

International Affairs: Vol.69: №4, 2023:

Summary.

There Is No Common Denominator in Russian-American Relations

Sergey Ryabkov, *Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia*

Keywords: Foreign Policy Concept, New START treaty, G7 summit in Hiroshima, Special Military Operation, “color revolutions,” Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), NATO, BRICS, globalist elites

Recently, Russian President Vladimir Putin approved an updated version of the Foreign Policy Concept, and everyone is curious to know what makes it different from the previous editions.

I would advise those who are curious – not only readers of International Affairs, but anyone who cares about the foreign policy of our country – to read this document very carefully, to study it, because it makes far-reaching assessments of current global trends. It is our first document to divide foreign countries into constructive, neutral, and unfriendly. The latter are declared to be sources of existential threats to our country’s security, sovereignty, and development. The US is explicitly designated as the initiator and implementer of this line, which the Concept characterizes as a “new type of hybrid warfare.” Under the Concept, Russia may respond with symmetrical and asymmetrical measures.

Another new feature is a systematized exposition of principles for building a more just and sustainable world order, including multipolarity, the sovereign equality of nations, their freedom to choose development models, the supremacy of international law, the balance of interests, and cultural and civilizational diversity.

Furthermore, Russia’s Foreign Policy Concept states the idea of basing international cooperation on common spiritual and moral principles shared by all religions and secular ethical systems, and on the complete rejection of neocolonial practices and hegemony.

We have seen the spirit in which the relevant phraseology was formulated, how it was written out and ended up in a document released at a recent summit of the Group of Seven (G7) in Hiroshima.

But as you know, rhetoric is one thing and dialogue is another.

The treaty is not a thing of the past. It continues to be, I would say, a set of reference norms. But naturally, its entire operational component is frozen, and I do not expect that to change in any way. This is the fault of the US, which has come a long way to reach this situation.

A relationship needs to have some substance and constructive goals to be able to continue and develop. Our current dialogue with the US amounts to *démarches* by which we seek to caution Washington against escalating tensions and making new mistakes and reckless moves with respect to Russia and, more broadly, to what is happening in Europe or Eurasia. That is, so to speak, one model of behavior in today’s super-crisis period.

As regards counterterrorism and information security, the Americans have unilaterally curtailed dialogue on those issues and are not returning to them. Apparently, they have concluded that, in dealing with those matters, too, they will be successful if they work in narrow formats that bring together only their lapdogs.

Our history of relations with the US has been a didactic experience, and there has been direct evidence that in some situations it is impossible to reach an agreement with Washington. And at times we have concluded that it is better to pause our dialogue than to continue it. All this involves constant assessments of pros and cons. All technical resources are available; there is no doubt about that. Political will on the other side is another story.

I don't believe that aid to Ukraine will be cut. We should realize that the mantra about the need to inflict a strategic defeat on us that has become the core of the approach of the US and other NATO countries to Russia implies nonstop financing of US efforts to achieve that goal. This cannot shake but only strengthen our resolve to achieve all the goals set for the Special Military Operation.

There will be enough money for everything, including color revolutions. And there will be more attempts to carry out color revolutions. Money will also be spent on isolating those who are unwilling to obey the American diktat, on subduing the disobedient, and on infiltrating and controlling international organizations through staffing policies and extrabudgetary financing.

Our withdrawal from the CFE Treaty is one form of response. We make no secret of the fact that Sweden's and Finland's applications to join NATO and the latter country's subsequent accession to that alliance were reasons that predetermined how the situation regarding our suspension of the CFE Treaty a long time ago unfolded.

One can talk a lot about the role of the individual in history, about situations where a single person at the helm in some country turns the wheel so sharply that the huge ship changes its course. But that is not the case today. I would also like to remind you that Joe Biden's predecessor imposed what by that time was an unprecedented number of sanctions on Russia. So what gives some people the illusion that his potential return to the White House would mean some improvements?

Our missions in unfriendly countries are constantly under intense pressure, both political and psychological. Provocations by intelligence services have become regular occurrences, as totally unacceptable as this practice is. For instance, the CIA posted an appeal to Russian nationals on Telegram to consider being recruited by the agency.

Interest in BRICS is growing steadily because of large-scale geopolitical challenges and the radical changes that are taking place in the world. BRICS is seen as one of the pillars of a new, more just world order, because it offers the world constructive, unifying, forward-looking initiatives. Nor should we forget that BRICS possesses tremendous potential for cooperation in a wide range of fields.

Russia consistently seeks closer cooperation between BRICS and developing countries. Mechanisms have been set up in the association to bring the Outreach/BRICS Plus format into being.

It is one of the financial priorities of BRICS to build an efficient independent five-nation payment infrastructure. I am sure that we will be able to hammer out an algorithm that satisfies all five countries and that in the future we will be able to extend it to transactions with third countries. Russia will take an active part in discussing this matter.

Hiroshima was a significant reminder that the West's agenda is radically different from what the developing world is interested in and needs. One-sidedness, an anti-Russian fixation, a focus on the single objective of bullying anyone who disobeys the dictates of the collective West – in general, this is not a very attractive basis for the international community's interaction with the G7.

Our measured step, the movement toward our goals is irreversible. No F-16s can stop this. A group of countries is trying to provide this old rubbish to Ukraine under the guise of aid in the hope of obtaining more modern weapons from the US. The American military industrial complex is rubbing its hands.

Politicians in Washington have a dream that Europe, in terms of its independence in various areas, would cease to exist as soon as possible.

Take a look at a joint declaration of NATO and the EU that was published several months ago. It says openly that the world should be built in such a way as to guarantee the security and well-being of a billion people – that is to say, the population of the countries that make up these two groups. Who is the author of the declaration? An absolutely new formation of “thinkers” and politicians. Dangerous people, in fact.

Russia and China Need a Good and Diversified Relationship

Andrey Denisov, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, First Deputy Chair, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Federation Council of Russia*

Keywords: bilateral relations, Russia, US, China, Chinese peace plan, eastward turn, cooperation, Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

Any amicable sentiment carries its own subtext. In this case, the subtext is that Russia has a chance of repairing its relations with the US if it submits to the so-called rules-based order, to the American vision of the world, to American policies toward literally all countries in the world – in short, if it submits to American hegemony. That was what the case was a while ago.

Let’s recall a time that to outside observers seemed to be the honeymoon in Russian-American relations – the 1990s. In reality, this was a time of absolute triumph for the Americans and national humiliation for our country. Thank God that time is now past.

American weapons that have been put in Ukrainian hands are killing our people. Some of this is happening on our own territory, in spite of statements – extremely restrained – from the American side like: We don’t recommend that our Ukrainian partners use American weapons against what are called historical Russian territories. We know that this is nothing more than a prevarication.

As for Taiwan, what can the Americans make the Chinese believe? That the US is committed to the one-China policy, with Taiwan as part of China, and to other points of the notorious Shanghai Communiqué signed during US president Richard Nixon’s visit to China in February 1972? There is a total of three American-Chinese communiqués.

The US constantly tests China for how it would react and tries to provoke it into a reckless move of some kind. Naturally, this will not get the Americans anywhere but will rattle China somewhat.

I feel completely positive about this 12-point plan, and I don’t expect any amendments to be made to it. That is my personal opinion. I have carefully read the Russian and English translations of these 12 points and even checked them against the Chinese original. This plan means China generally wants to be involved in attempts to settle international conflicts, something it has in fact already been doing for some time. But that is really the attitude China has today.

As for China’s Ukraine peace plan, all of its key elements could be implemented if Ukraine earnestly wanted the conflict to be settled.

For many years, China has been making it clear to the entire world, including the US, that it can fill the global market with a broad assortment of goods at reasonable prices. American consumers, just as we Russians for that matter, have grown accustomed to the fact that there is an extremely wide range of

goods on the market that have been made in China as the “world’s factory.” The large-scale restrictions on trade with China that were imposed by Donald Trump, a man with a businessman’s mentality, backfired on American companies and consumers

American-Chinese relations rest on an impressive economic basis, which would be difficult to dismantle should anyone make that their goal.

In a sense, China has become the vis-à-vis of the US in a geopolitical situation in which it has to oppose the Americans, with Russia as its only support.

We started what we call our eastward turn long before February 2022. We may have accelerated it after February, but not out of a sense of hopelessness or a desire to snub anyone. Our national interests dictate this. The same can be said about China. It’s a rather controllable and systematic process.

What does the post-Soviet space need us to do? Primarily, to help maintain political stability, combat terrorism, and so on. On the whole, we’re coping with that. The best evidence is developments in Kazakhstan a while ago that everyone remembers. China mainly offers those countries financial and economic assistance.

I wouldn’t overestimate free aid. As someone said, if you’ve received some free aid, that means you’ve already paid for it.

The stereotype stuck in our minds that China produces cheap consumer goods is definitely true. But, for example, more than half of Chinese exports to Russia are machinery, industrial equipment, and means of transportation. China has for a long time been exporting engineering products, including high-tech goods, to Russia. This includes goods that the Western sanctions have deprived us of.

Current BRI plans look much different than the initial blueprints. China is making changes and drawing lessons from erroneous or hasty decisions. In my view, no one is about to renounce the BRI, because it benefits not only China but the countries that cooperate with it.

If China chooses some alternative routes to Europe, there will not be any anti-Russian motive for this. The reason is that it makes more sense for China economically. We may dislike it, but let’s face it: We can hardly expect anyone to base their economic activities on charitable considerations.

It is a fact that the role of the yuan as an international means of payment will grow and is already growing.

Western-Proposed Rules That Would Bypass the UN and Other Universal Bodies Threaten Chaos in Cyberspace

Anatoly Smirnov, *Director General, National Association for International Information Security (NAIIS), Professor, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations (MGIMO), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Doctor of Science (History); aismirnov@list.ru*

Valeriya Bulva, *Expert, Center for International Information Security, Science and Technology Policy, MGIMO; valeriyabulva98@mail.ru*

Keywords: information security, the West, United Nations (UN), world order, cyber rules

THE West is drawing up rules for cyberspace that would circumvent the UN and other organizations and formats bringing together practically all countries of the world, and this plays a special role in the context of the vast hybrid war unleashed by the West against Russia and its allies. Unlike the legally

binding norms that Russia and its allies insist on, these rules are meant to be nothing more than recommendations and are normally drafted by narrow groups of nations loyal to the US.

The Summit for Democracy, a flagship initiative of the administration of US President Joe Biden, has the declared goal of building a US-led coalition of purportedly democratic states, but de facto it aims to unify the West and its allies on the ideological basis of proposed action against “autocracies” – primarily China and Russia.

The first Summit for Democracy took place on December 9-10, 2021. Its key topics were bolstering democratic institutions, countering disinformation, fighting corruption, and addressing the issues of climate, energy, and health care. The agenda also included regulation of the Internet.

The 108 summit participants included Ukraine, Iraq, the Philippines, Kosovo, and Taiwan, but remarkably, Turkey and Hungary – NATO members and allies of the US – were absent.

Biden, in his opening remarks, stressed the US’s allegedly exceptional status as a democratic country. He urged the participant nations to commit themselves to action to strengthen democracy. It was at this summit, where no agreements were signed, that Biden announced the launch of the Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal.

Russia and China issued separate but simultaneous statements about systemic problems with democracy in the US, Great Britain, and the EU. They criticized the US policy of promoting liberal values across the world and propounded a constructive alternative – a unifying agenda for international cooperation.

CYBERSPACE is one area where the West is applying its tactic of making rules that bypass the UN. Instances of this include the Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace (France, 2018, referred to as the Paris Call), the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI, proposed by Canada and France and set up in 2020), the Future Tech Forum (Britain, 2021), a global coalition for democratic technological development (the US, 2021), the Declaration for the Future of the Internet (the US, 2022), and an international agency for the peaceful use of cyberspace (the US, 2022) that serves as an alternative to the UN Open-ended Working Group on the security of and in the use of information and communications technologies (OEWG).

The Paris Call aims to be a vehicle for boosting cooperation in cyberspace among state and nonstate actors. The technical part of this effort is vested in six working groups.

One of the Paris Call’s priorities is a multistakeholder approach as a basic principle for UN-overseen negotiations. In practice, this means equal rights for state and nonstate actors with the latter being involved in decision-making.

The US did eventually join GPAI, but for political reasons, seeing the partnership as a channel for promoting the Western democratic model. The then-US chief technology officer, Michael Kratsios, argued that the GPAI was a platform for democratic countries to unify in support of AI development that was based on fundamental rights and shared values as opposed to what he claimed were authoritarian regimes such as China, which he accused of abusing AI to control their population.

On April 28, 2022, the US and 60 other countries issued a document called the Declaration for the Future of the Internet, pledging in it to work for “an open, free, global, interoperable, reliable, and secure Internet” to be based on standard rules and democratic values. The declaration was signed by the US, all EU countries, Australia, Great Britain, Georgia, Israel, Canada, Serbia, Ukraine, Japan, Taiwan, and the European Commission.

RUSSIA cannot accept the tactic of selective international cooperation on information security issues that bypasses established global formats. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in a speech to the

State Duma that Russia's updated Foreign Policy Concept "will stress the need to end the Western monopoly on creating a framework for international affairs. From now on, this framework will be determined not by the self-centered interests of the West but by the fair universal balance of interests in line with the UN Charter that has fixed the principle of the sovereign equality of all states."

Most of the international community refuses to follow the rules that the West is creating in pursuit of its own goals. Regional and macroregional organizations such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Arab League, and the African Union play an increasing role as channels for cooperation. Respect for the interests of everybody involved and the consensus principle are key features of these cooperation formats.

The rapid degradation of international law threatens to destroy the current world order. Lavrov argued at the 77th session of the UN General Assembly that the current global crisis is an indication of the rejection of American hegemony and the transition to a just, democratic multipolar order.

Proactive Digital Diplomacy in Contemporary International Relations

Maria Bazlutsckaya, *postgraduate student, Department of World Political Processes, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; m.bazlutsckaya@gmail.com*

Keywords: digital diplomacy (DD), Zaporozhye NPP, Special Military Operation (SMO), DD as a tool of external pressure, hacker groups, crowdsourcing

AMID the crisis of the international order, there is a tendency for the properties of digital diplomacy (DD) to change. Warning messages, instead of mere statements and reports, appear in the information field with increasing frequency. This is especially clearly manifested in connection with the Ukraine conflict in the absence of dialogue (Russia-US, Russia-Ukraine, Russia-West) and diplomatic relations (Ukraine-Russia). DD is increasingly playing a proactive rather than reactive role, taking the place of, for example, negotiating platforms.

On the basis of the Ukraine crisis, the author of this article identifies the conditions and practices of the use of proactive DD by Russia, the US, and Ukraine, and illustrates them with specific examples.

It is worth emphasizing that DD, in the author's understanding, is part of the state's public diplomacy that is aimed at achieving foreign policy goals and includes the interaction of official representatives of the state and civil society with foreign audiences through digital communication channels, including official government websites, social networks, and the media. The absence of dialogue means severed diplomatic relations and/ or the absence of bilateral and multilateral contacts on the most pressing issues between two or more actors in international relations.

