced with the word "strategy." At the same time, it was stated that Russia was "moving toward a new state policy in the field of national security." In other words, there was a final reevaluation of values.

The next version of the Strategy was adopted in 2015 following the coup in Kiev, the war in Donbass, and the return of Crimea – in effect, after Kiev had launched an open attack against Russian culture and Russian identity.

In early July 2021, a new version of the NSS was adopted in Russia. It reflects a new stage in the history of Russia and the world: the disintegration of the neoliberal globalist project, leading to attempts to preserve Western hegemony by military and economic methods; a confrontation between Atlanticism and NATO on one side and Russia on the other over Ukraine; a blow to European economies; and the US's preparations for a conflict with China.

In his September 2022 speech in the [Kremlin's] St. George Hall devoted to the reunification of Donbass with Russia, Vladimir Putin spoke about the West's "neocolonialist" and "satanic" policy, its direct military support for neo-Nazism, and the crisis of the entire neoliberal world order.

TRADITIONAL values serve as a foundation for genuine ideology in some form or another. They answer the questions: Who are we? What are we like? What do we rely on? But ideology as such starts later on, becoming the continuation of those questions in the historical perspective, in the people's collective intentions and historical mission.

It is important to understand that right now any national ideology must overcome the pressure of neoliberal dogma. Modern liberalism either absorbs other worldviews, supplementing them with its own basic postulates, or pushes them beyond the bounds of public discourse. Attempts to challenge this situation come up against dogmatic claims that liberalism is not an ideology but a certain set of "sacred civilization values."

Western civilization has always been fraught with Nazism. Our losses resulting from the genocide of Russians in the 20th and the 21st centuries are tens of millions [of people]. The problem is that unlike the Holocaust, the Russian genocide has no name – no name, no problem, as it were. However, this is

crucial for understanding the relationship between Russia and the West. Some have suggested the term “Russocide.” About a decade ago, I proposed a term with a Slavic root – “plakha” [“executioner’s block,” “scaffold” – Trans.]. So far, neither term has gained currency.

Generally, it is important to understand that ideology is not some technocratic project but a cultural and historical phenomenon – or to be more precise, a process resulting not from political projects but from history. This manifests itself most clearly in times of national hardship such as we are facing today. Life itself shows what our historic mission and our ideals are.

## **Conceptualizing Russia’s Image**

**Yekaterina Kolokoltseva**, TV-Tsentr host; [web@tvc.ru](mailto:web@tvc.ru)

*Keywords: image, obraz, imidzh, objective perception, foreign policy concept, public diplomacy, “soft power”*

TODAY, amid accelerated globalization and the informatization of society, one of the most urgent tasks for states is to form a positive obraz [image, figure, representation – Trans.] and increase competitiveness in the international arena. Like any other country, Russia strives for recognition in the world. However, the approaches to the development of our country’s foreign policy image have varied significantly at various stages of the country’s development. In this regard, study of the peculiarities of the evolution of the concept of a country’s *imidzh* [a Western borrowing that has a more restricted usage in the fields of politics and public relations – Trans.], its content, and methods of formation, is of particular interest.

An *imidzh* formation policy is relatively new for Russia due to our country’s comparative youth: As a successor of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation has existed since 1991. It is worth noting that in the early stages of its existence, modern Russia did not develop any holistic policy for forming its *imidzh*; moreover, for some time, it lost control over foreign policy *imidzh* formation, since the Soviet propaganda mechanisms were no longer functioning and an alternative to these mechanisms had not yet been invented.

The starting point for Russia’s *imidzh* formation policy is the early 2000s, when the task of building a positive *imidzh* of the Russian Federation was elevated to the national level through its inclusion as one of the key objectives outlined in Russia’s 2000 Foreign Policy Concept<sup>2</sup> and concrete steps were taken in this direction.

In the first years of the modern stage (2008-present), there was a clear continuity of the priorities formulated in the 2000 Russian Foreign Policy Concept related to the formation and promotion of a positive *imidzh* of our country in the international arena. However, over time, the *imidzh* component of Russian foreign policy has been refined, which is reflected in the content of its key documents.

These changes, in our opinion, are directly related to the challenge of information wars, which our country has faced in recent years and which seek to exert informational and psychological influence on society in order to form a certain opinion about a particular country and its subsequent control.

One of the most remarkable examples of the formation of political stereotypes during an information war is media reporting during the 2008 Georgian-Ossetian conflict, when vivid images were used to form a false idea of Russia as an aggressor in this conflict.

At the present stage, the situation has worsened, because in addition to classical media (television and the press), the Internet and social networks have rapidly developed, presenting interested parties with new opportunities to shape public opinion in various countries as desired, since the Internet and social networks are used today along with newspapers and television to cover international events.

There is another problem, which has become more acute in recent years, including in connection with the active informatization of society accompanied by the increased availability of the Internet: the distortion of historical memory, primarily about World War II, and the downplaying of Russia's role in world history. These negative trends are particularly evident in the post-Soviet space.

It is noteworthy that an objective perception by the world community as a priority goal of Russian foreign policy activity is also stated in Par. 6, Part III of the Concept, dedicated to issues of information support of Russia's foreign policy activities.<sup>8</sup> In general, the achievement of an objective perception is understood as conveying to the world community the most accurate and complete information on Russia's position on certain issues on the international agenda.

We believe that despite the etymology of the word *obraz* and its connection with the word *imidzh*, the two concepts are not identical. While *obraz* is a more passive category due to its purpose of reflecting reality, *imidzh* has an active nature manifest in purposeful action. Moreover, an *imidzh* is concrete and practical – it takes in only what is necessary to transmit into the minds of the people around it and discards the unnecessary, while an *obraz* reflects all aspects without exception.

Faced with one of the most pressing challenges of our time – information confrontation and the distortion of Russia's *obraz* and role in international processes – the Russian Federation was forced to change its priorities in foreign policy activities. Whereas previously the country's key foreign policy documents had stipulated the task of creating a positive *imidzh* of Russia, today the need to protect the country's reputation in the global media space has come to the fore. In this regard, the concept of *imidzh* is no longer used in the texts of official documents, having been replaced by the concept of "objective perception." It seems that the change of course toward the promotion of an objective perception of Russia's *obraz* in the world is appropriate in the context of information warfare and tendencies to distort history. Unlike the country's *imidzh*, which allows other countries of the world to see Russia the way it wishes to be seen, the concept of objective perception conveys to the world community objective information about what Russia is really like – a democratic country with an independent foreign policy that gives preference to the use of soft power tools.

## **Building a Just World Order in Greater Eurasia**

**Vladimir Kovalyov**, Adviser to the Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC),  
Candidate of Science (Law); [v.kovalev@ecommission.org](mailto:v.kovalev@ecommission.org)

*Keywords: Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Greater Eurasian Partnership, world order, international law, transregional law*

THE existing system of international relations has demonstrated its limited effectiveness time and again in recent years – and not just in 2022, with its shocking openness and rapid changes. Problems have been accumulating for decades, set aside, obscured. They should have been addressed by the multilateral institutions designed to reconcile the interests of their founding states based on the norms of international law, but they were not.

As a result, even in the opinion of international analysts, losses from the increasing fragmentation of the world economy and trade could reach 7% of global GDP. At the same time, the socioeconomic context has changed. The center of business activity has shifted to the rapidly developing Asian region. A look at the BRICS group of countries and its growing share of global GDP, which has risen from 10.5% in 2005 to about 25% today, shows that in 2023, these countries will already account for a larger share of the world economy than the G7 countries. This points to fundamental contradictions within the system.

The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), one of the most advanced associations in the world in terms of integration level, can and must serve as the backbone, the core of the GEP. The EAEU, whose establishment was a historic milestone in the development of all integration processes in the post-Soviet space, has demonstrated its maturity when stress-tested by the 2020-2021 COVID crisis and the global tensions of 2022.

Let us consider what can be done in the international dimension of this issue over the long term (of course, given political will) and what has already been done.

We will start with a review of the EAEU member states' participation in international organizations – namely, international cooperation formats designed to address specific applied problems, such as promoting free trade (WTO, UNCTAD, and others) and ensuring economic development (IMF, World Bank, and others).

First, we should not immediately reject all that has been created over the years and with our participation – doing so would play into the hands of our opponents. Nevertheless, a rational reassessment is needed of the format and degree of the EAEU member states' participation in numerous international organizations.

Second, it is time to move toward real coordination among the Union's member states on international platforms. Only by acting together can the Union countries ensure their sovereignty in international affairs.

And third, prompt action should be taken to create our own international institutions in critical areas whose smooth operation is required here and now.

We need a professional approach to the establishment of an international organization whose findings would not be influenced by political considerations (in contrast to the "Big Four" audit firms) and could provide a basis for investment decisions throughout the Eurasian region.

IN 2022, the EEC's work on the multilateral international track was significantly recast. Interaction with the SCO took a practical turn, and specific formats of cooperation with BRICS were proposed.

The idea of a common transport and logistics network for Greater Eurasia has been proposed as the basis for cooperation between the EAEU and the SCO. Documents regulating issues related to the development of transport corridors have been approved in both groups. There is also an understanding on the need to digitize logistics and create seamless regulatory documents for customs transit.

