

Russia and the US: The Search for a Way Forward Continues

S. Ryabkov

Keywords: New START, INF Treaty, NATO, Ukraine, sanctions, the collective West, coercive diplomacy, Venezuela, the Caribbean, nuclear weapons, national security

Washington has long been moving along the path of dismantling key pillars of the security architecture that had existed for decades – treaties and agreements on arms control. It's sad but true. Therefore, I don't assume that, with regard to New START, the American position could suddenly shift toward realizing that it is better to preserve something, not act rashly, and not let things drift.

By and large, Washington has always been driven by a single idea: ensuring the most favorable security conditions for itself. If it perceives some treaty in any area – and arms control is no exception – as something impeding this state of affairs, then it is discarded without hesitation.

The question of the next contact between the leaders is on the agenda. It is necessary to ensure that such contact has substance. We can't afford to depart from the framework that the leaders agreed to in Alaska

The Americans understand this approach of ours very well. We have repeatedly explained the logic behind it through various channels and at all levels. What matters is that the search for a way forward continues.

The US administration displays an ability to pursue its own agenda even in situations where a significant number of other actors on the international stage, including US allies, are not acting in unison with it.

In general, the current administration's policy shows a pattern of using carrot-and-stick tactics against the "unruly and disobedient." From that standpoint, there is nothing new. But no matter how many additional sanctions – primary, secondary,

tariff-related, or any other – are introduced, we will act exclusively in accordance with our national interests.

We are concerned about what is happening in the Caribbean. We condemn the ratcheting up of tensions in this region. We support the idea that all of Latin America should remain a zone of peace. We have a special partnership with Venezuela – a foundational treaty on strategic partnership and cooperation with that country was recently ratified. We cooperate across all channels, including through defense, security, and law-enforcement agencies. That is no secret, either.

Shortly after Washington announced a sharp increase in tariffs, a virtual BRICS summit was held, at which the leaders examined the situation in a detailed and substantive way.

We are already responding, and I think each of the countries in BRICS is finding ways and means to counter these threats. Beyond responding to current circumstances, we must, of course, work in a focused way on economic issues as an integral and critically important component of BRICS' activities.

We support our Iranian colleagues and friends in their search for a negotiated solution. We note that the European participants, in their political and geopolitical battles for their own influence, have gone so far as to turn everything on its head. They are now the main spoiler in the search for a negotiated settlement.

This is hardly new to us, because in general the role of the EU bureaucracy and its member states – along with the UK, which has aligned itself with them – is purely negative right now for the entire system of international relations. There is no source of “ideas” and approaches more saturated with aggressive, destructive energy than present-day Brussels and the leading European capitals. This affects, in essence, everything – and Iran's nuclear program is no exception.

Western Policy Has Radically Transformed the Algorithms of the 20th and 21st Centuries

A. Orlov

Keywords: world wars, collective West, US, USSR/Russia, NATO, Cold War, European Union, Ukraine

THE eve of the 20th century was a time of hope and anticipation. Although socio-political processes in many countries, including the Russian Empire, were developing quite turbulently, optimism nonetheless prevailed in society: Economic growth, scientific achievements, the flourishing of art and culture, and progress in other areas of human activity created the illusion that the coming century would be the most successful and happiest in the history of modern civilization – its “golden age.” Few believed then that, following the relatively peaceful 19th century, the world in the new century would plunge into the abyss of two world wars that would far surpass all previous conflicts in scale, brutality, and inhumanity – and that, afterward, it would spend another four decades on the brink of thermonuclear disaster during the Cold War.

The causes of World War I have been described and analyzed in exhaustive detail. Most studies place at the forefront the struggle among imperialist powers to redivide an already divided world – especially to redistribute colonies. In doing so, they often relegate to secondary or even tertiary importance the fact that the primary causes behind the outbreak of the global conflagration were the interests of the Western powers. The elites of those countries plunged the world into a devastating catastrophe, driven by their own desire to profit from a geopolitical and geoeconomic reconfiguration of the world. Russia had no fundamental need for World War I, although it must be acknowledged that, once drawn into it, the imperial leadership also intended to gain certain benefits from an anticipated victory. Nevertheless, under no circumstances would Russia itself have initiated the war, and its involvement was the result of a series of well-known circumstances, including the desire to offer fraternal assistance to the Slavic peoples of the Balkans, who had

been subjected to aggression, just as several decades earlier the Russian Empire had liberated the Bulgarian people from the Ottoman yoke.

World War II was essentially a continuation of World War I. Humiliated by its outcome, Germany attempted to exact historical revenge, to rise above the rest of the world and impose upon it an ideology fatal to humanity – fascism, or Nazism in its German interpretation. The Soviet Union was chosen as the epicenter of expansion, as the historical antithesis of German Nazism and the most rapidly developing country, which had become a beacon of hope for hundreds of millions of workers around the world.

For a second century in a row, the West is radically reshaping the algorithm of human civilization's development for an entire century – now the 21st. Instead of mutual trust and cooperation – so necessary for achieving meaningful results on the international stage and longed for by the majority of people on the planet – what we see is deep mutual distrust and hostility. Even if we allow the possibility (though it currently seems highly doubtful) that the international situation may improve over time and a certain normalization of relations might occur, will it be possible to quickly shed the sense that one must always be on guard when dealing with the West? That it always has a hidden agenda? That smiles and friendly pats on the back (should they occur) mean nothing? That the desire to tear Russia apart is, in fact, the essence of Western aspirations? The aftertaste of distrust will linger for a long time.

The familiar predictability in international affairs, shaped over decades, is being replaced by troubling unpredictability and turbulence. The same applies to strategic stability. Judging by current trends, the world will likely have to exist for a long time under conditions of strategic instability or strategic uncertainty. The deterrence factor will inevitably grow in importance, creating fertile ground for the unrestrained escalation of the arms race in all its imaginable and unimaginable forms, which will consume both natural and human resources.

International Relations in the Ideological Space of a Changing World

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Keywords: ideology, ideological space, empires, political spectrum, "horseshoe theory," international relations, "new ethics," bipolarity

TODAY, the ideological dimension of states' actions on the international stage often remains outside the conceptual field of world politics, despite its potential to explain a great deal. This ideological silence in international relations appears far from accidental. Having persuaded the "perestroika-era" Kremlin to abandon communist ideology and thereby making the ideological foundation of the socialist commonwealth collapse from within, the West declared victory in the Cold War and proclaimed the "end of history." To those who had previously found themselves on the opposite side of the now-defunct bipolar world, the West sought to instill the idea that it was time to abandon ideology – while never intending to relinquish its own ideological tenets.

The provision in the Constitution of the Russian Federation stating that "no ideology may be established as state or mandatory" was interpreted by some in an expansive manner; they asserted that ideology should be removed altogether from the country's socio-political life. In practice, however, this is impossible, as ideology constitutes a theoretically systematized form of social consciousness that expresses specific interests. The West failed to advance the concept of de-ideologization in the context of the "end of history," as it quickly became clear that the end had not occurred. Nonetheless, embedding this concept into the mindset of those who needed to be drawn into the sphere of Western dependence remained a key item on the Western agenda.

Ideology is a debated concept. Some view it as a set of ideas aimed at achieving certain goals, shaped by particular interests and postulated principles: in the Marxist tradition – by class struggle; in the liberal tradition – by a simulacrum of democracy; and in the conservative tradition – by the idol of private property. Others define ideology as a neutral worldview, an abstract system of views on politics, economics, and society detached from both state and private interests. In

the field of international relations, both tendencies are present – some ignore ideology's influence on world politics, while others analyze its impact from various political perspectives.

In reality, ideological views play a significant role in international relations and must be continuously analyzed in the context of the rapidly changing global landscape. This is essential for assessing, modeling, and forecasting potential developments in international affairs. Yet, in the vast body of scholarly literature on international relations, the ideological component is usually left aside – due in part to the entrenched post-Soviet disregard for ideology – and when addressed, it is only in general terms.

The ideological space today is filled with ideologically relevant questions that are not necessarily tied to any specific ideology and could be described as general trans-ideological issues. Here are a few currently being discussed:

- People in the West speak of democracy, yet real power lies with those who were never elected to any position.
- International relations and the ideological space operate with concepts that no longer function.
- There is no longer a Europe in the former sense of the word, but a certain simulacrum generated by the EU bureaucracy.

There is a problem in comprehending a rapidly changing world, as well as many other questions that demand ideological reflection. Ideology continues to exert a profound influence on global events and international relations. Modeling processes and development prospects suggests that new ideological formats and phenomena – such as mutating terrorism or radical Islamism – will pose increasing threats to peace and global security, altering the structure and nature of international relations.

It is not the rejection of ideology or the disregard of ideological factors and processes, but their study that will enable a better understanding and assessment of the state and prospects of international relations and the ambitions of their participants.

The International Context of the Formation of Russia's Greater South as a Macroregion

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Keywords: Russia's Greater South, geopolitical competition, security threats, macroregion, Ukraine, systemic crisis, South Caucasus, TRIPP

Intensifying geopolitical tensions are influencing shifts in regional configurations. The integration of the Southern Federal District, the North Caucasus Federal District, and the reunified territories of Donbass into a macroregion will allow for the consolidation of efforts and resources in this strategically vital area, focusing on shared development goals, economic and geopolitical objectives of the country, and the development of sociocultural cohesion among the population. Dynamic changes both within and around the macroregion are evident in the interactions among its constituent entities, as well as in the influence of external players, global power centers, or bloc-based entities seeking to establish themselves in key points on the globe and expand their ability to implement geopolitical projects.

Among the most prominent trends shaping the international environment around Russia's Greater South are the situations in Ukraine and a number of Russian Federation members in the South Caucasus.

Overall, competition for influence in the South Caucasus will continue to grow. Alongside Russia and the US, the UK and Turkey are also vying for political and economic benefits. The ambitions of these contenders give rise to various informal blocs. However, the divergent motives of a single state often compel it to act in the interests of various blocs. It is clear that the challenges of the Middle East extend into the South Caucasus.

