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Rosstrudnichestvo Turns 90

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From our perspective, public diplomacy has moved beyond the boundaries of friendship societies a long time ago. It is a powerful movement that involves people of different ages, interests, pursuits and professions who are not limited to the bounds of regulations, statutes, plans or official reports.

During the celebration of the 90th anniversary of Rosstrudnichestvo, we invited to our Public Diplomacy Forum members of parliament, public, cultural and artistic figures and scientists from different countries.

Today, Russian centers of science and culture actively work in many countries. We are all doing one important thing - strengthening relations between countries, establishing and developing cultural, scientific and business ties, and sometimes providing assistance in emergency situations. Today's world is rapidly changing - technologically, socially, economically, psychologically, and culturally. The system of international relations is undergoing major changes, which clearly calls for new approaches towards organizing interaction between the state and society, and a new mechanism to influence the minds and sentiments, a new way of disseminating information about Russia in the world and other "soft power" conduits.

Today, the RCSCs' objective is to find these proactive people in each country, find out their needs, listen to their ideas and organize joint interesting projects with them. In other words, this is also about an individual approach in each specific country.

We are all doing one important thing - strengthening relations between countries, establishing and developing cultural, scientific and business ties, and sometimes providing assistance in emergency situations.

We plan to become actively involved in developing mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of the Russian School Abroad concept that was recently signed by our president to ensure that the entire ideology of the expansion of Russian education, Russian teaching methodologies and Russian language studies does not turn into the banal practice of building schools abroad at the expense of the Russian budget. There are other ways of meeting the goal of creating a network of Russian schools abroad. This involves, on the one hand, using business interests and capabilities and, on the other, introducing Russian educational methodologies and education standards at schools abroad.

These are the areas where we plan to work.

New reality calls for a different mechanism to influence the minds and sentiments to be activated. This refers to business, specifically the business organizations that work, develop and have long-term interests in other countries. They need us greatly under the current circumstances.

Fifth World Congress of Compatriots Living Abroad

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The World Congress of Compatriots Living Abroad is being held once every three years under the Russian federal law "On the State Policy of the Russian Federation toward Compatriots Abroad," which was signed on May 24, 1999. The previous meeting was held in St. Petersburg on October 26-27, 2012.

The 2015 congress had a range of tasks on its agenda. It was to make a comprehensive analysis of work done by the Russian diaspora after the pre-

ceding forum, to arm ethnic Russian minorities with more effective ways of defending their rights and lawful interests, and to assess their role and influence in their respective countries. The congress was dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War. The forum had the motto "We Remember with Pride" and paid a great attention to the 1945 victory.

Another important point about the congress was that it took place in a changed geopolitical situation, during the information and sanctions war unleashed against Russia by certain forces in the West. "The anti-Russian hysteria that is being fanned across the world is having a serious effect on the Russian diaspora.

Many participants said on the sidelines of the congress that, although they lived far away from Russia, they felt its support and care.

There were naturally many representatives of Russian-speaking communities abroad among the speakers. Members of the coordination councils of Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, the United States, Germany, and other countries shared their thoughts, experience, and plans.

The Fifth World Congress was held in a businesslike and very open, friendly atmosphere. It was an opportunity for free discussions on all problems experienced by Russian speakers no matter in what part of the globe they lived.

The forum has demonstrated the unity of the Russian World, support by ethnic Russians who live abroad for Russia's foreign policy, the willingness of the Russian diaspora to continue to work hard to preserve and promote the Russian language and protect Russian culture, and its desire to maintain permanent contact with its historical homeland.

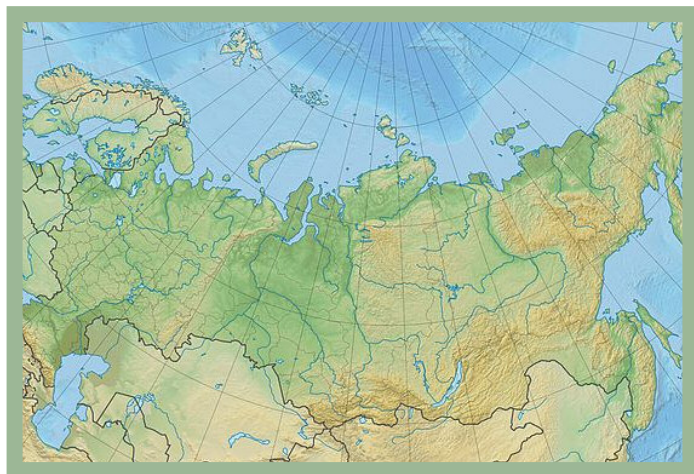
It seems to me that it would be appropriate to finish this article with a quotation from Ivan Ilyin, an outstanding Russian philosopher, whose name was often mentioned during the congress. "My

homeland is not the place on Earth where I was born, where my father and mother brought me into existence, or where 'I am accustomed to living,' but the place where I was born in spirit and where the creative work of my life stems from. If I consider Russia to be my home, it means that I love, think, sing, and speak the Russian way; that I believe in the spiritual strength of the Russian people and accept their history instinctively and consciously. Their spirit is my spirit; their destiny is my destiny; their suffering is my sorrow; and their prosperity is my joy."

"The Russian World Means a State of Heart and Mind"

Author: S. Filatov

Commentator for International Affairs



TURBULENT DEVELOPMENTS in the middle of the second decade of the 21st century have demonstrated a phenomenon that is very significant for Russia and that one would have been somewhat embarrassed to write or talk about in the past but can and should today because the times have changed. Namely, these developments make it clear that Russia has practically no loyal, staunch allies that would firmly take our side in the event of a serious international crisis or - God forbid - a great war. Re-

spectful as we are of our partners in various international organizations, we have to admit that, while they have major economic interests, they would hardly ever want to come up with more serious solidarity. We have it in our blood to help those who have been wronged, but it's different in other places, where one chiefly pursues one's own interest. No offense intended - it's just the way the world runs.

But it highlights the importance of unity for the Russian diaspora, the Russian world outside Russia, the millions of people who remember that Russia is their national home.

The Fifth World Congress of Compatriots Living Abroad, held in Moscow on November 5-6, 2015, highlighted new aspects of this hard work among the millions of people throughout the world who consider themselves part of the family of Russian compatriots, part of the Russian World. The title of this article, "The Russian World Means a State of Heart and Mind," is a quote from what one of the speakers said from the congress platform.

Interview-hungry reporters were hunting for participants, and I was quick enough to dive into that whirlpool as well. I was fortunate to be able to talk to some interesting delegates, which gave me better understanding of what was happening. Here's what I was able to hear from some of them.

Russia's increasing global influence impacts different parts of the world in different ways depending on how far they are located from Russia. In more remote countries, it stirs interest in Russia, and consequently greater respect for local ethnic Russian communities. In neighboring countries, it gives problems to local elites, who have increasing fears of Russia, and these fears result in pressures on our movement, which is seen as Russia's fifth column.

In conclusion, let me say a few words about the speech at the congress of the newly elected chairman of the World Coordination Council of Russian Compatriots Living Abroad, Mikhail Drozdov. Drozdov urged the diaspora movement to try to define "the place of compatriots in the changed world" and to think how "to make the Russian diaspora a factor of power."

The Great Geopolitical Revolution: Results So Far

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IN A NUTSHELL, our time is best defined as a "time of changes." Changes have spread far and wide to practically all sides of life. They differ in scope and impact from local to unprecedentedly consequential and from political makeup to crucial shifts; they are responsible, to a great and increasing degree, for the image of the present and for our future.

The developing countries, a space of impressive shifts, are a prominent element of the global torrent of changes and a scene of the post-colonial phase of the great geopolitical rev-

olution.

Today, Asia is the epicenter of a vast space of transformations of gigantic dimensions started by the great geopolitical revolution on three continents - Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The international configuration has changed a great deal even though very much as before the United States is the world's strongest power in practically all force-related respects. This situation may change since other countries can build up their own power. The United States is not merely a suzerain of the West. It claims the role of an irreproachable embodiment of Western values and interests and the divine right to represent and defend the Western interests and values.

