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"It Is Only Through Dialogue and Joint Work that We Can Avoid Dangerous Breakdowns and Uncontrolled Developments"

Author: Vladimir Putin

President of the Russian Federation



COLLEAGUES, it is a pleasure to greet you all at this traditional gathering at the Foreign Ministry. Let me start by thanking the Foreign Ministry's heads and staff and everyone working in our missions abroad for their professionalism and devotion to their work. I am sure that you will all continue to work in the same well-coordinated and effective fashion.

Russia follows an independent foreign policy and seeks to develop open and honest relations with all countries, in the west, east, south and north. Russia seeks mutually advantageous and constructive ties in the broadest range of areas. We do not impose our will or our values on others and we fully comply with the provisions of international law and consistently uphold the key role of the United Nations and its Security Council in resolving global and regional problems. As you know, the world today is far from stable and the situation is becoming less predictable all the time.

It is my conviction that it is only through dialogue and joint work that we can avoid dangerous breakdowns and uncontrolled developments. The international community must make progress in establishing a fairer world order built on the principles of common and indivisible security and collective responsibility.

Today's world is clearly more interdependent, and the problems all countries face are in large part common challenges. There is no need to prove what is self-evident now. I therefore say again that cooperation, a common will, and willingness to seek compromises are the key to resolving the greatest and most complex problems, no matter where in the world they arise.

It is unacceptable to prolong the Ukrainian crisis and to blame others for this, particularly Russia. This only worsens the already unhealthy situation on the European continent and aggravates the consequences of the great mistake that was NATO's decision to expand eastwards rather than to start building, with Russia as a full-fledged partner, a new architecture for equal and indivisible security from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

The terrorist threat has greatly increased and is now challenging global security. True, terrorists do not as yet possess all the modern military weapons systems and equipment, but they have already made grabs for chemical weapons. Their actions are spreading far beyond the bounds of just one region and it is difficult to predict where to expect new serious attacks.

Syria has found itself at the epicenter of the fight against terrorism. It is no exaggeration to say that Syria's future will be decisive not only for the future of the Middle East. It is in Syria that the fate of the fight against terrorism is being decided, the fight against this same Islamic State that has gathered terrorists and extremists of all stripes under its banners and united them in a desire to expand throughout the entire Muslim world.

It is important to create an atmosphere of cooperation and good-neighborly relations with other countries and put in place good external conditions for raising our citizens' prosperity and ensuring Russia's dynamic development as a rule-of-law, democratic state with a socially-oriented market economy.

The authorities will continue to consider carefully your proposals for bolstering the diplomatic service's material and human resource base and ensuring social guarantees for diplomatic personnel and their families. I conclude the first part of my remarks here. I thank our colleagues from the media. We will now say a few words behind closed doors.

Collective Intelligence: Russian Diplomats' Comments on President Putin's Speech



Audrey Denisov, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the PRC*
AS RUSSIA'S AMBASSADOR to China, I found it particularly interesting to hear evaluations that in some way or other concern the relations between our two countries, as well as the remarks on Russian-Chinese tandem as a structurally critical factor not only on a regional but perhaps also on a global level.

Today we are witnessing certain changes in the world's geometry - not so much changes in the lineup of forces as changes in development vectors. If at one pole we can see less than encouraging signs of weakening centripetal tendencies, as evidenced by the outcome of the UK referendum on EU membership, on the other side of the planet, just

the contrary, centripetal tendencies are strengthening as states are objectively gravitating more and more toward unification or rapprochement in the interest of achieving common goals.



Alexander Kadakin, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of India*

Russian-Indian strategic partnership differs from all other partnerships because we were the first to introduce it into the diplomatic sphere as a concept. In addition, this "especially privileged strategic partnership" sets corresponding tasks before the embassy. We work to deepen our ties.

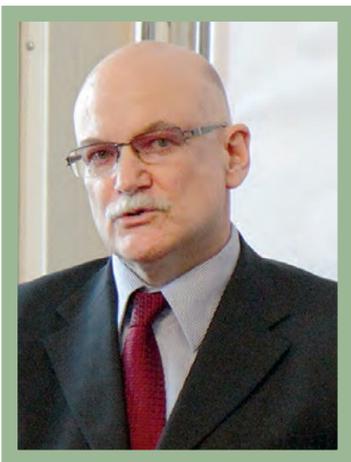
Our relations are on the rise despite the deliberately planted media stories.



Sergey Kislyak, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the United States of America*

THE RELATIONS between our countries have fallen on hard times. I would say that since the end of the Cold War, this is perhaps their lowest point. We are coming under unprecedented pressure, which, of course, will not work.

We always choose a very simple course: Let elections take place and we will work with the president who comes to the White House. And we will see whether our relations will improve or not. I do not think that considering the strong anti-Russian mood in the U.S. media and political beau monde, changes will come easily or quickly.



Alexey Fedotov, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Slovakia*

THE PRESENT INTERNATIONAL SITUATION and the situation within our country are such that the issues of human rights, soft power and new challenges and threats, among others, which may have aroused less interest in previous years, are now acquiring special urgency and relevance.

Slovakia is an EU member and we should not have excessive expectations due to its obligations to NATO and the EU; nevertheless, our bilateral relations are very interesting. Understandably, even new

challenges and threats are a subject on which we can convincingly present our approaches. If you do not sow a field there will be no sprouts.



Alexander Grushko, *Permanent Representative to NATO*

REGARDING Russia's relations with NATO, it should be pointed out that we can hardly count on any changes. By its own admission, NATO has defined a new configuration of forces in a new security environment. It is obvious to us that this strengthening should be viewed in a broad context.

In addition, military activities - continuing drills, the rotation of forces, the constant presence in the Baltic Sea, and tours of duty in the Black Sea - is creating a new military reality near our borders.

The most disturbing part is that it seems to be a long-term strategy, which is now being put into practice in defense planning and military

organization and development, and this means that when military plans are fully implemented, they will begin to generate a hostile policy toward Russia. Naturally, such military activity always needs some substantiation with regard to citizens of countries that are involved in all this.

I would like to note that it is important to consider the sum total of what NATO has, and take the necessary compensatory steps and measures.

Russia has absolutely no interest in becoming involved in a new confrontation, in a new arms race. Our interest is related to something entirely different: the conditions of normal internal development in collaboration with all parties, in particular with Europe, which we regard as our partner.