There are various threat-generating factors that require attention and regular monitoring, as pressure on Russia continues to increase. One of the most serious security threats in the South of Russia is linked to a possible resurgence of ethno-separatism; the destructive potential of several thousand militants – natives of North Caucasus republics who fought with ISIS in Syria and Iraq – remains. Extremist-

minded individuals constitute the core of terrorist sleeper cells in the North Caucasus.

Overlaying this backdrop is a new level of terrorist activity employed by the Kiev regime, which could create a highly dangerous mix.

Among the attempts to exploit ethnic issues is the effort to stir up anti-Russian sentiment among descendants of North Caucasian muhajirun who have formed ethno-cultural associations in Turkey. The “Circassian project” was most actively revived in the run-up to the 2014 Sochi Olympics, but the results then did not justify the efforts invested. Nevertheless, the project has not been shut down; relevant conferences are still held periodically, and demands continue to be voiced for the recognition of the Circassian genocide, and so forth.

A wide range of security threats – geopolitical, ethnic, economic, and others – are concentrated around Russia’s Greater South. The development of the macroregion requires a strong and stable core. In the second decade of the 21st century, the situation in the North Caucasus became stabilized, which enabled the growth of the agro-industrial sector in the South [of Russia], the establishment of advanced enterprises in the processing and extractive industries, and the stabilization of demographic indicators. The Greater South is assigned the role of a key hub in the development of Russia’s political and economic space: Its participation is envisaged in the creation of new infrastructure in transport, energy and energy resources, finance, information and cultural exchange, as well as other forms of communication in line with the global changes that are expected over the next 10 to 15 years. As new north-south lines of exchange emerge, it is necessary to establish and regulate a global transport and logistics management system, including a consortium to coordinate national transportation systems within international transport corridors.

Russia will have to make major adjustments to its policy in the post-Soviet space in light of the intensifying ambitions of geopolitical competitors and the return of war as a routine form of interstate relations.

Prospects for the Formation of a Eurasian Security System

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Keywords: Eurasian security system, new world order, Eurasia, Russia, new principles of cooperation

The formation of a Eurasian security system (EASS) is a complex, multifaceted, and evolutionary process that is a direct response to geopolitical turbulence and the restructuring of the global world order. Complex international-political and profound geopolitical transformations have made it necessary to seek acceptable options for a new global security architecture. Unlike in past eras, when such processes involved several great powers, the current international-political context and military-political situation require the architects – whose circle has significantly widened – to take into account the interests of smaller (in most cases regional) players, large financial and industrial conglomerates, and even nonstate actors.

This article attempts, from a political science perspective, to define the main parameters of a future EASS and its basic characteristics, and to identify the inputs that will make it possible to assess the optimal position of existing international organizations within the new system. The theoretical conclusions aim only to demonstrate the prospects of an objectively unfolding process, taking into account a number of equally objective factors. At the same time, these results can be seen as a first step toward conceptualizing the author's vision of a future EASS.

The formation of a Eurasian security system is an objective and historically conditioned process, dictated by a set of circumstances with existential significance for the region's states. Russia, as the largest geopolitical player in Eurasia – and the only one with a 300-year history of participation in European systems of international relations and international security – has repeatedly attempted (particularly insistently since the mid-2000s) to build a pan-European security system in cooperation with Western countries. These attempts failed because the West cannot accept the notion that Russia, after its defeat in the Cold War, could possess its own national interests, including in the field of security.

The pressure on Russia following the onset of the Ukraine crisis in 2013 and the reunification of Crimea with Russia in 2014 prompted it and other major Eurasian states to draw closer together. The threat of global war or a series of large regional conflicts has brought to the forefront the issue of forming a Eurasian security system that takes into account not only the experience of Western-centric and other regional systems but also the policies of united Europe and the US toward the rest of the world.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that the future system is not being created to confront the West. It is not an alliance against former adversaries and colonial powers. Rather, it is an attempt to build a multipolar, segmented architecture based on the right of regional powers to independently determine the parameters by which an adequate level of security will be ensured within and along the perimeter of the system, in order to realize the principle of equal and indivisible security.

The process of building a Eurasian security system will be complex and phased, and it will depend not only on the dynamics of relations between key regional players, but also on external pressure, which is expected to increase in the foreseeable future. The old world order seeks to preserve itself with minimal changes. This is the root cause of a series of acute regional conflicts in areas typically described as zones of civilizational contact – and thus of differing models of sociopolitical organization, ideologies, worldviews, economic systems, and more. In this sense, the formation of a Eurasian security system is a response to the need to create a more just and stable world order. Despite the challenges, the process is actively advancing, and its success will depend on the ability of the continent's states to find common ground and unite their efforts against shared threats to security and sovereignty.

The Missile Defense Issue in Russian-American Relations: Historical Evolution and Contemporary Challenges

T. Kashirina

Keywords: Russian-American relations, missile defense (MD), strategic stability, nuclear deterrence, ABM Treaty (1972), European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPA), NATO, Aegis system, arms control, hypersonic weapons, Russia's countermeasures, New START Treaty

THE issue of missile defense (MD) has remained one of the most complex and destabilizing factors in Russian-American relations for decades. Despite periodic attempts at cooperation, the deployment of MD systems continues to significantly affect strategic stability, undermining the foundations of the established international security architecture. The historical evolution of the US approach to MD – from limited protection of national territory to the creation of a global system with a European segment – has raised major concerns in Russia regarding the preservation of parity in the field of nuclear deterrence.

The relevance of this issue has increased particularly in the context of the US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty in 2002, the subsequent deployment of elements of a global MD system, and the escalation of tensions in relations between Russia and the West. The deterioration of relations between Russia and NATO countries, especially against the backdrop of military operations in Ukraine, has led to the development of new approaches to integrating MD and air defense systems, which involve functional integration of information and control systems with strike components. This article analyzes the historical trends of the MD issue, examines the main stages in the evolution of the parties' approaches, and assesses the prospects for possible cooperation amid escalating geopolitical confrontation.

The MD issue remains one of the most complex and destabilizing factors in Russian-American relations. Analysis shows that the deployment of MD systems exerts a destabilizing influence on strategic stability, creating for one side the illusion of a possible advantage in the nuclear domain. This provokes the development of

asymmetric countermeasures, including hypersonic systems and advanced missile defense penetration capabilities, ultimately undermining the security of all parties involved.

Under these conditions, the resumption of dialogue on the MD issue becomes not merely desirable, but a necessary condition for preventing further destabilization. Despite deep mutual distrust, the parties must seek ways to gradually build cooperation, starting with confidence-building and transparency measures in the field of MD. Promising areas could include the establishment of joint centers for the exchange of missile launch information, the development of verification mechanisms to confirm that MD systems are not directed at each other, as well as coordination in countering new challenges such as cyber threats to strategic command and control systems.

The future of Russian-American arms control relations will largely depend on the ability of both sides to find a new framework for engagement on missile defense that accounts for changing technological and geopolitical realities. The preservation and strengthening of strategic stability serve the interests not only of Russia and the US, but of the entire international community, as the risks of nuclear escalation in today's interconnected world are global.

Rejection of Fact-Checking: Return to Openness or Rebranding of Censorship?

Ye. Mikhailova

Keywords: mass communication media (MCM), fact-checking, content moderation, political discourse, trust, community notes, openness, election interference, propaganda

THE challenges that confronted the international community with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic compelled authorities to urgently take control of key channels of mass communication, especially social media. The reason for this phenomenon was that scarce information about the virus, its transmission, and methods of treatment – combined with its high lethality – led to the rapid proliferation on social networks of fake news, conspiracy theories, and various calls to resist officially promoted coronavirus protection measures.

Fraudsters and scammers actively exploited the vulnerability of a population caught in an unprecedented crisis, while political tensions rose amid dissatisfaction with severe restrictions on citizens' freedom of movement. As a result, key players in the field of mass communication media (MCM) tightened control over content distribution, including blocking posts, adding warning labels, and actively engaging independent fact-checking organizations to verify information.

This article traces the evolution of the approaches taken by major MCM players toward content moderation. By the beginning of this decade, Western media giants had gained the opportunity to emerge as active political agents – not merely reflecting the current agenda on their platforms, but also directly influencing socio-political discourse, including through overt censorship in the interests of their clients. Ideological opponents, former business partners, and opinion leaders were blocked and downranked under the banner of exposing “inaccurate” publications. However, the brief period of political and ideological bias displayed by mass communication agents is now drawing to a close, having proven disadvantageous – not only in terms of public trust, but also in terms of the benefit to those who pay for the bias.

With the start of a new US electoral cycle, slogans claiming that aggressive content moderation protects freedom of speech have been replaced with assertions that declining trust in MCM is the fault of hired fact-checkers who allegedly acted with political bias.

Zuckerberg's unfair accusations against the expert community provoked a wave of protest and open criticism of Community Notes as a substitute for fact-checking. But the obvious flaws of Community Notes – such as the lack of requirements for commenters' competence or accountability for false claims – will not determine whether the system continues to be used, because the aim of moderation through Community Notes is not to protect users from disinformation, but to shape a specific perception of socio-political reality.

One of the slogans used by opponents of Community Notes is the assertion that the Earth won't stop being round, even if a Note denying it is attached to the claim. Indeed, the shape of our planet is not contingent upon the collective opinion held about it. So, while the Earth will remain round, a political regime may cease to be democratic – with all the ensuing consequences.

A distinctive feature of the socio-political realm is that it lacks a tangible standard against which the truthfulness of certain claims can be measured. It is formed and transformed within an intersubjective information and communication space. The current political struggle is being waged over the right to shape this space, and for these purposes, the Community Notes method is undeniably valuable.

Although the focus of this article is primarily on Western MCM – some of which are currently recognized as extremist in Russia – the relevance of analyzing their approaches, intentions, and actions with respect to the information space is beyond question. A portion of the Russian-speaking audience continues to use such platforms, and Russian news outlets regularly cite these sources. Furthermore, the shift in political rhetoric induced by Western MCM suggests that they could be unblocked within the Russian Federation in the medium term, after which their influence on political discourse in Russia is likely to increase sharply.