The time of hegemony has passed. This idea is gaining popularity in the international community that is talking about the decline of the United States.

Europe's depressive evolution has created a favorable context for the developing countries that demand, with growing insistency that might evolve into a full-scale campaign, to revise Europe's representation in international structures.

The Asian intellectual and military elite demonstrated determination. They assumed responsibility for their countries, the forms, course and instruments of transformations and their results. It was thanks to these efforts that Asia became a zone of fruitful quest for economic models that would harmonize with the local conditions, national and cultural identities. This is especially true of Asia that has become the driver of global development.

The developing countries attach special importance to the nature and state of their relations with the West in which Washington calls the tune; they are equally important from the global angle. Today, the West and the former metropolitan countries that talk so much about democracy and the predominance of democratic institutions should admit that they are in some kind of debt to their former colonies and extend a helping hand to them.

There is another novelty: NATO is developing into an instrument of relations with the developing world; this is the road leading to the Alliance's de facto globalization.

This means that the United States and the West led by Washington will not abandon their usual policies - they are merely seeking ways to make them more efficient.

U.S. Policy in a Changing World

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A. Frolov (A.F.): The U.S. foreign policy today has fallen on hard times. The world is entering a new era with a lot of totally new challenges, including untraditional challenges that the U.S. leadership is faced with. In some instances, Washington manages to fit into ongoing processes while in others, the situation starts to follow a different scenario and then this policy, which is based on a number of important and fundamental principles, begins to founder.

A. Kortunov (A.K.): World history shows that any country or group of countries that are losing their former positions in the international system find this hard to stomach. They try to do all they can to maintain the status quo, freeze the ongoing changes and, as far as possible, not share their positions and status with new powers. This is precisely what we are seeing today. I will cite just one example - the ongoing struggle for the future of international financial institutions. However, in my opinion, it would be wrong to dramatize the relative decline of the United States: The U.S. economy has a significant safety margin.

A.F.: Generally, it is good that processes are not moving along so quickly. However, even the most developed state still should have some groundwork done for the future.

A.K.: I would say that investment of resources in education and science is investment not only in the future but also in the present. Today, the global market of scientific and educational services is comparable to the world arms market, and to many countries, the export of these services is a wide-ranging and profitable business.

A.K.: On the other hand, the convenience of the U.S. system of governance is that it makes it possible always to dissociate each new administration from its predecessors. This sets it apart from the Soviet system, with the CPSU Central Commission Politburo at the top, which operated in longer cycles. In the United States, a new president can always say that all those who were in his position before were incompetent, badly informed and unprofessional people and that he is not responsible for their action.

A.F.: I believe that many professionals, as well as Americans who are close to foreign policy matters, see a certain measure of senselessness in Obama's Middle East policy. There is a feeling that he does not know what to do. Sen. McCain is the only one who knows: in response to Russian airstrikes in Syria. Perhaps this is the reason for the recent conversation between the U.S. and Russian defense ministers. Evidently, there is a need to consult each other.

A.K.: I would like to point out that the appeal of liberal democracy is waning not only in the

Middle East. In Russia, we are seeing a similar picture. Even in Europe, liberal democracy is coming under attack from rightist political parties.

A.F.: If we consider the external aspect the outcome of Obama's presidency will most likely be negative. Support for the revolutions in the Middle East has produced little result. Perhaps former U.S. president Jimmy Carter, who comes from the same party, was right when he said recently that Obama has spoiled relations with all countries - Russia, China and the UK, even with Israel. I do not think that the Americans are willing to keep ratcheting up tensions in Ukraine and provoke further escalation to turn the Donets Basin into a second Afghanistan for Russia. Nevertheless, the extensive experience of U.S.-Russia relations shows that they begin to change fundamentally only with the change of the administration.

Transatlantic Partnership Plan: Germany's Position

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THE 23RD OF OCTOBER 2015 was the final day of the 11th round of negotiations between the European Union and the United States on a proposed free trade treaty. The full name of the accord, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), reflects its comprehensive character. The proposed agreement aims not only to remove customs barriers but also to harmonize various regulatory standards, protect investors, put restrictions on the use of subsidies, provide foreign companies with equal access to government procurement contracts, and solve a whole range of other sensitive problems. TTIP may bring into being a mega-bloc that would account for a nearly 40% share of the gross world product and run one-third of international trade.

What the Germans fear most about TTIP is that Europe would import from the United States genetically modified food and meat from hormone-treated cattle.

Chancellor Angela Merkel is intensively lobbying for TTIP. She claims that Germany has no alternative to joining the pact if it wants to remain one of the world leaders. Otherwise the Americans will move Europe down their foreign economic agenda and turn to Asia, she argues.

Germany's big business concurs. The country's main business association, the Federation of German Industries (BDI), has repeatedly expressed support for TTIP and called for its earliest possible signature. BDI president Ulrich Grillo never misses a chance to say that TTIP is Germany's ticket into the future.

KEY GERMAN COMPANIES are self-confident and not afraid of the liberalization of foreign trade rules.

The adjustment of German vehicles to American requirements such as technical and safety standards with all the tests and certification procedures that this involves also costs German exporters handsome sums of money but, according to VDA calculations, not as much as customs duties do. Regulatory harmonization would save German exporters as much as a 26% cut in today's customs duties would, VDA claims.

In a study popular among opponents of TTIP, Jeronim Capaldo of Tufts University in Boston warns that the agreement would inflict serious damage on European countries. Within the first few decades after the signature of TTIP, GDP may shrink by 2.7% in Northern Europe, by 1.4% in Germany, and by 0.95% in Britain, Capaldo estimates. About 600,000 jobs would be lost, and exports and state revenues would undergo net decreases. American transnationals and major U.S. market-oriented European corporations would be the main beneficiaries of TTIP, Capaldo says.²⁰

There are various reasons for the differences in assessments of potential effects of TTIP. Forecasts are heavily dependent on models underlying them and on what are often questionable assumptions.

Germany's participation in TTIP would most likely give a boost to negative trends in German-Russian trade that have been gaining momentum after the West slapped its sanctions on Russia. But this issue deserves a separate analysis, both per se and in the TTIP context. We will deal with it in another article.

Untying the Caspian Knot: Mission Accomplishable

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DEALING WITH THE GAMUT OF ISSUES that have caused disputes over the legal regime governing the use of the Caspian Sea is one of the priorities of Russian foreign policy.

FOR MOST OF THE 20TH CENTURY, the legal regime of the Caspian Sea was determined by Soviet-Iranian agreements signed between 1921 and 1940. Those accords allowed free navigation and free fishing throughout the Caspian except in the two countries' 10-

mile littoral zones but barred the inland sea to vessels from non-Caspian countries. This state of affairs was brought to an end by the collapse of the Soviet Union, with the latter being replaced as a Caspian littoral country by four independent states. This new state of affairs is not a legal vacuum, because the Soviet-Iranian accords remain in force. However, the Soviet Union's collapse has given rise to issues that those agreements cannot address. These issues include sovereignty over offshore oil and gas fields, and over the rights of the littoral states in the use of subsoil resources and in fishing, and boundaries of areas of national jurisdiction.

The Caspian Flotilla does not have a mission of being a potential strike force against neighboring littoral states. It is a counterweight to non-Caspian powers that assume they have a right to almost unlimited control over the Caspian.

Astrakhan's main achievement was an agreement on the demarcation of sea frontiers. That accord followed a debate that started out from what seemed diametrically opposite positions - Russia insisted that the littoral states have the right to common use of the entire sea while others wanted the sea to be divided into national sectors.

One of the main objectives of the negotiation process is to create a regional collective security system. The latter is to be based on the principle of collective responsibility for peace and stability, which includes a ban on the presence of armed forces from non-Caspian countries in the sea. Furthermore, a lot needs to be done to improve the Caspian countries' service industries. Primarily, the region needs a better financial sector with reliable banking services for the smooth funding of trade and production.

