

International Affairs: Summary №1, 2013

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Foreign Policy Pluses and Minuses of 2012

Author: S. Ryabkov

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation



Syria is a minus in the sense that the situation has not improved, and Russia's efforts to develop a platform on which to work towards a Syrian-led settlement did not materialize due various reasons.

Another minus that I would put after this one is the lack of adequate progress on a number of aspects of our relationship with the U.S.

There are also downsides which are not as "politically charged," for example the difficulties that we are having in a visa dialogue with the European Union.

I shall name among the positive results the creation

of the Eurasian Economic Commission made up of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan; strengthening of the Collective Security Treaty Organization; and the development of relations with a number of countries in different regions, including Latin America. Russia's accession to the WTO is a big plus. And then there is the BRICS.

At the election stage, the Americans, as a rule, are not greatly preoccupied with foreign policy as compared to other periods. For once it was different.

The U.S. administration towed in the wake of those who had decided to seek replacement of the anti-Soviet Jackson-Vanik amendment with an anti-Russian, extremely harmful and fundamentally wrong law, which has gained notoriety as the Magnitsky Act.

Kerry may not have been a longtime member of the Foreign Relations Committee, but in any case his role as chairman of the committee is unique.

Of course, Mr. Kerry is a man who only cares about U.S. interests; this is the alpha and omega for him. The position of secretary of state by definition cannot be filled by anyone else.

Solution of any problem is in dynamics, you need to watch the trends, where we were in the past and where we have come to today.

As regards the Middle East, the cooperation on the whole outweighs the differences. Although I do not want to underestimate the differences over Syria.

What are the resources of American growth? In America, they say that it is necessary to increase exports, boost innovation and support infrastructure development. All of this costs a lot of money.

In Russo-Brazilian trade we are only at the beginning of the road, but we will forge on.

BRICS as a group shows its relevance more and more. Divergent interests exist, I will not hide it.

We have wide-ranging cultural ties. Many groups of performers from Moscow and St. Petersburg toured Central and South America during the year. Concerts of Latin American performers are being planned in our country.

The Nuclear Threat Is Not a Bluff

Author: A. Arbatov

Ambassador Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Director of Center for International Security at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Russian Academy of Sciences



Security issues are beginning to concern the common people only when a war breaks out or the military spending increases to the point where they feel it in their pockets.

The major conflicts today are internal in character and are accompanied by outside intervention. In the first decade of the new century, only three conflicts were interstate and the remaining several dozen were internal. So it is now occurring in Syria.

The world had suddenly found itself on the brink of war. Although the war was no one's desire. How many false alarms there were when the missiles are on minute alert, and there is no time left for thinking.

This much bandied around thesis that conventional arms come close in destructive effect to nuclear weapons can be heard even at the political level. Yet nothing will ever come close to the destructive effect of a nuclear attack.

But with China the case is different. The strategic relations of the Americans with it develop in such a way that U.S. high-precision weapons are seen by the Chinese as a serious threat of a disarming strike, because they have fewer nuclear weapons and these are much more vulnerable.

India and Pakistan are countries from what is probably the most dangerous region from the viewpoint of interstate war with nuclear weapons.

In the Middle East, war is very likely but not a nuclear one. If Iran doesn't stop enriching uranium and continues to ignore the UN Security Council's resolutions, Israel will in the end deliver a non-nuclear strike at Iran's nuclear facilities. Although Israel has nuclear weapons, they are undeclared.

In the Far East, the North Korean missile launch that occurred not so long ago has sharpened tension, yet the likelihood of a war with nuclear weapons is small.

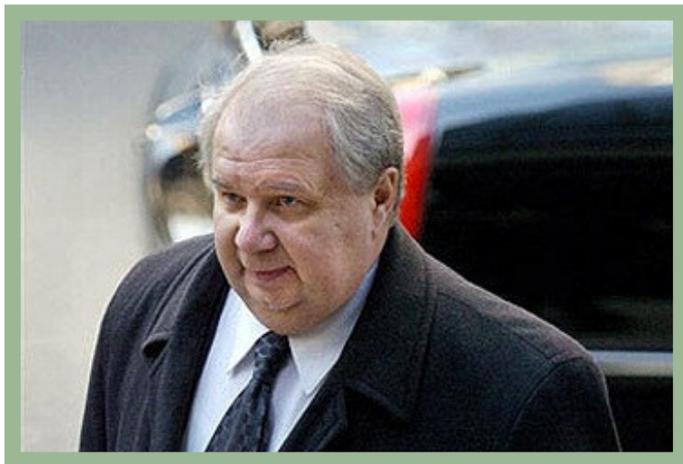
There is an illusion that if a third world war did not occur between the Soviet Union and the U.S. - with their large quantities of nuclear weapons - then enlarging the club of "nuclear haves" will reduce the likelihood of war between them. This is a profound mistake.

There is a movement in the world that is called "Global Zero. That's an absolute utopia. No one would ever really do it. When we talk about nuclear disarmament, we primarily have in mind not a state but a process. The nuclear disarmament process must by all means be continued.

At the expert level, we are engaged in serious talks with the Americans, arguing our case that their scheme is not going to work. There are other ways to solve this problem without compromising the security of Russia.

Author: S. Kislyak

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the United States



Over the past year, there have been plenty of election struggles between the pragmatic and more ideological, conservative schools about the United States' role and mission in the world.

Russia has its own ideas about ways of ensuring stable security in the region, first and foremost, around its own borders, which does not necessarily coincide with NATO and U.S. ideas - all of that is and will evi-

dently remain significant factors in the development of our relations.

On the practical level, disagreements between Russia and the U.S. will also be present both in political debates and in the media.

Even amid the existing tactical differences we work with the Americans on those issues, predominantly in a positive key.

Russia and the U.S. have put in place a mechanism which is aimed at facilitating the comprehensive development of constructive cooperation, namely, the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission.

It is in our interests to strengthen trade and bilateral investment with the U.S.

Innovational cooperation also has obviously good prospects. U.S. companies have become useful partners of the Skolkovo high-tech innovation hub.

We are partners with the U.S. at important forums such as the G8 and the G20. Having taken over APEC chairmanship from the U.S. we have closely cooperated in the preparation of the Vladivostok Summit, proposing our topics and to a very large degree ensuring the continuity of the U.S. agenda.

In recent years, our military cooperation has been getting increasingly practical. Dialog between the top military leadership has become a common feature but there is little coverage in the press of joint training and education programs for our military units. They train to be able to act together in warding off new-generation threats.

IT IS NOT AN EXCEPTION that Russia and the U.S. have disagreements but quite a common thing in relations between states, especially such large ones that are closely involved in international affairs as Russia and the U.S.

Apropos Russia's New Foreign Policy Concept

Author: R. Grinberg

Director of the Institute of Economics, Russian Academy of Sciences, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences



The fast changing international situation requires Russia's flexible and timely reaction to the new challenges and threats to its security that arise in the process of the constant evolution of the entire system of modern international relations.

The new world order is evolving in the context of globalization.

The logic of the development of the world economy and the world financial system that predetermines globalization can be realized only through

politics.

Integration into the globalization process has become a necessary precondition for successful national development, modernization and the higher effectiveness of economic and social structures.