Oleg Ozerov, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*

Saudi Arabia is deeply concerned by the destabilizing processes that are taking place in the region. Even on such a sensitive issue as Syria, we have an understanding of the need for dialogue, the need to listen to each other and look for points of convergence. The main point of convergence is the need to terminate the conflict in Syria and launch a

political process. We see eye to eye with Saudi Arabia on this even though we may have certain differences with regard to ultimate goals.



Alexander Veshnyakov, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Latvian Republic*

It is evident from reports in the Latvian press that the negative attitude toward "new arrivals" in the UK also extends to Latvians: "Why did you come here? Pack up and leave!" Today, even official representatives of the Latvian Foreign Ministry are saying that "we will negotiate with the British government on the protection of our compatriots." How can extremes be avoided in this situation?

I believe that by the end of the year, many EU analysts, including those in Latvia, will come to the conclusion that this policy course should

be reviewed, adjusted and seriously amended, taking present-day realities into account.



Boris Bolotin, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*

THE MIDDLE EAST is a very complicated region. A mass of problems have accumulated there.

There is a complete international consensus on the need for joint efforts in order to rebuff and fight the so-called Islamic State. By the way, of late, some positive developments have emerged both in Iraq and in Syria. According to the Jordanians, there is a real possibility of achieving a victory over ISIS by the beginning of next year. We would like to see these predictions come true, but a lot depends on our partners' behavior.

We are open to constructive collaboration with the Americans and other parties to the peace process, but, unfortunately, not all of our initiatives meet with support and understanding. However, if leading international and regional players really pool their efforts, then the objective of eliminating ISIS by the beginning of next year will look more realistic.

It is important to remember that we have to deal with a real information war that is being waged both by the Western and regional media. There is a lot of slander and falsification, and this can influence some people. So one of our most important tasks is to raise awareness, explain the essence of our policy to the public and explain what is really going on in Syria.



Vladimir Tarabrin, *Ambassador at Large for International Anti-Corruption Cooperation at the Russian Foreign Ministry*

ISSUES related to new challenges and threats and the fight against corruption are acquiring increasing relevance, since the fight against corruption is becoming a kind of a state's calling card, an indicator of its civilized nature and its ability to comply with universal standards

and procedures. At the same time, this issue is being increasingly politicized while certain states are using it as a tool to interfere in internal affairs of other countries. We believe in depoliticized, purely pragmatic and practically oriented cooperation in this sphere.

Russia-U.S. Relations After the Election: "We Will Be Ready for a New Start"

Author: S. Ryabkov

Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation



The summer is indeed hot, both in the direct and figurative sense of the word. We are in the maelstrom of events and I believe that we also generate certain waves. As for the United States, a bipartisan consensus based on an anti-Russian foundation has evolved there. We are faced with a situation where our country is being deliberately and consciously demonized and accused of almost every sin under the sun. The U.S. ruling circles

and all those they are dependent on have developed a certain complex with regard to Russia. They see us as an almost omnipotent evil, which points to some serious deviations in their perception of reality.

I do not trust words, especially the words of U.S. politicians and U.S. diplomats, regardless of their rank and standing. People should be judged by their deeds.

We believe that it is necessary to ensure the practical, not purely declarative, separation of ISIS, which is banned in Russia, and Jabhat al-Nusra, which has renamed itself, from the so-called moderate opposition and make it possible to focus efforts of the U.S.-led coalition, Russia and Syrian government forces on fighting terrorists, in this way creating additional prerequisites to enable the moderate opposition to go ahead with real, direct negotiations and to continue participation in the process coordinated by Staffan de Mistura.

Unfortunately, the U.S. has a somewhat different approach and a different order of priorities. It is important for Washington that we and Damascus do nothing that could, in its opinion, strengthen the positions of the present legitimate authorities in Syria, including in fighting the opposition.

I seriously doubt the Americans' oft-repeated claim that "we support the political process in Syria." In reality, the situation turns out to be different.

We were concerned by the well-known decisions with regard to building up the military presence on a rotational basis but in fact the deployment of permanent armed forces of a number of NATO countries in immediate proximity to our borders: in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Poland. I would like to say that this is not limited to only four multinational battalions. What is involved is the deployment of forward-based depots of equipment for several U.S. motorized infantry brigades in Europe in the next few years.

I am confident that there will be no war while what is going on is the usual flexing of muscles on the part of the West, just another attempt to "show Russia its place." It is also an attempt to please those on NATO's eastern and northeastern flank who are trying to take advantage of the current difficulties in Russia's relations with the West in their narrow, short-term interests, i.e.,

to secure some bonuses for themselves in the form of the greater physical military presence of other countries, the construction of certain facilities and so on. Politicians in these countries are clutching at what is going on to secure a closer connection for themselves and their electorate to the "Western root," to the "root of the Western community."

Born for Confrontation: On the Results of the NATO Warsaw Summit

Author: A. Orlov

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IN RECENT YEARS, we have been watching a grandiose performance in the theater of the absurd, directed by the United States and its closest allies, that can be called Aggressive Russia Threatens the Peaceful and Respectable West.

IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, the United States, the Alliance's flagship and engine, has moved to the fore with its numerous and varied foreign policy

doctrines and concepts. It developed a special taste for this sort of activities after World War Two when the wartime allies in the anti-Hitler coalition became, in no time, enemies in a new world war. Luckily, it was a cold war.

The Soviet Union, the "comrade-in-arms" that had carried on its shoulders the heaviest weight of deadly struggle against the common enemy that enslaved "non-Soviet" Europe and threatened the rest of the world, was treated as an irreconcilable enemy, "the empire of evil" the struggle with which justified the mad arms race unfolded by Washington and its allies.

During the détente, the conceptual arsenal of the United States was enriched with certain new accents very much in line with the times.

Thirty years later, the West discovered that these instruments of intellectual propaganda, upgraded and enriched with new elements could be used in the multicomponent, multiphase and hybrid struggle against Russia. This can be described as a non-traditional form of war of the twenty-first century in which the aims are achieved through protracted and varied impacts on the enemy country, its leaders and its citizens.

While holding forth about an imagined threat from the East and diligently molding common enemy No. 1 out of Russia the West deliberately builds up tension along Russia's borders. To analyze the "new reality" that is taking shape around Russia from the scholarly point of view, we should admit that any more or less important international event or trend should be discussed in its specific political and historical contexts otherwise they are deprived of meaning and scholarly value. All events and trends are rooted in the previous periods of their development and are the results of interaction and mutual influence of a great number of factors and specific circumstances that, in the final analysis, predetermined a specific situation or a specific trend.

