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Pax Atomica: The Birth of the US Nuclear Doctrine

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Keywords: Pincher Plan, US nuclear doctrine, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear war plans

THE Pincher Plan was the first yet crucial US postwar plan for war against the USSR.

The most enduring and long-lived component of the Pincher Plan was the offensive element of Allied operations, which, for the first time, envisioned the use of nuclear weapons. While appearing to develop defensive operations and troop movements, the Pentagon essentially created a framework for future concepts of offensive nuclear war aimed at “breaking Russian resistance.” Subsequent war strategies involving the USSR were, to varying degrees, clones of the Pincher Plan.

The plan’s authors acknowledged that to force the USSR to accept any demands – which, notably, were never concretely formulated at the political level – there would have to be not partial but “total mobilization” of all US forces and resources.

Military planners especially emphasized the fact that the monopoly on nuclear weapons was a significant advantage for the US. “The Allies would use air power as their primary weapon against the USSR.

It is also crucial to understand that from the Pincher project, like from a cocoon, emerged numerous attack plans against the USSR, all of which postulated the use of nuclear weapons as an integral component of any large-scale military operation against the Russians.

The Broiler Plan, which emerged in November 1947, retained the directive continuity of its predecessor, relying on atomic bombings in the early stages of military operations and utilizing forward-based capabilities. The plan acknowledged that nuclear attacks on industrial facilities located in cities would result in the deaths of many civilians: The suffering of the civilian population was regarded as a bonus. The main goal was the destruction of everything that contributed to Soviet military power.

Why, then, did the US not unleash a nuclear war against the USSR before the Soviets acquired such weapons themselves? Russian scholars rightly point to one of the key factors that prevented the world from sliding into nuclear Armageddon.

Nonetheless, opposition to nuclear warfare among the US political and military leadership was minimal and had no decisive influence on strategic military planning. On the contrary, the group of generals who quickly emerged and became dominant not only accepted but actively advocated a preemptive strike against the “Soviets” using nuclear weapons.

The proponents and active architects of such ideas were well aware of one significant obstacle – they contradicted the deeply entrenched American ideal that the US should never strike first. Therefore, the country’s leaders concealed the fact that they supported preemptive war against the USSR, even though it was this very concept that existed and influenced postwar strategic planning.

Russia's New Foreign Policy

V. Zayemsky

Keywords: deterioration of Western policy, SMO, BRICS, Trump, UN reform initiatives

A COMPARATIVE analysis of global events, including responses to the Russian-American summit held in Alaska on August 15, 2025, as well as the unjustified evolution in attitudes toward Russia, points to the need for an adjustment in Russia's foreign policy approaches and pursue a consistent course of prioritizing cooperation and enhancing relations with the Global South.

A key component of our updated course of action should be the development of economic cooperation.

In this regard, it is critically important that Russian businesses structure their activities in full alignment with, and in support of, the government's policy of strengthening relations with the Global South.

Russia's priority should be all things BRICS; thus, we should shape all our relations with third countries based on the requirements of this group.

At the same time, it must be understood that claims about internal disagreements within BRICS are clearly exaggerated. Of course, no one denies that differences of opinion arise among member states when working through specific issues, but BRICS is characterized by a commitment to reaching mutually acceptable positions, rather than imposing the viewpoint of a single country on all others.

Since Western European politicians continue to accuse our country of harboring aggressive intentions, it is vital to help them understand that, as the largest country in the world, we have no need to annex any territories. Therefore, a clear priority should be efforts to coordinate all aspects of European security, including

appropriate confidence-building measures, which in particular must rule out the excessive arming of Russia's neighboring states with Western weapons.

In the Global South there is widespread sentiment in favor of closer ties with Russia, a strong and sustained interest in Russian culture, and a long-standing willingness to establish mutually beneficial economic relations. All of this convincingly demonstrates that impressive opportunities lie before us.

Russia and the New World Order

V. Yegorov

Keywords: multipolarity, non-Western world (non-West), World Majority, Munich Conference

IN POLITICAL science discourse, the relevance of defining Russia's geopolitical identity is linked to the transitional nature of the modern world, which gives rise to dynamic global political processes.

The first trend: The dominant global order based on capitalist relations has historical limits and is bound to be not merely remodeled, but transformed as the planet's political architecture changes.

The second trend influencing the balance of power in the world and Russia's role within it is the fallout from the degradation of the liberal mainstream in its Western form.

A third factor driving the growing interest in the issue of Russia's geopolitical identity lies in society's recognition of the inevitability of a nationally oriented development strategy.

Russia's promotion of an order based on equal rights for all countries and peoples to pursue their own distinct paths of development is gaining increasing support worldwide. This can be attributed to Russia's own inherent, organic multiculturalism, as well as its unique experience in implementing civilizational innovations.

The West also offers its own vision for constructing a post-unipolar world: "The principal characteristic of twenty-first-century international relations is turning out to be nonpolarity."