Russia is doomed to the role of an object of global politics, with the West and China competing for it in their own interests.

A new world order is evolving amid the clash of civilizations. The rivalry of the superpowers is giving way to growing competition between civilizations, which is developing alongside their interaction.

It is especially important to note the role of the UN in international relations.

The evolution of modern international relations is based not on the balance of interests of the most influential states but on the balance of force.

Russia as a European state is interested in becoming part of the European security and stability zone. Integration into it is possible through cooperation with NATO and the EU, among other things.

The relations with Europe are marked by a more positive substance compared to relations with the United States.

The European Union today is focused mainly on its own internal problems while the strategic issues of relations with Russia have been sidelined.

V.V. Putin's idea of creating the Eurasian Union is not so much a tribute to fashion and a win-win move in a presidential election campaign as a response to the numerous challenges related to Russia's place in the modern world.

A Talented Play for Talented Actors

Author: V. Tretyakov

Dean, Higher School of Television, Moscow State University



What is Russia's problem? Not only Russia's, to be honest, but I will concentrate at it. Documents called concepts are multiplying like certain mammals yet concepts and doctrines are rare species: there should not be many of them and they should not be frequently changed.

A concept or a doctrine cannot be vague or contradictory; its wording and content should leave no doubts about its meaning either in the expert community or outside it. This is where Russia's foreign policy concepts or similar documents in other spheres leave much to be desired.

My previous experience and my present-day observations suggest that even the best professional diplomats cannot reproduce and, therefore, understand what our concepts say. Our foreign partners and our rivals cannot do this either.

First, the Russian public has no clear ideas about Russia's long-term foreign policy aims; this creates numerous misinterpretations, hearsay, myths and idle speculations. If the new concept reproduces the faults of its predecessors it will be useless. To avoid this, those who supply the key intellectual impulses for a new doctrine should think clearly.

We should compile a list of allies, unfriendly countries and potential foes and build up a system of measures to be applied to those who infringe on our national interests.

Governments can be changed and are changed, Russia being no exception, yet Russia's positions should not change because they are geared at the country's national interests. The countries which indulge in shifting their Russian policies cannot be Russia's allies by definition. They can count, at best, on the status of an "unreliable partner" to be treated accordingly.

People in the post-Soviet space has been waiting far too long for a clear declaration that Russia treats the status of each of the former Soviet citizens as its national interest; this applies first and foremost, to those who regard themselves Russian by birth, language or place of birth.

This is even more important in view of the fact that in 1991 the Russian nation became the largest divided nation of Europe.

To sum up: we should clearly define our national interests beyond Russia's borders; we should register international realities as a context in which Russia has to act; we should compile a list of allies, unfriendly countries and potential foes and build up a system of measures to be applied to those who infringe on our national interests. A concept should contain politically correct and maximally clear definitions.

Foreign Policy and Innovative Diplomacy

Author: E. Pantelev

Deputy Director, Information and Press Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Candidate of Science (Economics)



We haven't been very successful in providing information and advocacy support for our foreign policy and diplomatic agendas, and promoting a truthful image of Russia abroad; actually, we are often outplayed in the field of information. As Russian Ambassador to the United Kingdom Alexander Yakovenko aptly remarked, sometimes the impression is that the application field of diplomacy has moved from international gatherings in "smoke-filled rooms" to touch screens, and while the good old private conversations between diplomats are still there and unlikely to disappear, online diplomacy is really getting enormously popular.

In today's world, "where ideas and images play a larger role than ever before," in order to avoid losing out in international competition it is necessary to use modern tools of propaganda.

In this regard, we think it would be logical to add a mention to the appropriate section of the concept being discussed that the potential of the modern information and communication technologies should be actively drawn upon in carrying out foreign policy.

More and more attention is paid to digital technologies in the teaching programs of the educational institutions under the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The MGIMO University's School of International Economic Relations has opened a new speciality, Information Technologies in International Business. The School of Advanced Training at the Diplomatic Academy plans a course, The Basics of SocialNetworking.

In addition, the concept of innovative diplomacy looks promising for use in terms of being compared to the traditional, classical diplomacy.

The priority tasks of innovative diplomacy could include:

- Interaction with the public;
- Knowledge management - accumulating the best knowledge and experience and distributing them;
- Information management - tracking international information flows with the purpose of early warning of arising social and political trends, as well as for timely response to emergency situations with Russian citizens (including with the use of automated monitoring systems);
- Coordination support - planning, tracking and supervising external relations on the part of the subjects of the Federation, the federal executive bodies and large economic entities.

Author: V. Grinin

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Federal Republic of Germany



Speech at the international conference "Russia and Europe: Topical Issues of Contemporary International Journalism," Berlin, October 31, 2012

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear colleagues,
I would like to extend my heartfelt welcome to the participants and guests of this conference and thank you for this opportunity to speak.

Russia and Germany's joint course toward historical reconciliation and the strengthening of trust between the two nations have brought its results. The balance of our

relations is positive. And they are far better than some media outlets are trying to suggest.

What is characteristic of our diverse ties with Germany today? First and foremost, stability and dynamism.

I would say that our relations are marked by pragmatic respect for mutual interests and the commitment to search for joint responses to challenges affecting both Russia and Germany.

It is also important to mention the two countries' striving to expand contacts between civil societies and broaden cultural exchanges, especially between our young citizens, as well as to move toward even more intensive public dialog.

At present, our countries are completing wide-range preparations for a new round of annual interstate top-level consultations that will take place in Russia, as usual, with the participation of members of our governments.

This is one side of the matter but there is another, too. In this connection, it is essential to mention that we are encountering some phenomena that mar our relations posing a threat.

Intensive political dialog is ongoing and there are no pauses, i.e., no "political silence" that inevitably leads to misunderstanding and misperception, as well as other negative developments.

Generally, it would be nice if our media pooled efforts in a constructive manner to become involved in the living fabric of Russian-German cooperation. Good cooperation between Russia and Germany is a key to Europe's good future.

Dear friends, I wish you successful work. Thank you.

"We Can Survive Only by Building a Unified State and a Unified Civil Society"

Author: Nouri al-Maliki

Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq



Ladies and gentlemen, you know where Iraq is, you know its history. This is a country of great civilizations and it is living under Sharia law. Iraq has inherited the ancient culture and history of Mesopotamian civilization. Our country has always played a big role in human history, once sharing with the rest of the world many of its achievements, which people use to this day.

Today, let us talk about the new Iraq in all senses of the word. Our foreign policy is based on two factors: the situation in the world and the region, as well as on the state of affairs which takes place in Iraq itself.

The Iraqis had grown tired of a regime that was based on provoking wars and thriving on conspiracies, assassinations and sectarian strife. Today, we strive to build a renewed Iraq that can rightly use its resources and will be able to restore the destroyed once-strong infrastructure. We reject the previous policy of stirring up problems, intrinsic to many countries in the region. The ordinary people always suffered from that policy.

We are totally against any intervention in our affairs and those of any other state. All that's happening in our region is proxy wars unleashed by external forces.

Our people have suffered much. It is known that the one who has lived through much well understands the suffering of others. To build a new world requires new mechanisms.

