

# International Affairs: Summary №1, 2014

## International Affairs

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## The Moscow Conference: A Wartime Diplomatic Breakthrough

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Remarks during the Celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the Moscow Conference of USSR, U.S. and UK Foreign Ministers, Moscow, October 23, 2013



HONORABLE COLLEAGUES, friends,  
Thank you for responding to the invitation to mark a notable event. Seventy years ago, here in this building (on Spiridonovka Street), the foreign ministers of the USSR, the U.S. and the UK held a conference of unique importance. Its special place in history is due not only to the fact that representatives of the Allied Powers addressed vital issues linked to the need, through joint efforts, to bring forward the end of World War II. It is no

less important because by taking a glimpse into the future they sought to outline the basic parameters of a postwar world order. It was still a long time before the aggressor suffered a complete rout, but the participants in the Moscow Conference were unanimous in their understanding of the need to lay down a stable and durable foundation for a new world order that would ensure the freedom and independence of peoples, outlawing war as a means of resolving interstate disputes.

The Declaration established that after the war the signatory states would not use their armed forces on the territory of other states except for purposes provided for in the document, and after joint consultations. It also prioritized the importance of arms control.

An important step was thereby made towards the creation of the United Nations as a universal international body, designed to become a guarantor of peace and security. That said, the allies understood very well the importance of avoiding the repetition of mistakes made by the pre-war League of Nations, which were mainly due to the lack of effective mechanisms to prevent aggression.

It is very important to preserve the memory of the wartime diplomatic breakthroughs, as exemplified by the Moscow Conference. I believe that the 70th anniversary of that conference is a good opportunity to underscore the historic significance of the Declaration of the Four Nations on General Security, a precursor to the UN Charter, which was adopted at that time in this building.

Thank you.

## Overall, the Year Has Been a Mixed Bag

*Author: Sergey Ryabkov*

*Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*



We are pleased that after the elections which took place in Iran this year, and following the change in the negotiating team, everyone managed to tune in to a wave of compromise and the quest for solutions to freeze the situation.

The Geneva agreement strengthens the international legal basis of the world order as it puts a barrier to the use of force and pressure. Generally that's the exact result we were

after for ten years. We are glad that in the past year this remarkable result was achieved. If I were to describe the relationship between the U.S. and Russia in 2013 in one word, it would be "stagnation."

The contribution of the Russian Federation to this process is very impressive.

Americans are very consistent in the application of unilateral sanctions as a method for achieving foreign policy objectives. Many of the U.S. lawmakers consider sanctions to be practically the main instrument of their foreign policy. This is likewise unacceptable from our viewpoint. We believe that unilateral sanctions bypassing the UN Security Council are illegitimate.

We all understand: in diplomacy and foreign policy, the process is cumulative. You cannot ignore circumstances that preceded a decision or situation and examine it in isolation from its causes. I would like to emphasize that our predecessors devoted special attention to this aspect.

We had suspected from the outset that the nuclear program of Iran was being used by our American colleagues as a smokescreen for achieving objectives unrelated to Iranian affairs. Now we are told - in answer to the argumentation that you just mentioned: The threat has not yet been eliminated, all that was achieved in Geneva in November is a temporary thing; it is reversible and can be changed.

Sorry, everything can be changed. With such an approach to international security, no arms control and arms cuts are possible. In this case, "store is no sore" is a flawed logic. The only conclusion that we draw from this situation is that the U.S. European BMD system in its development ultimately aims to narrow Russia's nuclear deterrence capacity. This has always been a problem for us, and by and large it hinders practical work towards further cuts in strategic offensive arms.

*Author: Li Yong*

*UNIDO Director General*



THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION represents one of my first travel destinations since my recent appointment as Director General of UNIDO, and this is a strong reflection of my appreciation of, and confidence in our existing and future joint cooperation activities.

Today, when many countries of the world face similar challenges in balancing economic growth, environmental sustainability

and social and economic inclusion, UNIDO's mandate is relevant more than ever.

As a specialized agency of the United Nations system, UNIDO is dedicated to promoting inclusive and sustainable industrial development through fostering industrial cooperation and partnerships to address these challenges.

Thus, the role of UNIDO has never been more relevant than it is today, when it has become increasingly clear that we need a new development approach, which looks at society, economy, industry and the environment as a whole, and is based on profound changes in patterns of production and consumption. Ideas of economic growth, and the policies that underpin them must be linked to environmental sustainability and social and economic inclusion.

We also see a variety of production patterns, with some economies struggling to diversify and reduce their reliance on energy-intensive extractive industries, and others making impressive progress towards high technology manufacturing.

UNIDO and Russia have a long record of successful cooperation, and UNIDO counts on Russia as a strategic partner. Since the early 1990s, UNIDO has implemented over 30 projects in Russia and there are six ongoing projects with a combined budget of USD 103 million.

I am also grateful for Russia's participation in global and regional events organized by UNIDO, which serve as useful platforms for countries to share their visions of sustainable development and exchange knowledge.

