

# International Affairs: Summary №1, 2010



## Russia and the Middle East

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Let me start with the road map. It is a real legal document approved by a UN Security Council resolution and it underlies all practical steps aimed at achieving a peace settlement in the Middle East. This primarily refers to the search for a solution to a key issue i.e., the Palestinian issue, which is the root cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, the road map also provides, at subsequent stages, for a way toward a comprehensive solution to this complex problem.

The road map is not a document specified by degrees, minutes and seconds. It is, rather, an outline of the stages that should be given special attention in the course of the negotiating process. The road map does not spell out concrete solutions. It is a document that lays the groundwork for negotiations, because all issues should be addressed and this is a generally accepted view in the framework of the negotiating process.

Unfortunately, it has to be said that very little of it has been fulfilled. I would even say, very little with regard to the first stage outlined in the road map. This refers to an array of measures designed to facilitate the negotiating process as such.

Although it was not a precondition for negotiations, the issue of settlements due to the situation on the ground has become a serious impediment to the Palestinians and Israelis entering into a direct dialogue, into direct negotiations. That is why the UN secretary general, Russia and a number of our partners express deep concern in connection with the decision by the Jerusalem city planning committee with regard to building new facilities in the occupied part of that city.

The history of the Middle East shows that as soon as the negotiating process, the peace process stops, other, disturbing factors come into play, which often lead to serious instability in the region.

We can say that the U.S. administration is already moving toward the goals it has declared. The Agreement on the Withdrawal of United States Forces from Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities during Their Temporary Presence in Iraq has been signed.

As far as our Foreign Ministry is concerned, we will do all we can to ensure that no Russian national comes to harm. Our goal is to get our Iraqi partners to take appropriate measures. Most importantly, the Iraqi side is ready to discuss security conditions, and is already doing so. We will continue working in this direction.

I would like to stress that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a very large and important partner of Russia. We and the Saudi leadership share common approaches with regard to global processes. This refers, among other things, to the building of a new system of international relations based on polycentrism and greater democracy.

Africa needs assistance. I would not describe Africa as a disaster area: It should not be forgotten that in the past several pre-crisis years, average economic growth across the continent was around 5%. Not bad.

This does not mean that all issues are being solved. In fact, there are some disaster areas in Africa, but there are also growth areas there. There is yet another obstacle to the full-fledged process of stable development i.e., conflicts on the African continent. Unfortunately, there are still quite a few although some of them have already been resolved by the Africans themselves, but with active assistance from the international community.

## Pragmatism Instead of Complaints and Mistrust

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DESPITE THE POPULAR THEORIES of a clash of civilizations, such large and diverse countries as Russia and China provide an example (if not a model) of peaceful, mutually advantageous, and friendly cooperation. It is a commonly accepted fact that Russian-Chinese relations are playing an ever-growing role in ensuring international peace and security, stability, and development on our planet.

At the present stage, our states have very similar development goals: Russia and China are striving to achieve national revival and occupy a dignified place in the world. They are carrying out comprehensive and innovative modernization of their economies and consistently integrating into the world economy.

The Russian-Chinese political dialogue is distinguished by high dynamics and is making an important contribution to strengthening mutual trust.

On the whole, the most favorable climate has developed in our relations, which is characterized by mutual respect and trust and solicitously keeping in mind each other's main national and state interests. This is the result of extensive joint efforts that deserves respect. This climate makes it possible to jointly resolve the existing and arising problems in a constructive way.

As we recall, after the end of the Cold War, the world nurtured illusions about how human civilization would now develop peacefully. Reality has proven much harsher. The world emerged from the era of superpowers' standoff to enter a period characterized by a growing conflict potential and increase in new threats and challenges. In this context, the example of consistent confirmation of the principles of equality and mutual respect and taking each other's legal interests into ACCOUNT shown by the relations between two great neighbors, Russia and China, is all the more important. It will be no exaggeration to say that this model of interstate relations can truly be considered a model for the world in the 21st century.

The friendly and constructive relations between Russia and China convincingly show the extent to which pragmatism and de-ideologized dialogue are more productive than mutual complaints and mistrust. Our countries clearly understand the strategic advantages of partnership and cooperation and are intent on exerting further efforts to enforce the positive elements in hand and reveal new promising vectors of cooperation for the benefit of the Russian and Chinese people.

## Russian-Chinese Relations: Keeping up the Pace

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OCTOBER 2009 marked the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the PRC and establishment of relations between communist China and the Soviet Union.

At present, Russian-Chinese relations are at a high level of development, possibly the best they have ever been throughout their history, which spans not just sixty years, but four centuries. At the same time, during the past three or four years, their development has become somewhat stagnated: there have been no obvious breakthroughs in political relations and the world crisis has dealt a severe blow to their economies. In these circumstances, it is worth taking a look at the most problematic areas in bilateral relations, the reasons for the prob-

lems, and ways to resolve them.

Anyone who wants to see a more independent and powerful Russia should support the development of its relations with China.

China also needs Russia as a geopolitical and economic partner, although we must admit that in its current state Russia is playing a much lesser role in China's policy than China is playing in Russia's.

Adoption of the Cooperation Program for 2009-2018 between the regions of Russia's Far East and Eastern Siberia and China's Northeast, which envisages large mutual investments in several projects in both countries, caused a kind of an uproar in the Russian mass media. There was talk that such investments would turn Russia into China's raw material appendage.

It goes without saying that a certain number of the facilities in the Russian Far East and Siberia are mineral deposits. However, the danger is not at all in the fact that these deposits will be developed using Chinese investments, but in the fact that the revenue obtained might be squandered again and not used to create an innovative economy in Russia, the need for which is being frequently discussed today. But this will in no way be China's fault.

As of today, the two countries have settled all their border demarcation issues. So this historical question is politically moot.

The dialogue with China on the North Korean nuclear program and the problems of the Korean Peninsula are a very important vector of cooperation in international issues. In economic relations, a series of measures should be carried out to replace raw material deliveries with Chinese investments and transfer processing and other production units to Russian territory. This is already being done in the lumber industry, but so far is not yielding the desirable results. It might also be beneficial to promote broader economic cooperation within the SCO.

## Why Russia Is Not China: An Afterword to the Celebrations

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EAST ASIA moved into economic limelight as soon as the Soviet Union left the scene. By 1993, Japanese banks had accumulated half of the assets of the world's 500 largest banks; it even looked, at least to some of the experts, that New York lost its old role of an arbiter and manager of the financial markets.

The Asian crisis confronted New York that reconfirmed its global status with a new reality. It turned out that the Chinese umbrella had been already unfolded over Japan, America's younger brother, as well as over the new great East Asian sphere of joint prosperity for that matter.

China's increased economic mass forced Beijing to doctor the official figures of its defense and economic capabilities so that not to ruffle before time the feelings of all sorts of Big Seven or even Big Eight.