The protracted formation of a new world order is not a consequence of either the West's or the World Majority's economic or political defeat, but rather of

humanity's transition to a new social system – postmodernity – where the decisive factor of development will be information, not material assets.

While the West, as a “civilizational pole,” seeks universalization through the liberal-democratic template and uniform “rules” of behavior, the World Majority advocates cultural diversity, free cultural exchange, and the inviolability of each country's self-determination in both domestic and foreign policy.

The promotion of a multipolar world order, supported by the majority of humanity, is primarily driven by Russia's national interests. The West's rejection of Russia's attempts to obtain guarantees of equal security prompted the search for an appropriate foreign policy course for our country.

Given the need to protect national sovereignty, Russia's turn toward multipolarity was the result of a well-considered analysis of global political realities and the growing threat to national security, which laid the groundwork for active foreign policy efforts to advance a new architecture of international relations.

The current Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation identifies its central task as implementing an “independent and multi-vector (emphasis mine – Author) foreign policy” and consolidating “Russia's position as one of the responsible, powerful and independent centers of the modern world.”²³

Thus, Russia – which in the relatively recent historical past embodied an alternative future for humanity in contrast to the West – is gradually regaining its status as a country with attractive values and an appealing foreign policy strategy, due to the objective conditions of a paradigm shift in global development. This resurgence is driven not so much by traditional factors in terms of the economy and military power, as by the promotion of multipolarity, equality, and the right to sovereign development in international relations.

The US and China as Civilization States in the Context of a New World Order

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Keywords: civilizations, foreign policy, world order, international relations, history

TODAY, amid the sharp increase in turbulence within the system of international relations, a question arises concerning its potential transformation in light of the rise of alternative centers of power to the US, foremost among them China. Given the US's existing military, economic, and technological capabilities, and the rapid advancement of China in each of these areas – with Beijing quickly catching up to Washington in several key indicators – it is clear that both of these states will play a significant role in both the current international system and the emerging new world order, which with a high degree of likelihood will be based on the principles of multipolarity.

This implies that the future system will depend not only on the relations between these centers of power – in the present case, the US and China – but also on the overall foreign policy course that each country chooses to pursue. Accordingly, it is important not only to be able to forecast their behavior on the international stage but also to identify the deeper foundations from which such behavior arises, as this enables a more accurate understanding of their motivations and strategic aims.

The aim of this article is thus to analyze the prospects for US-China relations through the lens of the civilizational factor. The key thesis we will explore is that in regard to the US and China as civilization states, there exists not merely a conflict of national interests as great powers, but deeper antagonisms rooted in fundamentally different worldviews. This suggests that the stable and harmonious coexistence of these two countries as geopolitical equals is unlikely.

Possible Outcomes of Trump's Tariff Policy

P. Sadykhov

Keywords: tariff policy, global trade imbalance, foreign trade deficit, current account, balance of payments, global financial crisis, retaliatory tariffs, Plaza Accord

DONALD Trump's tariff war has literally exploded across the global information space and stirred up the political class in most countries, while the global business and expert communities are reacting relatively calmly to the innovations of the Republican administration, trying to calculate the possible outcomes of the US president's tariff policy in light of the already emerging positives and negatives resulting from the sharp surge in import duties.

From a macroeconomic standpoint, Trump's actions to raise import tariffs appear quite reasonable and align with the behavior expected from the authorities of any other country experiencing a trade deficit with its main trading partners. Therefore, when assessing the seemingly irrational actions of the new American president, one should also bear in mind that, according to macroeconomic theory, exports are added to GDP, while imports – as goods produced in another jurisdiction – are subtracted from it.

However, it is possible that Trump's strategy is not limited to this but also aims to correct global trade, economic, and financial imbalances, where global financial and trade diplomacy – represented by the IMF and WTO – is not always effective.

The global expert community's criticism of Trump's tariff démarche may be justified, but it is not always accurate from a macroeconomic standpoint, since protectionism is neither new nor extraordinary in the economic history of the West.

It is therefore reasonable to assume that the new US administration failed to calculate the multiplier effect of the announced tariffs and overlooked the fact that,

by raising duties – for example, on Chinese imports – the White House is primarily punishing the American consumer. But the paradox of the situation lies in the fact that China, by imposing retaliatory tariffs on American goods imported into the PRC, is also punishing the American consumer.

The main open question now is what form this “synthesis” will take and whether Trump will move toward further tariff concessions or continue to press his position.

In the context of the Russian-American summit in Alaska and its possible consequences for the US economy, it may be assumed that the tariff policy initiated by Trump is not about money: According to estimates by American experts themselves, over the next 10 years the US budget could gain approximately \$2 trillion from new import tariffs, meaning the treasury would receive an additional \$200 billion per year on average.