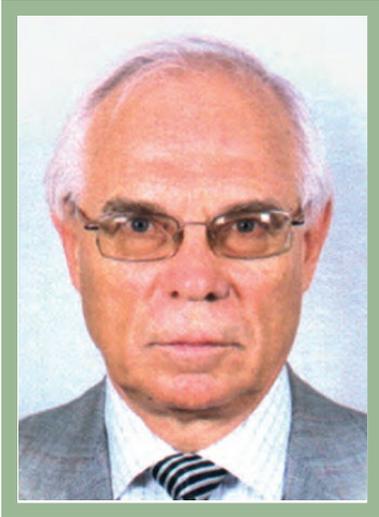
Today, NATO's expansionism of which the U.S. is the engine, is developing stage-by-stage or by leaps and bounds. As soon as the conditions for another "leap to the East" or for new decisions on the Alliance's further militarization have ripened it invents adequate information and propaganda framework and unfolds targeted brainwashing of the common people.

We should not avoid the dialogue with NATO in any format that fits the situation. The meeting of the Russia-NATO Council that had not been convened for over two years and that took place several days after the Warsaw summit meant that Moscow and Brussels knew that the communication channels should remain open. This is all the more important at the time when their relations sometimes breed problems that should be promptly resolved.

Partnership for Peace or Preparations for War: Evolution of Russia-NATO Relations

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THE JULY 2016 WARSAW NATO Summit not only decided to strengthen its military and political confrontation with Russia but also strongly invigorated the realization of its strategy designed to transform the North Atlantic Alliance from a purely regional defensive pact into a global military-political structure of "cooperative security" accommodating the geopolitical interests of the United States and the leading Western countries and seen as a substitute of the "inefficient" United Nations. One of the key elements of this newly formulated strategy is creating a global coalition of the NATO partners with the biggest possible number of states and international organizations from all corners of the world. The NATO strategists

expect that this will bring them closer to their abovementioned aim.

Today, the camp of the NATO partners consists of 41 states, half of them in Europe and Central Asia, and several international and regional organizations, including the UN, EU, OSCE, etc.

The Western observers have admitted that the new partnership policy created certain tensions inside the Alliance: "Should NATO privilege partners who can deliver operational impact or those who are fully committed to liberal democratic rule?"

Practically from the very first day of the "global partnership" concept, Russia was not regarded as an equal partner: it was a temporal fellow-traveler indispensable when it comes to dealing with individual albeit critically important international challenges. By and large, there are no common interests or aims in the true sense of the word between Russia and NATO to serve as the basis for mutually profitable and equal cooperation. Russia cannot accept the world order that the U.S. and NATO want to build on the cooperative security basis, that is, in fact, complete subjugation of all partners to America's diktat. Coordination, to a certain extent, is possible or even necessary when it comes to certain world policy issues. Having realized that the strategy of punishment and isolation of Russia failed, NATO is looking for the ways to move toward the strategy of "elastic" or limited interaction with Russia, albeit on its own conditions.

In view of NATO's persisting refusal to move away from the openly hostile course in its relations with Russia and the need to prevent the realization of its plans to undermine Russia's independent role in the world and to destroy the Russian-Chinese and Russian-Indian strategic partnerships, the leaders of Russia should arrive at a fundamentally new comprehensive policy of carefully balanced limited cooperation with NATO designed to reduce tension in Europe. This balanced trend should include both rivalry and cooperation with the Alliance in individual spheres in which there is no clash of interests.

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A "POLITICAL TSUNAMI," an "existential crisis" and "the not so United Kingdom" are several of the many assessments the British media used to comment on the results of the June 23, 2016 EU referendum. EVEN BEFORE the official talks with the EU, Britain became a scene of an uncompromising political struggle in which nothing was banned. For example, the fact that the president of the Confederation

of British Industry (CBI) had asked the government not to go too far in the talks with Brussels and refrain from being too ambitious so that to avoid disagreements became known and caused a scandal: the CBI had been expected to voice its opinion after, not before the negotiations.

The polemics flooded the foreign policy space: the dissatisfaction inside the country with its position in the EU was superimposed on the contradictions inside the European Union between the "old" and "new" (pro-American) Europe, between the national leaders of the member-states and the European bureaucracy in Brussels, between the rich North and the poor South. They were additionally exacerbated by the Greek debt and the migrant crisis against the background of the firmer positions of Eurosceptics across the EU.

According to public opinion polls, the Brits were more concerned with immigration from the EU countries. It should be said that the avalanche of information supplied by both sides did not correct the previously distorted ideas about the scope of immigration even at the height of agitation in May 2016. According to the Ipsos MORI Agency, the British citizens stuck to their distorted ideas about the key problems of the future referendum.

THE EUROPEAN ELITE have recognized that the reforms are overripe and that time has come to deal with the "democratic deficit" in the EU. At the EU summit, in the wake of the Brexit, the prime minister of The Netherlands presented the results of the April referendum in his country on Ukraine's association with the EU.

In fact, the uncertainty and the shifted balance of power inside the EU might negatively affect Russia. Will Germany acquire unlimited domination in the EU? Will Brexit be followed by the "domino effect" and an inevitable exacerbation of contradictions in Europe dangerously close to Russia's borders? The questions and possible answers are not of theoretical importance. This means that those who said that Russia was "interested" in Brexit bluffed: they had no choice but to go at all lengths to justify the aim for the sake of which they were struggling and created the problem in the first place.

Cultural and Social Integration of Migrants in the European Union

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IN 2014-2016, a migration crisis loomed large in the discussions held by the European Commission (EC) and the governments of the EU member states. Migration and its consequences sparked a massive public outcry in Europe. According to the polls carried out by the Standard Eurobarometer back in 2013, the Europeans started to give higher priority to migration problems than to issues such as taxes, pensions, education, and even terrorism, and in 2015, the problem was already second on the list of their priority concerns after unemployment.

EVEN LONG BEFORE an exacerbation of the migration crisis in 2015, it became obvious that assimilating migrants on the basis of the "melting pot" model does not hold water for the simple reason that the recipient societies are unable to "absorb" migrants, while the policy of multiculturalism entails a significant influence of ethnic communities on the prevailing cultural tradition. The conception of multiculturalism has been gradually phased out by the "civil integration" practice, which provides a certain level of social and economic rights to migrants on condition that a balance is maintained between their rights and duties with respect to the recipient community.

