

## **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS: 2018: #5**

### **"OUR PEOPLE WANT RUSSIA TO BE A STRONG, INDEPENDENT AND PEACEFUL STATE"**

**Author: Vladimir Putin**

*President of the Russian Federation*

*Vladimir Putin took part in a meeting of ambassadors and permanent representatives of Russia at international organizations and associations, where he outlined the main goals of Russian diplomacy.*

*July 19, 2018, Moscow*

*URL: <http://en.kremlin.ru>*

COLLEAGUES, welcome to this traditional meeting.

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the leadership, staff and veterans of the diplomatic service for their efforts to protect Russia's national interests and for their contribution to international cooperation.

The Ministry's central office, our embassies and all other Russian missions abroad are acting professionally in a coordinated manner, fulfilling the tasks set before them. Russia is pursuing a responsible and independent foreign policy in a dynamically developing and eventful global situation.

Our people want Russia to be a strong, independent and peaceful state. We are open to partnerships, to mutually beneficial and constructive relations with all countries and regional associations.

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Russia will continue to defend the fundamental principles documented in the UN Charter, which are sovereignty, equality of states, non-interference in other countries' domestic affairs, and the just resolution of disputes. We believe that by observing international law and working together we can deal with the most complex world problems.

It was with Russia's decisive role that international terrorism, ISIL and other extremist groups suffered a crushing blow in Syria. This allowed Syria to maintain its statehood and create conditions for its economic recovery and the return of refugees.

With Russia's active diplomatic efforts, the Astana process is moving forward. The Syrian National Dialogue Congress held in Sochi earlier this year was a significant achievement that deserves the closest attention, study and support. These efforts are laying a legitimate foundation for Syria's revival.

Russia also proposed a solution for the Korean Peninsula involving collective efforts and dialogue. We joined forces with China to draft a plan for the gradual normalization of the situation there.

However, we have seen cases where agreements reached through concerted efforts were derailed overnight. I am referring to the unilateral U.S. decision to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear program.

Colleagues, our foreign policy efforts are not aimed at achieving some kind of speculative greatness or creating problems for others.

In the years to come, Russia must not only firmly establish itself among the world's top five economies, but also substantially improve the key standards related to the quality of life of its citizens. To achieve these strategic objectives, we must make full use of our foreign policy opportunities.

I would like to emphasize that all the business projects that we are implementing with Europe, including, for instance, Nord Stream 2, are solely commercial and economically viable; they are not politically charged and have no hidden agenda.

Russia is open to further contacts with the United States on an equal and mutually beneficial basis. This is what not only our people but the world as a whole need. As the world's largest nuclear powers, we have special responsibility for strategic stability and security.

Make no mistake: the country's leadership remains committed to ensuring the material well-being and enhancing the professional status of diplomats, as well as improving social security for Ministry workers. A number of decisions has been taken to this effect.

Let me emphasize that these efforts are aimed at ensuring that diplomats can exercise their professional duties in an enabling environment, which is extremely important in terms of increasing the efficiency of our foreign policy efforts in general.

## **ON THE SIDELINES OF THE CONFERENCE**

The Ninth Conference of Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives of Russia

### **Albania**

**Alexander Karpushin**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

ALBANIA is quite a small country with a population of about 2.5 million. While being a member of NATO with a key position on the map of the Balkans, it seeks to become a regional transit center and an energy hub for the region as it takes part in the construction of the Trans Adriatic Pipeline running through its territory. Albania today acts as a Western outpost, positioning itself as the leading pro-American and pro-European state in the Balkans, the core and curator of the so-called "Albanian political factor" in neighboring countries.

Possibilities for developing mutually beneficial cooperation between our two countries do exist, because most of the population wants to see our relations normalized, in contrast to the ruling elite, which fully abides by the principles of Euro-Atlantic solidarity.

I also want to emphasize that Albanians show a particular interest in our culture and love our literature, music, and art. In this respect, they equal or even surpass many of their neighbors in the region. Most well-known Albanian writers, painters, and musicians have studied in our country. In my opinion, we should take advantage of this, and humanitarian diplomacy is very appropriate in this context. We will promote the Russian language, our culture, and our literature. I think there is reason to believe that eventually we will be able to get our relations back on track.

### **Great Britain**

**Alexander Yakovenko**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

CONFERENCES like this one are held every two years. Their purpose is to analyze Russia's priorities in the main areas of foreign policy, to define further steps in Russian diplomacy, and to consider how we are addressing - and should address - our key tasks: ensuring national security, creating favorable external conditions for the country's development, and protecting the national interests of the Russian Federation on the basis of international law, on the principles of justice and equal cooperation between states. The President of Russia and members of government are taking part in the conference, which is why the ongoing discussions make a big contribution to shaping the country's foreign policy.

This year, the Conference of Ambassadors takes place in new political conditions. On the one hand, there are many who share our views in the international arena.

At the same time, there are powerful forces working against Russia and, consequently, against our foreign-policy line. Just as anti-Russian hysteria has become part of the political struggle in the United States, Britain's Conservative government has turned the fight against Russia into a key element of its foreign policy, launching a shameless propaganda campaign, making unfounded accusations, and expelling diplomats. The course they have taken is long-term and well-considered, and we cannot but resist. We do not seek to win a power confrontation but want all our partners to understand the new geopolitical reality. Conveying this reality to them is one of the key tasks of diplomacy, both traditional and public.

## **Venezuela**

**Vladimir Zayemsky**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Venezuela and concurrently to the Republic of Haiti and the Dominican Republic*

THE AGENDA for these conferences is always very reasonable, allowing us to share our experience with others and to get an idea of some new realities that we may not know as each of us works in a particular country. But most important of all, we have an opportunity to discuss what to do next. Naturally, the key event is our meeting with the President of Russia.

The situation in Venezuela is far from simple in both political and economic terms. As regards political life, society cannot find any approaches that would bring it closer to national reconciliation. It is extremely polarized.

Last year, there was an attempt to carry out a "color revolution" in Venezuela according to a perfectly familiar scenario. The Chavistas managed to extinguish the fire by holding elections to the Constituent Assembly, one of whose tasks is to amend or even to rewrite the Venezuelan Constitution.

After the failure of the attempted "color revolution," gubernatorial elections were held in the country, followed by local elections. In the final stretch of that election marathon, in May 2018, the incumbent president and an associate of Hugo Chávez, Nicolás Maduro, was re-elected for a second term. The political situation in the country has somewhat stabilized, although, of course, it is difficult to talk about stabilization in such a polarized society.

I want to say a few words about International Affairs. The fact that we get your journal in Spanish is of great benefit to us. We use it actively in both Venezuela and the Dominican Republic.

## **Vietnam**

**Konstantin Vnukov**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

AS LORD PALMERSTON's famous saying goes, "Nations have no permanent friends or allies, they only have permanent interests." This is an excellent phrase, but it should get us thinking about what our national interests actually are. This conference provides an opportunity to take a systemic approach to the following question: what are our main goals and interests today in accordance with Russia's strategy? President Vladimir Putin gave a very clear answer to this question. And when he defined the tasks facing the country, the government, and the Foreign Ministry, everything became systemic.

Such systemic guidelines give us a clear perspective not only on the overall situation, but also on our whole work, because the Asia-Pacific today is one of the key directions. It is the fastest-growing region undergoing major changes, and there is a fierce battle for influence over it.

It is time to stop thinking in stereotypes and abandon the belief that some things are permanent. We have always believed, ever since the days of the Soviet Union, that Vietnam and our other partners are a given and that nothing unexpected can ever happen here. But everything changes. Vietnam is also changing, and very dramatically. That is why there is no guarantee that we will always achieve success - not only in relations with Vietnam, but also with other countries. We must fight, especially since Vietnam is the fastest growing economy among the ASEAN countries.

We should be proactive in areas that resonate with the Vietnamese, both the government and the people.

## **Gabon**

**Dmitry Kurakov**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

WE HAVE EXCHANGED opinions about the conference with our colleagues. For us, the conference is always a kind of roadmap for the next two years, with instructions for action. We follow the guidelines set forth by the president and developed during breakout sessions. We will continue to act in accordance with these instructions and try to improve our work in our host countries, such as Gabon, my place of work.

Our bilateral relations have two key components: economic and cultural. Culture is what allows our host countries to gain a better understanding of Russia. In this area, we try to work along different lines. In Gabon, we use a format such as exhibitions of Russian art, and this year we have held two exhibitions.

Gabon is a country that looks forward to our cooperation with hope. This is exactly what the Gabonese president said at his meeting with Vladimir Putin: Africa is waiting for Russian business. And Russian business should take full advantage of African leaders' willingness to cooperate.

If we miss the opportunity to enter the African market today, we will lose this opportunity tomorrow, because Chinese companies are already working actively in Africa; French companies continue to use their reserves; the Americans are on their way; and companies from India, Morocco, Egypt, and Malaysia are very active on the continent.

We should probably change something in our approach to the African continent, which is still viewed from a position dating back half a century.

## **Guinea-Bissau**

**Alexander Yegorov**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

Russia and Guinea-Bissau established their relations at the time when the Guinean people were fighting for their national independence. The Bissau-Guineans have always valued the contribution of the Soviet Union to the construction of the statehood of Guinea-Bissau and to its independence. They appreciate the assistance that the Soviet Union was giving the country up until 1991.

Education is the main area of our cooperation. It has traditionally been a field of cooperation between us.

Altogether we have trained more than 3,000 Bissau-Guineans in Russia. Many of them work at embassies and international organizations. On some occasions, more than one third of the Bissau-Guinean government were graduates of Soviet or Russian institutions of higher education.

Fishing has always been another important field of our cooperation. We have a basic agreement and a supplementary protocol, but the latter expired in 2016. There are very difficult negotiations underway. The new Bissau-Guinean government has said it's open to cooperation, which gives us hope.

In January 2018, our countries signed a two-year plan for joint action to combat drug trafficking. The plan involves exchanges of information and an educational program - the training of police personnel.

Guinea-Bissau is a small but interesting country. When you come there, you immediately notice friendly attitudes to Russia. Both older and young people are friendly to us. I've been working in Guinea-Bissau for three years but haven't seen a single negative article about our country in the Bissau-Guinean media during this time.

## **The European Union**

**Vladimir Chizhov**, *Permanent Representative*

THIS IS the ninth conference. I have taken part in all of them, and so I can make comparisons. I think this conference has been sufficiently focused on key problems that face the Russian diplomatic service. Naturally, the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, gave us guidelines for future work in his speech.

All the participants who have taken the floor made largely the same assessments - they spoke of increasing instability and potential dangers in international relations. Fundamental principles of international law are not even being revised but rather are being watered down. Let me give you a specific example. It happens increasingly often during debates both within and outside Europe that some speakers, instead of making references to international law as such, cite a so-called rules-based international order. This gets reflected in official documents and is used as a reference point in negotiations. One wonders what these rules are, who sets them and who approves them. This is a dangerous substitute for international law because it erodes the pillars that, in spite of the Cold War and all the rifts and rapprochements, have to this day carried the entire international order that took shape after World War II.

I can assert publicly that relations with the European Union, which are my own sphere, are abnormal.

