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“Russian Diplomacy Is Working Hard in All Areas”

Author: *S. Lavrov*

Foreign Minister **Sergey Lavrov**'s greetings at a gala meeting on Diplomats' Day, Moscow, February 8, 2019

Colleagues,

Every year when we gather in this hall we recall our veterans and other comrades who have passed away in the last 12 months. This past year was no exception. Let us honor their memory with a minute of silence.

First of all, I would like to read a message of greetings from President of Russia Vladimir Putin.

Dear friends,

Please accept my sincere congratulations on the occasion of your professional day, Diplomats' Day.

Today, our diplomacy is making a significant contribution to strengthening peace, resolving important regional and global strategic stability needs much attention, especially now that the arms control and non-proliferation regime has been challenged.

I am confident that the staff of the Foreign Ministry's central office and overseas missions will continue to work proactively, with full dedication and creativity in the interest of ensuring Russia's dynamic development and further strengthening of its standing and influence on the international stage.

I sincerely wish you every success in your work. I wish good health and all the best to our esteemed veterans who have dedicated their lives to serving the Fatherland in the diplomatic field.

Vladimir Putin

The high appreciation of the ministry's work is borne out by the fact that in the past year alone 67 of our colleagues have received state awards, certificates of merit or thank-you letters from the President. We have recently done much to enhance the social protection of our employees and veterans. We are aware of the remaining problems in the pension system and measures to improve medical and health resort treatment. We will work persistently to resolve these and other problems.

We are seeing persistent efforts to break the system of international security, the foundations of which were based on the results of World War II and recorded in the UN Charter. Key strategic stability agreements – the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear program and the INF Treaty are falling apart.

Threats and pressure, disinformation and crude methods of dishonest competition in diverse areas – from the economy to sports – are being used. This often amounts to brazen interference in domestic affairs of other countries.

Russia is one of the main obstacles in the way of world hegemony of a small U.S.-led group of Western states. This explains why we are subjected to verbal attacks and unfriendly actions and attempts to impede our domestic progress and push us to the outskirts of world policy.

We continue contributing to the peaceful settlement of numerous crises and conflicts, including Syria where the main terrorist hotbeds have been routed and the statehood preserved largely owing to Russia.

The Russian foreign policy service has always been distinguished by its traditions and careful attitude to the glorious pages of the past. Today too, the wealth of the intellectual heritage of our predecessors is a major factor in our work.

I hope the staff at our central office, territorial representatives and foreign missions will continue to work proactively, creatively, productively and devote all their efforts and energy to serving the homeland. I wish good health and all the best to you and your families.
Happy Diplomats' Day to you once again!

A Frank Conversation About War and Peace

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The interview was conducted by **Armen Oganessian**, editor-in-Chief, *International Affairs*

If we worked within a different system of foreign policy coordinates, we could say that we are involved in crisis management or damage control, but this is not our lexicon. still, despite the current trends in our relations, we are seeking a foundation, a fulcrum, based on which we could gradually begin to move upward. so far, this has not panned out.

It has to be acknowledged that for a number of reasons, domestic political struggles are continuing in the U.S. Russia has become a tool in these struggles – a tool for settling domestic political scores. as a result, it has proved impossible to stabilize our relations.

Indeed, it is a very sensitive issue. The 60-day deadline that the U.S. unilaterally set for Russia to destroy a missile that allegedly violates the treaty has expired. It goes without saying that the arrogant nature, tone and essence of this demand were unacceptable for us – primarily because Russia has not committed any violations. The missile in question does not violate the INF Treaty and has never been tested to a range prohibited by the treaty. It was not developed for that purpose. The American allegations to the contrary only go to show that the U.S. is looking for excuses to get rid of the limitations imposed under the INF Treaty. This is what is called the subtext, the backdrop, while our position is that it would be very important to save the treaty.

We were ready to show unprecedented openness with regard to the 9M729 missile that the Americans are so concerned about. We proposed a demonstration and a briefing on the missile, which is not required under the treaty.

The international community should be seriously concerned about what is going on. We will continue to deal with the crisis situation in arms control in all relevant formats, be it the First Committee of the UN general assembly this coming fall, the preparatory session for the NPT Review Conference this spring or something else.

Regarding Russia's CSTO allies, we are closely working with them. We are conducting an intensive dialogue at all levels. The CSTO has issued an important statement in support of the INF Treaty. We are expressing our concern, and our allies that are parties to the treaty are doing their utmost to help resolve the current crisis.