With the help of DD, the exchange of information about positions on the battlefield, as well as in politics and economics, occurs practically online (messages are published several times a day, depending on the importance of the topic).

DD serves as a tool for providing a warning (threat of action) in the event of a continuation of the political course by parties to the conflict and also serves as a means of communication through which countries "raise the stakes."

As a result, the situation in the information field looks like this: Attempting to preempt each other's actions, Russia and Ukraine are using statements to prove to the world that they are not involved in the

shelling of the nuclear power plant and to warn about the consequences of such shelling. Each party stands firm in its position.

In terms of negotiations, the positions are irreconcilable and cannot yield positive results in the case of ordinary negotiations. At the same time, the dissemination of ideas through DD gives each side time to assess its strengths and costs and to wait for a convenient moment to advance or change its position.

DD is increasingly being used to signal intentions in order to incite the counterparty to react.

The statements by the US and UK representatives about the readiness to use nuclear weapons, distributed through DD, may have been made to gauge the seriousness of Russia's intentions when encountering direct threats to its security.

HACKER groups from both the Russian and Ukrainian sides have also begun to resort to DD in the context of the Ukraine crisis. We use this term because in this case the purpose of the hackers' actions and messages is to use their channels to warn the opposing state about impending attacks in order to intimidate it.

In addition to coordinated hacks, hacker groups use their social media accounts to organize mass DDoS attacks through crowdsourcing.⁴² The target audience in this case is ordinary users. The purpose of the attacks is to intimidate the enemy by disabling their electronic systems.

DD was and remains a means of communication with citizens of foreign countries and of drawing attention to one's own country. It might have seemed unbelievable, but during the Ukraine crisis, Russian DD was taken to a new level by pranksters Vovan (Vladimir Kuznetsov) and Lexus (Alexey Stolyarov) with their Russia Calling project and method of interviewing interlocutors. This format of communication with leading Western politicians not only appealed to Russian users but struck a chord abroad because of its resonant approach to dialogue with the leaders and "stars" of the EU and the US.

AMID the Ukraine crisis, the scope of the digital diplomacy of Russia, Ukraine, and the US is expanding, and the approach to dialogue with the target audience is changing. The proactive model of communication is taking the place of the reactive one. It partially replaces negotiations, serves as a mechanism of intimidation, signals transformations in positions on key foreign policy issues and outgoing threats, and is used to identify counterparties' weaknesses. Proactive DD is conducted not only by government officials but also by hackers and civil society representatives, making it more decentralized. New players offer alternative methods of finding, obtaining, and presenting information, which helps form a new information reality. The practice of digital diplomacy by nonstate actors, which often contains a shock factor (e.g., pranking as a new genre of DD), is expanding.

Additionally, although DD is playing an increasingly important role as a foreign policy tool, it is used by Western countries to escalate disagreements within the framework of today's hybrid wars and is therefore not oriented toward real progress on the negotiation track. Therefore, it is important to complement digital tools with real diplomatic and negotiation capabilities.

Shared Challenges, Shared Responsibilities: Results of the SPIEF-2023 Energy Panel

Keywords: 26th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, Rosneft Oil Company, Energy Market, carbons, energy consumption, oil, liquid hydrocarbons, gas pipelines

THE Energy Panel was held as part of the 26th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, sponsored by Rosneft Oil Company. The event was attended by heads of leading energy companies and market experts. Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin gave a keynote speech. The participants in the Energy Panel presented a detailed analysis of the state and prospects of the industry and were united in their assessments and forecasts: The current crisis phenomena and difficulties are a systemic challenge to the entire global energy field that requires a unified, coordinated, and strategically aligned response from all market players. Global energy security is at stake, which means so is the development of human civilization in general. It is the duty and responsibility of all players, regardless of their political preferences, to solve the current problems.

Leaders of major oil producing companies and the independent expert community wholeheartedly support the Russian vision.

It should be noted that many of the industry's problems are man-made and the sad consequence of the short-sighted greed and speculative levity of some market players who have become disconnected from reality. For example, the West's attempt to implement the utopia of a "green transition" has already brought disastrous consequences to the world.

The phantom of "carbon neutrality" that has captivated theorists and carried them off to a fairy-tale land of personal well-being proved unattainable on a global scale, given the pool of "green" technologies currently available. Many of the required solutions are still in the experimental development stage.

This sophisticatedly lobbied false path looks even more absurd given the fact that oil and gas technologies are currently at peak development.

It is absolutely clear that oil demand and prices will only grow.

Among the factors contributing to the increasing demand for energy, experts highlight the underestimation of the real potential for consumption growth in Africa.

African colleagues share the opinion of the Russian oil sector and are open to the closest cooperation in both production and comprehensive development of the industry.

Underinvestment will inevitably create a deficit in the market, leading to higher oil prices. This is also noted by Saudi Arabia, which announced a new cut in production (already the third during the period of the agreement) and expressed interest in the long-term stability of the market, the elimination of speculative volatility, and keeping oil prices at \$80 per barrel, as well as its further growth to introduce new oil production capacity and implement projects to diversify the economy in line with the Saudi Vision 2030.

While announcing the current voluntary production cuts, Saudi Arabia is at the same time increasing prospective production capacity, and the number of its drilling rigs may grow by at least 25% in the next two years.

It is noteworthy that only some countries, including Russia, are capable of increasing production of liquid hydrocarbons securely and reliably in the long term – in other words, saving the world community from the inevitable hydrocarbon famine.

The stability of the Russian energy sector is guaranteed, despite any pressure, but there are still issues whose solution will be of paramount importance for providing cheap, affordable energy to industry, the housing sector, and agriculture. And these issues will be addressed to ensure the most efficient development of the sector.

In this regard, the head of Rosneft presented a roadmap for improving the efficiency of the Russian energy sector in the face of unprecedented external challenges, and he offered proposals to provide the Russian economy with affordable energy, which is a key resource for its sustainability and development.

The construction of new gas pipelines to the east opens up the opportunity to tap the vast resources of Eastern Siberia, where the reserves of independent producers exceed 4 trillion cubic meters, the head of Rosneft said. “Finally, we have an opportunity to create more transparent conditions for all market players in gas production, transportation, and sales,” Igor Sechin noted.

On the Critique of Impure Reason

Ivan Kravchenko, *Adviser, General Secretariat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Candidate of Science (Political Science)*; kravt-iv@yandex.ru

Keywords: “truth decay,” fact, opinion, criticism of political realism, quality of the media environment, adequacy of policy decisions.

Truth is something we are losing. It is something that eludes us – and by our own senseless will. In short: The primacy of facts over opinion, of reality over wishful thinking, of objective analysis over blind faith is increasingly rare in political decision-making. This pernicious trend, which threatens to zombify (in the classical voodoo sense of the term) political science and politics itself, is not confined to any state, region, or continent. In our networked age, diseases of the mind are as massive and pervasive as epidemics of bodily ailments. Naturally, this is not going unnoticed, and the search for a vaccine is just as ubiquitous.

With regard to the US, where, as Americans themselves have noted, the scale of the political class’s distorted perception of the real picture of the world in the last two decades has become alarming, the phenomenon is detailed in a report by RAND Corporation researchers. In particular, they refer to this phenomenon as “truth decay.”

Among the drivers and factors that contribute to “truth decay,” American researchers cite changes in the information system, including the emergence of social media and the 24-hour news cycle, which greatly increase the volume and accelerate the flow of information. Another driver is political, sociodemographic, and economic polarization, which breeds opposing groups, each with its own configuration of views, worldview, agenda, and set of facts. Among the most important drivers are educational methods that lag behind the evolution of the information environment, the inability to form critical thinking skills to enable individuals to separate the wheat of fact from the chaff of opinion. As a result, people turn into feeble-minded conveyors and distributors of all kinds of fake information.

In addition to these mostly natural drivers and objective factors, the RAND report authors identify actors – so-called “agents” – who wittingly or unwittingly contribute to the abnormal perception of reality for their own political or financial gain.

The first among them are media suppliers that rely on low-quality “expert” content and opinion-based news that can be easily repurposed for different types of audiences while ignoring more resource-intensive quality journalism.

In second place are academic and research organizations that, under pressure from their donors or curators, produce distorted or deliberately false information that conforms to the customer’s agenda.

In third place are government institutions and domestic pressure groups – federal agencies, Congress, and state legislative and executive bodies.

After domestic actors, in a modest fourth place are foreign forces – those notorious foreign agents.

The inadequate perception by US political and media circles of current events at home and abroad destroys domestic stability and leads Washington to make risky decisions in the international arena that could lead to complications in relations with allies and the aggravation of relations with adversaries.

Legalization of the persecution of foreign media makes it easier to label competitors as “foreign agents”: Now they can be demonized as enemies who promote a destructive foreign agenda. This is an extremely dangerous trend leading to the demonization of domestic critics and the silencing of the views of experts who disagree with the views currently accepted as official.

The world of political realism is the Hobbesian “war of all against all,” where everyone fights for survival by all available means. That is why there are neither “bad” nor “good” actors. Under these conditions, there is no reason to accuse or label anyone, because everyone is equally “bad.”

In general, for realists, the use of military force brings only death and destruction to all direct participants in a conflict, and under these conditions, diplomacy and compromise become the most effective and, in fact, only tools of dispute resolution.

The idealistic approach, on the other hand, is very convenient if it is necessary to divide participants into “right” and “wrong,” “light” and “dark.”

The situation with foreign “unfriendly” sources of information looks quite different. Here, in essence, we are dealing with a new “digital iron curtain,” and it has been lowered on both sides of the barricades: In the US and Europe, access to Russian state or pro-state media is blocked, while in Russia, access to American and European media is restricted.

As some American researchers note, in the US, the artificial reduction of the data pool and the introduction of a “media embargo” are creating information “black holes” that deprive both politicians and the public of a clear view of reality and prevent the formation of a coherent, adequate picture of the world.

This process will be long and painful, and not only in the US or Europe. Humanity has become a slave to the information leviathan it has created. And now we have to squeeze this slavery out of ourselves one drop at a time. There is no need to be afraid. He Who Separated Light from Darkness will not let it win. And the darkest hour is always before dawn.

India Continues to Pursue Its Interests

Sergey Velichkin, *Assistant Professor, Chair of International Relations, Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Candidate of Science (History); velichkins@mail.ru*

Keywords: SMO, sanctions, India, Russia, US, China, G20, Modi

WHETHER the Anglo-Saxons and the collective West that surrendered to them without a murmur would impose their diktat on the rest of the world and, having destroyed Russia, teach a lesson to countries that pursue their own nationally oriented foreign policy has become an existential question during the special Military Operation (SMO). The position of India, one of the biggest countries on our planet, confirms that this Anglo-Saxon undertaking is doomed to failure.

New Delhi explained its independent and principled position in an explanatory note: “India’s position on conflicts has been consistent – immediate cessation of hostilities and return to path of dialogue and diplomacy”.

The West relied on its fundamentally erroneous assessments of the balance of power in the world: Toward the end of 2021, Washington rejected Moscow’s proposals and thus started an open conflict.

A detailed article on this subject by Derek Grossman, a Rand Corporation analyst and former daily intelligence briefer to the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, in the February 2022 issue of Foreign Policy is very typical in this respect. The author commented that “since assuming office in 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has turned India into a strategic player with a highly effective foreign policy. Modi has done this by shifting New Delhi away from its old strategy of strict nonalignment. Under his watch, India has embraced the United States and its Indo-Pacific strategy in an effort to balance a rising China.” New Delhi is determined to prevent an escalation in its relations with Pakistan.

The West, with a fair amount of self-confidence, used unprecedented diplomatic pressure to force India to revise its positions and act as part of “its own camp.”

The culmination of those efforts was the fourth meeting of the US and India in the 2+2 format (foreign and defense ministers), predated by the virtual Biden-Modi summit of April 12, 2022. According to analysts of the well-known Asia Society Policy Institute (ASPI), “The meetings took place against the backdrop of mounting frustration in the US over India’s unwillingness to condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine, as well as India’s decision to increase purchases of Russian oil.”

Diplomatic pressure was accompanied by the massive publication of Western disinformation in Indian media condemning “perfidious and isolated” Russia. Those behind that disinformation campaign relied on America’s total control of cyberspace and yearslong efforts to inculcate American stereotypes among India’s predominantly young population.

Most Indians do not think that Russia is an aggressor; they are convinced that the conflict was stirred up by NATO or the West, led by the US. According to Stefan Aust, former editor-in-chief of Der Spiegel, the most popular hashtags on the Indian Internet are #IStandWithRussia and #IStandWithPutin.

Modi and his government are pursuing the foreign policy demanded by the forces on which the BJP is relying with growing success, given the results of the latest parliamentary elections. Indian analyst Shashank Mattoo is convinced that pragmatism – i.e., the invariable determination to ensure its own interests by the best possible means – is very different from the “ideologized non-alliance” of Jawaharlal Nehru. This will allow India to develop relations with all important powers.

According to Mattoo, External Affairs Minister Jaishankar supports widespread use of “strategic deception” methods. Jaishankar writes that the Chinese are masters par excellence of this method, having over several years reassured Americans that their intentions were peaceful and that they had no global ambitions until at some point they challenged America for power.

In fact, instead of putting India and Russia on opposite sides, the sanctions invigorated their trade.

At the 14th BRICS summit that took place in the videoconference format ahead of the summit in Germany (June 23-24, 2022), Modi’s contribution was in tune with the contributions of other participants and was obviously taken into account in the final document that supported the idea of talks between Russia and Ukraine.

The QUAD format also failed to become an anti-Russia platform, even though Japan and Australia, which are members of it together with the US, loyally share Washington’s hawkish positions on Ukraine.

Modi clarified his country's position, saying: "This is not the era of wars." This statement was carried across the world by media outlets, while the West tried to present it as evidence of India's shift after six months of the SMO toward the Western assessment.

By the end of 2022, it had become abundantly clear that India had reached its own conclusions about Ukraine and everything that was going on there – about the impacts of Ukrainian events on the world and the policies it should pursue in its own interests.

The West demonstrated its tools of "alternative pressure" on India. In early 2023, the BBC released a documentary about Hindu-Muslim clashes in Gujarat in 2002. It caused quite a stir in India and, as could be expected, was picked up by the opposition. The ruling circles, according to Jaishankar, perceived it as propaganda targeting Modi, who in 2002 was chief minister of Gujarat.

In view of the toughening position of the West, Indians are definitely not ready to assume the role of an intermediary between Russia and Ukraine that the Americans are pushing on it on the sly.

On the whole, India is standing firm in its interpretation of its own interests; it has not abandoned its independent policy related in part to gradually distancing itself from the West when it comes to establishing a new world order. This is undoubtedly advancing it toward acquiring the status of a great power within an objective process – which, in Russia's view, is already under way – to create and elevate new global centers on the basis of a fair, universal balance of interests. It is absolutely clear that the dynamics of the process and the price that humankind will pay for a multipolar world will be determined by the battle that started as Russia's SMO in Ukraine.