Cooperation with BRICS, as I see it, should focus on combining the potentials of our payment and settlement infrastructures and creating a universal financial system. Considering the structure of trade relations between the EAEU and BRICS, the use of national currencies in mutual settlements is particularly justified, and the significant potential for cooperation suggests the possibility of creating a new unit of accounting based on a basket of EAEU and BRICS currencies. It may be interesting and profitable to create a universal payment system involving the issuance of a common payment card (EAEU + BRICS) that would unite the national systems of China (UnionPay), India (RuPay), Brazil (Elo), and EAEU member states (Mir, Belkart, etc.). Based on the positive opinion of public and professional communities about the proposed initiatives,<sup>13</sup> the EEC has started working on them in greater detail.

A new format of cooperation between the EAEU and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) also plays an important role. The CICA is an Asia-wide dialogue forum, with 27 member states, designed to address key regional problems.

Today, the EAEU and its member states have a real opportunity not only to propose our own vision of a just world order (there is nothing new about this, as we were able to propose this vision in the past), but also to build it in practice with our own hands, to determine its form and content in detail. Despite the magnitude of the goal, it is important to work scrupulously and consistently, to accomplish the tasks of the Union's internal development step by step in connection with the external agenda, and vice versa.

Whereas in the past it was often thought that integration associations were just scenery on the international stage, while real politics was made at the bilateral level, today the realities have changed. A high degree of cohesion in the international arena and a coordinated economic development policy are crucial to global success. In this respect, the EAEU has good prospects.

## **Nonprofit Organizations as a Tool for Promoting Russian Priorities in Central Asia**

**Venali Amelin**, *Director, Research Institute of History and Ethnography of the Southern Urals, Orenburg State University, Chairman of the Board of the autonomous nonprofit organization Commonwealth of Eurasian Nations, Professor, Doctor Science (History); [avenali@mail.ru](mailto:avenali@mail.ru)*

*Keywords: Nonprofit organizations, public diplomacy, foreign policy, Russia, Central Asia*

IN RECENT years, a new integration association, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), has been developing in the Eurasian space with the goal of successfully realizing its economic potential and creating a single market for goods, services, capital, and labor.

Civil society institutions also play a role in the successful integration process. This refers to the use by nonprofit organizations of the capabilities of public or popular diplomacy, which meets the requirements of the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation.

This article covers the activities of the autonomous nonprofit organization (ANO) Commonwealth of Eurasian Nations, established in 2014, whose activities focus on forming a positive image of Russia and Orenburg Province in the countries of Central Asia and promoting the need for cooperation and closer integration as part of the EAEU. The main field of activity of this organization is the implementation of social and humanitarian projects jointly with partners from other countries.

Much attention is being paid to information support of integration processes, the dissemination of analytical materials and expert assessments, and the popularization of benefits and advantages of cooperation within the CIS, CSTO, and EAEU. In total, the Commonwealth of Eurasian Nations ANO has made more than 10,000 publications on these topics available in the media of 13 countries: Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine, Estonia, and China.

Another reason why the organization pays a lot of attention to working with young people from both Russia and Kazakhstan is that young people have no experience living together. In recent years, the Commonwealth of Eurasian Nations has organized and held the international youth event "Gagarin's Start: From Orenburg to Baikonur," and the youth forums "We Are Strong in Our Friendship,"



“Neighbors,” and “Us+Biz” (Orenburg, Russia). Participants included Kazakh nationals from the Aktobe, West Kazakhstan, and Kostanay Provinces of the Republic of Kazakhstan that border Orenburg Province. Participants of these events were the most active, concerned, creative, and proactive young people with active civic positions – those invested in the future of their countries.

After Russian President Vladimir Putin’s historic visit to Uzbekistan in 2019 and reciprocal working and official visits by Uzbek President Shamil Mirziyoyev, economic, trade, and humanitarian ties between the two countries are developing successfully. A grandiose Victory Park opened in Tashkent on the 75th anniversary of Victory.

In the countries of Central Asia, and in Russia as well, there is a problem of countering religious extremism. Dozens of important agencies and organizations are professionally dealing with this problem. On the other hand, it is generally accepted that law-enforcement, investigative, and repressive measures alone cannot eradicate religious extremism, the factors that initiate it, and the views and attitudes of people, including those in the high-risk group. Attempts to commit acts of terrorism continue to be thwarted in Russia and Kazakhstan.

Many foreign students from both the near and far abroad study in Russia. For instance, nearly a thousand students from Kazakhstan study at Orenburg State University alone. And here we believe it is important to determine the mechanisms of “soft power” influence through the potential of the foreign students studying there.

The search for effective tools for using “soft power” is still the most important task for Russian society. It is necessary to expand and attract new participants to activities in this area. As is known, the leadership of the Russian Foreign Ministry is interested in the most active and interregional participation of civil society institutions in international activities.

Forms of cooperation vary. They include the exchange of experience, information, professionals, experts, and representatives of ethnocultural associations. Joint activities are carried out: conferences, roundtables, expert forums, and the implementation of various projects. The assemblies of the two countries take measures and create favorable conditions aimed at preserving and developing the national languages, cultural potential, and cultural heritage of peoples living in neighboring territories of the regions based on the principles of mutual benefit and mutual assistance. Meetings of heads of the organization are held both in Russia and Kazakhstan. Delegations of assemblies representing the two countries participate in forums and congresses.

Speaking of interaction between civil society institutions in Russia and Kazakhstan, it is impossible not to note the positive role of women’s and youth organizations in the two countries, where significant positive experience has been accumulated.

## **Spain’s Catalonia Issue**

**Svetlana Gavrilova**, *Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science and Political Philosophy, Diplomatic Academy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Candidate of Science (History); [smgavrilova@gmail.com](mailto:smgavrilova@gmail.com)*

*Keywords: Catalonia, Spain, separatism, regionalism, nationalism, constitution, crisis, referendum*

CONTEMPORARY politics in Spain is marked by extreme instability. The country has been plagued by a string of government crises, the fragmentation of political forces, and complicated electoral processes. But it is Catalan separatism that has dominated Spain’s domestic politics over the past decade. While

initially a local phenomenon in the first few decades of its active existence, after Catalonia's independence referendum in 2017, Catalan separatism has indisputably become a threat to Spain's territorial integrity. It should be said that "separatism" is what politicians and scholars who champion Spain's territorial integrity call Catalonia's bid for independence; those seeking independence for the region prefer the terms "regionalism" and "nationalism."

In general, "separatism" is a fair term, as the main objective of Catalonia's nationalists is to separate the region from the Spanish kingdom and make it an independent state. But this does not change the nature of the problem: The issue is the main point on Spain's domestic political agenda and affects practically all aspects of the country's political, social, and economic affairs. The problem is effectively at an impasse, and the only way to break it is stable dialogue between the governments of Spain and Catalonia. Such dialogue is taking place but has yielded little progress over the last several years. One obstacle is that Catalonia's nationalist groups are divided, which complicates negotiations for the central government. Moreover, far from the entire population of Catalonia wants the region to secede.

Another obstacle is the fragility of the current Spanish government. The ruling Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) is forced to seek support from various groups, including Catalan parties. The potential Catalan allies include separatists, and this confronts the PSOE with the inevitability of making concessions to them. The Catalonia issue is partially rooted in the Spanish Constitution. The current escalation of the Catalan crisis calls into question the viability of the 1978 Constitution, which apparently fails to meet present-day political, economic, and social challenges and needs revision. On the other hand, there is no guarantee that a constitutional reform would defuse the tensions fanned by the Catalonia problem, because the proposed federalization of Spain would still fall short of satisfying the demands of the Catalan nationalists.

SPAIN'S administrative division system gives more rights to some regions than to others, and this causes problems in the central government's relations with some regional authorities.

It needs to be stressed in this context that separatism is not just a Spanish problem. There also exist hotbeds of separatism in other European countries, including Britain, Belgium, and Italy, though in Italy it is much less of a problem today.

THE general political crisis in Spain that had spanned several years and involved unstable cabinets and intense divisions among the electorate formally ended with the swearing-in of the second cabinet of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez in January 2020. But it affected the government: The PSOE had to form a coalition with the Unidas Podemos electoral alliance and the Socialists' Party of Catalonia (PSC). As of autumn 2022, PSC members held two cabinet seats.

The political climate within Catalonia is also an important factor. In the 2021 Catalan regional elections, the PSC and the Republican Left of Catalonia received 33 parliamentary seats each, Together for Catalonia won 32 seats, and the Popular Unity Candidacy got nine seats. Together for Catalonia calls for the region's unilateral secession and refuses to discuss the matter with the central government. The Republican Left, on the other hand, believes that talks with Madrid are possible and necessary.

Russian scholar Vladimir Vernikov says that the elections "confirmed... the falling prestige of nationalist parties because of the unpopularity of their leaders and persistent efforts to force the idea of a referendum on unilateral secession from Spain on the electorate."

Economic considerations remain one of the main factors of Catalan separatism. Catalonia is one of the most developed Spanish regions. As of 2022, Catalonia was responsible for the largest share of Spain's gross domestic product – 21%. It also has an unemployment rate lower than the Spanish average: The rates for the fourth quarter of 2022 were 9.91% versus 12.87% nationwide.<sup>19</sup> But it remains to be seen whether secession would bring Catalonia any economic benefits. Inevitably, the region's GDP would

shrink; logistical chains would be broken; and there would be capital outflows and stock exchange crashes, as well as higher social, defense, and government spending.

