

## International Affairs: Vol.70: No4, 2024: Summary

### From a Course on Political Demonology, or Fascism in a Nutshell

#### *I. Kravchenko*

*Keywords:* fascism, Nazism, moral decay of the ruling elite, personnel degeneration

In modern Russian political discourse, the concepts of Nazism and fascism have long become commonplace. We hear them constantly, from all sides and directions, appropriately and inappropriately. We often receive their semantic signal automatically, without proper critical analysis and understanding – or we ignore it altogether.

As a result, the terrifying import of these words fades. As they become part of the pervasive information noise, they start being perceived as cliché, a given, almost as a norm of our arduous life.

Fascism as a phenomenon of political and social life always operates on two levels. There is an external, visible part, akin to the fruiting body of a mushroom. This is the consumer-oriented, pompous façade. Then there is the hidden structure, like the mycelium, which forms the internal foundation – a complex, branched system containing its true essence. This part is accessible only to the deeply initiated, the major shareholders and top-level managers. There is a very clear boundary between them that is designed to prevent any unauthorized intrusion into the “underground part.”

The purpose of this construction is to glamorize, enchant, blind, and capture human souls, seizing minds and hearts. It has a tremendous, devilish magnetism that skillfully ensnares its victims by appealing to the most virtuous traits of our nature: love of country, nobility, selflessness, and bravery. It alters consciousness and brainwashes people, and does so surprisingly quickly.

Absent serious external opposition, the corrupt system works efficiently, dispersing its hallucinogenic spores. But as soon as a force capable of standing up for itself and resisting appears, the majestic superstructure turns out to be just a thin dried crust. With a little pressure, the crust cracks, and the foul contents of this sociopolitical abscess spill out.

Nazism is always slavery – of body, spirit, and mind. With its numerous offshoots, it invades, tries to control, and regulate all realms of human existence. It dictates how to work, how to rest, what to eat, what to wear, what to read, whom to sleep with, what to say, and how to think. Fascism does not say: “I release you,” “choose,” “you have the right,” but rather: “I summon you,” “there is no choice,” “you must.”

While preaching high moral qualities for the general mass of neophytes – ordinary citizens – the “initiated” functionaries of the Nazi power system are themselves utterly devoid of such qualities. Moreover, they do not consider this hypocritical. For Nazis, morality is not a clear, sacrosanct category that characterizes a person’s actions and, therefore, the person themselves by their deeds.

The Führer is never wrong. Mistakes and miscalculations are the domain of subordinates. These subordinates, typically mindlessly copying the leader’s behavior, assign responsibility to the next lower level. This process continues until the “blame” gets pinned on a rank-and-file operative who cannot pass the buck on to anyone else.

The fascist system always makes a clear distinction between insiders and outsiders, those who are for and against, with us or against us. It does not tolerate neutrality or ambiguity. Under fascism, there is no third option.

But even those who “follow the right path” should not be overly optimistic. The system will drain them dry and dispose of them, if necessary, regardless of their rank in the diabolical hierarchy.

Once caught in the web of fascism, wittingly or unwittingly, there is no way back. There are no former fascists: Aiding evil in thought, word, and especially deed is an indelible stain and curse for the rest of one’s life. Repentance will not help, nor will it redeem the guilt, which will haunt one to the grave and only fade with the passing of generations.

In general, those who are marked by this diabolical trial are truly unfortunate. Under Nazism, a person is simultaneously a tool, a hostage, and a victim of its crimes. And those who survive will still have to answer for everything.

## **The Great Game, or the Struggle for a New World**

***P. Frolov***

*Keywords:* multipolarity, alliance with Belarus, SCO, interaction with countries

The vision of multipolarity presented by many today is indeed more of a model to strive for – the final destination on the “road map.” Right now, we need practical recommendations about how to advance toward this goal, how to act now, how to organize our work, what to focus on and where, what to delve into, and so on.

In implementing our foreign policy, which has considerable inertia, it is essential to understand that the world order that existed before February 24, 2022, is irrevocably gone, and the international institutions it created must change profoundly or be abolished.

One of the main tasks is to “rouse” the World Majority, making it possible to change the status quo – for example, the situation with voting at the UN.

The Non-Aligned Movement holds considerable potential for pursuing our strategic aspirations. Its members are quite politically diverse, which hampers the effectiveness of the organization, but it must be studied carefully and thoughtfully based on our goals.

Close allied cooperation with the Belarusians is seen as a major asset in this area. The involvement of specialists from the foreign policy department of the Union State member country is extremely important. Minsk can do more than Moscow can within organizations such as the Non-Aligned Movement. The task must simply be clearly and precisely formulated. And for that, there is the Plan of Interministerial Consultations.

Work with existing non-Western international organizations and associations, as well as the formation of new political or politico- economic alliances, must be elevated to an entirely new, higher level. Incidentally, financial flows should also be redirected. We have no reason to fund participation in politically biased organizations such as the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. We also do not need to cling to participation in some or even all Council of Europe conventions. The freed-

up funds could be directed toward project-based activities – for example, in the SCO. We should remain only in specialized and sectoral organizations such as the Financial Action Task Force (leaving could lead to additional international fiscal measures, which is completely unnecessary).

Belarus seeks to play an important and independent role in the regional security system. This should be fully supported. In this regard, it would be beneficial to back the intention of our partners to transform the Eurasian Security Conference, held in October 2023 under Minsk's CSTO chairmanship, into a permanent Minsk discussion platform.

The attempt to isolate Russia has failed, but we should not isolate ourselves, either. We cannot leave Europe. Interaction should continue on a bilateral basis with Turkey, Hungary, and Slovakia. We should strive to increase our influence in the Balkans, which has long been a heated area, where the conflict potential is off the charts. Serbia will soon be under pressure, which we must not allow. This country is also a potential supporter of multipolarity, the clear outlines of which will give Belgrade real development prospects, especially since Serbia has clear regional leadership ambitions.

China's position is extremely important, and we must begin discussions about the future world order with the Chinese. It seems that initial steps in this direction could be taken through interparty dialogue between United Russia and the Communist Party of China.

A lot of work lies ahead. We have determined where we stand. As for the rest, we still need to inspire them with an idea that may make their lives less calm but will help them feel part of something truly great.

## **Nuclear Doctrine Is a “Living Document”**

### ***A. Oganesyanyan***

*Keywords:* nuclear doctrine, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, World War II

Nuclear doctrines are not dogma but a guide to action. Over time, they have undergone changes, shifts in emphasis, and adjustments. As President Vladimir Putin noted at the recent St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, nuclear doctrine is a “living document.” Today, Russia faces the most serious threat to its security since the Great Patriotic War. The situation demands action.

The topic of nuclear weapons use is so complex, multifaceted, and risky in its implications that it requires comprehensive analysis and discussion. Karaganov himself calls for this. For my part, I want to share thoughts that involuntarily came to mind after reading the article and reflect solely my personal opinion.

Nuclear weapons have been used only once in history – against Hiroshima and Nagasaki. “The atomic bomb represented to Truman a solution to all the dilemmas he faced: unconditional surrender, the cost of Japan’s homeland invasion, and Soviet entry into the war. He was jubilant at the news of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, not because of a perverted joy in killing Japanese, but because of the satisfaction that everything had gone as he had planned.”<sup>4</sup> But that plan would soon go off the rails.

Today, it seems surprising that after the shock of the first atomic bomb, the Japanese Army (on August 8) recommended to the Japanese government that if the Soviet Union entered the war, the Japanese should “strive to terminate the war with the Soviet Union as quickly as possible, and to continue the war with the United States, Britain, and China, while maintaining Soviet neutrality.”<sup>11</sup>

In his article, Karaganov writes that “nuclear weapons can be used to win a war quite easily. But it would pave the way for further use, lifting the nuclear taboo.” While the second assertion by the author is seemingly indisputable, the first raises doubts. America’s use of atomic bombs did not compel Japan to surrender; instead, it gave the military elite and army greater determination to fight, thereby strengthening the “war party.” Moreover, the “peace party” did not even deem it

necessary to use this argument in political struggle with their opponents and did not resort to it as a decisive factor to convince the emperor of the need to end the war. And this was a country that did not possess nuclear weapons and was, in this regard, defenseless.

Today, we see that even a nonnuclear conflict, seemingly limited to a regional scope, is rapidly globalizing. In other words, knowing the physical properties of nuclear weapons based on a chain reaction, we cannot reliably predict the chain reaction of their use in any amount and at any level of escalation – whether in a theater of operations, a region, a continent, or the planet.

Karaganov acknowledges this as well: “Naturally, when describing the mostly positive functions of deterrence, one must not forget the monstrous, still unexplored consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, without the credible threat of which deterrence does not work. The use of nuclear weapons and the unleashing of nuclear war are not only dangerous in their unpredictability but, I repeat, can cause us enormous moral damage. Conventional weapons can be far more deadly (more people died in Tokyo and Dresden than in Hiroshima and Nagasaki). But nuclear weapons carry a special moral significance, surrounded by apocalyptic horror. That is why I call them the ‘weapons of God.’ ”

It is important to consider that today there are many indications that the global, supranational elites have shifted from the tactics of managed chaos at the regional level to a strategy of global chaos. The objectives of such a strategy are a topic for a separate, extensive discussion. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to ask: Wouldn't the use of nuclear weapons play into the hands of its initiators?