Burn to the English Channel?
On Effective Security Guarantees in the Context of Russia's Historical
Confrontation With the West

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Keywords: Russia, the West, confrontation, security guarantees

ON NOVEMBER 18, 2021, Russian President Vladimir Putin, in remarks at an expanded meeting of the Russian Foreign Ministry Board, commented that Western countries were ignoring Russia's security concerns, continuing NATO's eastward expansion, and "exacerbating the situation by supplying Kiev with modern lethal weapons, conducting provocative military exercises in the Black Sea and other regions close to our borders." In this regard, he directed [the Foreign Ministry] to "push for serious long-term guarantees that ensure Russia's security."

Two weeks later, during an OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Stockholm, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov warned his foreign counterparts that "the transformation of our neighboring countries into a bridgehead for confrontation with Russia and the deployment of NATO forces in the immediate vicinity of areas of strategic importance to our security are absolutely unacceptable." He called to "translate these valid words into long-term, legally binding security guarantees," emphasizing that this is "a vital prerequisite for preventing the slide towards a confrontational scenario."

The draft treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States on security guarantees and the draft agreement on measures to ensure the security of the Russian Federation and the member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, carefully developed by Russian experts, were handed over to the American side on December 15, 2021. As is known, our Western colleagues then avoided engaging in serious dialogue on this issue. Soon after, we were forced to launch the Special Military Operation, responding to yet another aggression by the Kiev regime – provoked by the West – against the [self-proclaimed] Donetsk and

Lugansk People's Republics [DPR and LPR] and fulfilling our obligations to protect Donbass residents in accordance with Art. 51 of the UN Charter.

The nearly four years that have passed since then have opened many eyes to the real causes of events, taught us much, and left no doubt that in Ukraine we are not fighting a puppet Kiev regime but the enormous military machine of the Western alliance. This machine, gathering momentum and cloaking itself in propagandistic slogans about a so-called Russian threat, is once again moving eastward. Moreover, the West does not hide the revisionist nature of its latest aggression against Russia and its desire to settle scores for past defeats. Most illustrative in this regard was the first official address by the new German Chancellor Friedrich Merz in the Bundestag, in which he promised to make the Bundeswehr “the strongest conventional army in Europe.”

History is repeating itself. Today we are dealing with the same enemies who attacked our homeland 85, 100, and 200 years ago. Only while in the Northern War, the Patriotic War of 1812, the Crimean War, or the Great Patriotic War we fought against individual states and their alliances, now we are confronting virtually the entire Western bloc that has united against us. The reason is simple: the fear that Russia may finally break free from its influence. In any case, we have the potential to do so.

Without achieving victory – or establishing military-political conditions that are unambiguously perceived both in Russia and abroad as a victory – it will be impossible to compel the West to negotiate with us. Historically, the West has been far more receptive to Russian proposals for the formation of a new security architecture (or guarantees) when Russian troops were in Paris or Berlin. Conversely, our constructive approach has always been interpreted by the West as weakness, provoking adversaries to raise the stakes, act more assertively and aggressively, and advance their interests with no regard for Russia's position. In this regard, wishful thinking and all manner of “rose-colored glasses” will only hinder us.

“Tensions Between Our Countries Are Practically a Constant, and It Has Always Been the British Who Provoked Them”

A. Kelin

Keywords: Russia, United Kingdom, tensions, sanctions, anti-Russian hysteria, UK military spending, Russian diaspora

There are far more commonalities than differences in the foreign policy approaches of Britain and the US. Both Washington and London advocate for a “rules-based order” – that is, Western rules. This implies a privileged position for Western transnational corporations, preferential trade terms, support for the military-industrial complex, and advantages in other areas. Most importantly, it reflects an unrestrained desire to dominate global affairs – even in the absence of sufficient capacity to do so.

At the same time, Washington has recently introduced another “rule” that is supposed to underpin this “order”: “America First.” In the context of the collapse of the previous world order, this requires a redistribution of resources and the abandonment of unprofitable and failed initiatives. One example is so-called wokeness, from which Donald Trump has distanced himself, but which remains entrenched in Britain and Europe.

For London, however, maintaining a significant American presence in Europe is essentially a matter of existential importance. The British understand that reaching agreements between Russia and the US on key aspects of European security – including a peaceful settlement in Ukraine – would further devalue the relevance of the European theater of war for Washington.

It should be understood that British sanctions on their own are of rather limited effect. Russian companies have learned to adapt to changing realities. They are successfully restructuring logistics chains and expanding cooperation with reliable partners. The Russian energy sector remains in demand, and the restrictions only serve to stimulate the development of new trade links.

However, negative effects on the global energy market as a whole cannot be ruled out. In their pursuit of short-term political ambitions, the British authorities

clearly fail to calculate the consequences of their actions. They carry risks of destabilizing global energy supply chains. Unlike the US, Britain is much more vulnerable to fluctuations in the energy market. When the strong stumble, the weak tumble.

British media have been writing tall tales and concocting scare stories about Russia for hundreds of years. This trend has only intensified in the context of the West's hybrid aggression against our country. Since the start of the Special Military Operation, local media have acted as a mouthpiece for anti-Russian propaganda in support of the hostile policy pursued by official London.

The military and the increase in defense spending are a favorite pretext for self-promotion by the British authorities, as well as for engaging in the kind of "double bookkeeping" so typical here. In the 2024-2025 fiscal year, expenditures under the budget lines that the British themselves classify as defense amounted to £60.2 billion – just over 2% of GDP. However, in political statements intended for the general public, government representatives prefer to use NATO metrics. This allows them to include several additional categories of spending in the accounting. Using this method, London reportedly spent 2.33% of its GDP on defense last year.

In recent years we have observed attempts by the British elite to consign to oblivion the historical truth about those events and the memory of the heroism of the Soviet people, who saved humanity from Nazism. There are clear instances of open indulgence of neo-Nazism. Some British politicians – whether out of ignorance or opportunism – voice slogans that were used 80 years ago by Hitler's collaborators.

Interest in Russian culture and art has always been high in Britain. However, today, our official cultural and humanitarian programs are completely frozen. This is the result of a political decision made by the British authorities in light of events in Ukraine.

UK Foreign Policy in the Baltic Region: Current Situation and Some Prospects

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Keywords: Baltics, Baltic region, United Kingdom, British strategy, NATO, Ukraine, Ukraine conflict

THE events of September-October 2025 once again highlight the need to analyze the interests of extra-regional actors, first and foremost the United Kingdom, in the Baltic region. In this case, the Baltic region is understood to mean the aggregate of countries forming the coastal perimeter, including coastal zones extending 50-200 kilometers inland. This definition includes all countries with direct access to the Baltic Sea, including access via straits, as in the case of Norway.

The trend of Britain's expanding influence may also encompass a "neighboring perimeter" – i.e., countries without direct sea access, such as Belarus, that share a border with states in the coastal perimeter. This spatial framework is particularly important as it aligns with the definition of hybrid warfare as a war for territorial influence and geopolitical control, which London is waging under the strategy of "asymmetric advantage" due to the lack of other available means, as will be discussed further.

On the one hand, the Baltic Sea is described not only as a geographical area but also as a symbol of the strategic interests of the Euro-Atlantic community; on the other hand, it is said that the Baltic holds significant military and symbolic importance for the Russian Federation. Regarding the UK, we proceed from the premise that NATO is actively employing the following "sub-threshold" and/or asymmetric tools in the Baltic Sea to gain advantages that Russia cannot counter with military force. NATO and the UK do not view competition for maritime control as an end in itself, but as a strategic necessity. Experts regard the Baltic's waters with their chokepoints – straits and islands – as means of mutual restriction of access to the territories of coastal countries (the Baltic states and Kaliningrad Province) and

the deployment of ground forces. To this we may also add the economic impact of logistical costs in the event of a blockade of maritime trade.

The declared and permanent threat to critical underwater infrastructure has become a foundation of its defense and national security concept, as the UK, being an island, is directly dependent on these systems. However, the beneficiary of these threats rightfully draws criticism. It is no coincidence that we find in the Western expert community statements that efforts to protect critical infrastructure allow for a rethinking of priorities in strengthening Europe's collective defense, increasing solidarity, and that the Baltic Sea has, in this regard, become a center of positive ideas and renewed faith in NATO's importance.

However, there is one issue preventing the UK from fully realizing its direct strategic interest in the Northern European-Baltic region: "the challenge of matching its ambitions and commitments with its limited resources". Therefore, we return once again to the highly probable threat of asymmetric (hybrid) actions by the UK against the Russian Federation, which we mentioned at the beginning and which is directly referenced in the 2025 Strategic Defence Review.

Ukrainian Studies Centers in the West: Agents Contributing to the Weakening and Disintegration of Russia

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Keywords: Russia, the West, Ukraine, Ukrainian studies centers, think tanks, analytical centers, disintegration, SMO

THE modern world is rapidly approaching a classical world war, which is currently unfolding as a hybrid confrontation: Coalitions are forming, regional centers of military-political conflict are expanding, economic and financial warfare is being waged, and terrorist acts aimed at weakening competitors are being carried out. The world has split into the collective West and the non-West. Retrospective analysis shows that the establishment of a new world order, as in previous historical epochs, is inevitably accompanied by confrontation between the main centers of power vying for global leadership. In this process, “think tanks” – institutes for scientific and expert analysis – acquire the status of active agents, fulfilling a critically important function: providing informational and analytical support for political decision-making.

The Western academic community has traditionally shown keen interest in the comprehensive study of developments in the geopolitical space of Russia. Regardless of the form this space has taken (the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, or the Russian Federation) and irrespective of the dominant political regime, this interest not only persists but is intensifying. This phenomenon is driven by the demands of practical politics, as think tanks exert a significant influence on the shaping of Western foreign policy and the exploration of issues of national security issues and governance.

Specialized institutions focused on regional and area studies serve precisely this goal – the production of applied knowledge. A vivid illustration of this trend is the formation and evolution of Ukrainian studies in the West: from individual studies within Russian and Soviet studies to the creation of powerful research institutes that advise government bodies.

The purpose of this publication is to identify and examine, using systemic, geopolitical, and discursive approaches, the operational characteristics of Western-based Ukrainian studies centers as agents contributing to the weakening and disintegration of Russia.