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Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in International Economic Cooperation

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Keywords: international economic cooperation, OECD, EDB, EFSD, EAEU, digital platforms

FOLLOWING a period of accelerated globalization in various areas of economic and social life, a new stage is emerging – one marked by the increasingly sharp division of countries and, consequently, of international trade into separate blocs, groups, and sectors.

Large companies, and transnational corporations in particular, are finding it increasingly difficult to operate on a global scale, as they have become dependent on both domestic and foreign political contexts that directly affect economic decision-making. These include not only the withdrawal of several Western companies from the Russian market, but also the relocation of Apple production from China to India, and the restriction of Chinese company Huawei's operations in the US market.

Restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022) also played a significant role in reshaping how large companies operate in international markets. During this period, small and medium-sized enterprises (SME), due to their inherent characteristics, found themselves in a more favorable position. Less constrained by political limitations, they explored new opportunities for growth and development in international markets.

A number of characteristics of SMEs enable them to successfully integrate into global economic relations and international value chains. In Russia, this became especially evident when sanctions were imposed on the Russian Federation by its traditional foreign trade partners, primarily from the European Union. It must be acknowledged that the restructuring of national economic relations and

logistics chains has affected not only the Russian economy but also the economies of neighboring states and other countries. In particular, the economies of the Republic of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and even such countries as Turkey and India have undergone significant changes.

It should be noted that the role of Russian SMEs in international economic cooperation is objectively growing. This is facilitated by:

1. The changing external economic environment, which creates new opportunities for SMEs that possess a number of advantages over large companies.
2. The development of national and interstate support tools for value chains and international cooperation, designed to meet the most pressing challenges that hinder SMEs from playing a stronger role in international trade and cooperation.
3. The emergence of new formats, particularly digital resources and platform solutions, that make it easier for SMEs to find foreign partners and carry out foreign trade operations.

SME interactions are increasingly strengthening international economic cooperation. This is especially evident in border regions, where SMEs are often virtually the only economic actors. However, SMEs possess significant potential even in the development of relations between non-neighboring countries. In the postcrisis period, they naturally fill the gaps left by the withdrawal of large companies from the market, thus contributing to the overall normalization of interstate relations. To paraphrase the well-known saying about the cumulative strength of a thousand threads of humanitarian ties, one can assert that SMEs are no less capable of fulfilling such a role.

The New Development Bank: 10 Years of Operation of the BRICS Bank

I. Pilipenko

Keywords: New Development Bank, mandate, financing, investment, projects, operations, sectors of specialization, infrastructure, clean energy

THE year 2025 marks the 10th anniversary of the launch of the New Development Bank (hereinafter referred to as the NDB or the Bank) in July 2015. The signing of the Agreement on the NDB in July 2014 by Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China, and the Republic of South Africa (South Africa) – the founding countries of the BRICS association – during the summit of the five heads of state in Fortaleza (Brazil), was the result of successful cooperation along the financial track.

The main areas of financing, as classified by the NDB in its General Strategy for 2022-2026, include: the clean energy sector and energy efficiency, transport infrastructure, water and sanitation, social infrastructure, digital infrastructure, and environmental protection. In addition, in its operations, the Bank takes into account such aspects as climate change, resilience to natural disasters, technological integration of client companies, and inclusiveness in its project.

In accordance with its charter (the NDB Agreement) and the practice of multilateral development banks (MDBs), the Bank is not permitted to finance projects in a country of operation if there are objections from the government of that shareholder state; the Bank is also obliged to maintain reasonable diversification of its project portfolio and to avoid disproportionate allocation of resources in favor of any one of its shareholders.

As of the end of July 2025, the Board of Directors had approved the implementation of 108 projects since the NDB's founding, with a total financing amount equivalent to \$35.9 billion.

One distinctive feature of the NDB over the past decade was its focus primarily on sovereign projects, in which the borrowers were the central/federal executive authorities of the countries of operation. Thus, 83 projects (77% of total operations), totaling the equivalent of \$31.5 billion (88% of total NDB financing), were sovereign operations.

The Bank also primarily focused on financing transport infrastructure projects, with 44 operations totaling \$15.6 billion (43% of the total resources provided by the NDB over the decade), and on the clean energy and energy efficiency sector (16 projects worth \$3.7 billion, or 10%).

At the same time, most transport infrastructure projects were implemented in India (18 projects totaling \$6.9 billion) and China (14 operations totaling \$4.8 billion), which together account for one-third of the NDB's total financing over 10 years.

In general, the experience gained during its first decade of productive work should equip the NDB with effective tools to ensure the consistent expansion of its operations and rapid development in the interests of all its shareholders and the BRICS association as a whole.

The SCO Amid Global Turbulence: Challenges, Successes, Prospects

A. Jekshenkulov

Keywords: Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), SCO Youth Council, global turbulence, geopolitical tension, multipolar world

THE current international system is undergoing profound transformation. The rise in geopolitical tensions, the growing potential for conflict in various regions of the world, and the crisis of trust in existing global governance architectures are all generating a need to strengthen regional multilateral cooperation. Under these conditions, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) serves as one of the few stable and pragmatic mechanisms for ensuring security, economic interaction, and cultural dialogue across Eurasia.