It is a priority, therefore, for UNIDO to assess potential areas of political and technical cooperation with the Russian Federation, and subsequently to position itself strategically to play a meaningful role as a trusted partner.

In conclusion, I want to assure you of my commitment to our future successful cooperation in order to move the industrial development agenda forward.

## A Syrian Settlement Formula

*Author: Gennady Gatilov*

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ON SEPTEMBER 27, 2013, the Security Council of the United Nations unanimously adopted resolution 2118 in support of the decision of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) made on the same day in The Hague to place Syrian chemical weapons under international control and dismantle them. From that moment, a qualitative turn in the situation around Syria began.

Of course, the openness and cooperation of the Syrian government in matters of chemical dis-

armament, and the strict and unfailing discharge of its Convention obligations played a key role in creating the conditions for the realization of the Russian-American initiative to convene an international conference on Syria. It is important that the relationship between chemical disarmament and the political process is explicitly stated in UN Security Council resolution 2118.

It is obvious that from the beginning of unrest in Syria, the SC Western members did not really try to understand the root causes of what was happening and presented it as yet another "round of the Arab Spring." They found it convenient to reduce Syria's complex conflict to being "a struggle for freedom and democracy."

As the conflict escalated, international terrorist groups declared Syria a "territory of jihad" and of struggle to establish a "global caliphate."

It is important that all international players work to create a political atmosphere conducive to inter-Syrian negotiations. There should be no place for any fanning of tensions, no matter what difficulties the dialogue presents.

The Syrian government clearly stated its position in favor of a peaceful solution. But things are more complicated with the opposition.

Thus, the Syrians have a choice before them: move together towards peace and use the chance to negotiate the future of Syria or continue to bet on a military solution on the battlefield.

It is important that all international players work to create a political atmosphere conducive to inter-Syrian negotiations. There should be no place for any fanning of tensions, no matter what difficulties the dialogue presents. The Geneva Communiqué clearly states that the Syrian parties should themselves, without external interference and threats, agree about the future of their country. Working issues that will arise during the negotiations should be handled professionally and calmly by both parties.

## Russia and the West

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IS RUSSIA A PARTNER of the West? This question has been repeatedly asked throughout centuries both in Russia and in the West. In the far from simple multipolar world, Russia's trump cards (military might and geography among them) make it objectively a partner of the West; moreover, Russia's importance to the West is steadily increasing. Russia was not merely avoided; it was treated as an opponent or even an enemy. In crises,

European countries drawn into continental wars sought alliances with Russia only to be discontinued as soon as the danger had passed: the Eastern giant was not trusted, it was even feared.

The wounded national pride of the Russians coupled with political and ideological contradictions stirred up heated discussions about Russia's relationships with the West. A considerable part of the Russian elite very happy to learn from the West remained loyal to the traditions when dealing with the home and foreign policy matters.

A split into Westernizers and Slavophiles was inevitable as it was inevitable in all countries which, having lagged behind tried to catch up with the most developed countries.

The Russians were badly disappointed with the meager fruits of economic cooperation with the West which was obviously unwilling to help to the extent it had helped other countries. Loans were relatively small and excessively restrictive; investments, inadequate. Many of those who came to Russia allegedly to do business were plundering the country's natural riches turning the recent "superpower" into an "economic colony."

No longer afraid of Russia, the West looks at it as a backward, criminal and corrupt country; it is not free and is especially rude when dealing with neighbors.

THE SITUATION, however, is not hopeless; a broad range of factors offer good chances to develop, widen and deepen cooperation between Russia and the Western world.

I HAVE DESCRIBED above the negative and positive factors responsible for the very contradictory nature of the relationships between Russia and the West; their future is still unclear. We all want the positive factors to prevail yet euphoria is premature and should be better avoided. A sober approach is strongly advised.

## Is the European Union an Obstacle on the Road to Greater Europe?

*Author: Gilles Rémy*

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WE ALL KNOW which states make up the European Union, so everything is clear about it, while "Greater Europe" remains so far a fuzzy idea. Today there are people who still doubt Russia's European nature.

Greater Europe is a continuity of historical and cultural values of the European continent stretching from Brest to Vladivostok; this continuity has brought together hundreds of

nations of the Russian/Soviet world beyond the Urals; their common tongue makes them heirs to the common cultural heritage responsible for their identity. This is what makes the Kazakh and the Chinese Uyghurs different. Greater Europe is also a common marine space; global warming will probably open a sea route from Le Havre to the Pacific bypassing the Middle East.

The transit land and sea routes will become great transportation corridors, the fastest, cheapest and reliable, between Europe and Asia.

Today, the EU and Russia look very much like an old couple who have lived too long side by side with no marriage certificate and no children.

It seems that Russia has arrested the rapid decline of its military potential and even invigorated military production. Its military budget, however, is one-tenth of the military budget of the United States.

Strange as it may seem, Russia's only comparable advantages are found at the opposite sides of the scale of values: natural resources and human capital, the educational level of which is still high despite emigration and the lower quality of education.