In January 2022, Aragonès had said that “a referendum is necessary” and that Catalonia’s “right to self-determination is inevitable.” But in a later speech, he said that his government was seeking dialogue with Madrid. These inconsistencies, threats, and ongoing aggressive rhetoric suggest that Catalan leaders are much less open to dialogue than the central government.

The secession issue has precipitated a host of problems. Catalan society is split over the independence issue, controversies between Catalan political elites and their inconsistencies are making the crisis difficult to resolve, and dialogue between Madrid and the Generalitat is in jeopardy after barely starting. The position of Aragonès raises a lot of questions. Even though his own position is rather shaky, he has made radical statements that have sparked a Catalan government crisis, endangering the region’s dialogue with the central government and dimming prospects for a compromise solution. His actions have provoked regression on Spain’s main domestic political issue. With support for the independence idea dwindling among Catalonia’s population, the Republican Left may lose some of its voters because of Aragonès’s actions.

GIVEN its domestic instability, the growing stratification of its electorate, and the transformation of its political system, Spain desperately needs national unity, and the sooner the Catalonia problem is solved the better. Otherwise, the current Spanish government risks facing a vote of no confidence, and forming a stable new cabinet would be problematic given the country’s continued overall instability.

Radical separatists are losing support both from some fellow nationalists and from Catalonia’s population. If the central government is able to defuse growing tensions over the Catalonia issue, the PSOE would have more freedom in decision-making, without having to rely on regional forces. But any mistake on Madrid’s part, such as the mistake the People’s Party made after the 2017 referendum, may exacerbate the crisis.

## **Kosovo at a Dangerous Point: The False Assumptions of the West and Genuine Dialogue as the Only Alternative**

**Alexander Botsan-Kharchenko**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Serbia*; [rusembserbia@mid.ru](mailto:rusembserbia@mid.ru)

*Keywords: Kosovo and Metohija, the Kosovo issue, the collective West, NATO, US, EU*

TODAY is December 20, 2022. In recent weeks, the situation in the Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohija has been troubled and highly charged. Serbs in northern Kosovo have been at the barricades for more than 10 days now. For them, this is the only way to protect themselves from aggressive arbitrary action by the self-proclaimed Pristina “authorities” who are seeking – with the connivance or de facto support of their Western handlers – to gain control over the Serb-populated northern part of the province and enclaves south of the Ibar River. Belgrade has emphasized its commitment to finding a peaceful solution but has made it clear that it will not tolerate a new cycle of violence against Kosovo Serbs, whatever the cost.

The Kosovo issue has been the main threat to peace and stability in the Balkans for almost a quarter-century. The root cause here is the anti-Serb bias of the Washington-led collective West: disregard for the legitimate interests of Belgrade and the Kosovo Serbs and pandering to the separatist aspirations of the Kosovo Albanians in contravention of international law

Starting in the mid-1990s, Western-supported radical forces in the province adopted terrorist methods and established a so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), whose victims were both Serbs and Kosovo Albanians (today, a Special Court in The Hague is investigating the atrocities committed by the KLA). In its fight against the KLA, Belgrade invariably pursued a political-diplomatic settlement of the status of Kosovo and was ready to grant the broadest possible autonomy to Pristina. But this option evidently did not suit the Western countries involved. And this is understandable: They needed to use the “Kosovo project” in the war against Serbia.

On March 24, 1999, the North Atlantic Alliance – in disregard of international law, without the approval of the UN Security Council – unleashed aggression against independent sovereign Yugoslavia, a founding state of the UN. The false pretext used at the time was an alleged massacre of “Kosovo Albanian civilians” in the village of Račak by Serbian special forces, as recorded by a team of OSCE inspectors led by an American, William Walker. In fact, they turned out to be fighters of KLA gangs dressed up as civilians

The 78-day-long brutal bombing campaign that included the use of depleted uranium ammunition was cynically declared a “humanitarian intervention” called Merciful Angel.

The NATO invasion was halted and the Kosovo issue was put back on the agenda of the UN Security Council largely owing to Russia.

The dialogue between Serbs and Kosovo Albanians was resumed only several years later, in accordance with the wishes of the then authorities in Belgrade, this time under the auspices of the European Union (today, the team of Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić openly refers to that decision of the previous authorities as mistaken and short-sighted). The EU’s mediation mandate was approved by UN General Assembly Resolution 64/298 of September 9, 2010.

This unprincipled approach does no credit to the EU. It shows that the EU strategy leaves no room for a sincere intention to promote a settlement and build trust between the Albanian majority and other ethnic communities living in the province. Let me add that the EU’s behavior can hardly be called consistent or rational as it cannot be explained using common sense, especially since Serbia remains a candidate for accession to the EU “club,” while a renewal of crisis processes in the Balkans would have a direct effect on European security.

As for Pristina itself, during the almost 15 years of its unilaterally proclaimed “independence,” it has been unable to demonstrate its sovereign capacity. It is no coincidence that today more than half of all UN member countries do not agree with the “sovereignization” of this quasi-entity. In recent years, owing to the systematic efforts of Serbian diplomacy, a number of countries have withdrawn their recognition of Kosovo’s pseudo-statehood, hastily granted at the behest of Washington

The Pristina “elite,” blinded by Serbophobia, have neither strategic vision nor an understanding of the goals and objectives of sustainable development. Internal political turbulence has become chronic. Long-overdue social reforms are not being implemented.

Pristina’s incapacity and inability to negotiate have affected the Brussels dialogue as well. Instead of fulfillment in good faith of previously assumed obligations and an expert study of the negotiation agenda, Kosovo Albanian representatives put forward artificial demands designed to make a splash.

A fact to be noted is that Western representatives keep introducing new ideas into the dialogue. When speaking of the negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell hinted at the advisability of switching to the so-called Franco-German settlement plan, which implies Belgrade’s consent to Kosovo joining international organizations, including the UN.

So far, Western coercive measures – from NATO aggression to blackmailing of the Serbs with the prospect of a “bright Eurointegration future” (without specifying when this future will arrive, the West is urging Serbia, even today, to abandon Kosovo, turn its back on Russia, China, and other non-Western partners, and adopt the ultra-liberal values agenda without a murmur) – have not brought the desired result: i.e., Serbia’s total submission, its loss of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Russia will continue to act in close coordination with Belgrade to protect Serbia’s legitimate rights regarding the Kosovo and Metohija province.

As Russian President Vladimir Putin noted, Russia’s position on the Kosovo issue remains unchanged. We want to see Belgrade and Pristina reach a mutually acceptable and viable solution in strict compliance with international law, based on UN Security Council Resolution 1244. Such a solution must serve the interests of Belgrade and the Serbian people and be approved by the UN Security Council.

Let me emphasize that routine approaches are unacceptable, just as attempts to establish a time frame for the settlement. Western countries should abandon their biased unilateral course of action, their favorite double or even triple standards. Creating a fair architecture for final agreements on Kosovo and Metohija will take time and hard work.

Only genuine dialogue can bring peace and harmony to the Balkans. It will open up new horizons for socioeconomic and infrastructure development in the region and make it possible to maintain its cultural and religious diversity and preserve its rich historical heritage. For our part, we are ready to promote such a constructive dialogue in every way.

## **Lithuania and Belarus Between a Rock and a Hard Place: National Post-Soviet Transition Models**

**Nikolai Mezhevich**, *Chief Researcher, Russian Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Europe, President, Association of Baltic Studies*; [mez13@mail.ru](mailto:mez13@mail.ru)

*Keywords: Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, socioeconomic and political development models*

THE marking of a full 30 years of the post-Soviet space, which coincided with a severe global economic crisis and the Special Military Operation in Ukraine, are reason enough to revisit the question of what has happened along Russia’s Western borders. Since the early 1990s, the Russian expert community has adopted the Western paradigm of assessing transformation processes as a single model that can be applied at the very least from Tallinn to Chisinau, and at most from Vilnius to Dushanbe. It did not immediately become clear that in analyzing macroeconomic indicators, Western experts “tend to think globally or in regional terms, while studies of national specifics are few and far between, but this is precisely where the devil is.”

Is this one reason why Russian policy in neighboring countries is not effective enough? Proceeding from this, we will try to find answers to several difficult questions.

: Modernization theory is based on “concepts formulated in the West for the breakthrough development of economically underdeveloped countries (the world economic periphery) through the adaptation of capitalist institutions....” In other words, the version of the modernization theory that was voluntarily/compulsorily implemented in the space from Ulan Bator to Prague was an oversimplification of a really complex, complicated, and interesting set of research approaches related to the evolution of the market economy since the late 19th century.

A national economic model is a formalized description of key principles of state development. The basis of any modern state policy is not a market economy but a national model.

Let us consider the main characteristics of national economic models. First, the integration factor has proved very important for Lithuania and Belarus. Lithuania's accession to the EU was an important but somewhat overestimated event.

A significant segment of the Lithuanian economy was inefficient in the global market. But such abandonment on a large scale of industrial and agricultural production is uncalled for.