The upcoming signature of this fundamental document appears to have stimulated the five nations to boost all forms of cooperation. The Astrakhan meeting sowed precious seeds. Whether they will sprout depends on the summit in Astana. They will either produce a rich crop or stay in the soil forever if they are not nourished by clear and effective legally binding agreements.

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ON JULY 26, 2015, President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on board the frigate Admiral of the Soviet Navy Gorshkov endorsed a new version of the Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation, the basic document that specifies Russia's naval and maritime policy. This version added the Mediterranean to the areas of the national maritime policy (the Atlantic, Arctic and Pacific zones) and specified that Russia's naval presence there is aimed at "turning it into the

zone of military-political stability and good-neighborly relations."

THE MEDITERRANEAN was an important terrain of strategic rivalry between the West and the Soviet Union during the Cold War and remains today an important crossroads of world politics where cultures, traditions and interests meet, interact, compete, and disagree.

WHEN TALKING ABOUT THE HAZARDS and risks I had in mind the Arab-Israeli, Kurdish and Iraqi conflicts and the "frozen" conflicts between the Greek and the Turkish parts of Cyprus, between Turkey and the Greek part of Cyprus, between Turkey and Israel, and the "recent conflicts" in Libya and Syria.

These conflicts develop into crises that spread to littoral Mediterranean states and their neighbors undermine regional security and that of the sea trade routes and make offshore oil and gas extraction too vulnerable to external interference.

Russia's relations with the Mediterranean states have been cleared of the strong ideological bias of Soviet foreign policy to become pragmatic: Our country wants to preserve historical ties and contacts with all forces present in the region.

The relationships between the Soviet Union and several Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen) that at certain periods of their history shared the concept of socialist orientation stemmed from Moscow's support of the ideas of decolonization and its widest involvement in infrastructural projects. Much attention was paid to cooperation in the military sphere.

In the 2000s, Russia became determined to restore its lost positions, its determination further confirmed by President Putin's corresponding statements and moves.

In Russia, where followers of different religions live side by side. Muslims constitute the second biggest religious group after Orthodox Christians. This means that stability inside the country depends, to a great extent, on the level of direct and indirect contacts between the Russian Muslims and their coreligionists in the Mediterranean countries. A large number of Russian compatriots in the Mediterranean countries have created a strong impetus for closer cultural and

religious contacts between Russia and the Mediterranean states on the territories of which there are Christian, Muslim and Judaic sacred sites.

This means that Russia, a big naval power, remains in the Mediterranean to confirm its status by demonstrating its great and increasing interest in the international challenges to the Mediterranean states.

The Middle East and Sunni-Shia Contradictions

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For many centuries, the Middle East or, rather what has been going on there, echoed far and wide in the neighboring regions, Europe in the first place. Today, however, the threats achieved the dimensions unheard of before; they range from the inflow of refugees and the resultant migration crisis in Europe, a potential threat to its cultural and ethnic identity, to terrorism and radical Islam exported all over the world to threaten stability and security elsewhere.

The Arab Spring that reverberated in nearly all Middle Eastern countries widened the gaps between them, destroyed statehoods, fanned mistrust, and multiplied conflicts.

America and its allies exploited the social and political mess to interfere in the domestic affairs of the region's states to change regimes, rekindle old conflicts and deepen contradictions.

The short-sighted actions of Washington and its allies added religious hues to the events first in Iraq and later in Syria that placed the Shia and the Sunni on the opposite sides. The new authorities Americans brought to power in post-Hussein Iraq cast aside the consolidating ideas in order to establish Shia monopoly; they squeezed the Sunni from all spheres of state administration to push them to the margins as people of no importance.

Today, the Middle East is an area of profound and objective social and political changes, which means that it is wrong to explain them only in terms of religious contradictions.

Sunni and Shia, two main Islamic trends, were spreading unevenly space- and timewise across the Middle East and North Africa, and West and Central Asia. Their followers do not live in strictly outlined territories but side by side: in Iran, the stronghold of Shia, where Sunni live in compact groups in Khuzestan, or in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia populated mainly by Shia.

With the Sunni-Shia balance tipped in favor of the former, the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and some other Muslim Sunni states increased their pressure on Shia to undermine their political positions in their traditional countries and elsewhere. The Sunni leaders of the UAE invigorated their claims to three islands in the Gulf (the Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs) so far under Iranian jurisdiction; the Sunni royal regime of Bahrain aided by Saudi army suppressed the uprising raised by the Shia for equal rights with the Sunni.

The double standards of the West (that supports the Syrian opposition and refuses to support the opposition in Yemen) make it partly responsible for the continued conflict in this country: It has joined anti-Shia front of the Saudis and Qatar that have pushed aside their sharp contradictions for the sake of their joint cause.

Deliberately or not, Washington and its allies' approval of the war the Sunni coalition is waging against the Houthis of Yemen has intensified the Sunni-Shia standoff thus pushing the region closer to the quagmire of never ending religious clashes.

Russia, in its turn, is convinced that the events unfolding in the region should not be reduced to the Sunni-Shia disagreements. This approach simplifies the situation and might provoke a full-scale clash.

In fact, Russia sided with the legitimate power in Syria to help it cope with the terrorist "international" that has neither nationality nor citizenship. All forces of the civilized world should fight it everywhere and act together. Political disagreements and narrow state interests should be pushed aside.

East Asia and the New World Order

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changing increasingly.

This is how the things stand in the world. Chaos and uncertainty make it hard to move to a new international system; the old and new forces are locked in an uncompromising struggle sometimes at the brink of another world war.

Very much as before, the new world order is born in throes, with East Asia playing one of the key roles. China and Russia rely on the structures they have set up (SCO, BRICS, EAEC, and CSTO) to openly challenge America's domination and its monopoly on world governance. So far, the majority of other countries, mostly in the non-Western world including India as another potential superpower, other BRICS members and Iran, latently support Moscow and Beijing in their opposition.

The historical lessons of the Roman and British empires have taught us that containment can slow down the movement toward a new world order but cannot reverse it. Dynamic and fast economic growth made China, India and East Asia as a whole stronger than any other part of the world; today, they need a new development paradigm.

The BRICS and East Asian countries led by China and Russia, the active core, undermine the positions of the West by steadily increasing their impact on the processes unfolding in all corners of the world.

The U.S. wants to know whether China is ready to defend its declared principles and aims by force and whether it is ready, morally and materially, to wage a big war. A military confrontation in East Asia will impress the U.S. allies; they will close ranks around it to increase America's potential in a confrontation.

Russia should work hard to ensure security and stability in East Asia. Very much in line with the basic law of international relations that speaks of global balance, Moscow is convinced that stability can be achieved if and when the interests and ambitions of the sides have been balanced out, clarified and understood by all players. While pursuing their interests in the region the United States and its allies should accept the fact that in the multipolar world they should take the interests of other regional powers into account. The balance of power and interests in the region

will remain out of reach if weaknesses are abused, dissatisfactions deliberately ignored and coercion practiced.

Unity is the main source of power of the countries determined to build a new world order based, as we hope, on equality of all states, justice and the rule of law rather than on the arbitrarily rule of the strongest and egoistical interests of the countries of the so-called first echelon. This is a clear answer to the question formulated above about a possibility of a peaceful transfer to a new world order. The course of history cannot be stopped by force.

The Return of History - the End of Liberalism?

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IN 1992, FRANCIS FUKUYAMA brought "the good news" of the end of history: Liberal democracy had won, putting an end to the "history of conflicts" between states. Classical bipolarity had become a thing of the past. The Cold War ended in the "complete triumph" of the West (Western interpretation) to be replaced with tectonic shifts in the system of international relations.

The post-Cold War period was highly specific in many respects: The U.S. global leadership remained uncontested for nearly two decades, while analysts and experts did not hesitate to talk about America's hegemony, its status of "hyper-power" and so on and so forth.

As one of the sides in the bipolar world the U.S. was actively involved in building up a system of international laws adjusted to its interests

and designed to support and develop its values.

The globalization that the industrialized countries of the West had launched in their own interests was what gradually created the conditions for an economic and technological upsurge in the developing countries, China and India, the fast growing giants, in the first place.