The Turkmen Factor in Turkey's Syria Policy

Alexander Kolesnikov, *Director, Center for Eurasian Studies, St. Petersburg University, 1st Class Councilor of the Diplomatic Service (ret.), Professor; Doctor of Science (History); akol2017@mail.ru*

Mehmet Urper, *Senior Lecturer, Chair of International Humanitarian Ties, St. Petersburg University, Candidate of Science (Political Science); mehmeturper@mail.ru*

Keywords: Turkey, Syria, Turkmens, Bashar Assad, ISIS, Kurds, Aleppo, Muslim education

THE Turkmens, an ethno-confessional Turkic group that has been living on Syrian territory for centuries, are the third largest group in Syria after the Arabs and Kurds. It is believed that Turkmens migrated to the area from Central Asia before the historical Battle of Manzikert.

In the early 1990s, when the bipolar system of international relations fell apart, Turkish leaders became especially interested in the Turkic factor. It became an ethno-confessional card of sorts within Ankara's foreign policy strategy in the post-Soviet space (Central Asia and the Caucasus) and in the Middle East. As soon as civil war flared up in Syria, Ankara did not hesitate to use the Turkic factor in the Syrian territories under its control. The stake on the Turkmens was not fortuitous. Facing persistent discrimination from the Syrian authorities, this ethnic group became more loyal to Turkey and sought to move closer to it.

Unable to ensure their security amid the civil war, Turkmens deliberately moved closer to the Turks in ethnic, confessional, and everyday aspects and, what is even more important, in their military-political positions.

Most Syrian Turkmens are Sunnis, the rest are Alawites. The regions where they live are a patchwork of ethnicities and confessions. The majority lives in the regions of Aleppo and Latakia; a considerable part occupies the Damascus-Homs-Hama triangle.

Turkmens set up several political organizations with military bodies, the biggest of them being the Syrian Turkmen Mass (Mass), Syrian Democratic Turkmen Movement (Movement), and the Syrian Turkmen Assembly. Yusuf Molla, the founder of the Mass, lives in Turkey, the headquarters of his organization is in Latakia (Bayirbucak) with subsidiary offices in Yayladağı, Akçakale, and Gaziantep. The Syria Democratic Turkmen Movement (Movement) was set up on March 21, 2012, in Istanbul. It is based in Aleppo and has all sorts of subsidiaries.

It should be said that as soon as these organizations appeared, Turkish officials started paying attention to the Turkmen factor.

The Turkmen army was formed under the supervision of the Turkish National Intelligence Organization (MIT). Even though Syrian Turkmen organizations had fewer than 1,000 representatives, the Turkish media spoke of a 5,000-strong Turkmen army. It seems that it was planned to achieve this figure at the expense of Turkmens living in Syria, serving in the Turkish Army, or studying in Turkish educational institutions. This means that the numerical strength of the Turkmen ethno-confessional group in Syria is not as big as Turkish official propaganda makes it out to be.

In the last five years Turkish troops have been involved in several military operations that have led to the establishment of several border zones.

According to journalist Khalil Ashawi, the Turkish authorities, likewise, try to “dilute” Syrian identity.

Educational policy in the controlled territories deserves special mention. A lot of money is being invested in shaping “Turkic awareness” among the younger generations. School curriculum was brought in line with Turkish standards. Turkish is now a compulsory subject in approximately 500 schools with hundreds of thousands of primary and secondary school students.

Relations between the Turkmen and Kurd communities in Syria are a separate and equally interesting subject. According to Turkmen political leaders, their community survived amid discriminations and repressions carried out by Syrian authorities. So far, it remains to be seen how Turkmens will response to the appearance of the Kurdish autonomous region: Turkmen leaders are convinced that “tens of thousands of Turkmens” will have no choice but to move out. All sorts of Turkmen political associations are another problem. Some of them belong to a coalition that opposes the Assad government, while others distance themselves from Turkey’s interference in their domestic affairs and even support official Damascus. According to certain Turkmen commanders.

Being fully aware that the Turkmens were drawn into the conflict contrary to their initial intention to keep away from it, Turkey is deliberately using them in its own strategic aims and forcing them to object to a Kurdish administration close to their borders.

Certain politicians suggest that Turkmens, rather than Turkey, should start political negotiations with the PYD and other Kurdish groups to lower tension and consolidate their future cooperation on issues of mutual political interest in Syria. Some researchers argue that the Syrian Turkmens are putting their legitimacy on the line and, in this regard, do not want to have anything to do with Turkey.

Today, we can surmise that in the medium term, Turkish leaders will continue the Turkification of Syrian Turkmens to set up a vast buffer zone between Turkey and areas densely populated by Syrian Kurds. In the longterm perspective, it is conceivable that Ankara will try to set up a quasistate of Turkmens as its ally in the armed struggle against Kurds on Syrian territory.

The National Strategies of Central Asian Countries as a Tool of Social Stability: The Poverty Factor

Fyodor Arzhayev, Senior Research Fellow, Financial University (FinU) under the Government of the Russian Federation; Senior Expert, Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA), Candidate of Science (Economics); arzhaevfedor@gmail.com

Vladislav Andriukhin, graduate student, School of World Politics, Lomonosov Moscow State University (MSU); vlad.andriukhin@gmail.com

Dmitry Kritsky, master's degree student, Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs, National Research University-Higher School of Economics (HSE); dimak14z1@gmail.com Anton Kotik, independent researcher; anton96nov@gmail.com

Dariya Saprynskaya, Research Fellow, Department of Central Asia and the Caucasus, Lomonosov Moscow State University (MSU); saprynskayadv@gmail.com

Keywords: poverty, Central Asia, Eurasian integration, international financial organizations, multivector approach, national development strategies

POVERTY has been and remains a key global problem, including for the states of Central Asia (CA). For the world's economies, this phenomenon is often associated with systemic problems in various fields – from the need for political modernization to the real sector of the economy. It is fair to say that the systemic nature of poverty causes a number of problems: low education levels, forced migration due to unemployment, etc. At the same time, Central Asia's integration into global economic chains remains weak.

Inadequate living standards in the post-Soviet space are rooted in the disruption of production chains after the breakup of the USSR, as well as in the socioeconomic problems that accompanied the transition to independence.

It should be noted that the poverty problem in Soviet Central Asia was of a specific nature. Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan engaged in large-scale cotton production, while Kazakhstan had a developed mining industry (coal, oil, gas, uranium). In 1990, shortly before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, agriculture accounted for at least a third of the gross domestic product in the Soviet republics of Central Asia. At the same time, about half of all poor people in the Soviet Union lived in these republics. The income gap between the regional nomenklatura and ordinary citizens, as well as environmental problems caused by the Soviet leadership's irrigation plans (Siberian river reversal) and the catastrophic state of the Aral Sea, played a significant role in perpetuating poverty in the region. It should be added that the capacity utilization rate in the production of cotton fiber and cotton products in the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) in the late 1980s was only two-thirds. The situation was similar in other republics manufacturing these products of great importance to the population.

With the disruption of production chains after the breakup of the Soviet Union, the cotton-growing industry lost its preferential status in the region, and this raised the question of meeting the basic needs of the population. In the case of Tajikistan, the situation was exacerbated by the consequences of the civil war (1992-1997), which had an extremely negative effect on the country's socioeconomic development. As for Kazakhstan, its problem lies in the wide socioeconomic disparities between regions: The gap in living standards between the prosperous cities of Astana and Almaty and rural areas has become evident.

The authorities of Kyrgyzstan focus mainly on social problems and the inadequate level of public administration. The key measures here are designed to reform education, coordinate vocational education and the labor market, stimulate technological modernization of the economy, and support young families.

Concrete measures to fight poverty and its corollaries in Central Asia include two educational programs launched in Kazakhstan: Bolashak, which helps to maintain links between talented students from Kazakhstan studying abroad and their home country by providing them with scholarships and employment opportunities in the public sector upon their return home, and Balapan, a preschool education program (2010-2020).

The Food for Work (FFW) program, designed by the government of Kyrgyzstan in coordination with the UN World Food Program, is among the practical measures being taken in this area. Its main task is to provide training in agricultural disciplines and help farmers to start a business, which serves to reduce the number of low-income and poor households and the poverty rate in the country.

According to a report by the UN Development Program (UNDP), the number of households with average incomes below the subsistence level could increase in all countries of the Central Asian region. In view of the onset of a new global crisis and rising energy and food prices, poverty in Uzbekistan is likely to increase across all poverty lines. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan can expect a significant increase in the number of households living below \$5.50 and \$3.20 a day, respectively. In Kazakhstan, poverty could increase at higher poverty lines. Considering the economic contraction in the Russian Federation – a key partner of the Central Asian countries – due to Western sanctions, the CA countries could also see a contraction in their own economies, a risk noted, for example, in the Concept of Integrated Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan Until 2030 and the concepts of other CA countries.

In order to address current problems, such as a low urbanization rate, low education level, and low technological intensity of the economy, it is vitally important for the Central Asian republics to attract foreign capital and foreign companies, and to support small and medium-sized businesses.

For their part, international financial organizations (ADB, EDB, and others) also play by the “international rules” of the financial market, and if they can provide loans and investments to these countries on easy terms, they provide them on a very limited scale and only for projects with state participation or with key players in these countries.

The draft agreement on the ERC provides for the possibility of establishing separate funds at the request of the parties, and one suggestion is to create as part of the ERC a fund for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises that could insure and reinsure companies with small volumes of business on favorable terms. Although this is a high-risk area, it could eventually support the local population and small enterprises.

It would be advisable for countries in the region to increase the share of settlements in national currencies, Chinese yuan, and Russian rubles. They could initiate a multilateral currency swap arrangement similar to the Chiang Mai Initiative. This would reduce currency risks and increase the region’s investment attractiveness.

The socioeconomic welfare of the Central Asian countries and their continuing relations with Russia as friendly and allied states directly depend on progress in eradicating poverty in the region. Intensive efforts to address regional problems will reduce the risk of socioeconomic and sociopolitical destabilization not only in Central Asia, but also in the Eurasian space in general and Russia in particular.

Multiethnicity as a Means of Achieving the West's Goals in the Western Balkans: Case Study of North Macedonia

Mikhail Krapiva, *Attaché, Historical and Documentary Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, fellow, Department of World Political Processes, Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*

Keywords: multiethnicity, polyethnic society, national identity, Western Balkan states, Ohrid Framework Agreement, the Prespa Agreement, EU, US

THE concept of nation-building has always been a focus of attention, but it attracted the particular interest of researchers in the 20th century amid the development of Third World countries and the desire of new states to expand their powers within a certain territory. This issue was particularly acute in the area of decolonization, but after the US withdrew from Indochina and this process came to an end, the debate on “nationbuilding” lost its appeal both in international relations and in academia.

The late 20th century was characterized by the development of political and economic processes such as globalization, modernization, and westernization that led to a blurring of traditional concepts such as “nation-state” and “national identity.”

In complex multiethnic societies within nation-states, ethnicity is created on the basis of a common political culture. This process is most difficult in new nation-states (predominantly in Africa and Asia), where it contradicts old ethnic divisions. This problem is no less acute in bi-ethnic communities, where one part of the identity belongs to the ethnic majority, or “titular ethnic group,” and the other to the ethnic minority, where many individuals maintain a sense of dual ethnicity.

This phenomenon is widespread in the Balkans, particularly after the breakup of Yugoslavia. The most interesting in this regard are the so-called Western Balkan states, where the process of national identity formation is still ongoing.

THE debate about who the Macedonians are has been ongoing since the former Yugoslav republic gained independence in 1991. Ideas about the origins of the Macedonians have been shaped amid ongoing disputes between the Macedonian elite and Bulgarian, Greek, and Serbian national intellectual circles.

The primary aspect of the confrontation is the debate about the ancient origin of the nation. The search for a new ideological paradigm and mythmaking led today's Macedonia to explore its connection with the ancient Macedonian (classical) heritage. This met with opposition from Greece, which saw this as a threat to its own national and cultural sovereignty.

Bulgaria was the first country to recognize Macedonia as a sovereign state, but it still considers Macedonian to be a Western dialect of Bulgarian.

THE sharpest polarization of Macedonian society along ethnic lines was manifested during the Slavo-Albanian conflict, which ended (with the active mediation of Western countries) officially with the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA) of 2001, signed by the leaders of the leading Macedonian parties (including the Albanian political bloc), as well as by François Léotard and James W. Pardew, the special representatives, respectively, of the EU and the US.

This agreement is still seen as the basis for the normalization of interethnic relations in the country through the development of civil society whose core value is respect for the ethnicity of all citizens. The document enshrines, first of all, the equality of all citizens before the law and eliminates discrimination based on ethnicity.

Ethnic Albanians in North Macedonia are the least interested in building a common Macedonian identity; their goal is to act in the wake of the Pan-Albanian policy aimed at uniting all the lands surrounding Albania where Albanians live (the prevalence of the Albanian ethnos over the state-forming one). The project of building a “Greater Albania” has existed for more than a century, but it was in the early 21st century that it started to turn into a definite plan of action (events in Kosovo and North Macedonia).

THE ethnic aspect is also the focus of attention in relations between North Macedonia and the EU. The Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU (2001) was, in a way, the country’s reward for signing the OFA. Thus, the implementation of the OFA became one criterion for membership.

The EU still views the OFA as a solid foundation for building a multiethnic society. It serves as a foundation for an active campaign to protect the country’s Albanian population: EU representatives have repeatedly stated that the issue of the use of the Albanian language in North Macedonia has been insufficiently regulated.

THE main player exerting direct influence on domestic political processes in North Macedonia is the US (the mediator in the signing of the Ohrid and Prespa Agreements). Since 1990, the US has been providing regular financial assistance to North Macedonia.

USAID programs in North Macedonia address ethnic tensions by decentralizing government power and responding primarily to the key demands of ethnic Albanians. At the same time, USAID positively assesses its activities in the country, noting, in particular, the following on its website: USAID promotes understanding between ethnic groups and the integration of institutions by building awareness to promote stability and decrease ethnic tensions.

NATION-BUILDING is a process that is extremely complex and hard to evaluate. It can result in the construction of a nation in a stable and sustainable national state (not all scholars consider the nation-state to be a necessary element of the modern political system) or in the emergence of fragmented societies and states unable to maintain their existence. Key in this context are questions of the correlation of ethnic, national, and political affiliation.

It is important to note that oppression against the ethnic majority in bi-ethnic societies is a common problem of the policy of constructing multiethnicity. North Macedonia is a case in point. Possible accession to the EU may lead to further oppression of the rights of the majority in favor of the minority.

The US Economy: Postcrisis Development Prospects

Viktor Supyan, *Director of a research program at the Russian Academy of Sciences’ US and Canada Institute, Corresponding Member, Russian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Science (Economics);*
vsuppyan@yahoo.com

Keywords: US economy, economic potential, scientific and technical potential, long-term development factors, postcrisis economic recovery factors, economic model, economic forecasts, role of the state

IN THE first decades of the 21st century, the US experienced several major socioeconomic shocks – primarily the so-called great recession of 2008- 2009, the most destructive cyclical crisis after the Great Depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s; the cyclical crisis of 2020, which coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic and had a fairly negative impact on the US economy and revealed its weaknesses; and finally, inflation, which in 2022 hit 8% for the first time in 40 years.