The issues of socio-cultural and inter-confessional interaction of migrants with recipient communities stand out as the most complicated in the range of problems relating to migration policies and require that some resolute steps be taken at the all-European and national levels. In each country, migration policy is currently characterized by a number of specific features. However, general trends have also surfaced: a part of political parties in Germany, Great Britain, and Denmark speak out in favor of a possible inclusion of able-bodied skilled migrants in the economy. In Germany and Britain, these ideas come under strong criticism from nationalist movements and right-wing movements and parties, which traditionally adopt a tough Eurosceptic stance.

The present-day situation remains highly complicated: the European countries are facing a number of serious challenges, which will require a few decades to be resolved. Some researchers believe that "historically representatives of different civilizations would not so much confront each other as cooperate within the framework of a multipolar world," and such a prospect still remains, if an intense cooperation is launched and contacts at all levels are expanded between Christian and Muslim cultures through the integration of migrants in the European society. However, the steps taken by the EU and national governments are often just band-aid solutions unable to either satisfy the needs of newcomers or appease the indigenous European population.

China and the EU: The Issue of Market Economy Status

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AS OF LATE, the recognition of China as a market economy has unexpectedly become an acute political issue for the European Union, emerging as a subject of controversial and heated debate both within European institutions and in the international arena as a whole.

In principle, this is rather a technical concept and is used mainly in antidumping investigations. Thus, market economy status plays an important role in situations where it is recognized that a producer reduces the price of exports to

foreign markets to such an extent that this provides conditions for unfair competition, which affects local business. In this situation, market economy status is a signal for using a particular mechanism to calculate an antidumping margin applied to a "dumping" exporter so as to balance the market situation.

China became a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) on December 11, 2001, assuming obligations - essential for the subsequent development of the entire system of international trade - aimed at opening and liberalizing the national economy and accelerating its integration into global economic architecture.

In substantiation of their position, China's Western partners are reiterating that the country's economy, nevertheless, does not quite measure up to market criteria. Strict control that official Beijing exercises over some key sectors of the national economy with the help of numerous state-owned corporations, which, according to this view, are characterized by a lack of transparency, bureaucratization and inefficiency, comes under sharp criticism. In addition, the West is inclined to believe that the Chinese authorities continue to actively intervene in economic processes, which should be regulated on a market basis. As a recent example they cite large-scale interventions by Chinese government agencies into the country's stock exchange after the crash of Shanghai Composite Index last year. The following conclusion is made: China is not a market economy, while Beijing's policy in this sphere creates prerequisites for unfair competition between Chinese and Western businesses.

According to forecasts, Beijing's current trade, economic and financial policy, including the denomination of the yuan, as well as the considerable amount of time that the Chinese authorities need to deal with the overproduction problem, can significantly intensify pressure on markets in a number of European countries. This will eventually trigger wide-ranging and rather painful restructuring of production in the European space with severe consequences for the labor market. This prospect confronts Brussels with the need to maneuver skillfully between the risk of demonstrating its inability to protect the fundamental economic interests of its member countries and the danger of seriously impairing its relations with China, which are going through their

"golden era." The situation is complicated by the fact that there are no signs of consensus along this track either among leading EU member countries or within EU institutions as such. The issue of granting China market economy status has become one of Beijing's priorities in the so-called economic diplomacy and is invariably present on the agenda of the country's leadership's meetings both with Brussels representatives and with the heads of leading European countries: Germany, Italy, France, and Great Britain. The latter, without committing themselves, always promise China to "work" on Brussels, but there are no signs of any progress yet. No doubt, the EU has a great deal to do and there is very little time left. Nevertheless, Brussels should decide soon to what extent it is willing fulfill the obligations to China that it assumed in 2001.

SCO Expansion and Regional Aspects of Nuclear Nonproliferation

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THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY SUMMIT of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) that took place in June 2016 was an important landmark on the road toward admitting new members (India and Pakistan); it also confirmed the very timely trend obvious in the contemporary international relations caused by the growing role of political and diplomatic measures in settling regional challenges to the nonproliferation regimes of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear weapons in the first place).

The regime of nuclear nonproliferation, unique in its universal and comprehensive nature as well as its importance for international peace and security, is the cornerstone of contemporary world order, a symbol of ability of all (or nearly all) states to come to terms and

cooperate for the sake of common survival.

Today, this instrument and symbol of world politics is under serious threat. The inconsistent policy of the recognized nuclear powers in the sphere of disarmament and global strategic stability is responsible, in many respects, for the erosion of the international nonproliferation regimes and an increased interest of many countries, the developing countries in the first place, in acquiring nuclear potential.

The history of SCO has demonstrated that throughout its existence it has been "committed to enhancing strategic stability, strengthening the international regime of nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction and upholding order in international law."² Today, the erosion of the nuclear nonproliferation regime and the challenges the

Compliance with the international regimes of nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction has become one of the main criteria of admittance of new members, together with their belonging to the SCO region, common borders with other SCO members, antiterrorist struggle and non-participation in military blocs, an absence of military bases and military contingents of third countries on their territories, diplomatic relationships with all SCO member-states, and observance of human rights - these criteria were exhaustively formulated in the Statute on the Order of Admission of New Members adopted by the Tashkent Summit of June 11, 2010.

The above determined everything that was done in preparation for the admission of India, Pakistan and Iran, the highly "problematic" states where nuclear nonproliferation is concerned.

Having passed the decision to initiate an admission procedure for India and Pakistan at the SCO Ufa summit in July 2015, the SCO member-states reconfirmed that all NPT provisions should be strictly observed, its aims and principles comprehensively balanced to further consolidate the

nonproliferation regime and the process of nuclear disarmament in the conditions of equal and undivided security for all.

This means that the SCO which does not abandon the idea of SCO membership for India, Pakistan and Iran will have to cope, in the short-and mid-term perspective, with a very complicated and non-trivial task of strengthening the nonproliferation regime at the regional level, within its responsibility zone.

