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Making the World Stable and Safe

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THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY of the UN has become a major international event of the year. The jubilee session of the UN General Assembly was attended by over 150 heads of state and government. This fact alone testifies to the recognition of the unique role that the UN, originally designed to prevent a repetition of the tragedy of World War II, plays in international relations as their central coordinating mechanism. Many agree that the current stage of international development is characterized by the intensification of competition during the formation of a new interna-

tional system designed to measure up to the realities of the 21st century.

The world is changing and the global balance is being redistributed towards the centers of force and influence that are outside the West, which has for centuries been traditionally perceived as a trend setter in the political and economic sphere. However, the so-called historical West is not prepared to put up with the relative reduction of its weight in global affairs.

Conversely, when major states, primarily permanent members of the UN Security Council, find a common language and pool their efforts to achieve coordinated goals, as a general rule, positive results are in fact achieved. Recent examples include the successful coordinated efforts to eliminate Syrian chemical weapons and the agreement on the resolution of Iran's nuclear program, which was achieved as a result of prolonged and difficult negotiations.

The Ukraine crisis has become a manifestation of the systemic problems that have accumulated in Europe, as well as the result of the refusal by Western countries to collaborate on the basis of genuine equality and partnership.

Obviously, international stability is a prerequisite to stable and steady development. An unprecedented global development project was launched at the UN.

We hope that the implementation of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted in New York City, will make it possible not only to consolidate the results of the 15-year efforts by the international community, but also to take these efforts to a qualitatively new level.

For many years, Russia has consistently advocated for the return to genuine partnership based on international law. Today, amid the evolution of a new polycentric world order, it is time to make major steps towards normalizing the situation in the world and returning to the culture of the search for compromise in the interest of overcoming global challenges. Aware of its responsibility for the future of humankind, Russia is ready to join collective efforts.

The UN: No Place for Jokes?

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The world's universal organization, which is marking its 70th anniversary, deals with very important things: the maintenance of international peace and security, development problems, the eradication of diseases and poverty, the promotion of social progress and providing better living standards for people throughout the world - in short, everything that is recorded in the UN Charter, which was adopted 70 years ago. This, as they say, is no joking matter.

If we look back in history it may be recalled that the first General Assembly session took place in London in February 1946. It made the decision to establish the Organization's headquarters in New York City.

Moscow supported the choice. At the same time, only a few people know about a historical episode related to the decision.

The supreme commander-in-chief believed that the UN headquarters should be in the United States. This was the only way, he stressed, of tying America firmly to the UN and using this organization to impact on Washington's behavior on the international arena. Stalin recalled the inglorious fate of the League of Nations, which collapsed shortly before the war not least because the U.S. had withdrawn from it.

The fact that even in the most difficult and strained historical periods there is room for humor at the UN should inspire optimism.

Russia's voluntary contribution to the project was the design of the UN Security Council Consultations Room. It is in fact the main room where Council members meet every day to discuss important issues on the agenda and prepare draft resolutions and decisions.

Of course, the UN is a serious political organization, but it would be wrong to portray the United Nations as a kind of "an order of sword bearers" whose faces never smile. As any living organism - and the UN is, without a doubt, a living organism - its "residents" cannot always live under constant strain. Despite the seriousness of the political issues under consideration there are situations that cannot but arouse an emotional reaction. And sometimes it is impossible to do without a good joke here.

Generally speaking, many UN diplomats are outstanding personalities and have hobbies. Remember, for example, a French ambassador who closely watched his colleagues: Many of them had their favorite corners in the lobbies of the UN building where they preferred to relax during the brief leisure hours. He took note of their habits and later even published a pamphlet describing his colleagues' character and preferences.

The Global Cooperative

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THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION is, to a great extent, a faithful reflection of the stronger and weaker points of mankind; therefore, "Don't blame the mirror," as a Russian saying goes.

THE UN that was conceived as a political and military alliance set up to prevent the third global conflict failed to prevent the Cold War and, therefore, never developed into a real union. The "birthmarks" of the original intentions can still be seen in the UN Charter and in its structures, the dormant Military Staff Committee

being one of them.

Instead, the UN by trial and error arrived at what is called "global governance," its meaning being much wider than "international relations," the term habitually used when the organization was born.

Today, as globalization is spreading far and wide revealing mankind's prospects and limitations, "global governance" is gathering more importance. The word "governance," on the other hand, smacks of voluntarism of those who intend to "govern" the world.

The "global cooperative" is probably the best definition. According to the commonly accepted formula, cooperative is an autonomous association of people who united on their own free will to satisfy their common economic, social and cultural requirements and to set up a commonly owned and democratically controlled enterprise. Added to the list of requirements the term "political" completes the picture.

THE UN has an ideology of its own rooted in scores of concepts, declarations, agreements, speeches, and statements. This "progressist" and mainly liberal sum-total of views preaches that the world should become fairer and that equality should be encouraged. Political and military measures alone cannot bring safety; this means that it will remain a chimera unless development and overcoming of backwardness are viewed as the main goal; hence a lot of attention to the social matters and social price of economic processes.

The UN "collectivist" ideology proceeds from the idea that the resources should be redistributed in favor of the poor and that the worst forms of inequality should be liquidated.

Today, a more specific development concept or even "a new political economics for sustainable development" is at the core of the UN collection of ideas.

So far the UN Security Council is a safety net of sorts rather than the last instance when it comes to the war and peace issues. It is much too often involved in shaky compromises and pushes the UN onto the marshy ground of vague mandates. Kosovo and Iraq are only two of the pertinent examples that have revealed the pernicious nature of ambiguity.

We should remain realists. It seems that I am not the only one who would like to paraphrase Nikolay Berdyaev to say that the UN exists not to get us to heaven but to only save us from hell.

Can We Restore the Harmony of Victorious 1945?

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THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY of the United Nations Organization is an international event of signal importance. Set up as a fundamental element of the international system, the UN remains its cornerstone with no alternatives no matter what its numerous critics are saying in chorus.

Today, the UN looks like an eternal structure, the history of which goes back into hoary antiquity. In fact, its history goes not further than World War II and the efforts of the anti-Hitler coalition to identify and formulate the basic principles of the future in-

ternational structure.

The great role of President Roosevelt in setting up the UN is generally recognized. "No single person was more instrumental in the founding of the United Nations than Franklin Delano Roosevelt," UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told a ceremony at the dedication of a public space in honor of the U.S. leader - the Four Freedoms Park - on Roosevelt Island in New York's East River within sight of the UN Headquarters complex on the island of Manhattan. "He had the vision. He helped develop the plans. He even gave us our name."

The UN survived many hard durability tests; at some points, it looked as if it was sliding into a deep crisis or even had come dangerously close to disintegration. Each time, common sense triumphed and the ship remained afloat.