In terms of GDP at current prices, the US still accounted for the largest share in 2022, at \$25.4 trillion (24% of global GDP). The closest competitor, China, was in second place with a GDP of \$18.3 trillion (15.5% of the world's GDP). However, in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP), China is in first place, significantly ahead of the US: \$30.1 trillion and \$25 trillion, respectively. Russia placed 11th in terms of nominal GDP (\$1.8 trillion) and sixth in terms of PPP (\$4.5 trillion). In terms of per capita GDP, the US is in eighth place, taking into account oil-producing countries and offshore zones.

The US maintains a long-term lead in science and technology. This manifests itself in more than just total and relative R&D expenditures and in its rankings in major technologies.

There is good reason to say that the US (liberal) economic model is favorable for competitive, efficient workers. Clearly, this model is unsuitable for a socially oriented state focused on the welfare of all. At the same time, it has some obvious advantages: a focus on high production efficiency as a whole; scientific development; technological and managerial innovations; and economic growth, which ultimately leads to an increase in general welfare.

Meanwhile, the shortcomings of the dominant model of capitalism have also become obvious. The pursuit of profit rather than long-term development goals has resulted in the aggravation of environmental problems, devastating consequences with regard to climate, and a crisis in the fight against the [coronavirus] pandemic. At the same time, the problem of social and property inequality is becoming very acute in individual countries and in the world as a whole.

In the 21st century, the US economic model has been confronted more than ever with growing challenges, worsening the American people's wellbeing and prospects. Many of these challenges are a product of the model as such, while others were brought about by external circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The widespread discontent among large population groups and concern among experts are leading to various proposals to improve the market model of capitalism.

Another major challenge to the market model of capitalism is the response to climate change. In the foreseeable future, the social and economic impact of cataclysms such as floods, fires, and extreme weather events in various parts of the world on all aspects of human life, the environment, and physical capital – and, in a broader sense, on economic systems, including current market economy models – will significantly increase. Given the scale of climate change, these challenges will be essential in testing the stability and effectiveness of the present liberal economic model.

SINCE the 2020 crisis, which was largely caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the US economic situation has been in flux. For example, real GDP increased by 1% in 2022, significantly down from 5.7% in 2021. The main factors in declining economic growth rates were a drop in investment in housing construction and the slowdown of inventory investment.

There are several short- and medium-term factors that are determining the economic situation in 2023. First, consumer spending and consumer behavior.

Second: durables spending.

Lower demand from Europe because of military operations in Ukraine and a higher dollar have created some headwinds for US exporters. Real US exports are now slightly above the prepandemic level.

In 2022, the labor market changed considerably. Two years ago, millions of workers left their jobs due to the pandemic, and the big question was whether they would return. Now there are labor shortages.

DURING and after the crisis, the federal government took several major steps to facilitate economic recovery. The fiscal boost from government spending to support businesses and people during the

COVID-19 pandemic has largely petered out. The federal deficit is back to the prepandemic level of 4% to 5% of GDP.

The Republican victory in the House of Representatives during the 2022 midterm elections may be a negative factor in the administration's pursuit of an effective fiscal policy. It might complicate an agreement on federal spending for 2023 and subsequent years to prevent a so-called shutdown – i.e., a failure to enact funding legislation to finance the government for its next fiscal year, as has often been the case before. In addition, this could aggravate the problem of the national debt ceiling – in particular, hamper an agreement between Democrats and Republicans in Congress on this issue.

According to the CBO's projections, the US trade deficit will rise to 3.9% of GDP by the end of 2023 before shrinking in 2024 and 2025 and then stabilizing at 3.2% of GDP. Exports will rise by 9.1% in 2024 and by 6% in 2025, but imports will rise by only 3.7% and 4%, respectively, in those years.

On the whole, postcrisis recovery of the US economy will lead it to a fairly stable position. Considering that this stability will remain amid a huge general economic, scientific, and technical potential, the overall forecast can be considered quite favorable.

Sports as a Mechanism for Integrating Migrants: Germany's Experience

Alexander Nadezhdin, *First Secretary, Personnel Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Candidate of Science (Political Science); 3039210@mail.ru*

Keywords: sports, migration, Germany, host society, "Integration Through Sports," social adaptation, team sports

IT IS well known that sports are an important unifying factor regardless of personality traits, background, or age. In recent decades, there has been a surge in the number of people involved in sports, due to the development of its amateur and professional segments, promotion through media channels, and development of the training base. Along with promoting a healthy lifestyle, sports play an important social function, fostering communication and the development of contacts. With the intensification of modern migration processes, physical culture and sports activities serve as important channels of the adaptation of new arrivals in the host society.

In the context of current domestic political transformations and demographic changes in German society (of Germany's 84.3 million inhabitants, nearly 25% come from families with a migrant background), the sociopolitical community and expert circles note the role of sports as an integration mechanism.

According to German sociologists, sports – especially for young people from migrant families or foreigners residing in the country, as well as for students with poor academic performance – can be a kind of compensatory mechanism and a social elevator in the current reality of the lack of opportunities for higher education or prestigious jobs.

The universal nature of sports contributes to the formation of a multicultural and tolerant society, self-actualization, and the strengthening of mutual understanding of those of different nationalities and religions living in the country.

THE main body regulating sports in Germany is the German Olympic Sports Confederation (Deutscher Olympischer Sportbund, DOSB), created in 2006 as a registered public association following the merger of the German Sports Association and the German National Olympic Committee. As far as migration is

concerned, the charter of the organization states that the DOSB undertakes to promote integration and inclusion in sports by all available means and at all levels.⁸ The DOSB currently has more than 90,000 members. The main program within the DOSB is “Integration Through Sports,” which originated based on the Sports for All – Sports with Resettlers project, launched in 1989 by the Federal Ministry of the Interior with the support of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees.

An important task of the Integration Through Sports program, along with the implementation of the National Integration Plan of the Federal Government, is finding new models of joint work in the area of human motor activity.

A DETERRING factor in integration processes is the low level of representation of people from migrant families in sports associations. According to the 2013-2014 German Sports Report by the Federal Institute for Sports Science in Bonn, only 6.2% of sports club members come from the migrant community. Integration is complicated by the insufficient number of people from migrant families in the governing bodies of sports associations.

FOR a time, the German soccer team was the epitome of successful integration as a result of a well-planned state migration policy.

Mesut Özil, a player of Turkish descent and a top player who was previously called one of the most successful examples of integration, announced his decision to quit the national team after the championship. He was widely criticized in Germany for posting a photo with Erdoğan on the eve of the presidential election in Turkey. The situation provoked a new round of debate about national and cultural identity and the willingness of the third generation of migrants to integrate into society and accept its value and legal attitudes, and the poor performance in Russia added fuel to the fire of the heated debate.

AMID a strengthening of external migration pressure and an increase in German society of people from families with a migrant background and refugees, especially among young people, the need to improve the mechanisms of their adaptation is growing significantly. The development of interaction with this category of citizens seems to be one of the main sociopolitical challenges, the solution of which is important for the political, social, cultural, and economic development of the country.

It seems possible to use the integration potential of the organized sports system more intensively through the active involvement of immigrants from migrant families in governing structures, along with ordinary membership.

As the analysis confirms, people from migrant families seek membership in sports associations that not only provide opportunities for participating in the most popular and promising sports but also implement in practice a wide set of integration measures. In this context, the most popular clubs are soccer and martial arts, which are considered the most effective way to express oneself and climb the social ladder. A similar situation is observed in other European countries, where migrants make up a significant number of soccer players in amateur and professional sports.

BARBARIANS: Who Destroyed the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant and Why

Sergey Filatov, *commentator for International Affairs*; serfilatov@mail.ru

Keywords: Nord Stream, ammonia pipeline, HIMARS, aftermath of the dam collapse

DURING the Ukraine conflict, one thing has become very clear: Russia's enemies are barbarically destroying what others have created, as if to avenge their own worthlessness and weakness. It is just like the old Chinese proverb: "The weak take revenge, the strong forgive...." Russia's enemies are destroying vital assets, dooming devastated areas to environmental disaster. The blowing up of the Nord Stream gas pipeline, the Togliatti-Odessa ammonia pipeline, the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant – They are unable to deal with the Russian Army and are retaliating against the civilians of Europe, Ukraine, and Russia in their powerless rage. This hysterical behavior is psychologically abnormal. Not even the Nazis during World War II thought to blow up the Dnepr Hydropower Plant; and yet, the Kiev authorities are destroying critical infrastructure on their own territory like real occupiers.

As RIA Novosti columnist Victoria Nikiforova has beautifully written: "The miracle of civilization, the beautiful Kakhovka HPP, was built in the 1950s by Soviet people who could never have imagined that their own grandchildren, having registered as 'Ukrainians,' would hit it with artillery [...]"

On June 6, 2023, after several months of targeted shelling by the AFU, the central part of the dam gave way, triggering a cascading collapse of the structure, and tons of water – the Kakhovka Reservoir was quite nearly the largest on the Dnepr – rushed downstream, sweeping away everything in its path.

The barbarians showed themselves literally a few days later, when Ukrainian forces launched strikes on temporary accommodation facilities for evacuees on the Arabatska strelka the morning of June 10.

And after the destruction of the hydroelectric power plant, the typical European Russophobic tricks began. President of the European Council Charles Michel said that he was shocked by the destruction of the dam of the Kakhovka HPP. "We will hold Russia accountable," he wrote on Twitter.

Speculation about Russia's responsibility for blowing up the dam have been pouring out of European officials. They even get certain pleasure from this stream of Russophobic lies – they get a kick out of it.

Well-known US news anchors, whose audience numbers in the millions, have now weighed in on the events on the Dnepr. It is in over-regulated Europe that everyone is keeping silent, so as not to express doubts about the "wise EU leadership" and incur the wrath of the Brussels bureaucracy, while in the US freedom of speech still exists. And the impression is that the Americans are simply shocked by the shamelessness of the Europeans and the Kiev regime.

The consequences of the destruction of the HPP are very serious: An area populated by 22,000 people was flooded, the Dnepr water regime was disrupted, and the future of agriculture in Kherson Province, which was left without the main irrigation reservoir, the Kakhovka reservoir, is in jeopardy.

Although the safety of the Zaporozhye NPP is not directly threatened by the dam collapse, the situation there has become serious.

Thousands of farms used to rely on four canals that flowed from the Kakhovka reservoir. The Krivoy Rog South Reservoir is fed by the artificial flood of the Kakhovka Reservoir and provides water for domestic, industrial, and agricultural needs. The lake itself is used for breeding commercial fish species. Thus, the Ukrainian strike on the Kakhovka HPP will also cause enormous damage to Krivoy Rog.

The South Ukrainian (Kakhovka) Canal irrigates most of the agricultural fields in Kherson Province and also supplies drinking water to people living in hundreds of settlements and villages along its route. The canal is used to irrigate 326,000 hectares in two provinces; through the 175-kilometer R-9 water line, water from the Kakhovka Canal feeds the water supply system of Berdyansk.

Well, the Kiev regime has approached the standards of "European values," the main one being fierce Russophobia, which sweeps away even the dams of hydroelectric power plants. Not 10 years have passed on the path to the "European choice" between shouts of "Hang the Russkies!" and the

orchestration of a barbaric environmental disaster. What else must the Kiev authorities do to reach the “European level”? To Europe, of course, barbarism is familiar business.

The Bucharest Nine Versus Russia, Again

Vladislav Gulevich, *foreign correspondent*; journal@interaffairs.ru

Keywords: Bucharest Nine, Visegrad Four, Russia, Ukraine, NATO

AT THE recent summit in Bratislava of the Bucharest Nine (B9), on June 6, 2023, Romanian President Klaus Iohannis declared Russia to be the primary threat to Euro Atlantic security. The B9 is a group composed of Romania, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, formed in 2015 under the watchful eye of their American keepers. The State Department and the Pentagon have representatives present at all of the group’s gatherings.

The Visegrad Four (V4) – comprising Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia – which was created in 1991 as an auxiliary format for the Euro integration of post-Soviet republics (above all Ukraine and Belarus), would like to play a stabilizing role within the B9. Yet, due to the position that Budapest has taken, the V4 is not functioning today. It exists as a formal entity but does not operate on the practical plane. Thus, Hungary is inhibiting consensus within both the V4 and the B9.

The B9 consistently criticizes the idea of European autonomy in the military realm and underlines the indispensable role of the US as the military power guaranteeing Central-Eastern European security.

The B9 is trying to be a pro-American engine and is aiming to meet the US demands of its fellow NATO members to increase defense spending to 2% of [each nation’s] gross domestic product. Currently, the group’s combined military spending amounts to \$24 billion. In particular, Lithuania is putting forth effort, with its defense expenditures growing 156% since 2008.

Washington’s benefits from the B9’s existence are clear. First off, the B9 serves as a “cordon sanitaire” against Russia, keeping it away from the Balkans. Second, it contributes to the fragmentation of Europe, splitting it into a camp of “autonomists” and a pro-American camp. The potential autonomists are still Paris and Berlin. Thus, the pro-American camp consists of post-Socialist Europe and the Anglo-Saxon-friendly countries of “old Europe” (Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece).

The Romanian-Bulgarian coast is considered of great strategic importance in Romanian geopolitics, with Romanian theoreticians calling it the “Thracian-Illyrian corridor.” This terminology is part and parcel of a contrived ideology about Romanian statehood being the successor to Ancient Rome: Everything that Romanian propaganda dresses in a Roman toga carries existential significance. Having a Latin equivalent for a given strategic site or region shows the importance ascribed to that site by Romanian strategists.

The B9 is the US’s Trojan Horse inside Europe. The most active players in that group are not only Poland, but Romania, along with the provincial blocs clustered around Warsaw and Bucharest.

The UAE: Russia’s Largest Trading Partner Among the Gulf States

Dr. Mohammed Ahmed Al Jaber, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Arab Emirates to Russia*

Keywords: UAE, RF, SPIEF 2023, EAEU

This interview was specially prepared for International Affairs by the Interfax News Agency. The interview was held before the start of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum 2023 (SPIEF 2023).

Strategic and historical relations between the UAE and the Russian Federation are deep and strong, and trade volumes have increased substantially in recent years. There are no definite projections of mutual trade for the end of the year, but I think the increase in trade this year, as in 2022, will be significant.

The UAE is pleased to participate in SPIEF 2023 because it provides an opportunity to outline prospects for cooperation. I hope it will bring us new ideas, plans, and projects that will help to deepen cooperation between our countries.

We have a very dynamic and attractive business environment for all countries without exception. This is due to the UAE's unique geographical location and the opportunity to offer advanced logistics services, because we are connected by air and sea to different continents and cities of the world. A favorable business climate is also formed by our economic legislation, a sophisticated legal and regulatory framework that attracts investors, and other advantages that provide incentives for doing business in our country. I think that today's business environment in the UAE is very favorable for both Russian entrepreneurs and businesses from other countries.

We have a large potential for expanding cooperation with Russia on air transportation. Currently, there are about 260 flights a week between our countries. Considering the trends in the tourism market, I think that the number of flights will increase.

