

The Future of Ukraine

V. Bodelan

Keywords: war in Ukraine, postwar problems, absence of political associations

THE war [between Russia and Ukraine] is still ongoing. But calls for its cessation are becoming more frequent. This raises key questions: What will this life be like? Will we learn lessons from the past, and will we be able to find the right path to a new life? These questions are more difficult to answer than predicting the outcome of the war. They trouble the author as well, prompting me to search for the right answer. Author offers a few proposals and states several questions that shall be asked.

The first question: Will Ukraine be able to exist as a full- fledged, independent, and nonaligned state? It can. But a few problems must first be addressed:

Complete rejection of the dominance of nationalist forces over the political and economic activities of the state; decisive resistance to any interference in the internal affairs of the state; rejection of the division of Ukrainian society along national and religious lines— a real and resolute fight against corruption, bribery and theft—from top to bottom.

How can these problems be solved?

Their solution depends entirely on a change of power. However, the situation in Ukraine is such that only various factions take turns at the helm, each viewing the state as a tool for accumulating personal capital.

And weather there are preconditions and possibilities for a revolution?

Preconditions, yes. Possibilities, no. The country lacks any political association able to organize and carry out such an upheaval. And society is not ready for it either.

The West's Conflict With Russia: General Issues and Prospects

V. Levchik

Keywords: West's conflict with Russia, anti-Russian rhetoric, confrontation with Anglo-Saxon elites.

THE indirect power confrontation between Russia and the collective West has been ongoing for nearly three years. It cannot be ruled out that, in one form or another, it will continue indefinitely, which is unsurprising – the current anti-Russian aggression is yet another stage in a comprehensive pressure campaign against Moscow by Euro-Atlantic political elites. This campaign, in all its diverse forms and narratives, has already become an independent historical process, developing according to its own logic. One of its characteristics is the long-term and comprehensive preparation by Western political elites for another *Drang nach Osten*, as has happened this time as well.

History not only demonstrates the West's inevitable competition with everyone – not just Russia – but also confirms that the once-popular idea of incorporating our country into the Western camp is ultimately unfeasible. This is not solely due to political, ideological, or other differences arising from divergent values.

Moscow's hypothetical defeat in the current confrontation is not merely a regional threat, as many believe, but a global one. It would provide Washington and Brussels with the resources to “develop” new regions and sources of power. And even if, in theory, the West manages to impose its “rules of the game” on the entire planet, that would still mean the same endless “war of all against all.” New conflicts, fault lines, and divisions would be artificially ignited to enable yet another phase of resource redistribution.

At the same time, the historically passive stance of the World Majority in its relations with the Western bloc inflicts colossal, existential harm upon itself. This poses a direct threat of extermination and the subsequent genocide of any indigenous people – not necessarily through violence, as was the case in the colonial era.

The Arctic: A New Front of “Deep Warfare”

O. Yanovsky, A. Ilnitsky

Keywords: “deep warfare,” the Arctic and its resources, war for the world order

THE Arctic is increasingly becoming a staging ground for “deep warfare” in today’s geopolitical realities. Unlike traditional interstate conflicts, the region is now the nexus of interests not only among national governments and military alliances but also among influential global coalitions of interest groups, hybrid networked structures, and their associated military and intelligence entities. These actors share common objectives: the struggle for resources and critical logistical hubs, the effort to limit or strip rivals of their agency, and the drive to secure overwhelming dominance – not so much through formal territorial control, but rather through access to the most critical technologies.

For Russia, the Arctic has long been a key factor in maintaining sovereignty and economic growth. The Russian Arctic shelf contains substantial hydrocarbon reserves, while the Northern Sea Route has the potential to serve as a strategic corridor for exports and international transit. Preserving the military balance in the region and strengthening infrastructure directly impact national security and future development. Equally important is the creation of an independent market for breakthrough Arctic technologies, including dual-use innovations, as well as the attraction of high-risk technological investments to the region. The development of the Arctic is not merely an economic or political issue, but one that affects technological sovereignty and Russia’s place in the global balance of power.

Arctic is emerging as one of the largest testing grounds of “deep warfare,” where the primary actors are not only states but also networked consortia of venture capital, industrial, quasi-military, and intelligence organizations. These entities can conduct targeted operations at a concealed level, influencing logistics, cybersecurity, energy networks, human resources, and financial flows.

**History of the Creation and Outcomes
of the Work of the Ad Hoc Committee
to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the
Use of ICT for Criminal Purposes**

E. Chernukhin

Keywords: UN Convention against Cybercrime, AI, information security, digital environment.

ON DECEMBER 24, 2024, the 79th session of the UN General Assembly, by consensus, adopted Resolution 79/243, approving the Convention against Cybercrime developed by the international community at the initiative of the Russian Federation. This document became the first universal legally binding instrument in the field of criminal justice in the digital environment and international information security as a whole.

Thus, five years passed between the adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution 74/247 – which, by majority vote, established the Ad Hoc Committee to elaborate a comprehensive international convention on countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes – and the presentation of the finalized convention to the 79th session of the General Assembly, following its approval by the Ad Hoc Committee on August 9, 2024. It would be fair to state that the Ad Hoc Committee successfully concluded its work during the 78th session. However, the mandate established by UN General Assembly Resolution 74/247 has not been fully implemented. Therefore, further work will continue in the format of new discussions on the development of additional protocols to the convention.

From the very first attempts to discuss cybercrime at the global level, it became evident that the idea of drafting a universal UN treaty on combating cybercrime was not supported by the leading developed countries. The US and its allies blocked any initiatives to bring this issue into the UN framework. It took Russia, China, Brazil, and their like-minded partners nearly a decade to overcome the fierce resistance of the “progressive West.” They worked step by step.

In the coming years, the international community will need to establish a new, permanent, universal UN mechanism for combating crime in the digital space. This marks the end of the era of behind-the-scenes agreements on the technological division of the world. A new architecture for international information security is taking shape, with the groundwork laid by the UN Convention. The next step will be the development of new universal norms. At this critical moment, every state's voice is essential in shaping a fair global order in the digital domain.

The US Global Missile Defense System: A Serious Challenge to Russia's Security

G. Mashkov

Keywords: Missile Defense, THAAD, Aegis, Patriot, Iron Dome, David's Sling, Arrow, strategic dialogue, ICBMs, NPT

SINCE its inception in the late 1940s, the US missile defense system has undergone significant evolution – from its early stages as a limited- capability system designed to protect specific sites within national territory to the formation of a global, multi-layered structure. Today, it covers not only the entire US homeland but also strategically important regions worldwide – Europe, Asia, and the Middle East – ensuring the protection of US military forces deployed abroad, as well as Washington's allies and partners.

The missile defense shield continues to expand and evolve, enhancing its land-, sea-, air-, and space-based capabilities, all in pursuit of Washington's strategic objective: securing US global military dominance and, consequently, shaping a future world order based on "rules" established in Washington.

The global missile defense project is reshaping regional security dynamics, reducing to empty political declarations previous agreements on indivisible and undiminished security for all states. As a result, five decades of agreements in the Euro-Atlantic region have been devalued. The US is implementing an anti-Russian missile defense project in Europe, an anti-Iranian missile defense system in the Middle East, and anti-Chinese and anti-North Korean missile defense initiatives in Asia.

Given the current realities, Russia must mobilize all available resources to strengthen national defense. If current global trends persist, Russia will need to accelerate the development and modernization of the defense industry, particularly enterprises involved in missile production. Additionally, it will be necessary to revive civil defense measures, expand strategic reserves in case of large-scale conflict, upgrade the early warning system against missile threats, and increase the construction of shelters and other civil defense infrastructure.

The US Economy: **What Biden Is Leaving for Trump**

V. Supyan

Keywords: US economy, economic policy of President Biden, economic policy of President Trump, reforms of the new administration, GDP, inflation, unemployment, foreign trade tariffs, immigration

FOR the second time, following a four-year hiatus Donald Trump has assumed the presidency, promising numerous initiatives. This suggests that a new era is beginning in the economic policy of the leading Western nation: America is shifting from Keynesian approaches to a traditional Republican policy that primarily relies on market forces and focuses on reducing the role of government regulation. There is nothing fundamentally new in this transition – the history of the US has largely been a cycle of alternating liberal and conservative economic policies.

However, these transitions should not be oversimplified. In no country, including the US, has economic policy in recent years been purely Keynesian or purely neoliberal (neoclassical). The modern economy and society are so complex and diverse that each of these two dominant schools of economic thought inevitably incorporates elements of the other. While it is too early to speak of a full-fledged symbiosis of the two, their mutual influence is considerable. At the same time, the differences between them remain significant and evident. This is particularly clear from recent examples – “Trumponomics” and “Bidenomics.”