I anticipate the counterargument: Maybe not only the elites but also ordinary Europeans would be frightened and hold their ruling elites accountable, or even overthrow them. I fear we are again in the gray area of unpredictability, somewhat captive to outdated notions about the role of the masses. The recent example of Ukraine, where we were “suddenly” not welcomed with flowers and hugs, teaches us to be cautious – after all, we are talking about a kindred, historically unified people of shared faith.

## Functions of Nuclear Deterrence

**S. Karaganov**

*Keywords:* nuclear weapons, concept of nuclear deterrence, concept of geopolitical deterrence, NATO, “nuclear peace dividend,” security

Discussion of the role of nuclear weapons in the modern world is necessary in Russian policy in order to end the war that NATO has unleashed in connection with Ukraine and to prevent the world from sliding into an “age of wars” and an increasingly likely World War III.

Time is of the essence. The discussion, which plays an extremely useful role in preventing the outbreak of thermonuclear war or, at worst, its escalation into a general war ending on terms unfavorable for our country, urgently needs to progress.

Many books have been written about the functions of nuclear deterrence. Here is my classification, which differs from most commonly accepted ones.

*Deterrence I or Strategic Intimidation:* The ability to convince a potential adversary that any nuclear strike on your territory will inevitably result in a retaliatory strike causing “unacceptable damage.”

*Deterrence II:* Explicitly or implicitly, Deterrence I presumed the inadmissibility of any war between nuclear powers because it theoretically carried a high, if not inevitable, risk of escalation to a nuclear level.

*Deterrence III or Extended Deterrence:* Under this doctrine, the US guaranteed a nuclear umbrella to its allies, claiming readiness to strike the aggressor should NATO ([or its partners, like] Japan, South Korea) lose a war using conventional armed forces. That promise was pure bluff.

*Deterrence IV:* Preventing war by demonstrating the country’s readiness to use nuclear weapons in the event of any attack on its territory that uses only conventional forces. This approach is likely also adhered to by most other nuclear states: France, Great Britain, India, Israel, Pakistan, and North Korea.

*Deterrence V:* Under a sound policy, nuclear weapons can deter a conventional arms race. The maintenance and buildup of nuclear arsenals are often associated with an arms race. This was largely the case during the Cold War, when

Washington and Moscow built up nuclear arms in a largely irrational and thoughtless manner, disregarding any normal logic or reasonable strategic calculations, capable of destroying all life on the planet five or 10 times over.

*Deterrence VI:* Ensuring the democratization of international relations. Without the deterrent role of nuclear weapons, which limits the massive use of military force in general, it is unlikely that “new” powers, primarily China, would have been allowed to rise, let alone so quickly. They could have finished off Russia during its years of weakness.

*Deterrence VII:* One of the most important, albeit almost unstudied, functions of nuclear deterrence is its civilizing influence. The presence of nuclear weapons with their inherent theoretical capacity to destroy countries and continents, if not all of humanity, has changed mindsets and “civilized” the ruling elites of nuclear countries, making them more responsible.

From the function of deterrence as a civilizing factor follows *Deterrence VIII*, or *Self-Deterrence*. Understanding the danger of conflict escalation has compelled and continues to compel leaders of nuclear states to rule out the consideration of actions that could escalate to the nuclear level or to a general nuclear conflict.

*Deterrence IX* or *Geopolitical Containment*. This involves the territorial, ideological, and economic limitation of the adversary’s expansion, ideally pushing it back (“roll back,” in the American Cold War lexicon). Containment is a comprehensive strategy that involves military

(including nuclear), economic, and ideological tools. This concept was practically absent in Soviet foreign policy theory and in Russian theory. When we were “contained,” we spoke of peaceful coexistence, for which we paid the price.

Without reviving the functions of nuclear deterrence described above, we may not win in Ukraine, or the cost of victory will be so high that it will be largely Pyrrhic. That is what the Westerners are aiming for. They have realized that they cannot defeat Russia. They want to weaken us economically and politically as much as possible.



## **How to Jump-Start UN Security Council Reform**

*V. Zayemsky*

*Keywords:* UN Security Council, UNSC reform

As we know, discussion on the expansion of membership and improvement of the working methods of the Security Council has been ongoing for almost 30 years. However, the members of the Organization have yet to reach a consensus on an acceptable formula for the proposed changes.

In this situation, I am convinced that two conclusions are key:  
1. The overwhelming majority of states believe that, given the increase in the number of Organization members since the expansion of the UN Security Council in 1963, this phenomenon should be adequately reflected in the composition of the Council.

2. Reform efforts can only be justified if they are carefully balanced to ensure the effective functioning of the Council, meaning they should not result in mere “bloating.”

Unfortunately, the current realities indicate that Western countries have chosen to abandon the atmosphere of constructive interaction that prevailed in the UN after the end of the Cold War, including during preparations for the Millennium Assembly and the 2005 summit. Instead, they have begun to impose a “rules-based order.” It is evident that the idea of this so-called “order” was initially promoted in opposition to international law. As a result, the atmosphere of the discussion on Security Council reform has fundamentally changed.

In my opinion, considering the changes in our country’s foreign policy priorities, we need to rationally adjust relevant aspects of our position on UN Security Council reform.

In conclusion, given all the above, I believe it is necessary to emphasize that our country must coordinate its actions with the states in the Uniting for Consensus group.

## **UN Security Council Resolution 1540 on Non-Proliferation: 20 Years Later**

***G. Mashkov***

*Keywords:* UN Security Council Resolution 1540, UN Security Council 1540 Committee, WMD nonproliferation, nonstate actors, Group of Experts

UN Security Council Resolution 1540 was unanimously approved on April 28, 2004. Russia was one of the initiators of this resolution, contributing significantly to finding a delicate balance of interests to address the issue of preventing weapons of mass destruction (WMD), their means of delivery, and related materials from falling into the hands of nonstate actors, including terrorists.

The resolution was adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, making its provisions mandatory. It addressed existing gaps in the global nonproliferation architecture concerning nonstate actors and remains one of its key elements to this day.

Over two decades, significant work has been done. Almost all states (185) submitted their initial reports, with the exception of eight countries, with whom explanatory work is conducted regularly. Regarding additional information, states provide it at the committee's request or as necessary in the manner they deem appropriate. Russia submitted its first report in 2004 and additional information in 2005, 2007, 2014, and 2020.

One important area of work is raising states' awareness of the resolution's content and implementation methods. Various events have been held in this context, including regional courses for national contact points (NCPs), which numbered 146 as of December 2023. A total of nine such courses have been conducted for countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe.

There are ongoing attempts by some Western states to "open up" the resolution and infuse it with new nonproliferation obligations. This includes introducing commitments for UN member states to incorporate into their national legislation provisions for criminalizing actions prohibited in paragraph 2 of the resolution's operative part, creating interagency structures and national centers for the implementation of the resolution, forming and regularly updating control lists of

WMD materials, and developing additional measures to counter new risks and threats related to the advancement of science, technology, and commerce.

There are also targeted efforts by several countries to change the functionality of the 1540 Committee. Attempts to limit its coordinating functions and delegate committee responsibilities to external organizations controlled by specific political blocs, including research centers, persist. The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs and regional UN peace and disarmament centers are trying to play independent roles, creating positions for Resolution 1540 coordinators without the committee's consent. There is a growing push to advance agendas not inherent to the nonproliferation nature of the resolution, such as gender issues, and to transform the committee from a monitoring body into a regulatory authority that interferes in the internal affairs of states, evaluates the activities of executive authorities, demands error correction, and requires states to report on their work to the committee.

Russia has adopted and continues to refine measures for the effective implementation of the resolution at the national level. Within the committee, it helps facilitate the resolution's implementation and strives by all possible means to maintain the balance of interests established in 2004, preserving the spirit of cooperation and joint efforts to address global proliferation risks. The potential of the resolution is far from exhausted. The goal of preventing WMD materials from falling into the hands of nonstate actors aligns with our long-term interests.

The US, distorting the real situation, publicly accuses Russia of blocking progress on Resolution 1540. That is a blatant lie. Russia always supports constructive initiatives that contribute to common nonproliferation goals and seeks compromises where possible, considering our national interests and those of all involved parties, including developing countries. However, this does not mean that we will automatically endorse all ideas from Western partners that they try to push under Resolution 1540.

**International Information Security:**  
**Russia at the UN (2020-2021) – Start of a New Stage**

*S. Boiko*

*Keywords:* international information security, UN, OEWG, GGE, ICT

A new phase in the discussion of international information security at the UN was initiated with the decision to convene, starting in 2021, the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for a four-year period (2021- 2025). This decision was enshrined in UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/75/240, “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security,” adopted on December 31, 2020, at Russia’s initiative.

The new Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) was intended to ensure the continuity and progression of a democratic, inclusive, and transparent negotiation process on ICT security, effectively continuing the work started by the first group in 2019. The strong support from the majority of the international community for continuing this dialogue within the UN framework was underscored by the fact that the General Assembly resolution was adopted even before the existing group concluded its work.

It is essential to highlight the meticulous efforts of Russian diplomats that led to this result. The challenges of securing this resolution’s adoption are clearly reflected in the First Committee’s report A/75/394 from November 16, 2020. The document indicates that under agenda item 98, “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security,” the 75th session of the UN General Assembly considered two draft resolutions, one submitted by the Russian Federation and the other by the US.

The opponents of Russia aimed to deprive it of its leading role in the UN, despite significant support for Russia’s approaches to ensuring international information security. The inclusion of provisions in the operative part of the resolution that allowed for the continuation of specialized dialogue at the UN only after the completion of the aforementioned groups’ work and only as needed clearly

demonstrated the negative stance of the authors of the draft resolution toward maintaining the current discussion format of the OEWG, which had proven its relevance and effectiveness.