BRICS as the Common Denominator of Strategic Priorities

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Olga Leonova, Professor at the School of Global Processes, Doctor of Science (Political Science);

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GLOBALIZATION and regionalization have set a trend for new associations of states such as regional and interregional organizations and dialogue forums to emerge to take over decision-making on some international issues. New regional organizations and dialogue forums are set up with the participation of emergent political players, actors that are vehicles of an innovative format of international cooperation. BRICS, which

brings together five key regional powers representing four continents and four major civilizations, is a splendid example of such an association.

The BRICS countries are unanimous in being dissatisfied with the status quo in current geopolitics and with their roles in today's system of international relations. They seek economic prosperity, adequate social welfare, and greater international political influence for themselves, and act in unison in trying to build a new, polycentric system of international relations. In view of this, it is important to analyze the five nations' objectives and confrontational or destabilizing factors in bilateral relations between some of them.

BRAZIL is the largest country in both Latin and South America by area and population. It has the largest economy in South America and produces one quarter of continent's industrial output and one third of its agricultural output. It also accumulates more than half of South America's scientific and technological potential.¹ Brazil has very clear foreign policy priorities.

RUSSIA is justly described as the founder of BRICS. Primakov was the author of the RIC strategic triangle idea, a concept the BRICS stemmed from.

Russia's presence in BRICS is fully in line with its national interests. It is of great economic importance for the country.

INDIA is one of the main players in international affairs and consistently asserts itself as one of the world's economic leaders.

It is a country with a rapidly growing economy, rich resources, and large demographic, economic, political, and military potentials.

BRICS provides India with a major platform for discussing a wide range of global financial and political issues with Brazil, Russia, China, and South Africa. India attaches great importance to academic-level meetings, which have positive effects on BRICS agendas and make interaction within the group more effective.

CHINA sees BRICS as a means of building a new, just and rational world order, according to speeches by Chinese officials and analysis by influential Chinese research centers.

China's membership in BRICS coincides in time with the country's search for a new, more active foreign policy algorithm to be in tune with the nation's rapid economic development and growing political influence.

SOUTH AFRICA is an influential state in global politics which refuses to be a political satellite of developed countries.

South Africa's membership in BRICS highlights the significance of African participation in today's system of international relations. It enhances the status of BRICS, offering its member countries extensive opportunities to pursue diverse economic projects in Africa jointly with South Africa and the African Union. Zuma argues that his country can be a full representative of the whole of Africa in BRICS.

Today, the BRICS countries are focused on seeking optimum parameters for their economic cooperation.

Geopolitical analysis shows that there are quite a few nations in various parts of the world that, while having no desire to sever economic relations with the United States or European Union, are ready to cooperate as partners within an extra-American zone of interaction, a zone with guarantees of national sovereignty, equality, and respect for these nations regardless of their global status.

The new philosophy of partnership based on principles of equality between large and small countries, mutual confidence, and respect for various civilizations, cultures, religions, systems of government, and concepts of development would underlie the construction of a harmonious multipolar world order.

Peace and Prosperity in a Vulnerable yet Beautiful World

Author: Perfecto R. Yasay Jr.

Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines



On the 40th Anniversary of Philippines-Russia Diplomatic Relations.

The relations between the Philippines and Russia have come a long way ever since its establishment, and I remain convinced that our relations will flourish even more in the ensuing years - because they are founded on our common values of respect for the sovereign equality of states and the rule of law. On the 40th year of our friendship, I wish to declare that the Philippines is committed to further nurturing, exploring, and developing more avenues

of cooperation with Russia.

IT IS NOTEWORTHY that even before the official establishment of our bilateral relations, cooperation in the area of humanitarian assistance had already existed between our countries. One heartwarming but little known fact is that from 1949 to 1953, some 6,000 Russian refugees were living in the Philippines.

Within this historical perspective, the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Assistance to Nationals Caught in Conflict and Other Crises in Third Countries acquires greater significance. When forged, this agreement will enable greater cooperation between our countries in responding to various crises - and in a broader sense, our bilateral relations will flourish even more.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, the Philippines and Russia have enjoyed cordial and productive relations - evidenced by exchanges of high-level visits, inter-parliamentary exchanges, regular political consultations, bilateral agreements, and the conduct of various cooperation activities at the bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels.

The Philippines and Russia have signed agreements covering trade and investment, arts and culture, inter-parliamentary cooperation, defense and security to name a few.

The Philippines and Russia also work very closely in promoting regional cooperation through ASEAN.

Incidentally, this year is not only the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Russia but also the 20th anniversary of ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Partnership.

In this connection, the Philippines wishes to congratulate Russia on its successful hosting of the recently concluded ASEAN-Russia Commemorative Summit in Sochi.

At this historic juncture, on behalf of the Filipino people, may I thank Russia and the Russian people for their friendship, for the fostering of mutual trust, and for never tiring in finding a common ground for our countries - as we advocate peace and goodwill in our vulnerable but beautiful world.

"Slovakia Should Restore Its Previous Level of Cooperation With Russia"

Author: Ivan Gašparovič

former President of the Slovak Republic This interview was conducted by International Affairs' commentator Igor Gushchin



With regard to Slovakia, it was a decisive historical stage that required the making of unequivocal and responsible decisions - I am referring above all to the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. After 1990, unemployment in certain parts of the country was over 50% and the issue of Slovakia's state independence came up.

There were two scenarios for resolving the problem: either the creation of a unitary state, something with which the Slovak people did not agree; or complete separation and division into two independent republics.

This was a serious trial for the citizens of both republics. After acquiring sovereignty, Slovakia went through several severe crises, including international crises. I am proud to say that the Slovaks endured and successfully

overcame the difficulties that the republic faced.

I believe that it is necessary to invigorate cooperation between special services in various countries and to expand their capabilities, even if this violates people's rights and freedoms. I completely support the idea of organizing thorough inspection and control procedures at airports, and the present-day situation in the world reaffirms the need for such security measures. These are obligatory measures for saving thousands of human lives. Terrorism cannot be defeated if we do not cooperate, and this is why there must be no political divisions with regard to this issue. We should have a common plan of eliminating organized terrorist groups that threaten the security of people across the world.

The Slovak Republic has from day one been against the imposition of obligatory quotas regarding the number of refugees, openly saying that this will do nothing to resolve the migration crisis in Europe. Oftentimes nobody wants to think about the consequences of the measures that have been taken; quotas are a good case in point. Brussels made the decision to impose a specific number of migrants on each EU member country but it did not consider the possible consequences of this decision.