Tourism is a key sector and plays an important role in strengthening bilateral ties between the UAE and Russia.

The UAE has started signing comprehensive agreements with strategic partners under its long-term program to diversify the economy and build strong international ties through sectors such as trade, industry, and investment.

Along with the establishment of a preferential trade regime, we seek to ensure the presence in the UAE of a large number of companies, including innovative ones, from the EAEU countries, as well as to strengthen our role as an international trade, transport, and logistics hub.

The UAE is Russia's largest trading partner among the Gulf states: Our country accounts for 55% of total trade with Russia.

Over the past five decades, the UAE has worked to strengthen international partnership and has made rapid progress in enhancing the competitiveness and sustainability of its economy, as well as in exploring the prospects for its development. Indeed, hundreds of small and medium-sized enterprises take advantage of existing opportunities, which facilitates their access to markets and gives them special advantages.

I am very happy that my work to develop bilateral ties between our countries is valued so highly. The UAE and our country's wise leadership appreciate the willingness of the Russian government and people to develop relations. For my part, I emphasize the UAE's desire to further strengthen this interaction and keep advancing toward new horizons of friendship, cooperation, and joint development.

Russia and the UAE are bound together by long-term political, economic, and humanitarian cooperation. Interparliamentary interaction and cooperation in agriculture, space exploration, energy, sports, advanced technology, education, and culture are top-priority and promising areas.

The War for the State

Andrey Ilnitsky, *Adviser to the Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation, State Adviser of the Russian Federation 3rd Class, member, Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, Senior Researcher, Higher Attestation Commission, Candidate of Science (Technical Science); ilnitskiyam@gmail.com*

The article presents the author's personal views.

Keywords: national security strategies of Russia and the US, deep states, middle class, minorities

THE national security strategies of Russia and the US were adopted in the summer of 2021 and the fall of 2022, respectively. These documents will define the countries' policies for decades.

Even a cursory comparative analysis of these strategies shows a striking civilizational difference in how Russia and the US see themselves, their development, and their role in the world.

IN ITS Strategy, the US declares itself to be a "global" hegemon – a state whose sphere of interests is the whole world. The development and prosperity of the US is obviously pursued through the appropriation of global resources through financial and economic tools, backed up by pressure and the imposition of "universal democratic" values.

This is the strategy of a state that establishes the only "correct" rules – rules that legitimize interference in the internal affairs of other countries and the exploitation of their natural and social resources to ensure its own hegemony. At the same time, as follows from the strategy, democracy for the US is not so much a value as a tool and pretext for interference in a sovereign state.

Russia's strategy and our understanding of the world order are different.

Our National Security Strategy prioritizes the value categories of people, nationality, spirituality, morality, justice, culture, history, etc

It follows from an analysis of the contents of the National Security Strategy, as well as the recently released Foreign Policy Concept, that Russia is a multi-confessional and multi-ethnic 1,000-year-old civilization that developed historically and culturally around Christian Orthodoxy and is based on a strong state that guarantees state sovereignty and the protection of national interests and traditional spiritual and moral values.

In our self-sufficient spiritual and moral dominant, in our, as they say, "conservative offensive," Westerners see an existential threat to the hegemony of their pragmatic expansionist civilization.

Strategic conservatism is a broader ecosystem of traditional values that constitute the politico-cultural implementation of Russia as the Third Rome concept. It is focused primarily on three areas where societal tensions appear highest.

First, the defense of the "traditional" family (marriage between a man and a woman) in opposition to Western support for same-sex marriage and "nontraditional" families.

Second is the protection against Western policies of Russia's unique cultural and historical national identity, related to demographic diversity.

The third narrative is that Russia, as the sole defender of traditional values, is a "savior" that wants to protect the West from itself by preventing its decadence and ruin.

Russia's promotion of strategic conservatism arouses sympathy in the world.

THE customers and beneficiaries of this strategy of the West are transnational corporations, various supranational oligarchic clans, and “pressure groups,” including those with ties to security forces and intelligence communities, as well as financial, ethno-confessional, cyber, and other closely intertwined networks that represent what is referred to as the “deep state.”

The complete interpenetration and dominant participation of deep state organizations in the military-industrial complex and the intelligence and defense communities, along with the creation of a network of “think tanks” that shape strategy and meanings, has ensured control over the foreign policies of the US and the West as a whole.

In the last decade, the IT oligarchy – so-called Big Data (BD) and Big Pharma (BPh) – has been actively increasing its influence and penetration into the deep state.

NATION-STATES are an objective obstacle on the deep state’s path to power.

Therefore, the actual goal of the deep state is to undermine the traditional world order by abolishing the institution of the nation-state as a sovereign agent of world politics.

Still reeling after the “Trump fluctuation” and in order to avoid precedents, the deep state appears to have decided to strip the US nation-state of what remains of its agency and to substantially reset its functionality, ideology, and development priorities.

The concept of the Second America dominates US politics and its ruling elites today. It is for its doctrinal entrenchment that the deep state has introduced a new, globalist version of the US National Security Strategy through the administration of Joe Biden (absolutely and entirely a functionary of the deep state system), whom it fully controls.

Info-cognitive technologies of mental warfare are resetting the ideologies and national identities of states: culture, history, values, and traditions – i.e., everything with which nations identify themselves.

THE middle class is being destroyed not only because it is a social and financial burden that the oligarchs of the deep state are “tired of,” but because it is the source of the political sovereignty of the individual, family, and society; it is the stability, support, and reproduction of the nation-state.

In the US, what triggered this process was the launch of a project known as the Uprising of the Minorities.

The intellectual elite, as if out of spleen and the feeling of being overly satiated with life, conscientiously “became concerned” with injustice to minorities.

There is nothing surprising here – the technique of governing/ manipulating society based on the “divide and conquer” principle – i.e., ruling by dividing society into sects, ethnic groups, social environments, and other such minorities, and working in a targeted fashion with each of them – is as old as the world.

Minorities that are unable to consolidate into a majority – that are active but financially self-sufficient and therefore controllable and governable – are a rather viable and reliable technology of the deep state.

It must be understood that by shaking up the elites in a revolutionary way, the Bolsheviks were achieving objectives besides just seizing and holding power! And in terms of strategy, these were tasks of construction, not destruction!

The working class from the minority had to become a majority! Including by eliminating competing minorities that had ruled up until that time – the bourgeoisie and the nobility – but most importantly, by emancipating the serfs en masse!

The second important thing is that the Bolsheviks were building something. And that is why, in forming this new majority, they launched a universal education system for all that was grounded in the classical, fundamental disciplines and would identify and promote the most talented students, especially in the hard sciences.

The American approach to the “minorities revolution,” by contrast, operated on the basis of destruction, achieved by replacing the traditional elites in power who in one way or another represented the interests of the majority (the middle class above all). Because of their low skill level and inability to govern strategically, people of color, women, those of nontraditional orientation, and other minorities, with their energetic new elite, are being controlled like puppets by the real ruling class: the deep state – i.e., the oligarchy of IT & Big Data, Pharma, and transnational media corporations.

WE MUST first defeat the West mentally. To do that, we need a powerful ideology that unites the will of the people and answers the questions: “What are we?” “Who are we?” and “Why are we?”

Russia’s elite must live and act for the sake of the great cause, for the sake of the Fatherland. The military and law-enforcement officials; parliamentary deputies and executive branch officials; and leaders of national corporations, the media, and the educational and cultural sphere must mobilize internally, and clearly define their place on the front line of the civilizational war against the West.

The Problematic Issue of Genocide in the West’s Information War Against Russia

Denis Podolsky, *Second Secretary, First Department of CIS Countries, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs;*
den_podolskiy@mail.ru

Keywords: genocide, information warfare, information policy, international law, Russophobia, anti-Russian rhetoric, neo-Nazism, falsification of history

THE confrontation in opinion journalism today between Russia and countries of the collective West is commonly called hybrid warfare – in particular, on the grounds that provocations, the falsification of facts, and the heightening of tensions are taking place in the disparate realms of politics, economics, and culture. At the forefront of the struggle is the information space, which promptly and sometimes sharply reacts to any fluctuations in the political situation, focusing attention on a certain problematic issue. One such topic that has become a significant label for current political events is genocide.

Across the global information space, this topic has until recently been largely restricted to Turkey’s refusal to acknowledge the Armenian genocide in 1915. Every year on Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, April 24, this issue would come across the headlines, riveting the audience’s attention to remarks made on the occasion by world leaders (the US president, in particular).

The situation has changed over the last few years. Ever since Crimea returned to Russia, the topic of genocide has popped up more and more at the instigation of Western states and Ukraine as part of their Russophobic rhetoric.

Many international law specialists point out a certain “vagueness” of the norms set by the Genocide Convention, which enable practically any inhuman acts toward any sort of ethnic group or nationality to be recognized (or not recognized) as such. Discussions about the essence of genocide as a crime against humanity, according to some opinions, “often comes down to demagoguery giving rise to a hidden bias or ethnocentrism, an ethnic prejudice.” Conceptions of genocide currently enshrined in norms of international law make it hard to arrive at an unambiguous interpretation of the legal content of this

phenomenon, but only if you ignore the fact that “genocide” and “crime against humanity” are synonyms, and that the “victims” of this crime might be not only an ethnic (national) group, but any social group.

There is a persistent page on the Internet that broadcasts information about “Ukrainian genocide.” This page was created on the extremely popular albeit rather despicable platform Wikipedia.

In July 2022, the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations passed a resolution recognizing Russia’s actions as genocide. In typical fashion, no mention is made in the draft resolution about the terrorist acts, atrocities, and massacres that have been carried out by Ukraine for more than eight years in Donbass.

There was an obvious necessity for the American senators to pass such a resolution: The aim was to apply greater pressure on Congress, NATO, and their European allies in the interests of providing military support to Ukraine.

In addition to the above data, the Wikipedia article points to evidence of alleged “Russian atrocities on occupied territories” that was gathered by the international human rights organizations Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, primarily in Bucha. However, its authors are forced to admit that these organizations do not consider it possible to acknowledge what is happening as genocide. Nonetheless, [the page] regularly adds new “evidence” and excerpts from Western mass media footage devoted to the Russian Army’s “crimes” in Ukraine.

It is worth mentioning that in April 2022, deputies from the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia put forward a proposal for the Russian legislature to acknowledge the commission of genocide by the Ukrainian authorities against the [ethnic] Russian population between 2014 and 2022. The draft resolution to this effect that was submitted to the Russian State Duma quoted an excerpt from a decree issued by [former] acting president of Ukraine Alexander Turchinov, which enshrined a “policy for the physical eradication” of residents of the DPR and LPR, the overwhelming majority of whom were Russian. This draft, however, was never adopted.

Ukraine, meanwhile, pursued a preemptive tactic in late February 2022 by filing a suit against Russia at the International Court of Justice in The Hague in which it claimed that our country had made false assertions of genocide in Lugansk and Donetsk Provinces. Denying similar accusations against itself, Kiev’s leaders accused the Russian government of “conceiving acts of genocide.”

The hyping of the idea of genocide “spins off” in several directions as part of the sweeping propaganda campaign aimed at discrediting the Russian Federation’s foreign policy.

An analysis of the above tactics in their totality gives reason to assert that the US and its allies are trying to use the theme of genocide to undermine the authority of Russian bodies of state authority in the eyes of the people, and that they aim to use [that theme] as an additional factor to weaken Russia’s position on the global stage.

NATO: The Race for the Secretary General’s Office

Andrey Kadomtsev, *political scientist*; journal@interaffairs.ru

Keywords: struggles, NATO secretary general, office, anti-Russian alliance

JENS Stoltenberg's tenure as secretary general of NATO expires at the end of September. Despite rumors that he may stay on the job, there already are struggles for the leadership of one of the key Western multinational institutions.

Stoltenberg, a former Norwegian prime minister, has been at the helm of NATO for nearly nine years, with two extensions of his tenure. He had planned to leave last year, but in March 2022, his term was extended for a year due to alleged emergency circumstances. In February 2023, NATO spokeswoman Oana Lungescu said that Stoltenberg had no intention to seek another term.

As has become a tradition, candidates for secretary general do not include Americans, since the post of supreme allied commander Europe (SACEUR), NATO's second-highest military position after chair of the alliance's Military Committee, is always held by a US general. Therefore, any candidate is either a European or a Canadian. However, de facto, no one can become secretary general without the go-ahead from Washington. The secretary general is elected through closed-door consultations among countries that are particularly influential in the bloc. Officially, decisions in NATO are made by consensus. But the key four economies, the US, Germany, France, and Britain, play the determining role in the process even if they have not put forward their own candidates.

The US and Turkey are special cases. Some critics believe that the geopolitical interests of the US are marked by duality. On the one hand, critics argue, the US plays the determining role in military assistance to Ukraine. On the other, they claim, weapons supplied by Washington can make the military power of Ukraine equal to that of Russia but cannot give superiority to the Ukrainians. Moreover, the US is paying increasing attention to the existential confrontation with China and obviously would like NATO to put military pressure on Beijing. Washington is seeking to revive its Cold War-era policy of setting up military alliances along the boundaries of Eurasia in a bid to gain control of the mega-continent.

Many of NATO's European members clearly are not thrilled by the US's China policy. In a recent survey by the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) among citizens of European member countries of NATO, an average of 62% of respondents said they would prefer their country to remain neutral in a potential US-Chinese war over Taiwan.

Turkey is seeking to diversify its foreign relations as much as possible in a bid to minimize its international risks. Seeing that it would not be welcome to join potential Western integration projects, Turkey is intensively building up cooperation with Russia, which includes joint military industrial projects, and is considering joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

NATO may face more serious challenges today than it has in the past three decades. The secretary general does not have much decision-making power but plays an important public relations role as NATO's face and voice. Western commentators say that the secretary general needs to be a skillful communicator capable of rallying political, diplomatic, and military groupings around a common line.

Observers believe it is possible that Stoltenberg will have his tenure extended at least until NATO's planned annual summit in 2024.

British media said that during a visit to Washington early in June, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak tried to persuade US President Joe Biden to back Wallace's candidacy. Nevertheless, Biden, at a joint news conference with Sunak on June 8, said that NATO had yet to reach a consensus on who would be its next secretary general. According to a statement on the White House website, Biden said that this remained a subject of intensive discussions among member countries. But no matter who the next secretary general is, NATO will remain an anti-Russian alliance.

The Baltic Trend: Spring-Summer 1939 – Documentary Essays

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

Keywords: Baltic trend of 1939, Finnish springboard, Germany

THE demands formulated by the Soviet government at talks with Great Britain and France on May 14, 1939, are still controversial. On that day, Moscow invited London and Paris to guarantee the neutrality and sovereignty of three Baltic republics (Latvia, Estonia, and Finland) that bordered the Soviet Union in case of German aggression. This issue roused acute disagreements at trilateral political negotiations that lasted until early August 1939. The draft trilateral agreement did contain the provision of trilateral guarantees against direct aggression, yet the issue of opposition to indirect aggression was excluded from the final text on account of Britain's position. The political agreement was never signed, while on August 12, the military missions of the three countries opened discussions of possible interaction in case of German aggression.