The system of international relations, however, felt a strong pressure of contradictory and, not infrequently, paradoxical effects of globalization and transformation unfolding in world politics.

Placed in a democratic context, market economy becomes a sine qua non of universal security. The liberal paradigm, however, has not yet agreed on the ways and means through which capitalism and democracy should be spread across the world.

FOR CENTURIES, war was the most reliable tool applied to achieve a balance of power between rivaling states. There is a widely shared conviction in the American foreign policy community and among political scientists that Washington's determination to acquire leadership in international organizations helps it address a wide range of problems. It has been generally accepted that America profits from a sustainable world order and the far from pinching rules.

The world order is gradually losing its Euro-centricity The globalization that the industrialized countries of the West had launched in their own interests was what gradually created the conditions for an economic and technological upsurge in the developing countries, China and India, the fast growing giants, in the first place.

Today, economic might is no less or even more important than military force. In future, the soft power factors will play more important role in many, including conflict, situations. Russia's positions in this traditionally anarchic, increasingly less predictable and increasingly more pluralistic world as well as the structure of the new world order, the pace of erosion of the liberal world order and the "return of history" will depend, to a great extent, on whether Russia will effectively use its military and economic, informational, organizational, cultural and other resources.

The Failure of U.S. Mechanism of Foreign Policy Decision-Making: The War in Iraq

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EARLY IN THE 21ST CENTURY, America's Middle Eastern policy suffered a series of failures that have decreased its security level, as well as that of its allies and the rest of the world. Today, these failures sprouted in Iraq and Syria where Washington's political and military interference had stirred up terrorist and extremist activities. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has become a regional actor and has dented regional stability and Washington's defense capabilities.

America's diplomatic defeats in the Middle East should be identified and analyzed: This has become an objective

necessity since they might be rooted in the mechanism of foreign policy decision-making in the United States.

AT FIRST it seemed that George W. Bush as the president would not change much, if anything, in his country's Middle Eastern strategy. There were no signs that the Ba'ath regime would be removed by force. Indeed, military invasion of Iraq did not fit the aims and tasks of America's foreign policy as declared by some members of the new president's foreign policy team. In fact, there were signs that a strong and influential coalition that had taken shape inside the Administration would keep Washington away from military operations in the Middle East.

Even before he was elected President, George W. Bush had been talking about the need to gradually undermine the positions of the Iraqi leaders; during the presidential campaign, he was talking about economic sanctions.

Aware of the disagreements the Administration and top officials invariably demonstrated their conviction that Iraq had already acquired everything needed to produce nuclear weapons. "The U.S. vice president, Dick Cheney, delivered this speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) national convention: 'Many of us are convinced that Saddam will acquire nuclear weapons fairly soon'."

THE PROCESS through which the U.S. Administration arrived at the strategy of war against Iraq exposed flaws or even faults of the mechanism of foreign policy decision-making in the United States.

This style of foreign policy decision-making in the United States might have repeatedly cropped up; the high level of confrontation and instability in the Middle East undermined American influence in the region and put the U.S. political establishment into a situation similar to that of post-9/11. This means that the errors and blunders of American diplomacy in the Gulf area have become possible because the mechanism of foreign policy decision-making in the United States cannot settle interdepartmental disagreements and arrive at the best options.

Catalonia's Dilemma

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THE FALL OF 2015 brought along an escalation of a separatist conflict in Spain as a movement in Catalonia for the secession of the autonomous region from the country gained momentum.

The nationalists needed early elections after a plan of Catalanian President Artur Mas, the CDC leader, to call a self-determination referendum for November 9, 2014 was thrown out earlier that autumn by the Spanish Constitutional Court at the initiative of Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy.

Unable to go ahead with the planned referendum, the Catalanian government organized a "citizen participation process on the political future of Catalonia," which was held on the same date, November 9, and was a non-binding plebiscite in which Catalonians were able to answer the same two questions.

The Spanish central government's law enforcement arsenal and the unconditional support it has from the West would enable it to overthrow all the plans of the Catalanian independence movement.

In fact, the Socialists see their Catalanian election campaign as a springboard for running in the national polls. They have announced that, if they win December's elections, they will hold negotiations with the Catalanian nationalists on reformatting relations between Catalonia and Madrid on a basis fundamentally different from the current one.

Another serious loser in September's elections was Spain's ruling center-right People's Party. Its representation in the Catalanian legislature dropped from 19 seats won in 2012, which had been a record achievement for the party, to 11. This had been predictable - the People's Party government in Madrid had always uncompromisingly turned down the idea of Catalanian independence.

The essence of the Catalonia problem and similar issues elsewhere in today's Europe is the refusal of political elites to recognize the right of regions with distinctive ethnic or cultural identities to self-determination.

The political crisis in Spain has many aspects to it and is not limited to relations between the center and the regions. For instance, Spanish politics are dominated by two parties, the center-left PSOE and center-right People's Party, which regularly replace each other in government.

The chain of corruption scandals came on top of austerity measures used by the central government in addressing a deep structural economic crisis that erupted in Spain in 2008 and is still partially unmounted.

There is still another remarkable point. NATO has never weighed into any of the struggles over the Catalanian independence bid, either those within or those outside Spain. The North Atlantic alliance's lack of reaction to the possibility of one of its most loyal and reliable members losing a strategic part of its territory is highly unlikely accidental.

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LATELY, experts are discussing with increased interest whether the globalization of hydrocarbon trade, competition between Europe and the Asia-Pacific, and the Western political and economic sanctions against Russia affect the latter's competitiveness in international natural gas business.

On top of this, there are the European Commission's attacks on Gazprom, the uncertain future of the Turkish Stream gas pipeline project, the Euro-

pean Union's Third Energy Package, the planned European Energy Union, Russian attempts to become firmly established in the Chinese gas market, and Russian plans to reduce gas imports from Central Asia and Azerbaijan.

First of all, Gazprom is accused of unfair pricing. The Commission says that there are differences of up to 40% between prices Gazprom charges in some of the countries and those it charges in others. Secondly, Gazprom undermines European markets by supposedly reselling gas and thereby blocking free competition.

TODAY, Russia holds relatively weak positions in the Asian gas market, unlike its foothold in the European market, and so it needs to set a long-term task of building up exports to the Asia-Pacific.

Our country still holds strong positions in Europe despite the political machinations of the European Commission, which are often instigated by the White House.

Asian projects can bear fruit only in a relatively distant future. So far, Russia's stock went up when it signed a major gas contract with China.

On the whole, Russia has a serious competitive edge in regional gas markets as it possesses large reserves of gas that it is willing to sell at fair prices and via transparent mechanisms.

However, Russian advantages are seriously diminished by various risks, among which legal and logistic hazards are the most prominent.

The U.S. and Vietnam in the Trans-Pacific Partnership

Author: M. Terskikh

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REGIONAL INTEGRATION has developed into an important factor of international relations. Today, practically all states on the map of the world belong to at least one regional association. In this context, the United States and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam offer the best example of an active involvement in the integration processes unfolding in the APR, the talks on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in particular. The region is increasingly often described as a loco-

motive of the world's economic development in the twenty-first century.

The positions of Washington and Hanoi are especially interesting. The former is the moving force of the new integration format best described as a preferential trade agreement of a new type; the latter is its economically weakest member. The SRV that has preserved its socialist superstructure and political leadership of the Communist Party is adjusting to the market. The political aspect of the agreement is no less important: The U.S. expects to address its geopolitical problems while Vietnam will concentrate at its regional tasks.

Much attention is paid to the interests of big corporations also present at the negotiation table. Information leaks (the talks are conducted in strictest secrecy while the text of the document has not yet been published) about a tribunal to be set up to sort things out among the member states and TNCs invited numerous questions.

So far, Washington is saying again and again that the TPP is nothing more than an integration structure not different from many others, APEC in particular, but that later it will replace APEC to become the main tool of liberalization of trade and investments in the region.