The Americans, at least an influential part of their political elite, do not need any arms control treaties that impose a web of constraints and obligations on the U.S., confine the country to a limited space and make it difficult to implement the concept of global military domination in all spheres.

Absolutely, zero control if related to the U.S., but maximum control by the U.S. over all others. This is probably the meaning of the "rulesbased international system" that the Americans and their allies are trying hard to bring into international discourse. Unfortunately, this disingenuous term is already finding its way into some important official documents. It is our job to expose its essence.

In a situation where Washington, in its military policy documents, has officially declared Russia and China its adversaries, practical steps are being taken by the U.S. to test the capabilities and potential of the Russian (as well as Chinese) armed Forces, including at an interagency level, to respond to all sorts of actions near our borders. We are seeing more U.S. and allied navy ships and assets sailing in the Black sea, as well as in the Pacific.

There are areas that could be described as dead ends, virtual or actual. Regrettably, in my opinion, our relations with the U.S. belong to this category.

Under current circumstances, we need other methods to bring home to the "broad masses" (as they used to say it in the past) the message that an irresponsible approach toward issues of war and peace is unacceptable and impossible. I believe that consistent efforts and frank dialogue, such as the one we had today, will help solve this problem. We need to alert at least the thinking segment of the Western public as to what is happening right now and make our counterparts think about the consequences.

Strategic Stability in the Early 21st Century

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One hundred years ago, mankind entered the 20th century as the “golden age” of realized ideals of freedom and humanism. Reality proved to be different: this was the cruelest and the bloodiest period in the history of modern civilization.

A conservative Republican determined to “make America great again,” that is, to restore its role of the unquestioned world leader in all trends and in all hypostases.

The end of the Cold War, the victory in which Washington arrogantly “appropriated” and its rise, at least in its own eyes, became a watershed of sorts in American understanding of the contemporary realities and of certain basic postulates that for a long time remained the cornerstone of the perception of the world by Washington and Moscow. This relates, first and foremost, to the strategic security concept.

Russia interprets strategic stability as a desired and predictable state of the international system and the interaction between all subjects of international relations that would keep big international conflicts within certain limits when no big military confrontation is possible.

This means that strategic stability should embrace not only the entire spectrum of nuclear weapons but also the new strategic power instruments: space and high-precision conventional weapons, potentials of all big powers and resources of information and cyber weapons.

The concept of the so-called hybrid wars has cropped up as one of the most prominent trends of American strategy. It relies on all means and methods available to put pressure on the opponent: the non-military instruments of what is called soft power; information and psychological diversion, subversion, color revolutions, fake news, etc. to achieve strategic geopolitical aims.

Due to the traditions of military and geopolitical confrontation, Russia looks at the U.S. and NATO and their military potentials as the de facto main military security threat, a mirror image of the American NATO military conceptual attitudes to Russia. nuclear weapons per se cannot be described as deterrence.

Regrettably, the negative trends of chaotization that undermine strategic stability and, by the same token, the prospects of nuclear disarmament, are gaining momentum in the world.

It seems that the sword of Damocles of universal guaranteed destruction in the third thermonuclear world war is still hanging. Illusions are counterproductive if not dangerous.

The economic war waged against Russia by the united states and the eu in the form of sanctions for practically five years now is absolutely illegal from the point of view of international law. Time has come to calculate how much it costs Russia, its citizens and the population of Western states, whose rulers started the war. The figures will be astronomical.

We hope that despite the complexities and contradictions of our time and complete absence of mutual trust, the biggest world powers, on which the future of mankind depends, still share the common aim of its ensured survival. A new concept of strategic stability for the 21st century has become an existential task.

Russian-Chinese Relations at Their All-Time Best

Author: Andrei Denisov, ambassador extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the People's Republic of China

Against the backdrop of difficult relations with certain Western countries, Russian-Chinese strategic partnership is developing steadily and progressively and can serve as a model of interstate relations. Current Russian-Chinese relations are at their all-time best; importantly, the parties are convinced that their development potential is huge.

Based on an overall assessment of the state of bilateral relations and taking into account China's aggregate power, there is every reason to say that China is Russia's main international partner among the countries with which we do not have allied relations. Incidentally, the absence of allied relations or bloc to bloc logic is a main principle of Russian-Chinese cooperation. At the same time, the Russian-Chinese tandem goes much further and works more successfully than many formal unions and organizations in the world.

The Russian-Chinese road map for Korean settlement was laid down in the July 4, 2017 joint statement by the two countries' foreign ministries on the problem on the Korean peninsula. It highlights the complex and interconnected nature of sub regional issues and the need for their step-by-step resolution.