In terms of the economic complexity index, the Lithuanian economy is rapidly going downhill, losing high-tech technologies.

These political decisions and their economic consequences are history now. Let us consider the current development of the two countries' economic models. Both Belarus and Lithuania specialize in transportation and transit services. The transportation and logistics sector is experiencing difficulties all over the world. Still, in Lithuania, half the transit and transportation companies have gone bankrupt; of those that remain, one in three will cease to exist in 2023. All this is the result of sanctions against Russia and Belarus, which, from an economic standpoint, are Lithuania's sanctions against Lithuania itself. We acknowledge that rerouting Belarusian cargo to Russian ports is not the optimal solution in terms of logistics, but the Union State [of Belarus and Russia] can always compensate for the length of transportation routes with balanced tariffs. Without Russian and Belarusian cargoes, Lithuania will have no alternative commercial cargo for Klaipeda.

There are practically no hydrocarbons in either Belarus or Lithuania. However, Lithuania was among the countries that initiated the scrapping of long-term contracts with Russia. As a result, the price of liquefied natural gas (LNG) for Lithuania "competes" with the price of pipeline gas for Belarus. The same goes for oil.

BELARUS'S successful socioeconomic development is a source of intense irritation for the Belarusian émigré community, as well as for Lithuania's political elites. There is a certain logic to this. It is rather difficult to compare Lithuania with Russia, or Moscow with Vilnius, based on economic parameters, since these entities are incomparable. Lithuania and Belarus are quite a different case, which lends itself to academic and political logic.

Lithuania's socioeconomic development model is a natural result of authoritarian rule, liberal economic practices, uniquely irrational nationalism, and the desovereignization of foreign policy practices.

Belarus's economic and political development model is the result of a balanced multivector policy that takes into account specific historical conditions; the institution of a social state with a post-Keynesian market economy; and positive effects of cooperation within the Union State and the Eurasian Economic Union.

## **Ukraine's Peacetime Post-Soviet Integration: A Failed Project and Reasons for Missed Opportunities**

*Aleksandr Irkhin, Head, Political Science Department, Institute of Social Sciences and International Relations, Sevastopol State University, Assistant Professor, Doctor of Science (Political Science); alex.irhin@mail.ru*

*Natalya Demeshko, Assistant Professor, Political Science Department, Institute of Social Sciences and*

*Keywords: Russia, Ukraine, integration processes, new system of international relations*

Today, a new system of international relations is unfolding in a world led, if not dominated, by Western civilization, which for several centuries now has been successfully depriving its rivals of the status of imperial spaces (macroregions), pushing aside all potential rivals in the struggle for resources in the widest sense of the word (from human or informational to hydrocarbon) and integrating those rivals into a world order set up to suit its interests and civilizational ideas. It relies on military, economic, information, cultural, and elite technologies to transform its rivals into a periphery of secondary importance, to deprive them of a chance to successfully compete in the geopolitical arena. The countries in the periphery or semi-periphery of the system of the economic division of labor cannot effectively protect their national interests while relying on the civilizational principles and ideas of others and remaining within an alien mental field.

The post-1991 political reality transformed the post-Soviet space into a zone of sharp competition of integration projects. Russia's priority interests have been consistently squeezed out of this space under the pressure of the interests and positions of other geopolitical actors: the US, EU (Germany and Poland), Turkey, and China. Although enfeebled by its internal problems and external challenges, Iran has not abandoned its pressure on Central Asia and the South Caucasus. Each of these centers are proposing integration models with certain civilizational aspects that become obvious when the entire set of civilizational factors becomes clear.

Since February 24, 2022, the restoration of its historic geopolitical space (the imperial space of Russia and the USSR) has become an existential problem for the Russian Federation and a choice between the role of an independent development center in the emerging world and the role of a periphery and "fertilizer" of sorts for other civilizational and geopolitical projects.

In this article, we will try to explain the reasons for the limited effectiveness, in the post-Soviet political reality, of Russia's integration projects implemented in Ukraine that ultimately cost Russia the Ukrainian space and led to the political and, to a large extent, civilizational re-coding that made it possible for contemporary Ukraine to exist as an anti-Russia. We will identify elements of a model of an indispensable and functional Russian integration project for Ukraine in peacetime, as well as for the rest of the post-Soviet space, whose elites are closely following the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and will undoubtedly prefer a peaceful model of reintegration with Russia.

The obvious course toward rapid reintegration into Russian integration models failed apparently for two general reasons: (1) there were too many competing integration projects in the post-Soviet space, and (2) the integration projects proposed by Russia were of secondary importance compared with Western projects.

In the context of the post-Soviet economic and political development model, the Ukrainian elite were forced to choose between the narrow prospect of joint decisions and other options. The Russian elite and the elite of all post-Soviet republics regarded the West as the center of political and economic legitimacy. Russia's integration model looked dubious: Its elite, like the Ukrainian elite, relied on the same source of political and financial-economic legitimacy.

Lev Gumilev described the technologies used by the West to determine the future civilizational choice of Ukraine – either the West or the East – and found a certain pattern in the pro-Western course of the Ukrainian elite [2, pp. 162, 170, 308]. He based his hypothesis on the foreign policy choice of Daniil of Galich and Alexander Nevsky. The former received the crown from the Pope to become king of the

western Russian lands. He had fought the Mongols, yet 80 years after his death, his kingdom became part of Poland without a fight and without any resistance.

An analysis of the regional level of Western integration projects in the post-Soviet space suggests that irrespective of which of the Western centers (France after World War I through the Polish Prometheus project and the idea of the Balto-Pontic federation of free people; the US after the Cold War through the GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development or the Community of Democratic Choice; the EU through the Eastern Partnership) implements an integration project, it inevitably becomes an arc that connects the Baltic with the South Caucasus and even with Central Asia. Ukraine, with its long Black Sea littoral, and Georgia are critically important.

To be successfully implemented in the post-Soviet space, a Russian integration project must first reject the dual dependence of the Russian and Ukrainian economic systems and their status of semi-periphery and periphery, respectively. They must abandon their dependence on the export of energy and raw-material resources and decrease their dependence on the world financial center. Today, this is a dividing line between the post-Soviet elite and society. The former acquires maximally high incomes while the raw-material specialization served as the cornerstone of the integration of the post-Soviet economic systems into the world economy. On the other hand, this led to a catastrophic drop in birthrate and life expectancy in both Russia and Ukraine.

Comprehensive security cooperation of the post-Soviet states is the second element of lasting and successful integration.

The third condition is the advancement of a competitive idea in the conceptual space that would explain to external centers the need for an integration project and, even more importantly, create supranational identities inside the imperial space.

The fourth indispensable component of a Eurasian integration project is mechanisms of control of the material consumption of the elites and the promotion of a wide social project.

The fifth element of the integration model is closely connected with the above: elaboration and implementation of a wide social project as the main idea that can inspire reintegration of the post-Soviet space "from below."

A new system of international relations based on the logic of Big Spaces (macroregions) presupposes that until 2014, Ukraine's national interests were determined by the extent to which it could increase its role and, therefore, agency in the process of integration in one macroregion. Due to poor conceptual elaboration and practical implementation of Eurasian integration, Ukraine faces the threat of being swallowed by the Eurasian or European integration model on less profitable economic and sociopolitical terms or being divided between them.

## **Anti-Russian Ukraine: From a Puppet of Germany and Austria-Hungary to the American Occupation and the War Against Russia**

**Vladimir Kiknadze**, *Editor-in-Chief of the journal Nauka. Obshchestvo. Oborona [Science. Society. Defense]*, *corresponding member, Russian Academy of Missile and Artillery Sciences (Moscow)*, *Associate Professor, Doctor of Science (History)*; [KiknadzeVG@mail.ru](mailto:KiknadzeVG@mail.ru)



*Keywords: nationalism, denazification, Special Military Operation (SMO), Cold War, WWII, victory over fascism*

How has nationalism developed into such radical forms in Ukraine that the Russian Army now has to solve the problem of its denazification? What role did the politics of memory and artificial historical discourse play in the development of Ukrainian nationalism?

The chief ideologue and recruiter of the Azov gang of Ukrainian punishers (banned in Russia), Vladislav Dutchak, who goes by the nickname Dotsent [assistant professor], talking about his methods of work and the secrets of the Kiev regime in an interview on NTV (October 30, 2022) while in Russian captivity, said that he proved his loyalty to Hitler's ideas by professionally brainwashing people.

There can be no doubt that the so-called national historical discourse in Ukraine is artificial. Moreover, it primarily serves the interests of other states, other peoples, transnational beneficiaries, and corrupt Ukrainian elites.

What the Third Reich needed was not individuals, but individuals – people with fragmented notions of reality. Such people are easier to manipulate, imposing upon them one's will, including bestial hatred of imaginary enemies – “subhumans,” both internal (Jews, Roma) and external (Slavs). And the result is obvious.

A similar algorithm of zombification with fascist ideology has been used in Ukraine. On March 30, 2022, Russian Education Minister Sergey Kravtsov reported that more than 50 experts, teachers, and historians had analyzed textbooks and teaching aids used by teachers and schoolchildren in Ukraine. It turned out that entire chapters of history had been deliberately falsified.