The local analytical community is concerned since the future agreements say nothing about a special regime for the less developed countries.⁹ No wonder, the Vietnamese team at the negotiation table is working hard to get a respite as the least developed country among the national economies involved.

If no other countries join the talks the TPP stands a good chance to be signed in 2015: all participating countries want to round up the talks if and when the positions of all of them have been taken into account. This fully applies to Washington and Hanoi.

China is one of the key factors and catalysts and as such it brings the positions of Vietnam and the U.S. on the TPP closer together. Washington looks at Beijing as the rival that will claim or has already claimed global leadership. This means that active integration with the countries of the APR and, in the first place, with the Southeast Asian countries (that Beijing includes in the

sphere of its historical interests) might undermine China's positions. Hanoi looks at Beijing as an opponent in territorial disagreements in the South China Sea, its first trade partner that exported more than imported and the country associated with the millennia of its national independence struggle.

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TWENTY YEARS have passed since what looked at first glance like a senseless slaughter in Rwanda in which one million of its citizens lost their lives. Today, wars and conflicts unfolding in other regions of our planet invited a closer scrutiny of the Rwandan slaughter. There is a strong possibility that certain politicians stirred up nationalists and pushed peoples into the bloodshed to satisfy their geopolitical ambitions and that the interests of the United States and Europe clashed there. This is confirmed by the deliberate inattention of Europe otherwise inclined to moralizing and by the deliberately passive response of the UN Security Council. We should go to the roots of the developments in Rwanda to better

understand what have happened in the world since then.

IN RUSSIA, it is generally believed that the appalling slaughter was caused by ethnic enmity between the Hutus and Tutsis. In one of his recent interviews, Alexei Vasiliev, Director of the Institute for African Studies, said the following about the possible ways and means of reconciliation in the Rwandan socium: "The Hutus and Tutsis who had been living side by side for a long time became closer but remained different peoples. Their ancient history is not quite clear. Tutsis are nomads and, traditionally, make good soldiers. Tutsis and Hutus speak the same language."

Each new case of international interference in conflicts anywhere in the world is accompanied by a myth that this was done to achieve reconciliation and protect human rights - "And because of excess of virtue the forces of hell prevail."

The numerous and very different interpretations of the term "ethnicity" make the distinctions between Hutus and Tutsis vague to the extent that the conflict between them can hardly be interpreted as ethnic.

In summer 1993, there was an illusion of a happy end: President Habyarimana who represented the Hutus and Paul Kagame with the Tutsis behind him negotiated a ceasefire and a Roadmap to integrate Tutsis into the country's political system. Those who for many years had been fanning this confrontation in their own political interests had to move fast. On April 6, 1994, the aircraft with President Juvénal Habyarimana and President of Burundi Cyprien Ntaryamira who were returning from the capital of Tanzania was shot down as it prepared to land in Kigali; everybody on board died.

THE GENOCIDE did not spring out of "ethnic hatred" between Tutsis and Hutus, the "barbarous peoples" who, driven by many centuries of enmity, started cutting each other into pieces for no reason at all. In fact, these people with no political tradition to rely on were fooled by the lies of the external forces.

ACCORDING to the 1991 population census, there were 1 million 143 thousand people living in Rwanda. The civil war and the 1994 genocide killed or drove out of the country up to 40% of its population. The UN experts estimate the losses from 800 thousand to 1 million; over 2 million became refugees. This is the official summing up of the genocide. Nevertheless, the number of the dead and the refugees from different social groups and their correlation look doubtful.

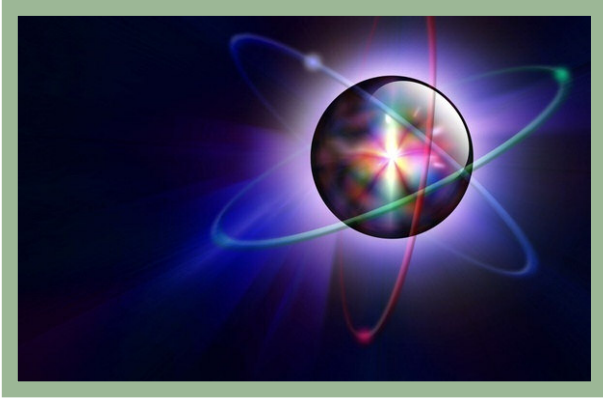
POLITICIANS who are still perfecting their skills of gambling with the political regimes of sovereign states should have given more thought to this sad story and repent. Today, certain states are proclaimed to be "the sphere of vital interests" of one or several states that have usurped the right to adjust the system of international relations to their interests.

In a relatively short time, the situation has changed considerably: Russia has accumulated enough strength to regain a worthy place in the world community. The United States feels pressed by China. Washington has responded with even more active interference in the affairs of sovereign states in a hope to remain the only superpower. Ageing Europe is not strong enough to stand up to the diktat of its "ally" even to the detriment of its own interests. History has taught us, however, that in the past mankind could gather enough power and wisdom to oppose madness and bloodshed.

Some Aspects of International Cooperation on Nuclear Safety Measures

Author: S. Surchina

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NUCLEAR SAFETY is one of the world's major security issues. The terms "nuclear safety" and "nuclear security" usually denote different notions.

It follows from these definitions that nuclear safety implies protection of nuclear materials and nuclear facilities while nuclear security implies protection of nuclear power plants. This article purports to put nuclear safety in the general context of nuclear issues and to look at some aspects of cooperation between states

in measures to ensure nuclear safety.

It is in the past five to seven years that the international community has started taking significant interest in political aspects of the nuclear safety and nuclear security issues.

Nuclear safety chiefly involves physical protection of nuclear materials and facilities. Physical ways of preventing unauthorized acquisition of nuclear materials and defending nuclear facilities and means of transportation of nuclear materials against sabotage have been subjects of national and international debates for a long time.

One of the most important aspects of the convention is that it declares unauthorized use of nuclear material a crime. Today, 153 states are parties to the convention. The accord applies to "nuclear material used for peaceful purposes while in international nuclear transport" and "to nuclear material used for peaceful purposes while in domestic use, storage and transport." The convention mandates that the states parties take all necessary measures to ensure compliance with established levels of physical protection of nuclear materials (Article 5).

Another major international agreement on nuclear safety is the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, signed in 2005 and based on a draft proposed by Russia in 1998. By January 15, 2016, 115 states had signed and 100 ratified the convention.

A special role among other key international mechanisms for nuclear risk prevention belongs to the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which is an example of successful practical cooperation between nations. The GICNT was launched by the Russian and U.S. presidents in a joint announcement in St. Petersburg on July 15, 2006. The main purpose of the initiative is to help universalize international agreements on nuclear safety, primarily the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Nuclear Facilities, and to help states parties to those accords fulfill their commitments under them.

To sum up, the nuclear safety issue has become established as a highly important aspect of international cooperation. The significance attached to it in top-level contacts between nations

suggests that it will remain high on global agendas for a long time. However, keeping it at the level of negotiations between countries rather than handing it over to international organizations to deal with would hardly add any value to the process. The latter would be far more effective if fully taken over by the IAEA, the international organization equipped with what are the best expert resources for it. Moreover, any international activities to prevent nuclear hazards and combat nuclear-related crimes must comply with principles laid down by international legal instruments, primarily the principle of a state's responsibility for nuclear safety on its territory.

Use of Biometric Technology by the Russian Foreign Ministry: History, Trends and Prospects

Author: Yu. Voytenko

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SECURITY has always been a key point of the foreign policy of any state. In this era of globalization, classical diplomacy is not the only method used by world powers to keep themselves secure. They also make extensive use of alternative efficient ways of handling modern threats and challenges.

Such ways include biometrics, which are measurements and analyses based on the combined use of bi-

ological data, information technology, mathematics, and statistics. Biometrics involve checking the identity of an individual by studying their biological characteristics such as facial features, voice patterns, handwriting, fingerprints, hand geometry, iris patterns, and DNA.

In 2002, 188 countries, including Russia, signed a civil aviation security convention that established facial biometrics as the main identification technology to be used in next-generation passports and entry visas, with iris and fingerprint biometrics being optional.