Today, the UN has found itself, once more, in the epicenter of international confrontation, not yet global but in certain respects moving in this direction. Very much like during the Cold War years, the great powers cannot agree not only on common approaches to certain regional crises; they disagree on several fundamental principles of world order.

As could be expected, the West blames Russia for this man-made collapse of its own doing and its own failures and blunders. The ingenuity of Western propaganda cannot but amaze. The West and the Western media do not hesitate to put everything upside down to make chaos look as a more or less well-organized construction. We in Russia regret that the enlightened Western society takes these lies at face value and that this will go on for an indefinitely long time. Foreign Minister of Russia Sergey Lavrov has deemed it necessary to point out that everything that is going on in the world indicates that nopower, no matter how strong its economy and how great its military might, can cope with the contemporary security threats and challenges singlehandedly. This means that today and in future the system of international relations should rely on the collective mechanisms of cooperation, the most efficient of them being the United Nations Organization set up, as President Putin has pointed out, to protect the world against destructive global conflicts. The UN does not operate in a vacuum: it is a mirror of the contemporary world and of its positive and especially negative sides, the number of which increases with every passing year.

Proposed Reforms of the UN Security Council

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SHORTLY BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS marked its 70th anniversary in October 2015, some countries mounted pressure for enlarging the number of seats on the UN Security Council. This campaign is spearheaded by the so-called Group of Four (G4) - Brazil, India, Germany, and Japan, which seek permanent membership in the Security Council. Russia as one of the council's permanent members again finds itself confronted with questions of whose membership bids to support and what is the formula for reforming the United Nations' main body that all UN member states

would accept.

Remarkably, the current U.S. administration seems to try to gloss over the promises of former American president Bill Clinton to consider the bid of Germany along with that of Japan for permanent membership on the Security Council despite the declared equal and strategic character of American-German relations.

The G4 was opposed by Uniting for Consensus (UfC), a group whose participants include Italy, Spain, Argentina, Canada, Mexico, Pakistan, and South Korea.

In a draft General Assembly resolution, UfC proposed an interim reform centering on enlarging the number of non-permanent members from 10 to 20 with the non-permanent members elected for a two-year term and being eligible for immediate re-election. UfC also called for "restraint on the use of the veto" by permanent members.

THERE are no officially approved criteria for permanent membership of the Security Council, but the G4 nations usually claim that they satisfy non-permanent membership criteria as prescribed in Article 23 of Chapter V of the UN Charter. These include "contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, and also to equitable geographical distribution."

RECENTLY, Moscow has revised the policy of supporting some countries' bids for Security Council seats that it adopted at the start of the 21st century. This was motivated by geopolitical developments and changes in Russia's relations with those countries.

As no progress had been made toward a peace treaty between Russia and Japan and Tokyo continued to lay claim to part of Russian territory, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was unable to obtain support from Russia for his country's bid for permanent membership in the Council during his visit to Moscow in April 2013.

At the same time, it needs to be mentioned that the potential enlargement of the Security Council's permanent membership would complicate its decision-making procedures. Ongoing pressure

from the G4 for the earliest possible entry of the four countries into the Security Council as permanent members antagonizes a large proportion of the UN member nations. The Council will lose much of its efficiency if the United Nations reforms it without looking for a more acceptable solution such as the above-mentioned interim model to avoid undermining the role of the Security Council as the UN chief body.

Russia and Europe: What Next?

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TODAY, the situation in the European security sphere is perhaps at its lowest. The current problems did not emerge yesterday: They have been accumulating for years. The prime cause of the serious cooling of the political climate in Europe was certainly not the Ukraine crisis. The roots of the contradictions that came to a head during the conflict in Ukraine go way back to the 1990s. In the 1990s, the world was at a crossroads. It could have followed the path of building a new open model of in-

ternational relations and putting into practice the principles that were laid down in Helsinki in 1975. Alas, the West took a different path. The opportunistic trend towards the consolidation of the international positions achieved as a result of the Cold War prevailed at the time.

This "new bloc to bloc" approach, to all intents and purposes, predetermined the fate of all the efforts aimed at establishing effective European platforms for discussions and decision-making on key European problems.

The first serious wake-up call was the 1999 crisis around Kosovo, when NATO countries grossly violated the key provisions of international law, the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, the NATO-Russia Founding Act, and the norms of humanitarian law.

It must be absolutely clear that we will not discuss any conditions on the lifting of sanctions. The first step towards lifting them should be taken by those who introduced them.

Brussels' refusal to take into account the specificities, interests and concerns of other states, including on vital issues, came through most graphically in drafting a Ukraine-EU association agreement.

The Ukrainian crisis has served as a kind of touchstone that revealed the real essence of the Western attitude towards Russia.

The so-called sanctions by the United States and the EU are not only unlawful, but are essentially counterproductive, since they in principle cannot force Russia to change its position either on Ukraine or on any other issue.

It is really amazing that the "civilized" Europe of the 21st century, which promotes democratic principles throughout the world - human rights, freedom of expression and the rule of law, is ready to "forget" about its own values for the sake of its geopolitical appetite, denying fundamental rights to the civilian population of the Donets Basin and refusing to accept the genuinely free choice of the Crimean people in favor of their reunification with Russia.

Russia itself is not ready to return to a type of relations where its partners "are giving it the finger behind its back." It is high time for everyone to realize this. Only equal and mutually beneficial cooperation can guarantee the building of a truly united, secure and thriving Europe.

Relations Between Russia and Europe: No Simple Solutions in Sight

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THE CRISIS between Russia and the West is associated with Crimea and Russia's actions in Donbass and Ukraine; in fact, it has deeper roots while its long-term repercussions might prove to be much graver than expected. A large-scale armed clash cannot be excluded even if this possibility is gradually reducing; we should be ready to political confrontation and contracted economic ties. Today, Europe is facing an even greater threat: a civilizational divorce with Russia.

The Russians have every reason to resent the West that responded to the Soviet Union's self-disintegration with a neo-Versailles policy. It tried to push Russia away from the political and economic markets; to establish its political and military control over the territories indispensable for Russia's security and preserved at a high price of millions of lost lives. A (so far) limited war that has come to Ukraine is a predictable and natural response to the West. In short, the West could have helped but preferred not to help.

As far as I know, Russia was the only one among the former socialist countries that was obligated to pay its debts accumulated in socialist times in full; all others had their debts slashed.

The present crisis between Russia and the West/Europe stems, among other things, from the deep-laying processes unfolding in the Old World.

In the last seven or eight years, we were watching how the EU, a seemingly magnificent and victorious structure, the most comfortable and humane place in the world and an example of post-historical international arrangement, was tumbling down. This Europe is still a promised land for the poor and ill-adjusted countries and nations. Look at Ukraine or, at least, part of its population. Europe, torn apart by numerous crises, will be gradually losing its attraction for Russia as well to finally become a problem, rather than a solution.