Note that he was threatening to exterminate not Russians but a nation – all the citizens of a state with a single common identity. Every single citizen of Russia, regardless of nationality. And carrying out this threat is only possible by means of a Russia-wide massacre. In fact, what he was calling for was a total terrorist war both in Ukraine and in Russia, coveted by the US. But he himself did not go to the front. He “fought” on the airwaves...

For more details on the history of Ukrainian nationalism and the role of historical discourse in its development, as well as the history of the preparation, beginning, and course of the Russian Armed Forces' SMO in Ukraine, see the author's book titled *Sila V pravde. Zashchita istoricheskoy pamyati kak strategicheskoy natsionalnoy prioriteta Rossii* [Power in Truth. The Protection of Historical Memory as Russia's Strategic National Priority] (Moscow: Veche, 2022).

## **Prospects for Russia's Relations With African States**

**Galina Sidorova**, *Leading Researcher, Institute for African Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Professor, Diplomatic Academy, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Professor, Moscow State Linguistic University, Doctor Science (Political Sciences); [gal\\_sid@mail.ru](mailto:gal_sid@mail.ru)*

*Keywords: Russia, Africa, security, cooperation, prospects, national interests, armed conflicts*

RECENTLY, the African continent has found itself at the center of Russian and foreign media attention. We see headlines such as “Fight for Africa,” “Bet on Cooperation,” “The Russians Are Coming,” and so on. Detailed discussions and conferences devoted to the problems and prospects of cooperation take place on various platforms. This revival is a result of the Russia-Africa Forum, which took place in 2019 in

Sochi, giving a certain boost to Russia's interactions with the continent's countries and causing considerable anxiety in the Western countries that formerly colonized the continent. Preparations for the second large-scale Russia-Africa Summit in St. Petersburg, scheduled for July 2023, are in full swing.

It is important to realistically assess the existing political, diplomatic, and financial resources of the country, as well as to take the peculiarities of African traditions and mentality into account. The African continent has more than a billion people living in an area of 30 million square kilometers.

We need consistency and a balanced analysis of the situation in any given African country, a risk assessment, since local armed conflicts take place in many countries, especially south of the Sahara. The result is political chaos and the absence of laws to protect businesses and human life. In addition, the legal framework for relations with Russia needs to be substantially updated. Bilateral treaties concluded in the Soviet era in various areas are catastrophically outdated – not only political realities but the very names of countries and their constitutional foundations have changed.

THE pressure that Western countries have put on their African partners to refuse cooperation with Russia does not always have a positive effect. At the US-African Leaders' Summit in Washington in December 2022, which played out as an undisguised tug of war, US President Joe Biden once again attempted to lure African heads of state to the West's side with lucrative promises. At the same time, Washington officially stated that it was not forcing partners to choose between "us or them," but simply suggested that they consider the consequences of contact with "them." However, African leaders are quite familiar with the "carrot" policy and its implications from history lessons, so they remain skeptical.

AN IMPORTANT and promising area of cooperation between Russia and African states, in addition to the areas listed above, is military technology. This fact was confirmed by the reset of Russian-African relations during the Russia-Africa summit in Sochi, where this became a key issue. Considering the difficult military and political situation in a number of African states, with illegal armed groups operating on their territory, the security sector of these countries is in dire need of assistance and support. The tasks in question include officer training, the supply and repair of military equipment, and support for national armies in case of conflict.

Russia's Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Internal Affairs are actively training national African army and police personnel. [Russian state-run arms exporter] Rosoboronexport has stepped up work on orders for African countries. According to the Rosoboronexport press service, the volume of contracts signed in 2021 with sub-Saharan countries alone approached 2.5 billion euros.<sup>13</sup> In the future, this leading joint-stock company plans to expand the range of weapons and military equipment exported from Russia.

IT SHOULD be noted that Russia's diplomacy in Africa has been developing successfully in general, despite the problematic nature of the situation in the world. This is evidenced by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's visit to Egypt, the Republic of the Congo, Uganda, and Ethiopia in July 2022. Under the new conditions, according to the minister, long-term plans are being developed in such areas as energy, geological exploration, mining, science and education, telecommunications, cybersecurity, and agriculture. Projects related to cooperation on the use of nuclear technologies for medicine and agriculture, as well as initiatives for future cooperation in launching a Ugandan satellite into Earth's orbit, are also on the agenda.<sup>18</sup> Lavrov made an important statement that the new edition of the Russian Foreign Policy Strategy will pay increased attention to relations with African countries as the Western direction fades.

Russia needs Africa just as much as Africa needs Russia. This is evidenced by historical facts in favor of multilateral cooperation.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, the role and significance of the emerging new trends on the continent should not be exaggerated. Most countries on the African continent remain below the poverty line; rural residents have no access to drinking water, and many suffer from tropical diseases.

Political processes are fluid and subject to sudden changes. One cannot help agreeing with Korendyasov that, “in all likelihood, a stable trajectory of the evolution of African states will remain unattainable in the foreseeable future.”<sup>20</sup> In this regard, we must not underestimate the circumstances or overestimate the possibilities.

## **Intellectual Property Organizations in Africa**

**Grigory Ivliyev**, *President, Eurasian Patent Office, Candidate of Science (Law)*; [Rospat130@rupto.ru](mailto:Rospat130@rupto.ru)

*Keywords: OAPI, intellectual property (IP), ARIPO, WIPO*

THE 1970s saw the beginning of the large-scale process of various countries joining forces to protect intellectual property (IP) rights. The European Patent Convention, signed in 1973, is a set of general rules on patenting various kinds of inventions. African regional IP organizations play a special role in regional IP protection systems, and in this article, we examine their activities.

IP protection is an inalienable part of the mutual economic integration process that may involve countries constituting a geographical region. Protecting IP rights amounts to legal measures that are essentially the same in many countries.

Regional patent organizations are based on international agreements, have a certain structure, and are international legal entities. Thus, they are intergovernmental bodies. However, they are highly specialized organizations authorized to issue regional patents that are valid in member countries of these organizations. The regional patent organization has a special agency in its structure – the regional patent office – that processes the applications. The office collaborates closely with the national patent offices of member countries of the organization. Regional organizations charge fees to issue patents.

The main reason for creating African regional organizations was not a common economic space or economic harmonization based on developed legislation, as was the case of the European Patent Organisation, which, as the EPO, was established in 1977, and the Eurasian Patent Organization, set up in 1994, but a legislative gap in IP protection and an urgent need to fill it.

ARIPO’s member states have their own IP legislation, which inevitably influences the nature of IP documents.

The organization is not mandated to issue a standard patent valid in all member countries. The ARIPO procedure requires a patent application to be submitted to ARIPO or a national office, indicating one or several states where protection is sought, after which the organization reviews the application and, if the application meets all the requirements, notifies the applicant and the offices of the states indicated in the application. In effect, reviews are made in all indicated countries and are based on their own legislation. In six months’ time, ARIPO registers patents valid in countries that have not submitted written rejections of the application.

ARIPO supports programs at universities and has set up its own educational institution, the ARIPO Academy. ARIPO and WIPO plan to eventually make the academy a regional educational center. The academy seeks to promote the development of IP protection systems in Africa, train experts, boost the development of human capital in the IP field, draw up educational programs and modules, conduct research, provide public information on various aspects of IP protection, and cooperate and partner with IP centers worldwide.

The fruitfulness of cooperation among countries in the region depends quite heavily on their level of economic development and mutual economic integration. This cooperation must be formally based on agreements, and there are numerous accords that regulate the protection of practically all types of IP, with the number of signatories growing all the time. This contributes to the development of the international IP protection system.

The chief mission of global IP organizations is to create and monitor agreements that set minimum standards for IP protection, while regional organizations promote cooperation within their regions and adapt world standards to regional realities. International organizations also register IP rights, provide facilities for exchanging experience and information, help enlarge and improve human resources, compile statistics, make reviews of IP protection activities, and most importantly, serve as discussion forums.

Eurasian and African organizations will undoubtedly continue to cooperate fruitfully for the good of member countries, their innovators, and government agencies.

## **Alexander Rubtsov at the Russian Museum: A Long Journey Home**

**Nikolai Sologubovsky**, *Journalist*

*Keywords: Alexander Rubtsov, the Russian painter who glorified Tunisia*

TRADITIONALLY friendly Russian-Tunisian relations have a long history. They are successfully developing in various fields, filled with new content but invariably maintaining positive dynamics. A trusting political dialogue is combined with fairly robust trade and economic cooperation, including in such science-intensive industries as nuclear energy and space exploration. Ties are being strengthened in education and health care, including in the fight against the novel coronavirus infection. Russian language and culture maintain strong positions in Tunisia.

Against this backdrop, there is growing interest in common historical heritage. Many details of the formation of the first Russian diaspora in Tunisia, associated with the exodus from Crimea, the centennial of which was celebrated in 2020, are already well known. Back then, at the end of the Russian Civil War, 33 ships of the Black Sea squadron with our sailors and their families arrived in the Tunisian port of Bizerte from Crimea. Among them was Anastasia Manstein-Chirinskaya, an elder of the Russian community in Tunisia, who lived in this city almost all her life and taught mathematics at the local lyceum for many years. Noting the merits of this extraordinary woman, the Tunisian authorities named a square next to the Russian Orthodox Church in her honor. Today, the Russian Naval Squadron Museum, which she founded, operates in Bizerte.