Russia and China have played a significant role in the dramatic transition from confrontation to dialogue on the peninsula over the past year, working hard with all parties involved.

In 2018, Russian-Chinese trade crossed \$100 billion, reaching \$107 billion, up 27% year on year. This is not a bad result. Our trade surplus exceeded \$11 billion, with Russian exports going up by more than 40%.

The main contribution to the increase in trade has traditionally come from the energy sector.

The existing potential for practical cooperation suggests that the \$200 billion target can be reached in the very near future. However, we will need to work hard to achieve this. It is important to understand that the qualitative growth of trade requires modernization of infrastructure and a favorable environment. There are still many problems here, for instance, in mutual settlements and trade banking services.

Bilateral military-technical cooperation is an integral and natural component of Russian-Chinese comprehensive partnership relations and strategic cooperation. Beijing has traditionally been a major buyer of Russian military products, and its share in Russian military exports remains quite high.

I do not see anything unusual about Baikal water supplies to China, and this can only be welcomed. Bottled water from lake Baikal is already available on the Chinese market, which is very promising due to its huge volume and growing demand.

China has traditional interest in Russia. There are many reasons for this. First of all, we are neighbors. As the Chinese proverb goes, "Close neighbors are better than distant relatives." The older generation of Chinese people has always been interested in Russian culture, cinema and literature.

Russia and China are large multiethnic states, and naturally, diverse, wide-ranging cooperation at the regional level is an important part of Russian-Chinese relations. Last year, there were hundreds of visits by delegations at the regional level, and many agreements and memorandums of cooperation between Chinese provinces and Russian regions and territories were signed.

Unfortunately, at this point, it is more appropriate to talk about the destruction of the world's existing political system than about the formation of a new one. I am referring primarily to the erosion of the system of international treaties and the rules of the game in arms control that is being imposed by our Western partners. nevertheless, any philosophical system, including the Chinese one, posits that the new does not arise out of nowhere but grows within what preceded it. In this sense, Russia and China, as two major responsible powers, are building their relations so that they become a kind of a crystallization point in the current troubled world, giving it the much-needed element of stability and predictability.

Russia and Islam

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In 986-988 a.D., grand Prince Vladimir decided the time had come to move away from worshipping many deities to choosing one god. Islam, religion of the Bulgars, who came first with their presentation, was rejected with the words: "Drinking is the joy of Rus." The embassy from Rome, likewise, failed; Khazars offered Judaism but it was also rejected for the simple reason that Russians and Khazars were locked in a life and death struggle. Vladimir chose eastern Christianity presented by the embassy from Constantinople, which arrived when all others had already failed.

In the 15th century, the ottoman empire became one of the main economic partners of Russian principalities: Moscow, Tver, Yaroslavl, Novgorod, Kolomna, Vyazma, and Mozhaysk were actively involved in trade while Moscow and Istanbul established diplomatic relations. This went on till the 1550s: in 1552, Moscow captured Kazan; astrakhan fell in 1556 while Kabarda joined Moscow on its own free will. This created a new situation: in 1569, Turkey responded with a march across the Don to the Volga yet failed to dig a canal. That's when the so-called oriental Question appeared on the agenda. From that time on, Russia was confronted by the ottoman empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that made its foreign policy situation very unstable.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, the Muscovy state spread to the Volga area and Siberia. This process was not smooth. Czar Ivan the Terrible and emperor Peter the great populated Kazan with orthodox Christians. However, Catherine the great stopped this practice.

The relations between Russia and the ottoman empire from the 16th to the 20th century are better described as a chain of wars waged for the domination in the Black sea basin.

The war-torn history of the relations between the Russian and the ottoman empires knows one exception: in 1833, Petersburg interfered into the conflict between Istanbul and Khedive of Egypt Muhammad Ali on the Turkish side.

In 1833, St.Petersburg and Istanbul signed the Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi on a military union under which Russia pledged to extend its military assistance to Turkey if needed. In a secret article, the ottomans promised to close the Dardanelles to all foreign warships at Russia's demand.

In the 1990s, when the contacts between Russia and the Muslim world were considerably weaker, the Muslim world learned to look at new Russia as a victim of Western intrigues and a reluctant ally of the West.