Global players like Russia, China, India, and Iran, as well as the Central Asian countries – and, of course, the Kyrgyz Republic, which is not only a full-fledged member but also an active initiator of many cooperation initiatives – play a particularly important role in the SCO's development. The transfer of the SCO chairmanship to Kyrgyzstan in 2025 opens up new prospects for enhancing cooperation, especially in the areas of regional security, sustainable development, and humanitarian partnership.

Security remains a key area of activity for the SCO. To that end, on June 7, 2002, in St. Petersburg, the heads of state of the SCO member countries signed the Agreement on the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), with its headquarters in Tashkent.

The SCO now faces a number of challenges, including internal differences among its members, the need for institutional reform, and pressure from external actors. Therefore, the SCO's future depends on its ability to adapt to a rapidly changing world.

Russia is the political and military foundation. The Russian Federation serves as a guarantor of security within the SCO. Through participation in joint exercises and the activities of RATS, Moscow contributes to the fight against terrorism, extremism, and separatism. Moreover, Russia promotes the ideas of a multipolar world and strategic sovereignty, positioning them as alternatives to the Western model of globalization.

China is the SCO's economic engine. With the largest economy in the SCO, China exerts decisive influence over the region's economic integration. Through the Belt and Road Initiative, Beijing invests in infrastructure, transport corridors, and energy projects in member states.

India represents geopolitical expansion. India brings an additional geopolitical dimension to the SCO by extending the organization's presence into South Asia. Cooperation with India grants the SCO access to new markets and energy routes, including the Iranian port of Chabahar.

Iran is an energy and logistics hub. With its strategic location and rich energy resources, Iran is a key element in the SCO's energy architecture. Through the International North-South Transport Corridor, Iran can link Russia, India, and Central Asia, enhancing the region's logistical connectivity.

Russia, China, India, and Iran collectively strengthen the SCO as a multilateral and balanced organization capable of addressing a broad range of issues – from security and economic development to the formation of a new architecture of international relations. Their participation ensures the SCO's resilience and establishes it as a key component of the emerging multipolar world.

Despite numerous geopolitical challenges, the SCO continues to gain popularity across all continents.

ASEAN on the Path to BRICS: Prerequisites and Constraints

V. Mazyrin

Keywords: ASEAN, BRICS, comparative advantages, potential and prospects for convergence, complementarity, differences and commonalities

THE relevance of a comparative study of the potential alignment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and BRICS is obvious, as the former is the leading regional organization in Southeast Asia while the latter is a new hub for uniting developing countries of the so-called Global South. The author is making one of the first forays in this area in Russian scholarship. This article focuses primarily on exploring opportunities for economic cooperation, which have been less studied, and on evaluating ASEAN as a BRICS partner.

Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of ASEAN and BRICS suggests that there are many opportunities for cooperation between these formats, considering their economic advantages, regional influence, and collective potential. It is clear that ASEAN is interested in becoming more active in order to gain new roles and positions within the forum of Global South countries. To a large extent, its attitude will be shaped by the success of trailblazers, the evaluation of the format's new potential by BRICS partner countries such as Thailand and Malaysia, and the decision of Vietnam – one of ASEAN's informal leaders – to join. Participation in the forum by direct US allies such as Singapore and the Philippines, or by countries with small economies, is unlikely – though partnership status may be feasible.

ASEAN-BRICS cooperation presents significant potential for mutual growth, stability, and prosperity. The synergistic effect of economic, cultural, environmental, and political initiatives could reshape the global economic integration landscape and help create a more interconnected and prosperous world.

FAO: An 80-Year Journey, or You Can't Build Peace on Empty Stomachs

O. Kobyakov

Keywords: food security, the right to food, soil condition, ecosystems, Russian support for FAO programs, FAO partnership

THE 80 years since the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) way back in 1945 have profoundly transformed the geopolitical landscape of the world. Among the few global constants that have remained unchanged since then is FAO – a specialized UN agency with a global mandate in the areas of food, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and rural development.

While the broader United Nations was established to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war,” as stated in its Charter, the primary task entrusted to FAO by its founding member states was to free humanity from hunger. On October 16, 2025, FAO marks its 80th anniversary with reflections on its successes, failures, and new challenges along this path, focusing its intellectual capacity and practical efforts on achieving the goals and objectives of the 21st-century agenda.

At the 2015 UN Summit on Sustainable Development, within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which defined 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the aim to eradicate hunger once and for all was formulated for the first time. SDG 2 – “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture” – was intended to eradicate hunger by 2030. UN member states are doing much to reach this goal, but in reality this historic milestone still remains out of reach.

A Concerning Trend: Since 2020, food basket prices have consistently risen faster than overall inflation, highlighting the particular vulnerability of agrifood

systems and underscoring the urgent need to prioritize food policy in macroeconomic planning.