We should and can start looking for a new détente because the sides have already got much of what they wanted to get. Russia wanted to teach her partners to respect its interests by force, since persuasion and appeasement had failed. Europe likes this even less than before yet, I hope, will respect it. The West wanted to prove that it is not a "paper tiger" and that it can deliver heavy blows. It has succeeded. The plummeting oil prices helped as well.

The idea that the problem of European security could be solved within the Eurasian context formulated several months ago and rejected outright with a lot of hostility is now discussed more and more frequently if not becoming popular. This helps me remain an optimist.

The Middle East: Learning Lessons or Repeating Mistakes?

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TODAY, our Western partners seem ready to take into account the lessons of Iraq where the ruling Baath party and the army were disbanded during American occupation leaving the ungovernable country. History knows no examples of successful "regime change": disintegration of all structures of state governance is inevitable. Successful "regime change" is a utopia; those who think differently are indulging in dangerous fantasies the price of which is unacceptably high.

Among the myths shattered is the belief that unilateralism, especially military intervention, works. All unilateral actions of the past 25 years have proven to be utter failures. Be it in Iraq, Libya or the Arabian Peninsula, the costs to the region and the world still mounting. A truly collective international effort helps find sober and pragmatic middle ground which offers hope of success. It saves from the temptation to simplify and cut corners. It clears the road to an agreed goal of hidden agendas of all the players concerned.

All agree that airstrikes alone won't stop ISIL and those affiliated with them. It must be a coalition of the like-minded, including those who are fighting the extremists on the ground, i.e. the Syrian and Iraqi armies, the Kurds and the countries hosting them, which could provide assistance in that struggle. Russia already provides such assistance to Iraq and Syria.

There is no point in discussing the origins of the present situation in Iraq and Syria. What counts is the mortal threat it poses. It is time to act.

Today, there is a "grey" or probably "black hole" in the region that is used to channel the flows of illegal migrants to Europe. The crisis in Syria, the unyielding position of those who insist that Assad's resignation as a precondition of political settlement is more important than anti-ISIS struggle add to the present crisis in Europe. Time has come to admit that cooperation with extremist and radical forces is unacceptable.

Short of genuine regional cooperation, there will be no hope in the region, no stability and no development. This is the only way to find a sustainable solution to the migration crisis in Europe, too. People in the region, especially the young, with no prospects of education and jobs, are facing the stark choice between emigration and joining the extremist outfits.

Old politics does not provide solutions to today's problems. All the more reason for us to help others learn the universal lessons of history, rather than let them repeat it. Outside players failed the region in the past. We cannot fail it now.

American Interests in Eurasia and Ukraine

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WASHINGTON'S FOREIGN POLICY has played and continues to play one of the main roles in the international political and military crises in Ukraine, in the way they began and are unfolding. The American ruling circles spent twenty-five post-Soviet years tightening their grip on Ukraine and its people through a network of institutions ranging from the oligarchs with money in Western banks and numerous NGOs to rigidly controlled political parties and neo-fascist fighters - thrown into action at the opportune moment

to bring a pro-American regime to power.

GEORGE FRIEDMAN, head of the Stratfor global intelligence company close to the CIA, has demonstrated that throughout the twentieth century the United States was busy preventing an appearance in Eurasia a megapower, a center of attraction for the continent's people and resources. Any heavyweight on the world arena will tip the global balance of power and undermine American leadership. The defeat of Germany opened the United States a road to its hegemony in the capitalist world; the Soviet Union's disintegration made it the world's only superpower. Starting with the early 1990s, much was being said about economic reintegration that, however, did not make CIS a reintegration instrument on the post-Soviet space.

Relations with Ukraine are Russia's weakest point in terms of its revival, especially in connection with the growing importance of Eurasian integration.

The fast growth of economy and political influence of China is another source of Washington's apprehensions: it is seen as a dynamic power that can, in the short-term perspective, claim leadership in Eurasia and challenge the U.S. global hegemony. Weakening and isolation are two containment instruments expected to undermine China's growing economic, military and political might. President Obama's "pivot to Asia" has been devised with this aim in view.

At the dawn of market reforms in China, Deng Xiaoping, its architect, laid the foundations of the country's very cautious foreign policy so that to avoid conflicts with the West over an access to its markets.

We all know that the European ABM system in Ukraine would devalue a considerable part of the Russian nuclear shield and create an unfavorable balance of strategic armed forces.

THE WORLDWIDE BALANCE of energy sources and transportation routes is another important aspect of America's control of Ukraine.

It is expected that Ukraine would become an anti-Russian mechanism. Having moved the NATO military machine very close to Russia's borders, America moved even closer to its cherished

dream - strategic nuclear domination. The American business community would like to end energy cooperation between Russia and Europe to reserve the gold mine for itself. Some of the top figures in the American political elites, who demonstrate a lot of zeal in provoking the Ukrainian drama, have already enriched themselves significantly.

Geopolitical Ambitions and Intrigues of the United States in the APR

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TOTAL CONTROL over the Asia-Pacific as a step toward world domination had been on America's agenda for a long time before the dynamic shifts of recent decades, the status of the leading world powers reached by China and India and their membership, together with Russia, in the SCO and BRICS raised fairly high barriers to Washington's global ambitions.

Political rebalancing in the APR has been triggered by the de facto status of China as the Washington's key interests in the world. American analysts proceed from their stronger apprehensions that China's economic growth and mounting

military might will make its foreign policies more aggressive and a military conflict in the region more probable.

THE STRATEGIC SHIFT toward the Asia-Pacific forced Washington to elaborate a set of political, economic, military and other measures designed, on the one hand, to draw China into the world process on the side of the West and, on the other, to keep China's influence in the region within certain limits, that is, to apply hedging or containment methods to it.

India's new eastern policy gave Washington a chance to start talking about its strategic rapprochement with the American course at rebalancing the region and about common values and reciprocal interests of "the world's two largest democracies" to arrive at strategic and economic partnership with India in the security sphere, in the first place.

RUSSIA AND CHINA do not underestimate the gravity of Washington's designs and practical steps to strengthen its positions in the Asia-Pacific. Neither Russia nor China wants the United States as the only powerful player in the region and its stronger military-political status there. Neither Russia nor China can single-handedly oppose it. Together, however, they are the real force that can sober up the increasingly aggressive power on the other side of the ocean. This has created a firm foundation for further strategic cooperation between Moscow and Beijing to jointly protect their similar interests.

To consolidate their positions in the face of America's increasingly aggressive policy, they should not limit themselves to the joint measures designed to promote their strategic partnership and to defend their legitimate national interests but to arrive at a common strategy of opposing the U.S. hegemonic ambitions in the region.