Russia should maintain special relations with China while keeping in mind that friendship (to say nothing of love) in interstate relations is impossible.

From the religious and philosophical points of view and taking into account the state building issue per se the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and the CPC were operating in vastly different or even alien cultural and historical contexts.

At all times, China treated Christianity as a foreign and therefore exotic or even suspicious faith; in the 19th century, no effort was spared to check its spread across the Chinese territory.

The traditional beliefs syncretic pagan cults of ancestors, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism went better with the communist theomachic tradition simply because they were poles apart with Christianity; their ideas of life were purely materialistic and very close to the Chinese state capitalism of our days.

Russia should maintain special relations with China while keeping in mind that friendship (to say nothing of love) in interstate relations is impossible. This fully applies to China, a state of different numerical strength, different mentality, different religious, cultural, political and economic traditions and a different history. Judging from what the Bible or Christian eschatology say its future is different, too.

Russia can establish normal relations with this billion-strong giant; since no equal partnership is possible Russia needs strategic cooperation with China.

There is just one condition: the West should not count on its ability to understand the Orient and even (the cheekiness of it!) assimilate it.

## Euro-Atlantic Security: A Path to the Future

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THIS ARTICLE PRESENTS the key propositions of a report, entitled Euro-Atlantic Security: One Vision, Three Paths, that was prepared by a group of authors under the aegis of the EastWest Institute.

The idea of writing this report emerged in a situation that, to put it mildly, was not conducive to a grand scientific and political debate over European security issues. Even though the cannonade

in South Ossetia had already died down, a full-blown diplomatic exchange of fire continued between the West and Russia over the Caucasus war.

The participants in the projects were confronted with a challenging question: How, in such an emotionally and politically tense atmosphere, to organize a joint study that would result not in yet another declaration of disagreements, but in concrete, constructive proposals of a short-term as well as a long-term nature?

With that end in view, a decision was made right from the start to refrain from making any lists of complaints on either side. The project was focused on identifying the long-term shared interests of Russia and her Western partners in the Euro-Atlantic space, as well as ways of pursuing these interests.

The result was a document offering elements of a common strategic vision of security in the Euro-Atlantic region and a panorama of possible lines of action paths.

The decision to resume the full-scale operation of the Russia-NATO Council, which was made at the RNC meeting in Corfu, is a very positive step.

We are satisfied to say that the work of the Experts Group has not been wasted.

It has been proposed also to continue the current review of the cost-effectiveness and political repercussions of planned national ballistic missile defense deployments in Poland and Czech Republic as well as consider possible joint missile threat monitoring and, if the need arises, joint missile defense.

Arguments for this approach: The status quo in Europe and unilateral attempts at changing

it are generating tensions. Current policies are not sufficient to guarantee peace in the long term.

Eurasian dimension of security of the Euro-Atlantic area: Taking into ACCOUNT the number of threats and challenges for countries of the Euro-Atlantic area originating in the Near and Middle East and considering the growing role of the leading Asian states in regional and international security, it is proposed to hold a meeting of NATO, OSCE, EU, CSTO, and SCO secretaries general, as well as of speakers of the respective parliamentary assemblies. The purposes of the meeting could be to identify similar functions of the said structures in the spheres of hard and soft security and to discuss possible opportunities for cooperating in spheres and regions of common interest.



## Uniform Rules for the Euro-Atlantic Region

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IN 2008, RUSSIA INITIATED a new comprehensive European Security Treaty designed, as President of Russia Dmitry Medvedev put it, to consolidate the Euro-Atlantic region as a whole on the basis of uniform rules of the game to move toward a single security expanse on the continent without dividing lines. In the last twenty years the world has changed beyond recognition which inevitably affected the European security system; its transformation has become one of the points on the international agenda. Indeed, there are new challenges and threats; there is globalization, a crisis of global governance and of the security mechanisms for that matter.

President Medvedev's suggestions were prompted, among other things, by the crisis of American leadership. It has become abundantly clear, that so far the U.S. attempts at setting up an American world order have failed. A world order that offers no alternatives has no future: the subjects of international relations will rebuff the attempts to impose it even more resolutely than before.

In the last twenty years it has gained a lot of political and economic weight to claim a role and place in Europe that would fully correspond to the potential it can apply to the key issues of European security. This is quite logical and well justified: Russia is no longer a passenger on board a ship of European security as an equal team member it should be given a place matching its newly-acquired economic and political potential.

Europe should abandon its NATO-centrism and revise its biased or even apprehensive treatment of Russia. We should always bear in mind, however, that the United States as the central actor of European security has a final say on the issue.

Russia should travel its part of the road and revise its negative treatment of NATO on a number of issues. Its relations with the Alliance should be freed for their ideological burden in the context of Russia's broader and pragmatic approach to all international processes both in Europe and outside it and the correctly interpreted national interests.

Having laid an agenda for Greater Europe on the table Russia demonstrated that it is ready for partnership. It is for the West to act.

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THE REOPENING OF DISCUSSIONS about the expediency of preserving a nuclear test ban became a notable event of 2009. The nuclear test ban idea is not new. Back in the 1950s, first, India, and then the USSR proposed abandoning nuclear tests. However, until the late 1960s, the conduct of physical nuclear tests was necessary for the development of the nuclear weapon complex. 2 They made it possible:

- to confirm the possibility of developing a nuclear explosive device;
- to study the physical properties of nuclear warheads;

- to check the combat readiness of new nuclear systems;
- to get an idea about the caliber and mass of nuclear warheads;
- to develop systems for installing nuclear warheads on delivery vehicles; and
- to study the impact of side effects of a nuclear explosion on the hypothetical course of combat operations.

Russia's 2000 National Security Concept posited Russia's right to use nuclear weapons against aggressors using conventional weapons.

ONE OF THE KEY PROBLEMS about the ratification of the CTBT was its original link to the system of nuclear containment. 9 Officially, the treaty was designed to strengthen Article VI of the NPT. However, objectively it limited the modernization of the nuclear weapon complex of the legitimate nuclear powers. In that connection, almost all nuclear powers made provisos during the ratification process.

INITIALLY, the ban on the conduct of physical nuclear tests performed the function of strengthening the NPT and holding back a new nuclear arms race. In the first half of the 1990s, the nonproliferation problem took center stage, sidelining other military strategic issues. However, from the late 1990s and especially in the 2000s, problems of traditional (Russian-U.S.) nuclear deterrence recovered their priority positions. The U.S. decision to deploy a missile defense system and start the work on a new NPT strengthened that mood. In that situation, the CTBT began to be seen in the context of nuclear containment rather than nuclear nonproliferation problems. The issue of the unequal status of the nuclear powers in the IMS framework started to play a key role.

Discussions about building a nuclear-free world, which intensified from 2007, have lent a

new dimension to these issues. The Obama administration declared progress along these lines as one of its foreign policy priorities. Other countries are concerned that a rapid reduction of nuclear weapons amid overwhelming superiority in conventional armed forces will revive interstate wars. One cannot rule out attempts to use CTBT related issues as a mechanism to force potentially dangerous (from Washington's perspective) states to disarm.