A Russian Foreign Ministry decree instructed the Federal Migration Service (FMS) and its branches in the Kaliningrad region, the police force of that region, and Russian diplomatic missions and consulates in Germany and Lithuania to provide Russian nationals with biometric passports as from January 1, 2006 if they opted to have e-passports rather than ordinary passports.

Visas are another key type of document where biometrics is to be used under Presidential Directive No. Pr-850 of May 5, 2008.

An application for a Russian visa will carry an ordinary photograph of the applicant whereas the biometric data such as a digital photo and fingerprints will be forwarded to central authorities for authentication.

The main purpose of this project is to test out the technology of scanning and transmission of the biometric data of visa applicants and interaction with visa centers that obtain such data. The project does not involve either the accumulation or the use of biometric data.

The Russian Foreign Ministry is going to put proposals before the country's top leadership for the allocation of sufficient funds for providing all consular institutions and border checkpoints with fingerprint authentication technology.

Fingerprint authentication will be an effective barrier to illegal migration. It will enable security and law enforcement agencies to take more efficient action to prevent terrorists from entering Russia and will supply them with more information in criminal investigations.

The 130th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations Between Argentina and Russia

Author: Pablo Anselmo Tettamanti

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Argentine Republic to the Russian Federation



IN OCTOBER 2015, the Argentine Republic and the Russian Federation marked the 130th anniversary since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The initiative to celebrate this date came from Presidents Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Vladimir Putin, who made the decision at a bilateral meeting on July 12, 2014.

This made it possible to hold a series of events and meetings this year, which have

In the context of the presidential visit to Moscow from April 21 through 23, President of Argentina Cristina Fernández de Kirchner unveiled the exhibition "Eva Perón. Ambassador of Peace" at the Moscow State History Museum on April 22. The opening ceremony was attended by Russian Minister of Culture Vladimir Medinsky. Many people were able to visit this month-long exhibition. The president also visited an exhibition dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the end of the Great Patriotic War that was held in the premises of the museum.

As part of the Bilateral Year of Culture in July, the outstanding tenor Dario Volonté toured the cities of St. Petersburg, Nizhny Novgorod and Moscow with great success.

In the context of these events, the book *The International Community and the Malvinas Issue* was recently translated and published in Russian in conjunction with Institute of Latin American Studies. The book presents historical facts, events and international legal documents that call for reopening direct talks between Argentina and the United Kingdom on this issue. It will be presented and distributed across Russia. The publication of this book lends further support to Russia's call on the international community to ensure that the issue of the Malvinas Islands be resolved through direct negotiations with the United Kingdom.

At this stage, our relations were also reaffirmed by the signing of over 20 agreements in various fields, including cooperation plans in various spheres of activity: political, trade, economic, scientific, technological, industrial, agricultural, fishing and aquaculture, defense, environment, archives and financial spheres, as well as programs and projects in the peaceful use of atomic energy and outer space, traditional energy sources, communication, tourism, geology and mining. All these activities served as a foundation for a program that continues to develop and expand, as is also evident from the deepening of interparliamentary cooperation.

Russia and Europe: Topical Issues of Contemporary International Journalism

The Fourth International Conference "Russia and Europe: Topical Issues of Contemporary International Journalism" was held in San Marino on October 8, 2015.



Laura Guerra, *Vice President, Tonino Guerra Cultural Association (Italy)*: Our relationship with Russia, based on friendship and love, lasted for almost 40 years. When he was still a boy, Tonino came to love [Alexander] Blok's and [Sergey] Yesenin's poetry and it inspired him throughout his life. In the late 1940s, he started writing in the Romagnol dialect to give the language of the people a new voice. In this way, he resurrected his mother tongue.

First of all, we want to preserve the memory of Tonino, of his friendly attitude toward Russia. We have a chance to conduct various activities that would link Russian and Italian cultures, making it possible for artists, poets and filmmakers to interact closer and providing a good opportunity for them to work together in order to make this world a better place.



Michele Chiaruzzi, *representative of the University of San Marino, director of the International Relations Center (San Marino)*: Why is it so important for the University of San Marino and its International Relations Center to host this international conference? Because one of the university's prime missions is to help our city and state influence relations between this unique political society, the city and state and Europe, in particular the European Union. Pursuant to this mission, San

Marino decided that relations with Russia and naturally with everything that Russia represents, including media activity, any information activity and its promotion, is an important matter both for Europe and for the European Union.



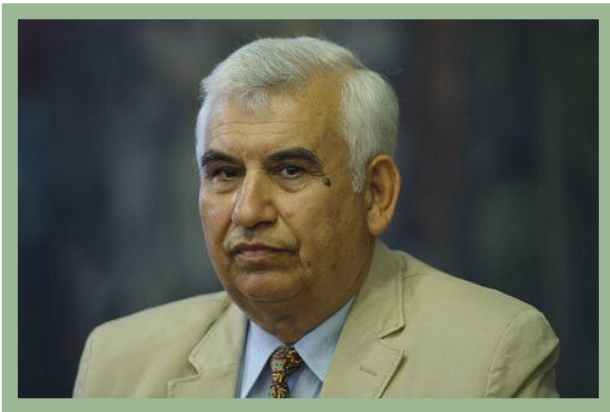
Gianfranco Vestuto, *director general, Russia News (Italy)*: Our era is characterized not by the invention of the means of information but by the creation of the mass media, such as the commercial film industry, television, the radio, newspapers and many other things, which can broadcast a news report immediately to millions of people. The development of the media, however, depends not only on technological achievements and scientific

and technical progress but also on the evolution of a new type of society that also needs information and that already knows how to use it. Our society not only uses the media but also regards them as its intrinsic element. In order to survive, the political system of mass democracy needs mass information.

The media scene is currently experiencing significant changes, with new technology opening new prospects and avenues for communication, which is marked by interdependence.

The media scene is currently experiencing significant changes, with new technology opening new prospects and avenues for communication, which is marked by interdependence.

Everything has been commercialized, including news. Paradoxically, with all the abundance of information, we have less knowledge of what is going on.



Dr. Dinko Dinkov, *Deputy Editor-in-Chief, International Relations journal (Bulgaria)*: Bearing in mind the original name of the conference, Europe beyond the European Union, I would like to draw your attention to the "battle" for Europe that we have been observing in recent years and that has soured the relations between Russia and the European Union.

Experts and the media superficially describe rather than analyze new trends in the Euro-Atlantic region.

This is why the concept of the West is still used to refer to the monolithic unity of countries opposed to the Eastern bloc. However, first, the Eastern bloc is long gone. Second, relations between Western countries have changed.

Contrary to the plans, the European Union has failed to unify Europe as a whole. This is certainly disappointing.

Time entrusts a responsible mission to the media and analytical periodicals. It is essential to overcome Cold War stereotypes and take a pragmatic view of the new reality.



Dmitry Rylov, *general director, Nayada International (Italy)*: After the lofty political matters, let's go down to earth. Interaction between the two countries is not only about interaction between state institutions or international agreements and meetings between presidents, which the media traditionally regard as their top priority. It is also about daily contact between citizens of the two countries on the business, cultural, sport, spiritual and personal levels. They are no less, and perhaps even more instrumental in shaping the

image of the other country and its people, as well as in the development of relations. This holds true even in the context of the new reality, when Russian and EU political institutions are in opposition on many issues, while the media often provide a black-and-white picture on each side. According to a Euromag magazine poll, Italy is in the top position among the countries where

Russians would like to live - far ahead of Germany (second place), followed by France, the UK and Spain.

Together with our friends, my wife and I have created a group for Russian-speaking moms on Facebook. In other words, we work primarily with families. Typically, these are Italian-Russian (bilingual) families, so our mission is to promote and preserve the Russian language in such families, as well as to promote Russians customs and traditions among our children. In addition, cultural exchanges and mutual assistance are important aspects of our activity.