To survive as a big industrial country with an impressive scientific potential, Russia should become integrated into the space where the developed countries cooperate.

To sum up the twenty years of stormy relationships and misunderstandings: today, fewer Russians find inspiration in the European Union, while Russia looks less and less understandable to an increasing number of Europeans.

In the final analysis, the Greater Europe project should become a serious alternative to the problems with which Europe, in its present form, is struggling. It will help us defuse the most serious challenges created by the unpredictable and, therefore, dangerous world.

## Outlook for the Canadian Economy under NAFTA

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CANADA was among the few developed market countries whose banking and financial systems did not experience any significant disturbances in the face of global economic instability.

According to a number of international experts, Canada is the most stable of the 20 countries with the largest economic potential.

The conditions of doing business in Canada, and its investment attractiveness are estimated very highly. More than that, according to such an authoritative magazine as Forbes, Canada was recognized in 2011-2012 as the world's best place for business due to low levels of taxes and red tape.<sup>3</sup>

It should be noted that the political situation in a country, the stability of a government and its ability to pursue effective economic policy play an important role in the ranking of the business climate. Here also Canada got high marks from experts. Its Conservative Party, led by Stephen Harper, did actually improve the economy.

In summary, I will note that for Canada, the Free Trade Agreement with the U.S. and the subsequent NAFTA also had a palpable economic impact domestically because they were central to the neoliberal shift, the purpose of which was to limit the extent and nature of state intervention in the economy and to expand the boundaries of freedom for TNCs striving to improve the competitiveness of North American goods. In fact, internationally FTA and NAFTA were the beginning of the era of "open regionalism," a harbinger of the globalization of world trade and financial relations.

Experts note that today Canada simultaneously strives to minimize impacts associated with the "thickening" of the Canadian-American border and pushes forward in areas and fields where the conditions are created for this. Amid a continuing trend for the weakening of Ottawa's standing in the world (its final transformation into a regional power), it can be assumed that Canadian foreign economic interests will soon be narrowly oriented, limited to participation in solving those international problems for which Canada really has a reserve of knowledge, experience and authority, as well as the U.S. support.



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INTERDEPENDENCE of economic imperatives of China and the United States is a product of two main circumstances.

First, there is globalization as the current stage of the never-ending "compression" of global space which is accompanied by intensified social interaction and transnationalization of man's economic and extra-economic activities.

Second, there is internal evolution of the Chinese so-

cium and the deep-cutting systemic and social reforms started in the late 1980s and known as a process of "economic reforms and openness." In future, however, certain factors (there are many of them) may mar the eye-pleasing picture of Chinese-American trade.

The American firms and investors doing business in China have to understand China's economic realities, to harmonize their work with them and be their integral part in order to fully profit from the investment climate and concessional taxation.

INTERDEPENDENCE of China and the United States, economic interdependence in the first place, goes hand-in-hand with competition bordering on rivalry and conflicts in the military and security spheres.

The conflict of interests which breeds rivalry, or even confrontation, between the two countries in all key functional spheres - economy, security, ideology, international relations, and media and information - has already come to the fore and causes sporadic flare-ups.

Any functional bureaucratic bloc, especially if it functions within a uniform foreign policy ideology, should promote the entire range of interests of state and society in its operational field. This explains why motivations with different vectors (partnership and conflict) exist, in different combinations and proportions, in both blocs of Chinese bureaucracy.

THE DICHOTOMY OF INTERESTS related to the United States will continue to vacillate between compromises and conflicts in the framework of the common denominator of Chinese strategy. Much depends on trends which might predominate in China and decisions taken within the still evolving model of the country's social and economic development.

*Author: Armen Oganessian*  
*Editor-in-Chief of International Affairs*



"IN ENGLAND, everything is possible, and at the same time nothing is possible in England," a lady from Russia sophisticated in British affairs once said to me. Here is another aphorism: "England is divided into two parts - the very rich and those who serve them." For this reason, for rich and very rich Russians, Britain is the Promised Land, and not only because of its reputation as a world financial center.

What I can say in this context, in contrast with Russia, is that the idea of anarchy has no chance of mastering the English mind. All the tracks are laid, the movement is programmed to perfection, and only a crisis can make any adjustments to such a rational mindset for life. However, the regulations often produce unpredictable results for particular people in particular circumstances. It took over 60 years for Britain to appreciate the extraordinary feats of the Arctic convoys, establishing a special medal, the "Arctic Star." "It was well known as the worst of all journeys in the history of the world," as Winston Churchill described the route from the shores of Albion to Murmansk.

Today, in peaceful times, despite the cool relations between Moscow and London, UK exports of goods and services to Russia have grown by 75% from 4.6 billion pounds to 7.6 billion. And that was in only three years. As Russia's ambassador to Britain, Alexander Yakovenko told me, there is still considerable scope for the growth of Russian-British trade. Last time I was in the UK in 2006, and since that time, the number of immigrants on the streets of London has increased considerably. However, now they are better dressed, many of them wealthy and even rich people who can afford to buy goods in stores such as Selfridges and Harrods.