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THE BREAKUP OF THE USSR signified the start of the process of geopolitical changes everywhere in the former Soviet Union. Many regions have become spheres of national interests of the world's leading states. The geopolitical importance of the Caucasus is indisputable and not accidental. One possible proof is that more than 30 states have declared the Caucasus to be the zone of their interests.

The North Caucasus has always held a special place in Russia's policy. Under the present conditions, the region's role and place on the geopolitical map have grown even more important. The reasons for it are above all its immediate vicinity of NATO's southern flank, its direct vicinity of Transcaucasia and Central Asia and outlets to the Caspian and Black Seas.

The following should be singled out from among the factors strongly influencing the system of security, the contents and nature of the social, political and socioeconomic situation in the North Caucasus:

1. The geopolitical factor international rivalry over the region and tensions surrounding the Abkhazia and South Ossetia issues.
2. The fragmentariness and inconsistency of the nationalities policy.
3. The political instability and the struggle for power among ethnic elites.
4. Illegal armed units whose terrorist acts and attacks have become one of the main problems in the North Caucasus.
5. The presence of many ethnic groups and religions and ethnic conflicts.
6. The erosion of a single legal framework; the aspiration of the republics, territories and regions for more powers.
7. The economic crisis attended by the growing social and ethnic differentiation of society.
8. The worsening crime situation and the growing corruption among the authorities.
9. Uncontrollable migration processes and their impact on the socioeconomic situation.
10. The weak information policy.

These are only the main conflict-generating factors impacting on the situation in the North Caucasus.

All this goes to show that the great battle for the Caucasus is not over and that it is only beginning. Under the circumstances, it is necessary for Russia to develop a new set of nationalities policy ideas for the Caucasus taking ACCOUNT of the geopolitical situation in the region. We can propose the following ideas:

1. To formulate Russia's fundamental principles of security in the North Caucasus.
2. To develop an international legal system to ensure the observance of Russia's interests and rights in the region.
3. To develop an effective regional policy of Russia to even out the economic, social and educational status of the peoples of the North Caucasus.
4. To preclude manifestations of separatism and suppress all attempts at terrorism in the North Caucasus.

In order to be effective under the new geopolitical conditions, Russia's policy in its south should be rooted in clearly understood and clearly defined Russia's interests, to pursue clearly defined goals and offer a realistic strategy of attaining them.

## Bickering: How Much Longer? Russian-Polish Relations

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WHY DO RUSSIA AND POLAND remain in an antagonistic embrace for far too long, and in defiance of common sense? Why are the past mistakes still alive? What is behind this and who is the gainer? This is not idle curiosity: the questions should be answered. Indeed, Russia's relations with Poland's EU and NATO neighbors are good or even model, to borrow an expression from our recent past.

It is for publicists, politicians and other experts to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the Russian-Polish relations at their present stage. As a student of Poland who sympathizes with the country and is tied to it by blood kinship I deem it necessary to offer an objective picture of facts and events and my personal comments and opinions about it.

The two Slavic states cannot agree on their common and highly contradictory history. It seems that there are no other large nations in Europe to be divided by the cardinally different assessments of their past relationships and their highly biased approaches to them.

Today, the facts (facts are stubborn things) testify that under left or right government Poland remains unfriendly toward Russia.

During the last two decades the majority of the Polish media has been flooding the country with disinformation and lies about Russia. Day after day politicians, historians and journalists are rubber-stamping anti-Russian clichés, the most successful of them soaring high to the summits of mythology and Russophobia.

A great interest in the Russian language in Poland against the background of anti-Russian hysteria raging in the country cannot but amaze. This is best explained by the globalization-induced pragmatism of the Poles: business in Russia and with Russians is profitable; the Russian language opens doors to Russia, the CIS countries and even helps move further on, to China and Japan. Cultural interpenetration is going ahead despite the reefs created by the common dramatic past and certain political forces of our day.

In recent years our relations have been improving albeit slowly and painfully: there are too many psychological political and other hurdles and obstacles yet we should move forward. This is a long road for several generations to negotiate.

## Russia and Slovakia: Forming a New Partnership

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SINCE FULL-SCALE INTERSTATE RELATIONS were established between Russia and Slovakia in 1993, they have not been clouded by confrontational approaches and have on the whole been developing dynamically. To a very large degree, this is due to a number of factors that have objectively contributed and I hope will continue to contribute to the further rapprochement between our countries and our people. These include the proximity of languages and culture, a similar mentality, a shared production, transport and energy infrastructure that evolved in

previous decades, and finally, the lack of any serious irritants in the recent history of bilateral relations, which would impede the movement forward.

Cooperation with Bratislava on foreign policy matters is generally developing in a constructive spirit. On a number of current international issues, Russia and Slovakia have identical or close positions.

Slovak Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajcak stressed that in the 21st century, Slovakia would like to see Russia as a good and attractive partner, friend and even ally.

Russia and Slovakia are also interested in cooperation in such sectors as chemistry, machine manufacturing, agriculture, the food industry, and tourism. Experts believe these sectors have a significant potential, the realization of which requires dedicated joint efforts.

In the realm of military and military-technical cooperation, Slovakia has carried out what is probably the only project in Central Europe involving the modernization of the Slovak Air Force's 12 MiG-29 fighters with the participation of Russian corporations as well as British and U.S. firms. There is still one outstanding problem, namely the regulation of licensed production of Soviet and Russian arms and military equipment in Slovakia. But even here, the sides are working to find a solution in the spirit of constructive cooperation.

Our cooperation with Slovakia is successful, pragmatic and mutually beneficial, and has good prospects. The foundation created by our bilateral ties gives hope that even after next year's parliamentary elections and the formation of a new government in Slovakia, bilateral relations will continue to develop. That responds to the long-term interests of our states.

## Belgium, Our Partner at the Heart of the European Union

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RUSSIAN-BELGIAN RELATIONS have deep historical roots. Traditionally, the trailblazers in their development were craftsmen and traders. Ever since the days of Lord Novgorod the Great, European wines, fabrics and laces have been held in great esteem. Meanwhile, those goods were brought to us by Frisian merchants from the Flemish coast. They also delivered Russian furs, flax fabrics, resin, and hemp to Western Europe.

Business contacts between our two countries boomed on the borderline of the 19th and 20th centuries. That was a time when Belgian MONEY really moved into Russia. A combination of a

favorable investment environment, provided by the Russian government, on the one hand, and the mobility, advanced technology, and financial capacity of the Belgians, on the other, produced a remarkable result.

Today, there is good reason to say that our business ties with Belgium have entered a path of stable, diversified development.

In the past several years, Russian business also has achieved tangible successes on the Belgian market.