Juris Gulbis, CIEL&CO (Latvia): The popularity of previously well-respected journalists, who took years to build up their authority and reputation, is rapidly falling, while the social media are greatly reinforcing the individual voices of unprofessional reporters and upstarts with just any educational background or none at all. In a conversation about the online media, Alexander Genis told me: "It's a fence in the global village on which everyone can write whatever he pleases - illiterate and amoral."

The "news vs. opinion" balance is not in the hands of Lady Justice. The snowball of doubts generates new, double standards of news, which sometime could not be further from the truth, and the reporters' Sisyphean labor is scuttled by hybrid media that always have a camera set up by the wayside in advance of an upcoming event.



Armen Oganessian: I believe that the quality press, radio and TV can be irresponsible with regard to their readers, listeners and viewers. The fact is that even during the Cold War era, it was considered to be unprofessional and unacceptable to invent facts that did not actually exist. There was a hard and fast rule that information cannot be aired unless it is confirmed by two independent sources. Today, this is indeed a huge problem for the media and the audience: Facts are in-

vented. In other words, virtual reality is created that is out of sync with objective reality. You just watched footage of an airstrike on terrorist headquarters in Syria. Well, many Western newspapers use the clichés, "according to some reports," "according to some sources," or they report facts without attribution.

The world media community should come to terms regarding this standard of modern journalism that does not in any way limit freedom of expression, freedom to interpret events and express one's ideas and convictions.

So, what is information? First of all, information should reflect the truth in all possible forms. So, when we are faced with a problem, an especially complicated problem, of course, it is better to present different opinions, opposing them to one another, because one opinion may not have

something that another has - there are no attributions and sources are not taken into account because they cannot be confirmed. All of this creates huge problems, as unconfirmed, unverified news stories are reported.



Igor Pellicciari, *professor at the University of Salento, Russian honorary consul in Bologna, Emilia Romagna (Italy)*: The Russian Federation is a country too large. Its adversaries fail to realize that it isn't in Russia's interest to attack anyone. Rather, Russia is afraid of an attack. And it is the size of the country that explains this fear, a fear that is a product of its history, because such a country is very difficult to defend.

I noticed one remarkable thing about San Marino when I was living six kilometers from its border. San Marino is indeed one of the smallest states in Europe along with the Vatican and the Principality of Monaco. San Marino is the smallest liberal democratic country in Europe. It can be called a political microsystem with all elements of the liberal democratic systems of other European countries. For this reason, in my view, San Marino has the full right to be called a smaller state of Europe.

Something small may conceal something large in it, a micro may conceal a macro, and it is the purpose of this meeting to explore possible connections between large and small entities. It's thrilling to see something small being part of something large, when this small entity watches developments and looks at everything from a different standpoint.



Andrei Nesterenko, *Ambassador-at-Large, RF Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Russia)*: This plenary session is an opportunity to exchange opinions not only on issues of cooperation between Russia and small European states but also on the role of small states in global affairs in general.

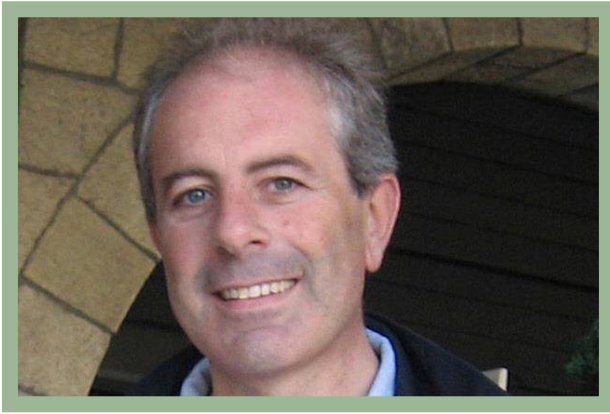
Modern information technology and means of communication and the increasingly free movements of capital, goods and people have turned the world into a "global village." One logically wonders whether, in this situation, small states will retain their role in international affairs.

Russia, as a staunch champion of the supremacy of international law in relations between countries, sees the United Nations as the main guardian of international law.

Small size does not prevent a country from closely following developments in any part of the world, from becoming involved increasingly deeply in global processes, or from working for the implementation of measures that have been developed by the collective intellect of the international community and that are in line with international law.

Russia has tremendous respect for the European and worldwide roles of San Marino as a neutral state involved in tackling international issues.

We appreciate San Marino's objective position on the Ukrainian crisis, including its refusal to support the anti-Russian sanctions despite outside pressure on the republic. We can see attempts by the Sammarinese leadership to help achieve a peaceful settlement of the situation in Ukraine.



Epifanio Troina, *plenipotentiary representative of South Ossetia in San Marino and honorary consul of Abkhazia in San Marino (San Marino)*: I would like to start my speech by analyzing relations between San Marino and the Russian Federation in light of the fact that San Marino plans to sign an association agreement with the European Union and to integrate more closely with the North Atlantic alliance while it needs closer economic relations and more extensive ex-

changes of tourists with the Russian Federation. I don't, of course, deny the ability of the Republic of San Marino to pursue its own independent foreign policy, but people with knowledge of the matter have remarked that there have been differences of opinion on that even at our conference today.

I have pointed out on more than one occasion that San Marino should have the role of a third party, a mediatory mission, that it should offer its territory as the venue for negotiations on conflicts and organizational problems, and help resolve them.

As plenipotentiary representative of the Republic of South Ossetia in the Republic of San Marino and honorary consul of the Republic of Abkhazia in the Republic of San Marino, in other words as a representative of two small Caucasus states in San Marino, let me give you my best wishes of success and ask you to think about my words.

In international organizations, small states such as San Marino naturally can't rival large states in terms of influence, but they can contribute to debates and can be instrumental in elections because their votes have the same weight as the votes of other states.



Michele Chiaruzzi, *University of San Marino, director of the International Relations Center (San Marino)*: San Marino is a member of the Council of Europe, something that probably not everyone is aware of. During the current friction between the Russian Federation and some European countries, San Marino has been doing hard and serious work to prevent the collapse of a dialogue whose essential nature gets forgotten by some people in Europe.

The key point that the EU bases all its negotiations on is the following: Democracy is the main thing, isn't it? From this point of view, there is no imbalance about relations between the small state of San Marino and the other 28 countries - or the European Union if you like. Our country is a recognized sovereign state, but it has a special kind of sovereignty because San Marino is one of the last remaining city states in the world, on the entire planet Earth. We haven't been

put away in a casket as a curiosity. It is really an amazing country, and it takes an active part in everything.

It is an objective fact, a fact that many have been remembering recently, though very late unfortunately. But now may be a good time to remember that dialogue is an important instrument of diplomacy, and that one should probably pay less attention to demagoguery and more attention to serious reasoning, including the reasoning of small states. This would help maintain order and stability in the world.



Ivan Foschi, *member of the Sammarinese parliament (San Marino)*: Distorted information, especially if it's information about a series of events, may trigger an even greater risk. Moreover, it may lead to a less resolute government policy. It seems that being too conciliatory leads to a softer policy, and an irresolute policy will prevent a government from coping with key problems and from keeping the economy running smoothly.

San Marino should resume its mission. I think San Marino would be able to find a lot of opportunity for cooperation with Russia, especially because there already exists effective commercial cooperation between the two countries and they exchange tourists on a large scale. For this reason, I'm convinced that all state institutions in our country, especially its foreign policy bodies, should seek better relations with Russia. Wide-scale cooperation between Russia and Europe would guarantee peace, security and friendship of nations, and would facilitate economic, scientific, and cultural development.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I'm sure that San Marino and Russia can offer each other tremendous opportunities despite their huge territorial difference.

George Kennan on Nationalism in World Politics

Author: E. Arlyapova

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THERE ARE INTERPRETATIONS that are growing more and more complicated, theories that explain and methods that help comprehend nationalism. This phenomenon long ago spread far and wide beyond the framework of disciplines that normally studied it to become an object of interest of academic branches that study international processes and relationships. They supply the background against which the "self-evident opinions" about nations and nationalism George Kennan offered in his *Around the Cragged Hill* look like old postcards that gladden the eye and warm up the soul.