On December 6, 2021, the General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/76/19 “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security, and advancing responsible State behaviour in the use of information and communications technologies,” without a vote.

This outcome was understandable, as the document’s text mainly contained “neutral” formulations, frequently repeated in previous related resolutions.

For instance, A/RES/76/19 emphasized that all states are interested in promoting the use of ICTs for peaceful purposes and preventing conflicts arising from their use. This formulation fully matched the similar assertion of resolution A/RES/75/32, initiated by the US. Meanwhile, a similar thesis from resolution A/RES/75/240 (drafted by Russia) omitted the important goal to create a community with a shared future for humanity in cyberspace, proposed by Chinese partners and previously included in the 2018 resolution A/RES/73/27, also initiated by Russia.

Therefore, it can be assumed that the “neutral” nature of the document, as well as the absence of provisions confirming readiness to address ICT security issues and the formation of an international information security system in the near future, were reasons why China, Cuba, Egypt, Iran, North Korea, and Venezuela, which had previously consistently co-sponsored similar Russian projects, did not become co-authors of the resolution.

However, as noted earlier, Russia’s co-authorship of the document can be attributed to the desire to create the most favorable backdrop for the start of the new OEWG’s work, within which Russia planned to implement important initiatives aimed at forming an international information security system.

The extent to which this compromise step by Russia was justified would be assessed based on the outcomes of the Group’s substantive sessions, the first of which was scheduled to take place December 13-17, 2021, in New York.

## **Is a Modern Multipolar World Possible Without Digital Sovereignty and an Independent Technological Policy?**

*S. Melnik, Ye. Petrova, V. Sudovtsev*

*Keywords:* multipolar world, Internet, AI, ICTs, digital sovereignty

Currently, there are two approaches to defining the future of the Internet and the model of digital transformation. The first approach is based on the Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace, which states that the Internet should not have political borders. The second approach reflects real life and suggests the responsible use of the Internet, delineating boundaries and measures of responsibility. The first approach is supported by the US and the collective West. The second is advocated by Russia, China, India, and several other countries. Meanwhile, most countries in the world have yet to give a definitive answer on what the future Internet should look like.

This article supports the claim that in today's world, real state sovereignty cannot be achieved without ensuring digital sovereignty and an independent technological policy. It proposes a technical model for achieving digital sovereignty goals and provides examples of interactions with African countries to promote this position within the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

The world is changing, and we must be active participants in these changes. We have the opportunity to promote ICT standards that incorporate the necessary technological mechanisms for a multipolar world. Our opinions are valued by colleagues from developing countries. Together, we are helping to create and improve certification mechanisms for communication devices and services, which enhances the technological independence of nations. Mandatory certification of communication devices allows any country to pursue an independent technical policy in the ICT field, ultimately leading to a more independent overall political stance. An independent technological position is fundamental to building a multipolar world.

We are ready today to implement digital metrology technologies that enable the technological delineation of data network boundaries and ensure the digital

sovereignty of any country. Efforts continue toward the goals outlined in Russian President Vladimir Putin's speech at the second Russia-Africa Summit and the Russia-Africa Economic and Humanitarian Forum on July 28, 2023, in St. Petersburg. Interest from African colleagues in Russian approaches to telecommunications conformity assessment and digital metrology is growing.

These developments offer prospects for equitable integration into the global technological community. Technological dominance by some countries over others no longer seems inevitable. ICT now offers possibilities for technological choice. Only equal science and technology partnerships have a right to the future.

We must and are prepared to approach the next, third summit and the Russia-Africa Economic and Humanitarian Forum in 2024 with the appropriate technological groundwork. ITA experts are contributing to this collective effort.

## **Dialogue Partnership Between Russia and ASEAN in Digitalization:** **Status and Prospects**

***Z. Gomboin, K. Kablukov***

***Keywords:*** ASEAN, Russia, Southeast Asia, dialogue partnership, digitalization

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a prominent example of an integrative organization that, over its more than half-century history, has become the central entity in Southeast Asia (SEA) for key areas of regional development. A key feature that has enabled ASEAN to maintain cohesion among its members is its ability to adapt to dynamic global processes.

In this regard, a significant milestone for the Association was the decision to establish the ASEAN Community at the 27th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur on November 22, 2015. Researchers note that this event marked ASEAN's transition to a higher level of integration. The establishment of the ASEAN communities, particularly the Political-Security Community, the Economic Community, and the Socio-Cultural Community, according to Russian researchers, contributes to "a more coordinated policy of all institutions aimed at maintaining peace and stability in the region". Simultaneously, the program document ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together was signed, forming ASEAN's medium-term strategy for all three established communities. This development trajectory of the Association indicates that the leadership of ASEAN member countries sees the greatest benefit in deepening integration processes and seeks to use any possible formats to consolidate efforts to accelerate regional development.

ASEAN's ability to promptly respond to new challenges to regional stability is also noteworthy. A vivid example of such a policy is the involvement of extraregional countries in discussions on various political and economic development issues in SEA within ASEAN-centric institutions.

The importance of digitalization at the ASEAN level has been enshrined in the Association's key documents, particularly in the aforementioned ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together. To underscore the significance of the ICT sector for the Association, a Digital Masterplan (ADM) is developed every five years.



Russia and ASEAN, whose relations were established back in 1991, have a long history of successful interaction and cooperation. In 1996, Russia became a full-fledged dialogue partner of ASEAN. In 2017, Russia opened its permanent mission in Jakarta. In 2018, dialogue relations were elevated to the level of strategic partnership. Notably, in the same year, ASEAN established a Program of Cooperation (PoC) with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), which includes Russia and neighboring Central Asian countries. In the fields of energy and agriculture, the relevant ASEAN working groups have adopted special work plans with the participation of Russian representatives as dialogue partners.

The dialogue partnership is a unique form of ASEAN's interaction with the rest of the world, maintaining the Association's central role in Southeast Asia. The gradual development of integration processes within ASEAN has allowed this interaction mechanism to extend not only to the areas of security and regional stability but also to all types of economic activities of the Association, where extraregional countries have had the opportunity to exchange experiences and establish constructive cooperation.

Accelerating digitalization processes increasingly attract the attention of states in terms of regulation, development, and the formation of sovereign digital ecosystems. To ensure regular activities for exchanging the latest practices and solutions and consolidating their regulatory activities, ASEAN countries in the economic community have formed several specialized ICT bodies.

The Russian Federation, as a country with highly developed telecommunications infrastructure and e-government service provision system, seeks to expand the geography of its cooperation in the ICT field. In this regard, work within the dialogue partnership has intensified. This format allows for regular exchange of best practices on the implementation of advanced solutions for the population of Southeast Asian countries and continuing integration process with ASEAN to intensify cooperation, including in multilateral formats.

## **Health Diplomacy as an Aspect of International Humanitarian Cooperation**

*N. Bychkova*

*Keywords:* international humanitarian cooperation, medical diplomacy, vaccine diplomacy, global health diplomacy

The modern world faces an increasing number of natural, biogenic, and anthropogenic challenges and threats. Addressing most of these challenges requires the mobilization of efforts from multiple states and, in some cases, the entire global community, necessitating constant dialogue to coordinate activities.

International humanitarian cooperation is becoming increasingly important as international relations become more complex. This concept is interpreted differently in Russia and other countries.

An underestimated area of contemporary international humanitarian cooperation is health care. It is believed that the term “medical diplomacy” was proposed in the late 1970s by Peter Bourne, an American physician and special adviser to president Jimmy Carter on health affairs, although international cooperation in this field began long before the term emerged. Describing medical diplomacy as a promising area of US foreign policy, Bourne emphasized that this type of cooperation is an effective way to establish contacts when interstate relations are in a state of crisis for some reason.

Greater attention began to be paid to international cooperation on health care later. In the late 20th century, the UN proposed the concept of “human security.” Since 1994, ensuring human security in all its diversity has become a priority of the UN and its specialized agencies. At the turn of the 21st century, the UN established the Commission on Human Security, which aimed to comprehensively analyze existing challenges and develop possible measures to overcome these problems.

Medical diplomacy can include not only the export of technologies, products, and expertise, but also their acquisition from foreign partners. Achieving the goals of medical diplomacy today is only possible through stable, mutually beneficial, and respectful dialogue. Medical diplomacy is not so much about donor-recipient relations as the mutual enrichment of two or more interested parties in dialogue.

In the last decade, another term has gained traction – “global health diplomacy.” This concept emerged in the early 21st century to emphasize that international cooperation in the medical field has extended beyond bilateral relations between states. Health challenges and threats are global, necessitating dialogue among all participants.

The COVID-19 pandemic gave new impetus to the development of health diplomacy. The rapid spread of the new infection across national borders forced states to respond to a serious biogenic challenge. Each country responded based on the number of infections, the speed of the infection’s spread, the capacity of the national health care system, and the particularities of its political and administrative culture.

It is important for Russia to consider whether health diplomacy can serve as a “bridge” to establish connections with other states amid a crisis in political relations. Given that health diplomacy is a tool of the state’s “soft power,” it can indeed improve relations where they are currently strained. However, it seems unlikely that this tool can fundamentally change the situation under the current conditions. The level of distrust among some states toward Russia is too high, and large-scale information campaigns aimed at discrediting even the most selfless and logically justified initiatives effectively nullify the potential of international health care cooperation as a tool to overcome crises in relations with unfriendly countries.