A trend in Europe, caused by the crisis in the Arab world, is the growth of immigrants from the Middle Eastern and North Africa countries. Therefore the theme of the conference entitled "The Arab Spring: Scenarios for the Future," organized by International Affairs magazine with the support of the Russian Embassy, came at the right time. The session was attended by 15 ambassadors to London, Members of Parliament, and representatives from Chatham House, leading research institutions and the media.

I must say that the Russian Embassy website is becoming extremely popular in London. To the envy of other missions here, it regularly hosts a mini-conference of bloggers which other diplomats shy away from, perhaps no less than from Assange himself. What impresses is a lack of tension in communication, the open dialogue and live communication conduct of Russian diplomats in the British capital, a place which is quite prudish.

## The Mote in Thy Brother's Eye

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ON NOVEMBER 4, 2013, Stephen Sestanovich, U.S. special envoy for New Independent States in the Clinton administration, prophesied in *The Financial Times* a complete failure of Russia's foreign policy round the corner.

Mr. Sestanovich makes clear his reason for this prediction, i.e. he doesn't like Russian diplomacy's success in turning things around in international community's response to the Syrian crisis. He does omit, however, a few facts of real consequence.

It is true that Russia has always been advocating values of classic diplomacy, including finding negotiated solutions to internal and international conflicts and strict observance of the rule of law in international affairs. As a matter of fact, our Western partners over a period of 20 years after the end of the Cold War, by trial and error, including experience of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, have come to accept, though reluctantly, the basic wisdom of that view of the world.

This is something Mr. Sestanovich wouldn't recognize. So, he focuses on other things, which, in my view, are not convincing.

The region is in the throes of a momentous transformation. Those countries are trying to manage it to their advantage, while facing the prospect of being shaped by it. We truly believe that non-interference and non-use of force is the best policy.

As regards Eurasian integration, it makes economic and developmental sense in that region, as it does in other parts of the world. It makes part of a broader pattern of strengthening the regional level of governance at the era of deglobalization.

Stephen Sestanovich seems taking it as personal offense that Russia helped Washington out, when it had driven itself into the corner.

Our Prime Minister at the turn of the 20th century Sergey Witte said that "Russia's best and truest ally is time." It somewhat explains our foreign policy philosophy today.

S. Sestanovich's choice of words implies either subservience or subordination for Russia vis-à-vis America. It is a far cry from reality. That is why it would be good for all if the U.S. tried to be a normal country, as Russia has been doing since 1991, however much our Western partners' foreign policy choices interfered with that process. As other nations, including Britain, also start thinking of doing. After all, losing an empire was not exceptional after WWI and after WWII. It has not been exceptional after the Cold War either.

## Is China a "Third Alternative" for Ukraine?

*Author: Armen Oganesyian*

*Editor-in-Chief of International Affairs*



IT IS DIFFICULT to define the exact moment when in Europe there was a soft click of a switch and the "Belavezha Accords" were launched, which slowly but logically brought the European Union before our eyes. However, distinctly visible cracks appeared long before the financial crisis, which clearly polarized the interests of the "periphery" and the center, the new and old members of the club.

Today, sharp differences have come to light in the infighting between the founding fathers themselves, dissatisfied with Brussels and each other's policies. This applies to such fundamental issues as competition in the domestic markets, the distribution of benefits and credits, and migration policy.

Recently, British Prime Minister David Cameron threw a "bomb" into the noble assembly when he announced the measures necessary to restrict labor migration from Eastern European countries - members of the EU.

What is interesting is that this phenomenon was born of the realities in Europe, when the basis of the xenophobia is not so much racial intolerance as the economy. But such an approach to migrant workers from Eastern Europe is supported by Austria, Germany and the Netherlands. From the beginning, it was stated that when it comes to the partnership with the EU, negotiation is inappropriate. This was said in response to the requests from Kiev to provide large loans for the transition to European standards.

According to Ukrainian experts, "China considers Ukraine not just a window, but a springboard ... its partner for entry into the European market and cooperation with European countries and the CIS." Russia has a special interest in the plans of Chinese experts for constructing a plant for processing coal into a synthetic gas. The project, which was hastily declared a "break-through" in ensuring energy independence, is a powerful lever in negotiations with Gazprom on prices for Russian gas.

Of course, it is easy to dismiss this topic, saying that this is an attempt by Kiev to play the China card to push the EU and Russia for greater concessions. However, where are Ukraine and China in economic terms? The weak cannot play against the strong, and especially such sophisticated partners, pursuing their tactical objectives. Also, sitting on a "third chair" is more comfortable for Kiev than the other two. China pointedly emphasizes that it is only interested in business; it does not impose any political conditions.

If China is actively involved in the geopolitical game as part of the "triangle" of Europe-Ukraine-China, then Russia will have to deal with new realities not only in Ukraine, but also in other CIS countries.

## Russia's Parliamentary Diplomacy in Scandinavia

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DELEGATES of the Russian Federation Council led by its head Valentina Matviyenko paid an official visit to Sweden, Finland and Norway on December 2-5, 2013. They met with the heads of government and parliament.