A battle of Ukrainian and Russian historical narratives is in effect unfolding within Ukrainian studies in the West, reflecting the struggle for Ukraine's geopolitical and cultural definition. It must be acknowledged that Russia is not currently winning this battle, given that it is the West that is choosing which meanings to promote.

In conclusion, the following conclusions can be drawn.

First, the activities of Western centers of Ukrainian studies are primarily focused on constructing, academically legitimizing, and promoting in the public space the following conceptual frameworks:

- Ukraine is a centuries-old “victim” of Tsarist, Soviet, and modern Russia
- Ukraine is a kind of “European outpost” against “Russian aggression”
- Ukraine is a country of “revolutionary struggle”
- Ukrainian nationalists are “heroes and fighters for Ukraine’s freedom and independence from Moscow”
- Russia has employed “colonial” mechanisms of governance in the post-Soviet space, and “decolonization” of the Russian Federation is allegedly the only possible path toward the emergence of a new, just world order.

Second, current Western expert studies of regional developments in Ukraine are increasingly focused on the territory of historical Novorossiia, with the aim of challenging Russia's historical claim to this space and subsequently initiating centrifugal trends across the entire territory of the Russian Federation. In effect, a scenario for the disintegration of Russia is being constructed – something that is supported not only by the research conducted in Western countries, but also by public statements from heads of state, documents of international organizations, and the creation of various destructive entities whose primary objective is to implement techniques to fragment Russia by spurring ethnic nationalism within its regions.

Serbia's Struggle for Justice: Kosovo and Metohija, Republika Srpska, and the Challenges Facing Serbian People

A. Gujon

Keywords: apartheid in Kosovo and Metohija, the situation of Serbs, legal violations in Republika Srpska, Russia's support

TODAY, the Serbian people are enduring trials no less severe than those of the past. At one time, Serbia was the first line of defense for Europe against the Ottoman Empire; today, it is a bastion in the fight to preserve identity, rights, and dignity in a globalized world where international law is increasingly trampled. Serbia is a state that won its freedom and independence at enormous cost. It therefore understands well that peace is the ultimate goal and the highest value. Peace, however, does not mean accepting injustice. And it is injustice that Serbs face daily in Kosovo and Metohija and in Republika Srpska.

Kosovo and Metohija is the only place in Europe where true apartheid exists.

Serbian families in Kosovo and Metohija live in fear, deprived of the right to a normal life. Their property is seized, their children grow up under constant threat, and their language and faith are systematically suppressed. The use of Serbian currency is prohibited, and the provision of professional services in the Serbian language are banned. Institutional discrimination has become the norm. Current trends indicate that even the dignity of women is under threat due to increasingly frequent cases of sexual harassment in the north of the province, with no accountability for the perpetrators. All of this points to an atmosphere of insecurity and a total absence of the rule of law.

Serbs are also facing injustice in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The recent verdict by a BiH court against President of Republika Srpska Milorad Dodik for non-compliance with a decision of the so-called High Representative [for Bosnia and Herzegovina] Christian Schmidt is not just an attack on one individual. It is an attack on the entire Republika Srpska, its administrative institutions, and ultimately its people – a calculated attempt to endanger its very existence.

A military alliance composed of Croatia, Albania, and so-called Kosovo has already begun to arm itself. This raises the question: Why would Croatia and Albania – already NATO members – need to create such a cooperation format? The only logical answer is that it is aimed against Serbia and the Serbian people.

The authorities of Serbia will always stand by their people, whether they live in Kosovo and Metohija, Republika Srpska, or elsewhere in the region. Belgrade supports the lawfully and legitimately elected leadership of Republika Srpska. Moreover, the Serbs of Kosovo and Metohija and the Serb List [political party] will receive support in their resistance to the terror perpetrated by Albin Kurti's regime. In this struggle, Russia's support is not only diplomatic – it is fraternal. It reflects our shared historical struggle for freedom.

Preservation of Socio-Cultural and Spiritual Foundations as a Condition for the Development of Georgian Society

O. Semyonova

Keywords: traditional institutions, Georgian Orthodox Church, “strategic patience,” national identity

THE socio-cultural and spiritual foundations of Georgian society, along with the significant role of the Georgian Orthodox Church, hold special importance in resolving the complex situation that has developed in Russian-Georgian relations. In this article, the Church is viewed not so much as a religious organization as a socio-cultural institution that shows high effectiveness in preserving identity and statehood.

The situation in Georgia is quite ambiguous, in part due to its complex relationship with Russia. The countries were at war relatively recently and severed diplomatic ties. Nevertheless, in practice, mutually beneficial relations have been developing between them, and Georgia has refused to join the Western front against Russia. As of the end of 2024, the Russian Federation is among Georgia’s top three trading partners.⁴

It should be noted that the deterioration of Georgia’s relations with the West has not led to a fundamental improvement in relations with Russia. However, while the basic parameters remain unchanged, significant factors and trends have emerged that could lead to positive changes in the foreseeable future. The current substance of Russian-Georgian relations has become characterized by pragmatism, based on economic, geographic, and other practical realities.

The Georgian elites’ understanding of national priorities and their defense of the country’s interests logically leads to a rejection of blind adherence to instructions from Washington and Brussels. This serves as a foundation for developing a pragmatic policy and constructing

mutually beneficial, stable relations based on recognized law and within the framework of existing institutions.

The preservation of the traditionalist foundations of modern Georgia and the special role of the Georgian Orthodox Church in the country's development reflect adherence to established socio-cultural patterns, guided by Christian values and norms. This, in particular, prevents the majority of Georgian society from accepting deviant mentalities and submitting to destructive behavioral models imposed from the outside.⁸

Candidates for accession to the EU and NATO are expected to demonstrate full loyalty – which, in practice, means dismantling traditional foundations and destroying the values of their own countries. However, Western trends toward extreme individualism, childlessness, and the blurring of gender roles are at odds with the characteristics of Georgian society, which include hospitality and respect for elders, and the primacy of family values and patriarchal traditions. A key role is also played by attachment to folk traditions, the ritual feast (*supra*), an optimistic outlook on life, the positive role of national cuisine, winemaking, and distinctive music – all of which constitute a rich, multifaceted culture and contribute to the preservation of national identity, and in essence, statehood.

Paradoxically, the escalation in Russian-Georgian relations led to a shedding of illusions and yielded constructive outcomes. Having experienced the consequences of broken ties, politicians and the peoples of both Russia and Georgia came to realize that mutual isolation brings no benefits, whereas multifaceted cooperation, tourism exchange, and much more can promote mutual enrichment and further development.

A Year in Chişinău

O. Ozerov

Keywords: Republic of Moldova, letters of credence, Vienna Convention, Russian House, patriarchal traditions, “Romanization,” Transnistria

Over the past year and a little more, the author has held 192 meetings with diplomats, public figures, politicians, and ordinary people, and traveled nearly the entire country, making 24 trips across it.

These meetings and journeys provided him with far more food for thought than the brief, vague, and – both personally and professionally – unproductive encounters with representatives of the official authorities. Their behavior was often (though not always) not only hostile but more than strange, unlike anything he had encountered in nearly 45 years of diplomatic service.

Summing up his year in Chişinău, he can confidently state that there are no unfriendly countries or peoples – only unfriendly elites. The Moldovan people are friendly, welcoming, hospitable, and open-minded. Aside from the more extreme cases, they are generally well disposed toward Russia, despite the deafening propaganda poured on them from morning to night by progovernment media outlets. The broad public campaign in the country against the closure of the Russian House was yet another confirmation that, at the popular level, Russia is not seen as an enemy. People in Moldova clearly understand that Moscow harbors no hostility toward their country and has no aggressive intentions, despite the constant attacks directed at it.

He concludes that the dark period in our relations will inevitably come to an end. It cannot be otherwise. However, this will require political will and a rethinking by Chişinău of its “eastern policy.” Russia was, is, and will remain a great power, firmly defending its national interests, and the establishment of friendly relations with it fully corresponds to the core interests of both countries.

The Third Lebanon War

S. Vorobyov

Keywords: Lebanon Wars, Israel, Iran, Palestine, Syria, Hamas, Hezbollah.

THE term “Lebanon Wars” has long become familiar both in the media and in academic discourse associated with the modern history of the Middle East. However, it is important to clarify that in the course of the First (1982), Second (2006), and Third (2023-2025) Lebanon Wars, it was not the Lebanese state or its armed forces that fought against the Israelis, but irregular formations representing only part of society (Hezbollah units in 2006), with the participation of foreign allies (Palestine Liberation Organization militants and the Syrian Army in 1982). During the Second Lebanon War, when Hezbollah had not yet fully developed into an independent political and military force, both the Palestinians and the Syrians pursued their own goals under the prevailing circumstances. [PLO leader] Yasser Arafat sought to preserve the PLO’s position on Lebanese soil, while Damascus aimed to maintain its policy of dictating terms to Lebanon under conditions of partial occupation of the country. All this unfolded amid a bloody civil war in Lebanon and significant Palestinian- Syrian disagreements.

It is impossible not to acknowledge the significant differences between the Lebanon Wars, especially considering that the Third Lebanon War was provoked by the acute crisis in Gaza that began on October 7, 2023. Events on the Lebanese front cannot be viewed in isolation from the actions of Hamas in Gaza and, of course, Iran’s policies.

As for the chronological framework of the Third Lebanon War, it appears that it may now be defined as extending from October 8, 2023, to November 27, 2024 (the date of the ceasefire agreement).

And in conclusion, a few words about Russian-Arab relations and our ties with Lebanon today. It must be acknowledged that there has been a clear deterioration: The turn of events in December 2024 in Syria, an ally of Russia, was unfavorable to us – an obvious and regrettable fact. The indefinite postponement of the Russia-Arab summit in Moscow scheduled for October 15 and the fact that the Russian Federation

was not invited to the Sharm el-Sheikh summit are deeply disappointing. Since July 9, 2025, following the retirement of deputy foreign minister Mikhail Bogdanov, no one has been appointed as the special representative of the president of Russia for the Middle East and African countries. There are other indicators of some weakening of Moscow's positions in the region. However, this should not be dramatized – Russia possesses vast experience and potential in Middle Eastern affairs.