Our aim is to build a civil society and work towards a new equitable world order where we would not be confronting each other and would not try to exploit the wealth of each other. Referring to the Syrian question, I want to note that we support the Syrian people in their struggle for freedom and democracy, but at the same time we adhere to our position on this issue. We are working to end the conflict in Syria by drawing on the experience of international organizations.

As to internal policy, which is the basis of our foreign policy, we pursue a course of building a civil society, and stand against communal strife and for the confiscation of weapons from people, but at the same time we strive to ensure rights and freedoms in every sphere of civil life. We want to create an Iraqi army which would be capable of defending our country, rather than intervening in the affairs of other countries.

Iraq is a great repository of all kinds of natural resources, especially oil and gas. We would like to use these resources and other mineral wealth to rebuild our country and its economy. I believe that the Russian Federation could become our close partner.

Bloc Mentality Still Alive in the Military-Political Sphere

Author: A. Grushko

Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the North

Atlantic Treaty Organization



The changes in the Euro-Atlantic military-political landscape today are clearly lagging behind the trends of integration, interdependence in all key areas of interstate and economic ties. As far as Russia is concerned, absolutely all vectors of its development are linked to increasing interaction with the outside world and further integration into global economic processes.

At the same time, thinking based on bloc affiliation still persists in the military-political sphere.

We are still hearing calls for "containing" Russia. The process of NATO expansion is ongoing. Devoid of any sense in the new reality, this process provokes the search for an enemy, fueling the behavior stereotypes of "frontline states."

It was of principal importance that the Lisbon Summit confirmed the need to maintain a continuous political dialog in the NATO-Russia Council. There is a special term in the Russia-NATO lexicon: "all weather capability." It means that even if differences arise between us, dialog should not stop and the consultation mechanism will continue to work "under any conditions and on all issues."

Overall, we are ready to build up interaction with NATO member countries along the lines where we have common security interests, on the basis of equality and the principles of international law.

We cooperate on Afghanistan: There is a joint program to train drug-control specialists and technicians for servicing Russia-made helicopters.

Missile defense remains one of the key issues on the Russia-NATO agenda. Sadly, serious differences in our approaches remain.

What is important for us are reliable guarantees - expressed in clear-cut military-technical and geographic criteria - that this system is not aimed against the Russian nuclear deterrence forces and fully measures up to the declared goal, i.e., defensereliability of such guarantees would be ensured by making them legally binding.

NATO does not have a uniform opinion on all issues, and that includes specific aspects of relations with Russia. We understand that and seek to work with our partners within the framework of all existing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms. Our dialog with the U.S. is one important instrument of maintaining strategic stability, and in this context it definitely is of great importance for our relations with NATO as well. A case in point is the situation around the missile defense program.

Russia and the OSCE

Author: A. Kelin

Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the OSCE in Vienna



In 2015, the OSCE will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act (HFA), which heralded the start of a pan-European process and the birth of a new international structure.

But, unfortunately, today not everyone knows that this is the place of the headquarters of one of the world's largest regional political organizations, where representatives from 56 countries are working on topical issues of se-

curity in the area from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

The largest regional organization of today, which stretches across three continents and integrates a wide range of issues relating to internal and external security, is what it is: a reflection of the condition of relations among its Member States.

Another distortion in the OSCE's work is excessive attention to the humanitarian dimension of security, back-burnering military and political issues relevant for the Organization, as well as economic and environmental topics.

A lingering weakness of the OSCE is the lack of agreement among the key players, particularly Russia, the United States and the EU, on the basic priorities, objectives and functions of the Organization.

Yet the OSCE is a unique field of triangular cooperation between Russia, the EU and the U.S. on European affairs. Work in the "triangle," primarily due to its being a flexible and not overformalized format, provides opportunities for finding solutions to the most complex issues.

Special note should be taken here of our close cooperation with our CSTO allies and other CIS partners in the OSCE.

Of course, the main thrust area of the OSCE should be efforts to strengthen the military and political security in Europe. Without this, it is impossible to implement the task of expanding economic and humanitarian cooperation. Some progress is there.

By way of conclusion, let it be mentioned that it is impossible within the space of an article to cover the multi-faceted nature or work of the OSCE in full. Topics of the Organization's contribution to the international assistance to Afghanistan, of the economic dimension of security, the implications of the prospect of Mongolian membership or the importance of parliamentary diplomacy through the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly as well as many other things, also deserve serious consideration.

Egypt: Birth of the "Second Republic"

Author: V. Beliakov

Leading Research Fellow, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Professor at the Military University, Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, and the Russian State University for the Humanities, Doctor of Science (History)



The "Second Republic" in Egypt was born on June 30, 2012; on that day, President-elect Mohamed Morsi administered the oath. He is the first civilian president since the revolution of July 23, 1952: for 60 years, the country was ruled by the military.

Egypt has just started building up its "second republic"; this will take a lot of time yet it has become clear that despite possible variants the

result will be very different from the old regime.

The country was badly hit by the revolution but not crippled. According to a Central Bank of Egypt press release, Egypt's overall balance of payment deficit was \$12.7 billion compared to the same period the year before when it had registered an overall surplus of \$719.1 million.

The elections, which made Morsi president, were the first completely democratic and absolutely transparent elections in the country's history.

The Egyptian electorate is split into two nearly equal parts. Society is divided into active participants in the revolution who reject the members of the previous regime and those who want normality as soon as possible.

The Muslim Brotherhood has much more behind the façade than meets the eye; the newly elected president has repeatedly confirmed this.

There is a very strong opposition in Egypt to its possible Islamist future. Nearly 10% of the country's population are Christians with their economic and cultural involvement being much bigger than their share in the total population.

THE FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES of the new regime are suggested by the urgent social and economic problems. This explains the choice of China as the country of the new president's first official visit he made late in August 2012.

In a short while the relations between Cairo and Tehran will return to normal: Iran's role in the region cannot be ignored any longer.

The situation in the country is very different from what it was a couple of years ago. The Egyptians regained their dignity and freedom; they destroyed the hated regime; the state of emergency was annulled together with the arbitrary rule it produced.

China: The Fifth Generation of Leadership

Author: I. Antonov

Izvestia Correspondent in Beijing, exclusively to International Affairs



In September, China's relations with neighboring Japan suddenly became complicated because of mutual territorial claims; there was also no letup in outside pressure on the Chinese authorities and society - as always, the occasion for criticism was Tibet, human rights, the urgency for political reform, etc. And now, in such a specific atmosphere, the party's leadership rejuvenation was to occur, along with a transfer of power to a new generation of leaders.

Even before the start of the 18th Congress, information began to appear in individual and, as a rule, very knowledgeable Hong Kong media outlets about the possibility of the Committee being reduced from nine to seven members, as that was during the rule of Jiang Zemin. This version received wide publicity, becoming a subject for discussion among experts.

An attentive journalist noticed that on the podium for the new Standing Committee members only seven digits were pasted two meters apart from each other. There was no doubt left that the number of people at the helm in China for at least the next five years would be two fewer than they were during the rule of Hu Jintao.

The atmosphere of the 18th Congress and the decisions made at it suggest that we can generally expect continuity in the foreign and domestic policies of China under the new leadership.

After the announcement of the final Standing Committee line-up, some conclusions and future projections began to take shape among the expert community.