The discussions focused on cooperation in the Arctic, European issues and inter-parliamentary contacts.

Speaker of the Parliament of Sweden Per Westerberg also spoke in favor of more active and broader bilateral contacts at all levels, including contacts between individuals.

The Russian and Swedish negotiators also touched on Ukraine's decision to postpone preparations for the signing of an agreement on association with the European Union. Another point raised by the Swedish side was the future of 13 Russian orphans the procedure of whose adoption by some Swedish families was put on hold after Russia passed a piece of legislation banning the adoption of Russian orphans to countries where same-sex unions are permitted by law.

Talking with journalists, the head of the Russian delegation summed up the discussions and talks she had in Stockholm noting that "despite the differences between our countries on a number of issues, there is a shared understanding of an objective need for more extensive bilateral political, commercial, economic and cultural ties. Our countries have valuable experience of mutually beneficial and fruitful experience in the Arctic Council, coinciding or similar views on a number of international issues. As for resolving differences and concerns, this cannot be done other than through direct and frank dialogue." The Russian delegation proceeded from the Swedish capital to Helsinki. Valentina Matviyenko met there with President of Finland Sauli Niinistö, Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen and held talks with Speaker of the Finnish Parliament Eero Heinäluoma.

The visit is over. It was extremely useful for us and our northern neighbors. A businesslike, direct and honest discussion is the best way to understand each other and then move forward together. The earnest and frank discussion between Russia and Northern Europe during the three days in December of the outgoing year 2013 was a veritable breakthrough for the Russian parliamentary delegation.

## The Vatican's New Course: Designs and Realities

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ON MARCH 13, 2013, the conclave of the cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church surprised the world by electing Archbishop of Buenos Aires Jorge Mario Bergoglio as a new Pope. What looked as unexpected and unpredictable is emerging as a deliberate and calculated choice. The cardinals intended to renew and rejuvenate Catholicism, to make it more dynamic and more flexible and, in general, better suited to the glob-

alized world brimming with threats and challenges.

His practical steps, his style and ways very different from those of his predecessors - Pope Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger) and John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła) - are carefully traced down and recorded in various international circles; they have already invited numerous commentaries and assessments, mainly positive or even rapturous. Recently, however, in the West and in the Third World countries the number of skeptics who doubt the practicality of papal initiatives and plans has been increasing.

Trying to deliver a concise answer to the above questions we risk missing some important components; nevertheless we will venture to single out the main elements of papal designs. Speaking in Rio the Pope openly admitted that there were young people who have lost their faith in the church, or even in God, because of the lack of consistency of many Christians and ministers of the Gospel and called on the Latin American and, in fact, world episcopate "to enter the road to renewal" since the Church is trailing behind the times and prefers to follow the routine while it should move away from its "Byzantine style," "bureaucracy which turns the clergy into officials of an indefinite non-governmental organization."

The critics and opponents of Pope Bergoglio accuse him of demagoguery and dismiss his behavior as better suited for a "parish priest." Fifty years ago, this was said about John XXIII who convened the Second Vatican Council, a turning point in the history of the Roman Catholic Church.

Amid the exacerbation of international situation around Syria, Francis made several practical steps toward a peaceful settlement of the Syrian conflict and prevent the use of force.

We wish every success to Pope Francis who has shouldered the task to remind the world about the eternal Biblical values and high morality and to consolidate the moral principles, harmony and stability. Today, Russia and the Holy See share many approaches to the prominent international challenges and threats on the world's agenda.

## Crisis in Eastern Congo and the Search for Solutions

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THERE HAS BEEN no stable peace for a long time now in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC or DR Congo), the key Central African country. Latent war in its eastern provinces has been going on for longer than one decade wiping off its democratic achievements and impeding the country's development. Arbitrary actions of the military, mass rapes, tortures, and the turning into slaves of young children and teenagers make thousands of people abandon their homes and flee for safety.

Economic matters are at the root of the undeclared war between Congolese armed groups, nationalist gangs and militants from Uganda and Rwanda.

Due to a critical situation in the country's east and the unfavorable circumstances in the DRC armed forces, the General Staff began, in August 2012, to recruit personnel urging young men between 18 and 25 years of age to join the national army. MONUSCO came to the aid of the Congolese government. The initial results of the recruiting campaign were, however, unfortunate. Young people were reluctant to heed the appeal. Even if the recruiting officers assured them that recruiting was not directly related to combat operations in the east and its objective was to inject young blood in the forces, young people treated the call with distrust.

Rwanda continued to be closely watched by the world community and especially by its long-standing partners.

Nevertheless, Rwanda, elected the nonpermanent member of the UN SC, had no intention to give up. The DR Congo's east remains for Kigali vitally important for resolving its ethnic, political and demographic issues, and for its economic survival.

Thus, despite the fact that the aforementioned military-political crisis has taken on a protracted nature and the country, to all appearances, is in for years of ordeal, there are tangible signs that things can change for the better.