Russian policy toward the Lebanese – and toward all Arabs – remains, without a doubt, friendly. It remained so during the Gaza conflict and the Third Lebanon War, and will continue to be so. Positive changes in our traditionally good relations with Lebanon are inevitable following the resolution of the acute Ukrainian crisis on terms acceptable to us. We have many sincere friends on Lebanese soil, and the Lebanese have friends on Russian soil.

Political and Legal Aspects of BRICS Cooperation in the Current Context

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Keywords: international relations, global institutions, political regionalism, interstate cooperation, national interests, BRICS

IN THE current circumstances, the trend of searching for and establishing effective mechanisms to promote national interests at the global level is growing and gaining strength. At the same time, most international platforms in use – particularly the UN and NATO, which are experiencing systemic difficulties reconciling supranational and national priorities – not only show dysfunction in political decision-making but also reveal a crisis of political trust among member states.

In this regard, it becomes relevant to examine certain practices of political regionalism for building interstate cooperation based on shared national goals and objectives, as well as priority areas of mutually beneficial collaboration. One aspect is political interaction among BRICS member states, which is focused on strengthening national security systems, integrating strategically important infrastructure, developing joint initiatives on economic issues, and so forth.

Currently, the strategic framework guiding the work of BRICS member states is the BRICS Economic Partnership Strategy 2025, which outlines three key priorities for interstate cooperation: first – trade, investment, and finance; second – the digital economy; and third – sustainable development (climate change, energy, infrastructure development, human resources development, and food security).

On July 6-7, 2025, the BRICS Economic Partnership Strategy 2030 was adopted in Rio de Janeiro. This new strategy takes into account current challenges observed in international relations and related global and regional political processes. It reaffirms the principles previously established in the areas of economics, digitalization, and comprehensive development, and places particular

emphasis on the need to improve the international monetary and financial system (including through reform of the International Monetary Fund).

Assessing the current political and economic potential of BRICS overall, it can be noted that its comprehensive influence has been increasing significantly in recent years. This also attests to this association's promising prospects and its constructive role as a geostrategic counterbalance to the Western community, as can be seen, for example, from an analysis of certain outcomes of BRICS economic initiatives.

At the political level, BRICS discussions focus primarily on coordinating foreign policy approaches in light of deteriorating bilateral relations between BRICS members and other states, as well as the expansion of the destructive geopolitical influence of the collective West [9]. Moreover, the official BRICS political agenda currently includes issues related to fostering and maintaining systemic resilience in the face of global risks such as cybercrime and cyberterrorism, civil armed conflicts, uncontrolled mass migration, and more.

In substance, this involves organizing and conducting negotiations to resolve a particular contentious issue or to consolidate the existing political partnership through official agreements.

Under current conditions, the implementation of various infrastructure projects within BRICS undoubtedly shows promise and innovation. In this context, maintaining an open and mutually beneficial partnership among BRICS member states is particularly important. Such partnership must be based on ensuring trust-based governance practices and utilizing effective platforms to discuss joint initiatives. Within this framework, a positive track record of multilateral cooperation has been established over many years, free of any major conceptual problems or discrepancies.

At the same time, the continued guaranteed development of positive interstate communication within BRICS depends on maintaining constructive political dialogue and expanding and diversifying the existing practices of cooperation among the judicial systems of BRICS member states.

Digitalization as a Driver of BRICS Cooperation in Higher and Vocational Education

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Keywords: Russia, Brazil, India, China, South Africa, BRICS, education, digitalization, cooperation, national projects

THE BRICS platform unites 10 geographically distant but ideologically aligned countries that support the formation of a multipolar world order and aim to strengthen their technological sovereignty. The association has proven to be in demand among Global South countries – in 2024-2025, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the UAE, and later Indonesia joined Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa as full members.

This doubling of membership has made it necessary to identify promising areas that can stimulate the new partners' involvement in BRICS's multifaceted work. One such area is educational cooperation, as its deepening aligns with the interests of BRICS countries in gaining international experience in training highly qualified personnel for the innovative development of their industries. In this context, the digitalization of educational cooperation provides additional opportunities to create flexible joint programs and to overcome geographical distance and financial constraints.

Issues of digital cooperation across various fields are among BRICS's priorities and are reflected in Points 40 and 57-61 of the final declaration of the 17th BRICS Summit, held July 6-7, 2025, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Nevertheless, the potential of digital platforms as drivers of cooperation in higher and vocational education among BRICS countries has not been fully realized due to a number of political, regulatory, technical, and sociocultural challenges. Therefore, a key research task is to identify new mechanisms that can accelerate the digitalization of educational cooperation at various levels within BRICS, in line with Russia's strategic development priorities.

Russia, Brazil, India, China, and South Africa each recognize digitalization as a key priority in their national strategies for the development of higher and vocational education, yet the principles guiding its implementation differ across countries. The approaches of Russia and China to introducing digital tools into the learning process are characterized by a high level of centralization and a focus on the use of domestic technologies and standards. At the same time, Brazil and South Africa face infrastructure constraints and digital inequality. Consequently, each country is interested in acquiring new experience in implementing educational digitalization tools.

The BRICS platform already includes institutions for cooperation in both higher education (the BRICS Network University) and vocational education (the TVET Cooperation Alliance). The launch of joint digital solutions within the association would represent a significant step toward harmonizing the educational systems of its member states. Creating innovative online platforms offering courses in the most in-demand industrial fields, implementing digital skills passports, and adopting a framework document that codifies basic national data protection standards in cross-border exchanges would allow BRICS countries to lay the foundation for a new educational space. This space would serve as an alternative to Western platforms and integrate best practices in the digitalization of the rapidly growing economies within the association.

In turn, by enhancing cooperation with BRICS countries in the digitalization of education, Russia can strengthen its position in the international educational arena, share its experience with friendly countries of the Global South and Global East, and incorporate successful mechanisms from its partners into the implementation of its own national projects. Moreover, the launch of new digital formats opens opportunities for involving businesses from BRICS countries in the development of training courses that are in demand among industrial companies. The association will advance toward creating a digital educational infrastructure that lies outside Western influence and contributes to the formation of a multipolar world order.

Russia-Mexico: 135 Years of Diplomatic Relations

N. Sofinsky

Keywords: Russia, Mexico, 135th anniversary of diplomatic relations, Russian-Mexican relations

GENERALLY, in any retrospective review of relations between countries, the most frequently used characterization of their historical development is the well-worn phrase popular among experts: “ups and downs.” This turn of phrase has also made its way into the paradigm of relations between Russia and Mexico.

Our countries first established diplomatic relations 135 years ago, on December 11, 1890, driven by the emerging needs of trade and navigation, as well as a mutual cultural affinity. Following the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia, official ties were severed under the influence of the geopolitical climate of the time. They were restored on August 4, 1924, as part of the global wave of recognition, which became a kind of first experience of détente for Soviet Russia – an initiative in which Mexico played a prominent role.

Contrary to expectations, the first postwar decade – ushering in the era of the Cold War – unfortunately did not become a period of particular closeness or stability in Soviet-Mexican cooperation. It was only in the 1960s that relations between the two countries once again embarked on a trajectory of steady development, maintaining this trend in the decades that followed.

Russian-Mexican relations once again faced serious challenges in the 1990s, following the dissolution of the USSR and the emergence of the Russian Federation as an independent actor in international relations amid diverging trends in the global geopolitical landscape. These challenges required both sides to adapt accordingly, but at the same time, they opened up new prospects for further development.

In recent years, due to the well-known escalation of the geopolitical situation surrounding the Ukraine crisis, certain difficulties have arisen in relations between Russia and Mexico. These stem from the massive anti-Russian campaign initiated by the collective West, which led to a resurgence of military confrontation, the disruption of the entire system of political and legal regulation and global trade

mechanisms, and the breakdown of established logistical and financial-settlement supply chains.

As a result, differences emerged between Moscow and Mexico City in their assessments of the Ukraine crisis. Mexico was among those states that condemned the Special Military Operation of the Russian Armed Forces but did not support the Western policy of financial and economic sanctions against our country, rejecting any possibility of joining them in the future.

Russia regards such a position on Mexico's part as friendly neutrality, focused not on absolutizing political differences, but on placing national interests at the forefront – with an emphasis on the pragmatic and prioritized use of areas of practical cooperation, grounded in the historically established positive experience of interaction.

The 135th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Russia and Mexico provides both sides with an excellent occasion to reaffirm their commitment to strengthening these ties, based on the belief that cooperation will bring tangible mutual benefits.

Throughout this time, Mexico has remained one of our key partners in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Today, the Latin American – and with it, the Mexican – vector is acquiring additional significance, becoming of strategic interest to Russia.

The Russia-China Tandem: Driving a New Economic Reality

OPENING the Seventh Russia-China Energy Forum in Beijing, Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin emphasized that the continuation of aggressive sanctions policies against Russia and China will undoubtedly hasten the onset of another economic crisis in the Euro-Atlantic space. Moreover, by cutting themselves off from access to Russia's competitive resource base and China's component platform, our Western opponents will rapidly decline – to the point of completely losing their technological and economic agency. All of this threatens inevitable global upheavals and a civilizational reordering on a global scale. Signs of deep and complex changes in the world economy are already visible: growing debt, loss of trust in the existing financial system, a search for alternatives, uneven population growth across the planet, uncontrolled migration, and a lack of affordable energy.

Thanks to the farsighted policies of the two countries' leaders, Russia and China are prepared for any negative scenario in the development of the global economy. Not only has modern infrastructure for oil and gas deliveries been built in advance, ensuring mutual energy security, but the foundations of a financial infrastructure have also been laid.

Speaking about the energy sector, the head of Rosneft emphasized that the unique synthesis of Russian resources and China's technological platform – unprecedented in global historical practice – reliably ensures the stable development of our economies, taking into account the priorities of domestic consumption.