FAO, a market-oriented organization by philosophy, advocates adherence to free market principles and therefore considers protectionist measures such as export bans and quotas, prohibitive tariffs (except in cases of temporary emergency restrictions due to food shortages), and especially sanctions and artificial barriers in the food sector, to be counterproductive.

Hunger can be eradicated only by pooling the efforts of all stakeholders at multiple levels. FAO has stated that, under current trends, SDG 2 will not be achieved by 2030. It does not venture to forecast when hunger will be eradicated.

At the same time, the goal of ending hunger remains attainable. Its timeline depends entirely on when the international community chooses to pursue coordinated investments and policy actions aimed at transforming global food systems.

In alignment with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), FAO welcomes and supports the efforts of interested parties, including influential international organizations such as the SCO, BRICS, and many others, and is ready to work together with them to develop an ambitious yet realistic agenda for sustainable development beyond 2030.

The UN Climate Process: Between Environmental Extremism and Political Pragmatism

Marking the 10th Anniversary of the Paris Climate Agreement, the 20th Anniversary of the Kyoto Protocol, and the 30th Anniversary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

O. Shamanov

Keywords: Earth's climate, UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol, Doha Amendment, Paris Agreement, politics and the climate process

OVER the years, the issue of global climate change has far transcended academic discussions within scientific circles and become one of the most high-profile political topics. Some see the changes taking place in the Earth's climate system as a harbinger of environmental apocalypse; others are quick to blame global warming for nearly all socio-economic problems of the present day while slyly, behind the scenes, trying to address issues far removed from environmental concerns. Still others go so far as to cry out that climate change is a threat to international peace and security.

The objective of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is formulated in the broadest terms: "stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system." In line with the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities," developed countries are expected to "take the lead" in curbing anthropogenic emissions and to "provide new and additional financial resources to meet the agreed full costs incurred by developing country Parties in complying with their obligations" of the UNFCCC, as well as to promote the transfer of environmentally sound technologies.

The Kyoto Protocol (KP), adopted in 1997 at the Third Conference of the Parties to the Convention (Kyoto, Japan), operationalized the UNFCCC by establishing specific targets, timelines, and methods for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It was the first international legal instrument to address environmental problems by employing market-based mechanisms, including emissions trading and crediting emissions reductions achieved through targeted projects implemented in other countries.

The culmination of the UN-led international climate process came with the adoption of the Paris Agreement at the 21st Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (November 30-December 13, 2015, Paris, France), in which Russian President Vladimir Putin took part.

The problem of global climate change must be approached with a cool head, grounded in science (including – especially – national science), avoiding alarmism and particularly the exploitation of the issue for narrow political and economic gain. It must be addressed systematically alongside other global environmental challenges, not elevated above them as a super-priority. That is precisely how it was envisioned in the outcomes of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, which laid the foundational principles for collective progress toward sustainable development.

Only political pragmatism, combined with a scientifically grounded approach, will preserve the international community's chance of achieving real results from cooperation on climate issues.

The International Anti-Money Laundering System: Structure, Current Trends, Challenges

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Keywords: Financial Action Task Force (FATF) standards, anti-money laundering (AML), countering the financing of terrorism (CFT), countering proliferation financing (CPF), targeted financial sanctions

WITH the rapid development of the global financial system and the growing number of offshore zones, the scale of money laundering worldwide increased dramatically. Drug trafficking was typically the main source of illicit capital. Consequently, in the context of combating drug trafficking, a requirement emerged in international law to recognize the laundering of criminal proceeds as a criminal offense. This approach was first articulated in the 1988 UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (the Vienna Convention).

In 1989, at the initiative of the G7 countries, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) was established. As a first step, in 1990 the FATF developed 40 Recommendations aimed at improving the legislative systems and financial infrastructures of member countries to protect them from being used for money laundering purposes.

The events of September 11, 2001, spurred the expansion of the FATF's mandate to include the fight against terrorist financing (CTF); the group adopted an additional IX Special Recommendations in this area. Since 2006, the FATF's competence has gradually extended to issues related to countering financing for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (CPF).

In 2012, updated standards were approved in their current form – a revised set of 40 Recommendations covering the full range of AML/CFT/CPF issues within the FATF's mandate.

As an intergovernmental body operating as part of the OECD, the FATF's recommendations were initially nonbinding, and the FATF's work was positioned more as an expert platform. However, as AML evolved, more and more countries became involved in the FATF's activities to varying degrees, and its requirements were increasingly promoted as worthy of universal application.

The international AML/CFT/CPF system, whose main contours had taken shape by the early 2010s, continues to evolve steadily under the influence of developments in the global financial system, the emergence of new instruments such as virtual assets, and broader socio-economic changes in society. Current trends are taken into account during the revision of standards and their adaptation to prevailing circumstances. Approaches to the mutual evaluation process are also changing: In 2022, a new methodology was adopted to serve as the basis for the next global evaluation round (the fifth to date), which began in 2024.