It is very important that our business cooperation is not, figuratively speaking, only about Russian oil in exchange for Belgian chocolate.

There are also overlapping areas of cooperation, combining both commercial and social components. This refers, in particular, to cooperation between Russian state-run and private healthcare establishments with HealthCare Belgium. This is an association of 11 leading hospitals, scientific medical centers and pharmaceutical companies, created especially to develop contacts with foreign partners. The Belgians have quite a bit to offer in this field: Their achievements in burns surgery, neurosurgery, oncology, and cardiology are widely recognized throughout the world.

The regional dimension of Russian-Belgian business cooperation plays an increasing role. Another valuable instrument in coordinating the activity of state agencies and business structures in both countries in the interest of promoting business ties is the Intergovernmental Commission for Cooperation between Russia and the Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union (the co-chairman on the Russian side is Russian Culture Minister A.A.



Avdeev, while the Belgian co-chairman is V. Van Quickenborne, the federal minister of economy and reform). The Russian TRADE mission to Belgium is also very active both as an instrument of promoting business ties and as an important source of information about the economic situation in the region for Russian government agencies and business structures.

I am sure that Russia's cooperation with Belgium, a country located at the very heart of the EU, has a great future. As Greater Europe's economy emerges from the crisis, we will witness dynamic development of our business ties for the benefit of our two nations.

## Nuclear Renaissance: An Author's Perspective

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THERE IS A WELL ESTABLISHED VIEW that an administrative decision today can be correctly assessed and understood only by those who were directly involved in its elaboration and approval that is to say, administrators themselves. All others are destined to remain outside the bounds of the established democratic (or bureaucratic) procedure. Not only are they not in a position to influence the choice of a development scenario the choice is not even explained to them. A report on the causes of the disaster at the Sayano-Shushenskaya hydroelectric power station could go on and on. As in the case of any man-made industrial accident, there are plenty

of causes: Modern technical systems are highly reliable and, as a general rule, extensive and strenuous efforts are needed to force a turbo generator to start crushing walls and killing people. A court punishes those guilty but does not impact on a system that makes managerial decisions dictated by interests rather than engineering decisions dictated by technical laws.

All these must nots are of an engineering/technological nature. Meanwhile, decisions are not made by engineers. Decisions are made by managers. The problem, incidentally, is not that managers are bad and are ready to ruin the station in pursuit of their selfish interests, endangering human life. First, no one wants to go to prison. Second, major disasters do provide opportunities for misuse of public funds, but definitely not by those operating a station and responsible for its operation.

It would not be a mistake to say that a manager cannot have a strategy. Only tactics.

This is exactly why a manager cannot be a decision maker.

So fundamentally new energy projects can change the type of globalization and in some cases call it into question.

The present-day world is going through a nuclear renaissance.

There is every reason for a nuclear renaissance. Even now the world is experiencing a shortage of electrical energy, and according to all expert assessments, this shortage will only deepen. Hydrocarbon prices are increasing, while the costs of hydrocarbon transportation are rising even faster. As for coal, it is either environmentally hazardous or expensive, and in addition, its transportation is a problem. Available hydro-resources are scarce and randomly located. Faith in energy saving and alternative energy brings to mind

a quote from Tertullian: I believe because it is absurd.

Unfortunately, nuclear energy has its own problems. It is not so much a matter of radiation phobia: Decision makers are not susceptible to it, while the position of other people will not be taken into account.

## The Energy Era and Energy Diplomacy

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS and Srečko Djukic, a prominent Serbian diplomat and man of letters, have been maintaining strong friendly ties. As a member of Serbia's embassy staff in Moscow during several years in the past he used to come to our office for interviews and discussions on political and literary subjects which were always interesting. Dr. Djukic has been posted since as Serbia's Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Minsk, the Republic of Belarus. From Minsk, he was sending us his articles that appeared in the journal. His latest book *VRÉME ENERGIJE. Više od Diplomacije* [ENERGY TIME. More than Diplomacy] was recently published in Bel-

grade. This is a revealing view of a diplomat on the pressing subject. We agreed with the ambassador for an interview to cover the issues raised in his book and other aspects of European and international power industry.

Now let's turn to Srečko Djukic's book about the importance of energy and how he, as a diplomat, sees it.

I have been trying to combine the two JOBS since I took up diplomacy and my diplomatic career only benefited from that. The result was the following books: *Economic Cooperation between Yugoslavia and Comecon* (1984), which is the first book I wrote entirely on my own and for this reason I especially value it; *The Unforgettable. Reflections* (I wrote it in Russian in 2006); *Siberia, a Land of Challenges. Notes on a Trip along the Yenisei* (2007); *Srečko Djukic's Universities* (2008); *The Former Soviet Union. Globalization Processes* (2009).

Early on in my diplomatic career, I was trying to keep abreast of the work and draw on the experience of Serbian, Soviet, Russian and other notable diplomats who always inspired the younger generation of diplomats.

My book has just been brought out in Belgrade. It starts with discussing the energy crisis, the oil crisis of the 1970s, the creation of the Group of Six which soon expanded into the Group of Seven, and later, into the Group of Eight, which is now the Group of Twenty.

There is a separate section in the book on Russian gas industry. It cites figures confirming the prevailing position of Russian gas, its amounts and the fact that it is irreplaceable. Russia is ahead of the rest of the field for its reserves, production and export.

In a nutshell, Russia's oil and gas potential, export and the key oil and gas pipelines in East Asia make Russia a giant energy platform. Crossing its borders annually are hundreds of millions of tons of oil and hundreds of billions of cubic meters of gas to Europe and the rest of the world.

One significant step is the accord signed between Serbia and Russia on building one of the sections of the European South Stream main gas pipeline via Serbia and linking the other former Yugoslavian republics and other countries to this gas pipeline run by Gazprom and European Union.

The Russian president's visit confirmed that cooperation in the realm of energy and correcting the mistake of Kosovo independence were at the root of Serbian-Russian relations.

Minsk, Oct. 22, 2009

## New Analytical Center to Serve Government Interests

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THE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (IIS) at MGIMO-University of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) was formed in May 2009 as successor to the university's Problem Research Laboratory for Systems Analysis of International Relations founded in 1976. The founding of the IIS should be seen as an important event in the continuing development of MGIMO-University, an essential phase in turning it into not only a recognized center of

education but a world-standard research center as well.

A closer bond between science, education and practice is essential for the making of modern society. All the major universities in the world are also big research centers. The leading nations on the planet foster a fusion between academic and expert knowledge, theoretical training and developing practical skills. This is in line with the traditions and the main strategic development of MGIMO-University, which has every reason for regarding itself as one of the cutting-edge national universities doing research into the key sociopolitical disciplines.

One important distinguishing characteristic of the Institute of International Studies is that this is a leading analytical agency working for the government. In addition to Russia's MFA, which is naturally a customer of IIS, its analytical products are of interest to virtually all government agencies dealing with the shaping of Russia's foreign policy, including the Presidential Executive Office, working for which is both a great responsibility and honor.