The foundation of the steady progress of both countries and their key advantage is the high and guaranteed efficiency of power supply to their economies. Today, electricity generation in China is more than double that of the US. This situation is the reverse of what it was 20 years ago, Sechin noted. Thanks to sound energy policies, electricity costs for the industrial sector in Russia and China are more than twice as low as in the US, and three to four times lower than in some EU countries.

Overall, the Russia-China tandem is showing the entire world – particularly the countries of the Global South – qualitatively new, unique opportunities for

multipolarity, shifting the trajectory of human civilization. These are truly equal, mutually dependent, and complementary partnerships, in which success is a shared value for all participants. Colonial systems and reckless neocolonial schemes are irreversibly becoming a thing of the past.

As Sechin rightly pointed out, such attempts are inevitably doomed to fail. Instead of achieving their declared goals, energy consumers in Western countries already find themselves in a dire situation – they are “cancelling” themselves. Speaking about the new world being built by Russia and China, Sechin recalled the words spoken by the leadership of our country on the first day of the Great Patriotic War, which are more relevant today than ever: “Our cause is just, the enemy will be defeated, victory will be ours!”

65th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations Between Russia and Laos

T. Phomvihane

Keywords: Russia, Laos, strategic partnership

THE friendly ties between Russia and Laos date back to the years of the Lao people's struggle for freedom and independence. During that difficult time, the Soviet Union supported the Lao revolutionary cause. The solidarity between the two countries has remained a solid foundation for the development of bilateral cooperation to this day. The establishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR and Laos on October 7, 1960, was a landmark event, the 65th anniversary of which we are celebrating this year.

With the emergence of the new Lao state on the world map, contacts between the LPDR and the USSR continued to steadily grow. In May 1976, during a visit to Moscow by Kaysone Phomvihane, general secretary of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP), a joint Soviet-Lao declaration was signed, laying the foundation for cooperation in the areas of culture, science, trade, and mutual settlements between the two countries.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Laos continued to view Russia as a close friend with a similar worldview and maintained a relationship of trust and mutual understanding. On December 31, 1991, the LPDR recognized the Russian Federation as the legal successor to the USSR.

In the 1990s, Russian-Laotian relations went through a difficult period due to the collapse of the socialist bloc, the global financial and economic crisis, and other factors. Both countries faced a number of domestic challenges, but nevertheless continued their political dialogue in the interest of establishing cooperation at a new stage. Of historical significance was the signing in 1994 of the Treaty on the Fundamentals of Friendly Relations between the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Russian Federation.

In the early 2000s, bilateral contacts gradually resumed. The official visit to Russia by LPDR prime minister Bounnhang Vorachit in 2003, during which a

substantial package of documents was signed, was an important event in strengthening traditional friendship and laid the foundation for achieving tangible results in advancing cooperation in the era of globalization.

The adoption of the Declaration on Strategic Partnership between the Russian Federation and the LPDR in the Asia-Pacific region following the official visit to Russia by LPDR president Choummaly Sayasone in 2011 opened a new era in the establishment and expansion of multifaceted cooperation between the two states.

A significant event in the celebration of the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations was Sisoulith's official visit to Russia in July 2025. Following extensive talks with Vladimir Putin, seven agreements were signed, including on interparty and interagency cooperation.

The foreign ministries of Laos and Russia effectively coordinate their actions. Exchanges of visits and consultations at the level of deputy foreign ministers make a significant contribution to strengthening friendly relations between the countries.

In May 2025, as minister of foreign affairs of the LPDR and special representative of the president of Laos, I had the honor of participating in celebrations in Moscow marking the 80th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War and in June paid an official visit to Russia.

Over the past decades, significant progress has been made in the implementation of joint programs in the field of education, particularly in the training of a large number of Lao personnel and specialists in Russia.

The socio-cultural dimension has been steadily developing since 2013, when the Russian Center for Science and Culture (RCSC) in Vientiane resumed its activities. This has contributed to the revitalization of cultural exchanges and humanitarian contacts between the peoples of the two countries. Information cooperation is also underway.

The Rapid Restoration and Development of Russia-Yemen Relations

Ye. Kudrov

Keywords: Yemen's humanitarian crisis, Ansar Allah, Presidential Leadership Council, Russia-Yemen cooperation

THE Republic of Yemen (RY), traditionally a friendly nation to Russia, has been in a state of acute military-political conflict for more than a decade. Earlier, between 2011 and 2014, Yemen went through the dramatic events of the “Arab Spring” and their domestic political consequences, which required significant efforts both from the Yemenis themselves and from key regional actors to resolve internal disagreements and ensure the transfer of power.

Such prolonged upheaval has come at a high cost to the Yemeni people. In addition to the tens of thousands of lives lost and hundreds of thousands injured, including civilians, Yemen has lost part of its infrastructure, and the country's economy has contracted significantly. According to World Bank estimates, the total GDP loss of the RY between 2011 and 2021 amounted to \$126 billion. Between 2022 and 2024, the economy somewhat stabilized, and in 2022 even recorded a slight growth, which unfortunately was followed by a decline the next year due to the suspension of oil exports.

As a result, Yemen today finds itself in a situation where the internationally recognized government – which declared Aden to be the RY's “temporary capital” and primarily operates from there – controls the territory of the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and several important northern regions, including the major cities of Marib and Taiz. Meanwhile, the government formed by the leadership of the Ansar Allah movement⁶ in Sana holds the remaining northwestern provinces of the country. Along the front lines between the armed forces of the parties, occasional exchanges of fire, drone strikes, and even isolated skirmishes of local significance continue to occur; however, large-scale inter-Yemeni confrontation, fortunately, has not been seen for some time.

Under these conditions, in order to help restore the RY's economy and subsequently overcome the humanitarian crisis, recent efforts of Russian diplomacy

have been primarily focused on reviving bilateral cooperation with the internationally recognized authorities of friendly Yemen.

In February 2024, Ahmad Awad bin Mubarak, then chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Yemen and minister of foreign affairs, paid a working visit to Moscow – his first visit to our country in the capacity of prime minister.

In addition to bilateral political contacts, work also began in the second half of 2024 on updating the legal framework for cooperation.

Another fundamentally important area of bilateral cooperation is the resumption of work through the Russian-Yemeni Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, and Scientific, and Technical Cooperation.

Overall, the series of intensive bilateral contacts at various levels – whose undisputed highlight was Al-Alimi's visit to Moscow – confirmed that Russia and Yemen are genuinely committed to deepening cooperation across a wide range of areas. In this regard, it is telling that in an interview with RIA Novosti, published just days after his visit, the Yemeni leader emphasized that his talks in Moscow would serve as an additional impetus for relations between the two countries. It is worth noting that all the necessary prerequisites for the further intensification of bilateral cooperation across various sectors are indeed in place: In terms of trade turnover, Yemen ranks third (after the UAE and Saudi Arabia) among Russia's trading partners on the Arabian Peninsula.

What is particularly important for Russian producers is that the overwhelming majority of economic interaction consists of exports from Russia. At the same time, Yemen's population is growing rapidly and, according to WHO estimates, exceeded 40 million by the end of 2024. Accordingly, once the country inevitably enters a trajectory of political settlement, its economic significance will increase.

Current Trends in Key Macroeconomic Indicators in Africa: Their Role in the African Strategy of Russian Economic Operators

V. Baikov

Keywords: Top 10 African economies, rising public debt, ranking of successful African countries.

The IMF released a World Economic Outlook report in April 2025 that includes forecasts for African countries. These data enable an analysis of the 2025 GDP volumes – both nominal and purchasing power parity (PPP) – of the top 10 largest African economies.

According to IMF estimates, based on GDP forecasts calculated at the nominal exchange rate of national currencies to the US dollar, the following picture emerges for individual countries in the aforementioned top 10. South Africa remains in first place with a GDP of \$410.34 billion. Egypt holds second place with \$347.34 billion. Somewhat unexpectedly, Algeria ranks third with \$268.89 billion. Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, drops out of the top three and falls to fourth place with a forecasted nominal GDP of \$188.27 billion. Morocco secures a firm fifth place with \$165.84 billion. It is followed predictably by Kenya, Ethiopia, and Angola, with forecasted GDPs of \$131.67, \$117.46, and \$113.34 billion respectively. Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana round out the top 10 African countries by forecasted nominal GDP with \$94.48 and \$88.37 billion, respectively.

These figures do not reflect the real economic weight of several of the countries listed. GDP calculations and forecasts are purely official indicators, based on the official exchange rate of national currencies to the US dollar, and do not account for the actual contribution of the shadow economy. Nevertheless, they make it possible to identify leading countries and observe trends in the evolution of the list of the top 10 African economies.

In light of the above, it seems that Russian businesses should pay close attention to Africa's economic heavyweights – especially South Africa and Egypt, and to some extent Algeria (although it presents a challenging business environment). Promising avenues for Russian business include Morocco, Côte

d'Ivoire (home to the headquarters of the African Development Bank), and Kenya. Ethiopia also remains a likely destination for advancing Russian business interests. In any case, it is important to remember that [the market in] Africa will not open up overnight. Continuous monitoring of the political situation and macroeconomic trends is essential. This publication may serve that purpose.

Europe and Russia: The Origins of Rivalry

Sh. Shakhalilov

Keywords: Russia, Europe, foreign policy, Catherine II, Alexander I, Nicholas I, national interests, Western powers

THE encounter with the West during the pre-Petrine period of Russian history had mixed consequences for Russia's future. On the one hand, Russia gained the opportunity to establish trade relations with its western neighbors and to adopt their achievements. On the other hand, their hostility toward Moscow became evident. The main goal of Russia's foreign policy toward the West during this period was to return the Russian lands that had fallen under foreign rule during the era of Russia's fragmentation.

The wars waged to resolve this important issue were described by Russian historian Vasily Klyuchevsky as defensive, meaning that Russia was fighting to reclaim what was its own, not to seize what belonged to others. Later, this goal was supplemented by the task of extending Russian territory in the northwest and south to natural maritime borders in order to strengthen its security and establish trade with Europe. The first objective led to clashes with Poland and Sweden, the second – with Turkey.