The Difficult Plight of a Promised Land

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ANY NATIONAL CRISIS tests a country's political system, exposing its latent vices and vulnerabilities. European countries have been plunged into such crises when, after times of affluent, carefree existence, they were spontaneously inundated by refugees from conflict-stricken areas in the Middle East and North Africa. Obviously, this is the biggest-ever challenge of this kind for the West, which has got accustomed to quietly dealing with small-scale problems and to loudly proclaiming

invented large-scale ones such as the "Russian threat."

There is a national security aspect as well: the poorly controlled inflow of mostly Muslim refugees might include Islamist fundamentalists, even Islamic State agents who would build conspiratorial networks in the EU for purposes of propaganda, recruitment and terrorism.

The number one task is to find out what needs to be done to solve the problems - placing blames is a job that can be postponed.

The refugee crisis fully dominates German media. No wonder - the situation is pretty dismal and there is little reason for optimism. About 40% of refugees arriving in Europe seek to settle in Germany.

Under German law, the entire work and cost of accepting and putting up asylum seekers is the responsibility of regional and local authorities. Asylum seekers have no right to work or study with the exception of attending German language courses, which means the law prohibits them from paying their own costs of living, least of all from making any financial contributions to the state.

The authorities in effect seek to gloss over or ignore the problem, or to blame all extremist incidents on neo-Nazis or ultrarightist freaks, but this is a fruitless, and quite often counterproductive, policy.

This produces what is one of the worst parts of any crisis - the population gets the impression that the government is out of control, makes no effort to solve the problem, and is burying its head in the sand.

One more reason for the government to pay close attention to the refugee issue is that the next federal elections are just two years away.

The people will pay for the mistakes of Germany's rulers, while the history of these times will be written by the winners.

Killed and Uncounted

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PEOPLE WONDER, "How come that the United States, a great democratic state and its no less democratic allies in Europe turn a blind eye to massive crimes against civilians in Donbass?" This is not accidental and this attitude has a pre-history of its own.

In the wake of World War II, the United States challenged the obsolete system of colonial domination of Europeans in Africa, Asia and the Middle East to make the dollar the world's only

ruler. The British Empire was the first to collapse followed by weaker "empires," protectorates, trust territories, and colonies.

Certain important ideological aspects of decolonization made the United States and the Soviet Union allies of sorts who eloquently described the numerous victims and untold suffering the colonialists and their henchmen had caused the peoples of colonies.

It looked as if the world had entered a new era of peaceful economic expansion and universal competition; the Soviet Union which proclaimed the principles of peaceful coexistence and economic competition of the two systems looked like a natural element of the new world order.

According to the latest figures cited by the Pentagon, "U.S.-led airstrikes against ISIS have killed only two civilians: both children - 'likely in Syria'" while a new report compiled by the non-profit group Airwars, which tracks coalition airstrikes in the Middle East, "documents up to 591 civilian deaths from more than 50 credible incidents - involving 5,600 airstrikes."

No wonder, the Western countries vetoed in the UN SC the draft resolution of the Russian Federation on the necessity for an independent investigation of the methods and nature of similar operations in Libya.

Susan Southard has opened a hitherto little known page about the Nagasaki tragedy: "Among the least-known victims of Nagasaki were 10,000 Koreans, who took 11 years to win the right to the same healthcare benefits as Japanese survivors."

C.J. Werleman invited his readers: "Go ahead. Conduct your own poll the next time you're chatting with Americans. Ask how many civilians were killed in Vietnam, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Iraq, Syria, Panama, Cuba, Nicaragua, Korea, etc. I bet they either don't know or care."

No wonder, this has made American politicians and a large part of the American population indifferent to the civilian victims in the far-away Donbass. Indeed, the democratic values "common to all mankind" should be defended harmoniously and without bloodshed; in the ideal world, they exclude bloodshed and suffering.

If You Want Peace, Prepare for Peace: Reflections Amid the Current Political Crisis

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We are the avowed proponents of the "if you want peace, prepare for peace" approach, but under different circumstances, at different historical and geopolitical periods, "preparations" can and should be different.

TODAY'S WORLD, this Bermuda Triangle of potentialities, intentions and threats, in which Russia is to uphold its national interests, is quite "appropriate" for the emergence and cultivation of the virus of tension and confrontation, not only military confrontation, as well as for the growing role of military

power in international relations, when even insignificant pockets of contradictions and slight provocations can cause numerous problems for the system of international and national security. There are a lot of explanations for this.

First of all, it is the global systemic crisis, not only a financial and economic crisis. It will have a recurring, multilateral character and it will last as a minimum until the end of the present decade, with growing turbulence and the most uncertain but clearly destabilizing consequences for the sphere of international relations.

Today, Russia is being ignored, demonized and isolated not because it purportedly makes mistakes or behaves arrogantly on the international arena, but because it is not strong enough; weakness is a greater sin than lack of cooperation or tolerance.

It would be irresponsible not to follow a focused policy aimed at strengthening and upgrading its defense capability and military activity. When the language of force and pressure, not only purely military pressure, is so trendy in the world, Vladimir Putin's remarks regarding the "law of the taiga" and the determination to protect it are particularly relevant, and this is not bullying, not a threat to the international community.

TO WHAT EXTENT is Russia itself to blame for the ongoing offensive on the post-Soviet space and the attempts to squeeze it out of this space, incidentally, not only on the part of the West? Frankly, the pace of reform in the Russian Federation does not quite match its current needs, and this is not only the result of intrigues by its opponents or the consequences of the global crisis. Therefore, there is a pressing need for a breakthrough in the sphere of modernization, and it cannot be made in the current feeble, verbose and inertial mode, without robust mobilization measures. It should be noted, however, that in reality, a virtual picture often costs more than a real picture, and the possibility of this optical illusion is widely used today, like never be-

fore, to enhance one's own importance in the eyes of others, as well as to discredit one's opponents.

In analyzing the crisis in the relations between Russia and the West, it is counterproductive to blame everything on the West. As the king in a well-known play said, we were all wrong in some respect or other.

Why There Is No "Baltic Bridge" Between Russia and the EU

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IN VARIOUS PERIODS in the past, states and territories of the Baltic region made successful economic and cultural use of the advantage of being located between Russia and Northern Europe.

After being incorporated into the Soviet Union, the Baltic republics for objective reasons had no chance of direct contact with the outside world. But due to their historical traditions and sizable investments into their economies and infrastructures, they remained an informal intercivilizational bridge because the Soviet authorities presented them to for-

foreign visitors as illustrations of the Soviet way of life.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, that interdependence, which had taken centuries to evolve, was practically ruined by nationalist elites that had come to power in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia and made it one of their objectives to sever their countries' historical, economic and cultural ties with Russia.

Unfortunately, the governments of the Baltic states failed to use a historic chance offered to them by the new, democratic era in Russia. Post-Soviet Russia sought no confrontation with those countries.

Estonia, which, like Latvia, has been ruled by right-wing nationalist parties ever since it regained its independence, has its own pragmatic politicians, and former prime minister Tiit Vahi and Center Party leader Edgar Savisaar stand out among them. As in Latvia, Centrists haven't been let into any power echelon higher than the municipal authorities of the capital city.