At the negotiating table, both Western powers, especially Britain, obviously wanted to push the Soviet Union into a corner. They planned to use the talks to pressure Berlin: London still hoped to establish contacts with Germany behind the scenes to achieve a political compromise.

The British continued their political games. They refused to consider pro-German coups d'état in the Baltic countries a form of indirect aggression that would turn them into military and political allies of the Third Reich.

In the summer of 1939, Western leaders and the Western political press offered many arguments in favor of the British political line on the issue of guarantees for the Baltic countries. First, they pointed out that without common land borders between Germany and these states, Germany could not threaten them; second, the Baltic states rejected any guarantees from any country as interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states; they announced that they would remain neutral, that there was neither a danger of a coup d'état in the Baltic states nor of their governments' reorientation toward military cooperation with Germany, etc. In the postwar period, these arguments became part of the ideological arsenals of certain politicians and historians.

Indirect aggression of German fascism against the Baltic countries might have transformed them into its satellites, which would have been even more dangerous than a direct Wehrmacht attack against the Baltic states.

Great Britain's consistent opposition to the Soviet formula of indirect aggression as applied to the Baltic states gave the Soviet government every reason to suspect that London wanted to leave "the aggressor a loophole" – i.e., to give Germany a chance to bypass Poland, which had been "guaranteed" by Western powers, and attack the Soviet Union.

THE Kremlin feared that if a war broke out, Germany might try to get the Finnish government to allow the Wehrmacht to cross its territory to reach the Soviet border or occupy part of Finland, block Soviet ships in the Gulf of Finland, and strike Leningrad from land and sea. It later emerged that the Germans had indeed harbored such plans.

In subsequent years, the question would repeatedly be asked: Why did Finnish ruling circles deny the very modest requests of the Soviet Union regarding isles in the Gulf of Finland that in no way encroached on Finnish sovereignty, especially given that many leading Finnish politicians were ready to accept those offers? Answers vary, yet they should not be looked for only in the anti-Soviet positions of Finnish political forces or German schemes.

On March 28, 1939, under the pressure of a rapidly aggravating international situation and developments in Lithuania, the Soviet Union issued statements to the governments of Latvia and

Estonia, recommending that they be ready to effectively oppose any encroachments on their sovereignty and territorial integrity in their own interests and in the “vital interests of the Soviet state.”

The governments of Latvia and Estonia were invited to sign agreements on mutual assistance that would have guaranteed their safety in the face of German aggression.

Both governments rejected the Soviet offer.

By the end of the 1930s, Estonian military intelligence had become a de facto part of the Abwehr and was working exclusively against the Soviet Union.

The negative responses from both Latvia and Estonia to the Soviet offer of assistance fully met the interests of Berlin: From that time on, it could hope that the use of force might not be needed and that the countries could be peacefully subjugated by diplomatic and economic means.

THROUGHOUT the 1930s, Germany steadily increased its political influence in Estonia as well as its military and military-technological cooperation [with the country]. It used a wide range of measures to make Estonia dependent on Germany economically and to corrupt its leaders. This indirect aggression was obvious: Tallinn was gradually transformed into an outpost of German influence in the Baltic region.

According to German documents, kept on a short leash, Estonian ruling circles were used as tools in the policy of neutralizing neighboring states. Berlin insisted that it was the Estonian government that had initiated a bilateral nonaggression pact with Germany. On the other hand, the Germans themselves might have prompted the Estonians to make such a proposal to Germany.

RIGA was a less comfortable partner. Germany’s share in foreign investments in Latvian industry, in share capital, and foreign trade was steadily rising and edging out the British. In the latter half of the 1930s, Berlin, luring Riga with exclusively favorable trade agreements, attracted a considerable part of Latvian agricultural exports by paying 20% above world prices.

In the 1930s, large German landed estates were liquidated and cultural artifacts belonging to Germans were nationalized. After the coup of 1934, the Ulmanis government pursued a “Latvia for Latvians” policy, which hurt the interests of Baltic Germans. Moreover, Latvian became the state language.

The very serious contradictions in Latvian society forced the ruling circles to tread carefully in the international arena. Later, this was defined as the “seesaw policy.”

The Latvians were defeated and took their place among the followers of German policies. On May 22, 1939, the Latvian government organized an openly anti-Soviet demonstration in the form of grand celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the liberation of the city from the Bolsheviks.

LITHUANIA is an inalienable part of any discussions of the Baltic region. Not mentioned at the British-French-Soviet talks, the country, starting on September 28, 1939, became part of the sphere of Soviet interests. Everything related to Lithuania goes beyond the time frame stated in the title of this article, yet it should be discussed, since the German policy of indirect aggression assumed a special form in Lithuania.

The land border between Lithuania and East Prussia allowed Germans to increase their pressure; in fact, after March 22, 1939, there was no sense in talking of this Baltic country as an independent state. Berlin capitalized on the territorial disagreements between Poland and Lithuania – stirred up by Polish occupation of Vilna (Vilnius) and the Vilna Region in 1920 and their annexation in 1922 – to steer the Lithuanian leadership headed by President Antanas Smetona to its side.

Warned and frightened, the Lithuanian government informed the German envoy that it was “satisfied with the statement and was deeply grateful” to Berlin and assured Germany that it would act in full conformity with the German demands.

The war radically changed the tone and content of German messages: At first, Berlin persistently proposed and later demanded that Lithuania occupy the Vilna Region.

There is every reason to suppose that in Danzig the sides discussed the German-Lithuanian treaty that, as planned, Urbšys would be asked to sign at his meeting with Ribbentrop. The “outline” of the treaty found in German archives is called Schutzvertrag – a protection contract. In their colonial past, the Germans concluded such “protection contracts” with their colonies.

It is understandable why the Germans were nervous and acted in haste: On September 17, units of the Red Army crossed the Polish border; on September 19, they entered Vilna. Berlin feared that Moscow, which had never recognized Poland’s annexation of the Vilna Region, would transfer it to Lithuania and thus increase its influence there.

SOVIET leaders buried the German claims to Lithuania without much trouble, as confirmed by a rather detailed recording of the talks at which Stalin represented the Soviet side.¹¹⁴ The following fact is important in this regard.

From the summer of 1939 to late 1940, Berlin effectively accepted all Soviet proposals and demands without a murmur. In fact, in its desire to neutralize the Soviet Union, Hitler fell into his own trap.

In 1939, Hitler was planning his main war – the war against the Soviet Union. But before that, he had to take care of all “intermediary tasks.” But he did not know at the time that Great Britain would stand firm. Stalin knew that two years later the Germans might attack the Soviet Union; he also knew that they would first go to the West and, therefore, wanted to protect their rear from a Soviet strike. At the same time, he probably hoped that Hitler’s “Western march” would take much longer and that, very much as in World War I, the Germans would get bogged down in France. He could not imagine that the valiant French Army would hold out for only a month and a half and that the British would ignominiously flee the continent to be locked on their island.

The Soviet leaders could soberly assess the situation: The shamelessness with which the map of Europe was being redrawn meant that war was inevitable. Increasingly convinced that an agreement with Western powers on collective resistance to the German aggressive policy was nowhere in sight, the Kremlin decided to accept the German offer of a bilateral pact as the only chance to avoid war, at least for a time.

In the fall of 1939 and the summer of 1940, the Soviet Union was the first to score political successes; Soviet political representatives and Soviet troops were greeted with flowers in the streets of Baltic cities. In the summer of 1941, it was Germany that scored the first (this time military) victory; its troops were greeted with flowers. In the summer of 1944, crowds with flowers poured into the streets of Baltic cities to greet the Red Army that had scored military victories. This behavior of the people of small states that found themselves between a rock and a hard place is easily explained, especially if this population is politically disunited.

Have things changed since then? Not really. The Baltic republics celebrated the Western success in the Cold War with the Soviet Union, which brought about their independence. Later, they rejoiced over their newly acquired NATO membership. Smiling people with flowers flooded the streets of the Baltic capitals to greet “Euroatlantic” politicians and soldiers. We have seen this all before. History never ends, and no one knows what it holds in store.

The Evil is Back: Nazism and Its Heirs

Alexander Borisov, Professor, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Doctor of Science (History); borisov.a.yu@my.mqimo.ru

Keywords: SMO, Ukrainian Nazim, fascism, world crisis

GERMAN philosopher Friedrich Hegel is credited with the well-known idea that history repeats itself twice: first as tragedy, then as farce.

A new threat that arose on the western border of Russia with the active assistance of NATO countries, evoking parallels in our historical memory with pictures of the military past, was considered by the Russian authorities to be so serious that it led to the decision to conduct a special military operation (SMO) in Ukraine with the aim of demilitarizing and denazifying the Kiev regime.

The judgment on Nazism passed by the Nuremberg International Tribunal of the victor states was final, without a statute of limitations and without right of appeal.

A generalized assessment of what has been written on the subject creates the impression that the pain caused by the greatest tragedy of the past is weakening. Human memory grows duller, eyewitnesses of and participants in the events of the first half of the 20th century are leaving this world, while the perception of those events is gradually losing its sharpness and tension, turning into dull academic discourse. Today, the heroes and villains of this great historical drama are seen as equal victims of inexorable events and, therefore, deserve to be discussed with all compassion and leniency.

In Ukraine, a series of antigovernment coups and falsified elections brought to power a man from the creative class. A comic actor, not a painter, he knows how to play his role and is highly regarded in Western offices, parliaments, salons, and audiences as a defender of “freedom” and “democracy” and an “enemy of authoritarianism.” True to its traditions, in 2022, Time magazine named Ukrainian President Zelensky “Person of the Year.”

It should not be forgotten that before Hitler revealed his global ambitions and started capturing other countries, the Western elites had regarded him as a messiah, a staunch anti-communist, and a protector of Western civilization against barbarians from the East.

The “Western democracies” regarded Benito Mussolini, leader of Italian fascists, as the founder of the “corporate state” and acknowledged his ability to maintain order with an “iron hand,” suppress the workers’ movement, and defend the interests of big capital.

It should be said that the tendency of European elites to rely on harsh methods of state and political governance, the dictatorship of strong personalities and their iron order, is rooted in the initial stages of the 500-year-long domination of the West in world affairs. Early in the 16th century, “Florentine secretary” Niccolò Machiavelli was convinced that the state could not survive without dictatorship in times of troubles.

Fascist-minded President of Ukraine Zelensky is using the weapons of political spin, the substitution of concepts, and the “big lie” – Goebbels’ favorite tactics in Hitler Germany that have been inherited by his followers in the West in the form of “fake news,” “alternative facts,” and “posttruth.”

TO BETTER understand fascism as a system of state governance, political power, economic and social organization of society, thinking of the elite, and the ideological indoctrination and zombification of populations, as well as a set of aggressive geopolitical attitudes, we need to delve into European and world history of the late 19th and first half of the 20th century.

This was a complicated time in world history that was brimming with apocalyptic premonitions reflected in the profound pessimism of the philosophical and sociological thought of Friedrich Nietzsche,

Oswald Spengler, and Sigmund Freud. It should be said that Edward Bernays, Freud's nephew, laid the foundations of the powerful "public relations" system in the US.

On the other hand, it was a time of unbridled technological optimism, faith in the boundless potential of human genius – a time of unique discoveries and inventions that opened new horizons of civilizational development, including horrific instruments of murder.

Today, amid a vast and painful crisis, Europeans are pinning their hopes, to a much greater extent than before, on a strong personality – a messiah who would come to bring order and save people.

Western elites prefer to push aside memories of the deep crises of their own making that led to the world wars, while the academic circles that serve their interests are demonstrating a growing trend of attributing fascism – German Nazism, in particular – to the deep and dark abyss of German history, the German preference for a strong power that rules by blood and iron (*Blut und Eisen*), an order that relies on force, cruel external expansions, etc.

Meanwhile, fascism is a historical category closely connected with a certain development stage of human community; the emergence of big capital and its perennial transborder ambitions; a new role for great powers and their never-ending desire to re-divide and colonize the world; and, what is even more important, the destructive crisis of the capitalist system.

In light of the powerful strike delivered by the collective West against Russia after the start of the SMO in the form of sanctions that had been prepared in advance, it is much easier to understand Stalin's vacillations over the Hitler's impending aggression against the Soviet Union. Despite having sufficient intelligence, he probably feared that any actions in advance could instigate a "crusade" of all Western states against the USSR. It seems that under the new historical conditions, in view of the sad experience of the past (which President Putin spoke about on several occasions), Moscow decided, after soberly assessing the unavoidable sanctions and their effect, to act preemptively and deliver a strike without waiting for an attack from the neighboring state.

THE World War – which at its conclusion was called the Great, not the First – led to the first global economic and political crisis. As could be expected, the losers, the members of the Quadripartite Agreement, suffered more than others. The great empires of the Habsburgs, Hohenzollerns, and Ottomans that had for centuries called the tune in European politics disappeared from the map of the world. The 300-year old Empire of the Romanovs fell under the blows of the February 1917 revolution. Several months later, the Soviet state, an entirely new phenomenon of world history, appeared after the October Revolution.

Nazism in Germany as an analogue of fascism was imported from abroad and did not appear independently on its national soil due to certain objective circumstances. In fact, in most cases, new ultra-radical ideologies were enthusiastically greeted in those European states that by the measures of the 20th century had completed their road toward state unification later than others and had, therefore, to force their economic development and modernization by authoritarian methods.

The Nazi party and its leader would never have come to power in the biggest country of Europe if in that vague interwar period torn by class contradictions they had not been patronized by London and Washington, as well as Paris, which joined them after considerable hesitation, and if the top crust of German capital was not convinced that they would help Germany restore its former might and occupy new territories in the east.

At the turn of the 20th century, the racial theory as an extension of the ideas of Social Darwinism was extremely popular in Europe as the foundation of the "civilizing mission" of Western colonialism praised by British writer Rudyard Kipling in his popular poem *The White Man's Burden*.

History does not repeat itself in mirror images. Today, in an era of political pluralism and collective responsibility, we can hardly expect that fascism would be specifically personified. Neo-fascism of the 21st century is an attempt to revive its old content rather than its external form, to reanimate the practically forgotten and to present it as something new. Ukraine is an experiment that breeds hope in certain neighbors (primarily the Baltic countries), where the heritage of the Nazis who lost the war is perceived by the nostalgic upper crust as a personal tragedy of their predecessors. It is important, therefore, to stamp out the infectious malady before it spreads across the region and captures, once more, the minds of the wavering masses.

Vladimir Putin wrote in his article for *The National Interest*: “Such figures as Pétain, Quisling, Vlasov, Bandera, their henchmen and followers – though they were disguised as fighters for national independence or freedom from communism – are traitors and slaughterers”. These names do not exhaust the blacklist of fascist abettors; not all of them found themselves on trial after the war.

Some German leaders, Rosenberg among them, nurtured the idea of a Ukrainian state that was officially independent but de facto a German vassal. But Hitler was firmly opposed to (even fictitious) independence of Slavs in any form; the idea was immediately suppressed. In its “march on the East,” the Third Reich humiliated Ukrainian nationalists by making them servants of its special services; they were expected to remove “racially inferior elements” (primarily Poles and Jews) from occupied territories – a task they coped with.