The election of Trump as US president will lead to significant changes in the country’s economic policy. Despite the relatively favorable economic results achieved during Biden’s presidency, the new president, guided by a neoliberal economic doctrine, is likely to pursue a new economic strategy focused on market forces and reducing government regulation. At the same time, in line with American neoconservative political traditions, his administration will likely support big business, impose stricter immigration controls, and seek to curb key economic and political rivals – primarily China – while embracing a degree of (relative) isolationism.

Many of Trump's economic and especially trade policy initiatives – such as the introduction of a universal tariff and increased import duties – have drawn sharp criticism from professional economists. The same applies to his anti-climate agenda, his reliance on traditional energy sources, and his overall skepticism toward environmental policies. Experts are also concerned about the lack of thorough planning and the impulsive nature of some of his economic proposals.

Of course, not all of Trump's campaign ideas and positions will necessarily be fully implemented in practice. Some of his public statements and intentions appear, to put it mildly, unusual and inconsistent with the existing global order, where the US still holds a dominant position in many respects (e.g., threats of sanctions against countries attempting to limit the role of the dollar in global trade, proposals to purchase entire regions from other nations, or suggestions to incorporate certain countries into the US). While such provocative remarks could be dismissed as political rhetoric, if they begin to translate into actual policy they could lead to major disruptions in both the US and global economies, as well as in international relations as a whole.

What Trump Inherits From Biden in the Nuclear Field

P. Sevostyanov

Keywords: arms race, hypersonic systems, cyber warfare, arms control, missile defense, strategic stability, space weapons, nuclear weapons

US PRESIDENTS in the nuclear era have repeatedly faced crises that could have led to nuclear war. Consequently, these presidents have updated American nuclear weapons policy and risk reduction strategies through comprehensive national nuclear policy strategies, culminating in a strategic document that defines the role of nuclear weapons in US strategy, plans for the maintenance and modernization of nuclear forces, and the overall US approach to nuclear arms control and nonproliferation – the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR).

The Biden administration initially planned to make significant adjustments to the US nuclear weapons strategy. Several key policy areas were identified that differed considerably from those of the Trump administration. However, in practice, Biden's nuclear policy did not deviate significantly from Trump's, despite early campaign promises. Therefore, a second Trump presidency may not fundamentally alter this trajectory.

A key aspect of Biden's unrealized new approach was a focus on strategic dialogue with Russia. This dialogue was intended to cover a wide range of issues, including limits on strategic nuclear weapons and reducing the risk of nuclear war. The Biden administration called for an extension of New START and further cooperation in nuclear disarmament.

A second major aspect of Biden's nuclear strategy was avoiding the use of nuclear weapons in response to nonnuclear threats.

Thus, the Biden administration's overall nuclear strategy was an attempt to revise and adjust approaches to nuclear policy, arms control, and strategic dialogue with Russia in response to contemporary challenges and threats. Biden and his administration appeared to be focused on reducing the risk of nuclear conflict and the unintended escalation of nonnuclear conflicts. To achieve this, they sought to

establish clear signals of cooperation with major powers perceived by the US as competitors in weapons development.

A key objective of the Biden administration appears to have been exploring future limitations on strategic arms. It is likely that Biden's administration would have preferred a future treaty to maintain restrictions on ICBMs, SLBMs, and nuclear-armed heavy bombers after New START expires in 2026.

A study of the measures implemented by the Biden administration indicates that continued political and diplomatic efforts toward mutual reduction of military threats are, overall, justified. The US and Russia continue to play a key role in advancing cooperation on arms control, and there is no clear indication that the US seeks to exclude Russia from this process.

However, it is undeniable that Russia and the US are now in a fundamentally different state of relations – arguably even more dangerous than during the Cold War. The current situation differs significantly from previous periods and is characterized by deep-rooted mistrust, hostile rhetoric, and strategic competition. Nevertheless, the evolving nature of global security only underscores the need for a redefined approach to arms control.

Moscow's initial reaction to the Biden administration's 2023 proposal for dialogue was one of cautious optimism, suggesting potential openness to discussions – but only under certain conditions. Russia's demands that de-escalation in overall relations must be a prerequisite for implementing New START (2010) are entirely legitimate and understandable, yet they would require significant shifts in US policy and a broader restructuring of the security and strategic stability dialogue.

Evolution of US Policy in Central Asia

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Keywords: US, Central Asia, C5+1, containing Russia, decolonization

CENTRAL Asia became a focus of interest for the US after the dissolution of the USSR in 1991. Washington was among the first to recognize the independence of the newly formed states and among the first to open embassies in all republics of the region. Initially, the American strategy consisted of deepening political contacts, promoting democratic governance, and liberalizing markets. Additionally, the US actively supported and promoted the revival of “national consciousness” and cultural identity of the peoples of Central Asia, with the primary goal of detaching the region from Russia in cultural, historical, and ideological terms.

The strategic significance of the region for the US is driven by its abundant energy resources, rare earth metals, and advantageous geographic position in Eurasia. This positioning makes Central Asia a key player in the fight against terrorism and regional stability efforts. At the same time, in terms of economic integration, migration flows, and both traditional and nontraditional security threats, Central Asia serves as a buffer zone for influencing Russia and, more recently, China, which has emerged as a major geopolitical actor on the Eurasian chessboard of the 21st century. Minimizing the influence of Russia, and now China, in the region remains a key objective of US geopolitical strategy in Eurasia.

Central Asian countries are unwittingly being used as a tool in the US strategy to weaken Russia’s and China’s positions in the region. Lacking interest in long-term investment in critical infrastructure development, and therefore failing to achieve desired outcomes, Washington is seeking new mechanisms of influence. Central Asia is not of critical importance to the US, but it serves as a strategic buffer zone between Russia and China – one where US presence can be leveraged to disrupt their cooperation with the regional republics.

To counter Washington's destabilizing policies in Central Asia, Russia must continue to implement development-oriented projects in the region.

Economic projects: strengthen integration within regional organizations such as the EAEU, SCO, and CIS, as well as expand bilateral cooperation; modernize logistics networks and develop new projects, including infrastructure projects like the Eurasian Agroexpress; and enhance the appeal of the EAEU by identifying and removing barriers within its internal market.

Political projects: conduct foreign policy that prioritizes both Russia's national interests and those of the Central Asian states.

Security projects: enhance security cooperation, particularly through intelligence-sharing and military-political ties with all Central Asian countries. An important aspect of this cooperation is the CSTO, which in effect remains the only security guarantor in Central Asia. The CSTO has recently increased efforts to establish partnerships and expand cooperation with other regional organizations operating within CSTO member states, further influencing regional stability.¹⁰

Cultural and humanitarian project: promote the Russian language, utilizing the International Organization for the Russian Language. We should expand cooperation beyond capital cities, engaging with regional centers in Central Asian countries and boosting Russia's image by opening branches of leading Russian universities. It is important to counter the "decolonization" narrative, which is actively promoted by the US and its partners. To that end numerous scientific and cultural events are being held on preserving the historical memory of the peoples of Russia and Central Asia.

Surge in Illegal Migration at the US-Canada Border

M. Chernykh

Keywords: US-Canada border, illegal migrants, immigrants from Asian countries, Joe Biden, executive order, key issue

UNDER the Joe Biden administration, the US-Canada border – and more specifically, the significant increase in illegal migration from the north – became yet another challenge. Unlike the US-Mexico border, the US- Canada border had not been a major concern for Washington following the events of September 11, 2001, when the US and Canada implemented additional security measures along its perimeter.

However, during Biden's presidency, and particularly in 2023 and 2024, a record number of illegal crossings were recorded by individuals attempting to enter the US from Canada through both official and unofficial entry points, primarily with the aim of seeking asylum.

For the first time in many years, American voters rank illegal migration as one of the most pressing issues. A 2024 Gallup poll indicated that this issue was, in fact, the top concern for voters.¹⁷ In 2024, a record 55% of American voters stated that the migration crisis worsened under Biden and posed a critical threat to US national interests.¹⁸ In other words, nearly nine out of 10 Americans expressed deep concern about the situation at US borders.

In 2024, Biden repeatedly claimed that the situation with illegal migration was improving, but the reality is more complex. The Biden administration focused only on addressing illegal migration at the US- Mexico border. In this regard, some improvement may have been observed between January and May of the 2024 fiscal year. The only measure Biden implemented to address the situation at the northern border was the signing of an Additional Protocol to the Safe Third Country Agreement, which came into force in March 2023.

For now, the popularity of the US northern border among illegal migrants will continue to grow, particularly among those from Asian countries.

Network Diplomacy in Russia Since 2014

V. Bulva

Keywords: network diplomacy, BRICS, Group of 20, Astana format, Normandy format, OEWG, Ad Hoc Committee

IN 2013-2014, several events influenced a shift in priorities in the development of Russia's network diplomacy. The first such event was the civil war in Syria, which began in 2011. In seeking mechanisms to resolve the conflict, international mediators actively utilized both global network diplomacy institutions (discussions held "on the sidelines" of G8, G20, and BRICS summits) and the specially created Geneva format, which brought together not only mediators but also representatives of the Syrian Arab Republic's government and opposition.