But the fate of other Russians, who by the will of God found themselves on Tunisian soil, is no less interesting. And here, of course, we must mention the Russian artist Alexander Rubtsov, who settled in Tunisia in 1914. It was he who managed to capture on his canvases the special charm of this North African country, where the bright color of the Mediterranean and the hot breath of the Sahara are intricately intertwined. No less significant is the fact that the mission of acquainting our art lovers with the works of Rubtsov was undertaken by the famous restaurateur and patron Medi Duss, who has been working in Russia for three decades.

AN EXHIBITION of paintings by Alexander Rubtsov, a unique Russian artist who by the will of fate became a celebrator and chronicler of Tunisia, organized by the Tunisian collector and art patron Medi

Duss together with the State Russian Museum and with the participation of Gregory Baltzer, head of Baltzer Auction Agency, was successfully held in St. Petersburg.

The exhibition featured works from the private collection of Medi Duss – more than 80 paintings and drawings from various years – as well as works by the artist's teachers, Jan Ciągliński and Dmitry Kardovsky, from the collection of the Russian Museum.

Alexander Rubtsov was born on January 24, 1884, in St. Petersburg. In 1904, he graduated with honors from the Eighth St. Petersburg Gymnasium and studied painting at the Imperial Academy of Arts under Kardovsky and Ciągliński.

The artist, who signed his paintings "Iskander Rubtsov," spent most of his life in immigration. According to his biographers, from 1914 he lived and worked in Tunisia.

" 'Why am I not leaving Tunisia?' I ask myself and answer: 'I could leave Tunisia, but I would always be nostalgic for the hues and colors,' " the artist wrote in his diary.

From time to time, Rubtsov, who had become a naturalized French citizen, would travel to Europe. Almost every year, he exhibited his works in France and, repeatedly, in Rabat, the capital of Morocco. The artist was awarded the Order of the French Academy of Arts. In Tunisia, he was involved in the creation of an art center.

In 1947, the artist visited France for the last time and held a solo exhibition at the La Boétie Gallery in Paris. Le Figaro reported that the French president expressed admiration for Rubtsov's *Arab Woman*.

Today, Rubtsov's artistic legacy is the subject of research and debate by foreign art historians. The Alexander Rubtsov Art Association, which has existed in France since 1980, seeks to popularize the master's heritage.

Art historian Natalia Gadalina believes that the Rubtsov phenomenon is interesting today not only because of his significance for Tunisian art and the stable French tradition of studying the artist's work. His creative individuality, belonging simultaneously to Russian, French, and Arab cultures, combined opposite traits. He combined an academic approach toward nature with the principles of new French art, the refinement of the European intellectual with the naiveté of Arab subjects, and the idea of art as a profession with the romantic ideals of spiritual freedom.

Alexander Rubtsov was buried by his compatriots in the Russian section of the Borgel Christian Cemetery in Tunisia. His coffin was covered with a St. Andrew's flag from one of the warships of the Russian squadron that came to Tunisia in 1920-1921. Thus ended the journey of the Russian painter who gave his talent to his beloved Tunisia.

The outstanding artist Alexander Rubtsov is now revered in Tunisia, remembered in France, and cherished in Russia. In early 2023, an exhibition of his works was held in Kazan. But paintings from the collection of Medi Duss continue their journey across Russia.

## **Vladimir Yuryevich Zakharov Turns 75**

"If you choose diplomacy as your profession, you should be aware that you are committing yourself to a round-the-clock job. All that really matters is doing your duty at any cost and following high standards in this work. Being a diplomat would primarily require you to mobilize all your resources, to be flexible,

and naturally to possess extensive knowledge. For a diplomat, education is a never-ending process.” –  
*Vladimir Zakharov*

DEAR Vladimir Yuryevich [Zakharov],  
Please accept our sincere congratulations on this landmark date.

We are grateful for your cooperation with our journal. Your insightful, professional articles on subjects such as Chinese foreign policy, relations between Asia-Pacific countries, and activities by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are always welcomed by our audience. This is natural because your many years of experience as a Russian diplomat posted in China and afterward as deputy secretary-general of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are a guarantee of profound and detailed analysis of developments in Asia.

One can envy students who have had a chance to hear your lectures and make use of your trove of knowledge and wisdom.

One, besides, cannot fail to mention studies of Chinese culture that you and your wife have made jointly. This research has resulted in unique books for children about Chinese traditions, symbols, and folk crafts.

May you, Vladimir Yuryevich, and your family, stay healthy, achieve new professional accomplishments, and have many more years of service to the country.

*International Affairs team*

## **Middle East Wars**

**Alexander Frolov**, *Leading Researcher, Yevgeny Primakov Institute of the World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), Russian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Science (Political Science);*  
[afrolov\\_53@mail.ru](mailto:afrolov_53@mail.ru)

*Keywords: Middle East, war, military operations, conflicts*

MY FORAY into Arab studies happened to coincide with an exacerbation of the situation in the Middle East and then with the Arab-Israeli war of 1973, which to a certain extent influenced my interest in Middle Eastern affairs. The Middle East is a unique region of practically incessant fighting, due not just to the political, economic, ethnic, religious, and development differences of its countries, but also to the diverse influences from external players. The Middle Eastern countries have become the world's main users of weapons, and weapons are not always the best means of achieving peace.

The division of ethnic groups and religious communities by state borders has made matters worse. Some countries have sought to use ethnic or religious minorities in neighboring countries to their ends, thus raising the threat of conflicts. Moreover, there are no marked and guarded borders in desert areas, which enables camel caravans or mechanized columns to move easily from country to country.

The wars and conflicts in the Middle East have differed significantly in nature and scale. Besides the Arab-Israeli wars and periodic flare-ups of the situation, there have been civil wars in the region.

One salient feature of Middle East wars are strategic miscalculations – essentially, underestimating the power or morale of the enemy and overestimating one's own power. Correct assessments are difficult to make. But the behavior of neighboring countries that are potential third parties is even harder to

foresee, regardless of the character of one's relations or agreements with them – to say nothing of the behavior of influential extraregional players such as the US, Russia, China, or Western Europe.

Occupied territory is easier to control by stationing troops on it, but the situation changes quickly if they leave. An occupying country will mainly need its armed forces on the front line and will partly seek to solve the problem by setting up provisional administrations, but often these administrations show questionable effectiveness and are staffed by people who are corrupt and want to wrench as much money as possible from their new bosses. In short, without a military presence, such territories are poorly controlled or not controlled at all and are a source of threats to the occupiers. The number of American troops deployed in Afghanistan (130,000 at the peak) were in no way enough to control the country.

The hope for support that invaders usually pin on a kindred ethnic or religious group in the country they are invading often proves misplaced; these groups are often loyal to their country of residence, and their members primarily identify themselves as citizens of that country. Saddam Hussein expected that the Arabic-speaking population of Iran's Khuzestan Province would, if not support, at least sympathize with Iraq in the IranIraq war. But most Khuzestani Arabs sided with Tehran. Nor did it help their self-proclaimed liberator that he had brought war, suffering, and devastation to their peaceful life. And the expectation of Iran, a mostly Shia Muslim country, that its counterattacks would be backed by the Shia community of Iraq, which made up the majority of that country's Muslims, proved mistaken, too. Shias and Sunnis fought the Iranians together.

Logistical issues affected the entire Iran-Iraq war. Practically from the start of the war in 1980, the whole world helped Iraq, even the main Cold War adversaries, the USSR and US. Iran's military found itself beset with heavy shortages of materiel. The reason was that, by their warnings about igniting Islamic revolutions in other countries, the ayatollahs frightened the US, Western Europe, the Arab monarchies, and the Soviet Union, which had a large Muslim community and until then had stood up for all revolutionary developments. Iran ended up with strict sanctions slapped on it.

In the bipolar world of the second half of the 20th century, a great power would usually help address the logistical problems of its allies or clients in the event of conflict. But the situation became much more complicated after the collapse of the bilateral system. Those who start a war do not know when exactly it will be over or what its outcome will be, because various additional factors may emerge during the war. Moreover, any war of conquest is aimed at strengthening the country that has started it, something that normally runs against the interests of various actors in world politics.

Motivation plays a tremendous role in war. Invaders have normally used not only propaganda but also material stimuli to motivate their society and armed forces, promising, for example, an increase in national wealth or bonuses to soldiers. Most wars have been aimed at taking hold of something valuable, not areas in a lifeless desert.

This study prompts the following conclusions:

- It is objectively difficult to name a country that could solve a problem through armed force in a way that would satisfy its interests.
- Attempts by large countries to force their will on smaller countries through war have eventually been unsuccessful; armed action by smaller countries to resolve conflicts with weakened larger countries make even less sense.
- It is the ruling elites, not ordinary people, who need wars.
- An invader enters foreign territory and occupies it but does not enter the hearts of those who inhabit it.
- The population of an invaded country will always see the invaders leave.
- Weapons are important in the initial stages of a war but lose their significance if the war takes longer than expected; morale is more important in a war than the most modern and sophisticated weapons.

- A war against a country that threatens the interests of its people cannot last long.
- It is again vital to adopt collective peace and security measures for the Middle East.