Filling of the vacuum began when Yevgeny Primakov was appointed Foreign Minister of Russia; with Vladimir Putin as President of Russia the process gathered momentum. as the domestic situation in Russia was stabilizing and Russian diplomacy was demonstrating more attention to the developments in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Palestinian-Israeli and, later, Syrian settlement, when Russia rejected the double standards policy and demonstrated resolution to strengthen the central role of the un in international relations, the Muslim countries were gradually acquiring new ideas about new Russia.

The Muslim world believes that Russia, as well as China, can guarantee equality in the Islamic world and looks at it as a power friendly to all Muslim states. The religious factor, however, affected the relations between Russia and Saudi Arabia.

The Arab countries (Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia in the first place) demonstrate their desire to move closer to Russia. They were prompted by their obvious intention to protect their place in the world challenged by the power centers. Riyadh paid special attention to what the Russian president said about the KSA as the leader of the Muslim and Arab world. The Saudi establishment welcomed Russia as an observer at the organization of Islamic Conference. Despite the somewhat ambiguous nature of what Moscow is doing in the Middle east, we should say that Russia has partly restored its positions in the region and the Maghreb. Russia's involvement in the civil war in Syria greatly impressed the Muslim and Western states; it was interpreted as consolidation of Russia's presence in the Middle east and the world.

The Regional Dimension of the Consequences of the Syrian Conflict

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The Dynamics of the hostilities in various parts of Syria over the past year suggest that large-scale armed fighting between the Syrian government – relying on its allies, especially Russia – and radical, extremist and openly terrorist groups with multinational personnel has by all appearances entered the final stage. however, clashes will presumably continue for some time after the military phase winds down, acquiring the character of a “guerrilla” war. In other words, Syria is still a long way from real peace.

Difficult and laborious political and diplomatic work lies ahead – and has already begun – to find a national consensus based on the drafting and adoption of a new Constitution, and the holding under it of nationwide elections whose results are accepted by at least the main military and political actors in the Syrian conflict (and it would be better if they were directly involved in those elections).

I think it is too early to summarize the results of the tragic events in Syria that began in March 2011, although some very preliminary conclusions can already be drawn, including with respect to how those events have influenced the situation in the region.

The most important result of these developments is that the war in Syria became a clear failure of the “bulldozer” strategy of the West (Washington in particular) aimed at undermining statehood and disseminating chaos in the countries of the Middle east, especially those who do not share so-called “Western values” and agree to unconditionally obey its dictates.

Besides the collapse of the ruling regimes in several Arab countries and the economic degradation of much of the Arab world, the most notable outcome of the “Arab spring” for the region was the change in the balance of power among regional players. The obvious beneficiaries of the “Arab spring” proved to be the monarchist regimes of the Arabian Peninsula, especially Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE.

The new leaders of the conservative wing of the Arab world were able, using financial and economic levers, to impose their views on other countries – in particular, to force a decision on freezing the membership of Syria (and Libya) in the LAS and replacing them with representatives of the Syrian and Libyan opposition controlled by Riyadh, Doha and Abu Dhabi.

The failure of Arab diplomacy to resolve the backlog of regional problems that have piled high in recent years in the Middle east has played into the hands of forces from outside the region and facilitated their active intervention, direct or indirect, in Arab affairs, thus increasing the dependency of the region on influential players from the West.

The failure of efforts to achieve the atomization, or to use Russian President Vladimir Putin’s figurative expression, “somalization,” of Syria provoked extreme irritation and rejection in Washington and some other Western capitals. Refusing to accept the failure of their plans in Syria, they are ready to support the most desperate radicals and terrorists, both Syrians and non-Syrians, who are capable of any provocation, including massive bloodshed, to turn current developments in Syria.

The West, particularly the U.S., is now seeking by any means to prevent regional geopolitical shifts in Russia’s favor based on the results of Russia’s participation in military activities on Syrian territory.

The Syrian experience clearly shows that forcibly democratizing the region under the guise of the “Arab spring” (supposedly a spontaneous expression of the will of the people) can be successfully resisted.

We can more or less confidently say that the military phase of the Syrian conflict will sooner or later be followed by the stage of political settlement of the contentious issues that led to this tragedy, which will be accompanied by Syria’s reintegration into the Arab community it was essentially ousted from by the Saudis, Qataris and representatives of some other gulf monarchies because of supposed “bloody crimes” of President Assad’s regime.

The political climate in the region must change with the restoration of the regional and international legal status of Damascus, which will inevitably lead to a new balance of forces in the Arab arena.

Syria’s restoration of its geopolitical position in the region in cooperation with other states that are currently outcasts in the Arab community will inevitably lead to the need for it to adjust its approaches to regional and global issues – make them more balanced and less pro-Western.