Another no less significant conflict was the crisis in Ukraine. It exacerbated disagreements between Russia and the Euro-Atlantic states, leading to the need to reassess the expediency of the Russian Federation's participation in Western-centric organizations (in particular, the G8). Following the collective West's transition to a strategy of sanctions pressure – which took on a layered character after February 2022 – the productivity and effectiveness of network platforms dominated by the US and its partners began to decline sharply due to the excessive politicization of their agendas and erosion of their mandates.

Moreover, there was a certain regression: Western countries reverted to Cold War-era bloc thinking. That trend climaxed with the establishment of "dividing lines" in various regions. At the same time, Anglo-Saxon, most European, and some Asian countries continue to adhere to a worldview in which a civilized, developed West is distinguished from revisionist states and countries with an unstable position, which consequently become targets of the collective West's neocolonial practices.

Under these circumstances, Russia seeks to play the role of one of the centers in a multipolar world, ensuring the preservation of political, economic, and cultural-civilizational diversity in sovereign states' development models. A key contemporary challenge is the pressure exerted on global institutions, primarily the UN, by certain states advocating for the formation of a "rules-based order."

Cultural and Civilizational Self-Determination of Russia and Foreign Policy: History of the Discourse

A. Kramarenko

Keywords: identity, new world order, philosopher-thinkers, culture, civilization, Christian Orthodoxy, Euro-Atlantic, Russia's mission

RUSSIA'S status as a "unique state-civilization" received official recognition in the country's Foreign Policy Concept of March 31, 2023, presumably owing to a decisive political break with the West, which had always regarded Russia as culturally and civilizationaly alien (other). It may have seemed that Moscow acted abruptly and opportunistically, guided by geopolitical considerations. In reality, an issue that for centuries had been swept under the rug by every Russian government could not have been resolved otherwise – especially given that the West (historically – Europe) had fallen into a systemic crisis with an uncertain outcome, exhibited clear signs of ultra-liberal degeneration, and thus was simply losing its appeal as something Russia would want to join. Not to mention the fact that Western elites did everything to make it clear that there was no place for Russia in their community except on the condition that it accept "American leadership" and renounce its own uniqueness and history.

The decision to expand NATO eastward can now, 30 years later, be quite reasonably interpreted as a veiled declaration of war against Russia (it is hardly a coincidence that George Kennan called it the most fateful [decision]). The question of Russia's cultural and civilizational self-determination outside the West has a long history, which speaks in favor of its inevitability.

This also signifies the end of the Euro-/Western-centrism of Russian governance over the past three centuries, regardless of its specific historical ideology, given that ideology itself, as a category of thought, is a product of Western civilization. It is the end of an illusion, of self-deception – including that of Soviet rule.

The entire history of our relations, including the past 30 years, indicates that Western elites agree with this assertion and rightly perceive the existence of a

sovereign Russia as an existential threat to themselves. This explains why the stakes were raised in the Ukraine crisis, which is evidently perceived in Western capitals as some kind of “final and decisive battle” – one that, if lost, would leave them with no choice but to accept the cultural and civilizational multipolarity of the new world order.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Ukraine crisis, provoked by the West in its attempt to preserve the global status quo, has become a powerful catalyst for Russia’s awakening – an awakening to the awareness of historical continuity in its development and mission in history.

Unintentionally, the West is doing everything to frame this conflict as its “hybrid” war against Russia, so that within Russia itself it is perceived as a Patriotic War, but now fought solely on a national basis and with a sharp decline in the West’s referential influence or appeal in Russia’s domestic development. A side effect of this is the establishment of rather strict standards for conducting modern warfare, which, in themselves, constitute a powerful deterrent – in addition to nuclear deterrence – at the level of conventional weapons and armed forces.

This qualitatively new situation in global and Euro-Atlantic politics necessitates a comprehensive analysis of intercivilizational relations – an analytical tradition that has existed for the past 150 years in both Russia and the West but has remained in the shadows on both sides due to well-known ideological and other reasons. Now that it has become clear that foreign policy is a policy of identity, the time has come to turn to this legacy. Otherwise, it is impossible to understand what is happening in the world, to build an effective foreign policy strategy, or even to forecast the further development of events.

The Influx of Highly Qualified Specialists From Unfriendly Countries Into Nizhny Novgorod Province: A New Immigration Trend and a Unique Strategy of Regional Government

O. Guseva

Keywords: resettlement of highly qualified foreign specialists, new immigration trend

NIZHNY Novgorod Province is experiencing a noticeable influx of highly qualified specialists from countries previously designated as unfriendly. This immigration trend is characterized by several important features that set it apart from ordinary labor migration.

Applications for relocation to Nizhny Novgorod Province are most frequently received from Germany, France, Switzerland, Canada, the US, and Australia. Notably, these applications are predominantly from families with children, and the incoming professionals are highly qualified – engineers, IT specialists, doctors, and investors in social projects.

The primary reason for relocation is the imposition of nontraditional values in their home countries. The desire to live and raise children in a traditional cultural environment is a key factor prompting the decision to change their place of residence.

Initially, the Ministry of International and Interregional Relations of Nizhny Novgorod Province provided hands-on support for the resettlers. However, the continuously growing number of applications required the establishment of a special agency.

The growing number of resettlers presents Nizhny Novgorod Province with a unique opportunity to attract highly qualified professionals, develop various economic sectors, create new jobs, and bring in new investments.

Moreover, the province's successful experience in adapting and integrating resettlers could serve as a model for other Russian regions, establishing an effective approach to working with migrants and contributing to regional and national development.

Demographic Crisis in the FRG: Why Are Migrants Indispensable to Germany?

I. Klassen

Keywords: FRG, demographic crisis, indigenous population, migrants, declining birth rate.

GERMANY is the most populous country in the European Union. In late 2023, its population was approximately 84.7 million people, accounting for just over 18% of the total EU population – and its population is clearly rising. Over the past 10 years, Germany's population has increased by nearly 5%, demonstrating the highest growth rate among the largest EU countries. One might assume that German policymakers should take pride in this achievement, yet behind the attractive façade lies a void.

For five decades, the Federal Republic of Germany has been unable to sustain its population independently, relying solely on immigration for growth – a symptom of a serious and prolonged demographic crisis. Moreover, statistical data suggest that negative trends will inevitably worsen in the near future. In this regard, it is particularly relevant to analyze the causes and potential consequences of these developments, as well as to assess the effectiveness of any countermeasures that may be in place.

Germany is experiencing a deep and prolonged demographic crisis. It is no longer capable of maintaining its current economic indicators without a constant influx of labor migrants. The situation is further exacerbated by the government's reluctance to pursue pronatalist policies and its permissiveness toward various antifamily movements and practices, such as LGBT propaganda and juvenile justice policies. Against this backdrop, the country's indigenous population has declined by 13% from its peak, and further reductions are projected. Given the complexity and variety of factors driving this trend, it is unlikely to change unless significant upheavals occur that influence mass public consciousness and the political establishment's priorities.

The Fascism of Max Weber

A. Shchipkov

Keywords: Max Weber, fascism, ideology of the Third Reich, Reformation, Eurofascism

DESPITE Russia's unique experience in confronting fascism in the 20th and 21st centuries, the country has yet to develop a comprehensive conceptual description of this phenomenon. In public discourse, fascism is often interpreted solely as Hitlerism, the ideology of the Third Reich. Later forms are, at best, labeled with the prefix "neo-," while earlier forms are sometimes ignored altogether.

Max Weber, originator of the famous concept of the Protestant ethic of capitalism and "rational bureaucracy," paid close attention to Russian history and social life, especially after the events of 1905. Based on his study of the Russian question, Weber drew the categorical conclusion that modernization in Russia was impossible. He attributed this situation to the fact that Russia had not undergone the Reformation in the 16th and 17th centuries, which, in Weber's view, rendered the population backward and Russian bureaucracy ineffective. It was from such judgments, not only Weber's, that the idea of the necessity of an "Orthodox Reformation" emerged – a concept that is being actively promoted in Russia today.

Weber's concept of Germany's special "cultural-historical responsibility" gained new momentum in the 1960s in the works of the neo-fascist historian Ernst Nolte. It resurfaced later, in the 1980s, among supporters of the so-called "normalization of German history" during the famous "historians' dispute." This occurred against the backdrop of the Soviet Union's growing weakness, when the revival of Nazism in Europe gained noticeable momentum.

The existential threat of Eurofascism to the Russian community is more palpable than ever. For some, this fact is traumatic, but burying one's head in the sand is a poor strategy. To respond adequately, the threat must be comprehensively understood. To do this, we must first rid ourselves of narrow and one-sided concepts of fascism that do not correspond to our historical experience or the realities of today.