At present, the world cannot exist without compromises, and we should constantly look for them. Therefore, in addressing the issue of the sanctions policy against Russia, I believe it is essential to search for a compromise and I am sure that more European countries have a different view of sanctions against Russia today.

The present political situation in the world must not hinder the search for new points of convergence and affect the good relations between Slovakia and Russia. In this context, I can say that the Slovak Republic is interested in developing relations with Russia in various fields and in undertaking new joint projects. Despite the fact that we differ on certain issues, we should continue our dialogue.

Morals in the Foreign Policy and Diplomacy of Contemporary France

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MORALS ARE A SET OF RULES of social behavior based on opinions that declare some values true and others false and determines the relationships between people. Morals are not values. The common treatment of morals as rules endowed with the values of kindness, humanity and fairness is wrong. This refers to morals in general while there are types of morals that treat different values as true. In any case we should clearly understand how different people or societies interpret or define the same values of kindness or fairness.

Democracy means freedom of people; it is one of the most important and indispensable features of democracy. Its "export" does not mean that is freely chosen - it is imposed from outside.

It is interesting to discuss the moral element in the foreign policy and diplomacy of France in this context. My choice is determined by its historical primacy and important contribution into such spheres as contemporary diplomacy and diplomatic service, human rights and morals in foreign policy.

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, France was engaged in military operations - in Chad, Zaire, Lebanon, Mauritania, CAR, Iraq, Somalia, Rwanda, and the Balkans. And it was especially belligerent after having resolutely denounced the use of force.

French operations in the Middle East are especially illustrative: for many decades, the bourgeois and social democrats alike have preferred to ignore problems related to human rights, the rights of women and, especially, of all sorts of minorities. A new wave of interest in the problem of values and morals in foreign policy was raised by the Arab Spring assessed by the French politicians and the French public as unexpected, unpredicted, etc. As a result, French diplomacy, its information and analytical achievements and its abilities were subjected to severe criticism.

The French politicians, experts and diplomats are fully aware of the situation in which their country should survive by all means. Yet the question remains: Is their foreign policy moral? An abstract or subjective approach to morals as an allegedly possible unambiguous solution of the good/evil problem makes French policy pragmatic, even more so since it pursues the supreme national interests.

It seems that the young diplomats will find their jobs much harder: the principles of the universal human rights deeply rooted in French history and culture are popular among the younger generation. While the retired ambassadors who today reveal the discovered post factum divergences between what their politicians had declared and what they had done, the students would have no illusions. We will live and see how they will cope in practice.

Perestroika in Myanmar: Reasons, Challenges and Prospects

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DRAMATIC CHANGES are underway in Myanmar (formerly known as Burma). Civil administration has replaced the military regime which ruled the country since 1962.

Myanmar is an important country in both regional and international terms, being the biggest continental state in Southeast Asia with a population of 60 million, which has a rather high literacy rate (over 90%). The country is rich in natural resources, and it is located at the intersection of geopolitical routes connecting South Asia and Eastern Asia. In the first years of its independence, Burma/Myanmar played an active role in international affairs.

MYANMAR'S SELF-ISOLATION and the Western sanctions caused an essential damage to its economy. Upon joining ASEAN

in 1997. Myanmar's military leaders realized that their country was seriously lagging behind their neighbors, such as Thailand and Malaysia.

A political and economic blockade on the part of the West was inevitably drawing Myanmar ever more close to China, and local nationalist forces continuously expressed their dissatisfaction with their country's subordinate position in this bilateral union. Bridging differences between Myanmar and the West to balance China's influence and follow the middle course in foreign relations was possible only upon launching a dialogue with the civil opposition.

None of the external forces - neither China, nor ASEAN partners, nor the West - want Myanmar to become another trouble spot on the globe.

Myanmar's generals have preserved a powerful leverage system not only in the political but also in the economic arena. Thus, the ministry of defense controls two major economic structures - the Union of Myanmara Economic Holdings Ltd (UMEH) and Myanmara Economic Corporation (MEC), set up as successors to a number of state-owned enterprises.

THE PROBLEM of securing the country's unity has been facing Myanmar from the moment it was proclaimed a sovereign state. Myanmar is a multiethnic state with some 70% of its population being the Burman (self-appellation - Barnár), and the remaining 30% belonging to other indigenous ethnic groups. Seven national regions, where the non-Burman ethnic groups reside, account for over a half of the country's territory, and have significant mineral deposits. Throughout the entire period of Myanmar's independence, the above regions have been an arena of separatist movements and civil unrest.

ANOTHER BURNING ISSUE in Myanmar is the Muslim question. Myanmar is a Buddhist country. At the same time, it is also home to Muslims, mainly descendants of migrants from India and Bangladesh, who make up, according to official figures, around 4%, and by informal

count - up to 10% of the population.

THE PROCESSES going on in Myanmar open up new vistas both in and outside the country, which has good opportunities to return to the international scene as an influential political and economic player.

The Ukrainian Crisis in the Mirror of Polish Conservatism

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MANY EUROPEAN STATES recognized the Ukrainian crisis as a serious reason to revise their political opinions and change the balance of power. For historical reasons and due to the sharpening struggle between the main political forces inside the state, Poland is involved in the process to a much greater extent than its East European neighbors.

At all times, Polish conservatives have paid a lot of attention to the Ukrainian question; its revival in the current interpretation is connected with the "Orange revolution."

During the 2004 Ukrainian crisis, the "true" Polish conservatives, unlike their liberal colleagues, discerned in it not so much a political

but a civilizational problem that should be resolved in favor of the West. Viktor Yushchenko's victory was interpreted as a defeat of the pro-Russian forces and evidence of loyalty to the chosen course.

The right-wing conservative camp unconditionally supported the "European hopes of Ukrainians" and critically widened the gap between its position and the policies of the liberal government of Donald Tusk.

The Polish leaders were gradually realizing that their positions were somehow vulnerable. Warsaw was very much concerned with a wave of nationalist psychosis that engulfed the neighboring country and the official recognition of the most odious figures, Bandera and Shukhevych in the first place. The people in Kiev did nothing to cut short the campaign designed to revive the very aggressive ideology of "Ukrainian exclusiveness" that was becoming anti-Polish among other things. Warsaw was no less irritated by the leading European powers that being highly concerned, in their turn, with the fighting in the Ukrainian territory preferred to discuss the key issues of settlement with Moscow leaving Poland in the cold.