In addition to these ongoing factors, recent years have seen a growing trend toward the politicization of the FATF's technical mandate, compounded by the longstanding problem of inadequate representation of non-Western countries within the group. The current situation has given rise to the problem of dominance by the collective West, which seeks to use the FATF's sanctions mechanism to advance its geopolitical aims, thereby undermining the foundation on which international AML cooperation is built. This constitutes the most serious challenge facing the modern AML/CFT/CPF system and the FATF as its central body. The nature of the response to this challenge will largely determine the group's future and its standing in the eyes of the international community.

New Technological Challenges and International Security

G. Mashkov

Keywords: new technologies, critical technologies, artificial intelligence, AI, quantum technologies, chips, microelectronics, rare earth elements

THE world is in the midst of the fourth industrial revolution. Alongside unprecedented opportunities, scientific and technological progress is accompanied by serious risks and threats to international security, which are already beginning to take clear shape and will become increasingly evident in the future.

The implementation of advanced technological solutions is gradually altering the global military-political landscape, prompting a rethinking of the foundations of strategic stability, expanding the scope of interstate rivalry, enabling a qualitative leap in the capabilities of weapons and military equipment, fundamentally transforming military conflicts, and giving rise to new forms and methods of warfare.

The scope of new technologies is not clearly defined and varies across national jurisdictions. The UN secretary-general's report on the potential impact of current developments in science and technology on international security and disarmament (July 2024) identifies artificial intelligence (AI) and autonomy, uncrewed systems, digital technologies, biology and chemistry, space and aerospace technologies, electromagnetic technologies, and materials technologies.¹ In the list of critical and emerging technologies in the US National Strategy, the administration has identified 18 areas directly linked to national security.

New technologies have become an integral part of national security strategies in developed countries and have been elevated to a top priority.

The development of new technologies is occurring amid harsh military-political and economic confrontation and a total absence of trust among rival centers

of power. The trend toward escalation is long-term in nature. This makes it impossible to establish equal and mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of innovation, let alone ensure access to new technologies.

Most advanced technologies and innovative solutions are concentrated in Western countries (primarily those unfriendly toward Russia). Russia's adversaries are not inclined to share with it their know-how. On the contrary, they are doing all they can to restrict Russia's access to innovations and to constrain the development of its economic and military potential. Even Russia's friends are in no great hurry to share their developments, despite having once received many technologies from Russia that enabled them to build advanced scientific and industrial bases. Thus, when it comes to upgrading technologies, Russia is for the most part forced to rely on itself.

To achieve long-term innovation development goals and accelerate to this process, structural modifications will be required. It appears that a single, permanent, fully empowered federal-level body is needed, one with strong analytical capacity and adequate competencies to prepare recommendations on new technologies for the country's leaders, including with regard to emerging challenges and threats to international and national security.

Future military conflicts will be high-tech wars. Russia's Western adversaries are already preparing for them quite seriously, converting traditional WME to innovative platforms and deploying know-how to achieve dominance on the battlefield across all domains. The SMO is revealing vulnerabilities in Russia's Armed Forces in the context of new technologies. Many of these are being addressed on the battlefield. But these are largely tactical solutions. The main issue lies in the strategic dimension: If Russia does not accelerate technological rearmament, it may find itself pushed to the periphery of global processes, including the shaping of global and regional security architectures.

Donald Trump's Transactional Diplomacy as a Means of Achieving Foreign Policy Objectives

I. Lyabukhov

Keywords: transactional diplomacy, foreign policy, US, Donald Trump, doctrine, political realism, deal diplomacy

American foreign policy – particularly during US President Donald Trump's first term in office (2017-2021) and following his reelection in November 2024 – serves as a vivid example of a radical reassessment of the traditional foundations of international engagement. Trump initiated a shift away from the classical liberal paradigm of multilateral cooperation in favor of transactional diplomacy – a model oriented toward pragmatic, predominantly financially profitable deals, often at the expense of established alliances and ideological values. This reorientation not only changes the priorities of US foreign policy but also shapes new institutional practices, demonstrating the potential of transactional diplomacy as a tool for maximizing and scaling short-term political and economic effectiveness.

The transformation of American foreign policy has resonated widely within the international community and calls into question the traditional mechanisms of global governance, making the study of the characteristics, methodology, and consequences of the “Trump Doctrine” particularly relevant for understanding the current architecture of international relations.

HAVING emerged as an alternative to post-bipolar liberal internationalism, Donald Trump's transactional diplomacy in his second presidential term ceased to be a tactical deviation and became a systemic foreign policy paradigm. This shift is institutionally entrenched, exerting a transformative impact both on the traditional allied mechanisms of the US and on the architecture of international norms and institutions.

First, transactionalism undermines the stability of allied ties by shifting them from the realm of political commitments to reciprocal calculation – manifested most vividly in relations with NATO, Japan, and South Korea.