Philosophy and Politics of Peaceful Dialogue: Historical Logic and Contemporary Experience of Turkmenistan's Neutrality

E. Aydogdyev

Keywords: Turkmenistan, neutrality policy, "Dialogue is the Guarantee of Peace," international cooperation

THE peaceful foreign policy of neutral Turkmenistan, under the leadership of President Serdar Berdymukhamedov, is gaining increasing recognition and support from the international community, primarily due to major initiatives aimed at addressing global challenges, consolidating joint efforts through the identification of common interests, and employing political and diplomatic methods of peaceful dialogue.

The constructive nature of Turkmenistan's foreign policy strategy and its consistent implementation have gained even greater momentum since the beginning of 2025, which was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly as the International Year of Peace and Trust. For Turkmenistan, which initiated this high-level decision at the UN, this year is also a milestone, as it marks the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the UN General Assembly's special resolution "Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan" on December 12, 1995.

In accordance with a decree signed by President Serdar Berdymukhamedov, Turkmenistan has established a State Organizational Committee to oversee ceremonial events dedicated to the 30th anniversary of Turkmenistan's neutrality and the UN General Assembly's designation of 2025 as the International Year of Peace and Trust.

Turkmenistan is the only state whose permanent neutrality has been recognized at the level of the UN through the adoption of the aforementioned special UN General Assembly resolution, "Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan," on December 12, 1995.

Documentary evidence of the peaceful nature of the Turkmen people's ancestors can be found in ancient chronicles. Herodotus, whom Cicero honored with the title "the father of history," dedicated remarkable lines to the legendary Queen

Tomyris, who defeated Cyrus the Great in battle after he rejected peace and invaded the lands of the Massagetae, located in present-day Turkmenistan.

Turkmenistan's neutrality serves as a platform for dialogue and partnership in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, where one of the fundamental aspects is ensuring security guarantees for the smooth functioning of international energy and transport-transit corridors and their associated infrastructure.

Turkmenistan's neutrality also plays a crucial role in preserving and enriching cultural values and traditions that promote good neighborliness, mutual understanding, and respect among nations and peoples. A striking example of this was the international forum The Interconnection of Times and Civilizations – the Foundation of Peace and Development, held on October 11, 2024, to mark the 300th anniversary of the birth of Magtymguly Fragi. The forum was attended by the presidents of 10 countries, as well as representatives of international organizations, high-ranking members of foreign parliaments and governments, prominent scholars, cultural figures, and diplomats.

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The year 2025 promises to be a defining period for key decisions on the path toward global peace and security, where the peacekeeping potential of the institution of neutrality will undoubtedly be in demand at the highest international level – primarily within the framework of effective cooperation at the UN and other respected organizations.

The Russia-Islamic World Strategic Vision Group Has a Full Agenda

F. Mukhametshin

Keywords: Russia-Islamic World Strategic Vision Group, Malaysia, multipolar world, inter-civilizational dialogue

THE events of 2024 in international relations have demonstrated epochal tectonic shifts, revealing a key contemporary trend – the formation of a new world order based on multipolar principles.

The off-site meeting of the Russia-Islamic World Strategic Vision Group (RIW SVG, or the Group), held December 10-12, 2024, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, was dedicated to discussing prospects for cooperation between Russia and the Islamic world in this emerging world order.

The Malaysian session of the Group followed an international conference of the RIW SVG that took place on May 16, 2024, in Kazan with the agenda “Russia-Islamic World: A Just Multipolar World Order and Secure Development.” The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), along with Arab-Muslim analytical centers and news agencies from OIC member states, highly praised the conference.

While the Kazan meeting of the Group laid the conceptual foundation for further discussion of this global issue, the Malaysian session focused on the role of OIC member states in the formation of new independent decision-making centers that are striving for a global dimension. This includes choosing paths of free development rooted in national traditions, culture, and spiritual and moral values. The discussion also explored approaches to actively influencing regional and international processes, ensuring fair development, and fostering mutually beneficial cooperation based on the principle of sovereign equality among states.

On May 13-18, 2025, Kazan will host the “Russia-Islamic World: KazanForum 2025” International Economic Forum. Its key themes will include Islamic finance and investment, science and technology, the halal industry, international cooperation, global challenges, business associations, tourism, culture, sports, and more.

In 2025, the RIW SVG will place special emphasis on youth policy, particularly within the framework of planned events, including the upcoming Group session under the title “The Experience of Russia and the Islamic World in Youth Policy: Common Challenges and Joint Actions.” This event will take place ahead of the Kazan Global Youth Summit, scheduled for August in Tatarstan.

British Policy Toward Russia: The Great Game and the Great Lie

O. Ozerov

Keywords: Russia, England, the Great Game, Crimean Wars, Palestine, Ottoman Empire, the Hejaz, Arabian Peninsula

TODAY, many are reflecting on how past events – specifically, the 1853- 1856 war between the Russian Empire and Turkey over Crimea and the ensuing Great Game between Russia and Great Britain – resemble the events of the 21st century in the same regions. The answer may lie in the fact that the [Crimean] war was not merely about territory but rather a confrontation between Russia and the British and French forces backing Turkey. The outcome of this war largely determined the fate of modern Europe. Essentially, it was a precursor to World War I, which was waged with the same objectives but in a different configuration.

From Britain's perspective, control over the Black Sea was, first and foremost, of strategic importance, as London had regarded Russia as a competitor since the 17th century. Second, the Black Sea provides access to the Mediterranean, and thus to the World Ocean, control over which the Anglo-Saxons have always fought for, viewing it as a key link in their global hegemony.

The Great Game – played in two “halves” (1853-1900 and 1900-1918) demonstrated that Britain is guided solely by its own interests and never sacrifices them for any humanitarian “sentiments.” For Britain, other nations are merely tools for achieving its objectives; it never regards them as equal partners. This applies both to its allies and to those it considers vassals. Britain initiates divisions at the ideological level, exploiting religious tensions and nationalist instincts, before translating them into politics and economics. The danger posed by the Anglo-Saxons – this formidable and perilous predator – lies in their mastery of pitting nations and states against each other, playing on multiple chessboards at once, and never revealing their true intentions. Their motives are always concealed behind a mask of lofty ideals, and behind every word uttered by the British lurks the most vile and insidious deception.

Vietnam Studies and Russia's Diplomatic Service

On the 75th Anniversary of the Establishment of Soviet-Vietnamese Diplomatic Relations

Ye. Panteleyev

Keywords: Vietnam studies, Vietnamese studies, Vietnam specialist, MGIMO, USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

ON JANUARY 30, 1950, the Soviet Union officially established diplomatic relations with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, becoming one of the first countries in the world to recognize the young independent state in what was once a colonial possession of France in Indochina. For three-quarters of a century, close ties of friendship and cooperation have united our peoples, regardless of the formal details and spatial jurisdiction of the state system. Undoubtedly, the deep sense of affinity and practical achievements of our interaction over the past decades would have been impossible without intimate and systemic knowledge of each other's language, history, culture, customs, and traditions.

Over the long years of studying Vietnam in our country, staffers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its overseas missions have played a significant role. The leading university for their training has been – and remains – the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO University).

It is essential to emphasize that, for an extended period, the Vietnam-focused sector of the diplomatic service was staffed primarily by true professionals – genuine country specialists and practicing language experts, dedicated enthusiasts of their assigned mission. For decades, up until the relatively stable 2020s, working and living in Soviet and Russian overseas missions to Vietnam involved significant everyday hardships, serious health risks, and, at times, life-threatening conditions due to the tropical climate and sanitary challenges. There was no way to be assigned to Vietnam through “connections”; instead, Vietnam specialists could rely on the professional ethics of their “guild” for mutual assistance, fair recognition of their diligence, and appreciation of their efforts.

The diplomatic dispatches, correspondence, position papers, and reference materials prepared by Vietnam specialists at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs undoubtedly shaped perceptions of Vietnam at higher decision-making levels and formed the basis for policy decisions. As part of their professional duties, Vietnam specialists served as interpreters at high- and top-level negotiations and recorded key points from discussions.

Within the constraints imposed by their official roles, some Vietnam specialists at the ministry actively participated in academic research on Vietnam and contributed to publications about the country intended for a broader audience.

Overall, Vietnam studies within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can be regarded as an important factor of staffing and societal impact that has significantly influenced the study of Vietnam in Russia and helped sustain the long-standing friendship and cooperation between the two nations. A deep, systematic approach to studying the history, economy, culture, and language of Global South countries was a defining feature of the Soviet diplomatic school, and seems to remain relevant for the Russian diplomatic service in the current phase of international relations development.