Nevertheless, there are many states that are open to Russian initiatives in the health care sector. Active diplomacy in this field can help form friendly and mutually beneficial relations with these countries. Additionally, amid sanctions pressure, Russia also needs foreign partners in health care to facilitate technology transfer, diversify markets for medical products, and gradually develop a relatively independent pharmaceutical and medical industry.

## **Challenges of Global Health Governance**

### **Amid the Growing Use of Force in the World**

*A. Chesnokova*

*Keywords:* global health, WHO, infectious diseases, humanitarian crisis, Palestine, Syria

Natural disasters and armed conflicts have accompanied human existence throughout history, always leading to spikes in mortality and morbidity. However, in recent years, the scale and scope of these events have noticeably increased. Since the 1990s, such events annually affect around 217 million people, forcing them to live under conditions of extreme instability and humanitarian crises. Despite this, in recent decades, global health management measures amid humanitarian crises caused by armed conflicts have not led to increased equity and quality in the provision of medical care and services in affected areas.

Armed conflicts have a profound impact on the architecture of health governance. Military actions often result in the destruction of health care infrastructure, including hospitals, clinics, and essential medical supply chains. Such widespread disruptions hinder the delivery of basic medical services, leading to increased morbidity and mortality.

Besides environmental factors, socioeconomic factors such as trade, tourism, demographics, poverty, and cultural characteristics undoubtedly play an important role in the dynamics of infectious disease spread. However, the factor of organized violent confrontation and armed conflicts affecting the outbreaks of infectious diseases and their consequences, especially in poor and developing countries, remains largely unstudied.

The need to maintain health care during and after armed conflicts is especially high; however, due to exacerbated disagreements caused by political factors, the civilian population becomes the target of military actions, and human rights violations further increase health care needs.

Severe, prolonged conflicts pose a significant challenge to global health, as their consequences are highly indiscriminate. It can be said without exaggeration

that any armed conflict is a global health problem. Such conflicts lead to the disruption of measures to strengthen global health, the destruction of health care systems, mass epidemics, and lifelong disabilities and post-traumatic disorders that can have long-term health consequences for nations.

The responsibility to heed calls for humanitarian aid lies with the international community. Therefore, there is an urgent need for constant cooperation between the WHO and its member states to effectively address the consequences of military actions on global health. Such cooperation is vital for achieving the ideals of global health and ensuring the human right to health.

## **Russia and Eurasian Identity**

*V. Yegorov*

*Keywords:* identity, Eurasianism, civilizational choice, East-West, Eurasia

Identities in the sociopolitical process in general, and in the structuring of geopolitical space in particular, have only recently been incorporated into Russian academic discourse.

Identity is especially influenced by national-cultural factors in an era of global turbulence, characterized by a widening gulf between the consolidated West and the non-West, whose motive is a development strategy focused on identity and sovereignty.

Amid the ongoing global changes, Eurasian identity, as an ideological movement, is taking shape in real sociopolitical practices.

Eurasianism derived from the views of Russian emigrants in the early 1920s.

Due to its unique historical path and the ambivalence of its social and cultural practices, only Russia could become the cradle of Eurasianism: not only because it absorbed the core of Eurasia, the Heartland, and constituted a territory that could not be excluded, bypassed, or nullified in any context; and not only because the Russian state, over a long historical period, included a significant part of Eurasia's population in its political and legal space, but also because Eurasianism has a deeper foundation that cannot be reduced to a set of factors. Describing a narrower, national identity, Anthony Smith highlighted not only the commonality of territory but also historical memory, mythology, and shared culture as defining features.

The mainstreaming of Eurasianism in theoretical discourse, and even more so in geopolitics, became possible after the gradual overcoming of global Eurocentrism. Despite political, economic, and cultural expediency, Europe legitimized Russian Europeanism only in a limited contextual format. The Old World was unwilling to acknowledge that, in addition to the West, its "organism" contained an integral component – the East.

Eurasian identity is a complex, multi-layered phenomenon, arising not merely from acculturation or cultural universalization. It is not described by political

integration but encompasses a comprehensive set of factors that constitute the existence and collective social potential of the peoples, nations, and states involved in its genesis and development. Thus, identity in general, and Eurasian identity in particular, is a product of a shared social quality that emerges from historically prolonged coexistence accompanied by mutual cultural exchange.

It is important to note that a crucial role in preserving and developing Eurasian identity is played by contemporary Russian policy, which aims to support the inalienable right of all nations and states to sovereign development and the preservation of their historical and cultural roots.

Only through an equal dialogue of cultures, values, and social orientations can an organic fabric of multiculturalism be produced that binds together developing identities.

## **Trends and Prospects for Foreign Economic Policy and Trade of EAEU**

### **Member States: The Fate of Integration Projects in Armenia**

*A. Donchenko*

*Keywords:* EAEU, integration projects, regional associations, foreign trade

Considering the development prospects available to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) through inclusion in integration projects, it should be noted that the EAEU can provide all sorts of paths and avenues for cooperation to all member states. Currently, there are differences in approaches to economic development among the countries, as well as varying perspectives on political issues among member states. However, it is significant that interaction within the EAEU on defense and counterterrorism guarantees the stability and security of all EAEU member states and contributes to the overall stability of the region.

Moreover, the EAEU enhances the political weight of its participants on the international stage, including for the protection of their regional interests. The attraction of foreign investments, increase in trade turnover, economic growth, development of infrastructure and transport-logistics connections, as well as the possibilities for the EAEU to integrate into global projects are all directly related to the effectiveness of the EAEU itself.

In the EAEU, projects with an integration component are of particular importance today. These projects involve the combined production and scientific-technological potential of integration union participants aimed at achieving a technological transformation of the economy and enhancing competitiveness.

The strategic areas for the development of Eurasian economic integration until 2025 include prospects for increasing innovation and investment activity and foresee expanding vectors of economic cooperation. Recently, the Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) and the EEC agreed to focus efforts on preparing promising industrial cooperation projects for potential financing through a new support mechanism. It should be noted that the EDB is currently the only international development institution listed among the financial organizations and development institutions



allowed to participate in implementing the new mechanism for supporting trilateral cooperation projects.

It should be noted that the EDB's Country Strategy for Armenia highlights five priority areas of work until 2026. First, the bank's role in facilitating the country's development of sustainable infrastructure is crucial. This includes supporting projects in the construction and modernization of general infrastructure aimed at ensuring energy security, transport accessibility, and continuous economic development.

The EDB pays special attention to food security, aiming for a balanced import volume and domestic production of key agricultural products, as well as developing channels to move goods from producers to consumers. Furthermore, the EDB focuses on programs for industrial and export diversification, identifying the agricultural sector as having the highest export potential.

In terms of the digital transformation of Armenia's economy and public administration sector, the bank utilizes the competencies of its Digital Initiatives Fund to achieve this goal. Finally, the EDB collaborates with banks to support targeted lending programs aimed at developing the financial market and improving access to financial services in Armenia.

In conclusion, the role and implementation of joint projects within the EAEU are directly proportional to the member states' involvement and interest in integration processes. For Russian investors, the creation of export-oriented production in Armenia to sell finished products in third- country markets is not very advantageous due to difficulties in delivering goods to the global market. However, establishing joint ventures whose products are in demand in the Armenian or Russian markets is highly relevant. Currently, such projects by Russian companies are launched in sectors like building materials production, metallurgy, educational technologies, and public catering.

**Asia in Washington's Sights:**  
**The Economic Flank of "China's Isolation"**  
**Misunderstood by Washington's "Partners"**

***G. Yeliseyev***

*Keywords:* Indo-Pacific Economic Framework Agreement, IPEF, US, People's Republic of China, Asia-Pacific region, trade agreement, "isolating China" policy

A key aspect of international rivalry with the People's Republic of China for the US has always been, and remains to this day, the struggle for political influence in the Asia-Pacific region (APR) and for the dominant role among the powers located there. Washington is well aware that political rapprochement in the modern world largely stems from economic rapprochement, achieved primarily by "attaching" the national economies of other countries to itself through trade agreements, making further interaction with US rivals simply unprofitable for participating states.

Perhaps the main foreign trade decision made by America in this realm in its modern history was the "Pivot to Asia" strategy proclaimed in 2011 by the 44th president of the US Barack Obama. The strategy envisioned creating the most powerful intergovernmental integration group called the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which was to include almost all the countries of the region except, of course, China.

However, the calculation to create a gigantic free trade zone centered on the US economy did not succeed, as the winner of the 2016 election, 45th American president Donald Trump, who made the fight against the "unfair trade agreements of previous administrations" a cornerstone of his campaign, promptly withdrew the US from the TPP.

The US aims to block China and isolate it from the rest of the Asia-Pacific region, and in the long term, to dislodge it from its established positions in Latin America. The IPEF and the Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity are the trade-economic "flanks" of this plan, designed to assist in areas where political-

diplomatic methods might fail. Merely demonstrating military potential through groups like AUKUS will never attract many regional countries to the US side, as they traditionally view China as their main economic partner. Even Australia, an active US ally, as we noted above, is now forced to navigate its foreign policy between the two superpowers. As we mentioned at the beginning, political influence in the modern world stems from economic influence. Washington understands that well enough, but despite all its efforts, it still faces significant problems in this area.

Both the IPEF and the Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity currently merely exist to “annoy” China, without being able to bring any real benefits to American strategy in the region. As “empty shells” of agreements, devoid of substantive content and clearly aimed at benefiting only the US at the expense of other countries, they are unlikely to form the basis for a new “pivot to Asia” or for any effective US competition with China in the region. Whether the White House understands this and whether the US is willing to make concessions to its potential allies for the sake of its geopolitical plans will be revealed in the next rounds of negotiations on the IPEF. If not, this poorly crafted attempt to “isolate China” will become little more than a minor footnote in the history of the Washington-Beijing confrontation in the Asia-Pacific region.