## **The Rise and Fall of the Taliban**

**Roman Shchedrov**, Pashto translator and interpreter; [olecaqraf@mail.ru](mailto:olecaqraf@mail.ru)

*Keywords: Taliban Islamic Movement (TIM), Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, insurgent group, civil war, jihadist networks, foreign fighters, madrassa students, Northern Alliance, Pashtun majority, Muslim people*

THE fall of Mohammad Najibullah's regime in April 1992 led to the capture of Kabul by Afghan Mujahideen units, which subsequently faced a number of problems. The new authorities inherited state symbols (namely the capital), but state mechanisms were not functioning – the political elite had left the country, the army was divided along ethnic and religious lines, and the state had no institutions capable of generating income and managing economic resources.

THE growing confrontation among the Mujahideen became a serious problem. The leaders of various groups could not agree on sharing power and started fighting among themselves. As a result, a civil war broke out in Afghanistan. Fighting took place not only for control of Kabul but for other areas of Afghanistan as well. The situation in the country was aggravated by a lack of centralized power accompanied by continuous looting, arbitrary charges for the passage of trade caravans, and plundering of key material and military resources of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan's former government.

Rivalry among the Mujahideen led to a brutal armed conflict that caused extensive damage to the country's capital. Although the security situation in Afghanistan improved considerably during this time, the opposite was true in the capital. Various parts of the city were controlled by different forces.

THE Taliban (from the Pashto word that means "madrassa students") emerged in 1994 in the southern province of Kandahar, primarily as an insurgent group amid the civil war in Afghanistan. The Taliban Islamic Movement (TIM), like all other warring groups in Afghanistan, was formed by both internal and external factors. The internal factor was the fact that the group was a product of the civil war.

As for the external cause, the TIM emerged as a product of Pakistan's regional politics. Afghan religious students were scattered across hundreds of Pakistani madrassas. They were war veterans who had resumed their theological studies after 11 years of jihad against the Najibullah regime.

According to eyewitness accounts, foreigners who had fought against the USSR later joined the Taliban. It was from such a motley crowd of disillusioned fighters that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) sought to create a fighting force that was familiar with the terrain and various weapons and, most importantly, inspired by the proposed idea of liberating Afghanistan from the clutches of warlords, drug dealers, and other unseemly elements.

An analysis of the Taliban's initial activities confirms their links to Islamabad.

The fact that the Taliban were involved in the civil war in Afghanistan demonstrates the disappointment of the Pakistani security services over the failed attempt to bring the Islamic Party of Afghanistan (led by Hekmatyar) to power in Kabul. By supporting the Taliban, Pakistan sought to create a regime in Kabul favorable to Islamabad, as well as to open a trade route extending to Central Asia that would have strengthened the struggling Pakistani economy.



THE distinguishing feature of the IEA was its lack of external legitimacy and weak internal legitimacy. Internally, the Taliban lacked broad popular support, and externally, the IEA remained a political regime unrecognized by the international community.

The TIM leadership used Islam as a restrictive political source of legitimization to prohibit any political activity opposing the Taliban. In their opinion, no alternative political mechanisms, such as a modern party or traditional tribal system, were necessary under an Islamic regime.

Although Afghanistan is a Muslim country and Islam has functioned as a source of legitimacy and jurisprudence for centuries, the Taliban's interpretation is not widely accepted in the country. Except for individual TIM supporters, the rest of the Afghan population, even rural religious communities, were not inclined to willingly follow the Taliban's Islamism.

THE Taliban waged an unrelenting armed struggle against their domestic rival, the Northern Alliance (leader Ahmad Shah Massoud), but did not have enough military power to eliminate it completely.

The TIM had no permanent military structure with a hierarchy of officers and commanders, and their unit leadership changed constantly.

However, TIM control over the claimed territory was not stable, since the war continued in these areas. None of the opposing sides won full victory, since all were able to rebuild quickly and prepare for new offensive actions after each defeat.

WHEN the Taliban took over Kabul in September 1996, they inherited a state that had completely collapsed as a result of civil war, with destroyed infrastructure, looted wealth, and professionals fleeing the country. The TIM's capabilities were limited by a weak economy and lack of a governing apparatus. The Taliban's source of legal income was too insignificant to meet all the state's needs, and government bodies were filled with madrasa-educated mullahs.

Despite their successes in the war and rapid capture of territory, the Taliban failed to achieve their ultimate goal of militarily destroying their domestic rival, the Northern Alliance. In addition, the IEA leadership was unable to provide safe living conditions for its citizens by ending the war and securing the borders against regional jihadist infiltration into Afghanistan. The TIM's economic capacity was too weak to effectively govern the state and meet the needs of the population. The Taliban lacked the necessary administrative capacity to manage the resources at their disposal. The IEA's weak managerial apparatus was incapable of generating reliable sources of revenue for the country's economy or providing basic services to the population.

Overall, the IEA was institutionally based on a two-tiered system of governance that focused almost entirely on warfare rather than statebuilding. The Taliban lacked the necessary institutions and expertise to form an effectively functioning state system.

A study of the Taliban regime from 1994 to 2001 shows that the current situation is repeating the same scenario. Twenty years later, neither the Taliban's approach to state-building and forming a government nor their norms and social rules have changed, causing growing dissatisfaction among the population. We can assume that unless the Taliban changes their domestic policy, tension will inevitably lead to civil war in the country and worsen the situation in the region.

## **Georgy Chicherin: The Man and the Commissar**

**Andrey Sidorov**, *Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations and the Foreign Policy of Russia, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, University of the Russian Foreign Ministry, Candidate of Science (History); [asidorov333@yandex.ru](mailto:asidorov333@yandex.ru)*

*Keywords: Georgy Chicherin, people's commissar for foreign affairs, foreign policy, Soviet Russia, Soviet Union, national interests*

MUCH has been written about Georgy Vasilyevich Chicherin in Soviet and Russian works on history. His life and work have been depicted by journalists, filmmakers, and novelists. Yet there are a few touches missing from his portrait. This article endeavors to examine some aspects of him as an individual and a public figure while avoiding banalities as much as possibility.

Chicherin was a man of outstanding talents but also a tragic figure. No other Soviet politician so embodied the rift between two eras and the revolutionary transition from tsarist Russia to Bolshevik Russia. Much of his personal drama stemmed from prolonged and agonizing illnesses, loneliness, the disorderliness of bachelorhood, and a chaotic private life. But most remarkably, his personality was a combination of three seemingly incompatible elements: He was a hereditary aristocrat, an experienced revolutionary, and an outstanding statesman and diplomat. Each of these elements best manifested itself in one of the three main periods of his life: his childhood and youth, his time spent abroad as an émigré, and his role as people's commissar for foreign affairs (foreign minister).

It is well known that Chicherin came from a Russian noble family and was well educated.

Chicherin knew many foreign languages. He had a perfect command of French, German, and English. He also knew many other languages – Turkish, Hindi, Arabic, Irish Gaelic, classical Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Sanskrit. His secretary B.I. Korotkin recalled that Chicherin would give a speech in Polish while on a visit to Poland and a speech in a Baltic language while in the Baltics. When at work at the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID), he would switch from one shorthand writer to another, dictating in French, English, German, and Russian with equal ease.<sup>2</sup> The shorthand writers even guessed what mood he was in based on the language in which he was dictating.

Chicherin was a singularly erudite man and had a phenomenal knowledge of history, political geography, and culturology. He was not only the best-educated people's commissar in the Soviet Union but also the best-educated European foreign minister of his day.

Why was Chicherin, a refined hereditary aristocrat and an organic part of the Russian pre-1917 social and political system, tempted by the Marxist utopia? That is a mystery.

Chicherin's departure from Russia was officially legitimate – he had been given a health leave at the ministry. It took his superiors a while to realize that he was not coming back. He was fired from the ministry four years after he left, when Berlin police arrested him for living under a false name.

Chicherin was in Brixton Prison in London when the October Revolution broke out. Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky, who did not have the slightest idea of how to organize the diplomatic service for the new Soviet state, made extraordinary efforts to get Chicherin released and eventually had him swapped for British Ambassador George Buchanan. The day after he arrived in Petrograd, Chicherin was appointed deputy people's commissar for foreign affairs.

Stalin once described the Communist Party as an "Order of the Brothers of the Sword within the Soviet state – something that directs and inspires its authorities." Chicherin was undoubtedly one of the ascetic, selfless monks of that order.

In Chicherin's opinion, Germany was the only Western great power the USSR would be able to and should build a strategic relationship with. He was sure that, after Germany's defeat in the world war, the

French and Anglo-Saxons would never let it restore itself as an independent center of power but would always keep it under tight control.

Asian diplomacy was just as high on Chicherin's agenda. "The eastern policy of the Soviet government is an absolutely independent, extremely important, and maybe even the most important field of its international activities," he said.

Though he had severed contacts with former colleagues, Chicherin remained in touch with relatives. His second cousin once removed Yelena Chicherina said that in that period, he was in a very gloomy mood and had apparently fallen out of favor with the party leadership, which made him suffer.

In corresponding with Soviet leaders, he repeatedly branded "our Moscow speeches" as "a lot of rubbish." In such attacks, which included obvious allusions to Stalin, he complained that Soviet leaders failed to understand European realities and had replaced foreign policy with propaganda.