Features of the Modern Banking System in African Countries and Prospects for Russian Economic Interests

V. Baikov

Keywords: Africa, banking system, Russian economic interests

COMPARED to other geopolitical centers that make up today's Global South, banking institutions on the African continent, with few exceptions, remain outsiders in the global banking system. The modest scale of the African banking sector is illustrated by a single example: Russian banks surpass all African banks in terms of total assets, Tier 1 capital, and net profit. At the current dollar exchange rate, the sizes of the banking systems of Africa and Russia are roughly comparable. The total assets of African banks amount to approximately \$1.5 trillion, compared to \$1.67 trillion in assets held by the Russian banking system (according to the Bank of Russia, as of January 2024, 166,816 billion rubles at a nominal exchange rate of 100 rubles per US dollar). Sberbank (with assets of around \$530 billion) is roughly three times as large as Africa's biggest bank, Standard Bank Group.

The current state of the banking system in Africa is influenced by several key trends.

First, the African banking system has been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the macroeconomic consequences of the ongoing hybrid war waged by the collective West against Russia in response to our country's Special Military Operation in Ukraine.

Second, nearly half of Africa's population lacks access to banking services. However, this also presents a positive aspect, highlighting significant development potential for the financial market.

Third, African banks face strong competition from information and communication technology (ICT) companies providing financial services. Nevertheless, many banks remain financially stable and meet the Basel III minimum capital adequacy requirements (8%). It should be noted that this applies only to banks that publicly disclose information about their financial position.

Fourth, the withdrawal of Western, primarily European, banks from Africa has become a notable trend. The official reason cited is the European Union's stricter credit risk assessment requirements in the banking sector. This necessitates increased reserves from their own funds to cover potential losses from active operations conducted by and their branches or subsidiaries in Africa. Compliance with the EU's new regulations while maintaining an operational presence on the continent leads to reduced profitability for these banks.

IT IS in Russia's economic interests to strengthen its participation in African Export- Import Bank, as the bank is directly involved in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement. The execution of large investment projects in Africa, with the assistance of international financial institutions, requires the involvement of the African Development Bank (AfDB). Membership in this bank is a prerequisite for companies from respective countries to participate in tenders. However, Russia is not a member of the AfDB, which effectively excludes Russian businesses from lucrative investment projects funded with AfDB participation. A strategic goal should be Russia's entry into the AfDB. However, given the current Western sanctions against Russia, this objective remains unattainable in the near term.

A promising avenue, considering the Western sanctions regime, is to establish cooperation with banks from Egypt, Morocco, South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria that operate across the continent. Special attention should be given to the Burkinabe banks mentioned in this article, given the strategic pivot of the current government in Burkina Faso toward closer ties with Russia.

It would also be beneficial to offer African partners access to Russia's modern banking and financial technologies, particularly through joint development of ICT companies in the financial services sector. Additionally, African partners could be engaged with alternative payment and settlement tools, with a focus on digital solutions. It is crucial to recognize that without close cooperation with African banks, it will be nearly impossible to establish a tangible economic presence for Russia on the African continent.

Contemporary Integration Processes in the Post-Soviet Space (Part 2)

The Georgian Orthodox Church: A Steadfast Path

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THERE are several reasons to examine the role of the Georgian Orthodox Church (GOC) in contemporary Georgian society:

The GOC is one of the oldest Christian churches, having received autocephaly in the year 483. It has played a key role in Georgia's unification, defense against external threats, and the consolidation of the Georgian nation. Since the 10th century, the liturgy has been conducted in the Georgian language. The church enjoys well-earned respect and authority in Georgia, with 83.4% of the population identifying as believers, according to the 2014 census.

The GOC plays a crucial role in strengthening the spiritual, cultural, and social bonds within Georgian society. It helps preserve national and Christian values amid global changes and new challenges, demonstrating its unwavering course.

While the GOC is highly authoritative in Georgia, it remains fairly conservative and does not seek explicit political activism or changes to its status. The ruling Georgian Dream party proposed amending the Constitution to declare the GOC the state religion, but the church diplomatically declined.

Although the church previously supported Georgia's pro-Western course, many clergy members are now deeply concerned about the influence of Western culture and liberal values on the country's traditional foundations.

Some representatives of the GOC believe that closer ties with Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) should be fostered, an idea that resonates with certain segments of society.

If relations between Russia and Georgia stabilize, communication between the ROC and GOC could serve as a bridge of mutual understanding and support – one that was destroyed in previous years.

Two Shores – One Sea: The Problem of Interaction Among Black Sea Region Countries

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Keywords: Black Sea region countries, security issues

WITH the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, the Black Sea has increasingly become a focal point for NATO military forces. Washington places significant hopes on Turkey, as evidenced by a report published in September 2024 by the alliance's think tank, the Atlantic Council, titled "A Sea of Opportunities: Exploring Cooperation Between Turkey and the West in the Black Sea." The report's section titles indicate that NATO leadership is seriously focused on reconfiguring the balance of power across the entire Black Sea region: "Political-diplomatic dialogue: Challenges and opportunities for Turkey's realignment with the West in the post-2022 environment"; "Maritime security: Redefining regional order in a new security environment"; "Defense cooperation: Turkey's triangular balancing in the Black Sea region"; "Turkey's geopolitical role in the Black Sea and European energy security: From pipelines to liquefied natural gas."

After the start of the SMO, Turkey complied with the Montreux Convention's requirements by closing the Straits to Russian and Ukrainian warships (except for those returning to their home bases). However, it extended this measure to all littoral and non-littoral states. Yet in February 2023, the US destroyer USS Nitze passed through the Dardanelles and docked in Istanbul, with its potential fire coverage zone including Russian coastal territory. Notably, even under the closure of the Straits to military vessels, NATO continued conducting Sea Breeze exercises with the participation of naval forces from Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, Greece, Georgia, Poland, Romania, the US, Sweden, Japan, Ukraine, and France. In 2024, these exercises were held off the coast of Scotland "improve interoperability and train for a post-conflict era Black Sea region."

Overall, it must be acknowledged that we are witnessing a further escalation of tensions in the Black Sea region and attempts to turn the Black Sea itself into a NATO-controlled lake. While Turkey remains the unquestioned flagship of US and NATO policy in the region, it nevertheless seeks to maintain a balance in its relations with Russia and uphold its national priorities. This type of policy looks a lot like the image of the two- faced Roman god Janus, forcing Ankara's partners to carefully scrutinize both of its faces at all times.

Russian Diplomacy in a Changing System of International Relations: A Political Science Perspective

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Keywords: Russian diplomacy, macro-governance crisis, the West, SMO, UN

IT IS widely recognized that the modern world has entered an era of global, revolutionary change. Fundamental transformations are taking place in the international system, leading to a reconfiguration of interstate and interregional relations. A political science analysis allows us to outline probable areas of and assess the prospects for transformations in diplomatic practice.

Diplomacy remains a powerful tool for strengthening Russia's position and advancing its interests. The promotion of national interests amid sweeping global changes requires new approaches and diversification of diplomatic practices. Key priorities include economic sovereignty, the transition to settlements in national currencies, the creation of a new reserve currency, and the transformation of the global financial architecture based on mutual understanding and cooperation among states. A growing number of countries are gravitating toward the forms and principles of integration proposed by Russia and its allies. However, it is important to recognize that this alignment is driven less by sympathy for Russia and more by opposition to Western neocolonial policies, confrontation tactics, and coercive measures.

The crisis of macro-governance has demonstrated that global development needs remain unmet due to the absence of an effective system of sociopolitical and economic management. A key trend in global affairs is the decline of governance effectiveness, which increases security risks and threats. Parallel systems of response and management are emerging, and the redistribution of influence over global processes is occurring gradually, with unclear timelines and outcomes. The global shift in the rules of the game has led to the fragmentation of governance across

various domains, complicating diplomatic efforts when engaging with individual centers of power.

The West's long-standing abuse of its position in the UN is evident in its ongoing attempts to marginalize Russia within the organization. This includes efforts to exclude Russia from UN specialized agencies, revoke its veto power on the Security Council, and limit its participation in the UN Human Rights Council and other multilateral diplomatic institutions. Structural reforms are necessary, as "the ongoing transformations in international relations are outpacing the UN reform process." In the transition to a multipolar world order, proposals are emerging on how to restore the authority and effectiveness of multilateral diplomatic institutions, including the idea of creating an organization with functions similar to those of the UN.