Second, the direct erosion of multilateral institutions is another manifestation of transactional diplomacy. Withdrawal from the UNHRC, suspension of funding for the World Health Organization, and the imposition of tariffs in violation of WTO rules all indicate a reorientation of US foreign policy from global leadership to strategic egoism.

The third key consequence is the shifting role of the US in the international system from a guarantor of world order to a powerful but intractable actor, undermining the legitimacy of legal norms and generating permanent instability in global politics. At the same time, the weakening of international institutions and alliances initiated by Trump's transactional diplomacy has created favorable conditions for powerful states like Russia and China that seek to establish an alternative order based on a traditional understanding of sovereignty and power.

The ongoing dedollarization of the global economy and the decline of American hegemonic influence indicate profound structural changes in the international system, calling into question the effectiveness and resilience of the existing liberal model of internationalism based on universalist norms and institutional mechanisms.

Thus, Donald Trump's transactional diplomacy not only changes the tactical approaches of the US in foreign policy but also contributes to a fundamental restructuring of the global world order, leading to a redistribution of geopolitical and economic resources in favor of new centers of power.

The Military Content of American Strategic Culture

K. Kozhukhova

Keywords: American strategic culture, military equipment, idea of superiority, military technology, US Department of Defense, deterrence policy

A KEY component of American foreign policy is its strategic culture, which many foreign and Russian political scientists consistently distinguish from British strategic culture, placing Americans at the foundation of the Anglo-Saxon worldview.

The American “political miracle” separated from its British forebears due to a number of historical circumstances, the central one being the highest form of isolation from all global conflicts: Compared to the island nation of Great Britain, separated from Europe by the English Channel, the US enjoys an even more advantageous geographic position, located on another continent and separated from the world by oceans, which preserved the authentic development of the US.

The military and military-technological superiority of the US is an integral part of its geopolitical strategy, driven by a distinct national specificity in foreign policy behavior. The destructive orientation of American strategic culture – which grew up in isolation from the major military confrontations of European and Asian powers – predetermined the onset of the arms race and the Cold War, the cornerstone necessity of global primacy for the US, and decisive interventions in various local conflicts where American national interests suddenly and quite consistently emerge.

All of this has been shaped by the military origins of American strategic culture, as US “divine election,” among other things, manifests itself in global deterrence through military technologies that are effectively employed far from home – presupposing, in the view of the American establishment, unconditional leadership in the modern system of international relations.

The Struggle for Territory Has Begun: Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean

N. Kulyeva

Keywords: struggle for territory, Turkey, Libya, Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East, North Africa, “Blue Homeland”

TURKEY, especially during the presidency of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has been displaying marked activity in strengthening its regional and international influence.

This strategy is aimed at obtaining tangible material and financial dividends, including through control over mineral resources beyond the bounds of “obvious” Turkish jurisdiction recognized by other parties.

This course of action is most clearly manifested in relation to Libya. The signing of the Turkish-Libyan memorandum of understanding on the delimitation of maritime jurisdiction areas in 2019 became a starting point for the reconfiguration of existing maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean in order to implement the maritime geopolitical doctrine of the “Blue Homeland,” proposed in 2006, which envisions expanding Turkey’s exclusive economic zone in the Black and Aegean Seas and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Turkey’s policy in Libya can thus be seen as one of the most successful applications of its new foreign policy model, establishing long-term trends in the development of the country’s regional and global standing.

By confirming the effectiveness of its unique model of engagement in military-political conflicts, Turkey has significantly strengthened its international image, one of the key elements of which is now its national defense industry. Moreover, Turkey has managed to establish and consolidate a new status quo favorable to its interests, enabling it to pursue its territorial claims and strategic ambitions. Additionally, by bolstering its position in Libya, Turkey has expanded its

economic prospects across several regions, including the MENA region and the Mediterranean.

Although Turkey's policy in Libya was largely formed as a reaction to developments in the region following the Arab Spring, it is important to consider Libya's broader significance for Turkey within the Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and African dimensions of the Libyan conflict. In this context, several priority issues emerge for Turkey in Libya related to policy, economics, ideology, and international law. At the same time, Ankara's policy toward Libya has become an important tool for Turkey to justify its regional ambitions and build a framework for engagement with both regional and global actors in the MENA region, as well as in the Mediterranean and the African Sahel.

In this regard, Libya appears, on the one hand, as a bridge that links key points of regional energy and economic corridors from a transport and logistics perspective; on the other hand, it functions as a frontier for the further spread of regional instability and its consequences to neighboring regions, especially Europe and Africa.

Thus, Turkey's Libyan track in foreign policy should be viewed as part of its maritime strategy. Through Libya, Turkey has articulated its maritime ambitions aimed at shaping a new order in strategically important maritime zones. Therefore, the Libyan case is not a standalone episode but a reflection of a broader global trend emphasizing the growing importance of maritime activity – even for middle powers.