There are also hopes for the positive impact of the visit by a UN Security Council delegation to the Great Lakes Region, the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda which ended on October 8, 2013.

## Russia Goes to the East: Opportunities, Challenges, Goals

*Author: G. Ivasbentsov*

*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*



THE YEAR 2013 has to a very large extent become a year of Asia for Russia. The 2012 summit of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC) in Vladivostok was followed this year by Russian-Chinese and Russian-Indian summits in Moscow in March and October, 2013.

That is natural. Today, the Asia Pacific region is where forms of mankind's further movement are being determined. Dynamic economic growth has already turned East Asia into one of the world's principal centers - alongside the U.S. and the European Union - of manufacturing, distribution and consumption, the chief holder of gold and foreign exchange reserves, a global investor. The most futuristic scientific and technological projects are being implemented there. A model for the modernization of socio-political organization through the coalescence of traditional Western democratic forms and local political cultures is also being developed there.

Russia is not a newcomer to the Asia Pacific region. It has been, is and will continue to be its inalienable part.

THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS in the Asia Pacific region is far from being cloudless. There is obvious tension in the financial sphere, and there are territorial disputes. Military capabilities are being built up.

In the Asia Pacific region, as in no other region, our country's internal and external interests are closely intertwined. It is because the future of Russia as a great power lies in the economic, technological and social development of Siberia and its Far East.

THE ENERGY ISSUE will be the key to the security of the Asia Pacific region in the next decade. The region's energy needs are steadily growing.

Russia's interests do not lend themselves to complete harmonization either with U.S. or with Chinese interests. Moscow needs its own, original version of nonalignment policy. The existing "demand for Russia" gives it a good chance of fighting for a respectable place in new Asia.

Today, Russia is facing the Pacific in a new environment. Its evolution as a full-fledged political and economic player in the Asia Pacific space would not simply make the state's eastern borders secure but would also help use collaboration with the Asia Pacific countries in the interest of our country's modernization and ensure dignified living conditions for the population of Russia's Far East.



## International Law on the Use of Force by States in International Relations and the War in Syria

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IN ACCORDANCE WITH the UN Charter, a Bible of contemporary international law, all UN members "shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means" and "shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force" (Article 2, Paragraphs 3-4).

However, with the demise of the USSR in 1991, the United States, unexpectedly placed in the position of being the world's only nuclear superpower, began attempts, with the support of its NATO allies, to get rid of these limitations of international law.

The agreement on Syria has greatly increased Russia's political weight and stature globally, and in the Middle East specifically. It has also provided Russia and the U.S. with an opportunity to improve their bilateral relations.

However, this "Libya model" quickly led to anarchy and the complete destruction of all state mechanisms in the country. The Libyan government has lost control over armed groups of former "revolutionaries" - it would be more correct to call them "bandits" - and they began to terrorize and plunder the civilian population, to attack foreign embassies, and to kill diplomats, including those from the Western countries that helped them.

Nevertheless, the United States, France, Britain, and the Arab Gulf monarchies had their own geopolitical reasons for initially wishing to apply the "Libya model" to Syria.

Currently the U.S. media themselves do not believe the threats occasionally heard from Washington to use force at discretion to be realistic, as the situation in the world beset by economic crisis has changed markedly. The experience of the West's wars against Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya led even the parliament of Britain, the U.S. most loyal ally, as well as a majority of the other NATO members to decline an attack on Syria.

Although it is too early to speak with absolute certainty about the prospects of a settlement in Syria in accordance with the Geneva agreement of July 30, 2012 and the UNSC resolution of September 27, 2013,<sup>18</sup> one can already speak about the brilliant success of Russia's foreign policy.

## Stop Crimes Against Mankind's Cultural Heritage!

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The victims are not people and countries alone. The victims are also historical relics of which there is huge number in the region. The Mediterranean region is rightly termed the "cradle of civilization." It is where the oldest seats of civilization were located, where arts flourished for centuries and whose knowledge and ideas made many generations of people wiser and more humane.

The world community has no right to keep silent about this absolutely intolerable situation, helplessly accept it and do nothing about it.

Above all, we are to form a clear idea of where we have ended up against our will. We should bear in mind the fact that Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Libya are facing massive destruction and looting of their cultural treasures.

According to estimates by the Iraqi Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, 130,000 cultural and historical relics were smuggled out of the country in 2003-2004 and as little as 10% of them could be recovered by now. Most of the looted items were retrieved from neighboring Lebanon and Syria, but the lion's share of the stolen artifacts was smuggled from the Middle East to other continents.

The destruction of cultural heritage ought to be equated with the employment of weapons of mass destruction, and the culprits recognized as war criminals.

The ancient pyramids remained unharmed by the religious fanatics, but many ancient artifacts in Egypt were pillaged in the spates of civil unrest.

Mankind already faced a similar situation several decades ago and tried to learn lessons. Vast destruction and unchecked marauding during World War II stirred UNESCO in 1948 into considering a convention on the protection of cultural property. In May 1954, the Hague Convention defined the now generally recognizable protective sign to identify the protected cultural property - the Blue Shield.