As per the age limit adopted in the party, only two of the current PBSC members can remain in their posts for more than five years, Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang, and the five others will reach retirement age by the time of the 19th Party Congress in 2017. And now they will normally be succeeded by members of the so-called sixth generation of leadership provided everything goes as usual. For this to happen, they are all in the Politburo already.

By all indications, the current Chinese President Hu Jintao will completely retire from official business following the March session of the NPC.

In this regard, the background of the future leader of China is of interest for analysis. This member of the fifth generation of leaders is being talked about as one who is able to make a mark in history.

Speaking of the outgoing Chinese President, his contribution to China's development was officially recognized by a specific insertion in the charter of the party at the end of the CPC 18th Congress.

Author: Yuri Raikov

Doctor of Science (History)



This past summer, the worsened territorial dispute in East Asia between Japan and China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, China and certain ASEAN members has appreciably soured the situation in the Asia-Pacific region. It reminded us of the fragility of peace in this exceptionally important region and placed this situation, together with the situation in the Middle East, at the top of the world's political agenda. The dispute involves three leading world nations on which peace in the international arena depends to a large extent.

The political and military rivalry between the great powers and the arms race, the dormant territorial conflicts, which send reminders from time to time, has become characteristic of international relations in the Asia-Pacific region along with the growing economic integration and multilateral cooperation in various spheres. The chief source of instability is the clashing geopolitical interests of the key centers of power, which are expected to intensify as the region is gaining strength as a global pole of economic, financial and political activities.

A struggle for global leadership is inevitable between the PRC and the U.S., and it will be only intensifying as it proceeds. International experts see as obsolete and largely out of keeping with the national interests of both countries the calls for close U.S.-China cooperation.

Washington's policy steering to confrontation leads to the legalization in international affairs of yet another cold war which is gaining momentum before our eyes, now between the USA and China.

China's economic progress helped it gain confidence and independence in the international arena, greater political ambitions among members of its elite and generated a general growth of nationalist mood in the country.

As an emerging superpower, China demands its own place under the sun. The United States remains the leading nation on the planet and is clearly not prepared to cede leadership in the world community to the new competitor.

Tensions in the Asia-Pacific region may deteriorate into a major conflict if a number of interested states join hands to bring pressure to bear on Beijing.

Although the territorial wrangling between the PRC and a number of countries in the region are mainly bilateral, the U.S., as a guarantor of regional security for a number of countries in the region, would hardly be able, or want in today's situation, to evade involvement in the region's affairs.

Brazil, the Country of the Future in the Present

Author: V. Davydov

Director, Institute of Latin America, Russian Academy of Sciences, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences



Events of the past two decades show that Brazil is becoming the country of the future in the present. It has entered into the 21st century with an imposing record having won respect from both its neighbors and its partners in meridians far removed from the New World.

Today, it is in the top ten countries with the greatest economic potential. But it's not only that.

Brazil is now one of the leaders in the aircraft industry, even though it set its footprint in this market not so long ago - only fifteen or twenty years back. Brazil is doing well in the domain of genetic research. Brazilian scientists demonstrate high creativity in traditional and nuclear power, and it's a pleasure to note that the Brazilian school of nuclear physics has been founded in São Paulo by our compatriot Gleb Wataghin.

While talking about the economy, we should not forget the social sphere. Brazil of the last decade has convincingly demonstrated to the world that social spending is by no means charity. It's a significant investment in the national economy and the enhancement of its productive potential.

Brazil is the only country that can take on the role of an alternative pole within the space of the two Americas.

Over the last few decades, Brazil has pursued a balanced policy. Lula da Silva was trying not to make any sudden moves, but at the same time doggedly creating incentives for national capital, for small and medium businesses, strengthening physical and financial infrastructure.

Today, Brazil enjoys a well-deserved international reputation as a stable democratic society and a country that respects human rights. Of course, it would be naïve to see Brazil as an ideal country. One of the most sensitive problems is extreme social stratification and polarization.

Noticeable is the increased attention being given by the Brazilian leadership to the national army and the military-industrial complex.

Brazil has endured the global economic crisis with minimal costs and is maintaining positive growth dynamics.

Today, we are aware that we need to purposefully build relationships with Brazil in a wide spectrums of forms - both as part of the BRICS five and bilaterally.

The Revolution Better Avoided

Author: Armen Oganessian

Editor-in-Chief of International Affairs



The first anniversary of the events on the Bolotnaya (Swamp) Square did not pass unnoticed even though after twelve months they would have been safely forgotten.

For many years, we have been taught to tally up the scores and draw up annual balance sheets; today, the unrealized dreams leave a bitter aftertaste.

The 1848 revolution in the bored country came like a bolt from the blue: it took the

court and the radical revolutionaries unawares. It was a farcical reincarnation of the French Revolution. In 1848, the revolution was triggered by a ban of a political banquet of the opposition. Under different circumstances and different repercussions the ban would have looked too common or even banal to be noticed.

According to Cuvillier-Fleury, preceptor of prince royal, Louis Philippe was a good politician, serious and balanced man, active and far-sighted who wanted to rule by law and who wanted his people to live in peace, work, buy and sell, grow rich, respect freedom and avoid rocking the boat.

The Russian diplomat reported: "Nobody was prepared to what happened next; even those who found themselves at the helm were taken unawares." The rest followed the trodden path of all revolutions.

Very soon "conscientious" opposition which had provoked unrest by its "fraudulent populism" lost control of the crowd.

The danger was very real; despite the assurances to the contrary coming from the Interim Government, the revolutionary crowd was drunk on the ideas of export of revolution which would intoxicate the Paris Commune in 1871.

Russian Princess Daria Lieven had to emigrate from France to Great Britain from which she was watching with bleeding heart what was going on in the country where she had been living for many years and which she loved so much ... Even workers in Parisian faubourgs have admitted: When rich people disappeared we became even poorer - we need a king."

Leadership for Global Economic Growth

Author: V. Lukov

Ambassador-at-Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Coordinator for G20 Affairs, Sous-Sherpa for BRICS and G8, Doctor of Science (History)



The granting to Russia of the functions of the leader of the G20, of course, reflects the continued growth of the role of our country in world affairs. At the same time, however, chairing this group is a big responsibility. It's about guiding the work of a substantial coordination mechanism of the kind not yet seen in the history of international economic relations.

The Russian Presidency will be actively working to promote IMF reform. The G20 must give political impetus to both directions of this reform: making arrangements for overhauling the IMF's quota and voting structure based on a new formula for their calculation and allocation.

tion.

The Russian Presidency falls on a difficult period for the world economy. The most difficult situation is in the eurozone.

This complicated macroeconomic situation also brings an array of adverse consequences in many areas of international life. Economic difficulties feed the risk of increased protectionist trends in international trade.

We can talk about the following key priorities of Russia's presidency of the Group of Twenty:

- The promotion of further implementation of the Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth;
- Investment financing as the basis for economic growth and job creation;
- Employment provision;
- The modernization of national systems for government borrowing and sovereign debt management;
- Reform of the international monetary and financial system;
- Reform of financial regulation and supervision;
- Sustainable development of global energy markets;
- International development assistance;
- International trade promotion;
- Control of corruption.