This doesn't mean there are no relations with the EU at all. There is a dialogue underway, and trade is going on. I've heard some of the ambassadors say proudly that trade between their countries and Russia has increased 17% in volume and, according to general statistics, trade with the EU has grown 22%. This confirms that the EU remains our number one trading and economic partner and the biggest source of investment in the Russian economy despite all the sanctions.

What is negative is that the EU has frozen the entire architecture of our strategic partnership, which took years and a lot of work to develop.

In general, I would reiterate a traditional position - I would call for a more pragmatic and not excessively emotional attitude to the EU, and for avoiding the extremes of idealizing or demonizing the EU.

## **Spain**

**Yury Korchagin**, *Ambassador to Spain and Andorra*

Spain is a dynamic country. A lot happens there that's interesting. The main political outcome of the past few months is a change of cycle.

Of course, it will take time to adjust the system, to replace personnel in individual departments, but this is happening. It won't affect the rhythm of our bilateral relations. Recently, our interagency groups on counterterrorism had very effective consultations.

I want to thank International Affairs. We use it to exchange opinions, which undoubtedly enriches us. We also use this journal to support Russian language centers that exist at some universities, we deliver it to libraries that are run by Russian-speaking communities and that accumulate materials in the Russian language, and we also supply other organizations with it.

I suggest discussing that one of the next few issues include an item about the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), which is a United Nations agency and has its headquarters in Spain. The next session of the UNWTO General Assembly will take place in Russia for the first time in the history of the organization. The UNWTO member states voted for a resolution to this effect recently. The session will be held in St. Petersburg in 2019.

## **China**

**Audrey Denisov**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

THE BIENNIAL ambassadorial conferences that are hosted by the Foreign Ministry have become a stable practice.

This practice is being improved. At first two days were enough for us, then we extended it to three, but that wasn't enough either, and now we take a week, in fact.

Of course, the speech of the Russian president has been the acme of the meeting. One always needs clarifications, one needs to know what should be prioritized, and it's very important for each of us when all such explanations are made at the top level of state authority because it enables us to accurately verify, analyze whether we are doing everything correctly.

The president dwelled on a whole range of subjects, including social security for Foreign Ministry personnel posted abroad. Each of us is at the head of a staff, sometimes small, a few dozen people, and sometimes large, as in China, - hundreds of people. All of them are people with their own life, which is far from easy because of the nature of our work, with relatives and children whom they have left behind at home. Surely social security is one of our concerns. I think that all our people who are abroad have heard and have been satisfied with the president's words. It is important that events such as this conference are sources of confidence - we people who are posted on the front line abroad have a secure rear and wise commanders.



The economic sessions, in my view, have been very useful for all of us. We ambassadors have questions about how our country will be organizing its foreign economic activities, and we have received some guidelines from the most influential leaders of the economic bloc of our government. That is very important.

Finally, everyone agrees that the session about the media, about public information efforts, has been the most interesting one and has brought together the largest number of people. That's surely an area that poses great challenges to our diplomacy.

As regards Russia's interaction with the People's Republic of China, our two countries have built a harmonious edifice of bilateral relations. China is a key political and economic partner of our country, and a partner from the point of view of building harmonious cultural relations and exchanges. I believe that literally everything about our relations is important.

It's important that contacts between our leaders are characterized by enviable and ongoing regularity.

China has stably been our number one trading partner for quite many years, and I don't think this will change in the foreseeable future.

Of course, in China we work in a more comfortable information environment. That is a fact. It is our task to boost our efforts to deliver accurate information about Russia to the friendly Chinese audience. It's a problem for us that sometimes the Chinese have somewhat outdated perceptions of our country. These perceptions go back to the 1990s, but that still hasn't come home to all our partners. Our task is to tell not just the truth about Russia in general but also the truth about present-day Russia.

## **The United Nations**

**Vasily Nebenzya**, *Permanent Representative*

THIS CONFERENCE has given me marvelous impressions. We always wait impatiently for these conferences. They offer wonderful opportunities to talk to other diplomats, listen to intelligent people, exchange impressions, receive new guidelines and advice, share one's experience, and receive approval for some points. They are very useful events.

At the United Nations, where I work, we have warm human relationships with one another. I've spoken about this repeatedly, and I wasn't putting up a show either. We treat one another with respect in the Security Council, in the diplomatic corps, and in the embassies. We are on very good terms with everyone. As you would remember, Saint Paul said that you should hate a sin but not the person who has committed it. We follow this principle. If I'm fighting a diplomatic battle of some kind, it's not because I have a

personal dislike for someone. We dislike U.S. policies on many issues, and therefore we honestly and sincerely speak about it. It's part of our life.

Life is always interesting in the United Nations because it's a place where all global problems are dealt with. We don't spend a day without dealing with a hot topic of some kind. Half of our agenda is taken up by numerous African issues, although that is unlikely to be obvious to everyone. On the one hand, Africa is a continent with good prospects, but, on the other, many of its countries face grave problems. In the Security Council, we are jointly taking every possible measure to prevent the continent from going ablaze. Africa is a continent that is plagued with terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking. We deal with these problems permanently.

## **Poland**

**Sergey Andreyev**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

RUSSIA and Poland are neighbors, and, regardless of the state of bilateral political relations, there are many practical problems that need joint consideration and solution.

Russian-Polish trade halved during the crisis of 2014-2015, but trade in sectors that don't come under Western sanctions against Russia or Russian countermeasures is being restored due to the favorable international economic environment. Russian and Polish agencies that oversee road, rail and air transportation normally manage to achieve mutually acceptable pragmatic solutions even in difficult situations. The Russia-Poland Cross-Border Cooperation Program for the period up to 2020 has been approved by Russia, the European Union and Poland and has begun to be implemented in 2018.

However, none of this changes the general negative atmosphere. Although there remains a large potential for mutually beneficial Russian-Polish cooperation, political will is needed to make such cooperation a reality, whereas we can't see the Polish leadership showing any such will. Warsaw has frozen the political dialogue between our countries, lobbies the West to keep its sanctions against Russia in force, fans an anti-Russian information war and fears of a supposed Russian threat, tries to rewrite history in an anti-Russian spirit, has launched mass-scale demolition of monuments to Soviet liberators, and expels from Poland Russian academics, journalists and public figures who make public statements that run against the political postulates of the Polish government.

We naturally monitor the attitudes of the Polish leadership and draw conclusions. We react to unfriendly Polish moves in commensurate and tough ways. Our premise is that Russia doesn't need normal relations between us any more than Poland does. If our Polish partners are not yet ready for such relations, we'll wait. We are patient enough.

## Transnistria

**Sergey Gubarev**, *Ambassador at Large*

THIS TRADITIONAL CONFERENCE of ambassadors and permanent representatives, the ninth one in this series, is undoubtedly a useful event for various reasons.

Naturally, the central point of each of these conferences is the speech of the Russian president, in which he assesses our work and the situation in the world and highlights matters that we should focus on in the foreseeable future.

My field is the Transnistrian settlement process - I am the political representative of the Russian Federation at the Permanent Conference on Political Issues that is part of the format of this process. I'm very glad to see that some real progress has been made over the past few months. It has been possible to make both parties see that the ultimate purpose of the negotiations is to make life easier for common people on both sides of the Dniester.

I can mention several recent achievements. One of them is an agreement to normalize the functioning of Moldovan schools in Transnistria where written Moldovan language is based on the Latin alphabet. Another is progress on a proposal for the apostilling of Transnistrian certificates of higher education - the problem of seeking international recognition for such certificates has been put on the agenda for negotiations between Moldova and Transnistria after multiple appeals from Transnistrian graduates.

Yet another achievement is a process to establish regulations to normalize the use by Moldovan farmers of plots of land that are formally situated on the territory of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic, the so-called return to the 2006 mechanism. As far as I know, there has been progress on this issue but maybe not as fast as one would have liked it to be. The main thing, though, is that there is progress in place.

Telecommunications are one more point on which progress has been made. It's mainly a commercial issue. Transnistrian and Moldovan political structures have put together a roadmap for negotiations with two main specialist companies operating in that region. I hope that diligent work will make the parties see the necessity to cooperate on this issue.

And, of course, it was a very symbolic decision to open a road bridge across the Dniester between the villages of Bychok on the Transnistrian side and Gura Bîcului on the Moldovan side.

Of course, a resolution of the UN General Assembly on the "withdrawal of all foreign military forces from the territory of Moldova" that was proposed by Moldova and represents an openly provocative initiative doesn't make the situation easier. It's

obvious that the aim of this resolution is to remove the Operational Group of Russian Forces from Transnistria. The group guards artillery ammunition depots that are located there and are a legacy of the USSR. Moves like this hamper the settlement process.

## **Syria**

**Alexander Kinshchak**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

IN SUMMING UP this conference, let me say that it was very pleasant to hear the president of Russia make a high assessment of the performance of our embassy. Vladimir Putin pointed out not only the successes of our military but also the work of Russian diplomats in Syria. That is extremely important for us.

Developments in Syria are, by and large, following a positive course. One feels optimistic and hopes that everything will end well in the near future.

This was mainly bloodless liberation. It was achieved through negotiations and conciliatory action on the part of the population of cities, towns and villages, which persuaded militants to accept terms set by the government.

One more disputable territory is the northeast, where, with the support of the Americans, the Kurds have got settled with their armed groups. There's a couple of NATO countries present there as well. The government has been seeking an agreement with them, and not unsuccessfully either, - the Kurds are restoring economic ties and removing their separatist symbols. In general, there is a positive trend in place. I hope that in the long run peace will come back to my beloved Syria. This will be good for all of us because it will open new opportunities for trade and economic cooperation.

I'm a regular reader of International Affairs. There are very good selections of articles there. The authors are talented professionals. It's a great help to me, a source of information that broadens my outlook. Thank you for a very good job.

## **Slovakia**

**Alexey Fedotov**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

AS REGARDS this ambassadorial conference, I can say it has been structured better than the conference of two years ago. The speakers dealt with practical matters without adducing any theoretical points. The conference has made clear that there exists effective interaction between the Foreign Ministry, on the one hand, and Russian missions abroad and agencies within Russia, on the other. This interaction is marked by synergy that stems from understanding what objectives have been set and from a desire to work for them. We all realize that our external environment is increasingly complicated. We need to move together dynamically in the same direction. What has

been said at the conference by various speakers - people working in the humanities, people working in the sphere of information, specialists in counterterrorism - gave me the impression that this need is well understood. That is my chief impression of this conference.

In Slovakia, a lot is happening - the change of government, liberal forces are putting powerful pressure, although many people come to realize that the liberals are not the mainstream. As for Russia's relations with Slovakia, everything is developing more or less normally in spite of quite strong external attempts to push Slovakia away even from what are traditional areas in our relations.

The main point I want to make is that both Russia and Slovakia want to preserve something that has taken years or decades to create. They also want to build up their interaction in various fields. In that sense, Slovakia is a very interesting and promising partner, a partner that is pleasant to work with.

We are very pleased with our cooperation with the journal International Affairs. The fifth conference that had been organized by International Affairs stirred a lot of interest in the journal in Slovakia and enabled the editors of the journal to understand the Slovak public better.

We also use the journal as a floor for discussing key international issues.