The destruction of cultural heritage ought to be equated with the employment of weapons of mass destruction, and the culprits recognized as war criminals. By destroying objects of cultural heritage and razing historical relics, they infringe on humanity's collective memory and literally trample underfoot treasures of culture and humanism.

## How and Why a TV Show Can Complicate International Relations

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The destinies of five young Germans unfolding against the backdrop of the Eastern Front are at the heart of the plot of the movie *Our Mothers, Our Fathers*. Artistically, the film tries to reflect the tragic transformation of the psyche of the "normal boys and girls" whom the war turns by inhumane circumstances and commanders' orders into cold-blooded killers, sadists and traitors, which, according to the filmmakers' thought, were plenty on both sides of the front. There is no need to retell

the film's story - today one can see it online and independently form an idea of just what the authors wanted to say artistically or ideologically, as well as getting acquainted with the numerous angry "reviews" at forums.

The well thought through promotion of the film *Our Mothers, Our Fathers* has demonstrated that a new genre in great demand by audiences, the so-called TV-Event Production, has finally taken shape in the European information market.

As a result of the producers' efforts, the film, according to local media, sparked unprecedented attention on the part of German audience to war themes.

The film *Our Mothers, Our Fathers* has provided an illustration of another, this time transboundary, factor of the TV-Event Produktion methodology: the active use of the virtual space for its promotion had resulted in its audience's expansion including absolutely non-target groups of viewers, such as in Poland and Russia. Their interest was wittingly or unwittingly provoked by the web placement of the trailers with sequences which, pulled out of context, explicitly marked the movie as "anti-Russian" and "anti-Polish."

As to Germany itself, the screening of the film has fulfilled the main purpose of its creators. German media noted that thanks to the film, citizens of Germany, perhaps for the first time since the war, so openly talked on what had been a taboo subject - the life of a whole generation of "fathers and mothers" or, rather, the part of their life spent on the Eastern Front.

The surge of interest in military subject matter suggests that films about the war will continue to be produced in Germany.

And to draw these boundaries correctly is becoming increasingly difficult in the information society, just as not to yield to provocations when the blurred framework of soft power may well be used for gamble and political PR over delicate and painful historical themes. Even when objectively all the i's are long since dotted and t's crossed.

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SINCE THE BEGINNING of time, young people have been the most receptive to new ideas, views and concepts. For example, students getting their education abroad, in addition to gaining specialized knowledge, learn other languages, absorb different cultures and meet new friends there. Returning to their own countries, very many of them become the most effective champions of the policy and culture of the country where they studied.

Young people are political active. A key role here is played mostly by social networks rather than public organizations and political parties. It is social networks that have come to be the most important tools for shaping public opinion among young people and they proved their efficiency during the "Arab Spring" events.

Interestingly, we can see that ever more young people tend to take part in social networks - today, even junior school students have their accounts in VKontakte and Facebook. Young people are the easiest to influence by the social environment which shapes their ideas of life and value priorities.

The most efficient form of public diplomacy is to provide young people from other countries with opportunities to be educated in Russia. When still students, young people once and for all form their attitudes to life, their priorities and principles. In addition to training in specialized fields, the students can learn languages, culture and find friends. As a result, young people back home after training in Russia become champions of Russian culture in their countries.

In order to prevent conflicts with young people from other countries and win over more pro-Russia young people abroad, Russian governmental and nongovernmental organizations ought to take a proactive stand on young foreign nationals right here.

Worthy of note is the Council of Young Diplomats of the Russian Foreign Ministry which welcomed in Russia a delegation of young public leaders from Afghanistan.

We have to resolve many current issues, including internal ones, in order to ensure that Russia could work more efficiently with young people of other countries, be attractive and open to others. It is necessary to update our traditional tools of public diplomacy and make them accessible to young people in other countries and also introduce the latest know-how for working in social networks, learn how to use effectively the resource of the youth community to promote the interests of Russia's foreign policy.

## Russia's Diplomats in the Crimean Khanate

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IN 2013, WE MARKED the 250th year of Russia's diplomatic presence in the Crimea; the real history of diplomatic relations between Russia and the Crimean Khanate is much longer. Far from simple at all times, until the early 18th century they were unfolding amid the never ending conflicts caused by devastating raids of the Crimean Tatars into the Russian lands and later, by the gradually rising

pressure of the Russian Empire on the steppe. Diplomatic activity, however, remained high: the sides exchanged letters and embassies.

The history of Russia's permanent diplomatic presence in the Crimea was fairly short, but full of crucial events: the weakened Ottoman Empire retreated under pressure of a new force, the Russian Empire.

A huge pile of archival documents testifies that not only the Collegium of Foreign Affairs but also Empress Catherine the Great herself attached great importance to Russia's official representation in the Crimea.