For several decades, anything written by George Kennan, Professor at Princeton University, invariably attracted attention and echoed far and wide.

Never before the theorist of the "containment policy" had gone so far in revising his own ideas and, what is even more important, in critical analysis of realities. This easily explains the response: In public opinion, this book stands apart from his other works; this explains the epithet "radical" in one of the reviews; this explains why all reviews mentioned his advanced age even though it was generally accepted that "as his new book shows, he writes in his eighty-eighth year as trenchantly and elegantly as ever." The book reads more like a "collection of critical observations" than an exposition of the author's personal and political philosophy (of which he warned in the title) and contains highly original conclusions on all topical issues discussed.

In view of this interpretation of the essence and history of the nation-state, nationalism is identified in Kennan's work as "the sense of belonging to such an entity - giving it one's loyalty and indeed of accepting citizenship in it as part of one's own identity." In other words, the phenomenon was contemplated mainly through the prism of a combination of identities and the problem of dominating loyalty.

Through the features typical of an entity (its numerical strength, in the first place) the romantic assesses his own value. "Hence many facets of his behavior. Hence the frequent demonstrational loyalty of his patriotism: the flag-waving" as well as bias toward intolerance and militarism (p. 79). "It is a real and terrible disease of the human spirit. The damage it has done is appalling. It was one of the two fundamental causes of the First World War." He wrote that "it would be wrong to assert that the diseased form of nationalism is an inevitable product of the modern national state as an institution.... It is a disease of national society, not an essential concomitant of it but it is an illness to which members of the modern national community are particularly

and dangerously susceptible" (p. 80).

Very much concerned about the emotional side of the process of restructuring for the small players Kennan was no less concerned about the restructuring impact on big powers especially in view of the "cult of the minorities" in world politics.

Despite his insistent "lobbying" of the idea of regional integration presented as the answer to practically all challenges it is hard to pass over in silence his obvious perspicacity and the wide scope of his political ideas. He detected and discussed in detail not only the most urgent but also still vague problems of international interaction. Having identified the trends of world processes associated with ethnicity, he not only arrived at correct forecasts related to the degrees to which the international structure would be needed and efficient; he left us a splendid analysis of future crises and political dead ends inevitable if and when we relied on these structures to settle acute international problems.

A Breakthrough to European Peace, Security and Cooperation: Dashed Hopes

Author: R. Khasbulatov

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THE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS JOURNAL has done the right thing by publishing an article by Prof. Yury Piskulov, Doctor of Economics (Yu. Piskulov. *Along the Road Laid in Helsinki*. No. 5, 2015), devoted to the 40th anniversary of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). At that time, the painstaking and productive work of its participants was capped with success - the 1975 Final Act. I did not say "the right

thing" by accident. Strangely enough, the anniversary of this unique event in modern European (as well as in global) political history passed almost unnoticed in the world media.

"Forty years later, the CSCE has not lost its appeal or relevance," Dr. Piskulov points out in his book. The author, a major specialist on economics and politics, stresses the outstanding role that was played by President of Finland Urho Kaleva Kekkonen, who demonstrated an international-level politician's approach towards the challenging task (including his work behind the scenes) of organizing the conference and ensuring its successful completion.

In his book, Yu. Piskulov expounds on the ideas of European cooperation. From the position of an expert on world economics, a theoretician and practitioner, he addresses the roots of the current conflict and passes judgment on the present and future of Russia-West relations, the breakup of the unipolar world order led by the U.S. and the American attempts to prevent its transformation into a multipolar world. The author talks about the West's dashed dreams to see Russia as its obedient junior partner, its anti-Russian course and its rejection of Putin's independent Russia. It is important to note the realistic analysis and the in-depth assessment of events, including the information and "hybrid" wars that the West has unleashed against Russia, as well as the paradox of the confrontation between politicians and the striving of European and Russian business circles for real integration. The author examines the new globalization "U.S. style" that the United States is trying to implement through the establishment of global partnerships: a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership with Europe and a Trans-Pacific Partnership with Asia - to the detriment of Russia and China.

I would also like to note the part of the work that looks into the causes and consequences of the unprecedented Western information war against Russia.

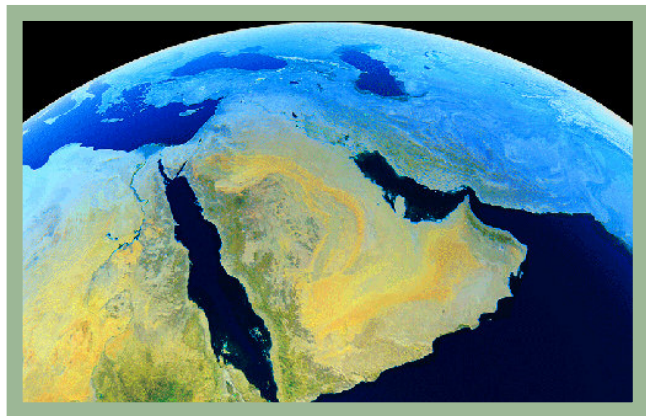
In spite of its small size (just 75 pages), the book is highly substantive, packed with interesting new facts; it offers the author's original vision and relies on solid research. In particular, it contains 100 references to primary sources. This effect is achieved due to the author's incontestable "com-

parative advantages": He has decades of active and influential participation in the development of our country's business ties with the European Council and the West as a whole behind his belt. He has devoted as many years to the theoretical analysis of his experience and the accumulation of profound, comprehensive knowledge about the subject of study.

Russia and the Arab World

Author: S. Filatov

Commentator for International Affairs



Alexey Podtserob's latest work "Russia and the Arab World" was not only an instant success - it is worthy of our respect. In his highly impressive monograph, the author has gathered a huge amount of information about the history of the relations between Russia and the Arab world based on a thousand and a half sources. This was done by a highly respected scholar who for many years had worked in different countries of the Arab East

rising from the lowest diplomatic posts to the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation. The book is not only a scholarly effort but it is also tinted by the author's far from indifferent attitude to the events and problems described by him.

The book is opened with an introduction written by Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in which he said, in part: "Alexey Podtserob relies on extensive factual material to reveal the deep roots of friendly relations between Russia and the Arab world based on mutual sympathy, trust and an account of common interests."

The reader will find documents related to the establishment and development of contacts between the Russian Empire and the Arab world, to the aid the Soviet Union extended to Arab countries and the state of the relations between the Russian Federation and the countries of the Middle East and the Maghreb in the new epoch.

The author has the following to say about the specifics of local radicalism: "Religious radicalism stems from many causes, the most prominent among them being Israeli occupation of Jerusalem and the unsolved Middle East conflict; the same applies to the American and Israeli threats to Iran and the invasion of Afghanistan by the United States and its allies..."

When writing about the current state of the Russian-Arab humanitarian contacts, the author has pointed out: "The Friendship Societies resumed, in many respects nominally, their activity in Russia, the Middle East and North Africa. In 2010, the four-day celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Russia-Morocco Friendship Association was carried in Rabat under patronage of Mohammad VI, the King of Morocco."

When writing about the "Impacts of the Religious Factor," the concluding chapter of his impressive monograph, the author offered the following opinion: "In the Russian Empire, the religious component did not greatly affect the Russian-Arab relations despite the jihad against St. Petersburg declared by the sultan in Istanbul. In the Soviet period, likewise, the religious factor did not influence the relations between the Soviet Union and the states of the Middle East and North Africa where the USSR was seen as neutral toward Islam in other countries."

I want to complete my review with another quote: "Russia's potential for the continuing presence

in the Arab world is very real. Because of its historical specifics it is the easternmost country of the West and the westernmost country of the East; as such it is civilizationally much closer to the Arab countries than the European states or America. Russia's active involvement in the Middle East and North Africa means that no geopolitical realities will be formed there without taking its interests into account.

The prerequisites of cooperation between Russia and the Arab world are objective. No matter which regimes will come to power in the region they will need the Russian Federation. This means that despite the changes now taking place in the Middle East and North Africa the future of Russia's relations with the countries of the Arab East looks optimistic."

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