## **Turkey**

**Alexey Yerkhov**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

THIS conference, as the previous ones, has been very useful and interesting, and has had a rich agenda. Heads of Russian diplomatic missions need to exchange opinions. It is also important to hear what the head of state and members of government think about what should be done in foreign policy in general and in each of its specific fields. The fact that political dialogue has been taken to the highest level of state authority means that the government doesn't slacken off and keeps working hard. The Foreign Ministry, for example, sets foreign policy goals and is a coordinating body. Our economic agencies have their own tasks to carry out.

As for Russian-Turkish relations, there are bilateral strategic projects underway - the Akkuyu nuclear power plant, the TurkStream natural gas pipeline and others. They are all very important long-term projects that can benefit our relations very much. There's a great deal of work underway, and there are some results already. Our trade has increased in volume, more Russian tourists visit Turkey, and cultural exchanges have grown in scale.

The year 2019 will be the Russian Culture and Tourism Year in Turkey and the Turkish Culture and Tourism Year in Russia. Turks also come to Russia as tourists but, of course, not in such big numbers as Russian tourists going to Turkey.

Each conference is the quintessence of our shared vision of the global situation and our bilateral relations with other countries.

## **France**

**Alexey Meshkov**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

THESE ambassadorial conferences are a good tradition that has existed for a couple of decades already. Each such conference is the most important event of a two-year period for us. Above all, it provides us with vision and enables us to receive guidelines on principal international problems from the leadership of the country.

Of course, the main agendas are traditional sets of subjects.

Nevertheless, the nature of some of the discussions has changed radically because the international situation has changed seriously over the past few years. Let me point out that, while the conferences themselves last several days, preparations for them, including in the central apparatus of the Foreign Ministry, start a long time in advance. Therefore, each conference is the quintessence of our shared vision of the global situation and our bilateral relations with other countries. So, each conference is a very important event for all the ambassadors.

As for the journal *International Affairs*, I value it a great deal. It's a very useful journal. It is largely a unique periodical because on its pages you find assessments and analysis that have been made by people who work in your own field, members of the political science community. It's a necessary, serious journal, and I wish it every success.

## **Central African Republic**

**Sergey Lobanov**, *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary*

I HAPPENED to be in Central African Republic at a turning point in its history. My long period of ambassadorial service there has included what was a difficult time for the country - an aggravation of the domestic political situation that ended up in a coup several years ago and then a long, difficult recovery from the crisis. This transitional period ended recently. It eventually enabled the country to hold legitimate elections, and now it has a legitimate president, a government that has been appointed in the way established by law, and a legitimate parliament, in other words all legitimate state structures.

Some consequences of the coup are undoubtedly still around. There has been a moment when up to 80% of the territory of the country was outside government control. The army, police and gendarmerie in fact disintegrated. So were vital sectors such as the health service and the education system. Today, the new government faces the fundamental practical tasks of rebuilding the system of economic governance and disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating the militants of the numerous armed groups.

It is very important - it has become especially noticeable over the past year - that Russia is energetically returning to Africa. The rebuilding of the country requires an efficient professional army, and Russia supplies Central African Republic with armaments through legal channels and with the approval of specialized structures of the United Nations. Russia also trains personnel for the armed forces of the country. This is becoming a routine, stable process. Over the past few months, Russian instructors have completed training 800 military personnel, and are due to finish training another 400 soon.

I think that we hold an absolutely correct and just position on African problems. But, of course, African problems need primarily African solutions, although help from the rest of the world is needed to solve them as well.

I'd like to say a few words about the journal International Affairs. This journal has accompanied me practically throughout my adult life, at least throughout my professional life. It was with me during my period of research work and has been with me during my diplomatic career. The journal, which has a long history, is always up to date. It contains high-standard and diversified analytics, and one can always find personal views and interesting press reviews in it as well.

If I were writing an article now I would probably entitle it "Central African Republic: Halfway Down the Road." I think one needs to be an optimist, because it would be difficult to work if you took a largely pragmatic but non-optimistic approach. There can be no miracles, but there's very much we can do by joining forces.

## **"WE WOMEN ARE AN INCREASINGLY SIGNIFICANT MOTIVE FORCE OF THE HISTORICAL PROCESS"**

**Author: Valentina Matviyenko**

*Chairwoman, Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation*

Women play a dynamically increasing role in all spheres of public life. It is a global trend that nobody seriously denies. We women are not just an inseparable part but an increasingly significant motive force of the historical process. Just try to leave women

out of the range of factors that drive humankind forward - you'll get a negative number, not movement but stagnation, even reverse movement. Unlike what was the case between 100 and 150 years ago, in the present-day world the essence of relations between men and women is not subordination but partnership. This is a historic change representing a new phase of civilization.

But this doesn't happen automatically. Even countries that have indisputably made great progress toward gender equality haven't fully gotten rid of sexism and gender discrimination in employment, education, wage levels, job promotion opportunities and politics, and haven't been able to fully prevent violence in families. And that not to mention quite many countries that, at best, are only taking their first steps toward women's equality.

There still are quite many problems, and to solve them, women and women's organizations in all countries need to combine forces. The First Eurasian Women's Forum, which was held in St. Petersburg three years ago, made clear that the initiative of the Federation Council for women all over the world to join forces to address this objective need had fallen on fertile ground. The response exceeded our expectations. The forum participants were unanimous that there should be regular forums in this format. They also put forward a proposal for setting up a permanent venue for women to openly discuss problems they were concerned about. This proposal materialized as the Eurasian Women's Community website. Over its three years of existence, the website has become a popular and influential venue for bringing together international women's movement activists.

I can say with all due responsibility that there are imperative issues on the forum agenda. Most importantly, in terms of its priority items, the agenda perfectly reflects challenges that face the international community as a whole.

In my view, in the early 1990s, women's movements in what one normally calls developed countries entered a new phase. Since then, these countries have brought out laws and set up institutions to ensure practically complete legal equality between men and women. Officially, discrimination against women is eliminated. Naturally, there still is work underway on supplementary legislation to prevent any violations of this formal equality.

Labor rights are where gender discrimination takes its worst forms. In Russia and other countries, including Western, there are instances where women are discriminated against in seeking employment, find it harder than men to receive promotion in their jobs and to make career progress, and are paid lower wages than men.

We should keep working to reduce this gap. The Federation Council is willing to support initiatives to that effect. I'm convinced that today control by the state and civil society of the enforcement of laws on women's rights should be the main task in seeking gender equality, an end to all discrimination against women.



Let me once again say something that I've said repeatedly: the family as an institution changes but does not disappear. Neither does the woman's mission of being a wife, mother, and homemaker, a mission that underlies our civilization and is reflected in its best characteristics.

Unquestionably, humankind is experiencing deep-going changes. But new threats and challenges don't justify a disdainful or arrogant attitude to the experience that has been accumulated. Civilization is not only technology or industry. It also includes a moral and spiritual wealth and social institutions that are based on it and have been tested out by the entire human history. We have no guidelines that are more reliable than these. And these guidelines provide incontrovertible proof that no values are higher than maternity, building a loving family and bringing up children. Nothing else than the family with its values can make this possible.

## **"IT IS BECOMING HARDER TO TRUST THE AMERICANS"**

**Author: Sergey Ryabkov**

*Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation*

There is one problem, which is related to the fact that anti-Russian sentiments in the U.S. today have affected such broad sections of the government apparatus and the political class that almost right after the top-level contact, we began to see attempts to revise possible agreements. So, we do not understand in what direction we should move in order to get along.

At least, there are ongoing attempts to move away from the positions that could have been reached since the Helsinki meeting. These attempts will continue, especially under the current circumstances, when a fierce domestic political struggle is escalating in the U.S., with both parties playing for high stakes. Unfortunately, Russia is being portrayed as an enemy, which our opponents are exploiting in the most cynical way.

Needless to say, this is a factor that has a negative, destructive impact on our relations, to put it mildly.

Another equally difficult aspect of the current situation is the obvious bent of our Washington partners for unilateral approaches: America first. Only those decisions are made that are necessary and important for the U.S., regardless of everything.

The Americans' disregard for the opinion of others is simply off the charts. They are intoxicated with unilateral approaches, and the international temperature is rising due to the toxins disseminated by U.S. foreign policy.

For a long time we have observed the U.S.'s obvious desire to secure a dominant position in outer space, including in military space. I would like to draw your attention to

the fact that the concept of "military space" is much broader than everything related to the placement of strike weapons in outer space. Space has been already militarized in terms of intelligence, communications, surveillance, and control. All countries that have appropriate capabilities and resources have been doing this for several decades. Strictly speaking, we understand that it is impossible to do without this and are also developing such systems.

There are different ways of ensuring national security. Look at what is going on in the United States. The impression is that the Americans are ready to impose sanctions at the drop of a hat and that sanctions are the only foreign policy tool there is. The U.S. is reluctant to reach agreements with anyone on the basis of compromise. It seeks to dictate its will to everyone - be it in world trade, security or regional conflicts. Sanctions - not necessarily direct, possibly indirect sanctions - often become the means of forcing other countries to follow the U.S. lead.

We believe that after the Russian president, in his address to the Federal Assembly, announced the development of new types of weapons, many people began to see the situation in the world from a different perspective.

Russia believes in the strict and full implementation of the Minsk package of measures. This involves certain steps that Kiev is reluctant to take. No matter how much the Americans might say that black is white and vice versa, there is no getting away from the facts.

We are hearing numerous statements from the U.S. special representative for Ukraine, who is clearly playing on Kiev's field. All of this goes to show just how reluctant the Americans are to seek compromise as a method of solving problems as part of their course toward pressure and unilateral measures.

We are pestering the U.S. authorities, trying to get them to ease the conditions of our compatriots' confinement at the very least. There are more high-profile cases, like the ones you have mentioned, and there are less resounding cases, but we have not abandoned anyone to the mercy of U.S. prison administrations, migration authorities, or whoever.

## **A NEW WORLD SYSTEM, OR A WORLD WITHOUT A HEGEMON**

**Author: A. Borisov**

*Professor, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Affairs, Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Doctor of Science (History); albor@rambler.ru*

THE STATE of the world and, frequently, the course of history depended on the foundation on which peace on Earth was based - either on international balance or on omnipotence of another hegemon. Today, the Atlantic circles of different levels have adopted another propagandist mantra: international relations would be disrupted catastrophically or, worse still, slide into global chaos if the United States moves away (or forced to move away) from global domination.

We have already learned from history that any world order is relative and comparatively short. Starting with Antiquity, the best minds have been dreaming about an ideal world order, perpetual peace on Earth and harmonious relations between states. Reality was and remains different. The history of the world order was written by the bloodshed in big and small wars, the "game of the thrones" for domination, the never-ending replacement of leaders, triumphs of victors, and tragedies of the vanquished.

One cannot but wonder: how come that after so many years of deliberations mankind has not arrived at a common opinion? The variety of historical situations, relevant examples and rich historical experience means that there is no "magic formula" of an ideal world order accepted by all.

World history has clearly demonstrated that peace established under the aegis of a state that claims hegemony is never firm and never long-lived because the potential hegemon pursues plundering and occupation of its neighbors and rivals. The Roman Empire that, having defeated Carthage, knew no rivals in the pre-Christian world but nevertheless collapsed several centuries later under the burden of internal contradictions and external wars.