The outcomes of the SMO – and their degree of conclusiveness – will play a decisive role in shaping Russian diplomacy within the evolving international system. Specifically, its results may bring together countries that support Russia's vision of a multipolar world order but are currently maintaining a neutral stance. However, a victory will not only increase the number of Russia's open supporters but also raise complex foreign policy questions. For example, to what extent do Russia's interests align with those of its new partners? Under what conditions and within what limits should Russia deploy its resources and military capabilities in future conflicts

The rise of the Western "deep state" is accompanied by the increasing appointment of symbolic political figures to official positions, including the highest offices. These figures frequently disregard or unilaterally withdraw from agreements, exacerbating concerns over the reliability of Western leaders and institutions as negotiating partners. This issue directly impacts the conditions under which the SMO should be concluded. In the current situation, it is unacceptable to leave remnants of the Kiev regime intact, as doing so would preserve a staging ground for future aggression against Russia

Armenia's Shift in Foreign Policy Amid the Ukraine Crisis

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Keywords: Armenia's foreign policy, Russia, the collective West, South Caucasus

A chronological analysis of Armenian government decisions that redirected its foreign policy toward the West reveals a direct correlation with the course of the SMO in Ukraine and visits by senior US and UK intelligence officials to Yerevan.

Recently, amid Russia's undeniable battlefield gains in Ukraine, the collective West's determination to secure a foothold in the South Caucasus has become increasingly evident. To achieve this, unprecedented efforts are being made using a "carrot and stick" approach. The "stick" involves threats to disrupt normal cooperation, impose sanctions, and favor a given country's adversary. The "carrot" consists of preferential treatment and promises of "ensuring security." Among the South Caucasus states, this strategy has had a relative effect only in Armenia, as its leadership pursues Western integration regardless of the costs. In Armenia, the West is employing the same tactic of luring with a "European future" as it has in Georgia.

However, Armenia's new patrons are failing to meet Yerevan's expectations. The country has no direct or even indirect security guarantees from the West beyond mere declarative statements. Meanwhile, Armenia's overseas handlers, through their political allies within the country, are demanding that Pashinyan take more active measures against Russia. Given the situation with the SMO, the Armenian prime minister is hesitant to take drastic steps against Moscow and is even trying to walk some policies back.

It is becoming clear that the EU membership referendum is merely a tool for destabilizing Armenia's domestic politics and further weakening its ties with Russia. In the end, Armenia will not become an EU member but will simply find itself left empty-handed as an anti-Russian outpost. In this situation, Pashinyan and his government will face constant pressure both from external actors and from pro-Western political parties within Armenia.

The Minsk Agreements: A 10-Year Retrospective **on the Foundational Documents**

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Keywords: Minsk agreements, LPR, DPR, Donbass, Normandy Four

At the time, the Minsk agreements represented the optimal solution – providing a small but tangible chance for a peaceful settlement of the Donbass conflict while also allowing both sides to prepare for an inevitable armed confrontation. The West used this time to build up Ukraine’s military capabilities, while Russia pursued a dual-track approach: On one hand, it attempted to negotiate with the West to address the root geopolitical causes of the conflict; on the other, it worked to prepare domestically for all possible scenarios, including a military one

The Donbass republics solidified their status as independent states. The geopolitical circumstances surrounding the partially recognized LPR and DPR created the conditions for Russia’s recognition of their sovereignty. This, in turn, enabled them to sign treaties of friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance with Russia. These agreements then provided the legal and political foundation for Russia to defend the people of Donbass and launch the SMO to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine – both to eliminate threats to the Russian-speaking population and to fully realize the LPR and DPR’s right to self-determination.

The next logical step was the referendums – held in the LPR, DPR, and two other provinces of Ukraine – on accession to the Russian Federation. These plebiscites were conducted under conditions that left no doubt about their legitimacy.

Looking back at the events of 2014, it is clear that these developments met the very expectations that drove the people of southeastern Ukraine to resist the armed coup in Kiev and to take to the streets in defense of their legal rights and Russian identity. The outcome is precisely what the Donbass population had sought. Granted, it took eight long years to achieve.

Thus, the Minsk agreements and negotiations ultimately created the conditions for fulfilling the key demand of the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine. At the very least, this was achieved in the four historically Russian regions that have now rejoined the Russian Federation.

As for the next stage for Ukraine, it is difficult to predict. At this juncture, everything depends on the external actors who helped create the circumstances in which Ukraine now finds itself, as well as on Ukraine's willingness to adhere to any agreements reached through dialogue with those external forces interested in resolving the conflict and prepared to exert influence over it.

The Place of Ukrainian Nationalism/Nazism in the Context of the Internationalization of the Ukraine Conflict

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Keywords: Galicia, Austro-Hungary, Ukrainian nationalism/neoNazism, old nationalists, new right, Patriot of Ukraine, Azov, Western connections, Eurasia under the rule of the White Leader

UKRAINIAN nationalism, which from its inception identified itself as part of the European fascist movement, traces its origins to the establishment of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) in 1929. It is no coincidence that this event took place in Vienna, the former capital of the Austrian (Austro-Hungarian) Empire. In turn, the OUN stood on the shoulders of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen – a volunteer formation of Ukrainian nationalists within the Austro-Hungarian Army.

From its inception, two fundamental characteristics of Ukrainian nationalism became apparent: its repressive and genocidal nature and its close ties to foreign states (or, more precisely, its deep dependence on them). Initially, these were the German-speaking states: Austro-Hungary and, from the early 20th century, Germany, which even opened a General Consulate in Lvov.

Later, immediately after World War II, Ukrainian Nazis abandoned the sinking ship of the German Reich and placed themselves under the patronage of the Anglo-Saxon states – Great Britain and the US.

Immediately after the victory of the Euromaidan (“Revolution of Dignity,” as it is officially called), Ukrainian nationalism underwent its final mutation into Nazism.

Ukraine has become a perfect testing ground for the organizational and combat coordination of white supremacists and neo-Nazis. Among all such movements, Ukrainian neo-Nazism – especially the Azov Regiment and its affiliated organizations – is undoubtedly the most organized and battlehardened force. If Ukraine serves as a tool for advancing the geopolitical and military-political goals of the West, then Western countries themselves may soon become a platform for the

practical implementation of white supremacist and neo-Nazi objectives by militants who gained combat experience in Ukraine.

The geopolitical ambitions of Azov and its affiliated groups (National Corps, etc.) extend far beyond the parochial aspirations of the old nationalists who dream of building a “Greater Ukraine from the San to the Don.” “Thus, the old nationalists aim for a Great Ukraine for Ukrainians, while the new right envision a Great White Eurasia under the rule of the White Leader [i.e., Andriy Biletsky].”

The Ukrainian neo-Nazi tail is beginning to wag the Western dog that nurtured and armed it. This situation echoes historical events: Western support for Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP) in the 1930s.

Some Aspects of Interpretations in the Post-Soviet Countries
of Crimes of the Nazis and Their Accomplices
During the Great Patriotic War

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Keywords: Nazism, distortion of historical truth, Wehrmacht legions, Victory Day in various countries, 2022 Russian Foreign Ministry report, UN General Assembly resolutions passed in 2022 and 2023

WITH the intensification of geopolitical confrontation, the mental space has become a new battlefield in civilizational conflicts. Here, historical memory is at the forefront of various fights. The truth about the Great Patriotic War is being deliberately distorted, pseudoscientific myths are being created, key events falsified, war criminals and their collaborators glorified, and the decisive role of our homeland in the victory over Nazism deliberately silenced. The architects of this deliberate and consistent policy aim to rewrite world history, thereby implanting false images and symbols into the minds of young people based on a distorted historical and cultural code.

In recent years, there has been a growing body of work aimed at justifying collaborationism and the accomplices of Nazi occupiers, particularly within certain national historical schools. A particularly aggressive example of historical revisionism can be seen in post-Soviet Ukraine, which in recent years has transformed into a neo-Nazi Bandera state under the leadership of Vladimir Zelensky's Russophobic regime.

In the creation of a negative image of Russia, Western-backed NGOs act as key promoters. The curators of these nongovernmental and nonprofit organizations aim to reeducate young generations in post-Soviet countries through a Western ideological and value-based lens.

These organizations frequently operate within the framework of the Open Government project, where the leading roles are played by the Soros Foundation (whose activities were declared undesirable in Russia in 2015) and USAID (banned

by the Russian government in 2012). These international entities offer grant programs for the governments of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, and the Central Asian republics to fund projects such as “Open Archives” and “Open Data.”

The countries of the South Caucasus generally maintain a respectful attitude – both at the state and societal level – toward the history of the Great Patriotic War and the memory of their participation in it. At the same time, shifts in historical interpretations of the events of 1941-1945 are noticeable, though they have not escalated into a total rewriting of history or a denial of the Soviet Union’s victory, as has occurred in Ukraine.

Despite the emergence of certain anti-Russian narratives, the memory of the Great Patriotic War remains strong in Central Asia, thanks to the efforts of local political elites, who themselves were largely shaped by the Soviet educational and ideological system. These elites continue to frame the war’s key meanings as an element of patriotic education and national identity formation.

Moreover, respect for the shared history of the war also serves as a symbol of good-neighborly relations with Russia. This symbolic significance plays a role in shaping historically accurate knowledge, values, and attitudes, especially among younger generations. However, attempts to rewrite history, downplay the significance of the Soviet victory, glorify Nazis and their collaborators, or whitewash the atrocities committed by the occupiers in some former Soviet states remain alarming.