At the very end of the 17th century, Russian interests for the first time aligned with those of European countries in restraining the expansionist ambitions of Ottoman Turkey. As a result, Russia briefly found itself in alliance with them while fighting for access to the southern seas. Peter I, who launched two Azov campaigns, counted on assistance from Austria, Venice, and Poland in achieving this objective. However, it quickly became clear that the allies had no intention of aiding Russia, viewing it only as an ad hoc partner for advancing their own goals.

In the struggle for access to the Baltic Sea, Russia was opposed by Sweden. In this war, European countries again sided with its adversary – this time Denmark, Poland, and Saxony. But even in this case, Russia soon found itself alone against the enemy.

Catherine II inherited two unresolved problems from her predecessors: the Polish and the Turkish questions. The Polish problem had both geopolitical and religious dimensions. The security of Russia's western borders depended on the situation in Poland and the policies of the European powers backing it. The Polish state included historical lands of Western Rus inhabited by an Orthodox population, whose difficult condition evoked strong sympathy among Russians.

The wisdom of the great rulers Peter and Catherine lay in the fact that they pursued a national policy, promoting truly Russian interests on the international stage. During their reigns, Russia did not wage wars for the benefit of foreign states. The situation changed after them. Emperor Paul joined the anti-French coalition alongside Austria, England, and Prussia, placing Russia on an "unnatural and thankless path as the savior of Europe". His successor and son, Alexander I, who declared upon ascending the Russian throne that he would continue Catherine II's legacy, in practice led Russia along this very path throughout his reign.

Alexander I's successor, Nicholas I, was even more fearful of revolutions in Europe and their impact on Russia, especially in light of the Decembrist uprising of 1825 in St. Petersburg. By supporting European monarchs and safeguarding order in Europe, he also believed he was thereby securing the interests of his empire. His rejection of any opposition to legitimate authority led to a renewed closeness between the Russian and Austrian courts in their efforts to counter liberation movements.

Russia paid a high price for its long and close alliance with these states, which Russian diplomacy considered essential for containing Britain and France. However, Austria and Prussia were not irreconcilable opponents of the British and often entered into ad hoc agreements with France against Russia when it suited their interests.

The history of international relations provides ample evidence that unity among the great powers is not in Russia's interest. In such cases, putting aside their quarrels with one another, they would combine their efforts to contain Russia, seeking to subordinate it to their own interests and deprive it of independence.

“The Struggle for Their Own State”:
The International Activity of the Ukrainian Post-Revolutionary Émigré
Community Amid the Formation of Russia Abroad in the 1920s

N. Vasiliyeva

Keywords: Russia Abroad, Ukrainian political emigration, postrevolutionary refugees, League of Nations, High Commissioner for Russian Refugees, Fridtjof Nansen, Nansen passports, Ukraine, Ukrainian People’s Republic (UPR)

THE October 1917 Revolution and the ensuing Civil War in Russia triggered, in the early 20th century, a mass exodus from the country that many domestic and foreign scholars would later refer to as “the first mass political emigration of modern times.” According to the most conservative estimates found in various Soviet sources from the 1920s, the number of Russian émigrés in this wave ranged from 1.5 million to 2 million people. At the same time, the émigrés themselves, seeking to lend their community greater political weight in the eyes of the ruling elites of their host countries, often placed this figure between 3 million and 3.5 million.

Unlike the Western Armenian refugee diaspora, which at that time was the second-largest community of displaced persons in the early interwar period and was formed based on ethnic unity among its members, the aforementioned generation of Russian émigrés was characterized more by a state identity than an ethnic one. In the eyes of the outside world, it included all those who had left the former Russian Empire, rejected Soviet citizenship, and not become citizens of the newly formed states that emerged in its place.

The situation was even more acute for émigrés from “Little Russia” [Malorossiia]. Moreover, divisions arose even within this diaspora, which had initially been formed on a unified territorial basis.”

A significant number of prominent émigrés from Little Russia considered themselves ethnic Russians from the very beginning, believing that in the historical context of their time, the word “Ukrainian” was “a symbol of non- Russianness, a renunciation of Russianness.”

At the same time, there were many so-called *samostiyniki* [supporters of Ukrainian independence – Trans.] within this émigré group who, on the contrary, consistently emphasized their “Ukrainian” rather than Little Russian identity and openly supported the idea of Ukraine’s political independence from Russia.

In the ideological discourse of the Petlyurists, the term Little Russian was exclusively associated with the word “renegade” or “traitor.” For this reason, they opposed any attempts by members of Russia Abroad to integrate émigrés of Ukrainian origin into its ranks, asserting before the international community that there were profound and inherent national and cultural differences between Great Russians and Ukrainians.

Through large-scale agitation and propaganda efforts in many of the victorious European countries that signed the Versailles Treaty, the Petlyurists persistently sought international recognition of the “legitimate” rights of Ukrainian refugees to exist entirely independently from Russia Abroad. Moreover, against the backdrop of the general financial insolvency of most other political groups and associations established by Ukrainians in exile, this movement – which from the outset had held pro-Polish positions and received significant material support from Poland, both through official and unofficial channels, as well as from certain other European states – was able rather quickly to bring under its banner virtually all Ukrainian independence-oriented factions.

At the turn of the 1930s, the central theme in the political discourse of this segment of the postrevolutionary émigré community became the struggle against Soviet “domination” in Ukraine and its “catastrophic consequences” for the 30 million people living in the region. Yet shortly before this, many of its representatives had, on the whole, taken a fairly loyal view of the Bolsheviks’ active policy of Ukrainization in the Ukrainian SSR at the time, perceiving it “as a partial realization of national aspirations.”

From the History of the Russian Donetsk Governorate: The Archives Bear Witness

I. Kochenkov

Keywords: Donetsk Okrug, Donetsk Governorate, Don Host Oblast, Conciliation Commission, administrative division

THE inevitable collapse of the Provisional Government during the revolution, along with the slogan “all power to the local soviets,” contributed to local executive committees independently establishing new administrative boundaries. An attempt to legalize this phenomenon is evident in the decree of the Council of People’s Commissars (CPC) of January 27, 1918, “On the Determination of the Boundaries of Governorates, Uyezds [administrative units subordinate to a governorate – Trans.], etc.”¹ This decree stated primarily that “issues of changing the boundaries of governorates, uyezds, and volosts [rural administrative units subordinate to an uyezd – Trans.] are to be resolved entirely by local soviets”; it further stated that disputed issues and disagreements arising when parts of one governorate or oblast [region, a name used in this time period to designate administrative units for less developed frontier areas – Trans.] were transferred to another “are to be resolved by joint commissions of the interested governorate soviets or their congresses.”

This decree granted local executive committees the right to establish new boundaries when transferring to other administrative-territorial units, submitting their decisions to the People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs, which, in turn, approved all changes. Essentially, the decree legalized the process of forming new administrative boundaries that had already taken shape in practice.

The task of coordinating the creation of new districts and oblasts and implementing the plans of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in this regard was taken up by the Administrative Commission. Established under the Presidium of the All- Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) in December 1919, the Commission was charged “both with the general development of principles for the new territorial division of the republic and with

resolving individual specific cases of the creation of uyezds, governorates, and oblasts.”

According to archival data, the Administrative Commission regulated internal border disputes, and in the summer of 1920, the Donetsk Governorate was part of the RSFSR.

Naturally, the Ukrainian side’s arguments regarding the economic self-sufficiency of the Donetsk Basin were merely a pretext for annexing Russian “fragments” of the former Donetsk Republic into the now Ukrainian Donetsk Governorate. In reality, the region was already subordinated to the VSNKh and functioned as an integrated whole in this regard, and it was essentially irrelevant that the coal deposits ended up on different sides of administrative borders. What was far worse was that the people were divided.

This issue was partially resolved through territorial reorganization. On June 2, 1924, the Shakhtinsko-Donetsky Okrug was incorporated into the RSFSR.²² Following that, on October 1, the Taganrog Okrug, which included the Yekaterininsky Rayon, also became part of the South-Eastern Oblast.

The Contribution of the People of Uzbekistan to the Victory of the Soviet People in the Great Patriotic War

Sh. Yusupov

Keywords: Great Patriotic War, Uzbekistan, Victory Park Memorial Complex

EIGHTY years have passed since the end of the war that brought suffering to millions of people. The Great Patriotic War, which became part of World War II, was the most terrible in human history. The sacrifices made by the Soviet people on the altar of Victory made it possible to restore peace to countries that had been unable to withstand the aggression of Hitler's Germany. Today, those terrible events and tragic years have entered the pages of history.

Uzbekistan, as a republic within the USSR, made a significant contribution to the common victory over fascism. The war touched every Uzbek family and reached into every mahalla [community], kishlak [village], and city. Although no military operations were conducted directly on the territory of the Uzbek SSR, the echoes of war and the human losses were clearly felt in the republic. During the war, about 2 million of our compatriots went to the front. More than 500,000 true heroes died in fierce battles. Over 200,000 Uzbek soldiers and officers were awarded combat orders and medals; 301 compatriots were awarded the high title of Hero of the Soviet Union; and more than 70 were awarded the Order of Glory of all three degrees.

In the very first year of the Great Patriotic War, the evacuation of the Soviet Union's industrial capacity from frontline and threatened areas to

the east, including to the territory of Uzbekistan, was organized. This was implemented in accordance with procedures defined by resolutions of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks). As a result, from 1941 to 1945, the evacuated and already operational enterprises at the start of the war produced the following for the defense order of the State Defense Committee of the USSR: 2,090 aircraft, 17,342 aircraft engines, 55 road-artillery lifts, 420,000 parachutes of various types, 5,113 [metric] tons of copper wire, 220,000 km of special cables, five armored trains, four bath and bath-laundry trains, and 14 medical trains. The total weight of the mines,

bombs, and shells produced amounted to 218,000 tons; about 3,000 trainloads were required to deliver them to the front.

During the war years, military academies, dozens of military training institutions, officer training courses, and Red Army military schools were evacuated to Uzbekistan.

To commemorate the contribution of the people of Uzbekistan to the victory, the Victory Park Memorial Complex was established in Tashkent, based on a concept approved by a resolution of the president of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The fate of nearly every Uzbek family is connected with the Great Patriotic War. Therefore, studying the personal history of each family and their contribution to the victory over fascism in the Great Patriotic War is of great importance.