THE EUROPEAN BALANCE established at the Vienna Congress in 1815 by the powers that had defeated Napoleon turned out to be amazingly long-lived: for nearly 100 years, the Old World lived in peace. It looked as if the Europeans, who still called the tune in world politics, had finally found the key to a firm world order and entered the new age brimming with optimism. They learned the lesson of their past: balance of power should be maintained while disagreements should be resolved on time by diplomatic means.

FOREIGN POLICY of the United States changed to a much greater extent than the foreign policies of all states that had fought in the war.

According to American historiography, the results of World War II transformed the United States, a prewar regional power, into a global power.

In retrospect, the Soviet-American bipolarity in the nuclear age looked as a sustainable variant of the world order despite the risks and the situations in which mankind came too close to a nuclear catastrophe (during the Caribbean Crisis of 1962).

The Cold War was buried with a lot of pomp; America's foreign policy acquired such new pillars as triumphalism, the liberal world order, the "Washington Consensus," and globalization under the U.S. aegis.

Very much like many times before, the victor immediately acquired a crowd of enthusiastic supporters convinced that the "benevolent" American guidance would make the world a much safer place.

Very soon, however, many of them realized that the "benevolent hegemon" was in fact egotistical and unmanageable. The old truth - power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely - perfectly fitted domestic and foreign policies and was reconfirmed in the unipolar world. At the early stages (especially under the Clinton Administration), the United States had demonstrated moderation and the readiness to rely on "soft power." With time, however, Washington was consolidating its domination and tightening its policies.

At the turn of the 21st century and very much in line with the logic of politics based on strength, the United States started using military force in the Balkans, Afghanistan, in the Middle East, and North Africa under the pretext of establishing liberal order and relying on the right to humanitarian intervention.

As could be expected, the unipolar world was becoming increasingly vulnerable: America's military, financial and economic capabilities proved to be inadequate to keep it safe and intact; meanwhile, new rivaling power centers appeared and were consolidating their strength.

WITH THE HEGEMON prepared to take into consideration the interests of its partners and to trim, to a certain extent, its ambitions for the sake of greater aims shared by all humanity, unipolarity could have developed into a foundation of a new sustainable world order. However, this is an ideal and, therefore, imaginative picture. In real life, the winner is never inclined toward self-restriction; it is guided by the right of the strongest that by definition "takes all."

Today, nearly thirty years after the Soviet Union's disintegration, when sovereign Russia as its descendant replaced it on the international arena, we have accumulated enough facts to say that Washington's shortsighted approach to its relations with Russia was a grave strategic error the repercussions of which have not yet been fully comprehended.

THE 21ST CENTURY is neither an apotheosis of the unipolar world nor triumph of the liberal world order predicted by Washington when the Cold War became history. The U.S. has obviously overestimated its potential and underestimated the progress of other players involved in world politics.

The end of a certain epoch, that at the dawn of American history Franklin compared with sunset, is not the end of the world.

## THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE: TRENDS AND ANTI-TRENDS

**Author: A. Orlov**

*Director, Institute of International Studies, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation;  
orlov\_a@mgimo.ru*

WORLD HISTORY is a nonlinear process. This is a fact. It moves from one point of tension to another, each of them of crucial importance: they set the main trends of world processes for many decades to come. Today, very much like as in the past, Russia has found itself in the epicenter of global processes and under multi-vectoral collective pressure of the West. The future of Russia, and mankind for that matter, depends on its ability to survive under this unprecedented pressure. This is not an exaggeration.

Western policy relies on economic sanctions and mounting military pressure to strangle Russia, to isolate it politically and undermine its internal stability.

The deep-cutting systemic crisis of the Western civilizational model, that the West, as could be expected, refuses to admit and the possibility of which is rejected outright, is one of the main reasons why the world has been confronted by the highly contradictory, barely predictable and aggressive policy of the collective West led by the United States.

Today, fake information is treated as evidence and accepted as arguments on the strength of which armed force can be used against sovereign states. The international law, the result of many decades of development before it acquired its final shape, is crumbling. Trade wars that only recently looked impossible within the WTO are pushing the world back to the Middle Ages.

The Western political elite are consistently degrading, which is a pity. Today, people are brought to the political Olympus by chance; they do not fit the demands of "big politics"; they are nothing but "cooks who can govern the state" who use state posts to lord it over the world which they do with maximal pleasure and minimal responsibility.

Russia's ill-wishers tied together by the anti-Russian chain are afraid of Russia's resurgence and spare no effort to prevent it.

Recently, united Europe has been demonstrating, though cautiously, dissatisfaction with the brutal behavior of its strategic ally on the other side of the Atlantic. Let's see how long the European Fronde will last and how it will end.

Russia is tested for survivability; its adversaries are trying to weaken it so that to push it into the ranks of powers of secondary importance. We cannot accept this; we should pass the test with flying colors; we should win to become a strong and prosperous state with sustainable, modern and dynamically developing economy, high living standards,

high intellectual, moral and spiritual levels of its citizens, strong defense system based on the latest achievements of military thought and active foreign policy able to multiply the number of our friends beyond our borders.

## **PEACE OR WAR IN CYBERSPACE?**

**Author: Alexander Zinchenko**, *Professor, Leading Expert, Center for International Information Security and Scientific and Technological Policy, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Doctor of Science (History)*

**Anastasia Tolstukhina**, *staff editor at International Affairs, Candidate of Science (Political Science)*

INFORMATION and communication technology (ICT) plays an unprecedented role in today's world, but cyberspace is clearly lacking in security mechanisms that can guarantee stable and sustained world development.

Insufficient information security is a barrier to investment in high-tech sectors. Digital technology is a hostage to the absence of internationally accepted rules of behavior in cyberspace.

All countries without exception are increasingly vulnerable to cyber threats. The international community needs to join forces to build a reliable information security system, but instead individual states are pursuing policies that make cyberspace even less secure.

The United States is undoubtedly a global ICT leader. However, over the past few years, it has increasingly demonstrated an open desire to use ICT for military purposes. It has been developing military ICTs and intensively militarizing cyberspace, thereby unleashing a cyber arms race. There is ample evidence of this.

In 2009, the Pentagon set up a body to direct cyberspace operations, the United States Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM), and put it in full-scale service the next year. Cyber Command is authorized to conduct both defensive and offensive operations. Its decisions are to be based on reports from the National Security Agency (NSA).

The New York Times has cited current and former U.S. officials as warning that U.S. attacks against foreign networks may provoke "retaliatory strikes against American banks, dams, financial markets or communications networks."<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Cyber Command admits that its strategy poses diplomatic risks because, according to what it

calls "new vision" of Cyber Command, it is by no means terrorists, hackers or common criminals that are the United States' main adversaries but states - China, Russia, Iran and others.

The American use of Stuxnet against Iran in 2011 was, as it were, a cyber Hiroshima and an alarm signal to the entire international community.

The United States is going out of its way to monopolize cyberspace. It is an increasingly intensive enterprise, and what makes it particularly dangerous are Trump's initiatives to do away with the traditional system of White House control of U.S. offensive and defensive cyber activities while a system that is going to replace it is still essentially in embryo.

Nearly 20 years ago, Russia became the first country to sound the alarm at the United Nations about threats that were germinating in cyberspace. Moscow put forward a breakthrough initiative for a guarantee of international information security - a draft UN General Assembly resolution entitled Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security.

The Russian position amounts to the principle that no military or political conflicts in cyberspace are acceptable and that therefore any doctrine declaring the use of force in cyberspace a fair method must be rejected.

Russia stands for a digital world order that is based on equality and justice and guarantees the possibility of advancing national interests to all countries regardless of their level of technological development.

Future reactions in the United Nations to Russia's information security initiatives will make clear who really wants peace in cyberspace and who uses manipulation and fake concerns as a screen for plans to unleash a cyberwar. Maintenance of peace in cyberspace is the responsibility of each sovereign member of the international community.

## **INTEGRATION PROCESSES IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION: RUSSIA AND ASEAN**

**Author: A. Sinitsyn**

*Associate Professor at the Department of English, Diplomatic Academy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Candidate of Science (Political Science);  
alnasina@live.ru*

MANY EXPERTS call the 21st century an era of integration and unification. Today, national economies are moving towards integration with each other, gradually forming a common market with more intensive movement of goods, capital, labor, services, and information.

There are few states in the world not involved in regional or subregional integration processes. Many states give up national sovereignty in favor of an integration arrangement with other states. Since the economy is the main driver of integration, its purpose is to increase the economic efficiency of production. Considering the integration processes under way in the Asia-Pacific Region (APR), the region's strategic importance from a geopolitical perspective has steadily increased.

Russia has not remained on the sidelines of these processes. For all the difficulties and uncertainties of Russia's relations with Europe and the United States, it has continued to play an important role in the APR both owing to its geographical position and from a political point of view. Along with the most significant players in the region, which undoubtedly include the United States, China, and Japan, the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are ever more prominent in the political landscape of the APR.

The ASEAN countries recognize the fact that Russia's political presence and involvement in regional integration processes is a necessary condition for maintaining the balance of power in the region, as well as for the sustainable economic development and security of the APR countries

Russia, like the ASEAN countries, has its political interests in the APR. The main lines of policy in ensuring Russian interests in the process of Asia-Pacific integration include, first and foremost, a reduction in the U.S. military presence in the subregion and its replacement by the development of economic relations with ASEAN countries.

Russia keeps emphasizing ASEAN's important role in regional development and integration processes in the APR.

Annual Russia-ASEAN foreign ministers' meetings are regarded as the most significant instrument of political dialogue.

In this area, it is also necessary to deepen Russia-ASEAN ties by stepping up efforts to develop programs for training highly skilled personnel for ASEAN and by expanding exchange of specialists and students.

The Russia-ASEAN partnership, given political will on both sides, can meet the challenges of the changing Asia-Pacific Region. Regarding each other as equal partners, Russia and ASEAN have sufficient resources and technical potential to reverse the emerging trend towards a "war of all against all." The economic dialogue in



Sochi on the prospects of economic cooperation between the EAEU, the SCO, and ASEAN creates the conditions for effective solutions in this area.

## **ALTHOUGH VERY DIFFERENT, THE BRICS MEMBERS STICK TOGETHER**

**Author: Ye. Astakhov**

*Professor, Department of Diplomacy, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Candidate of Science (History); djpc@mgimo.ru*

THE RECENT DYNAMICS of world processes has confirmed that unipolar model is unable to cope with the global governance: the current financial institutions, the dollar system that de facto serves the interests of the United States, are gradually exhausting their resources.

The struggle between the financial and industrial elites inside the United States and the rising wave of disagreements between Washington and Western Europe do nothing good to the unipolar world.

In this context, BRICS has become more visible: there is a clear awareness that the system of world governance should be reformed.

These prospects, however, are not accepted as an axiom by many people both inside Russia and outside it.

The Russian "Westerners" prefer to define BRICS as an association of potentially important countries that so far are trailing behind the West. China, India and Russia are perceived by them as nations with lower civilizational statuses.