According to the latest assessments by the European Commission, the dairy industries of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia are on the brink of collapse. Latvian Agriculture Minister Janis Duklavs has warned that if Brussels does not support his country, its farmers will begin to slaughter their livestock and close down their farms.

The door into government remains closed to Center Party pragmatists in Estonia too. In Lithuania, a coalition government formed by Social Democrats and their allies has been unable to build pragmatic relations with Russia, a policy that they advocate but that runs against the presidential line.

To sum up, anti-Russian sentiments have become much more pronounced in the Baltic states in recent years. Russia and periods of coexistence with it within the same state are vilified by politicians and media all the way through. The seeds of mistrust and hatred sown in the independence years bore bitter fruit. Politics and governance have been increasingly influenced by young people who are unfriendly toward Russia, such as Gabrielius Landsbergis, grandson of the notorious Lithuanian politician Vytautas Landsbergis, or radicals from the All for Riga - marches of former Waffen SS legionaries.

The Baltic Countries as Test Labs for External Governance

Author: V. Olenchenko

Candidate of Science (Law), Senior Research Assistant, Center for European Studies, Ye.M. Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), Russian Academy of Sciences



RUSSIA'S RELATIONS with the European Union and the United States are centered today on the Ukrainian crisis - and not on Ukraine itself, which has been and remains an inseparable cultural and historical part of the East Slavdom, while the crisis is a product of the forcible, foreign-instigated seizure of power by the current Ukrainian leadership and is being made worse by its incompetence.

The external governance of the Baltic countries has been considered as effective. Governance structures and practices evolved in the course of it have motivated its authors to extend its Baltic experience to other countries. Among other things, external governance is an increasingly significant factor in competition among foreign investors.

For objectivity's sake, one may hypothesize that behind the external managers' return to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was homesickness, that they enjoy wide support there, and that they are determined to dedicate the rest of their lives to serving their homeland. But there is little factual evidence of this.

In broader terms, are we not witnessing an attempt to get NATO to organize demand in Europe for U.S. weapons in a bid to stimulate the American economy by giving priority to the American military-industrial complex? Latvia, for example, has already responded to NATO appeals and decided to buy 67 million euros' worth of radio equipment in the United States.

These trends mean that NATO member countries are risk areas as investment NO SERIOUS STUDY of anti-crisis policies in the Baltic countries is possible without exploring the political environments in which their economies function. The foreign policy of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania has some specific characteristics which differ it from that of any other EU country, including the fact that it determines their domestic policies.

There is obvious reciprocal movement on the part of the Republicans.¹⁵ By and large, it is safe to forecast that if the next U.S. president is a Republican, the Baltic countries will harden their anti-Russian rhetoric and seek to boost confrontational aspects of relations between the West and Russia.

What tasks should Russia set itself in its Baltic policy? It should support lobbies in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania that want and are able to defend their countries' sovereignty and right to independent policies aimed at safeguarding their genuine national interests.

Russia and Egypt: Back to the Future?

Author: V. Belyakov

Leading Research Assistant, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Professor, Military University of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation



Russia and Egypt have been rapidly boosting their relations after the Egyptian revolution of June 30, 2013 put an end to the rule of Islamists who had been brought to power by a combination of circumstances.

The United States and Western Europe saw the overthrow of President Mohamed Morsi as a commonplace coup and suspended the provision of aid to Egypt, but Russia reacted in a different way.

Military-technological cooperation remains a priority in

Russian-Egyptian relations. But that is a sensitive subject, and so I won't cite any media reports, either Russian or Egyptian, about what specifically is supposed to be sold to Egypt and at what price. Let me cite official information instead. The two countries signed a protocol on military cooperation during the first meeting of the joint commission on military-technological cooperation in Moscow early in March 2015, which was chaired by the Russian and Egyptian defense ministers, Sergey Shoygu and Sedki Sobhi.²

Plans for Russian arms exports to Egypt were not the only issue raised at the commission meeting. A plan was announced during it for the two countries to hold a joint naval exercise in the Mediterranean and a joint exercise for anti-terrorist rapid deployment forces.

During his visit to Sochi, Sisi invited Putin to visit Egypt. Such a visit took place in February. The Russian president received a very warm welcome in Cairo. There were pictures of him all over the city.

Only three agreements were signed during Putin's visit - two investment accords and a deal on the Egyptian nuclear power plant project.

Today, there are quite many large and economically advanced countries, and so Egypt has no need to tie down its economy to relations with just one foreign nation, whether it is the United States or Russia. Cairo pursues, and I'm sure will continue to pursue, a diversified foreign policy, collaborating with countries that have something to offer to Egypt.

From that point of view, Russian-Egyptian relations show no tendency to return to the Nasser era. Yet there is one more aspect to them - their atmosphere. Quite often, economic relations are purely pragmatic deals - one partner sells and the other buys. But it can be different as well, with one well-intentioned partner, aware of the needs and resources of the other side, making concessions to it. I believe that this is what current Russian-Egyptian cooperation is like.

Intellectual Property Owners and State Support

Author: G. Ivliyev

Federal Service for Intellectual Property (Rospatent)



Inventions are patented where they are in demand most of all. Naturally, if our economy is passive, not responsive to inventions and patents these ideas materialize on a different market, which is more adapted to innovations and which is more technologically advanced. It is right to say, there would be nothing terrible about this if this invention was also utilized by our economy. However, when this is not so, when other countries get competitive advantages that is wrong. But on the whole, the international

protection system is organized so that you can protect your rights both in Russia and in other countries.

If we display greater initiative in providing support for the practical use of intellectual property objects, we will follow the path of the U.S. and China, and we will have more patents and more intellectual property to show for it in the national economy.

It is very important for us of course to resolve the problem that continues to affect society, specifically Internet piracy. Authors cannot receive remuneration for their work, because their product goes online and is disseminated there. An author has spent a lot of time, effort and creative energy; an entire team has worked on a film or a video clip; an investor has provided significant funding, but there is no return on that.

We can see that the Internet industry is developing successfully. Today, all of its users want the situation to continue, but the financial gains that the industry receives do not reach the author. CISAC is one of the world's intellectual property organizations. Collective management is practiced in 30 countries. This is an effective form of work. It is absolutely wrong to speak about the introduction of some contractual formula now.

It is necessary to create a cultural environment and explain that downloading unlawful content is piracy, the infringement of other people's intellectual property rights. Many people believe that it is okay to steal a film from a film director: After all, this is not the same as stealing sausage from a supermarket.

We should propose a general regulatory mechanism not at the user's level, but at the level of an Internet agent, operator, service provider, the state, and copyright owner. The aim is to protect the user's rights and expand these rights. If we adopt a different model we will hurt our society a great deal.