Strategic Autonomy Based on Sovereignty

Vinay Kumar

Keywords: Russia, India, strategic partnership, mutual interests

When India gained independence from colonial rule on August 15, 1947, we did not yet have our own governing framework. It was only on January 26, 1950, that the Constitution of India came into force, transforming the country into a sovereign democratic republic. Since then, January 26 has been celebrated as Republic Day in India.

Sovereignty, or *purna swaraj*, in modern India extends far beyond the political independence achieved in 1947. It symbolizes the nation's ability to preserve its core civilizational values while embracing modernity.

India and Russia have long enjoyed strong and mutually beneficial relations, marked by deep trust and cooperation across various fields. This relationship has evolved into a special and privileged strategic partnership, reflecting the depth and significance of our bilateral ties.

Achieving \$100 billion in bilateral trade between India and Russia by 2030 is an ambitious yet entirely feasible goal. Our trade relations are growing rapidly, and the bilateral trade figure for 2024 is estimated at over \$60 billion – a fivefold increase in just five years. This growth is expected to continue, not only through cooperation in traditional sectors like energy but also in areas such as agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and the textile industry, including through mutual investments.

Energy security is of paramount importance to India. As our minister of petroleum and natural gas recently stated, we must ensure the stable supply, affordability, and sustainability of energy for the 70 million Indian citizens who visit gas stations daily. Russian oil plays an important stabilizing role in the global energy market.

India and Russia continue to work together on developing settlements in national currencies. Currently, *vostro* accounts in rupees serve as an effective mechanism. Additionally, consultations are underway on ensuring compatibility between our financial messaging systems.

The world is currently undergoing a significant economic, political, and cultural rebalancing, which makes it possible to talk about real multipolarity.

It is evident that BRICS has the potential to contribute positively to global stability while steering this rebalancing process toward a multipolar world.

BRICS also plays a key role in actively advocating for reforms in global governance. India hosted the third Voice of Global South Summit in August 2024 and continues its efforts to amplify the voices of these countries on the global stage.

Tourism between India and Russia is currently on the rise. Business travel has become an important driver of this growth, and in early 2024, India ranked third among non-CIS countries in the number of Russian business travelers.

Currently, around 27,000 Indian students are pursuing education at various universities across Russia. About 95% of them are enrolled in medical programs, while the rest are engaged in academic fields such as aviation and space technologies, engineering, natural sciences, mathematics, economics, humanities and social sciences, journalism, linguistics, and more.

For Andrey Gromyko, the Yalta Conference
Was the First of the Most Important
in His Diplomatic Career

A. Gromyko

Keywords: Yalta Conference, Crimea, Big Three, Vistula-Oder Offensive, Yalta-Potsdam System, UN

For Andrey Gromyko, the Yalta Conference was the first of the most important in his diplomatic career, because it largely determined not only the outcomes of World War II but also how the world would develop for decades to come. He recalled how all the conference participants, gathering in the main hall where the official negotiations took place, understood that they were at the focal point of history, so to speak. It was in Yalta that the spirit of compromise and mutual understanding among the participants in the Big Three reached its peak.

In Yalta, it was important for Stalin to achieve the maximum from both a geopolitical and military standpoint. In early January 1945, after Churchill sent a personal letter to Stalin requesting an acceleration of the offensive against Germany from the East, Stalin assented to the request.

When Andrey Andreyevich was asked in the 1980s what he considered the most important achievement of his tenure as head of Soviet diplomacy, or of his diplomatic career in general, he placed the drafting and signing of the UN Charter first. Second, he ranked the consolidation of postwar borders in Europe, and third, the establishment of a system later known as strategic stability, which at the time he called achieving military-political parity with the US.

This year, we are marking the 80th anniversary of the Yalta Conference, the creation of the UN, and the Yalta-Potsdam system of international relations. But for many years, opinions have been voiced that the events of the late 1980s and early 1990s destroyed the Yalta-Potsdam system, and in recent years, that the UN itself has become outdated, is falling behind the times, and that its days are supposedly numbered.

This is a very mistaken and even dangerous misconception. The UN remains the only organization whose credibility is unmatched by anything else created from

1945 to the present. It is a platform where nations – large and small – can meet both publicly and behind closed doors to discuss any issues of interest to them. What we see during the official sessions of the Security Council is only the tip of the iceberg. Diplomats from the five permanent and 10 nonpermanent members of the Security Council spend far more time negotiating behind closed doors, including in the so-called “Russian Room” [i.e., the UN Security Council Consultation Room – Trans.] which is considered the heart of the Security Council’s work.

The idea that a significant part of the Yalta-Potsdam system is fading into history should not be taken seriously. None of the permanent members of the Security Council stand to benefit from this, and in fact, no one is really saying it.

The Yalta Conference – 80 Years Later

M. Kravchenko

Keywords: Yalta Conference of 1945, Big Three, postwar world order

EXACTLY 80 years ago, in February 1945, the third meeting of the Big Three took place in Yalta – the longest and most significant of them all. The experience of the Crimean meeting has enduring historical value. It proves that high-quality diplomacy is capable of winning over and uniting even those players who are openly unwilling to negotiate. Our task as historians is to continue studying all stages and dynamics of this complex political process in detail and to present them objectively.

The broad range of issues expected to be discussed at the conference predetermined the large size of the delegations from the three powers. The creation of the UN, the liberation of Europe, the partition of Germany, reparations, Poland, Yugoslavia, the Far East, prisoners of war, and many other topics were addressed in Crimea. The decision-making process during the conference was very intense and complex. Participants exchanged written opinions on the agenda items before and after each session. As a result, several documents were adopted.

Step by step, the contours of a new postwar world order were formed. It was not perfect, but having withstood numerous trials, it proved its viability and resilience, shielding us from the apocalypse of another world war. Over time, assessments of key historical events evolve. Today, in the context of new geopolitical realities, what seems especially relevant and significant are not only the outcomes of the Yalta Conference but also the very fact that the leaders of states with opposing, and at times even mutually exclusive, national interests were able to reach an agreement under the harsh conditions of a zero-sum game and secure peace for human civilization for nearly half a century. The Yalta Conference will forever remain a triumph of Soviet diplomacy, which, during the years of the most severe wartime challenges, demonstrated its exceptional professionalism and unparalleled quality of work. This legacy has been passed down to us. Preserving and building upon it is our duty.

Overcoming Oblivion: The Unknown Martyrs of Galician Rus

A. Oganessian

Keywords: genocide of the Russian population, Thalerhof, Terezín, death camps, historical memory

When asked what associations the names Halychyna or Galicia bring to mind, many will respond: Of course, it is a hotbed of Russophobia. That was where the SS Legion was formed, and Bandera's ideology was nurtured. Aside from a narrow circle of specialists and historians who study the region in depth, no one will tell you anything about the hundreds of thousands of Russian martyrs of Galicia, Bukovina, and Hungarian Rus who suffered during World War I.

Today, in Ukraine, many people are enduring persecutions against Orthodoxy comparable to the persecutions of Christians in the early centuries of Christianity. For them, restoring the memory of the martyrs and confessors of Subcarpathian Rus is especially important. It would serve as an inspiration for their own confessional witness, a subject of their prayers, a source of spiritual support and protection.

We now have commemorative dates for the victims of Butovo, we have the Feast of New Martyrs, and we have the day of remembrance for the Anzersk Martyrs, who were glorified relatively recently. There may well be some other forms of church-wide veneration, which will open up for us the tragic pages of our history with the names of the martyrs of Thalerhof and Terezín.

Author quotes Doctor of Science (Philosophy) Eduard Popov, who, in his opinion, identified this issue very cogently: "The physical extermination of the Russian population of Galicia, Bukovina, and Hungarian Rus through extrajudicial executions and in the death camps of Thalerhof and Terezín represents the first genocide in modern European history. However, this genocide has remained largely unnoticed in Russian academic literature and public consciousness."

It is our duty to overcome historical amnesia. The recognition of the genocide of the Russian population of Galician Rus and other Russian regions of Austria-Hungary is long overdue and requires scientific, moral, and legal assessments.

Russian Diplomacy: Events and Names

M. Yakushev

Keywords: diplomatic service, Boyar Duma, Posolsky Prikaz, Collegium of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

THE history of Russian diplomacy spans several centuries. Among the most important tasks of Russia's diplomatic service are the continuity of generations, preservation of historical memory, and fidelity to tradition.