The foreign policy course of BRICS is also criticized as not supported by an adequate economic weight indispensable for independent foreign policy let alone confrontation with the "civilized" community.

THOSE who support BRICS are very optimistic about its prospects for the following reasons.

BRICS maintains that all cooperation between countries should be based on the respect for their sovereignties, their cultural and civilizational identities.

Its members represent all continents, which is highly symbolic and reflects the interests of the entire developing world outside the borders of the "golden billion." It is not a different "camp" but rather part of the world free from the Euro-Atlantic bloc discipline.

At the same time, BRICS and SCO, for that matter, are two developing integration structures in which the U.S. is not involved.

IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, BRICS has been concentrating on economic interaction, a highly positive side of its activities.

By widening its foreign economic ties according to the "integration of integrations" formula, the association will consolidate its geopolitical positions through cooperation with MERCOSUR in South America (promoted by Brazil as one of its leaders), the African Union (with the help of South Africa), integrational organizations in Asia (ASEAN in particular), and the Eurasian Economic Union.

The "pro" and "contra" arguments discussed above suggest that the turbulent international situation demands not only more active multi-vectoral efforts to consolidate the association's political and economic influence. Much should be done to improve the quality of information used - both inside BRICS and outside it - to cast doubt on its aims and its philosophy. The member states should pull their efforts to upgrade the BRICS' reputational attractiveness; much will depend on Russia that in the last few years has learned a lot about how to oppose the Western architects of information wars.

## **THE NORTHERN SEA ROUTE AS PART OF THE BELT AND ROAD PROJECT**

**Author: B. Kheyfets**

*Chief Research Associate, Institute of Economics, Russian Academy of Sciences, Professor, Doctor of Science (Economics); bah412@rambler.ru*

The Northern Sea Route (NSR) may become a significant Russian contribution to China's One Belt, One Road project due to the shared interests of Russia and China. Russia definitely needs the NSR much more than any of the potential other participants in Belt and Road. The NSR plays a key role in the development of vast Russian territories that are largely uninhabited but possess tremendous reserves.

China also sees the NSR as more than a transportation route. The Arctic is acquiring a new strategic importance due to its geopolitical role, its increasing economic significance, and its unique global environmental impacts.

Infrastructural measures are an important element of this strategy and include arrangements for more effective use of the NSR as a key national sea route and the main component of the country's Arctic transportation system.

China, while not being an Arctic nation, regards the Arctic as an international region and believes that activities in it should be based on the consensus of a large group of countries.

The NSR is immensely significant for Russia from the national security standpoint. The Arctic is a frontier area, a region where military infrastructure facilities, Northern Fleet bases, and key defense industry facilities are located. There is a nuclear testing site in the south of the Novaya Zemlya archipelago.

TRANSCONTINENTAL freight traffic along the NSR is increasing permanently, and, because of the global warming, the navigation seasons are becoming longer. To make the NSR more attractive commercially, Russia plans to introduce free port regimes in key ports in its Far East. Today Vladivostok has such a regime.

The Chinese Ministry of Commerce and the Russian Ministry of Economic Development are jointly developing a mechanism to coordinate the exploration of the NSR, economic activities in the Arctic, infra-structural projects, tourism, and scientific expeditions.

Russia and China have essentially the same objectives for activities in the Arctic. The two countries share technology and experience with each other and make investments in each other's economies. It is a strategic need of each of them to build up their cooperation. China shares Russia's principle that the Arctic is an important region from the point of view of international security. The Russian-Chinese disagreement over whether the Arctic should be an international region or whether Russia is entitled to retain its sovereignty over its Arctic zone does not cause any intense frictions. The two countries' shared interest in the use of the NSR, which is seen by China as an important transit route of the Belt and Road project, offers opportunities for compromise and mutually beneficial solutions. This benefits large Chinese and Russian companies that are closely involved in the activities of the Arctic Council.

## **IMPORTANT FOREIGN POLICY CHANGES THAT SWEEPED THE WORLD**

**Author: Yu. Sayamov**

*Head of the UNESCO Department, M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University;  
y.sayamov@yandex.ru*

FOR SEVERAL YEARS now, the world has been watching with a steadily growing concern how foreign policy changes are moving toward a global confrontation and how international relations are rapidly deteriorating with a threat of a "hot phase" on the horizon.

The idea of exclusiveness and superiority and "the great desire of a narrow group of Western countries led by the United States to preserve their domination in all areas in the hope of continuing to ensure their well-being and prosperity at the expense of everybody else" is the main cause that in the past repeatedly plunged mankind into troubles and sufferings.

The Soviet Union's self-liquidation followed by the disappearance of the socialist commonwealth and the Warsaw Treaty Organization that stood opposed to the aggressive NATO bloc pushed the Western powers toward brinkmanship and created an illusion that anything goes. The readiness of the Soviet Union and its allies to clear away the debris of the Cold War was interpreted in the West as a weakness and mistook for capitulation.

Contrary to what had been promised, NATO moved eastward, while assurances of equal and dignified partnership and respect of Russia's national interests and sovereignty turned out to be empty talk. As could be expected, they were unpleasantly surprised, not to say shaken, by its revival.

The global foreign policy context has acquired another, and lamentable, feature: across the Atlantic, they are holding forth with light heart about possible nuclear wars. The lightheartedness is easily explained: Americans watched both world wars from the other side of the ocean.

An illusion of a unipolar world American style was short-lived. The world rejected the Pax Americana model and after a short period of unipolarity began to develop a polycentric structure, the product of geopolitical reformatting of the global space.

Today, the United States can no longer count on domination in its "near abroad." Many Latin American countries are determined to follow their own course laid according to their own, not Washington-imposed, ideas.

Turkey, recently the closest ally of the United States and the NATO linchpin in the geopolitically vulnerable space between Europe and Asia, no longer conceals its displeasure with Washington and its policies.

Amid the mounting international tension created by what the United States and its allies are doing on the international arena, Russia needs a more active foreign policy based on clearly identified strategic priorities. Today, it is not enough to realize tactical tasks and respond to what is going on. The conflict between the United States and North Korea, in which the sides had exchanged harsh insults, threatened to push the nuclear button and finally agreed to talk, means that any state determined to defend its position can force a much stronger and much more influential global power to start negotiations.

## **"RESTORED SOVEREIGNTY" AS A BASIS FOR NATIONAL PRIDE**

**Author: Yelena Alexeyenkova**

*Research Associate, Center for Global Problems of the Institute of International Studies, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; Program Manager, Russian International Affairs Council, Candidate of Science (Political Science); [alekseenkova@russiancouncil.ru](mailto:alekseenkova@russiancouncil.ru)*

THE PIVOTAL NATURE of the current political moment, as described by Russian President Vladimir Putin in an annual message to parliament on March 1, 2018, reflects perception of the current domestic and foreign policy situation as a point of bifurcation where any move might be of extremely high significance and any decision could change the route of further development. Undeniably, what path Russia takes in its further development largely depends on, or is even determined by, the character of the country's interaction with the rest of the world.

The director general of the Russian International Affairs Council, Andrey Kortunov, says justly in his article "How to Survive in Trench Warfare" that over the past few years Russia's foreign policy can increasingly have been a source of national pride, and that the restoration of national sovereignty is one of the reasons for this.

Economic mobilization as a reaction to a potentially escalating conflict between Russia and the West would apparently put the fragile basis of domestic sovereignty to the most serious test.

With Russia's military success in Syria and the very convincing military part of Putin's 2018 message to parliament, it can hardly be expected that there are any doubts in Russian society about Russia's sovereignty in the international arena.

The Westphalian sovereignty concept occurs in Russian political discourse no less frequently. Interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states has been a key issue in Russia's conflicts with the United States and EU since NATO's attack on the former Yugoslavia in 1999 and the color revolutions of the 2000s and remains so today with Russia defending the inalienable right of the Syrian people to choose their own future.

However, it remains a fact that Russia is heavily dependent economically on other countries and would inevitably run serious risks if more limits are slapped on its access to borrowing markets abroad and if the United States presses companies in third countries to prevent them from cooperating with sanctioned Russian firms.

Some researchers who take a constructivist view of sovereignty speak about the significance of state identity, "ontological security," and socio-cultural foundations for legitimation in the assertion and functioning of sovereignty.

To sum up, economic mobilization would be a legitimacy test for Russia's government system: it would test whether great power ambitions and "restored sovereignty" would work as the national idea. Economic mobilization always means greater interference by the state in the life of every individual and minimal opportunities for exit strategies. Hence it means that those who didn't vote for Putin - about two thirds of the population - and stick to the exit strategy would be tested for loyalty to him. Economic mobilization as a reaction to a potentially escalating conflict between Russia and the West would apparently put the fragile basis of domestic sovereignty to the most serious test.

## **BACK TO THE FUTURE: FROM THE CHRONOLOGY OF RUSSIAN-BRITISH RELATIONS**

**Author: Ye. Kutovoy**

*Professor, Doctor of Science (History); ekutovoy1@yandex.ru*

Sergey Sazonov, Foreign Minister of the Russian Empire, wrote in his time that the history "of our relations with England... can be presented as an endless chain of political puzzles, mutual suspicions in committing furtive or even overt acts of hostility." The minister further wrote, and with good reason, that "short-lived were the periods of time" when "mutual mistrust was replaced with much more balanced and more reasonable awareness of the commonality of many political and economic interests."

Even a cursory glance at the 500-year history of Russian-British relations is enough to conclude that the periods when they joined forces to fight their common enemy in two world wars or Napoleon's aggression in the early 19th century were marked by their closest cooperation.

Early in the 19th century, relations between the two countries, not marred by more or less serious conflicts, were friendly enough. They received a new lease of life under Alexander I confirmed by the Russian-English Naval Convention (St. Petersburg Convention) signed in June 1801 very much in the interests of Russian nobility and merchants who were interested in the Baltic trade.

In the early years of the 20th century, Russia's relations with Great Britain were gradually stabilized.

Russia received from Britain certain concessions in the Middle East and thus consolidated its positions in Persia in the first place.

The war intensified the relations between the Soviet Union and Britain; they closely cooperated in neutralizing the fascist influence in Iran and Afghanistan. Exchange of classified letters between Stalin and Churchill on the wide range of questions related to interaction between the two powers during the war was of huge importance.

The sober-minded Russians and British should conclude that the protracted chilling period in their relations should be replaced with a warmer period of cooperation very much needed to create mature relations and mutual respect. It is not easy today and will not be easy in future to sort out problems between our countries. Too often we are marching forward while looking into the past and with our back to the future, so to speak. We should learn to look soberly at the realities that divide us and, despite disagreements, should avoid extremes. We should discuss them openly and responsibly and demonstrate pragmatic and businesslike approach to these issues. We should accept the fact that an open approach to ideas, contacts and differences is the key to our successful future.

## **THE SPLENDORS AND MISERIES OF "SOFT POWER" RANKINGS**

**Author: N. Yudin**

*Assistant Professor, Department of International Organizations and World Political Processes, School of World Politics, M. V. Lomonosov Moscow State University; Associate, Center for Security & Development Studies at the same School, Candidate of Science (History); nicolas.yudin@gmail.com*

TODAY, elaboration of all sorts of soft power rankings and indices used to assess, measure and compare achievements of different states has become one of the actively developing and prominent trends of soft power studies in Russia and abroad. This trend has become an industry on its own right highly attractive for all sorts of state, private and commercial organizations and institutes.