If a similar system is put in place now it will not remove some artificial barriers but will eliminate incentives for action to promote something. If inventors who have protected themselves with a patent are focused on ways of putting their invention into practice throughout the world, then

the abandonment of legal protection will lead to a situation where no one will want to invent anything, develop it and bring it to a stage where this invention acquires a universal value. We will thus destroy the economy completely. Once the principle of legal protection of inventions is abandoned the economy will disappear.

Author: Rüdiger von Fritsch

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



WHAT is the FRG government guided by in its actions, apart from urgent, current problems? Adenauer's moves already clearly point to the key elements of the German foreign policy after World War II as they will subsequently determine its eastern policy and the course toward détente by the German social liberal governments under Willy Brandt, Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Helmut Schmidt, as they will make possible the establishment of German unity by Helmut Kohl and again by Hans-Dietrich Genscher,

and as they still continue to act consistently and continuously: Policies are shaped in the process of dialogue and are built on the balance of interests; they are predictable and based on the established perceptions of values and principles, integrated into the context of the circle of partners and allies and harmonized with direct and indirect neighbors.

This policy, however, is above all aimed at firm agreements and reliable rules accepted by all. The country that had caused so much trouble for Europe and the world during the National Socialist rule drew a conclusion from the horrible suffering and destruction that had affected, among others, the Soviet Union and its people: There must be no more arbitrariness in international relations. Guided by deep convictions, German foreign policy will decisively respond to all violations of these rules, which jeopardize peace and trust.

Germany is still one of the most favorite places abroad for Russian students and researchers to receive an education and engage in research. At present, about 15,000 young Russians are studying in Germany. Over 880 universities in our countries have established partnership links.

These days we are marking the 60th anniversary since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR and the FRG and it is in this connection that the present article is being published. However, we should not forget about the major contribution made by the residents of the former GDR to the preservation, maintenance and development of cultural and scientific ties, as well as people-to-people contacts between

Nevertheless, we can make History, and we can make it together. Soon, we will be marking the 25th anniversary of the German reunification as a result of a peaceful revolution in the GDR and talks between the two German states with each other and with the four former allied powers in World War II. That was when not only the division of Europe began to come to an end but the withdrawal of the allied forces also began. Who could have hoped at the time that the withdrawal of Soviet troops would have proceeded as peacefully as it had? We Germans are still grateful for this!

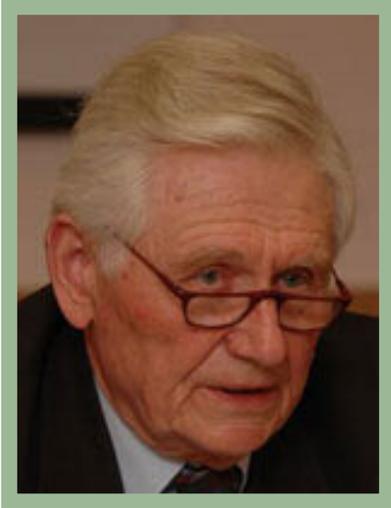
WE STILL HOPE that conflicts can be resolved and when they are resolved we will be able to reach out to each other again.

Childlike belief in a future without conflicts and disagreements has nothing to do with reality. It would be naïve to hope for this either in ordinary life or in politics! However, all of us need to work hard to prevent a new division between the East and the West and to restore the damaged trust, but we have the right to hope for this, and I believe that this hope is realistic.

The Soviet Union and the Federal Republic of Germany: The 60th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations

Author: V. Terekhov

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Professor at the Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation



IN SEPTEMBER 1955, ten years after the end of the war in Europe, the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany. The reason why this event had taken so long to come about was that the two countries first had to go through a multitude of extremely complicated problems, and that took time.

As years were going by, it was increasingly obvious that not everyone believed in a world order based on peaceful, equal and constructive cooperation and respect for nations' choice of path of development. The Cold War, which broke out almost immediately after World War II, had become a stable form of international relations.

The West German Social Democratic government realized earlier than conservative politicians did that throwing off at least some of the fetters of the Cold War and making compromises would be a more productive route to take than obstinate confrontation with the Soviet Union.

This agreement changed the political scene in Europe and worldwide. Simultaneous dramatic processes in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe became another source of global change. Its authors suggest bringing back the Soviet-era formula of peaceful coexistence, which did not prevent the two sides from being divided on key points. But that was the formula for the period when the Soviet Union still existed, and it would have been problematic for the West to try to not coexist with it. Yet some people in the West think it is worth trying out this formula. Not much of an idea.

One more suggestion is that the West tries to create some new kind of security system for itself that excludes Russia. But what kind of security would it be without Russia being part of the system?

Obviously, nothing will work if Russia and the West don't start a new dialogue - without any preliminary conditions or demands - to negotiate a mutually acceptable degree of security. The status quo in Ukraine could be frozen for the negotiation period and fighting there could be stopped under Russian and Western control.

A comprehensive settlement in Ukraine is hardly achievable today. It will be a while before it becomes possible, but Germany, and the West in general, would be able to bring it forward. But they are still at the crossroads. Such is today's reality.

A Quarter-Century of the "Greater Federal Republic of Germany": The Germans and the Lessons of History

Author: I. Maximychev

Doctor of Science (Political Science), Senior Research Associate, Institute of Europe, Russian Academy of Sciences



THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY of the incorporation of the German Democratic Republic into the Federal Republic of Germany fell at the year of the 70th anniversary of the victory over Nazi Germany in World War II, which saved the world from Nazism. This is an extra reason to try to see what conclusions the Germans drew from events that had become turning points not only in their own but in world history.

The "national problem of the Germans" arose after World War II mainly because of the rejection by West

Germany, which was under external rule, of a plan to create a single state taking account of the interests of all Germans.

The nature of West Germany's European politics after the defeat in the war meant that the West Germans had neither forgotten anything not learned any lessons. Not only did they pursue subversive activities in the Soviet occupation zone and then in East Germany.

We have to admit that we left our socialist allies in the lurch, abandoning them to the tender mercies of the political elites of the United States, West Germany and other citadels of the West. The threat of riots in bigger East German cities made the Soviet military authorities to send tanks to city streets. The first order to that effect was given by the commandant of East Berlin. The tanks never opened fire or crushed anyone under their tracks, nor were there any registered instances of clashes between tanks and demonstrators. The sight of armored vehicles proved enough for the situation to normalize. Order was eventually restored by the East German police after they had recovered from a shock the unrest had left them in.

Needless to say, the wall wasn't something East Germany could be unambiguously prideful about, though it surely was a masterpiece of engineering. It wouldn't ever have come into existence in the first place had the West at least a minimal desire for normal relations with the East. And yet the wall did play a serious role in defusing international tension.

As long as Soviet foreign policy was chiefly under the personal control of Andrei Gromyko (nicknamed Mr. Nyet, "Mr. No," in the West), the outward appearance of its achievements did not differ significantly from their essence.