On July 26, 2023, at the Holy Trinity St. Sergius Primorskaya Hermitage in St. Petersburg, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov took part in the unveiling ceremony of the tombstone of the prominent Russian diplomat Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Empire Nikolay Girs (1882-1895). During his visit to the Holy Trinity Primorskaya Monastery, Lavrov laid wreaths at the gravesites of ministers of foreign affairs of the Russian Empire Prince Alexander Gorchakov (1856-1882) and Mikhail Muravyov (1897-1900). Most chancellors of the Collegium of Foreign Affairs and ministers of foreign affairs of the Russian Empire are buried in the necropolis of the Holy Trinity Alexander Nevsky Lavra. This is no coincidence, as Saint and Blessed Prince Alexander Nevsky is the heavenly patron of Russian diplomacy. Such memorial events with the participation of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov attest to the continuity of Russian diplomacy and history.

Bulgarian Tsar Boris III

N. Gusev

Keywords: Russia, Bulgaria, Boris III, Tsar of the Bulgarians, Russian-Bulgarian relations

THE year 2024 marked the 130th anniversary of the birth of Tsar of the Bulgarians Boris III, who ruled the country for 25 years until his mysterious death in August 1943, during one of the most complex and dramatic periods in modern Bulgarian history.

The future Bulgarian Tsar Boris III (full name: Boris Clement Robert Maria Pius Louis Stanislaus Xavier of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha) was born in Sofia to Prince Ferdinand I of Bulgaria and Princess Marie Louise of Bourbon-Parma, and was baptized at birth by then Pope Leo XIII. However, in 1896, at the age of two, he was converted to Orthodoxy at the request of his father, Ferdinand I.

On October 3, 1918, upon ascending the Bulgarian throne, Tsar Boris III issued a manifesto “To the Bulgarian People,” in which he proclaimed, among other things: “Born on the beautiful Bulgarian land and being a spiritual child of the Orthodox faith, raised among my beloved people.... I solemnly declare that I will honor the Constitution and serve faithfully and loyally for the good of the people.”

During the reign of Boris III (1918-1943), Bulgaria experienced various, including highly dramatic, periods. However, without a doubt, the most difficult time in the Tsar’s life was during World War II.

Boris was personally awarded the highest state honor of the Russian Empire – the Order of the Holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called – by Emperor Nicholas II.

Boris’s pacifism was further reinforced by the anti-Nazi and anti-Hitler sentiments of his close relatives: his sister Eudoxia, his wife Giovanna, and her sister Princess Mafalda of Savoy – daughters of King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy and Queen Elena of Montenegro, a graduate of the Smolny Institute for Noble Maidens.

Boris did everything in his power to shield the country from direct involvement in military actions on the side of the Germans and delayed Bulgaria’s accession to the Tripartite Pact for as long as possible, although he was ultimately

unable to avoid it, joining the pact on March 1, 1941, a year and a half after the outbreak of World War II.

In the career of a statesman of such stature, there are usually both errors in judgment and notable achievements, and therefore, it should be evaluated based on the final result. Of course, Tsar Boris made a number of fateful, albeit to some extent unavoidable, mistakes – from his eventual accession to Hitler’s Tripartite Pact after prolonged resistance, to consenting to the deportation of Thracian and Macedonian Jews.

On the other hand, despite Hitler’s growing dissatisfaction, which presumably posed considerable risks to Boris, he nevertheless managed to prevent the direct involvement of Bulgarian troops in combat on the Eastern Front, effectively saved the majority of Bulgarian Jews from deportation, and preserved diplomatic relations with the USSR. It can be stated that Tsar Boris III fulfilled the primary mission of a monarch and national leader, doing what he could to protect his people in a time of great trial, and upholding with respect the Bulgarians’ sense of gratitude toward the Russian nation of liberators – rightfully calling himself the “Tsar of the Bulgarians.”

Alexandra Kollontai and the Soviet-Romanian Armistice of 1944

V. Lapshin

Keywords: Alexandra Kollontai, Ion Antonescu, Romania's armistice with the USSR, Great Britain, and the US

A FEW years ago, in connection with the 70th anniversary of the passing of Alexandra Kollontai, the documentary film “Vikhri veka” [Whirlwinds of the Century], dedicated to her diplomatic activity, was released. Unfortunately, the genre of film did not afford an opportunity to tell about many aspects and interesting details related to her work during World War II.

On August 23, 1944, a small group of officials met with King Michael of Romania in the royal palace in Bucharest. They were participants in a conspiracy against Marshal Ion Antonescu. The plan was to summon him in the afternoon and remove him from power. Among them was Grigore Niculescu-Buzești, head of the cipher department of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. By that evening, he had become the new minister of foreign affairs in the first Romanian government following the dictator's overthrow. In his pocket was a decrypted telegram marked “urgent” from Stockholm, containing a report of a conversation between Gheorghe Duca, counselor of the Romanian Embassy in Sweden, and Soviet Ambassador [to Sweden] Kollontai. To this day, the contents of that document and the role it was to play in Romania's fate have been subject to the most incredible interpretations.

The Battle for Syria

A. Baklanov

Keywords: A.I. Vavilov's book The Battle for Syria, the Syrian crisis, Russia-Syria cooperation

THE Battle for Syria is the title of a new book by Russian diplomat Alexander Iosifovich Vavilov, a prominent scholar of the Orient.

As a result, this extensive work turns out to be a kind of summation of the prolonged era of cooperation between our country and Baathist Syria, led by the Assad family clan, the ethno-confessional Alawite group, and a close alliance of party functionaries and the top echelons of the military hierarchy.

The book was published shortly before the dramatic, large-scale events in Syria, the removal of President Bashar al-Assad from power, and the beginning of a new phase in the country's development.

The book enables us to gain a deeper understanding of Syria's recent history, the origins of current events, the causes of the crisis, and the eventual decline of the rule of the Arab Socialist Baath Party and President Bashar al-Assad.

It seems that a discussion of Vavilov's book could serve as the beginning of a critical reassessment of the policies of various actors on the Syrian track and help identify possible courses of action aimed at preventing the disintegration of the state, overcoming the country's crises, and ensuring continuity in our friendship with the Syrian people.

New Facets of Diplomacy in the Digital Age

A. Ulanov

Keywords: report, digitalization, artificial intelligence, IIS

THE digital age demands the development of new approaches to the study and teaching of diplomacy and international relations. The analytical report “Digitalization and Artificial Intelligence in the Service of Diplomacy,”* edited by Professor Yelena Zinovieva and a team of authors from Moscow State Institute (University) of International Affairs (MGIMO), is a thorough and comprehensive study dedicated to analyzing the impact of digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) on contemporary diplomacy. The report was prepared as part of the “Priority 2030” strategic leadership program and published by MGIMO-University.

The authors of the report posit that digital technologies and the Internet now play the same role in modern international relations as nuclear technologies did in the 20th century – serving as a key strategic tool vital for military leadership, economic growth, and foreign policy prestige. This proposition sets the tone for the entire study and highlights the importance of digital technologies as a new field of geopolitical competition and a critical area of Russia’s foreign policy.

The report devotes special attention to the evolution of digital diplomacy, with a significant portion of the study focused on the Russian experience. The authors detail how Russia has adapted its foreign policy tools to the demands of the digital age and how these changes have affected its standing on the international stage. In particular, they emphasize that Russia has actively employed big data analysis tools and demonstrated to the world that an unregulated digital space poses a threat to all states.

The central idea of the entire study is that Russia has successfully adapted its diplomatic tools to new challenges and continues to play an important role on the international stage. This area of study and diplomatic practice appears to be in high demand.

Secularism as a Theological Phenomenon

V. Bagdasaryan

Keywords: secularism, Christianity, Christology, heresies, theology, the West, Russia, Renaissance, Reformation, Catholicism, Orthodoxy

The book *Genealogy of the Secular Discourse** by Vasily Alexandrovich Shchipkov, Doctor of Science (Philosophy) and Associate Professor of International Journalism at Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations (MGIMO), begins with an examination of the genesis of the concept of “secularism.” Etymological analysis does not always sufficiently reveal the essence of a phenomenon. In reality, the age as transitory time was opposed to the eternal; the worldly – to the transcendent. These were different levels of a unified system in which the secular constituted the ontological lower level. The author shows that the secular level was originally part of a theological system. The separation of the secular from the religious signified a division between the upper and lower levels of the system.

Shchipkov’s book presents a broad spectrum of approaches to understanding the phenomenon of the secular. Various theories of its historical origin are cited, including, for instance, the adoption of Christianity as the state religion under Constantine the Great, the influence of nominalist philosophy, the rise of Renaissance humanism, the replacement of the Christian worldview with a pagan one, and others.

The book provides a history of Western society as a single continuous line in the development of secularism. Shchipkov traces this trajectory from the heresies of Christological controversies to the establishment of the secular system of the modern era.

The importance of Vasily Alexandrovich Shchipkov’s *Genealogy of the Secular Discourse* lies above all in the potential consequences it generates. The transition from scholarly conclusions to social implications is of fundamental importance in terms of a way out of the current crisis. In this regard, one can only wish the book a great future