The unique role of IIS is that this institute deals with more than a narrow special subject; it deals with all pivotal matters of international relations. At the moment, IIS brings together 11 research centers, each of which is a recognized center of expert knowledge in a particular field.

Working towards these objectives will help MGIMO-University adopt major interdisciplinary innovatory research and education programs aimed at scoring advances in a number of areas of research and train specialists rated here and abroad as highly skilled and capable of contributing in a big way to modernizing Russia.

The goals set by IIS may seem too ambitious, but experience shows that failing to set major goals, one is likely to spin the wheels for a long time without knowing it. MGIMO-University's philosophy is to work hard to achieve its goals, all the more so because these goals accord with the state's development goals.



THE ISSUE OF RECOGNITION OF STATES acquired a new relevance and topicality in connection with the declaration of independence by Kosovo, and then by South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Active debates were started concerning the basic criteria for the recognition of states; political and legal aspects of recognition, such as the emergence of a state as a subject of international law; the recognition of a state as a

subject of international law only by a part of the international community, and its impact on the status of such a state. They became a subject of a recent roundtable discussion at the Institute for Contemporary International Studies, Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**A. Pushkov:** Unrecognized states and non-recognition of states is a highly relevant topic, and it requires in-depth consideration by the expert community. There is a widespread belief in the academia that persons involved in high level politics know the answers to these questions. However, that is not necessarily so firstly, due to time constraints, and secondly, due to the objective complexity of the issue at hand, which makes it difficult to elaborate concrete proposals. So decisions are often made depending on the political situation prevailing at the time.

**G. Kurdyukov:** The political map of the world shows that at present there are up to 200 different ethnic entities laying claim to statehood. Even little Greenland (57,000 residents), where a referendum was held recently, is claiming independence true, under the aegis of Denmark.

Recognition is an institution of international law, and its norms are linked to the ability of states to exercise rights within the system of international relations.

**A. Kovalev:** What is the meaning of unrecognized state, and who establishes how many recognitions are required for a state to be considered a subject of international law? And is there a specific number of recognitions for joining the UN? To become a UN member, a country needs to be peaceful, and comply with the Charter.

**O. Khlestov:** Sometimes we witness hasty action, including by our country. Recognition is a purely political act although it is formalized through legal documents, unilateral or bilateral, which entails certain legal consequences. The legal aspect does exist, but we should start with the considerations that states have in deciding on the issue of recognition. I have strong doubts about your point of view with regard to the recognition of unrecognized states. They are not recognized, there are no contacts with them as subjects of international

law, and they do not enjoy the rights that are enjoyed by subjects of international law.

**L. Malksoo:** What is worrying in the case of Kosovo, on the one hand, and South Ossetia and Abkhazia, on the other, is the regional fragmentation of international law. It seems that a situation has evolved where international law is not equal with regard to all states: Regional groups have emerged, some of which recognize a given entity as a state whereas others do not. Historically, it is probably linked to thinking that assumes the existence of spheres of influence within the scope of which decisions are made as to which entity may become a state.

**Ye. Lyakhov:** We are, essentially, speaking about the political aspect of recognition although the recognition of a state as a subject of international law entails some far-reaching consequences in the realm of international law. The first is on the border of international and constitutional law.

**A. Mezyaev:** Indeed, it only used four qualifications under the Montevideo Convention, and the statehood of Croatia, as well as of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was assessed according to some primitive qualifications as the existence of a permanent population, government, and so on. It would be appropriate in this context to mention qualifications of statehood in addition to those listed in the Montevideo Convention, namely legality and legitimacy, according to Prof. J. Dugard and J. Crawford. The ICCJ purposely excluded them from consideration, since the Croatian and Bosnian entities did not possess the qualification of legality, because they were created in breach of both Yugoslav national law and international law.

**A. Filimonova:** There is a pressing need for us historians that experts on law respond to global processes in a timely manner. In the present-day conditions, the problem of the recognition of states started with Yugoslavia, and with the moment an outside actor became closely involved.

In the case of Kosovo, aggression was not only external, on which the UN Security Council had to pass judgment, but also internal, because the so-called Republic of Kosovo was created with the active participation of extremist groups and gangs with support from outside actors. Obviously, gross pressure is applied to secure recognition for states that lack a legal capacity and a legal personality, as in the case of Kosovo.

**B. Ashavsky:** The problem of recognition of states, naturally, has both political and legal aspects. To solve it, it is necessary to analyze the practice of interstate relations, the existing norms of international law, and the doctrine of international law. Practice shows that the issue of recognition comes up with the emergence of a new state. The significance of acts of recognition is sometimes challenged, which is due, on the one hand, to the absence of codification in this realm and on the other, to the existence of two competing theories in the international-law doctrine declarative and constitutive. The declarative theory posits that a state becomes a subject of international law the moment it is created, while recognition only formalizes the fact. By contrast, the constitutive theory assumes that new states



only become subjects of international law after recognition.

**A. Vylegzhanin:** Doubts have been expressed as to whether a population of 40,000 is large enough to be recognized as a state, and whether Abkhazia and South Ossetia have a chance of becoming UN members. I do not think the importance of quantitative factors should be overestimated. Let us take the state of Tuvalu nine islands, four of them being claimed by the United States it is very well off even without the UN. It is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, and there are no problems there. It casts itself as a subject of international law, it is party to international agreements, and it effectively functions. The issue of the recognition of states is up to a certain point exaggerated. It is more important for a new state e.g., Abkhazia to fulfill itself as a subject of international law in reality.

**V. Likhachev:** I am currently involved in the process of creating for the first time in the history of Russian parliamentarism a sub-committee on international law and legislation, in cooperation with the Diplomatic Academy and the Russian Association of International Law. Today, we are encountering a large number of serious problems, which, in my opinion, could indeed lead us to a kind of revolution in modern international law. After all, the review of many concepts and categories, but most importantly, their interaction, suggests that a new conceptual and regulatory apparatus should evolve to describe the existing realities.

There is also covert practice, which could be described as a gray or black zone. For example, Turkey is actively involved in Abkhazia, helping it both survive and develop. From the perspective of the modern concept of international recognition, it is essential to use new approaches: a subject of international law, a subject of international relations, a subject of the international community or something along these lines. Both the Executive Office of the President of the Russian Federation and the Foreign Ministry need recommendations from the Russian expert and academic community.

## From Alaska to Tierra Del Fuego

*Author: M. Bragin*

*Correspondent for International Affairs in Mexico*



A REGIONAL CONFERENCE of Russian compatriots living in North and Latin America was held in the capital of Mexico. The conference held in Mexico with the active organizational support of the Russian Embassy and Federal Agency of CIS Affairs, Compatriots Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation was the third regional forum of its kind, bringing together members of compatriots' organizations living in the countries of the Western hemi-

sphere.