## **Russia and Japan in Saudi Arabia's 21st Century Foreign Policy:**

### **A Comparative Analysis**

*N. Antonova, A. Bushueva*

*Keywords:* Saudi Arabia, Russia, Japan, international relations, foreign policy, national interests, Vision 2030, Asia-Pacific region, international energy markets

In the early 21st century, Saudi Arabia, a major economic and geopolitical player on the international stage with extensive oil reserves and a unique strategic position, as well as home to Islam's holiest sites, began developing a new foreign policy strategy in the Middle East. The kingdom followed a characteristically cautious policy aligned with the US on military-technical and energy cooperation. However, the new Saudi leadership has shown greater initiative in pursuing a regional policy independently. This shift is attributed to significant political changes within the kingdom and shifts in the balance of power on the international stage, particularly in the Middle East.

Additionally, changes in the landscape of the energy sector have occurred due to the active increase in shale oil production in the US, the persistence of lower oil prices, and an increase in natural gas production. For many years, Saudi Arabia was the world's largest oil producer, influencing the global oil market. However, the significant budget deficit caused by the oil price drop in 2014 forced Saudi Arabia to reassess its strategy to strengthen its geopolitical position.

In recent years, Saudi Arabia's foreign policy focus has shifted from the US and Europe toward Asian countries. The kingdom is increasing its trade with these nations, establishing increasingly close trade and economic and political relations. Among the relatively new priority areas of cooperation for Saudi Arabia are the Asia-Pacific countries – and not only China but also Russia and Japan, which are considered significant geopolitical actors in the Asia-Pacific region.

Relations between Russia and Saudi Arabia are pragmatic – Russia does not seek to replace the US as the kingdom's main strategic ally and guarantor of military security in the Persian Gulf, nor to usurp China's role as Saudi Arabia's leading economic partner. Russia's interest in developing relations with Saudi Arabia is

driven by a combination of economic and military-political interests. For the kingdom, it is advantageous to strengthen ties with a significant geopolitical player like Russia, given its growing influence in the Middle East, leading position in the arms market, and its role in the global economic and energy system. Despite major disagreements on regional security threats, the conflict in Syria, and Iran's role in the Persian Gulf, both countries are willing to build pragmatic relationships in the areas of economy, energy, and defense – the primary areas of intergovernmental cooperation.

For Japan, Saudi Arabia is the main oil supplier. Tokyo aims to avoid past mistakes when oil-exporting countries were viewed solely through the lens of energy relations (“technology for oil”), neglecting political aspects. Since 2016, when Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman announced Vision 2030 to “break the curse” of a rentier state, Japan has participated in the project's implementation. From Riyadh's perspective, cooperation with Tokyo aligns with several goals of the project where Japan has achieved success – transitioning to renewable energy sources, developing the private sector, and health care. For Japan, it is crucial to remain a focal point for Saudi Arabia, especially as the kingdom increasingly favors China, which Tokyo is seeking to contain.

Thus, despite clear differences in dynamics and driving forces, Saudi- Russian and Saudi-Japanese relations share some common features: close economic ties largely tied to the energy sector; strategic partnerships (Japan's involvement in Vision 2030 and military-technical cooperation with Russia); and interest in ensuring stability in energy markets.

## **Remilitarization of Germany: Political Focus**

***F. Trunov***

*Keywords:* Germany, foreign policy, strategic presence, Bundeswehr, NATO, confrontation, Russia

Since the mid-2010s, Germany's sociopolitical discourse has highlighted numerous weaknesses in the development of the Bundeswehr. This is evident from leaks and reports from the Ministry of Defense,<sup>1</sup> as well as statements from several high-ranking officials. Amid the backdrop of Russia's forced Special Military Operation (SMO), the German information space has been promoting the notion of the Bundeswehr's technical incapacity to conduct large-scale military operations over an extended period.

Concurrently, official Berlin has announced ambitious plans not only for the development but also the utilization of the Bundeswehr. According to plans from the late 2010s, the number of divisions in the army is set to increase from three to six, with eight to 10 new brigades being formed in addition to the existing 7.5 brigades by the mid-2030s. In June 2022, Chancellor Olaf Scholz declared the intention to transform the Bundeswehr into the largest conventional armed force among NATO's European member states, making it the third largest overall within the alliance, following the US and Turkey.

For Germany, this goal is intertwined with another aim: to play the role of a "framework nation" for as many multilateral NATO groups as possible. This concept involves a specific country taking a leading role in staffing, operating, and managing multinational military formations of various scales. Compared to other NATO members, Germany has been willing to take on a higher burden through NATO's Response Force (NRF), enhanced and tailored Forward Presence (eFP and tFP) forces, and the new NATO Force Model (NNFM).

Germany emphasizes its consistent commitment to multilateralism in practice, striving not only to participate more intensively and extensively than its partners in staffing a wide range of NATO formations but also to assume the role of framework nation in the maximum number of cases. This goal significantly drives the internal

reorganization of the Bundeswehr – not only increasing the number of formations, especially within the army, but also making them more joint in nature, following the logic of NATO’s multinational units (e.g., incorporating drone units, manned army aviation, boats, and special operations forces into tank or mechanized infantry brigades). Thus, Berlin aims to secure substantial, if not the most significant, integrated control over the functioning of NATO’s powerful military potential among all European member states.

At the same time, Germany is showing willingness for protracted expansion of its armed forces. Given Germany’s substantial resource base, this is expected to transform the Bundeswehr into the largest “military machine” among its European partners in the long term. Finally, compared to some of its NATO and EU partners, Germany shows restraint regarding the highly dangerous issue of deploying the troops of Western democracy in Ukraine. When these tactics are combined, they are expected to provide Berlin with control from the West over the confrontation with Russia without its escalation into a direct “hot” war.

This approach is highly likely to bring Germany certain potentially significant tactical results in the foreseeable future. However, strategically, Berlin is poised for failure. The German establishment’s exclusive confidence in the West’s dominance in terms of the quantity and especially the quality of military and foreign policy resources appears illusory, given the declared goals. Russia’s foreign policy and that of its strategic partners aim to disrupt the international system’s balance: The collective West, as a center of attraction, objectively requires strategic balancing, without which long-term global stability cannot be achieved. Therefore, Germany’s path of remilitarization with an anti-Russian orientation will ultimately lead to a dead end, forcing Berlin, along with other Western democracies, to seek paths not of confrontation but of cooperation with Russia.

## **Current Trends in Migration Regulation: Germany's Experience**

### ***A. Nadezhdin***

*Keywords:* migration, Germany, Central Register of Foreign Nationals, bilateral agreements on migration, payment card for refugees, safe countries of origin, chance card

Germany's migration policy is transforming under the influence of external factors and as a necessary measure to prevent further declines in the ruling elite's ratings and growing public discontent amid existing socioeconomic difficulties. Germany continues to be a magnet for migrants in Europe, which is facing challenges in accommodating and integrating arrivals. The country deals with two distinct flows – a traditional one from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and a new one from Ukraine – that cannot be regulated using the same model due to their qualitative and quantitative differences. It is also important to note that this situation is not unique to Germany. As Russian migration researchers rightly point out, the current issues in EU countries are compounded by accumulated problems in migration management since the 2015-2016 [migrant] crisis.<sup>16</sup>

In light of the growing need to account for incoming migrants, the digital system for storing and processing personal data becomes particularly significant. Emphasis is placed on the comprehensive improvement of mechanisms to protect sensitive personal information, including the secure operation of the Central Register of Foreign Nationals. Updates to the national legal framework are focused on creating conditions for prompt decision-making on granting refugee status, implementing deportation procedures, encouraging legal migration to address labor shortages, and mitigating the economic consequences of demographic problems. The Chance Card mechanism, although substantively promising, requires some time to assess its effectiveness.

The adopted model for reforming citizenship by simplifying the criteria for acquiring it does not appear balanced. Citizenship could be granted based purely on formal criteria to individuals who are not highly motivated to integrate into German society. Despite high hopes placed on bilateral migration agreements by political



and expert circles, the possibility of selective compliance with these agreements by Berlin's counterparts cannot be ruled out, especially regarding the readmission of citizens denied asylum and support in curbing illegal cross-border migration.

The launch of the new payment mechanism for refugees aims to reduce Germany's attractiveness for social dependency and prevent cross-border money transfers. Additionally, linking the amount of social support to the duration of stay in the country is insufficient. Elements for controlling the integration of migrants need to be developed. In this context, it is impossible to implement sociocultural support programs if migrants themselves are unwilling to put forth maximum effort to succeed.

## **Russian-Mongolian Cooperation:**

### **Status and Prospects Amid the Struggle for Resources in Eurasia**

*R. Kalinin, A. Khatmullin*

*Keywords:* energy security, nuclear energy, Russian-Mongolian cooperation, mining industry, energy resources, lithium, uranium, rare earth elements

Mongolia possesses significant reserves of resources valuable for the production of high-tech products, however, Mongolia lacks sufficient energy capacity for numerous infrastructure projects.

Mongolia is interested in energy cooperation with Russia. A current Russian-Mongolian energy project is the construction of small modular nuclear power plants (SMR). The Rosatom state corporation is currently awaiting an official response from the Mongolian government on the SMR project. It is known that companies from the EU and China are also vying for the right to build nuclear power plants in Mongolia and are actively investing in the development and exploration of mineral deposits in Mongolia. Russia's activity in this area remains low.