THE SCIENCE of international politics in Russia repeatedly displayed interest in soft power rankings and indices and made them objects of special studies.

IT SHOULD BE SAID that existing rankings are uncritically accepted as relevant sources of information used to assess soft power of any state: as a rule, researchers limit themselves to a description of relevant methodology of studied indices; much rarer, they undertake critical assessments of whether statistical indicators and calculation of points in any index were representative enough. Very much needed per se, this analysis comes second after critical assessments of the initial parameters, indices and criteria as component parts of soft power rankings.

The indication that, according to Skolkovo, Russia's soft power is will not help us elaborate development strategy for the system of higher education and science as a practical measure designed to strengthen Russia's soft power potential.

Not even the most carefully designed and the fullest ranking can, in principle, say anything about the soft power of any state since its place in the index, even if defined by calculation of the most relevant metrics, does not give an idea about its ability to influence other actors.

This brings us to a wider circle of problems related to the use of all sorts of soft power rankings and assessment of academic writings dealing with them and, more than that, to the range of soft power problems in general.

ON THE WHOLE, we can conclude that, despite its popularity and attention from state figures and wide media coverage, the soft-power rankings used today cannot be regarded as an adequate source of studies of corresponding parameters of states and, in general, are not directly related to the phenomenon of power. They are based on an extremely simplified approach to the concept that merely looks at the power of any state as a sum-total of its material and non-material resources.

To acquire a strictly scholarly nature, soft power studies should rely on an exhaustive account of the existing tradition of studies of the problem of power in international relations. Related to one of the key concepts of studies of international politics, this approach is absolutely indispensable as the only road leading to a qualitatively new level.

## **INTERNATIONAL DIVERSIFICATION AFTER 1917**

**Author: V. Komleva**

*Assistant Professor, Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, Doctor of Science; Vvkomleva@migsu.ru*

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS of February and October 1917 have been a subject for century-long discussions.

THE PHRASE "international diversification" is extremely rarely used to denote a sociological concept and is normally a label for an economic concept. Therefore, there is no single accepted sociological definition of this phrase.

The revolutions of 1917 blended political and economic diversification with social diversification. Namely, society was deliberately restructured for political and economic ends; social mobility channels, social elevators and forms of redistribution of wealth were changed; social classes and strata received new roles; and new types of public personae, e.g., Homo Sovieticus, came into being.

Diversification was put on a legal basis and received institutional intellectual and moral support. A new kind of art, "proletarian art," came into existence, the essence and methods of propaganda and agitation changed, the education system underwent significant reforms, and religion was removed from public life.

International diversification is not a spontaneous process. It is a systematic policy pursued by international actors, and hence is wholly dependent on their strategic



interests, on their perception of their global role, and on their own assessments of risks to their interests.

After 1917, two nations began to rival each other in seeking global leadership - the United States and Russia. Each of them diversified its economy, politics, and public life in seeking to fend off what it saw as risks and threats. Despite the huge economic difference between them, - with a boom in the United States and devastation in Soviet Russia, - each country propounded its own strategy for international diversification. These strategies were based on different principles for the economy, for government, and for the organization of public life.

THE NEW growing economies needed new markets and resources. The United States sought redistribution of foreign investments among countries and planned to oust European capital out of Russia.

Obviously, before the start of Bolshevik nationalizations, European nations generally found the Russian political climate suitable for investing in Russia. It was important for them to maintain their presence in Russian companies and, in general, to keep their capital in Russia.

The year 1917 was a turning point in international diversification. For the first time in history, U.S. armed forces entered Europe. In 1918, American forces invaded Russia by joining British and French troops in landing in Arkhangelsk and by joining Japanese troops in Vladivostok. The United States for the first time took on the role of the world arbiter and mediator in international conflicts, and laid claim to world leadership as manifested in President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, a peace plan stated by him in a speech to Congress in 1918.

Even before the 1917 revolution, it had been a key goal of Western countries to take control of Russia. There were frictions among them over how to distribute spheres of influence.

Key international actors sought to ensure that Russia stay in the war and become exhausted in it.

The revolution of October 1917 and the emergence of a political regime of a kind that the world had never known before led to political diversification and ran against the interests of capitalist countries. The Soviet political model contradicted the nature of capitalism and sparked public unrest in capitalist countries that threatened their political regimes.

The United States and Russia proposed mutually exclusive strategies and models for diversification, formulated global missions for themselves, won support for those missions and set up international organizations to help implement them - the

Communist International and the League of Nations. In 1917, the United States and Russia became divided on what path the world should follow in its development, and these differences determined forms of international diversification for a long time ahead.

## **DIGITAL ECONOMY: WHAT ARE YOU WITHOUT IT TODAY?**

**Author: I. Khalevinsky**

*Chairman of the Board of the Association of Russian Diplomats, Candidate of Science (Economics); ard.midrf@yandex.ru*

TECHNOLOGY is moving ahead at a blistering and accelerating pace. To remain competitive in today's digitized world, one needs not only to master new technologies but also to be able to detect them at their emergence. Digitization of all forms of social relations is one of the most obvious global trends.

There is no sector in any developed economy that is not being digitized. Nor is there any developed country that stays away from digitization. The reason is obvious: digitization technology gives a powerful impetus to any economic activity.

The United States insists on the free movement of information and on the removal of territorial restrictions on its storage and processing. In a bid to put commercial information and consumers' personal data under securer protection, the United States has signed agreements on personal data exchanges with European Union countries and other nations.

In the European Union, e-commerce began to develop rapidly after the European Parliament and the EU Council issued the Electronic Commerce Directive 2000.31/EC.

The directive is aimed at laying the legal basis for e-commerce and removing obstacles to a pan-EU digital economy. E-commerce always carries some risk as it is difficult to check the identity of one's trading partner.

China has made significant advances in e-commerce, falling behind Germany and Britain alone. Online stores handle more than 10% of China's exports. The country's Made in China 2025 ten-year digital economy plan expected to put an end to the nation's current role as a global factory and make it a global lab.

Unlike the digital economy programs of other countries the Russian program is not aimed at global leadership.

It is no longer only banks, retailers and telecommunications companies that make extensive use of digital technologies. Large industrial enterprises are also embarking on

large-scale digitization. The bulk of the money earmarked for the infrastructure subprogram - 299 billion rubles - is to be spent on creating a multifunctional satellite system to cover the entire territory of the world. This sum is planned to come from outside the federal budget, primarily from the Rostelecom and Roscosmos companies.

Now ICT is embracing the entire economy, both its private and public sectors. The real sectors are the part of the economy where digital technologies, e.g., the IoT, are used on the largest scale - in 2015, digitized sectors accounted for up to 64.3% of the market. There are industries whose competitiveness and effectiveness are directly dependent on their scale of digitization. Automating routine processes and reducing the role of the human factor would enable Russian companies to put innovative products and services on international markets. The use of the IoT and other digital technologies can guarantee significant advantages to all industries.

Digital diplomacy has been increasingly important in recent years.

Russia has made great progress in digital diplomacy. The Foreign Ministry sees digital diplomacy as an effective instrument for achieving foreign policy goals. ICT enables the government to have direct contact with the population and hence deliver its information to the people more quickly.

In 2012, the Russian government set itself the task of making digital diplomacy one of its most effective foreign policy instruments. This task is being carried out rapidly, and today Russia has one of the world's largest diplomatic networks.<sup>7</sup> A vast majority of its diplomatic missions have an account in at least one social network.

Today, the use of ICT and all accessible electronic means of communications is essential for advancing foreign policy agendas. Russia is a vanguard user of new ICTs in diplomacy. ICT has been behind many of Russia's foreign policy achievements. Russia's government sees the further development and promotion of ICT as one of its priority tasks for the next few years. Its implementation would bring about further progress in Russian digital diplomacy.

## **MEMORIAL ACTIVITY ABROAD AS AN EFFECTIVE MECHANISM OF IMPROVING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AMONG PEOPLES**

**Author: D. Zavgayev**

*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Slovenia; ambrus@siol.net*

AMID the rise in cyber attacks against our country and the continuing attempts to maliciously rewrite history, it is especially important to constantly search for effective forms and methods of building trust among countries and peoples, support and foster

the mechanisms of interpersonal communication and rapprochement, based on fundamental moral values.

Russian-Slovenian cooperation shows in particular that systematic historical and memorial activity is becoming an effective diplomatic tool.

Taking into account the close intertwining of the destinies of the Russian and Slovenian people in the 20th century, including during the two world wars, the embassy staff has managed to implement a number of major, socially significant projects in Slovenia, based on wide-ranging experience in historical and memorial activity, fostering bilateral relations, establishing useful contacts at all levels and consolidating our country's positive perception abroad.

The erection of a common monument, "To the Sons of Russia and the Soviet Union Killed on Slovenian Soil during the First and Second World Wars," in the capital of Slovenia, Ljubljana, the first such memorial in the history of the Russian state, was unprecedented event that had a major international impact.

The memorial was erected in Ljubljana's popular park area. It was built using donations from Russian and Slovenian citizens and companies, put on the balance sheet by the city authorities, maintained and protected by them, and included in tourist itineraries.

Today, the monument to "The Sons of Russia" has become a genuine pilgrimage site. The embassy uses this venue to organize public gatherings on Victory Day and other memorial dates.

The World War II International Research Center that we opened in Slovenia has become an equally important project with considerable diversified potential.

Russian-Slovenian cooperation shows that systematic historical and memorial activity is becoming an effective diplomatic tool.

The Russian chapel at the Vršič mountain pass in the Slovenian Alps, built by Russian prisoners of war during World War I in memory of their fallen comrades, has become a prominent feature of Russian-Slovenian relations in recent years.

We regard historical and memorial work as a two-way street, encouraging our partners to expand it. We are searching for information on Slovenes who were killed on Russian soil during the world wars. We officially transfer such information to the Slovenian authorities. In cooperation with the Russian-Slovenian Mixed Commission for the Implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement on War Burial Sites, we are working on a project to build a Slovenian war memorial in the Russian capital. We have received the proper endorsement from the Moscow city authorities. The monument will be erected at Park Pobedy [Victory Park] on Poklonnaya Hill.

The wide array of memorial events organized by the embassy has helped promote respect for our country among the Slovenian public, foster an atmosphere of public disapproval with regard to attempts to distort history, put an end to acts of vandalism against our burial sites and memorials and ensure their safety, and create a positive environment for the dynamic development of wide-ranging bilateral cooperation, including trade and economic cooperation.

## **RUSSIA AND JAPAN: EIGHT STEPS TOWARD RAPPROCHEMENT**

**Author: Toyohisa Kozuki**

*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Russian Federation*

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Russian President Vladimir Putin decided to declare 2018 the Cross Year of Japan and Russia to stimulate exchanges between the two countries in all spheres. The Cross Year is also my long-standing dream, since it encompasses not only culture and art, but also business, science, education, youth, sports, and interregional exchanges, and this will help us use the potential of Japanese-Russian relations to the maximum degree possible.