In 1991, our people experienced another more gigantic geopolitical cataclysm – the breakup of the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, the foreign minister of Russia at the time who was involved in drafting yet another obscene Brest-Litovsk treaty – the Belovezha Accords – was neither a patriot nor a farsighted strategist. Chicherin, who was gravely ill, returned to Moscow in 1930 even though he realized that this could hasten his death. He thought it would be wrong for him to stay in Germany and become a defector. But the minister who signed the Belovezha Accords was quick to leave Russia after his dismissal and has been living in the US ever since. Just as Trotsky was focused on the world revolution utopia, Andrey Kozyrev defended the primacy of mythical general human values. Moreover, he asked former US president Richard Nixon to explain to him the nature of Russia's national interests. Sadly, we did not have another Chicherin in 1991. This is apparently one reason why the collapse of the USSR was such a disaster for the Russian people, who, to quote Russian President Vladimir Putin, became "the largest divided people in the world."

Many of Chicherin's qualities as a human being and statesman – profound knowledge, a unique command of foreign languages, top-level professionalism, selflessness, a clear understanding of national interests – would be valuable assets to any present-day diplomat or politician. Chicherin is surely somebody to learn from.

## **The Gehlen Organization: How the Americans Created Germany's Foreign Intelligence Service**

**Roman Romachev**, *General Director, R-Techno intelligence agency, reserve officer of the Russian Federal Security Service; roman@romachev.ru*

**Valery Nochevkin**, *expert, online journal Tekhnologii razvedki dlya biznesa; post77\_77@internet.ru*

**Konstantin Strigunov**, *Senior Analyst, Association of Information Operations Specialists, postgraduate student, Faculty of Political Science, Lomonosov Moscow State University; sks6891@gmail.com*

**Fengli Guo**, *postgraduate student, Faculty of Political Science, Lomonosov Moscow State University; [heyfengli0920@163.com](mailto:heyfengli0920@163.com)*

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GERMANY'S intelligence establishment has come a long way in its 130 years of formation. Its history began with the secret police agency of the Hohenzollern empire, which was succeeded by the Abwehr (counterintelligence service) of the Weimar Republic. The Federal Intelligence Service

(Bundesnachrichtendienst, BND), Germany's current foreign intelligence agency, was founded in 1956 and is reputed to be one of the world's best intelligence services.

The Gehlen Organization was a private German intelligence agency set up in June 1946 under the oversight of Reinhard Gehlen, a former chief of Nazi Germany's military intelligence agency Foreign Armies East (Fremde Heere Ost, FHO), and eventually evolved into the BND. The idea of military and political cooperation between the US and Germany as a way to use Germany against the Soviet Union emerged during World War II. In July 1943, a unit was formed in the US Department of War with the secret mission of organizing the training of German prisoners of war as politicians who would be able to make postwar Germany a state the US could trust. But the project was a failure and was shut down a year after it was launched.

For nearly a year after the fall of the Nazi regime in 1945, Germany had no intelligence organization. With the approval of US Army Chief of Staff George Marshall, British and American intelligence services reached an agreement in April 1945 to study the Wehrmacht's experience of fighting the Red Army. The project, codenamed Hill, was conducted in the interests of the American Army by German officers taken prisoner and brought in September 1945 to Camp Ritchie, a war prisoner facility in the US state of Maryland.

The Gehlen Organization operated under the following guidelines:

- It was headed by Germans but also carried out tasks for the US.
- It took the side of Germany when there were disagreements between Germany and the US.
- It was funded by the US and in return provided the Americans with intelligence and extensively supported the US spy network in Europe.
- It focused on information about East European countries and the USSR.

Test operations started by the Gehlen Organization on April 1, 1946, received US approval. In 1953, the German government took the organization under its full jurisdiction after Germany recovered from the devastations of the war and regained its sovereignty. In practical terms, the organization's comprehensive transition under German control ended on April 1, 1956, when it was definitively transformed into today's BND.

AT FIRST, the Gehlen Organization was in effect used as a unit of the US Army, which provided it with all the equipment it needed, from typewriters to radio systems. Then the organization was put under the control of the US Central Intelligence Agency soon after the latter was established.

IN JULY 1946, the US Army command decided to return Gehlen and his team to Germany and merge the Bolero group with Keystone, which was based in Germany. This was the start of what was codenamed Operation Rusty.

Operation Rusty also provided intelligence coverage of Austria and other European countries, and was building up contacts with anticommunist émigré groups in Germany and with former members of Andrey Vlasov's Russian Nazi collaborator army. Operation Rusty resulted in 69 analytical reports, 38 of which were about the state of the Soviet Armed Forces and another three were about the Soviet Supreme Command.

IN JUNE 1950, Gehlen put a proposal for creating a foreign intelligence service for West Germany before Hans Globke, undersecretary of state at the federal chancellor's office, and repeated it to Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in September of that year. The proposal was adopted because of the changed international situation. The war that erupted in Korea in June 1950 was a clear sign that the Cold War might trigger real war at any moment [9, 10]. The divided Germany was a site of close confrontation between two mutually antagonistic social systems – communism and democracy. Therefore, the Korean

War underscored the vital need to collect information about the enemy and determined intelligence priorities.

The Gehlen Organization believed the main role should go to military espionage, primarily spying on Soviet forces stationed in East Germany, but also spying in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the other East European countries, including Yugoslavia, Albania, and the Soviet Union.

To sum up, under the oversight of the US Army and the CIA, a German private intelligence organization became the basis for Germany's foreign intelligence agency, established with the significant involvement of former Wehrmacht officers.

## **A Modernized Sun Tzu Versus French Colonialism**

**Alexander Savelyev**, *orientalist*

*Keywords: Sun Tzu, Ho Chi Minh*

IN FALL 2022, St. Petersburg State University Press published an unusual book: *Ho Chi Minh: Sun Tzu's Laws of War, 1945-1946* [in Russian]. The book is available in both print and electronic versions.

The translator and commentator is Prof. V.N. Kolotov, Doctor of Science (History), head of the Department of History of Far Eastern Countries at St. Petersburg State University and director of the Ho Chi Minh Institute at the same university.

This series of works by Ho Chi Minh, leader of the Vietnamese national liberation movement and founder of the Democratic and then Socialist Republic of Vietnam, has never been translated. Moreover, many foreign Vietnamese language experts were not even aware of its existence nor its role in the development of the Vietnamese People's Army strategy. That said, it is impossible to understand the course of the Indochinese wars without these crucial sources on the strategy of the Vietnamese side.

The book under review consists of a foreword by the current Vietnamese ambassador to Russia; comments by the translator; and facing columns of text, with the Vietnamese source on the left and the Russian translation on the right.

The comments by Prof. Kolotov, who spent many years working on the translation and comparing Ho Chi Minh's text with the original treatise in Chinese, as well as with translations into French, English, and Russian, deserve special attention. The process of translation and refinement of terms compelled Prof. Kolotov to work with texts in five languages.

One of the most important outcomes was a refinement of the translation of the original treatise in Chinese, which also enables a new assessment of its content. The phrase "laws of war" stresses the principles' objective nature, whereas the common understanding of the treatise as a study of the "art of war" lends a subjective nuance to military strategy, which is determined not only on the battlefield but also depends on a number of other factors. Prof. Kolotov's book thus marks an important milestone in the return to the origins of Sun Tzu's strategy, as reworked by Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh.

One of Ho Chi Minh's main conclusions in his book *Sun Tzu's Laws of War* is that abiding by the objective laws of war will lead to victory, while voluntarily ignoring them will lead to defeat.

This work by Ho Chi Minh is a new step in bringing to light the reasons why the synergy between the laws of war and the laws of statecraft enables those who master them to achieve victory over a significantly superior opponent.

What is worthy of special attention is [Kolotov's] systematic and complex approach to this rigorous and outstanding work of Ho Chi Minh. The widespread instilling of such fundamental knowledge of strategy and tactics, not just among officers but also among soldiers of the Vietnamese People's Army, allowed them to raise their resistance against the enemy to a level of quality unattainable for elements of the system on their own.

Given that this is the first translation of Ho Chi Minh's work into Russian, we should note the delay on the part of our Orientalists in paying attention to one of the most relevant and enduring themes in the historical process: the laws of war.

With an eye to the inevitable reprint of this book, we should point out the need to cite concrete examples of how these laws have been successfully applied, as well as the consequences of ignoring them, not just in Vietnam but [elsewhere] in world history.

Without a systematic study of strategy, any comprehension or effective cooperation with our Eastern partners is impossible. Now this knowledge will be accessible to anyone who reads this book.

The introduction into academic circles of a new source on the history of the war in Vietnam is also a major achievement by this author and the entire community of Russian Orientalists.

Savelyev's book is of undoubted interest not only to Orientalists, political scientists, historians, conflictologists, and military and international affairs specialists, but to anyone interested in modern politics, military matters, intelligence, and international affairs in the East.

In closing, we can only congratulate the author and St. Petersburg State University – one of the flagships of Russian Oriental studies – for the completion of this successful project, which may well be regarded as a valuable contribution to the success of the Russian turn to the East and to the development of Russian-Vietnamese relations.