To further develop Mongolia-Russia energy relations, it is proposed to assess Mongolia's potential in terms of the development, extraction, and export of rare earth elements (REEs), lithium, copper, titanium, coal, and uranium.

Unlike the West, Russia views Mongolia as an equal partner and can meet Mongolia's needs for diversifying energy resources and developing alternative energy sources, such as nuclear power, in cooperation with Rosatom. In turn, Mongolia can attract Russian investment and scientific potential to further explore and extract REEs and other valuable industrial elements. For Russia, Mongolia holds strategic significance and serves as a key transport corridor to China. It remains essential to convey to the Mongolian side that partnership with Russia positively impacts the economy, supports the energy sector, develops transport infrastructure, and increases trade and economic exchange. This should be done through media and cultural exchanges, and primarily within the framework of investment projects.

## **Ten Years of Abdel Fattah El-Sisi's Reign:**

### **A New Era in the History of Egypt and Its Relations With Russia**

*N. El Naggary*

*Keywords:* Egypt, President El-Sisi, Egyptian-Russian relations

Upon assuming leadership of Egypt in 2014, President Abdel Fattah El- Sisi immediately sought to stabilize the situation in the country, restore national institutions, and launch the Egypt Vision 2030 sustainable development strategy. This strategy encompasses 12 key areas: education, innovation, scientific research, energy, culture, environmental issues, social support, efficient functioning of government institutions, economic development, health care, national security, and foreign policy.

As Egypt has revitalized itself domestically, it has also restored its position on the international stage as a strong power, reaffirming its status and importance as an indispensable regional player. President El-Sisi's foreign policy efforts have been directed at resolving the Palestinian- Israeli conflict, where Egypt has repeatedly played a decisive role in establishing ceasefires in Palestinian territories, fostering good relations with Arab world countries, enhancing Russia-Egypt ties, and strengthening friendships with African countries and key international players.

Energy is a priority area of bilateral cooperation, and thanks to the efforts of Presidents El-Sisi and Putin, major projects such as the construction of Egypt's first nuclear power plant, El Dabaa, with the participation of the Russian state corporation Rosatom, are being implemented.

Additionally, preparations are underway to launch a project to create a Russian industrial zone on the banks of the Suez Canal, promoting cooperation in the oil and gas sector, metallurgy, electric power, light industry, chemicals, and other industries.

The relationship between Egypt and Russia can be fully described as a partnership and friendship. Joint projects in transport, culture, space, and trade are either being implemented or prepared, along with joint efforts to resolve regional conflicts and combat terrorism.

## **Operation FOCUS: 25 Years of NATO Aggression in Yugoslavia**

*S. Staroverov, Yu. Brazhnikov*

*Keywords:* Operation Focus, Yugoslavia, NATO aggression

April 28, 2024, marks the 25th anniversary of the unique, yet now almost forgotten FOCUS international humanitarian relief operation. In March 1999, it became a one-of-a-kind mechanism that united the capabilities of four allied states – Austria, Greece, Russia, and Switzerland – in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY).

Today, it is appropriate, in author's opinion, to discuss this operation not so much in terms of the quantity of humanitarian aid delivered, but from a historical and political perspective – as an example of collective efforts to mitigate military aggression. In this article, we will use the term “initiative,” as initially proposed by the Swiss side, since this term more accurately reflects its essence.

The uniqueness of this initiative lay in the novel approaches to international humanitarian relief in the context of the situation in the Balkans and Eastern Europe at the time. It also represented a covert form of protest by the united countries against US policy in this crucial geopolitical region.

The name FOCUS explained the initiative's essence – to concentrate collective efforts on providing aid as quickly as possible to where it was needed the most and to those who needed it most urgently.

FOCUS humanitarian forces were deployed after NATO began massive air strikes on FRY territory on March 24, 1999. Combat actions lasted three and a half months, ending on June 10 of the same year – the same day the UN Security Council adopted Resolution No. 1244 that, among other things, provided for the prevention of the resumption of hostilities and the maintenance and enforcement of a ceasefire.

Despite the political trends in the world, the creation of FOCUS and its work and achievements cannot be denied. Moreover, with the onset of the conflict in Ukraine in 2014, the idea of cooperation was continued and implemented in a bilateral format with Switzerland. Unfortunately, FOCUS 2.0 fizzled out due to

external factors and the unwavering drive of the collective West to turn Ukraine into its eastern outpost for confrontation with Russia.

FOCUS, as intended, initiated an operation to provide the assistance of the international community to the population affected by the conflict in the FRY, especially from NATO bombings. FOCUS set a precedent that, despite attempts to forget and overlook it, left a significant mark on the history of international humanitarian activities, creating a new coalition mechanism for aiding conflict victims in the FRY and preventing the complete destruction of the country due to NATO aggression.

This four-party joint initiative successfully piloted a new approach to providing emergency humanitarian assistance to those in need during a military conflict and the postconflict recovery period, as well as a comprehensive assessment of the conflict's impact on the environment and public health. The results achieved by FOCUS deserve detailed study and should be adopted in international practice for providing emergency humanitarian assistance to those affected by military conflicts and natural and anthropogenic disasters both now and in the future.

Given the current circumstances, it would be advisable for the Russian Emergency Situations Ministry to revive the experience of FOCUS, start building new relationships with friendly countries, and begin piloting coalition ad hoc projects to provide collective emergency assistance to affected countries and their populations.

**The Last Battle in the Balkans**  
**On the 25th Anniversary of NATO Aggression and the Failure of the OSCE**  
**Kosovo Verification Mission**

*S. Lavrov*

*Keywords:* crisis in Kosovo, NATO aggression against Yugoslavia, OSCE Verification Mission in Kosovo

The Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM) was the first large-scale OSCE operation focused on peacekeeping and conflict resolution. It was a failure, revealing all the political and organizational flaws and distortions that had developed within the OSCE over its existence and highlighting just how far the organization had strayed from its ideals of being an integrator of pan-European security and cooperation processes.

Shedding light on the KVM's activities, as a significant aspect of the events in Kosovo in late 1998 and early 1999, is instructive and adds important details to the overall picture of the Kosovo crisis, shamelessly used by NATO for aggression against Yugoslavia.

Political and organizational shortcomings of the mission's format became apparent from its initial steps: The agreement between the FRY and the OSCE of October 16, 1998, to establish the KVM effectively gave the head of mission the authority to initiate actions and evaluate compliance with the ceasefire conditions and UN Security Council resolutions on behalf of the mission. Consequently, the work in the field of the vast KVM apparatus was summed up or negated by the arbitrary assessments of the head of mission.

Ambassador William Walker was appointed as the head of the KVM. Almost immediately, Walker's overt arrogance became apparent. He was accused of connections with "death squads" during his tenure as US ambassador to El Salvador.

Walker and his entourage's confrontational approach toward the FRY Federal Republic of Yugoslavia authorities manifested itself in various ways. For instance, Walker deliberately ignored Yugoslavia's sovereign rights over its airspace. Only at the last moment would we receive notification from headquarters about Walker's departures or arrivals for transmission to the authorities.

Cultivating relations with the Yugoslav side had to be managed under challenging conditions, as the KVM immediately faced bitter friction with the [FRY] security forces. KVM patrols began to “storm” the locations of Army and police units to “inspect” their composition. This was clear overreach by the KVM of its agreed-upon authority.

A paradoxical situation arose: The Mission’s numbers grew, branches were opened in major settlements, but the situation worsened daily instead of improving.

FRY security forces, following strict orders from Belgrade to avoid providing any grounds for accusations of noncompliance with the demands of the international community, curtailed their activities and exercised restraint. Meanwhile, Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) militants exploited the created vacuum and the KVM’s nonintervention. Militants were openly training and marching their armed supporters. No response came from the KVM headquarters.

By the end of 1998, the KLA had regained strength, and the US had achieved an interim goal – the KLA was restored as a significant factor in the situation.

The Račak incident and the head of mission’s behavior in connection with this event ultimately spoiled relations between the KVM and the FRY authorities. On January 18, Belgrade declared Walker *persona non grata*, although under pressure from OSCE member countries (including Russia), the Yugoslavs had to “postpone” their *démarche*. More serious consequences for the mission ensued as, starting in February 1999, the resolution of the Kosovo crisis moved directly into the realm of high politics, taking shape through entirely different formats and structures.

By March 15, the Yugoslav side was given an ultimatum to come to Paris and unconditionally sign the entire proposed “package.” This essentially meant that the Yugoslavs were being asked to consent to the *de facto* secession of Kosovo from the FRY.

Days before the NATO bombings began, after “consultations” with the US, Walker decided to evacuate the Mission. The Liaison Office team left Belgrade for Zagreb.

## **The Vietnam War and Its End:**

### **An Attempt at a Philosophical View Half a Century Later**

*Ye. Panteleyev*

*Keywords:* “domino theory,” escalation, “Vietnamization,” Paris Peace Accords (Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam), rewriting history

Over 50 years have passed since the signing of the Paris Accords on Vietnam, marking the end of one of the longest and bloodiest conflicts of the second half of the 20th century. As the general theory of relativity teaches, time moves at different speeds in different points of space. This seems to apply not only to different galaxies but also to human life. For history, half a century is a moment. For archival work, it is a significant period after which many (certainly not all) documents are declassified. For an individual, it is a colossal span, once equivalent to a whole lifetime but generally within the bounds of personal experience.