THERE WERE two main reasons why the incorporation of the German Democratic Republic into the Federal Republic of Germany in 1989-1990 was such a quick process - the weakness of the post-Honecker leadership of the ruling Socialist Unity Party of Germany and shameless interference from West Germany. That process was based on a minor update of the 1953 scenario,

a version that didn't include an occupation regime with Soviet military authorities and tanks. German journalist Jakob Augstein says that Kaiser Wilhelm, who tried to lecture and discipline Europe, is not in demand today; it is Chancellor Bismarck who is needed. Some Germans still remember that Bismarck advised to be friends with Russia.

Author: V. Likhachev

Member of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Professor, Doctor of Science (Law)



TODAY, Russian-Chinese relations are officially described by Moscow and Beijing as a comprehensive, wide-ranging, equal and trusting partnership and strategic interaction. Based on this geopolitical and geo-economic paradigm, effective and pragmatic practice has evolved, which has become a positive factor in global development and global governance in the 21st century.

The objective axiology criterion shows the value of various aspects related to the organization and utilization of this experience in the evolution of bilateral, regional and global integration processes and spaces.

The established configuration of public activity participants, supplemented by the no less active part of business operators creating the national GDP and realizing economic sovereignty, constitutes a special dynamic integrated complex of Russian-Chinese interconnections.

A good case in point is the joint Russian-Chinese statement on deepening comprehensive partnership and strategic interaction and advancing mutually beneficial cooperation.

Today, Russia and China are also guided by other political, legal and regulatory documents that are correlated with the provisions of their Basic Laws. What does this refer to? For Russia, an exclusively important role in defining international activity parameters, spheres and mechanisms is played by the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation of 2013. It also includes essential provisions of international law. First of all, it is important to note the principle of the supremacy of law in international relations as one of Russia's priorities in dealing with global issues (Para. 2, Part III). Based on this, Russia is geared towards a program of concrete actions and diplomatic steps.

It should be noted that China's position regarding the application of international law within the framework of this project logically coincides with the measures and objectives that the Chinese leadership formulated under the "comprehensive advancement of the rule of law in China" directive.

Russian-Chinese interaction is a model of such a union and partnership. The potential for their integration will actively and creatively influence the evolution of international law and order, with all of its basic and auxiliary elements.

The Russian School of Prof. Martens and Contemporary International Law

Author: Ye. Voronin

Professor, Department of International Law, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations (MGIMO), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary



IT IS WITH GOOD REASON that we speak of the legal thought of Russia, and the school of Fyodor Martens, in the first place, as part of the contemporary doctrine of international law, a common heritage of the European legal tradition. His school was completely devoted to the principles of international law and the rule of law as the linchpin of foreign policy of all civilized states that rejected force as a means of settling interstate disagreements and a tool of prevention of European clashes.

The science of international law and European legal consciousness recognizes Fyodor Martens, Professor at St. Petersburg University and the Imperial Alexander Lyceum a very close analogue of MGIMO, as one of the leading jurists who insisted on the primacy of law in international relations, who spared no effort to establish an international court with the right to pass binding decisions and who was known as a "Russian politician."

The unique professionalism of Martens and the unique nature of his theoretical and practical school rested on three pillars: efficient international law, peace diplomacy and writings for the media based on facts.

Professor Martens shared, in many respects, the "legal" idealism of the "nobly assured" century and the ideas of self-assured pacifism.

The pacifist movement was intimately connected with the institute of arbitration as the main trend of international jurisprudence on the eve of war. The European idea rooted in the Western Christian civilization found its firm ground in the jus gentium norms, the source of arbitration as a form of settling international disagreements.

Diplomatiae tribunali of the early twentieth century developed into a preferable doctrinal practice of settling the war and peace issues actively supported by Martens and his followers. The concept of settling European contradictions, in the field of collective security in the first place, through arbitration and rejection of the use of military force, was moved to the dominant positions in the science of international law and affected, to a certain extent, European diplomatic practices. The legal ideas of the Martens school about international governance were of great "forecasting" importance. The principles and norms of the theory of international governance as expounded by Martens were a prototype of sorts of the functional foundation of international organizations, the UN in the first place, as we know them today. His ideas about the legal nature of non-inter-

ference in domestic affairs of states are as topical today as they were in the past. At all times, international law and order, relations between states and world stability depend not only on the will of the states that are subjects of international law but also on the positions of natural persons, experts in international law.

The Polish Experiment of the Romanov Dynasty

Author: Yu. Bulatov

Dean, School of International Relations, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Doctor of Science (History)



TWO HUNDRED YEARS have passed since the Vienna Congress (1815) when Europe's leading monarchs led by the Russian autocrat Alexander I produced yet another scenario for the world following the routing of Napoleon Bonaparte's empire; the Congress determined also the status of Polish lands.

Western historiography often interprets the inclusion of indigenous Polish lands into Russia in accordance with the decision of the Vienna Congress as the "fourth partition of Poland." It is impossible to agree with this view, although at first glance it seems that Western historians are right.

The Romanovs' Polish experiment objectively contributed to the destruction of the autocratic regime and the collapse of the Russian Empire.

At first, the Polish elite, in its majority, was in a state of euphoria over the resolution of the Polish issue at the Vienna Congress. After all, it was about the preservation of Polish statehood within the framework of a new system of international relations, even if under the auspices of Russia.

Nevertheless, the approaches of the Russian and Polish sides towards the establishment of the Kingdom of Poland differed conspicuously from each other. The Russian ruling circles believed that the establishment of the Kingdom of Poland had finally resolved the Polish issue. As for the Polish side, it believed that the appearance of the Kingdom of Poland as part of Russia was just a starting point on the way towards Poland's political independence and sovereignty in its domestic and foreign policy.

It should also be noted that the education level of the Polish szlachta was higher than of the Russian nobility. Poles were in top positions in this regard, ahead of the Russians, and coming second only to the ethnic German nobility in the Russian elite. This is why the Romanov dynasty always sought primarily not to integrate the Polish szlachta into the Russian nobility, but to weaken its influence both in the capital of the Empire and in the country's western provinces.

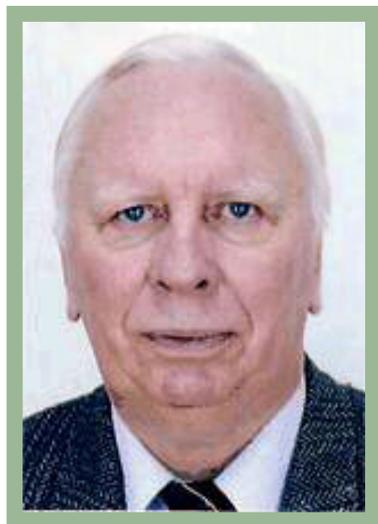
The goal of the Russification policy in the sphere of education was to train pro-Russian ethnic cadre from among young Poles. After a long hiatus, the University of Warsaw, where instruction in all disciplines was conducted in Russian, reopened in 1869. Instruction in Polish secondary and then primary schools was also in Russian, not Polish.