A separate area of work for each presidency is to develop G20 external relations. Russia intends to actively develop them in order to give maximum transparency to the workings of the group.

It is safe to say that, as G20 President, Russia will make every effort to find consensus solutions to the key problems of the world economy and finance in the interests of the peoples of the member states of the forum, in the interests of the entire international community.

G20 Presidency: From Mexico to Russia

Author: N. Shkolyar

*Counselor for Economic Affairs, Embassy of the Russian Federation in the United Mexican States,
Professor, Doctor of Science (Economics)*



The global financial and economic crisis has shed light on many contemporary problems, one of which is a contradiction between the distribution, established more than six decades ago, of the influence of nations on the decision-making process in international financial and economic organizations and the changes that have occurred during this time in the actual weight of countries in the world economy.

For Russia as the G20 leader in 2013, the lessons

of the Mexican presidency are of great importance.

The international community came to realize the need to break the monopoly influence of industrialized countries in the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as to increase the role of fast growing and developing economies in shaping the new international economic and financial architecture.

The background to the new G20 is also associated with the practice of inviting leaders of other countries to G8 summits for a broad dialogue. There even arose the formula Eight + Five, which started to meet under the name of the Heiligendamm Process. In addition to these five countries, many more other representatives used to be invited to G8 summits, but the Five became a regular partner, as it were.

In a short time, the Group of Twenty became the main platform to discuss ways for improving the international financial architecture, coordinating national economic policies and creating a favorable environment for global development.

As part of its presidency, Mexico developed collaboration with international financial institutions and continued to work on the recommendations to strengthen the international financial architecture.

The results of the Mexican presidency were highly praised by the leaders of the G20 countries. During the past four years, the G20 in its new capacity has positioned itself as the most appropriate international format for developing a multilateral system of decision-making on global issues.

In the context of the central task of economic growth recovery, under the Russian presidency it is most likely to expect that the agenda will, additionally, include such issues as financial regulation, green growth, climate change, trade, and development promotion. Thus, the number of themes will likely be much lower while the quality of decision-making higher, especially as "an inventory of all earlier undertakings by the G20" is anticipated to be made.

Author: Yu. Shafranik

Chairman of the Board, Union of Oil and Gas Producers of Russia



In the last decade, the Canadian oil sands have turned into a major source of "black gold" not only for Canada itself, but also for the United States. A further increase in production will enable Canada to rank fifth in the world behind Russia, Saudi Arabia, the U.S., and China and ahead of Iran.

Oil and gas flows will also be redirected from the West to growing Asian markets,

primarily the market of China, which is expected to surpass the U.S. in oil and gas consumption already in the next decade. As a result, the Asian economies will increasingly depend on stable oil and gas supply from the Middle East.

It is important to take all of this into account in adjusting not only energy policy, but also Russia's foreign policy doctrine as a whole.

It is also imperative to focus attention on the extraction of heavy oil, development of small fields and hard-to-recover hydrocarbon reserves, and an increase in recovery rates. Consequently, we need urgent and intensive work to enhance the efficiency of all companies and introduce advanced machinery and new technologies.

In addition, a sober analysis of the current state and prospects of our economy shows that in the next few years the export of energy resources (not only oil and gas, but also black coal) should be reoriented in large part to the East. Otherwise it will be impossible to maintain the current amount of federal budget revenue and level of employment in the main producing regions

WE HAVE AN ENERGY STRATEGY of Russia for the Period to 2030, which has set guidelines for the development of the energy sector as part of the transition of the Russian economy to innovative development. But we obviously need to develop an energy doctrine that would formulate, among other things, clear goals for Russia's foreign and domestic energy policy. If our domestic energy policy takes into account the whole range of geographic and economic differences observed from Kaliningrad to Kamchatka, it will play a decisive role in strengthening Russia's energy security and geopolitical influence.

The Divided States of America

Author: V. Batyuk

Head, Center for Military-Political Research, Institute for the U.S. and Canadian Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Science (History)



The 57th presidential campaign in the United States has become history.

The campaign better described as a clash of political views and ideologies was unprecedentedly harsh; the contenders were unprecedentedly incompatible not because of their personalities but because of the diametrically different views and opinions of the social and political forces behind them.

The 2011 budget crisis is one the glaring

examples of the American political elite's inability to agree on budget deficit, sovereign debt, economic crisis, and decreasing competitiveness.

Divided government in the United States continues: the Democrats remained in the White House and the Senate while Republicans brought even more their members to the House. With centrists at the helm in both parties this was of little importance.

There are practically no foreign policy issues on which the U.S. Administration and its Republican opponents see eye-to-eye. The Republicans are dead set against President Obama's intention to cut the current defense budget.

In the course of the election campaign Mitt Romney repeatedly accused the incumbent of "throwing allies like Israel under the bus" in an effort to gain favor of the Islamic world. It should be said that many in the Republican Party and especially in the Tea Party Movement are convinced that Israel should be supported as a matter of principle and that national security came second.

Relations with Russia will depend on whether President Obama will fulfill what he promised: "After my election, I have more flexibility," referring to the ABM issue and the Russian-American dialogue on the nuclear problem.

The time of easily earned triumphs has passed; relations with Russia will depend on whether President Obama will fulfill what he promised: "After my election, I have more flexibility". We should not expect breakthroughs in peace settlement in the Middle East: in the eyes of many Americans and not only them (neocon supporters) the slightest weakening of American support of Israel borders in perfidy. This Administration will have a lot of trouble when pushing the Netanyahu-Lieberman Cabinet toward a real dialogue with the Palestinians.

Russia-Poland: Will the Church Bells Ring?

Authors: O. Brykin

Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation



To answer today the question of how long we, Russians and Poles, are going to bicker, and whether church bells will ring for our reconciliation and brotherhood is very difficult, for far too arduous and sinful was the travelled path of our historical cohabitation. "And yet I am convinced that the majority of ordinary citizens in our countries treat each other normally, without biases. They are least concerned about the historical and political twists in the way of bilateral relations. And they do not want to be submissive pawns in the political games of those who

put their own narrow interests above those of society and the state. And I believe in the prospect of improvement in Russian-Polish relations and of enhanced understanding and cooperation between our two peoples. The age-old grievances and complaints will eventually fade away. It is important not to see each other as adversaries and as the onesto blame for the sins of past generations. We need to be realists and pragmatists and respect the rights of others to dissent. It is not out of place to remember that only truth builds trust. And it, trust, is the way to friendliness."

Take, for example, the question of forming a climate of mutual trust and political dialogue. Both sides should proceed on the wise folk saying: "Even a bad compromise is better than a good lawsuit." In spite of the dramatic trials encountered in their way the political, cultural and other ties between the two countries tended to develop.

The new President of the Republic of Poland, Bronislaw Komorowski, and its Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, have repeatedly spoken out in favor of building good-neighborly relations with Russia.

Anti-Russian rhetoric disappeared at the government level. Russia's unambiguous position undoubtedly played a crucial role in creating a favorable climate for the improvement of Russian-Polish relations.

No significant progress is evident in the trade and economic area. While it is true that Poland ranks second among Russia's EU partners, we cannot fail to notice the certain wariness among the Poles of a possible expansion of Russian capital into the country.

In general, we can positively characterize the state of cultural ties. It'sno revelation to say that culture serves as a pioneer in international relations.