The number of direct witnesses of the events from 50 years ago is dwindling. Recently, Henry Kissinger, one of the co-architects of the Paris Accords, passed away. In various countries around the world, a cohort of brilliant regional studies specialists who can share their memories in person is concluding their scientific careers and/or diplomatic service. Publications on the topic do not cease but have become varied to the point of diversity – on one hand, dry and academic, as they rely on documents; on the other, unconventional and emotional due to the purely memoiristic and literary approach of the authors.

The Vietnam War solidified the axiom that Washington’s ruling circles view foreign policy steps exclusively through the lens of domestic political interests and undertake them for electoral gain. Moreover, foreign policy agendas rarely become subjects of serious public debate; instead, there is regular verification of how a particular action on the international stage will affect the everyday life of the average voter.

In Vietnam, American arrogance toward allies manifested itself once more, and it would subsequently do so again and again. This arrogance stemmed from a mythologized belief in America’s own exceptionalism, leading to a sense of



permissiveness and irresponsibility. Political snobbery and blatant hypocrisy allowed them to pontificate about promoting democratic ideals while simply multiplying profits.

The head of the South Vietnamese regime, Nguyen Van Thieu, obediently fulfilled the wishes of American sponsors throughout his presidency, but after the signing of the Paris Agreement, many wanted only one thing: for him to disappear.

The externally imposed Western-style democracy sprouted on South Vietnamese soil as a hybrid of personal enrichment and a break from traditional values. In contrast, the patriotism and collectivism of the “northerners” combined harmoniously with the Confucian hierarchical mindset and Buddhist willingness for self-sacrifice. As a result, Hanoi seemingly won the ideological struggle for meaning.

American antihistoricism, however, continues to be applied very narrowly. If history has ended and is short, it can be written and rewritten. And by modifying the past, a desired new reality can be created. The consciousness of a person torn from historical context and deprived of ancestral ties is susceptible to manipulation and can be easily atomized.

Instead, the focus should be on practical resistance to historical falsification, confirming established historical facts, and spreading truthful information about Russia’s role and place in world history and the formation of a just world order.

## **The “Idea of Europe” Through the Eyes of Soviet Diplomats During the Great Patriotic War**

*N. Vasilyeva*

*Keywords:* “idea of Europe,” “European idea,” “United States of Europe,” USSR, Soviet diplomacy, Great Patriotic War, World War II, UN

With the onset of World War II, the development of the “idea of Europe,” which has deep historical roots and is based on the notion of establishing “perpetual peace” on the European continent through political and other forms of unification, gained new momentum. In the early 1940s, thoughts about the necessity of creating various regional federations and international institutions in this most “volatile” part of the globe began to be voiced not only by many prominent intellectuals of the time in the West but also by several major state figures from the countries of the anti-Hitler coalition. Unlike the Europeanism of the Versailles era, which was distinctly anti-Soviet, most European projects during World War II viewed the USSR – an unquestioned leader in the fight against fascist aggression in the Old World – as an equal partner of other Europeans in a future “United States of Europe” and acknowledged it as a leading actor in international politics alongside the other powers of the so-called “Big Three”: the US and Great Britain.

Therefore, it is of considerable interest to study the Soviet position on such pan-European initiatives, especially in the context of the development and discussion by members of the anti-Hitler coalition of specific plans for creating a new global security organization, within which any intra- continental unification of European states would inevitably become a regional bloc. Many prominent representatives of Soviet diplomacy who were directly involved in developing the conceptual foundations of the postwar world contributed significantly to the formation of this position. This article will analyze their perception of the “idea of Europe” from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

The topic of planning new federative structures on the European continent was first voiced in Soviet foreign policy discourse early on in the Great Patriotic War.

In their efforts to expedite the signing of an alliance pact with the British, senior officials of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID) were even willing to somewhat soften the USSR's official stance regarding the recognition of its new borders by the leading Western powers and to temporarily refrain from further development and discussion of any plans for future territorial and political reorganization in Europe.

**The Battle for Narvik:**  
**The Struggle for Historical Memory**  
**An Attempt to Analyze Contemporary Norwegian Approaches to**  
**World War II History**

*A. Ryabichenko*

*Keywords:* Norway, USSR, Great Britain, historical memory, World War II, Petsamo-Kirkenes Operation, military history, 80th anniversary of the liberation of Northern Norway

In October 2024, the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Northern Norway by Soviet troops from Nazi occupiers will be commemorated. During this operation, over 2,000 Red Army soldiers sacrificed their lives.

However, Oslo is approaching the upcoming anniversary with attempts to nationalize and, in the long term, de-Russify the historical memory of World War II events. To that end, the fact of the liberation of Northern Norway by Red Army soldiers in 1944 is being gradually overshadowed in the Norwegian information space by a narrative emphasizing the crucial significance for Norway's fate of a series of battles around Narvik in the spring of 1940.

Given the task outlined in Russia's updated Foreign Policy Concept to preserve abroad the historical truth and memory of our country's role in world history, it is important to pay attention to this process that is fueled by ideological support from Anglo-Saxon academic centers.

After the start of Russia's Special Military Operation in Ukraine, Norway froze cooperation on military history and launched a media campaign to discredit Russia's politics of memory.

Norwegian historians and political scientists (including Hedda Langemyr and others), citing works by researchers from Australia, Great Britain, and the US, have started introducing into public consciousness assertions about an "aggressive Russia using distorted military history as a tool of foreign policy".

These narratives are being developed by Norwegians, including as part of the NORMEMO project launched by the Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø (in

2021) and a project to form a pool of anti-Russian experts based in the border town of Kirkenes, via the online publication *The Independent Barents Observer*, which involves journalists who have left Russia and act as foreign agents (launched in March 2023).

It can be concluded that the Norwegian authorities are attempting to shift, including at an international level, the focus of the country's military history from the USSR's liberating mission to "Hitler's first defeat at the hands of the Allies who came to the aid of the Norwegians."

This narrative ignores the hypocritical nature of Britain's prewar policy toward Norway, exemplified by events in 1940 such as the British mining of Norwegian territorial waters and the shelling of the village of Bjerkvik that killed 18 civilians. It also overlooks the fact that the withdrawal of the Allies from Narvik, liberated from the Germans in June 1940, left Norwegian forces with no chance of victory.

## **Initiatives of Russian Emperors on Issues of International Peace and Arms**

### **Limitation Between the 18th and Early 20th Centuries**

*T. Kashirina, P. Multatuli*

*Keywords:* Russian Empire, initiatives to prevent wars, issues of global peace, arms limitations

Since its existence as a unified state, Russia (Rus, the Tsardom of Muscovy, the Russian Empire) has continuously faced external aggression from numerous conquerors and rivals. In his report to Emperor Nicholas II in 1900, War Minister Gen. Alexey Kuropatkin noted that “over the previous 200 years, Russia has been at war for 128 years and at peace for 72 years.”

Consequently, Russian statecraft, particularly starting with its rulers in the 18th century, sought to create international conditions where war would become impossible or, at the very least, not as bloody. The state found full support for this from the people.

The first to propose a European reconciliation initiative in modern history was Emperor Peter III Fyodorovich. By his order, on February 12, 1762, the Russian government submitted to foreign powers a Declaration on Establishing Peace in Europe to avoid “further bloodshed.” The parties were to cease military actions and voluntarily renounce territorial gains made during the Seven Years’ War.

On February 28 (March 11 N.S.), 1780, Empress Catherine II issued a declaration on the establishment of maritime international law: the Declaration to Warring Powers on the Establishment of the Principles of Armed Neutrality, Freedom of Trade, and Navigation. The declaration was developed in response to the tense situation caused by the American War of Independence and aimed to ensure freedom of trade for all states, regardless of their involvement in the American conflict, which England actively sought to impede.

Emperor Alexander I, the main founder and ideologist of the Holy Alliance, played a significant role in attempting to create a system of “peace without wars.”

In 1874, Emperor Alexander II was the first in history to propose the need for universally binding rules of warfare.

Nicholas II's initiative aimed to create an international system capable of effectively preventing major wars. According to Anatoly Ignatyev, the goal of the 1899 Hague Conference was not "the reduction of armaments, although it was also platonically proclaimed, but the search for peaceful resolution of international conflicts and the development of legal norms for conducting war."

The Russian Empire was the first and for a long time the only power to put forward specific initiatives for creating mechanisms to prevent wars, establish rules for their conduct, and limit armaments. It is worth noting that the USSR, from the late 1930s until 1991, also sought to adhere to a policy of peace and compromise in its foreign policy. The Soviet Union's anticolonial and antiwar rhetoric, its persistent calls for disarmament, and its efforts to maintain the global status quo were largely continuations of the Russian Empire's initiatives. Undoubtedly, the contemporary foreign policy course of the Russian Federation, based on the idea of a multipolar world, moral prerogatives, and the search for compromises and agreements, is rooted in the history of the Russian emperors' diplomatic initiatives concerning peace without war.

## **Nikolai Roshchin: Our First Ambassador to the People's Republic of China**

*K. Barsky, S. Ovsyannikov*

*Keywords:* N.V. Roshchin, China, World War II, USSR Embassy in China, Soviet-Chinese relations, diplomacy

In October 2024, the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China will celebrate a significant milestone: the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Over the years, cooperation between Moscow and Beijing has reached an unprecedented level. Interaction between our countries has become a stabilizing factor in international affairs, a driving force in forming a just multipolar world order, and a key element in ensuring global and regional security.