It will be no exaggeration to say that the forum held in the Mexican capital was extremely intensive. The fact that the conference took place on the eve of the World Congress of Compatriots in Moscow gave it special significance.

The end goal for all of us is forming a full-fledged consolidated diaspora from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego that has strong ties with the historical Homeland.

The plenary sessions focused on issues involving the activity of the Russian-speaking communities in different countries. The delegates of the coordinating councils of compatriots who gave reports drew the attention of their colleagues and representatives of the RF Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the problems they have to deal with in their daily efforts to preserve their historical and cultural uniqueness and shared their experience on strengthening unity and solidarity among Russian compatriots, spreading the Russian language in the region, and involving young people in these efforts.

Of course, today things are changing, and new forms of communication are opening up both before Russians living in Russia and our compatriots in the Near and Far Abroad, the most democratic and available of which are the opportunities offered by the global Internet.

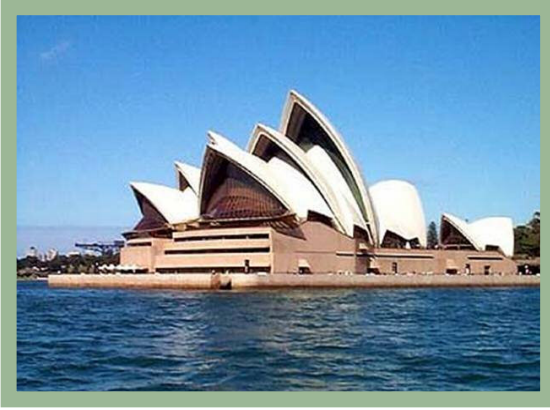
One of the final documents of the regional forum of compatriots held in the Mexican capital was a special resolution to support the preservation of Fort Ross Park in the State of California as a monument to Russian historical heritage on the West Coast of America. The conference's resolution on Fort Ross was adopted on the initiative of U.S. delegate Natalie Sabelnik, who represented the Congress of Russian Americans at the forum.

The wide range of issues and problems discussed during the third regional conference of compatriots and the numerous proposals put forward by its participants showed the demand for this kind of work format with the representatives of the Russian-speaking communities of the American continent.

## On the Russian Community in Australia

*Author: V. Sibilev*

*Deputy Director of the Department for Work with Compatriots Living Abroad, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Candidate of Sciences (History)*



ANOTHER WORLD CONGRESS of Russian Compatriots Living Abroad took place in Moscow. On the eve of this significant political event in the life of the Russian diaspora abroad, interest naturally turned to what was making various compatriots' organizations tick and how ready and willing they were to hold a dialogue and cooperate with their historical Homeland. The Russian-speaking diaspora in Australia began to form as early as the 19th century, but this process un-

derwent an immense upswing after the historical upheavals that occurred in the 20th century: the October Revolution and the pursuant Civil War in Russia, the Second World War, the Cold War, and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The migrants to Australia are mainly concentrated around the parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR. It is worth noting that First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York took part in both stages of the regional conference in Canberra and Sydney. The delegates and guests of the forum of compatriots from the APR positively assessed his presence, which was noted in several speeches.

Among the successes and achievements of compatriots revealed during the conference, its participants were particularly impressed by the Russian hospital they visited in Sydney's suburbs administered by the Reverend Sergius of Radonezh Charity Society with the support of the local municipal authorities. The society's leaders are mainly Russian immigrants from Harbin. Elderly compatriots suffering from different diseases of varying severity are receiving treatment and care in the hospital. They enjoy single rooms with first-class equipment, fittings, care, and services, including a Russian-language library and Russian television channels.

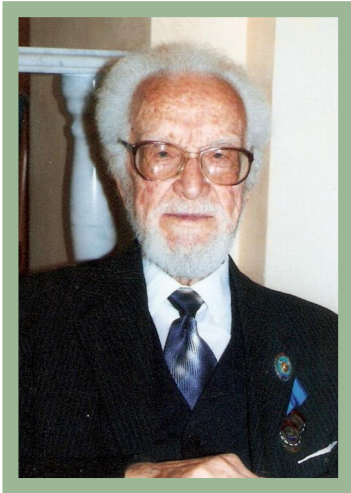
The compatriots also talked about their short- and mid-term plans and hopes related to building a new contemporary Russian club in Sydney and opening a Russian center of science and culture.

Summing up the observations I made during my visit to the Fifth Continent and meetings with compatriots, I would like to note that the Russian diaspora there is unique in its own way, self-organized, essentially self-sufficient, and capable of developing real partnership with the historic Homeland.

## Baron Faltz-Fein: Lasting Devotion to Russia

*Author: D. Safronov*

*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*



NOT LONG AGO, I read a book about the Germans who were offered by the Russian sovereign the opportunity to settle in Russia.

As I was reading the book, I, naturally, was overwhelmed with questions. Many questions relating, of course and above all, to what the German settlers were doing in Russia and what they thought about their new country. Were they thinking about themselves as hunters for a fortune or loyal servants of Russia thinking it was their duty to work for it and make it prosper. This latter aspect seems to me of the greatest interest and substance.

At first, the German settlers were mainly devoting themselves to breeding the highly valued and productive merino sheep this was in fact why they were asked to come and settle in Russia in the first instance. But

soon they branched out into growing high-quality cereals and fodder crops, gardening, breeding horses, cattle and poultry farming. Roads were naturally a must and they progressed from country roads to hard-surface roads to rail roads. As time wore on they established their shipping companies, built sea and river ports because the sea and rivers were close at hand.

Today, one of the descendants of the once powerful and dynamic family, Eduard Aleksandrovich Faltz-Fein, who has found himself outside of His Motherland, is nostalgically reminiscing about life in Russia. What could he remember about the life in Russia at that time if his parents took him out of Russia when he was five? And yet, he thinks of Russia as his native country.

Based on what I learned from the book, its main character, whom I cannot resist dubbing The Last of the Mohicans, has always culturally been in contact with the country of his birth. Whatever had even remotely to do with it, he has been doing all he could to either bring back to Russia or help bring it back.

Today, one of the descendants of the once powerful and dynamic family, Eduard Aleksandrovich Faltz-Fein, who has found himself outside of his Motherland, is nostalgically reminiscing about life in Russia.

Think of all the many people from Russia who found themselves in other countries as a result of WWII the so-called displaced persons. They are neither friends nor foes, but simply displaced persons who ended up in some unknown places and are missing, as it were. Most of them are outside Russia against their will.

Still on this exciting subject, I cannot help noting yet another very valuable quality of the book about Baron von Faltz-Fein it is edifying. It narrates about the life in the heart of Europe, in particular in the tiny states like Liechtenstein and Monaco, about those who live there or frequently visit them in such great detail that you gain the impression of going there on a tour with a good, knowledgeable and unbiased guide. And you even think you have lived there for some time. As far as I am concerned, this has been a veritable discovery.