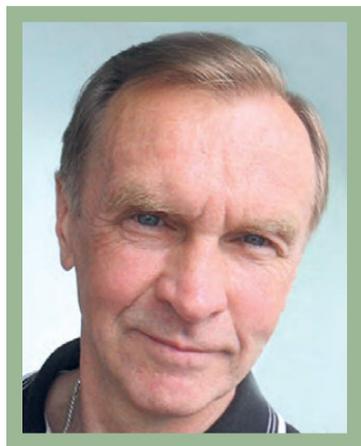
Polish politicians of all hues cannot but pay attention to the increasingly aggressive behavior of their neighbors and their territorial claims. The Poles, on their side, have not forgotten that they lost certain territories in the east between the two world wars.

The strategy related to the "Ukrainian Question" as one of the central foreign policy issues of Polish conservatives has become questionable. The PiS leaders have all the chances to regain power yet it should revise their basic foreign policy principles and formulate their own strategic projects to move away from the current situation when the inner Polish problems are projected into the sphere of international relations.

Abkhazia: A Zone of Alienation or a Zone of Growth?

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THE COLLAPSE of the socialist world late in the 20th century and the redivision of its territory resulted in the emergence of new independent states, some of which are generally recognized while others are labeled self-proclaimed. But no matter how a new state finds its way onto the map, there will have been deep historical and cultural reasons for its coming into being. One of the new states is Abkhazia. We were dropped off right opposite the hotel where we were booked in. Abkhazia's hotel industry has fallen into decay after the collapse of the Soviet Union. There are a lot of ruined buildings, particularly east of Sukhum, and hotels that have survived aren't being modernized.

It is in Russia's interest to help Abkhazia cease to be a region living on subsidies, get back to its feet, and become a self-sufficient country that is stable politically and economically without losing any of its cultural identity.

Apparently because Abkhazia's population is so small, the republic's elite is very considerate, and this manifests itself in the local political culture. Abkhaz politicians behave in an extremely civilized way and never use brutal measures against their rivals, which is more than can be said for the rest of former Soviet lands. Moreover, they usually have some degree of kinship with one another.

Abkhazia has its own literature, but Russian literature, and Russian art and culture in general, are venerated as if they were part of the republic's own heritage.

Russians are treated well - they are guests, and they bring an income.

THE COLLAPSE of the Soviet Union was a disaster for Abkhazia. The republic had its own niche in the Soviet economy. The Soviet Union's collapse effectively put Abkhazia in economic isolation. Nobody was buying its citrus, and even its wine industry went to the wall.

Abkhazia's budget is subsidized by Russia, but is scantier in per capita terms than its Russian counterpart.

Obviously, one can't live on that, and people do whatever they can to make some more money, which includes renting out rooms to vacationers. The tax collection system is inefficient.

What does Abkhazia need above all? A simple answer suggests itself: It needs competent economists who can think in modern financial and economic terms and suggest a policy that would enable the Abkhaz economy to meet international standards. And, of course, the republic also needs a system of training business personnel who know how to use innovative technology and can work during crises and force majeure circumstances. If Abkhazia doesn't modernize its economy and make an economic breakthrough, its future will be less than brilliant.

Human Rights in Judaism and the Jewish Legal Tradition

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TODAY, when the number of countries that pay particular attention in their legislation to human rights and freedoms and their enforcement practice has considerably increased, it has become clear that the mechanism of constitutional and legal protection of individual rights and freedoms has come to the fore. These challenges add tension to the fairly strained correlation between the need to protect the human rights and to ensure security.

The present concept of human and civil rights cannot be fully understood unless we acquire a clear idea of the sources of this definition and take into account that human rights and freedoms belong to all individuals while the rights and freedoms of citizens belong only to the citizens of each particular state.

It is commonly believed that the concept of human rights was formulated within the Jewish religious tradition and that Judaism is one of its richest and clearest sources. The present definition of human rights rests, to a great extent, on the principles formulated in Judaism.

In full accordance with the canons of Judaism, man is a semblance of God and personification of the Universe; as such he possesses unrivaled dignity and greatness. All mankind descended from Adam, its common ancestor. This means that an insult of any man is an insult of God.

In Judaism, man is protected against unjust court decisions and arbitrariness. The desire to establish social fairness should lead to a clearly organized judicial system; justice comes before religious rules.

In the part related to women, the Jewish law is based on the first three chapters of Genesis and on the idea of the different roles of men and women stipulated by their different physiologies despite which men and women were equal before the law.

Historically, Judaism played an important role in the development of the concept of human rights, while today the religious circles in contemporary Israel are the most determined opponents of human rights legislation. In fact, the most controversial characteristics of public life in Israel from the point of view of human rights are the product of pressure exerted by religious forces. There are no civilian marriages between the Jews, no public transport on Saturdays (in line with the Judaic tradition), there is a problem of burying non-Jews in common cemeteries and other stumbling blocks unknown in contemporary liberal and democratic states in which religion as a rule is separated from the state.

"Inhumane Weapons": What Are They?

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ON DECEMBER 12-16, 2016, Geneva will host a review conference of what is commonly referred to as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) or the Inhumane Weapons Convention. With its five protocols, the convention has been adopted as a key international mechanism of conventional armaments control and one of the pillars of international humanitarian law.

One important feature of the CCW is its balanced nature - the convention takes account both of the imperatives of international humanitarian law and of the legitimate defense interests of nations.

It is important that the first ban imposed by the CCW outlawed weapons that most nations avoided using anyway as an unwritten rule, and probably also because they had no military need to do so. This reflects a fundamental feature of the convention and all its protocols - their balanced nature.

It is worth stressing once again that the CCW and its protocols are an efficient international law mechanism that can harmonize international humanitarian concerns with the legitimate defense interests of nations. The CCW has proven to be an effective means of dealing with humanitarian threats and protecting non-combatants, to be adaptable to changing forms of warfare, and to be able to efficiently diversify its practical rules. Obviously, it represents a comprehensive approach to international relations that responds to their entire diversity and should be adopted universally.

As no other international armaments control instrument, the CCW strictly follows two fundamental principles of international humanitarian law - proportionality of the use of force and distinction between combatants and military objectives, on the one hand, and civilians and civilian property, on the other. The provisions of the CCW are acceptable to the majority of nations and lay the basis for more humane use of warfare methods that are made possible by rapid technological progress. The CCW offers nations a non-discriminatory opportunity for warfare regulation. There is every reason to expect the entire international community to make use of all these advantages for an indefinite time.