As to the media, Russian themes are a regular guest here, in contrast to the Russian media that only give measured attention to Poland.

Let us say frankly, some Russians will have to abandon the remnants of great power thinking as well as to recognize the lightness of a series of previously rejected Polish truths...

"Swing Mrs Thatcher's Handbag but Avoid Isolation"

Authors: E. Ananieva

Observer for International Affairs, Leading Research Fellow, Institute of Europe, Russian Academy of Sciences, Candidate of Science (Philosophy)



The Brussels summit convened to discuss the next long-term budget for 2014-2020, the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) failed to deliver. Normally, the European Union needs two summits to reach a budget agreement. This time, President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy should be ready with a new draft MFF by February 2013, the time of the next budget summit.

The crisis in the eurozone and the talks which ran into dead end made a failure too expensive and the future of European integration too vague.

Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, and Sweden, the donor countries, with their contributions higher than what they get from the EU to fund their national programs, are predictably against bigger spending.

The European Parliament which wanted the EU to acquire its own sources of funding outside the treasuries of the member-states and which put its weight behind the Tobin tax (financial transaction tax) supported by eleven EU members found itself at the extreme positions. It threatened to block the budget if the EU was left without its own source of money.

Herman Van Rompuy wanted not only to cut down the common EU budget but also cut down Britain's rebate by 25% which would have increased its contribution to the next MFF by £6 billion, something which the UK could not accept.

The Tory backbenchers acted on conviction that the House strengthened the premier's positions in Brussels even though those who sided with the government knew better: a budget cut was hard to achieve, if at all possible.

As distinct from the six founding countries defeated in World War II, the UK was one of the victor nations which explains why reconciliation through integration, popular on the continent, was never hailed on the British Isles. The euro crisis added firmness to the UK as a donor country.

Eurooptimists believe that the referendum is needed to defuse tension and stop endless discussions

The Guardian has pointed out: "No Eurosceptic ever complains about the selling of Britain to foreigners, a much greater constraint on our sovereignty than Brussels. Our fiscal and monetary policy will shadow that of the European authorities for fear of an attack on sterling if we do not.

Jolly Roger Party of Germany

Author: I. Kravchenko

Third Secretary, Third European Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Candidate of Science (Political Sciences)



The Piratenpartei Deutschland (Pirate Party of Germany) is a new creative, charismatic and original player in German politics. In a short span of time, the Pirates have succeeded not only to gain a reputation of a real political force but also to enliven the discussion on the essence and paths of extending democracy in the country.

The Pirates learned the lessons of history: a democratic society pays attention only to those who win seats and get anchored in the national

system of government. It listens to those backed by a fraction of the electorate. The public is equally cold to what political experts say and recommend.

Despite some obvious flaws in their program, the Pirates offer a new philosophy, a fresh vision of democracy and revitalize some old ideals. They have developed a style of intra-party dialogue and decision-making unique to German political realities and highly efficient mechanisms for instant mobilization of both fellow members and ordinary supporters of the party through web techniques

The Pirates see themselves as a political superstructure of the progressive section of the information society

The Pirates see the state as a tool to implement ideas and courses of action approved by the public. Transparency of political activities and operation of government agencies should guarantee successful and efficient operation of the state. This is the most important means to prevent corrupt practices.

Knowledge is key in today's information society for social development as it makes it possible for everyone to fully enjoy the benefits of civilization. It is precisely why that quality education should be equally accessible to all and everyone and the State should eliminate all financial and administrative hurdles in this area.

This is why the patent law should be changed. The Pirates, who are creative people, do not negate copyright as a category of science ethics. But the notion of owning an intellectual product is rejected.

The rapid technological progress brings mankind close to combining the achievements of science and culture accumulated throughout history.

The Pirates' idealism and impulsiveness can be partially attributed to the environment in which they came into being and took shape as a political association. A party like this can only originate in a comfortable society and among its more or less well-to-do members.

Evolution of Ethnic Democracy in South Africa

Author: N. Piskunova

Head of Students' Research Projects at the Institute for Contemporary Studies, Moscow Institute (University) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Candidate of Science (Political Sciences)



South Africa is a democracy with a dominant party, contingent on which are both the advantages and drawbacks typical of democracies of this type. The leading political force in South Africa today is the African National Congress (ANC). In this country, there are three principles which define interaction between the parties and the government:

1. The principle of anti-dominance.
2. The principle of the absence of power seizure in any form.
3. The principle of decentralization and anti-uzurpation of powers.

Political scientists are currently discussing the question of whether South Africa is a democracy. The text of the Constitution says that South Africa is a country with a democratic regime. Still the country's political history and the actual political

situation allow for a critical analysis of some of the peculiarities of the current regime.

It is important to note that the ANC's dominance resides in its structure. Beginning in 1997 and up to the present, the ANC has been assigning primary importance to democratic centralism.

The kingpin of democratic centralism is the ANC's policy with regard to the placement of personnel. This policy consists in putting into key government positions ANC members who undertake to facilitate the implementation of all ANC decisions.

In making sense of the political situation in South Africa it is important to remember that the ANC is the governing party dominant in Parliament. Of great historical and political importance are also the questions pertaining to citizenship and identity. It is especially important in this context to address the question of involving certain groups of people living in South Africa in or excluding them from the process of nation-building and the shaping of the situation in the country.

It is important to take note of South Africa's experience of constructing citizenship according to the ethnicity principle, which is an inalienable part of constructing ethnic democracy.

The movement's object was not only to achieve a civil society of full rights but also to reform society as a whole. There emerged the concept of "active citizenship" that comprised two main components: 1) active daily involvement of citizens in politics and the development of civil society organizations, and 2) citizenship which is not based on racial principles.

Ethnic citizenship of this kind can be granted to foreigners subject to approval of tribal chiefs. Officially, the post-apartheid regime granted citizenship only based on the principle of origin.

Taking a Different Look at the Eurozone Crisis

Author: T. Romanova

Associate Professor, Department of European Studies, St. Petersburg State University; Leading Researcher, Center for Comprehensive European and International Studies, Higher School of Economics



The current crisis of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) is traditionally described as an illustration of the fact that the euro area was caught unprepared for such a high degree of integration. The crisis of financial markets, which began in 2007, has no doubt exposed systemic problems of monetary integration in the EU.

The regulation of economic relations in the EEC/EU evolved in two directions: the development of soft forms of interaction and the emergence of flexible cooperation models.

From our point of view, it has been the uncontrollably increasing softness of regulation, coupled with the growing diversity of members and the rising complexity of integration that has led to the current crisis. The softening of the forms of political-legal regulation has reached the limit; the centrifugal tendencies have increased dramatically and called into question the already achieved level of cooperation.

The second direction in the evolution of the EU legal framework was toward increasing flexibility, or spreading a type of interaction that allows individual EU countries to deepen cooperation with each other, without waiting for the rest.

The European Union is gradually moving towards tightening measures for political and legal regulation. This trend, indirectly meaning recognition that the unsystematic relaxation was erroneous, is being realized in several initiatives.

The European Union is gradually moving towards tightening measures for political and legal regulation. This trend, indirectly meaning recognition that the unsystematic relaxation was erroneous, is being realized in several initiatives.