This achievement would have been impossible without the dedicated work of several generations of Soviet and Russian diplomats. It is no exaggeration to say that the most challenging tasks and trials fell upon the staff of the USSR People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs who worked in China during World War II and the Civil War in the mid-20th century. Unfortunately, the names of most of them are unknown to the general public.

Nikolai Roshchin, was the first Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the USSR to the PRC, and the first accredited head of a foreign diplomatic mission in this country.

On October 1, 1949, the establishment of the PRC was proclaimed on Tiananmen Square in Beijing. The very next day, October 2, the USSR became the first country in the world to recognize the new communist state.

On October 10, 1949, Roshchin arrived from Moscow to PRC to begin his duties as the head of the Soviet mission.

The rapid expansion of Soviet-Chinese relations dictated the need for the accelerated training of qualified diplomatic personnel. Roshchin paid great attention to this issue. In 1951, the so-called School of Trainees was opened at the Soviet diplomatic mission in Beijing, recruiting promising students from MGIMO and other universities. Young people studied Chinese and English, honed their regional studies knowledge, and carried out specific service assignments.<sup>57</sup>



Roshchin worked in Beijing until June 1952. In the letters of recall signed by Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR Nikolai Shvernik, the ambassador's contribution to strengthening friendly relations between the Soviet Union and the PRC was positively assessed.

Nikolai Roshchin left a good memory of himself. In his farewell speech, Liu Shaoqi noted that Roshchin had gone through "times of both difficulties and victories with China. No matter how difficult the domestic and international situation was, he honorably implemented the selfless assistance of the Soviet people to the Chinese people."

The name of Nikolai Vasilyevich Roshchin – soldier, intelligence officer, diplomat – is inextricably linked with the history of Russia- China relations. Roshchin, a simple man from Ryazan with a military character, a loud and commanding voice, rare diligence, and an open heart, was destined to bridge two eras, representing the Soviet Union in both Kuomintang China and the People's Republic of China. It is rare in diplomatic history for the same person to be the last ambassador to a state defeated in a civil war and the first ambassador to the state founded by the victors of that overthrown regime. Yet, in the new China, Roshchin was as effective as he had been in the old, and his Chinese partners, sensing his genuine goodwill and determination, held him in high regard.

## The “Rebel Mermaid,” Lady Gertie, and Simply Asya

*M. Konarovsky*

*Keywords:* Kabul, Lady Gertie, simply Asya

After the unexpected departure of Larisa Reisner, the common-law wife of Soviet plenipotentiary representative Fyodor Raskolnikov, to her homeland in the spring of 1923, the memory of this striking and prepossessing Bolshevik lingered for a long time in patriarchal Kabul. Combining seemingly incompatible traits – the harsh exoticism of the revolution and the gentle aroma of Russian poetic culture of the Silver Age – she made a tremendous impression on Kabul’s small diplomatic corps. With her charisma and charm, Larisa Mikhailovna Reisner captivated the close circle of the Afghan ruler who was eager to break free from the medieval stagnation of his country.

The contradictory perception of the “rebellious mermaid” in her country of political exile was vividly reflected in Larisa’s journalism; she became *Pravda*’s first correspondent in Kabul. Her inquisitive, sharp, and critical eye noted many aspects of life in the Afghanistan she encountered in the early 1920s. Initially, the outwardly attractive picture of the East increasingly revealed its real essence, expressed in a semi-dormant monotony and the absence of the spark of creativity she so loved, against the backdrop of the pervasive rigidity of local customs.

All this was reflected in the essays of the revolutionary professor’s daughter. Her articles and essays were carefully sent by diplomatic mail to Moscow, appeared in periodicals, and undoubtedly attracted readers’ interest. Later, they were compiled into a collection titled “Afghanistan,” marking a significant milestone in the creation of an image of Afghanistan in Soviet Russia in the early 1920s.

However, Gertrude Mary Deane, the wife of Sir Francis Humphrys, the British envoy, was unlikely perturbed. Quite the opposite, in fact. The brilliant “Valkyrie of the Revolution” posed serious competition for her at the emir’s court, especially in the women’s quarters. The eldest daughter of Sir Harold Deane, the first chief commissioner of the newly created North-West Frontier Province of British India, conducted herself like a “grand dame” within the diplomatic corps and, like her

husband, sought to avoid contact with their Soviet counterparts. She was bound to Humphrys not only by marriage but also by shared interests. Born in the “Jewel of the British Crown,” Gertrude – known as Gertie in her family circle.

In the summer of 1924, the post of Soviet plenipotentiary in Afghanistan passed from Raskolnikov to his old comrade from revolutionary battles and also a former Baltic sailor, Leonid Stark. Leonid Nikolayevich Stark was accompanied to his new post from Revel by his wife, Astkhik Nikitishna Manucharyants, or simply Asya. They also brought with them their younger daughter, Shushanik, born in August 1920.

The exotic legacy left by the “rebel mermaid” at the Kabul royal court and within the capital’s diplomatic corps could have long overshadowed the wife of the new plenipotentiary. Astkhik Manucharyants, one of the first postrevolutionary Soviet journalists, clearly did not match Larisa Reisner in professional charisma or revolutionary connections, although formally both women shared a journalistic background and the status of being married to prominent “twins of the revolution” – Raskolnikov and Stark.

Larisa Reisner not only did not need her husband’s help in her professional creative work but could also outshine him in this regard. In contrast, Asya Nikitishna’s work was always overseen by her husband. Plenipotentiary Stark personally paid close attention to the activities of the TASS bureau in Kabul. This was driven not only by operational necessity but also by Leonid Nikolayevich’s personal interest as a former journalist – one of the founders of TASS and its former head.

By a bitter coincidence, staying in Afghanistan proved fatal for both Larisa and Asya. Both found Kabul very challenging, which visibly affected their family relationships. Upon returning to the USSR, Larisa continued to wander through an already dimming, revolution-weary Europe, and at just over the age of 30, she died in Moscow from acute typhus. Asya’s life ended in Kabul. According to the official version, she died on the morning of September 11, 1928, from a heart rupture.

## **A.S. Pushkin and Diplomats:**

### **On the Occasion of the Poet's 225th Birth Anniversary**

***R. Reinhardt***

*Keywords:* A.S. Pushkin, Imperial Tsarskoye Selo Lyceum, diplomatic service, St. Petersburg diplomatic corps

June 6, 2024, marked the 225th anniversary of the birth of Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin. Preparations for this event began back in 2021, following a decree by Russian President Vladimir Putin. The anniversary was widely celebrated both in Russia and abroad, with significant contributions from the staff of Russia's embassies and consulates.

It is well known that the greatest Russian poet was also an employee of the foreign policy department. His diplomatic career spanned a total of 12 years, divided into two periods: the first from 1817 to 1824, and the second from 1831 to 1837. Had he not been dismissed from service in 1824, followed by his exile to Mikhailovskoye and then the "Boldino Autumn," his "employment record" would have remained with the Collegium, and later with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for nearly 20 years – from his graduation from the lyceum until his untimely death. However, history does not deal in hypotheticals, and employment records as we know them today did not exist back then.

What we do have are archival records. Pushkin worked with these records for much of his diplomatic career. Nearly two centuries after his death, we continue to study them. Such studies reinforce our belief that diplomacy permeated the entire life of "our everything."

Returning to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1831 after his dismissal and exiles, Pushkin was nonetheless reinstated in the same rank. He soon received his first and only promotion, being elevated to titular councilor, a position he retained, giving rise to the meme, as we might call it today, of the "eternal titular councilor".

Some marched forth splendidly, and some even led others. Pushkin, however, was destined for a different path.

First, the path of archives. From 1831 to 1837, he worked in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

Second, the path of someone under travel restrictions. Pushkin was already then open to both a “turn to the East” and continuing dialogue with the West. However, as is well known, he never had the opportunity to visit either, much to his great regret.

Third, he was closely connected with diplomats. In the last part of his life, he often interacted with members of the diplomatic corps in St. Petersburg.

Thus, diplomats played a significant role in Pushkin’s biography. Some of these related stories have been reflected in the works of historians and Pushkin scholars, with certain episodes appearing in our own articles.

## America Unvarnished

*I. Savelyev*

*Keywords:* monograph about America, geopolitics, struggle for global supremacy

The book *America Against Everyone*, published in late 2023, stands out favorably from the majority of generally similar works that praise the US. This study can be read with equal interest by American studies experts, who will find numerous previously unknown facts and arguments, and by people without a political science background who are nevertheless interested in the subject. The authors managed to make their text both vibrant and engaging, avoiding excessive theorizing and scholarly jargon, while also not descending into mere journalism. Although emotionality is present in the work, which makes it vivid and interesting reading, it is a meticulously researched publication based on the speeches of politicians, the works of scholars, and objective data from American reports.

The book demonstrates, as acknowledged by American scholars and politicians, that the US has trapped itself and been laying “time bombs” for centuries that are now starting to go off. As is well known, the consequences of this crisis led to a colossal domestic political split in the US that many impartial observers say has put the country on the brink of a new civil confrontation.

The monograph abounds with numerous practical examples, showing that from its very inception, the young American state clearly did not follow the values outlined by the so-called “Founding Fathers.”

The authors also provide a detailed account of the emergence of US leadership ambitions and methods that strayed far from liberal ideals in pursuit of short-term gains.

Despite the authors’ deep immersion in American studies and even skeptical respect for the subject of their research, *America Against Everyone*, as the title suggests, is a polemical, critically prepared text with no room for excessive niceties and disclaimers claiming impartiality. This can be considered both a strength and a weakness of the work, if viewed from a standpoint of detached academicism.