And one final point. The Polish experience of the tsarist government makes it incumbent on us to remember always that Russia is not only a multiethnic state but also a self-sufficient multiethnic and multi-faith civilization. The accession of indigenous Polish lands - i.e., new territories outside the boundaries of Russian civilization - to the Russian Empire at the Vienna Congress inevitably

created a large number of intractable problems for the autocracy. The artificial "integration" of Polish territories into Russia not only weakened central authority, but also proved unpredictable in its consequences. The Romanovs' Polish experiment objectively contributed to the destruction of the autocratic regime and the collapse of the Russian Empire.

Author: V. Vorobiev

Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the Kingdom of Morocco; Doctor of Science (Law), Professor, Merited Scholar of the Russian Federation



RECENTLY I received from Vladimir Churov a copy of his book *A Trip to Morocco with Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan*, for which I am sincerely grateful to him.

It's an amazing book both due to its informative and fascinating content and due to the variety of literary and historical ploys and methods used by the author. It may be called a bestseller among Russian books about Morocco.

Churov says that the book "is not a history of Morocco or Soviet-Moroccan relations but rather an attempt to draw a colorful picture of life in Morocco and the Soviet Union in the 20th century with the inclusion of several important historical facts."

I don't actually think he is quite right - the book contains everything

he is mentioning.

Besides its author's encyclopedic knowledge, the book is an impeccable work of graphic design and of superb printing quality.

Reading *Trip to Morocco* gives you the impression that you are in a paradise. Morocco's late King Hassan II once said that his country was a tree with its roots in Africa and its branches in Europe.

I would like to cite words by Mikoyan himself that are quoted in it and are a statement of love for Morocco: "We did know and hear about this country, its people, its natural beauty. But what we have seen surpasses all our expectations. It has turned out that the resources and riches of Morocco, intellectual, cultural and material alike, are bigger than our fantasy could ever have pictured." I think these words are very accurate.

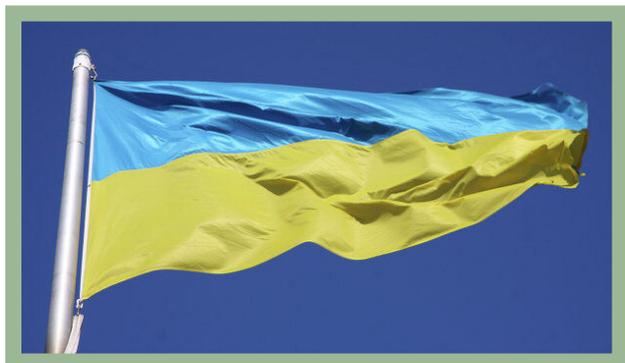
I would like to congratulate Mr. Churov on the publication of his wonderful book, which is a significant event in cultural relations between our countries. In Morocco, they have already started translating it into Arabic and French.

I also feel like repeating after the president of the Institute of the Middle East, Yevgeny Satanovsky: "Bravo to the author!" And I could add, "Bravo to the son who has finished his father's work!"

The Ukrainian Test

Author: A. Frolov

Leading research associate, Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Doctor of Science (Political Science)



UKRAINE has become a pet subject with those who have something to say and with even a greater number of those who have not. This explains why it is not easy to find a profound, balanced and comprehensive study based on rational arguments. Too much of what has been written so far is a heap of propaganda clichés hence a lot of attention to the recent fundamental work by Igor Ivanov "Ukrainian

Crisis through the Prism of International Relations" about the sources, evolution and prospects of the Ukrainian crisis. The author is a well-known figure with a huge amount of practical experience in international affairs in his past capacity of the foreign minister of Russia and due to his active participation in public and political life in his present capacity of President of the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC). He is well-known all over the world as one of the most respected experts in international relations and international security personally acquainted with the main characters of the drama unfolding in Ukraine and around it.

The author has demonstrated once more his abilities of a profound analyst, whose generalizations and conclusions are indispensable for all political actors. The volume is a collection of articles written throughout the crisis and, therefore, connected by a common subject, a common line of argumentation and generalization, and documentary and chronological appendices.

The author has pointed out that in 2014 the situation and the scope of the crisis differed greatly from what had happened during the 2008 crisis in the Caucasus. In its time, Russia spoke about a new European security treaty and a collective security organization expected to bring together all countries from Vancouver to Vladivostok and all structures (EU, OSCE, CSTO, NATO, and the CIS) and assume responsibility for settling disputes and disagreements.

The author has warned the readers against three seemingly logical yet absolutely wrong conclusions. First, don't try to build a wall between yourself and the dangerous and unpredictable world; many societies might opt for isolationism. This is a road leading nowhere. Second, don't try to profit from the less manageable international system. This is short-sighted and highly dangerous idea. Third, don't try to capitalize on the conflict's exacerbation. Under current circumstances, this is irresponsible and politically adventurous.

The author believes that to avoid a deep-cutting and tragic mistake the problems of Ukraine should not and cannot be reduced to the so-called annexation of Crimea. Its problems are rooted in the decaying Ukrainian statehood, the crisis of the main institutes of power and economic devastation.

The book encourages serious contemplations about the present state of international relations.

The Personae of Middle East Politics

Author: B. Dolgov

Senior Research Associate, Center of Arab and Islamic Studies, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Candidate of Science (History)



THIS IS A COLLECTION of essays about politicians who have been prominent in the Middle East in the period from the mid-20th century to this day. The collection "Political Portraits of the Statesmen of the Near and Middle East"* launches a new research project at the Institute for International Studies of the Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations (MGIMO), "Political Portraits."

The essays draw portraits of outstanding politicians in Middle Eastern and international politics. The book might also stimulate more analysis of the personal factor in history, especially in the history of Muslim societies, where great significance is still attached to the role of charismatic leaders.

The authors of the articles are high-profile Russian scholars and diplomats many of whom have repeatedly met with the politicians they describe and have been involved in decisions that have affected policies in the Middle East.

The collection includes three articles about monarchs - Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, who passed away early in 2015, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan (1918-2004), founder of the United Arab Emirates, and Jordanian King Hussein bin Talal (1935-1999), each of whom played a significant role in his own country and in Arab and global politics in general. These three articles were written respectively by Andrey Baklanov, a diplomat with the rank of ambassador and an adviser to a deputy chairman of the Federation Council of Russia; Yury Zinin, an Arabist and senior research officer at the Center for Partnership of Civilizations of the MGIMO Institute for International Studies; and Vladimir Kedrov, an Arabist and veteran Russian journalist.

The collection of articles that we are presenting offers a unique opportunity to see the ultimate causes and dynamics of various political developments in the Middle East.

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