But more importantly, "humaneness" is a moral concept. Weapons can't be humane. It's people who must decide whether the use of any weapon by an individual or by a nation would comply with international humanitarian law. "Inhumane weapons" is an arbitrarily coined phrase for any weapon that can cause exceptional or unnecessary suffering if used indiscriminately. Essentially, any weapon is deadly in purpose and nature, and hence its indiscriminate use is impermissible.

Ideally, no international issue should ever and under any circumstances be allowed to get to the point of war and civilian fatalities. But that is a subject for philosophical study rather than military policy research. Meanwhile, one would hope that all nations without exception strictly comply with the provisions of Chapter VI of the UN Charter, "Pacific Settlement of Disputes."

Investigation of the South Ossetian Crisis of 2008 by the International Criminal Court: Risks for Russia

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ON JANUARY 27, 2016, Pre-Trial Chamber I of the International Criminal Court satisfied a request from the ICC prosecutor, Gambian national Fatou Bensouda, for authorizing an investigation into the 2008 "situation in Georgia," meaning a probe into alleged international crimes "in and around" South Ossetia, which the ICC, in line with the position of the majority of nations and international organizations, considers part of Georgia. Former ICC prosecutor Luis Moreno

Ocampo had begun a preliminary examination of the South Ossetian crisis on his own initiative while the Russian operation to force Georgia to end its armed action was still in progress.

Unlike the International Court of Justice and the ECHR, the ICC has no authority to prosecute nations - it "investigates and, where warranted, tries individuals charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community."

The South Ossetian crisis is the first event outside Africa to be taken up by the ICC since the court was set up in 2002.

According to the official Russian position, Russia was in a state of international armed conflict with Georgia from August 7 to August 12, 2008, after Georgian forces attacked Russian peacekeepers late on August 7.

All other war crimes and crimes against humanity investigated by the Chamber are imputed to the South Ossetian forces and "were reportedly committed with a view to forcibly expelling ethnic Georgians from the territory of South Ossetia in furtherance of the overall objective to change the ethnic composition of the territory, sever any remaining links with Georgia and secure independence."

The ICC does not normally prosecute suspected rank-and-file perpetrators of crimes or middle-ranking officials. It mainly takes action against top military or political leaders of countries or leaders of anti-government movements.

In the South Ossetia case, former South Ossetian president Eduard Kokoyty is highly likely to be among the accused: according to the ICC prosecutor, he oversaw a systematic campaign to expel ethnic Georgians from South Ossetia.

MOSCOW should take measures to protect Russian nationals from politicized prosecution by the ICC.

Since Russian armed forces are increasingly involved in peacekeeping and fighting international terrorism, it might be an advisable long-term objective to update programs of teaching international humanitarian law to Russian military and security personnel and civil servants by enlarging sections on international court practices.

Biometric Documents: Defense Against International Terrorism or Control Over the Individual?

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IT HAS BEEN TEN YEARS since biometric passports, international travel documents of a new type also known as e-passports or digital passports, came into wide use. Have they achieved their main declared goals of hindering international terrorism, illegal migration, and document forgery? To answer this question, we would have to look at the whole history of replacement of conventional passports with biometric ones.

Firstly, it was the U.S. idea to have biometric passports introduced globally. The United States was virtually pushing other countries to put e-passports into use as soon as possible. Under the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002, adopted on May 14 of that year, biometric identification was mandatory for unrestricted entry to the United States for a maximum period of 90 days for nationals of 27 countries that had visa exemption agreements with the United States.¹ The United States threatened to sever the visa exemption accords with countries that didn't adopt biometric identification systems by October 26, 2004.

Secondly, it was with the U.S. involvement that the practice was launched of providing biometric passports with inserted chips that were based on radio-frequency identification (RFID) technology, a wireless technology for the remote acquisition of data on a person without the latter being aware of this.

Implanting RFID tags in humans had many adversaries who believed that it might result in global surveillance and totalitarianism. The project was postponed in the fear of mass protests but wasn't abandoned.

Instead of being a means of suppressing international terrorism and document forgery, biometric technology has resulted in mass collection of personal data. The United States does this on the largest scale.

The introduction of biometric documents has led to serious violations of fundamental civil rights. Firstly, it creates presumption of guilt as any applicant for a passport or visa is seen as a potential terrorist - they have to go through a fingerprinting procedure.

If one has his/her data records distorted because of a technical glitch or a computer virus, or deliberately falsified, one may be put under a permanent visa ban and have to look for proof of his/her innocence.

No technology is ethically neutral, and effects of the use of any technology depend on its broad

political context. To ensure maximum advantages for the use of biometric technology in foreign policy and international practice, multilateral mechanisms should be built to take care not only of national and international but also of personal security. Such regulation is achievable through multilateral partnerships of governments, civil society, businesses, and scientists.

UN Groups of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security

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THE HISTORY of the UN groups of governmental experts on developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security (GGE's) goes back to November 29, 2001, to one in a long series of UN General.

Setting up the GGE was a logical outcome of work within the UN format to launch a new mechanism for consolidating international efforts to handle rapidly mounting threats and challenges in the information space.

Russia had taken its first steps to that end back in 1998, when it propounded its first draft resolution entitled Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security at the 53rd session of the UN General Assembly. This was the first page in the long history of UN debates on issues of information and telecommunications security.

It was logical, therefore, that the proposal for setting up a second GGE in 2009 was reiterated in subsequent Russia-initiated resolutions adopted at the 61st and 63rd sessions of the General Assembly between 2006 and 2008.

When the second GGE was convened eventually in November 2009, this agreement was a major stimulus for Russia, China, for their BRIC partners Brazil and India, all in all, four countries that were among the 15 states represented in the group.

Krutsikh was elected as chair of the second GGE as well. He tried to build a team of like-minded people who would be able to put their disagreements aside and focus on the main task, preparing a report to the UN Secretary-General.

There were heated debates over current and potential threats and ways of warding them off at all four meetings of the GGE. One stumbling block was the terminology to be used in the report. In a clash between fundamental attitudes, some of the group members insisted on "information security" while others wanted a narrower term, "cyber security." However, the experts were able to adopt a constructive attitude and agree on key concepts.

The history of the GGEs may become a history of the evolution of success. And, paradoxical as it may sound, a history of the future.

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