## Finland: 200 Years of Autonomy. The Beginning

*Author: L. Suni*

*Professor at Petrozavodsk State University, Doctor of Sciences (History)*



EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED 200 years ago the war of 1808-1809 and the joining of Finland to Russia were caused by the political and international processes triggered by the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars.

Back in the early 18th century, during the Great Northern War Peter the Great used to say that he needed Finland to add flexibility to the Swedish neck rather than as territorial acquisition. This is true of the early period of the 1808-1809 war waged by Aleksandr I to force Sweden join the continental blockade of Britain. Under contemporary international law occupation of Finland was *occupatio bellica* to be ended when the main aim, peace between Sweden and France had been achieved.

This and the war added new dimensions to the Finnish problem: from that time on it was not enough to plan military operations; the country acquired civil administration under Commander-in-Chief F.W. von Buxhoevden yet it remained unclear on which conditions the Finnish territories should be joined to the empire.

At this stage there was no agreement about the status of the newly acquired territory: the Russian troops were pressing forward too easily to contemplate any special rights for Finland.

All decisions that imparted the Grand Duchy of Finland with elements of statehood should be ascribed, in the final analysis, to Aleksandr I.

The new imperial course was formed under Georg Sprengtporten's great influence with a direct involvement of Mikhail Speransky, one of the architects of Finland's autonomy.

It was at the same time that the status of Finland as part of the Russian Empire was gradually taking shape. Sprengtporten together with War Minister Arakcheyev and General von Knorring drafted a project of Finland's central government they called the Committee of Government to be housed in the city of Tavastgus (Fin. Hämeenlinna).

With time the efforts to build up the administrative system and clarify many of the economic issues continued after the Porvoo Diet convinced the local people to accept a much more benevolent and positive view of their new situation.

When in December 1917 Finland declared its independence it had, as a sovereign state, practically the entire set of administrative instruments at its disposal: it had the laws, government, one of the most democratic parliaments of the time, and national economy. The wide autonomy of the Grand Duchy of Finland that allowed it to develop its domestic sphere and the Finns who never spared effort to build up their economy, culture and statehood made this possible.

## A Glimpse of the History of the Bukovina Railway

*Author: S. Morozov*

*Assistant Professor at the History of the Slavic and Balkan Peoples Department, St. Petersburg State University, Doctor of Sciences (History)*



RECENTLY, historians have been displaying a lot of interest in prewar international relations in Europe and with good reason: new so far little-known yet weighty facts have come to the fore to be included in the history of diplomacy.

In the spring of 1936, the failure of the old security system in Europe became obvious to all; once more the European countries had to start from the very beginning. The Mutual Assistance Agreement and the Air Convention Moscow and Prague signed on 17 May 1935 allowed Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia Ed-

uard Beneš launch preparations for the worst possible variant, viz. German military aggression.

The Third Reich saw this as an obstacle to its aggressive plans: everybody knew that Hitler's inevitable eastward expansion would lead, sooner or later, to a clash with Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Having learned about the Polish-Yugoslav talks and having sensed concealed threat Nicolae Titulescu sped to Belgrade to learn that it conditioned its participation in the Bucharest meeting of the Little Entente on the Soviet Union's withdrawal from Central European affairs. To avoid a split, the Rumanian foreign minister promised to act accordingly.

By late 1936, a certain feature of great powers' European politics had become obvious. To a certain extent it could be discerned in Polish and Czech politics. Despite their frantic efforts to avoid a revision of their borders Polish and Czech leaders might become gradually convinced that they could do little if anything to tip the balance.

Diplomatic and archival sources confirm the above. On 29 September, Zdeněk Fierlinger informed Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia Kamil Krofta: Yesterday overjoyed French Ambassador Coulondre told me that the Soviet military attaché in Paris had announced that the Soviet Union dispatched 30 complete and alerted divisions as well as technical support units along its western borders to be ready to act at short notice.<sup>18</sup> In April 1939, Beneš in emigration in the United States said in an interview to the Daily Mail that in September 1938 the Soviet Union had been prepared to live up to its obligations to Czechoslovakia. What was more, added the former president, the Soviet Union had been prepared to act even if France and Britain stood aside.

## Remembering Reykjavik

*Author: A. Zaitsev*

*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Russia's ambassador to the Republic of Iceland (1998-2002), Candidate of Sciences (Economics)*



THE PROPOSAL of an assignment to Iceland made to me over the phone when I was on vacation by the chief of the Foreign Ministry Personnel Department who gave me two days to think about it, for the umpteenth time confirmed the correctness of my idea formed over more than 30 years of diplomatic service of the unpredictability of the chosen career.

I accepted the offer remembering the oriental wisdom about the need to change occupations for at least once in 12 years to boost your professional growth and gain knowledge of new regions, countries and cultures.

Nothing else is taken by the Icelanders so close to heart and so resolutely defended the entire recent history of the country proves this

as their rich fishing grounds and their right to use them.

During my first days in Iceland I did not know much about local realities and I did not realize right away that it was an earthquake and a rather strong at that. I finally got used to earthquakes after four years of my stay there. The city experienced several strong quakes and in March of 2000 I happened to watch an eruption of Iceland's biggest volcano Hekla, 110 km east of the capital, Reykjavik.

WHEN I BECAME HEAD of the Soviet embassy in Reykjavik our relations with Iceland, according to our Foreign Ministry, left much to be desired.

The only political document it formed the foundation on which to build in the absence of new accords and legal documents was the 1994 declaration on the principles of relations between Russia and Iceland, which did not actually work for the lack of practical value.

Having the above in mind, the first contacts with the leaders of Iceland were focused on explaining Russia's position on NATO expansion and Russian initiatives aimed at confidence building in the Baltic area to enhance security and stability.

Bilateral trade and economic relations were declining over the years to a point where the Russian trade mission in Reykjavik was closed down in 1995.

The bilateral political dialogue widened, its level increased and more visits were exchanged. Most of the visits took place for the first time in the entire history of relations between both countries.

FAR REACHING HOPES were pinned on the first ever official visit to Russia by a President of the Republic of Iceland, O.R. Grimsson and his talks with Russia's leadership especially with regard to rebuilding trade and economic ties undermined by the 1998 financial crisis in Russia and achieving progress in the hard-to-solve issues.

## Ambassador of a Great Power: 90th Birthday of Anatoly Dobrynin

*Author: A. Bessmertnykh*

*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, President of the Foreign Policy Association, Chairman of the World Council of Former Foreign Ministers, founding member of the World Political Forum, vice president of the Eastern Dimension international movement, member of the Presidium of the Russian Academy of Social Sciences, Honorary Professor of Moscow State University*



ANATOLY DOBRYNIN is one of those people typically referred to in Russia as samorodok, or a natural talent born and raised in the plain surroundings of numerous working families. His distant ancestors lived in a province near Moscow. His father, a locksmith, was doing his best to let his son get a higher education to become an engineer at some production plant. His dream came true. Enrolling in Moscow Aviation Institute, from which he graduated with honors and where met his future wife Irina Nikolaevna, charming, intelligent, brimming with energy, who has been his comrade and mainstay, Dobrynin got a JOB at a pilot plant run by A.S. Yakovlev, the designer of the famous fighter planes.