It appears that the "Libyan case" could prompt other states to become more active in the struggle for territory. This could lead to a major escalation of the international situation and an intensification of the arms race, particularly in the naval domain.

Militarization Trends of European Liberal Democracies

F. Trunov

Keywords: militarization, containment, European NATO member states, Germany, UK, NATO, EU, “coalitions of the willing,” military expenditures, deep precision strike, strike UAVs, multilateral formations, personnel strength, principle of sufficiency, Russia

In contemporary circumstances, European “liberal democracies” have drastically curtailed trade and economic ties with Russia, seek to “contain” and “push it back,” and use these goals to justify significantly increasing in their military capabilities. These changes are especially evident in the activities of the EU as a bloc and its largest member state – Germany.

Equally important is another point: the West’s unfounded conviction that the Fatherland would be unable to learn lessons from the tragedy of self-dissolution (1991) and would not make rational use of its defense and security resources.

The aim of this article is to examine a number of militarization trends that apply to European NATO and EU states as a whole, including specific cases such as Germany and the UK.

By carrying out militarization both ideologically and materially, European liberal democracies are striving to consolidate their superiority over Russia in troop numbers and drone system inventories, as well as through the use of a broad spectrum of well-integrated multilateral formations. At the same time, there is a clear intent to eliminate one of Russia’s few remaining advantages – its nonnuclear precision weaponry. In addition to their own substantial capabilities, the elites of European NATO and EU member states are also aiming to preserve and reorganize Ukraine’s military potential (in terms of both manpower and industry).

This reflects a desire to significantly shift the military balance with Russia. In most metrics of conventional power, there is a clear aim to achieve superiority by a

factor of three or more – an advantage widely considered necessary in military science to ensure the success of offensive operations. For European and international security, this trend is extremely dangerous, as it significantly increases the already high risk of military conflict involving nuclear weapons.

It is imperative for Russia to avoid being drawn into an arms race, to seek asymmetric solutions, and to demonstrate internal stability and a proactive foreign and defense policy. If these conditions are met, it may be the liberal democracies themselves that become “fragile” over time, as they expend enormous domestic resources on what is proving to be an insufficiently effective and, more importantly, low-yield effort to contain Russia.

Has Macron Lost Interest in Africa?

**V. Filippov,
A. Manoilo**

Keywords: Emanuel Macron, Rothschild family, France, Africa, Ukraine, Special Military Operation, economic crisis in Ukraine

THE years of Emmanuel Macron's presidency have been a period of rapid decline in France's African policy and the administrative practices of the Fifth Republic. China's powerful economic expansion into the countries of the African continent, Russia's return to Africa, the growing economic and political influence of other international actors in African countries, and the decline in US interest in African affairs during the presidency of Donald Trump – all of this enabled the countries of the Sahel and Central Africa to diversify their foreign economic and military policy. This undoubtedly weakened the position of the Fifth Republic across the vast Sub-Saharan region.

In France, many politicians and journalists are convinced that the current French president is closely tied to the Rothschild banking clan and, in certain situations, follows the directives of the most influential members of this family.

It is no secret that Macron is not the first French politician with experience working for the Rothschild family. The vast wealth of this clan has exerted (and inevitably continues to exert) significant influence over the entire postwar history of France. Of the nine presidents of the Fifth Republic, three have had direct ties to the Rothschild financial empire – Georges Pompidou, Nicolas Sarkozy, and Emmanuel Macron.

THE Rothschilds have been linked to many of the political crises of recent history; the clan is “considered one of the main instigators of major global conflicts since 1991. It was their money that funded the ‘color revolutions’ in Africa, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, the Middle East, Ukraine, and other countries.”

As early as 2018, French military personnel expressed major reservations about the effectiveness of the French Army's actions.

Nevertheless, Macron stubbornly continued to expand the French military presence in the Sahel and strongly encouraged his African satellites to strengthen the G5 Sahel military-political bloc. This is understandable: Such actions were dictated by the vital interests of the Fifth Republic – first and foremost, the uranium ore deposits in Niger, Mali, and the Central African Republic. Despite the aforementioned determinants of the French expeditionary corps' failures, Macron – up until the start of Russia's SMO in Ukraine – did not entertain the possibility of ending Operation Barkhane.

Now, however, the president of France has become the most ardent proponent of deploying NATO troops to Ukraine to join the fight against the Russian Army.

For what purpose? What does the Fifth Republic seek in Ukraine? Why is Macron willing to sacrifice his country's traditional strategic interests in Africa and prepare for a large-scale war with Russia? If one sets aside the rhetorical assurances about the need to defend European values (the absurdity of which Macron himself, of course, does not doubt), one is left to assume that he is ready to sacrifice his country's interests, the lives of his soldiers, and his own reputation in the name of the opaque interests of those who brought him to power and continue to keep him afloat despite his rapidly declining approval ratings.