The history of Russia's permanent diplomatic presence in the Crimea was fairly short; it covered two decades, from 1763 to 1783, but was full of crucial events which changed the political context in the Northern Black Sea area beyond recognition: the weakened Ottoman Empire retreated under pressure of a new force, the Russian Empire. Though overshadowed by military victories of Pyotr Rumyantsev and Alexander Suvorov, the victories scored by Russian diplomats, nevertheless, played an important role in the historic shifts on the Black Sea coasts.

It was Russian diplomats who neutralized the Crimean Khanate, the Porte's pivotal ally in the region; it was Russian diplomats who in 1774 gained access to the Black Sea; it was Russian diplomats who won, practically without bloodshed, the main battle for the Crimea, which was joined to Russia in 1783. The talented diplomats, chancellors of the Russian Empire - Nikita Panin and Alexander Bezborodko - and outstanding statesman Grigory Potemkin did a lot to make these victories possible. We should not forget, however, the diplomats who worked in the Crimea itself. The short history of Russia's diplomatic mission in the Crimea is the best proof of the above.

## Megatrends: Pondering Over Trajectories of an Evolving World Order

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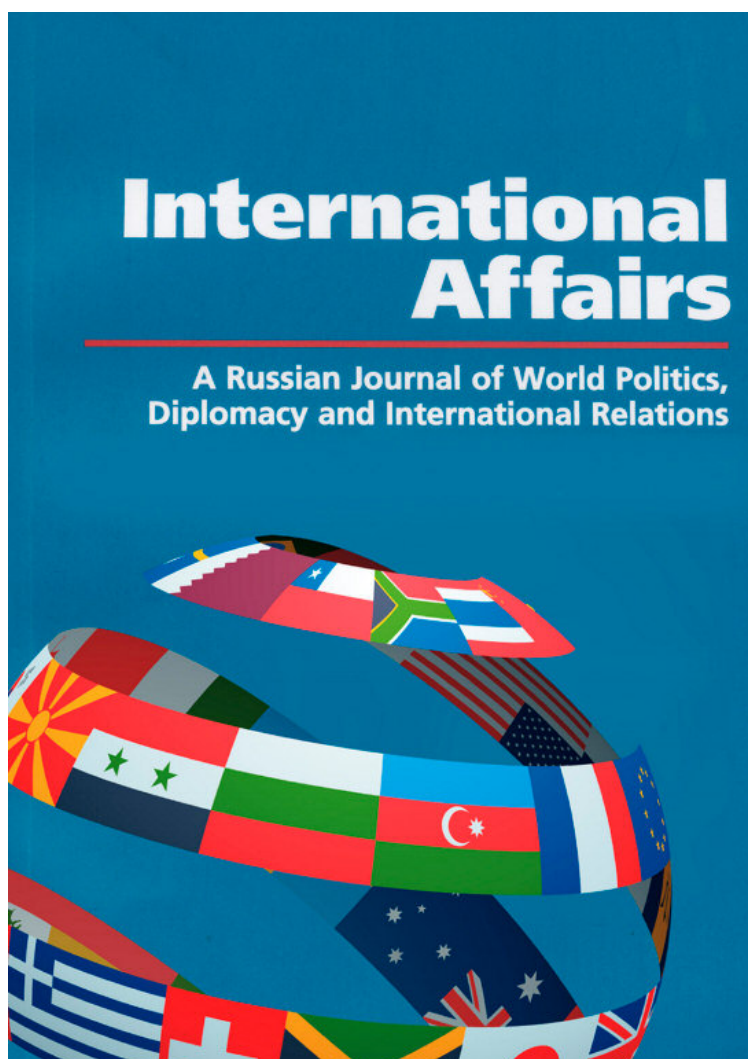
THE TERM "MEGATRENDS" has long been part and parcel of scholarly discussions. It is not often, however, that we ponder over how they manifest themselves on the current phase of world development. In this sense, the just published monograph "Megatrends: Main Trajectories of an Evolving World Order in the 21st Century" stands out favorably due to the authors' desire to make a comprehensive analysis of the global trends

as a phenomenon of today's reality. This sort of analysis is important and relevant not only for gaining a better understanding of everything that is happening in the world, but also for getting a good idea of what we can expect in the future and what could (and should) be done to neutralize crisis processes and threats of various levels and directions. "Megatrends" spans a broad range of topics related both to current changes in the international environment and evolution in attempts to control these changes.

One cannot but agree with the authors that there are several functional trends that characterize today's world system. These are the accelerating rates of social development, inversion of fundamental values, virtualization of sociopolitical relations, and the emergence of a new model of political power and governance in individual countries. It is no coincidence that the authors of the book pay much attention to socioeconomic problems because the world system's future, its endurance and stability, let alone the future of individual states, hinges on solving them at the global, regional and specific-country levels.

While the book sums up the research and description of the burning problems of world politics done by leading scholars in Russia, it also is a store of information for further analysis and forecasting (modeling) of the way the above trends may evolve. This is very important for Russia in planning its actions in all spheres of world politics where it retains sufficiently strong positions even if its power potential is uneven.

"Megatrends" is an important and significant contribution to contemporary Russian education.



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