Japanese-Russian relations have a long history, but there is still a lot we do not know about each other. It is important that the Cross Year helps deepen mutual understanding between our people. We intend to introduce the Russians to a broad spectrum of Japanese culture.

Russian music, ballet and other arts have long been known in Japan and have a large number of admirers in our country. A few years ago, a new translation of Fyodor Dostoevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov* was published in our country, which sold an unprecedented number of copies for a work of classical literature - more than 1 million. I hope that many Japanese people will be able to visit Russia and become acquainted with its natural and artistic treasures. I intend to continue to make every effort to foster contacts, laying the foundation for deeper trust between our two countries.

The eight-point plan of Russian-Japanese economic cooperation envisages "a substantial dynamic increase in people-to-people contacts in various spheres, including contacts between universities, youth exchanges, tourism, sports, and culture." Therefore, the expansion of Russian-Japanese university exchanges is also an important task that we are working on.

Another area of the eight-point plan is cooperation in advanced technology. It was decided to carry out joint research projects, as well as cooperation programs, in such areas as nuclear energy, ICT, postal services, medicine, agriculture, and fisheries. As a result, a number of documents on cooperation between institutions in various fields of science and technology were signed, and work is proceeding to further develop bilateral

scientific and technical cooperation. Still another area is space cooperation. On May 26, during the Japan-Russia summit, a video conference took place between cosmonauts Norishige Kanai and Anton Shkaplerov, who were on board of the International Space Station, and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Vladimir Putin.

We are determined to continue our efforts to achieve concrete results.

In addition, bilateral exchanges are developing at different levels. This refers not only to intergovernmental contacts, but also to cooperation between private companies.

Since the eight-point plan of economic cooperation was put forward, over 130 commercial projects have been developed and specific action has already been taken on about half of them, including in the form of contracts. Thus, by giving concrete substance to this plan, Japanese-Russian economic cooperation is developing at an unprecedented pace under the direction of the two countries' leaders.

## **A NEW ERA IN PHILIPPINE-RUSSIAN RELATIONS**

**Author: Carlos D. Sorreta**

*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Philippines to the Russian Federation*

SINCE 1976, when official diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Russia were established, bilateral ties have been characterized by good intentions, but have made almost no progress toward actual cooperation. Contacts between the Philippines and Russia have always been warm and friendly, but still different from those among our neighbors in the region. Even though we have managed to avoid serious conflicts, we have been unable to derive optimal benefit from our friendship or tap its potential to our advantage.

That was often due to differences in history, culture and the political situation, which led our countries down different paths that almost never intersected.

Diplomats in both countries have worked hard to develop our relations. Cooperation at international forums such as the United Nations (UN) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, as well as our dialogue-based partnership in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), has been very productive. In addition, significant bilateral economic and cultural exchanges have helped maintain people-to-people contacts. However, political changes have taken the relations between the Philippines and Russia to a new level, focusing the governments of both countries on closer cooperation.

Russia has already shifted its foreign policy course towards the East to fill the vacuum created by difficulties in its relations with the West. APEC and ASEAN have acquired

special significance in Russia's foreign affairs, therefore increasing the importance of bilateral relations with Asian countries. Thus, changes in the Philippines' foreign policy course have intersected with Russia's "pivot to the East."

In this context, 2017 was expected to become a successful year for relations between the Philippines and Russia.

"Historical" is the word that is often used in describing 2017 and its importance for our bilateral relations. I should say that this word is very appropriate and accurate in this situation.

Naturally, President Duterte's visit to Moscow in May 2017 was an important event. It was the first visit by the Philippine head of state to Russia in the last decade.

On May 25, 2017, our countries' foreign ministers, Cayetano and Lavrov, met at the RF Foreign Ministry mansion in Moscow to discuss the status of bilateral relations after the landmark visit. They reaffirmed the presidents' commitment to developing partnership in all spheres and pledged to cooperate closely to further deepen bilateral relations.

During the presidential visit, representatives of Russian and Philippine business circles had an opportunity to review trade and investment ties to identify specific projects and areas for cooperation.

Any diplomat will agree that a presidential visit is the most labor-intensive event in our field. President Duterte's visit last May was no exception. Both sides had to work hard for several months to ensure the success of the event. Despite a certain measure of disappointment due to the need to cancel a large number of planned events, I believe all the main goals were achieved. That was largely the result of flexibility, understanding, rapid response, and the desire to develop relations on both sides.

I am proud of the results that we achieved in 2017, and I hope that they will become a new tradition in relations between the Philippines and Russia. We believe that we have managed to increase the importance of the Philippines for Russia, as well as the importance of Russia for the Philippines. More importantly, we have been able to achieve specific results that will benefit our nations, while enriching our partnership and improving mutual trust. This is all that I can wish for as an ambassador. On behalf of our embassy's entire team, I would like to stress that, professionally speaking, the previous year was extremely productive.

We have optimistically planned many new events for 2018. We hope to sign even more agreements in various areas and are doing our best to promote Philippine culture and heritage among the Russian people. We also hope that President Putin will become the first Russian head of state to visit the Philippines.

## **CENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF LEV MENDELEVICH**

*This article was prepared by a team of staff members at the Foreign Policy Planning Department and the Department of History and Records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.*

THE RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY cherishes the memory of its outstanding predecessors, whose selfless efforts were always aimed at promoting and upholding national interests and bolstering our country's position in the world. This year we are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Lev Isaakovich Mendeleevich, a prominent diplomat who left a deep mark on the recent history of the country's foreign policy service.

Lev Mendeleevich rightly stands out among a galaxy of high-class diplomats who deserved warm, glowing comments for their years-long fruitful work and their loyalty to the Motherland. A well-educated person with a creative, unconventional, or as his colleagues said, unorthodox mindset, an erudite professional, a brilliant writer, an extremely energetic man, he successfully performed complex and responsible tasks for half a century.

Like many of our colleagues, he had to work in difficult times, when the world was changing literally right before our eyes, and relations between states were becoming more complex and multifaceted. The colonial system was disintegrating, and dozens of newly independent countries were coming to the international arena. New security threats and challenges were emerging, such as the arms race and the risks of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Amid the Cold War, steps to reduce military and political tensions and establish a mutually respectful dialogue between states with different socioeconomic systems were especially significant. Mendeleevich contributed to the resolution of these and other problems.

His scope of interests was very broad. He had to deal with international and regional security issues, various aspects of European integration, and disarmament.

Lev Mendeleevich's excellent job performance was duly appreciated by the ministry leadership, and in 1965 he was promoted to head the Latin America Department.

In 1968, Lev Mendeleevich had the highest diplomatic rank of ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary bestowed upon him. That was related to a new responsible position: He was appointed USSR deputy permanent representative to the UN for political affairs.

After returning to Moscow in 1970, Lev Mendeleevich became ambassador-at-large and for 14 years was responsible for a number of important issues related to international security. A.A. Gromyko highly valued his talent as an outstanding negotiator and master of compromise, often assigning him tasks that required broad erudition and deep intellectual commitment.



Lev Mendelevich revealed remarkable talent, including behind-the-scenes diplomacy, and was known for his ability to find mutually acceptable solutions in apparently hopeless situations.

Unfortunately, over the years, serious physical and psychological stress affected Mendelevich's health. In 1989, he passed away, remaining in his "battle post" until the very last day.

"He is well-known in our country and abroad as an expert on a broad range of international issues. He is regularly given responsible assignments, entrusted with preparing foreign policy materials and documents of special importance." That was how Lev Mendelevich was described in some of the ministry's working documents.

Lev Mendelevich possessed the best characteristics of the Russian school of diplomacy. First and foremost, high professionalism, proficiency in foreign languages, the ability to carefully analyze documents, and thorough preparation for meetings and negotiations. We would like especially to note his ability to "look beyond the horizon." According to his colleagues, Mendelevich talked a lot about "positive diplomacy," which, in his opinion, was the wave of the future, including in regard to our relations with China.

Lev Mendelevich's name is inseparably linked to the history of the Foreign Ministry. This year, a series of events dedicated to the 100th anniversary of his birth and designed to emphasize the continuity of the best traditions of Russian diplomacy have been planned.

The authors would like to express their gratitude to Lev Mendelevich's relatives for handing over to the MFA Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation documents and photographs from his personal collection that shed light on his work at the Foreign Ministry's central office, the UN and the CSCE.

## **RUSSIAN DIPLOMACY IN CRETE**

**Author: V. Zanina**

*Second Secretary, Department of History and Records, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; VPolyanina@yandex.ru*

PRESERVATION of historical and cultural heritage of Russia outside its borders is one of its foreign policy priorities. Much is being done to recover historical facts related to Russia's diplomatic presence in different countries all over the world; historical plaques have been already installed in Naples, Istanbul and Jerusalem to commemorate Russia's diplomatic service.

Few people in Russia or Crete know that Russia's consular and diplomatic service has been present on the island for over three centuries now. Today, the interests of Russian

citizens on the island are protected by Honorary Consul of the Russian Federation Nikos Daskalantonakis. A never easy job, it was highly challenging in the past: Russian diplomats who spared no effort to promote the interests of their country and support their compatriots and the local Greek population have earned the honor to be commemorated on the island.

FOR MANY CENTURIES, Russia demonstrated its interest in the island situated at the cross-point of interests of the European Great Powers that looked at it as a strategically important object of the Eastern Mediterranean and the best possible platform for consolidating their positions in the region. St. Petersburg nurtured strategic plans to set up a Russian consulate on the island as "an observation political post of Russia on the Mediterranean."

In 1784, Russia set up a consulate in Candia (the name the Island of Crete had inherited from its past as part of the Venetian Republic) and appointed K. Schpalkgaber Russia's consul for "service and in the interests of Russian trade." This opened the first of three stages of Russia's consular-diplomatic presence on the island.

This decision had been prompted, first and foremost, by Russia's desire to widen its trade, economic, military, and political presence outside the Black Sea, Crete being the logical choice because of its strategically important location in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Schpalkgaber, the newly appointed consul, was instructed to closely follow the developments on the island and promptly inform Yakov Bulgakov, Russian emissary in Constantinople. He was also asked to get involved in promoting trade between Russian subjects and Crete.

Spyridon Dendrino, who arrived in Crete in spring 1860, opened the second stage of Russia's activities on the island. The consulate was expected to stop conversion to Catholicism, return Greeks to Christian Orthodoxy (and the sphere of Russia's influence) and preserve stability since any attempt to destabilize the situation could detach the island from the Ottoman Empire and turn it into an independent entity under French or British protectorate. This meant that the Russian consul was to be active in several spheres.

First, information and analysis.

Second, interaction with Turkish officials.

Third, cooperation with Christians.

Fourth, contacts with consuls of other powers stationed on the island.

In twelve months, the Russian consul succeeded in solving two tasks: he restored peace on the island and consolidated Russia's authority among the Cretan Greeks.

To restore historical justice and draw attention both in Russia and Greece to the positive episodes of Russia's presence on the island, we should commemorate the history of the Russian consulate in Crete. None of the buildings that had housed the Russian consulate in Chania survived; they were demolished and replaced with another public building. A memorial plaque on it would have served as evidence of Russian diplomats' long-time work in Crete. The public and the descendants of the Greeks who worked in the Russian Consulate in Chania, in the first place, display a lot of interest in the history of the consular-diplomatic presence of Russia on their island.