Publication of Foreign Policy Documents:
From Catherine II to the Present Day

Marking the 80th Anniversary of the Historical
and Documentary Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Russian Federation

M. Kravchenko

Keywords: foreign policy documents, archives, 80th anniversary of the Historical and Documentary Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MODERN diplomacy is inevitably public. For both the perception of foreign policy decisions at home and, to a large extent, the weight of a country's diplomatic activity abroad depend on the nature and quality of its public engagement. As history has shown, the diplomatic service gradually evolved toward this, the only correct course of action, in order to avoid unnecessary rumors, speculation, misinterpretation, and outright falsification. A key step on this path was the publication of foreign policy documents, above all historical ones. In the second half of the 18th century, the Russian foreign policy office was among the first to adopt what was then an advanced practice, and it has consistently adhered to it ever since. Today, this work is carried out by the Historical and Documentary Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, which celebrated its 80th anniversary in December 2025.

In this context, author would like to present readers with a brief historical overview of the publishing activities of our ministry.

In the Service of Russia:
On the 400th Anniversary of the Birth of Artamon Sergeyevich Matveyev

V. Kononov,
I. Kulagina

Keywords: A.S. Matveyev, prominent statesman of the 17th century, Posolsky Prikaz

“CLOSE Boyar, Governor of various towns, Keeper of the Tsar’s Great Seal and State Embassy Affairs, Head of the Strelets, Kazan...,” Head of the Little Russia and Apothecary Prikazes, “as well as Chief Judge of the Mint.”¹ This enumeration of ranks and positions held by Artamon Matveyev is provided by Nikolai Novikov, a member of the Free Russian Assembly at the Imperial Moscow University in St. Petersburg, in his 1785 book *The History of the Innocent Imprisonment of the Close Boyar Artamon Sergeyevich Matveyev, Comprising Petitions Written by Him to the Tsar and the Patriarch, as well as Letters to Various Persons, with an Attached Account of the Reasons for His Imprisonment and His Release Therefrom.*

A portrait of A.S. Matveyev occupies a central place in the exhibition of Hall 18 of the State Historical Museum, dedicated to the governmental institutions of the Russian state in the 16th-17th centuries.

It was in this very hall, in November 2025, that a presentation- exhibition dedicated to Artamon Matveyev was opened at the initiative of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as part of a joint project with the Russian Military Historical Society (RMHS) to commemorate the outstanding leaders of Russia’s foreign policy institutions across different eras, with the support of the Russian Ministry of Culture, Rosarkhiv, and the Russian State Archive of Ancient Documents (RGADA).

The joint program of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the RMHS to preserve the memory of notable diplomats is being carried out in accordance with a directive from the head of state. It includes the erection of monuments, the restoration of graves and headstones, and the return of their names and deeds to public memory. The choice of A.S. Matveyev as one of the first figures honored is no coincidence – 2025 marks the 400th anniversary of his birth.

Artamon Matveyev was one of the most educated men of his time, well-versed in ancient philosophy and history. He is known to have assembled an extensive library, initiated the translation of books into Russian, and advocated for the dissemination in Russia of the technical and cultural achievements of other nations – in many ways, he was ahead of his time. All this, along with his diplomatic triumphs, underscores the need to preserve the memory of this outstanding Russian statesman of the 17th century.

In the Service of Russia:
On the 300th Anniversary of the Birth of Ivan Andreyevich Osterman

N. Vorobyova

Keywords: Russian Empire, 18th century, history of diplomacy, Osterman, dynasty

DURING the reign of Tsar Peter I, military and diplomatic successes in wars with Turkey and Sweden, along with Russia's new status as a maritime power, made the country a full-fledged participant in global politics.

The intensification of foreign policy activity and the establishment of permanent diplomatic relations with most European states prompted Peter I to thoroughly reform higher and central government institutions, as well as to reorganize the diplomatic service.

The reform of the Posolsky Prikaz, which had been created back in the time of Ivan the Terrible, began soon after the start of the Great Northern War in 1700. On February 13 (24), 1720, Peter I signed the main legal act of the foreign policy department of that time – Regulations of the Collegium of Foreign Affairs (CFA). It defined the personnel structure, outlined the scope of the collegium's activities, and assigned the responsibilities of its key officials.

In 1720, together with the president and vice-president, the staff of the Collegium included eight people, among them two councilors from the Secret Chancellery. One of them was Andrey Ivanovich Osterman.

The study of Ivan Osterman's biography remains a subject for future research. There is no doubt that the diplomatic work of several generations of the Osterman family made a significant contribution to the history of the Russian Empire.

International Security and Artificial Intelligence

A. Shutov

Keywords: textbook, AI, interdisciplinary nature, review

THE textbook *International Security in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*, reviewed here, is the second, revised and expanded edition, which in itself attests to the high demand for and relevance of this work. The team of authors, under the leadership of Maria Zakharova and Anatoly Smirnov, has made a successful attempt to comprehensively conceptualize one of the most dynamic and significant challenges of our time – the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies on the international security system.

The relevance and scientific novelty of the textbook are beyond doubt. The rapid transformation of all areas of public life under the influence of AI demands proper scientific and methodological reflection within the educational process. The reviewed edition not only captures the current state of affairs but also offers a systematic analysis of megatrends, risks, and prospects, going beyond traditional academic courses. Of particular note is the inclusion of a fundamentally new chapter in the textbook's structure devoted to the regional dimension of AI security technologies. This enables the authors to overcome an abstract, globalist approach and to examine specific features of AI regulation and application in key regions of the world (the Arctic, BRICS, SCO, EU, Latin America).

In conclusion, it should be noted that the reviewed textbook is not merely a teaching aid but a serious scholarly and analytical work that makes a significant contribution to the development of a new and highly relevant academic discipline within political science. It will contribute to the training of highly qualified professionals capable of responding effectively to the challenges of a rapidly evolving technological and international agenda.

Globalization as Americanization: Trump's Foreign Policy Strategy

V. Vasiliyev

Keywords: US foreign policy, globalization as Americanization, Trumpism, monograph

The monograph under review by Doctor of Science (History) Sergey Samuilov, Chief Researcher at the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute for US and Canadian Studies, is a fundamental work that thoroughly traces the contours and key milestones in the development of Donald Trump's "America First" foreign policy doctrine during his first term in the White House from 2017 to 2021. Most of the actions and foreign policy initiatives of the Trump administration during that period amounted to a series of erratic swings from one extreme to another, which by the time he left the White House in 2021 had generated a sense of utter confusion and even chaos within America's "deep state."

The monograph links the generally bleak outlook for the future of US-Russia relations during Trump's second term to the president's own inability to "chart a new path to peace" due to the factors of American "exceptionalism and impulsiveness," as well as the "limited predictability of Trump himself".

The complete failure of US efforts to establish a liberal world order compelled the ruling elite – centered around Donald Trump and the Republican Party – to gradually rally under the banner of "America First." In other words, the US openly declared a policy of interpreting globalization as a vehicle for creating, in the 21st century, an American empire – Pax Americana – constructed on the principle of cementing a colonial power on the North American continent and forming a loosely connected system of colonies, protectorates, and territories beyond it. In all likelihood, the implementation of this imperial project will determine the character of US-Russia relations for the foreseeable future – an excellent introduction to which is the monograph reviewed here.

A History of Contemporary France: Dominant Themes and Facets of History

M. Lyubart

Keywords: work of a historian specializing in France, historical dominant themes, Modern Age, French constitutions, legislative documents, international and domestic politics

FRANCE is a country whose significance for European and global history, politics, and culture is difficult to overestimate. The study of French history has traditionally occupied an important place in Russian scholarship. Unsurprisingly, the number of works written by specialists in the history of various periods of this country is vast. Nevertheless, the recently published new book by the well-known Russian historian and expert on France, Doctor of Science (History) and Professor Marina Arzakanyan, *A History of Contemporary France*, holds a special place.

This work synthesizes the substantial research experience of a professional historian who has dedicated many years to the study of contemporary French history; it presents that history in light of the latest scholarly advances. The work is marked by balanced and highly objective historical assessments. An important strength of the book is that Arzakanyan identifies the main historical factors and dominant themes of lasting significance that characterize the history, society, and culture of France. These, alongside a description of important events and key turning points in the nation's fate, form the core narrative threads. Among these thematic guiding lines are political history and the socio-political situation in the country, economic development, France's role in international politics, the colonial question, culture, and the arts.

The central axis of the narrative is arguably political history, which largely defines the stages of the country's historical development. In Arzakanyan's book, contemporary France is portrayed as a country with a developed political system that has gone through several stages of evolution, marked by tension and drama. It is worth recalling that this approach to structuring historical narrative – which today appears quite logical – has only recently been established in both French and Russian historiography. Until the 1980s, political history remained overshadowed by the

scholarly paradigms of social history, historical anthropology, “microhistory,” and so forth, not to mention ideological influences.

A noteworthy feature of Arzakanyan’s treatment of France’s modern history is the significant attention given to culture. French culture in its various forms is presented as a defining feature of French society. Across multiple chapters, the author reveals the richness of this culture. The chapters devoted to the 20th century are no exception – already at the beginning of the century, France was becoming the cultural capital of the world. Thanks to its cultural figures, entire artistic movements emerged and flourished in the visual arts (Art Nouveau, Fauvism, Orphism, Cubism, Abstract Art, Surrealism, Symbolism); French music produced a number of renowned composers (Maurice Ravel), and new genres (popular music, jazz, chanson) reached an advanced stage of development. The world came to know famous architects (Le Corbusier), writers (Henri Barbusse, André Malraux, André Gide, François Mauriac, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry). The French made a strong mark in drama, theater, and cinema, while historians such as Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch contributed to the renewal of historical research methods and fostered collaboration between history and other sciences (Annales school).

Thus, the book by Marina Arzakanyan reviewed here is a valuable guide to the history of contemporary France – a book that will be in demand among many specialists in history and the humanities as a whole. Such a book has been long awaited.