1. Adopting a package of six legislations ("Six Pack")
2. Establishment of a European Stability Mechanism.
3. Converging the regulation of labor markets in the Euro+Pact4.
4. Reinforcing macroeconomic coordination.
5. The Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance.

Equally indicative are the debates on the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance. The UK prevented its adoption in EU legislation. Moreover, the original text was considerably softened.

Such a development of events is a natural reaction of countries not interested in deepening monetary integration. The debate on new regulations is revealing.

Today, we need to find a new balance of regulatory softness and the depth of integration, which will help take into account the specificities of the countries, but will not trigger disintegration tendencies. The current crisis also shows that in extraordinary circumstances the limits of soft regulation abruptly narrow.

Managing Labor Migration: In Search of New Approaches

Author: I. Ivakhnyuk

*Deputy Head, Department of Population, School of Economics, Lomonosov Moscow State University,
Professor, Doctor of Science (Economics)*



The possibilities to travel around the world have widened thanks to the development of the means of transport and communications, causing a radical change in the structure of world migration flows in favor of temporary labor migration. Because the distance between countries has shrunk, temporary work abroad has become preferable for many people to a permanent change of residence which involves significant financial and psychological costs.

On the other hand, we witness the increasing global labor market demand for temporary workers, who are distinguished by a greater flex-

ibility in migration behavior.

Experts assess the impact of the 2008-2009 global economic crisis on international migration as the deepest and most global compared to other postwar economic disasters.

Here are some of the trends that are happening now.

First, temporary labor migration is growing at a rapid pace.

Second, global labor market demand concentrates in two opposite sectors, one of employees with low qualifications and the other of those with the highest qualifications.

Third, there are changes in gender characteristics among labor migrants.

The crisis affected the scale and directions of migration, especially labor migration, the volume of migration remittances, the level of welfare of migrants and their families, while simultaneously provoking an outburst of xenophobia. Contrary to predictions, most migrants, even after they lost their jobs, chose not to return home, but to remain in the host country.

The mechanisms varied, reflecting the trends of protectionism and the tightening up of entry conditions for foreigners. Australia, Italy, South Korea, Spain, and Russia cut their quotas for foreign labor as an "anti-crisis measure."

At the same time, the crisis has convinced host country governments to reconsider the entrenched perceptions that foreign labor is only a temporary resource covering labor shortages in boom years, easily dispensed with in a downward period.

Generally speaking, migration management involves a clash of three competing objectives: the economy, security and human rights.

The essence of the new understanding of the joint action of states for the orderly international migration of workers lies primarily in the emphasis on activity coordination among the countries involved in migration.

International Tax Rules: Moving Towards Transparency

Author: R. Shepenko

Professor at the Department of Administrative and Financial Law, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Doctor of Science (Law)



It is believed that in the second half of the 1990s the members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) began to express concern that the existing tax regime was inadequate to cope with taxation problems arising from the accelerating process of globalization of trade and investment.

States and territories are cautious about exchanging information for tax purposes even though such exchange has long been recognized as a tool for combating international tax evasion.

Under the influence of the United States, the OECD changed the direction of its work in the fight against tax havens. Instead of attempts to intervene directly in the tax

systems of other states and territories, the center of pressure shifted towards an indirect approach in the form of information exchange.

On September 17, 2009, the OECD Council adopted a decision establishing the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes. The previous Global Forum under the direction of the Committee on Fiscal Affairs was abolished as of the date of adoption of that decision (paragraph 17).

In order to fulfill its mandate, the Global Forum established a Steering Group to guide its work. This 15-member group is chaired by Australia, with vice chairs from China, Germany and Bermuda.

Some offshore financial centers (OFCs) and tax havens have concluded agreements with other OFCs and tax havens, and also international treaties with states that have an interest in obtaining information for tax purposes.

Today most bilateral tax treaties contain at least one article that sets out the nature and scope of information on relevant tax matters to be exchanged between treaty parties.

To remedy this situation, mutual legal assistance should be provided not only by judicial authorities. Switzerland also allows its tax authorities to grant administrative assistance to the tax authorities of other countries and seek their assistance.

On the whole, one can say that some successes have been achieved in promoting the idea or, more precisely, the principle of transparency. At the same time, the presented data enable us to draw some conclusions.

The spread of the practice of concluding information exchange agreements has somewhat strengthened the international legal framework for information exchange.

Recognition of Foreign Diplomas

Author: O. Ziablova

Head of the Department of Scientific-Educational Projects and Cultural Programs, Rossotrudnichestvo Representative Office in the Federal Republic of Germany, Professor, Doctor of Science (Philology)



The struggle for economic leadership and sustainability in conditions of tough competition compels the governments of European countries to take active steps to attract the best minds with advanced knowledge in their field of professional activity and in world cultural heritage, people who can freely converse in foreign languages, are tolerant, and have the ability to generate ideas. Nevertheless, attracting highly qualified specialists from abroad goes hand in hand with recognition of their professional skills.

The shortage of qualified personnel is becoming an increasingly urgent topic for both Germany and Russia.

Moreover, the situation is aggravated by a severe demographic slump.

Today, around 3 million migrants who have acquired a higher education abroad live in Germany. But many of them cannot gain a foothold in the German labor market.

It should also be noted that the concept of lifelong learning is highly valued in Germany. Taking advantage of the rich history of cooperation between Russia and Germany in the exchange of professional experience and training highly qualified personnel is leading to the idea of creating a common Russian-German labor market.

The main problem for foreigners is language. Many Russian higher educational institutions are distinguished by a high level of training. But some, even highly skilled specialists, have a very poor command of German.

Today, the agenda includes drawing up joint programs and new generation standards for secondary and higher professional education.

The need to reform the system of professional qualification recognition is also pertinent for Russia, where specialists who have obtained an education abroad have to go through an arduous procedure to confirm the compliance of their diplomas to Russian standards in order to work and teach in Russia.

In this context, the foreign representative offices of Rossotrudnichestvo (Russian houses of science and culture) could become not only a link, but also perform the role of awareness-raising platforms capable of bringing together the best in world professional experience and conveying the best of their domestic experience for foreign scientific and educational cultures.

The Fourth World Congress of Compatriots Living Abroad

Author: V. Sibilev

Deputy Director of the Department for Compatriots Living Abroad, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Candidate of Science (History)



The fourth world congress of Compatriots Living Abroad, held on October 26-27, 2012 in St. Petersburg at Tauride Palace.

The congress was convened at a qualitatively new stage.

Many speeches by congress delegates and guests touched upon the most urgent and pressing issues concerning the 30-million Russian community abroad:

In his video address, Vladimir Putin also emphasized the need to increase attention to young compatriots and their inquiries and needs, help them expand their ties with their historical Homeland, implement their initiatives, and hold events, youth festivals, and gatherings.