In view of the island's important role in the region, it would be wise to reopen the Russian consulate in Crete.

## **THE EARLY YEARS OF NARKOMINDEL IN ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS**

**Author: N. Kochkin**

Senior adviser, Department of History and Records, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; nnn9n9@mail.ru

A COLLECTION of online records, "Documents from the Archives of the Russian Foreign Ministry: The 1917 Revolution: The Fate of Russian and Soviet Diplomacy" [Dokumenty arkhivov MID Rossii. Revolyutsiya 1917 goda: Sudby russkoi i sovetskoi diplomatii] has become available on the Foreign Ministry's official website for all Internet users. Chronologically, it covers the period of the formation of the Soviet state from 1917 until 1922. The digitization of archival materials is not the ministry's first experience of this kind.

For obvious reasons, documents from the revolutionary years can hardly be viewed just as unequivocally. At the same time, there is no doubt that their study will make it possible to better understand the nature of those events, the specifics of the reforms that were launched at that time, and the uniqueness of the political figures who shaped and formulated the foreign policy of the Soviet state. This collection is even more valuable due to its integrity and completeness, since almost all the documents from the relevant stocks of the Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Empire and the Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation (AVP RF) have been digitized. Even their simple enumeration confirms the scope of source material hitherto unknown to historians: the secretariats of People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs G.V. Chicherin, Deputy People's Commissars M.M. Litvinov and L.M. Karakhan, international conferences with the participation of delegations from Soviet Russia, and the Economic and Legal Department, among others.

Hopefully, far from overshadowing the achievements of the vast historiography of the first several years of Soviet foreign policy and the institutionalization of the People's

Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (Narkomindel, NKID), the treasure trove of "documents from the past" will in fact significantly enrich it. Indeed, a large number of monographs and collective works on this issue have been written over the past century. However, it is important to take into account the ideological guidelines that existed in the Soviet period, while, unfortunately, there have not been so many comprehensive studies in modern Russia.

The purpose of this publication is to attract the attention of broad circles of experts to the collection of the Foreign Ministry's archives and to promote modern forms of sharing and disseminating information. It is important and very interesting to analyze certain subjects and storylines that are reflected in the archival materials under consideration.

It is telling that two and a half years after the October Revolution, the people's commissar had to admit that the NKID was still embryonic. "Actually, not even communists are coming to us, knowing that they will have to starve." Commenting on personnel issues, Georgy Vasilyevich [Chicherin] complained: "The most difficult thing is to find department heads, that is, people capable of working independently."

Such straightforward reports helped ensure the desired result: Before the USSR was established, the NKID already had a relatively diversified structure, as well as a staff that had acquired their first practical experience amid the Civil War and foreign intervention. At the same time, the country's extremely difficult economic situation made it impossible to ensure even the most elementary supplies for their work.

It should be noted that in general the NKID staff understood how things should be organized, and worked hard to improve the situation; importantly, they all worked jointly, from top to bottom.

The NKID's central apparatus constantly had to deal with legal as well as day to day routine difficulties that arose at that crucial time, on a par with all new governing bodies. The situation at Russian missions abroad depended on the level of bilateral relations, the specifics of ruling regimes, and the customs and traditions of host countries.

It is hard to say from reading the documents concerning the preparation of a trade agreement which areas were prioritized, because in 1922, the preliminary work in all areas was so thorough and meticulous.

To sum up, it may be recalled that the documents which have been analyzed here are only a small part of the total material. Its study should contribute to a balanced and objective perception of Russian history at its crucial period.

## THE UNTOLD STORY OF ANGLO-SOVIET INTELLIGENCE COOPERATION DURING WWII

**Author: Sergey Brilev**, *host, Saturday News (TV Channels Russia-1 and Russia-24), Candidate of Science (History); sbrilev@yahoo.com*

**Bernard O'Connor**, *British historian and writer*

THIS is the continuation of our efforts to find out who were the women whom Soviet intelligence planted as secret agents in Western Europe via Britain in 1941-1943. They went ashore in the UK with Soviet passports to the names of Maria Dickson, Yelena Nikitina, Emilia Novikova, Anna Uspenskaya, and Anna Frolova.

When the Russian coauthor of this article learned from his British colleague the bits and pieces of their life stories which the British special services had dug out his first response was: "If they were sent to Britain by Soviet intelligence they had been found in the Comintern."

In the previous publication, we have already told the story of the girls called Anna Uspenskaya and Yelena Nikitina. Today, we are absolutely sure that the former was Szyfra Lypszyc born in Warsaw and the latter was Elsa Noffke born in the Sudetenland (according to the Russian sources).

Their photographs found in The National Archives of the United Kingdom (TNA) and RGASPI show the same girls, which means that they have been correctly identified.

The third such coincidence is between Anna Frolova and Franchie Fromond. We decided to discuss this life story in a special article. Identifying this woman's name and tracing down her path were very complicated and, to a great extent, sensitive.

THE CORRESPONDENCE of the British MI-6 declassified after the war contains references to the photo of "Anna Frolova" made at the time when she was in Britain and was training for her mission in occupied Western Europe. The file contained no photograph; it was probably kept in one of the still classified folders or probably the British coauthor has not yet found all declassified materials kept in The National Archives.

The Russian coauthor found a photograph of Franchie Fromond in her personal file kept in RGASPI. Yet in an absence of a photo of Anna Frolova we cannot say whether they were one and the same person which means that there is no reliable visual evidence.

"An Attractive French Girl"

BRITISH SPECIAL SERVICES used the following terms to describe "Anna Frolova": "An attractive and extremely hard French girl; it proved to be next to impossible to extract any details of her previous life from her.... Having checked her luggage with due precautions, we learned that she was married and gave birth to a son in the fall of 1939."

FROMOND was one of those fantastic girls who were fanatic communists and who did not clearly distinguish between the personal and the public.

No matter what, Francine Fromond invariably stirred up adoration in men or even charmed them

IN A SERIES of articles that appeared in the International Affairs journal, we have already hinted that after World War II the search for the materials related to the fates of the Allied agents planted in Nazi-occupied Europe took unusual and unexpected routes. How can we explain this? An explanation is worth of a separate story.

By way of conclusion, we can offer a fact, or, rather a broad hint.

First, Soviet intelligence intercepted a British memorandum: "Because the differences of opinion between Britain and the Soviet Union remained as large as those between Britain and Germany, there could be no doubt that the USSR would remain a friend only as long as any use can be derived from this friendship."

The cross analysis of declassified materials from the British National Archives and RGASPI answered some of the questions that neither MI-6 nor the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service would have given on the strength of their rules. They never gave us these answers - we have found them ourselves. We should try to learn more about these girls who fought for the peace in Europe.

## **THE OSCE VS. TRANSNATIONAL THREATS**

**Author: A. Zinevich**

*Candidate of Science (Law); alyzenkov@gmail.com*

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS are not the most popular subject among scholars, and human rights organizations and those specializing in various aspects of security - military, political, economic or environmental - are even lower on academic agendas. This is one of the reasons why a book by Russian diplomat Alexey Lyzhenkov, OSCE vs. Transnational Threats: Past, Present, Future, is remarkable.

Criminal activities in the OSCE's area of responsibility, which extends from Vancouver to Vladivostok, undermine the security of countries, destabilize them, hamper their economic and social development, and violate or endanger the rights of about 1.2 billion people who live there, including their right to life, liberty and personal security as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

As the OSCE's first-ever coordinator of activities to address transnational threats - the position that he occupied since 2012 and involved heading the Transnational Threats Department in the OSCE Secretariat - Lyzhenkov, who holds the rank of envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, was instrumental in designing methods of combating terrorism, drug trafficking and other forms of crime activities. He also helped develop confidence-building measures to prevent information and communication technology (ICT) from being the source of conflicts between OSCE member states and ways to ensure more fruitful cross-border cooperation between law enforcement services, primarily police forces.

Lyzhenkov makes an unbiased analysis of achievements made by the OSCE and invites the reader to join him in pondering what else the organization might need to do. He bases his analysis on an impressive number of sources - about 270 documents signed by heads of state or government.

One indisputable advantage of the book is that Lyzhenkov puts specific issues in broad international contexts.

The OSCE has become the leader among international organizations in launching confidence-building measures to prevent ICT from causing conflicts in the OSCE area.

Lyzhenkov has first-hand knowledge of what various OSCE bodies, including its field operations, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the Parliamentary Assembly, have been doing in combating terrorism, drug trafficking, cross-border organized crime, and cybercrime.

A separate chapter in the book deals with interaction between those bodies, on the one hand, and the Secretariat's Transnational Threats Department, on the other. Lyzhenkov explores missions that the department was carrying out jointly with, for example, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. He describes the emergence of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's anti-terrorism mechanism, which Russia was instrumental in creating.

The book is bound to interest anyone who want to know about our country's relations with Western states, the history of the Helsinki process, and the emergence of the OSCE and its role in today's complicated and interdependent world.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN CHINA

**Author: A. Shevko**

*Orientalist; Ponomareva@yahoo.com*

THE RUSSIAN-CHINESE Environmental Council has brought out a collection entitled The Environmental Legislation of the People's Republic of China.

This Council was set up in December 2014 in the framework of the Russian-Chinese Committee of Friendship, Peace and Development to promote cooperation in environmental protection. Oleg Deripaska, chairman of the supervisory board of the Basic Element company, is the Russian co-chairman of the Environmental Council, and Zhao Yingmin, vice minister of ecology and environment, its Chinese co-chairman.

The collection consists of three sections: "Principal Laws of the PRC on Environmental Protection," "Laws and Documents Regulating Emissions at PRC Enterprises," and "Environmental Protection Documents as Part of the 13th Five-Year Plan, 2016-2020."

The leaders of Russia and China share the conviction that the state should pay special attention to environmental protection. Both countries have environmental protection included in their long-term development strategies.

Section one of The Environmental Legislation of the People's Republic of China includes principal laws to prevent air and water pollution and stimulate the creation of a circular economy with environment-friendly industries (pp. 2-118).

Section two contains laws and documents on greenhouse emissions. It is an important part of the book to scrutinize before planning Russian-Chinese projects that might pose threats to the environment in China (pp. 130-218).

Section three contains legislation that forms part of the 13th Five-Year Plan and includes laws on emissions and on the reduction of electricity consumption.

The five-year plan also includes environmental protection guidelines for regions to be covered by China's Belt and Road Initiative (p. 244).

China's green strategy involves the substitution of heavy industry by high technology as the basis of its economy. Since Russia and China border each other and have put forward a plan to coordinate the strategy of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) with the Belt and Road Initiative, they need to study each other's environmental legislation in order to be aware of environmental aspects of joint projects. The Environmental Legislation of the People's Republic of China would be of interest to specialists in environmental law, orientalists, students, government officials, businesspeople,



academics, members of nongovernmental organizations, and a wide range of general readers who take interest in environmental protection in China and in Chinese environmental law. Those interested in the book may email the secretariat of the Russian section of the Russian-Chinese Environmental Council at [ruschin\\_ecocouncil@mail.ru](mailto:ruschin_ecocouncil@mail.ru)