Back in 1959, the American Congress passed a so-called resolution On Captive Nations that tasked the executive branch with dividing the Soviet Union into ethnically specific parts. The place of honor belonged to separatist sentiments in Ukraine, the biggest of the Soviet republics. The resolution was drafted, passed, and implemented due, in particular, to the efforts of Lev Dobriansky, a leader of the two-million strong Ukrainian diaspora in the US. His daughter served as deputy head of the Department of State in the George W. Bush administration.

The West is exceedingly tolerant of the revival of Nazism in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, under the vigilant oversight of Western curators, an antidemocratic, totalitarian, neo-Nazi political regime has formed in Ukraine that shows extreme cruelty and uncompromising hostility toward its opponents inside and outside the country.

Here are two existential questions: How far will the ruling elites be forced to go along the road of repressions against protest movements and attempts to replace power by any means to preserve their privileges, and will the popular masses be ready to oppose them? In this respect, the Ukraine conflict is very important: The vector of European and overall world development and the guarantees that absolute evil will not return depend on its outcome.

In any case, historical experience is highly instructive; it warns us not to be complacent and naïve in expectation of a “happy ending.” Life has proved that the reincarnation of Nazism – or its reanimation, rehabilitation, or even exhumation, if you will – is not [just] a figure of speech used for propaganda purposes, as the tragic fate of Ukraine shows. Under a combination of fatal circumstances, it might well become another dark period of world history.

Metropolitan Jonah of Moscow: Commemorating the 575th Anniversary of the Autocephaly of the Russian Church

Archimandrite Makary (Veretennikov), Doctor of Church History, Winner of the Makariyev Prize;
office@lavra.ru

Keywords: St. Jonah, the Uniate danger, Vasily II – the guardian of Orthodoxy, the Hierarchs Council of Northeastern Dioceses, Jonah's missives, the Moscow Patriarchate

THE Baptism of Rus' under Prince Vladimir marks the birth of the Russian Church. It was headed by the metropolitans, who were appointed by Constantinople and then sent to Rus' to preside over the Kiev diocese. There are only two known cases – in the 11th and 12th centuries – when Russian metropolitans were appointed directly in Kiev. After the Mongol-Tatar invasion, the first metropolitan was Russian, and he was consecrated in Nicaea, since Constantinople at that time was under the rule of the Crusaders as the capital of the Latin Empire. After him, St. Maximos, a Greek, became the metropolitan. Subsequently, we see alternating Russian and Greek metropolitans.

In 1436, that is, already after the tragic death of Metropolitan Gerasim (†1435),³ Bishop Jonah of Ryazan went to Constantinople for his consecration as a metropolitan. He was accompanied by princely ambassadors – the boyar Vasily and Poluekt Morya. However, Jonah arrived too late, since the Greek bishop Isidore had already been appointed the new Metropolitan of All Rus'. Appointed in 1436 to the Kiev cathedra, Isidore arrived in Moscow in 1437 and went to Ferrara in September to attend a council, where the Unia with the Roman Church was signed. In March 1441, he arrived in Moscow and declared a union with Catholicism. Russian society found this unacceptable, and Prince Vasily II ordered him imprisoned in the Chudov Monastery. In September, Isidore fled Moscow to the West.

After Isidore fled Moscow, the suspended locum tenens of Bishop Jonah was reinstated. During the 15th century, Tsargrad (the name for the capital of the Byzantine Empire used in the Chronicles) succumbed to the onslaught of the Turks. Meanwhile, Muscovite Rus' faced internal turmoil and conflict as its succession principle shifted from tribal rotation to primogeniture. This transitional period posed challenges to the timely appointment of a new leader of the Russian Church.

Undoubtedly, Grand Prince Vasily II, who wanted to see the metropolitan in Moscow as someone who would pray for his success, actively assist in his plans, and stabilize the situation in the strife-torn country, was most interested in Jonah's speedy enthronement. He sent an embassy to Constantinople once again with a missive describing the state of affairs in the Moscow Metropolitanate resulting from the actions of the Metropolitan-Cardinal.

at that time, the Church in Constantinople was headed by Patriarch Mitrofan II (1440-1443), described as "the most zealous Uniate." Therefore, he could not be expected to provide the Moscow Grand Prince with instructions to take a firm stand for Orthodoxy.

The need to stabilize the situation in the country and the responsibility for the fate of Orthodoxy prompted Prince Vasily II to convene a council in December 1448 to elect and appoint a head of the Russian Church, "because the Greek Tsar and the Patriarch have united with the Latins at the Eighth Council." On December 15, 1448, on the day of St. Stephen of Surozh (8th century), for the first time in Moscow, the Hierarchs Council elected and enthroned the Ryazan Bishop Jonah as head of the Russian Church.

the issue of appointing its own metropolitan was resolved in Moscow seven years after the flight of the Greek metropolitan-cardinal from the capital. Information about the primatial appointment of Metropolitan Jonah was reflected in the chronicles, which vary in the extent to which they cover the early period of Russian autocephaly. The convocation of the council and the subsequent enthronement of St. Jonah was the achievement of Prince Vasily II of Moscow. He appeared as the guardian of Orthodoxy when Metropolitan-Cardinal Isidore tried to impose the Unia on the Russian Church. Years later, already blinded, he appeared as a guardian of the Russian Church, providing the appointee for the

widowed metropolitan see. The enthronement of St. Jonah put an end to the protracted instability in the life of the Russian Church.

Upon accession to the Metropolitan throne, one of the main tasks of St. Jonah was to assert his power and jurisdiction over the dioceses in the possession of King Casimir of Poland – i.e., over the western part of the Russian Metropolitanate. The king at that time was also the Grand Prince of Lithuania. The head of the Church had prior experience communicating with him.

the Moscow ruler, inspired by Equal-to-the-Apostles Emperor Constantine and Grand Prince Vladimir, discussed the current state of affairs in the Church with the hierarchs and concluded that the “metropolitans had been consecrated in Rus’, although neither in Moscow, nor in Volodimer, but in Kiev.”⁴⁶ The author speaks about the enthronements of metropolitans that happened in Rus’ in the old days, emphasizing that they had taken place not because of “the current church disorder in Tsargrad,” but only due to mutual discord.

To strengthen church unity and maintain discipline, Metropolitan Jonah took some steps to strengthen the authority of his deputies in the Lithuanian dioceses. On February 9, 1451, he issued a letter, appointing Protodeacon Mikhail as his deputy – “to keep the post in Vilna and in Novegorodok, and in Gorodnya, and throughout all cities, towns, and villages where my metropolitan churches are.”

Protecting the Church from the Uniate influence, Metropolitan Jonah demanded an explanation and repentance from Bishop Daniil of VolodymyrVolynskyi, ordained in Constantinople by Metropolitan Cardinal Isidore, who stayed in the empire’s capital in 1453.

An outstanding center of Orthodoxy and statehood, the center of Orthodox asceticism, the center of holiness and shrines, and the center of literature, arts, and culture perished under the attacks of the Turks. “Undoubtedly, the fall of Constantinople resonated as a tragedy in Rus’, affirming the wisdom behind their decision to independently appoint a Russian metropolitan.” Historian Ye.Ye. Golubinsky writes: “Had Constantinople not fallen to the Turks and ... Orthodox patriarchs been reinstated instead of the Uniate patriarchs, it is more than likely that the prior practice of appointing our Metropolitans would have returned.”

After the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, a defender of Orthodoxy, St. Gennady II (Scholarius; 1454-1456), became the Byzantine patriarch and put an end to the Uniate turmoil in the Church. He was known for his erudition and firm grounding in Orthodoxy. Gennady II was a friend and supporter of St. Mark of Ephesus, who defended the purity of Orthodoxy at the Ferrara-Florence Council. The new patriarch developed the principles of *oikonomia*, recognizing “the cardinal change that had taken place in the world: The empire had fallen forever, but the Church remained, defeated the Unia, and now found itself in new conditions and followed other paths than it did before 1453.”

Under Patriarch Gennady, relations between the Ecumenical Patriarchate and Moscow resumed after the interruption caused by the Uniate turmoil and political circumstances, specifically the fall of the Byzantine Empire.

The Roman Curia continued to show close interest in the state of affairs in the Russian Church. The Pope of Rome and the Byzantine Uniate Patriarch Gregory (Mamma), who had fled to Italy, considered Cardinal Isidore the legitimate primate of the Russian Metropolitanate, and St. Jonah – a usurper of power and an illegal metropolitan. Of course, after the enthronement of St. Jonah, the hope of returning Cardinal Isidore to Moscow was lost, but Rome sought to restore its partial jurisdiction over Rus’. Therefore, efforts were made to return at least the GalicianLithuanian part of the Russian Metropolitanate under papal control.

In early December 1459, Metropolitan Jonah convened the Hierarchs Council of the Northeastern Dioceses in Moscow. The message of St. Jonah to Bishop Moses of Tver has been preserved with an

appeal to come to Moscow on important church matters. Having gathered at the shrine with the relics of St. Peter of Moscow (†1326) in the Assumption Cathedral of the Moscow Kremlin, the bishops proclaimed the appointment of Metropolitan Gregory “pernicious,” and Gregory personally “rejected from the Holy Church and damned.” The hierarchs promised in writing “to be unwavering in their support of the Holy Church of Moscow and Metropolitan Jonah, and to obey him in everything, and after his departure to God, to obey the Metropolitan, who, according to the rules of the holy Apostles and Fathers, will be appointed in the cathedral church in Moscow at the tomb of Peter, the Holy Miracle Worker.”

In response to Rome’s actions, Metropolitan Jonah sent his envoys to the Principality of Lithuania in 1458-1459 – Hegumen Vassian of the Trinity Monastery (Snout; 1455-1466) and Hegumen Kassian of the Kirillov Monastery⁸⁵ (1448-1465) – admonishing the Orthodox not to accept a Roman appointee. He calls on the princes, boyars, and lords: “Sons, you should stand firm for the holy Church of God and for our Orthodox faith.” The Grand Prince also sent his ambassadors to King Casimir, emphasizing that the issue of replacing the metropolitan was always within the purview of the Moscow prince.

The appointment of a metropolitan for the Russian dioceses was an intrusion of Roman Catholicism into the jurisdiction of our church.

Metropolitan Jonah led the unified Russian Church for a decade, during which time the sporadic divisions within the Metropolitanate came to a regrettable conclusion. Under his leadership, a final split occurred, resulting in the division of the Russian Metropolitanate into two separate parts – a division that persisted until 1686. The earlier divisions of the Russian Church were temporary, because both the western and eastern parts were headed by the Patriarch of Constantinople. The two newly formed metropolitanates each produced a continuous stream of their own metropolitans – one had Moscow-based Metropolitans of Moscow, the second one had metropolitans of Kiev with a cathedra, first in Novogradok, then in Vilna, the capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

After the adoption of Christianity by the Old Rus’, the Greeks were the spiritual teachers of the Russians. Their authority was exceptionally high but started fluctuating over time. The adoption in Florence of the Unia with the Latins undermined the spiritual significance of the Byzantine Empire. As a result of the betrayal of Orthodoxy and the subsequent fall of Constantinople, scholars in Rus’ started to believe that their country was the only guardian of Orthodoxy.

In the 20th century, the establishment of the autocephaly of the Russian Church was triumphantly celebrated on its 500th anniversary in 1948. Delegations of Orthodox churches, some of them headed by primates, met in Moscow.¹¹⁰ Various topical issues in the life of the Church were discussed, and materials (greetings, speeches, reports) were published afterward.

The Man Behind the “Common European Home”: On A.G. Kovalev’s 100th Birth Anniversary

Yevgeniya Pyadysheva, *Deputy Editor-in-Chief, International Affairs*

Keywords: A.G. Kovalev’s 100th birth anniversary

THE policy of détente, the Helsinki process as its continuation, and Gorbachev’s new political thinking are landmark processes of the 20th century. Anatoly Gavrilovich Kovalev not only had a hand in these developments but to some extent spearheaded and promoted them. Having chosen the path of diplomatic service, he worked his way up the career ladder from assistant to first deputy foreign

minister of the USSR/Russia, and after scaling the heights of the Foreign Ministry, he reached the expanse of big politics. There was a period in his life and in the life of the country, albeit not a long one, when A.G. Kovalev, in tandem with the ideologists of perestroika, was working on creating a new foreign policy philosophy of the country.

He began his career in 1941 as a lighting technician at the Bolshoi Theater. In 1943, he enrolled at the Institute of International Relations – the first year of enrollment – and graduated five years later.

At the start of his career, four years in the office of the Supreme Commissar of the USSR in Germany and the Soviet Embassy in East Germany gave him the opportunity and experience to witness and participate in, for example, the outbreak and resolution of the East German uprising of 1953. Note that the “crisis theme” remained with him throughout his life.

The year is 1970. Although in charge of a different area at the Foreign Ministry at the time, Kovalev, an expert on Germany, was, for old times’ sake, brought into negotiations on the Moscow Treaty and confidential conversations with German partners on its ratification.

Then came 1989. East Germany was stirring. Kovalev was entrusted with creating a group to deal with this crisis. The outcome was the famous two-plus-four mechanism, whose work led to the unification of the two Germanies.

In 1965, Kovalev was appointed head of the First European Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union. He became, as he called himself, “one of the conductors of the policy of détente,” and the core of this process was Soviet-French relations.

Kovalev himself believed that the Helsinki Final Act was an act of surrender of the Cold War. A surrender, but not an unconditional one.

Incidentally, some believe that it was Anatoly Gavrilovich who suggested that the main document of the Helsinki process be called “The Final Act.”

He was also responsible for the concept of a “common European home.”

Creativity and art in general played a very important role in his life. As a young man, he even stood at a professional crossroads between poetry and diplomacy. For several years he studied at the Institute of Literature. But while doing rather pragmatic work in life, he never lost his poetic talent and inspiration. He was always writing poems; they were his way to diffuse tension.

Poets, writers, composers, singers, actors, directors – the great and famous – all gathered around him.

Time is compressing, and eras are changing swiftly. As we celebrate Kovalev’s 100th birth anniversary, it is clear that his name will remain in the annals of Russian diplomacy and the history of Russian foreign policy, and his professionalism, commitment to peace, and example of service to the Fatherland will serve as invaluable experience for future generations.

On the 100th Birth Anniversary of Sarvar Alimdzhanovich Azimov

Keywords: S.A. Azimov, diplomat, ambassador, writer, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Lebanon, USSR

My Father: Writer, Politician, Diplomat

Anvar Azimov, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

WRITING about your father is not easy. A son's love inevitably implies a subjective approach – you strive to see only the positive, closing your eyes to flaws that can be found in everyone, especially in extraordinary personalities such as my father. He was a brilliant and talented statesman, a prominent public and political figure, an exceptional writer, and a skilled diplomat – a remarkably well-rounded individual. His life was marked by a constant struggle against injustice and evil, and involved many ups and downs.

Although my father was actively involved in scientific and journalistic work at the Literary Museum of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan and the A.S. Pushkin Institute of Language and Literature, translated Russian classics into Uzbek, and wrote articles, his true calling lay in organizational and social and political activities. In 1956, my father became the head of the Union of Writers of Uzbekistan; he was only 33. The following year, he was appointed minister of culture of the republic.