Many speeches by congress delegates and guests touched upon the most urgent and pressing issues concerning the 30-million Russian community abroad:

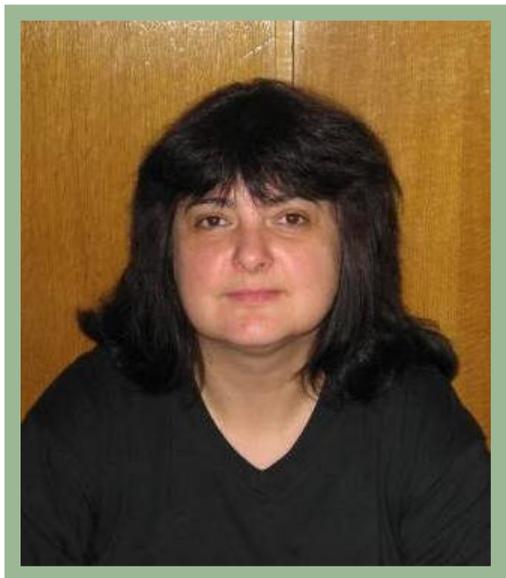
- overcoming the lack of integration among and promoting further consolidation of compatriot organizations;
- implementing a range of tasks related to the activity of the Fund for the Support and Protection of the Rights of Compatriots Living Abroad;
- and carrying out a more active "image policy" for Russia abroad, engaging the Russian diaspora in order to improve Russia's image in the world and acquaint the growing generation of compatriots with their roots and native origins.

The congress was held in a businesslike and democratic atmosphere. On the whole, the delegates were oriented toward unity, advancing toward consolidation of compatriot organizations, expanding diverse ties with Russia, being involved in its modernization tasks, and strengthening scientific and technological potential.

Socializing at the Congress of Russian Compatriots

Author: E. Pyadysheva

Executive Secretary of the International Affairs journal



This is not the first time that a congress of our compatriots has been held in St. Petersburg at the Tauride Palace. A large number of people, around one thousand, flocking together, enthusiastically discussed problems and heartily greeted acquaintances.

Our compatriots are indeed extremely diverse people in every way.

It was different circumstances that took them abroad, they have different ways of assessing their self-identity, and they have different attitudes toward assimilation in their country of residence. And ultimately, they have different reasons for participating in the compatriot movement. Each one of them has his, or her, own history.

"Of course, another very important aspect is establishing contacts because we are scattered all over the place; where else can we meet colleagues from Holland, or the U.S., or Australia? The very fact that these congresses are held, regardless of the agenda and resolutions issued, provides a wonderful opportunity for consolidation of the Russian World in the broad sense of the word".

The topic was often raised from the congress podium and in the talks behind the scenes of our compatriots participating in the political life of the country where they live. One of the official speakers called for Russians being elected to congresses and senates in order to help their fellow countrymen to develop their businesses and resolve other problems.

The congress of compatriots has ended, but socialization continues. I would like to hope that this is helping Russians, those who consider Russian to be their native language and Russia to be their homeland, to become closer to each other and feel part of the community of people who are preserving their language, culture, traditions, and are ready to assist in every way to promote the prosperity of our country.

260 Years of the First Embassy of Ossetia to St. Petersburg

Author: D. Medoev

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of South Ossetia to the Russian Federation



Very much as today, in the distant past the Caucasus was an arena of vehement rivalry between the Great Powers - Turkey and Persia - each trying to draw the North Caucasian peoples into their military and strategic orbits.

The first talks between Russia and Ossetia opened a new stage in the history of Ossetia and its people and moved them closer to the historic decision on Ossetia's unification with Russia.

By the mid-18th century, the desire of the Ossetians to apply to their powerful northern neighbor for political alliance and protection coincided with Russia's

revived interest in the Caucasus. Ossetia's highly favorable geographic location in the region's center made it a natural transit territory for those who moved southward to the Transcaucasia and further on. In short, Ossetia looked like an ideal toehold from which Russia could spread its influence in the region.

MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES were Russia's best instrument of establishing contacts in the regions in which it was interested. In case of Ossetia, Russia needed a fuller picture of one foreign policy aspect: the degree of loyalty of the Ossetians to Russia. Empress Elizabeth instructed the Collegium for Foreign Affairs to present a maximally complete report on all relevant issues.

By the fall of 1746, the embassy was ready to depart, yet the start was delayed by three years because of the intrigues of the Georgian members of the Ossetian Spiritual Commission and its head Father Pachomius: they tried to use the historic process of unification of Ossetia with Russia for their own mercenary aims.

The first, historic Ossetian embassy consisted of representatives of the noble Ossetian clans. Zurab Magkati who headed the mission was well versed in politics, with excellent education and excellent knowledge of Russian, Georgian and Kabardinian.

The ambassadors, their speeches, manners and dignity with which they spoke to the top Russian officials, their obviously high educational level and aristocratic origins removed all doubts about their noble roots.

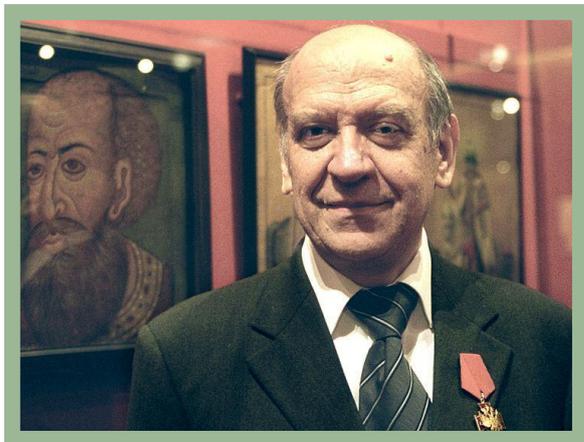
The historical ties which kept two peoples together, common historical roots and spiritual kinship survived the political ups and downs and withstood the winds of changes.

At a new stage of recent history, the alliance between Ossetia and Russia survived and even strengthened.

The 1812 Patriotic War: Falsifications Impossible

Author: A. Shkurko

State Historical Museum, President



Interview for "Face to Face with the World" project of the "Voice of Russia" international radio broadcasting service

Our main achievement was the putting together of the Museum of the 1812 Patriotic War. Incidentally, this was also a top priority item in the anniversary projects program approved by the federal government. It will be recalled that our predecessors set up in 1908 a special committee charged with establishing a museum of the 1812 Patriotic

War. The donations added up to nearly 20,000 objects and even a greater number of documents. There was a contest among the architects to design the museum building, but its construction was abandoned for lack of funds.

Shortly before the 200th anniversary, the government provided us with funds with which we built an exhibition pavilion.

The exhibition has generated genuine interest. Some 5,000 visitors saw it during the first few days. It will go on for at least a couple of decades. All expositions are bound to grow obsolete after 15 to 20 years. That's why this exposition will last as long.

Attitudes to the 1812 war were not changing; they rather broadened in range as its centenary was drawing near. If we take the major classical works by Russian historians, the importance of the war was never called into question. This was not merely a heroic period but it was also an endurance test for the nation. Russia asserted its independence. There cannot be two opinions about it.

As for the body of sources, they have been increasing in number to a certain extent over recent years.

Here is another interesting thing. We have for the first time ever reconstructed the panorama of the Berezina Battle. It turned out that in 1885 two Polish artists painted this panorama of 15 meters in height showing the horrors the French army went through trying to cross the river.

Separate pieces of the painting survived in private collections. As our art experts were studying the collections of paintings and graphic works that belonged to Dashkov, one of the founders of the 1812 War Museum, they stumbled on a piece of the panorama canvas.

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Адрес: 105064, Москва,
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