UNLIKE SOME AMBASSADORS who move during their career from one capital to another and resign after 30 or 40 years of honestly serving their country, Dobrynin was destined to serve as ambassador to Washington that hub of political passions for nearly 25 years.

The most memorable perhaps was the most perilous 1962 Cuban missile crisis that put the world on the brink of nuclear disaster.

In my numerous conversations with Anatoly Fedorovich in the years that followed, he often recalled this episode and taught me, an apprentice diplomat at that time, to never bend the truth by adjusting it to the moods of the Center and provide information the bosses may not like, come what may. I remembered that lesson serving as chargé d'affaires and then as ambassador in Washington.

I must mention here Dobrynin's rare gift for building and maintaining reliable contacts in the upper strata of the U.S. elite. I believe there were no influential figures in America he was not acquainted with. I was amazed at the ambassador's ability to detect, even in trifling things what later proved important tendencies. I put it down to his erudition, experience and being always mentally tuned to guessing out the mainsprings of what was happening.

One of the most important postulates of Dobrynin's diplomacy was the professional conviction that an ambassador gets posted in a country with the main objective in mind to safeguard relations with that country, but not at the expense of his own country's interests.

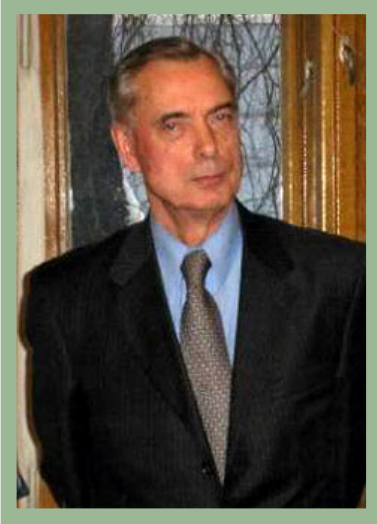
That's what Dobrynin remains today: famous, adored and leisurely because it is out of his character to clown before the public to quote from the Pushkin.



## Flying High: Boris Kolokolov Turns 85

*Author: B. Piadyshev*

*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Honored Worker of the Diplomatic Service of the Russian Federation*



I first met Boris in 1950 at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations where we both applied to become students of the legendary MGIMO.

Boris instantly became a recognized leader among his fellow students and at the institute. On a successful graduation from MGIMO, he embarked on the diplomatic career which lasted many years and earned him top diplomatic JOBS and titles.

He worked for a long time in the system of UN international organizations. He completely immersed himself in the protocol service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) becoming a paragon of competence in the subtle business of dealing with

the diplomatic corps. Even more so, in handling protocol matters involving top party and government officials. There was no margin of error in such matters, especially on Brezhnev's watch. They say (not without grounds) that Leonid Brezhnev once joked, 'The black-haired chief of the Foreign Ministry's protocol service is too handsome and distracts attention from the heads of the party and government at official occasions.

Whether Brezhnev actually said it or not, the successful chief of the protocol service was sent away from Moscow to Tunisia as USSR ambassador. This was a very important and honorary appointment and Boris Leonidovich represented there the interests of the great power with honor and dignity.

The peak of recognition came at the reception arranged by Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to mark Boris Kolokolov's 85th birthday. Gathered at the historic MFA Mansion on Spiridonovka Street were his old friends and associates.

Sergei Lavrov had some kind words and comradely wishes. Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov also voiced his fond wishes. Pyotr Deynekin, former commander of Russia's strategic aviation, spoke of Kolokolov's wartime experience and his present achievements. The celebrated film director, El'dar Ryazanov, recalled the good times both shared.

Kolokolov's MFA associates praised his friendliness and professional competence.

As for International Affairs, it has always played its part in activities of this remarkable man. We published his stories, articles and excerpts from his books. We are confident that our fine cooperation will continue. We are never too old.

Happy birthday!

## Looking Back at the Gulf War of 1990-1991

*Author: D. Khristenko*

*Post-graduate student at the World History Department, Yaroslavl State University*



THROUGHOUT the last twenty years Iraq has always been in the center of the world community's attention. Back in 1990, the military operation code-named Desert Storm (1990-1991) waged by a multinational coalition of 26 states (America, France, the U.K., and Saudi Arabia among others) was one of the first military conflicts when a new system of international relations was being formed on the ruins

of the bi-polar world. Its importance exceeded by far the region's limits<sup>1</sup>; in a certain sense it was a point of bifurcation that hinted at serious global changes on the world political scene.

The book by American author Kevin Woods *The Mother of All Battles<sup>3</sup>: Saddam Hussein's Strategic Plan for the Persian Gulf War<sup>4</sup>* can be described as a fresh approach to the American-Iraqi relations of that time based on the Iraqi documents captured in Baghdad occupied by Americans in 2003.

In an effort to grasp the logic of Saddam's strategies in the Gulf War Kevin Woods formulated four main tasks: to present the maximally unbiased picture of the period; to analyze it; to visualize the war as it was seen by the enemy and to demonstrate how the United States and Iraq adjusted themselves to the postwar situation (p. XXI).

Kevin Woods devoted a large part of his book to an analysis of how the Iraqi leaders had appraised the international situation during the war and why Saddam Hussein had been convinced that his regime had profited from it.

The author's comments and conclusions are highly interesting. The authoritarian regime did not allow the military to subject the failures at the front to an honest and unbiased analysis lest it cast doubt on the country's political leadership and its authority. This is Woods' main conclusion. He has written that even though the Iraqi leader readily admitted tactical errors and blunders he never permitted an honest and unbiased discussion of fundamental miscalculations that caused failures at the front. Kevin Woods has rightly written that in totalitarian and authoritarian regimes the military tend to curb their initiative on the battlefield which means, the author concludes, that Hussein would have been unprepared to accept an explanation that associated lack of initiative on the battlefield with the nature of his regime.

Readers in Russia will be especially interested to learn that during the Gulf War Baghdad

was very skeptical about the Soviet Union's role and its political weight in the world. Documents testify that seen from Baghdad the U.S.S.R. looked like a country which lost many of its former worldwide positions while its conduct on the world scene was determined by the domestic squabbles around Gorbachev between the pro-American lobby led by Shevardnadze and pro-Iraqi lobby of the has-beens in the Communist Party who had never loved America much anyway.

One can agree with Woods that his book will not only fill in some of the lacunas in the history of the Gulf War and its analysis but will also supply the American political establishment with a chance to assess their actions through the eyes of Saddam and his advisors. This book might prove useful for the Russian researchers of the Middle East and the military operations of the United States.

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