In 1959, he assumed the position of deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of the republic and minister of foreign affairs. Holding this position for 10 years, he not only handled external affairs but also oversaw ideology, education, science, culture, health, art, and sports. In 1964, he assumed chairmanship of the Soviet Committee of Solidarity with Writers from Asia and Africa.

In May 1969, S. Azimov began a diplomatic career, serving as an extraordinary and plenipotentiary ambassador of the USSR. Initially, he served in Lebanon until October 1974, and then in Pakistan until December 1980.

It must be noted that he never viewed diplomatic work as an honorary exile. He regarded his appointment primarily as a strong vote of confidence in him personally and in Uzbekistan in general – although for him, the concepts of Uzbekistan and Russia were always intertwined. His main strength lay in his ability to establish personal and trusting relationships with top officials and skillfully leverage these relationships to achieve his objectives.

When my father returned from assignment abroad in late 1980, he had no idea that fate would once again lead him to be elected as first secretary of the Union of Writers of Uzbekistan.

It seemed that fortune had smiled upon my father once again, as he resumed his active involvement in public, political, and creative activities. He was seemingly on the rise once more and naturally contemplated his main goal in life: to serve the people and the Fatherland in a higher and more responsible position. However, fate had a different plan in store.

In the autumn of 1983, Rashidov suddenly passed away, and upon Moscow's suggestion, Inamdzhon Usmankhodzhaev was elected first secretary.

My father once again faced challenging times. In April 1985, at the Seventh Plenum of the Union of Writers of the Republic, he was relieved of his duties as first secretary “due to his transition to creative work.”

In March 1988, my father resumed his position as head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic, and the subsequent XXII Congress of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan elected him as a member of the Central Committee.

My father was genuinely pleased with the developments, but in June 1989, Nishanov was replaced by Islam Karimov as first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan. My father continued to serve as minister of foreign affairs under him, albeit only until September 1991.

It was during this time that the diverging perspectives of Azimov and Karimov regarding the future of Uzbekistan and the role of the Communist Party became evident. The crucial factor that led to their complete rift, which later became irreconcilable, was apparently the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine held on August 28.

On September 16, 1991, my father was relieved of his duties as minister of foreign affairs and automatically removed from the Presidential Council. The following day, he was asked to submit a resignation request addressed to Karimov, which he did, primarily because he could not work on the team of this president for ideological and ethical reasons.

Remarkably, my father requested specifically to go back to where his labor and scientific activities began. However, as expected, his request remained unanswered.

My father bore the weight of these events with deep pain. The upheavals related to the Moscow coup, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the de facto termination of the Communist Party, and the president's actions in the post-Soviet era elicited a conflicted response from him. He appeared acutely aware of and fully comprehended the profound implications that the Union's disintegration and the subsequent severing of economic relations – primarily with the Russian regions – would have on the republic.

Naturally, he did not abandon his ideological convictions and principles but continued his prior work. The aim was to preserve the Communist Party, rebuild its ranks, and rejuvenate it.

My father, a proponent of transparency, felt obliged to present the party charter, which had been approved by the Presidium of the Organizing Committee, to President Karimov, along with a plea to allow electoral participation. Unsurprisingly, there was no response, and as a pragmatic politician, my father held no illusions regarding this outcome.

In addition to his party work, in which he fully immersed himself and to which he dedicated his life, he continued his public activities, initially remaining chairman of the Uzbek Committee for Solidarity.

In the final years of his life, he continued working on novels, film essays, and plays. As for his creative journey, he began as a translator, critic, and literary scholar, and wrote a number of textbooks.

His life ended on the morning of November 3, 1994, with his sons by his side.

The Pakistani Prime Minister's Mentor

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

IT IS my strong conviction that Sarvar Alimdzhonovich Azimov was a diplomat with a capital "D." In my diplomatic career, he was the first ambassador of immense spirituality following a line of Soviet ambassadors who were generally competent and even exceptional professionals. Sarvar Alimdzhonovich inspired admiration with his profound kindness toward people, attention to each individual, and exceptional education. He carried the entire history of the heartland (as Zbigniew Brzezinski defined the region of Central Asia) in his mind.

This sentiment was felt by people of all ages in Pakistan. They recognized the nobility of his spirit that united Bukhara, Samarkand, Lahore, and Peshawar, encompassing the vast expanses of a unique civilization.

Naturally, Sarvar Alimdzhonovich developed an exceptionally trusting relationship with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the prime minister of Pakistan. "Zulfi, my friend," was how our ambassador affectionately referred to the prime minister of Pakistan. Bhutto rightfully considered Azimov his mentor. Any issue was addressed personally. No ideology was involved. They were both great politicians and admired each other.

The prime minister, along with his wife Nusrat and daughter Benazir, informally attended receptions at the Soviet Embassy. Bhutto, due to his education, courage of spirit, and vision of the world, could easily speak to both intellectuals and peasants.

The military coup and the arrest of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto shocked Sarvar Alimdzhanovich.

Under the new conditions of the military regime, Sarvar Azimov made titanic efforts to prevent a setback in Soviet-Pakistani relations.

Zia-ul-Haq assured us that there would be no disruption in the development of bilateral relations. Later, he died in a plane crash. The US ambassador to Pakistan, Arnold Lewis Raphel, with whom I had developed surprisingly friendly relations during our time as first secretaries in Islamabad and always conversed in Urdu, was also on board the plane.

We knew that the ambassador was also a writer. He would write plays and books in the late evening hours. We cherish the memories of his heartfelt greetings at congenial embassy gatherings, where he treated diplomats, staff members, their spouses, and children with such warmth and sensitivity.

I must also express my gratitude to Sarvar Alimdzhanovich's wife, Laila Fazylovna. She was an amazing, kind, tactful, and intelligent woman. She did so much for the cultural life of the entire Soviet community in Pakistan!

Years in Lebanon

Vyacheslav Matuzov, *Independent political commentator, Arab expert*

I WAS fortunate to begin my diplomatic career at the USSR Embassy in Lebanon under the guidance of one of the most talented Soviet ambassadors, Sarvar Alimdzhanovich Azimov.

In 1969, relations between the USSR and Lebanon, heavily influenced by the policies of the US and its Western allies, were very uneasy, particularly following an incident involving an alleged "attempt by Soviet military intelligence" to bribe a Lebanese military pilot and steal a Frenchmade Mirage aircraft. Azimov was appointed the USSR ambassador to Lebanon in the immediate aftermath of this scandal.

Sarvar Azimov did not merely carry out his ambassadorial duties by the book. He was an ambassador of a world power. Once, during a conversation, someone appealed to the authority of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Sarvar Alimdzhanovich calmly responded: "I am here representing the Soviet Union, including the Central Committee of the Communist Party!" After that, all matters related to embassy activities were resolved only with his personal involvement. This earned him deep respect among the embassy staff.

One of the most challenging problems the ambassador had to deal with at that time was the need to establish initial political contacts with the Palestinian leadership.

During those years, the Soviet Union was wary of contacts with Palestinian organizations, including the PLO. The organizations were just beginning their activities in the Arab world, and their reception varied even among the various Arab countries. Moreover, our leadership included some influential supporters of restoring relations with Israel who actively hindered the establishment of ties with the PLO.

It required great courage, wisdom, and a politically astute understanding of this problem to radically change the Soviet leadership's stance on the Palestinian resistance movement in a short period of time. Our ambassador to Lebanon resolved this complex issue with remarkable brilliance.

Almost all the leaders of the country and the Palestinian resistance movement paid great attention to the opinion of the Soviet ambassador.

The ambassador's authority in the country was so high that his position could, in fact, influence electoral affairs.

S.A. Azimov dedicated much attention to social and political organizations of Lebanon and worked closely with the Lebanese intelligentsia. The ambassador's wife, Laila Fazylovna, played a significant role in fostering relations with the Lebanese Women's Union.

Sarvar Azimov did a lot to support the Society of Lebanese-Soviet Friendship and the Association of Graduates of Soviet Universities.

Today, as we celebrate the 100th birth anniversary of Sarvar Alimdzhanovich Azimov and remember his service to the Fatherland, we pass on the memory of him to the current and future generations of Russian and Uzbek diplomats.

England-Russia: Intrigue Without Love

Sergey Filatov, *commentator for International Affairs*; serfilatov@mail.ru

Keywords: England-Russia: Intrigue Without Love, by Igor Prokopenko and Armen Oganessian

Britain is an existential enemy of Russia. However, for the sake of historical accuracy, we note that at times the two countries were even considered allies.

Nevertheless, as early as July 1, 1945, less than two months after the Victory over Germany on May 9, Prime Minister Winston Churchill had plans to start a war with the USSR under Operation Unthinkable. But the British had been our recent ally, and Churchill had implored Stalin to hasten the Red Army's offensive on Berlin because the Germans were hitting the Anglo-Saxons hard after the opening of the Second Front, confronting them with defeat in the Ardennes. And yet, on July 1, under Churchill's plan, the Anglo-Saxons and Germans were supposed to attack our units stationed in Germany. That is British underhandedness for you.

That plan was never implemented. However, it has become one of many proofs of how Britain has been trying to defeat Russia for centuries, but to no avail. The British exude hatred for distant Russia. The long history of this geopolitical confrontation in various regions of the world – from Central Asia to Africa, from Crimea to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky – is described in detail in the new book *England-Russia: Intrigue Without Love* by Armen Oganessian, editor-in-chief of *International Affairs*, and Igor Prokopenko, deputy general director for documentary and journalistic projects of Ren TV, published in Russian and English. A 10-episode television series by the same authors and under the same title successfully ran on the NTV channel in spring 2023.

In the opening remarks, both authors share their views on a topic they have meticulously studied and presented first to television viewers and now to readers.

Let us first direct our attention to some of the topics covered in this formidable book: "Why did the English develop a fear of Russia?" "How did Britain set up Russia to be attacked by Napoleon?" "The plotted assassination of a Russian Emperor," "When did the British decide to take Crimea?" "The battles of the Great Game," "How Britain instigated Japan to wage war against Russia," "Hitler's British origins," "How the Crown sacrificed Czechoslovakia to safeguard its own interests," "The British plan to use the Poles as cannon fodder to protect Foggy Albion."

Relations between Britain and Russia have been analyzed based on documents dating all the way back to the time of Ivan the Terrible, when London first attempted to seize Russian wealth east of Moscow using English merchants.

The documents presented in this book, many of which are revealed to the general public for the first time, elicit a response succinctly described by Igor Prokopenko: “Just as centuries ago, we can clearly see today that England’s primary geopolitical objective remains unchanged – to weaken Russia, to dismantle Russia, to achieve victory over Russia....”

It would be very interesting to delve into the documents of the 1980s and 1990s, when, for example, the English “partners” addressed Gorbachev with their lulling speeches while simultaneously undermining the foundations of the Soviet Union.

Surely, the secret archives of the last decades contain evidence of the subversive activities of the British against Russia. Times change, facts accumulate, and London’s politics remain steadfast like a rock: “Britain has no perpetual partners, Britain has perpetual interests.” One of these interests is to defeat Russia, preferably through proxies, to avoid direct confrontation.

So, first, there was a television series titled “England-Russia: Intrigue Without Love,” and now a book with the same title has been released.

Finally, we have started publicly talking about how the “perfidious Albion” has been scheming since ancient times. Yes, it has been scheming for a long time, systematically, and this is no secret to anyone. However, there is something else to consider.

We can only speculate what will happen next in Russia’s relations with Foggy Albion. They are in for a rude awakening.

P.S. In 1793, when the ambassador of Great Britain, the major world power, arrived in Beijing for trade negotiations, the Chinese emperor told him: “I will receive you, but not in Beijing, rather in a tent city outside the walls, as we welcome barbarians in a tent and not in the palace.” Perhaps this is why the Anglo-Saxons still harbor such animosity toward the East. For them, the East encompasses everything beyond the English Channel, even France and Germany. This is known as “spatial psychology” and gives rise to certain phobias. The Brits fear the East, yet they are also afraid to admit it. Hence, the reflection. Poor, poor Britain....

A New MGIMO University Textbook

Konstantin Kosachev, *Deputy Speaker, Federation Council, Federal Assembly of Russia*;
KKosachev@senat.gov.ru

Keywords: Foreign Policy Concept, textbook, scientific and technological progress

RUSSIA’S higher education sector faces significant and difficult challenges given current developments in international relations and systemic transformations in the global economy. In what are often transborder processes, technology moves ahead very fast, accelerating industrial modernization. All this is subjected to philosophical analysis and produces quick legal reactions, especially in terms of intellectual property rights and other aspects of international and national law.

I believe that the textbook *Scientific and Technological Progress and Current International Relations** accurately reflects global developments and will be a key asset in bringing the standards of training

international relations specialists into conformity with the provisions of Russia's updated Foreign Policy Concept.

The book is, moreover, an important contribution to implementing the Science and Technologies Decade, a program declared by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Written by a team of leading researchers, the book focuses on the impact of scientific and technological progress on the system of international relations as a whole and examines problems that have been emerging in the course of this progress. It is based on a synthesis of knowledge from technological sciences and the humanities, which explains why the authors include professors from the Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations (MGIMO) of Russia's Foreign Ministry, experts from technological research institutes, and what is very important – diplomats. Some of the authors are well known both within Russia and abroad as researchers and public figures, and their contributions make the book a very detailed and insightful study.

The book covers such topics as Russia's role in international politics; the supremacy of law in international relations; the indivisibility of security both globally and regionally; the sovereign equality of states; and the principle of respect for the right of nations to choose their own social, political, and economic models. The Foreign Policy Concept states that it is in Russia's interests to "promote the sustainable development of the Russian economy on a new technological basis."

The textbook contains an explanation of the philosophical and humanitarian aspects of the technological leap, focusing on threats posed by global information transformation that, in turn, stems from transhumanist visions of the future. It is emphasized that scientific and technological progress does not put an end to the centrality of the human being to global development and that one should not merely be well-educated and law-abiding but also follow high moral values, comply with noosphere principles, and be able to adapt to constant industrial impacts on the biosphere.

I would like to especially emphasize that the book addresses cognitive confrontation and ensuring mental security. Social, psychological, and moral effects of modern technology may not have been studied exhaustively and hence may not be fully understood. Frequently biased information targeting various sociodemographic groups forms the basis for lies and disinformation technologies that have become powerful weapons in global hybrid warfare. This includes notorious attempts to undermine the historical spiritual foundations of society in an adversary country and manipulate it by forcing false and destructive values on it.

The textbook includes a separate chapter on the role of the younger generation in international scientific and technological relations, which offer it extensive opportunities for intellectual development and self-realization.

I believe it was an excellent idea to supply the book with a selection of documents that are important sources of information. This section can teach students to work with documents. It makes teaching more effective and gives students deeper insight into the subject matter of the book.

I expect the book to be interesting and useful to students, both those majoring in the humanities and those specializing in technology, as well as to general readers seeking to know more about how scientific and technological progress impacts international relations.