The Kurdish Question One Hundred Years After: Problems and Relevance of the Outcomes of World War I

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On November 11, 1918, the armistice of Compiègne ended World War I in Europe; on October 30, 1918, the armistice of Mudros ended the war between the ottoman empire and great Britain. The talks that followed settled the Kurdish question and created a new postwar world order based on a system of treaties known as the Versailles system, of which the Treaty of Sèvres signed in France on august 10, 1920 by the main entente powers and Turkey was part. It specified, among other things, the principles and conditions on which the Kurds could acquire statehood.

This brought the Kurds of the ottoman empire very close to a national state of their own, yet not all agreements of the time, the Treaty of Sèvres being one of them, were enacted. During the one hundred years that have elapsed since that time, the region saw many important events, several generations, new political forces, and new regional players. Today, according to different sources, there are no fewer than 40 million Kurds, the biggest stateless nation, living in four states (Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria).

Despite the fairly long historical period that separates us from these days, the results of World War I (including the Versailles system and the Treaty of Sèvres as its part) remain topical in certain respects.

For a long time now, many Turkish officials, including the President of the republic, have been actively criticizing the Treaty of Lausanne that replaced the Treaty of Sèvres in 1923.

Today, the treaty cannot be revised let alone abolished; this cannot be assumed even hypothetically since that would have imminently required a return to the earlier Treaty of Sèvres.

The government of Mustafa Kemal, elected President of the Republic by the grand national assembly of Turkey on April 20, 1920, that was functioning in Ankara, refused to recognize the treaty being, although it was fully aware that this treaty could be dismissed as null and void only the first countries that recog, who heavenized the legitimacy of their corresponding regimes; second, amid the Civil War and foreign intervention, the soviet leaders appreciated the buffer zone of sorts between Russia and the imperialist powers in the Caucasus; and, third, the by the same method by which it was imposed on defeated Turkey, viz., on the battlefield. Russia was the only ally in the struggle against colonialists. In complete international isolation, the soviet Republic, first, promptly responded to the request of the new Turkish government for help. Turkey and Russia were soviet leaders believed that the republican character of the new government that had replaced the sultan fitted the political and ideological concept of the world revolution.

Despite the fairly big number of the sides involved in the treaties mentioned above, they were authored mainly by great Britain and France that divided the “legacy of the ottoman empire” even if they had to take the position of the united states, a mere observer at the conference, into account.

The rhetoric about peoples and their rights could not conceal the spirit of the still very much alive colonial epoch. The American president who had already got the Nobel Peace Prize did not apply the allegedly declared right of nations to self-determination to American Indians.

The Kurdish regions were among the “certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish empire” that “have reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone.”

The doubts of the colonial powers that the Kurds, and many other peoples for that matter, could govern themselves are far-fetched. The historiography of the Kurdish states is vast. Boris James who left antiquity beyond the scope of his study has written that in the early 16th century the ottoman empire sought a military-political alliance with sixteen Kurdish emirates in its confrontation with Persia and recognized their relative autonomy.

The fact that the Kurds repeatedly tried to recreate their emirates, principalities and states testifies that they wanted and had enough willpower to set up a state of their own or, at least, acquire a wide autonomy. The history speaks of numerous attempts of this kind.

In Europe, Kurds, albeit disunited, did not wait for the verdict of the allies, let alone of the Turks; they were actively involved in the process. at the Versailles Conference and especially on the eve of the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres, they contacted Western politicians and diplomats to present their memorandums on independent Kurdistan, including united greater Kurdistan with Kirkuk as its part, maps and approximate calculations of the numerical strength and composition of the future independent states as their arguments.

The Kurds, who have a rich history of statehood in the territories on which they have been living for several millennia and were recognized by all agents of international relations of corresponding epochs, still exist in a period preceding decolonization. In the context of international law, starting with the Treaty of Sèvres, their territories were ruled not only by Great Britain (in contemporary Iraq) and France (in contemporary Syria) but also by the ottoman empire. The fact that the British and then the French had replaced the ottoman administration and that later they had no choice but to give independence to several states points to dual standards in relation, at least, to the Arabs and the Kurds.

Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems:

Problems of Current International

Legal Regulation and Prospects for Resolving Them

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In the past three or four years, a movement to ban “autonomous combat robots,” which in Russia are called “lethal autonomous systems” (in Western literature, LAWS), has been gaining strength in the world but remains almost unnoticed in Russia. Some believe that fully autonomous weapons will not be able to comply with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and could create confusion when it comes to identifying individuals responsible for the illegal actions of robots. Others believe that even if “terminators” could one day perform “combat functions” more precisely and judiciously than human fighters, their autonomous use must still be prohibited in the interest of the highest values of human dignity. Some governments agree. Today, 35 countries support a complete ban on autonomous weapons. Others have doubts, considering the topic farfetched or premature, since no one seems to have seen an autonomous combat robot capable of killing without input from an operator.

Meanwhile, the technology to create LAWS exists. It is still not advanced enough to create effective mobile ground-based LAWS, but stationary combat robots already exist.

Thanks largely to negative press, several systems capable of waging fully independently combat are now controlled remotely or by an operator. But there can be no doubt that some governments are already developing programs that in a critical situation could turn remotely controlled systems into autonomous attack robots.

The Russian Federation “proceeds from the fact that work on developing an operational definition and basic functions [of LAWS] must largely be built on the basis of the ultimate objective of the debate on LAWS: examining possibilities for the most appropriate use of this type of weapon in the future, and maintaining an adequate level of human control over it.” Russia is insisting only that “specific forms and methods of such control remain at the discretion of the states.”

The U.S. is the undisputed leader in LAWS research and development. The U.S.’s annual budget on military research and development is \$80 billion, which is double the research budgets of Google, Microsoft and Apple combined.

We are fearful a priori of iron “brains” bent on destruction. But, ultimately, we should fear not robots but the humans behind them. Humans can open this Pandora’s box, but humans also have the common sense to find a preventive solution to this problem.

Madness or Enlightenment: **The Life or Death of Humankind**

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The observable history of humankind shows that it has on many occasions, for intrinsic or extrinsic reasons, teetered on the brink of destruction – and the same holds true for all living things and the planet itself. Long before the advent of the apocalypse, people have feared for their lives and the fate of the earth. Scientists have identified several such periods in history when there could have been universal catastrophe. Now scientists acknowledge that we have entered a sixth period (starting in 1945, when nuclear weapons appeared and were used, and the Anthropocene era began).

We all know at what cost fascism was defeated, and again we believed that the time had come for everlasting peace; there could no longer be another world war because humankind simply would not survive it. This became especially apparent after the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But what is most curious is that the world very quickly forgot about the horrors of both world wars, not to mention all kinds of revolutions, armed conflicts and local wars. And almost all countries, particularly developed countries, again started spending exorbitant sums on new, even more destructive weapons.

Naturally, public organizations began to form in many countries to protect peace, to support international law and its strict observance. This led to the establishment of the United Nations and many other international organizations, since it had become clear that we could no longer believe in the impossibility of another world war; we could not naïvely assume that everything would sort itself out and we would all live in peace and friendship.

Humanity is now at a tipping point, a red line. Beyond it lies absolute and universal catastrophe: a real apocalypse that even the most vivid imagination cannot picture.

This refers primarily to the most probable and imminent danger of a third world war involving thermonuclear weapons.

Worried by the growing danger of thermonuclear war, the United States and the United Kingdom once made a very valuable proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Unfortunately, since then, they have resisted the actual establishment of this and other such zones in other regions and are blocking all related proposals. Moreover, they are constantly seeking to intervene in the domestic affairs of other states, including through armed force.

It is no coincidence that prominent American scholar and public figure Noam Chomsky calls the United States a country of “state-sponsored terrorism” that persistently and cynically violates its own laws, as well as the norms and regulations of international law.

If the process of human madness is not stopped, the destruction of all life on earth is inevitable.

Therefore, it is time for the political forces of the modern world to develop a new, more advanced system of international law under an auspices that would exclude the possibility of a third world war, as well as categorically prohibit any country from using any armed force in any region without UN Security Council authorization.

How the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS Approach International Information Security Issues

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In 2006, Russia and other SCO members launched a series of very important moves to lay foundations for a regional information security system.

A statement on international information security issued at an SCO summit in Shanghai on June 15, 2006, was a milestone document.

The agreement made provisions for coordination of action and mutual assistance on key points of international information security.

The accord was unique in the sense that it was the first-ever international legal document to state the existence of specific threats to information security, characterize the nature of those threats, and set guidelines for cooperation in dealing with them.

Importantly, the agreement is open for other states to join, which is in tune with the idea of creating a global information security system.

The Qingdao Declaration, passed at the SCO summit in Qingdao, China, on June 10, 2018, was inspired by a spirit of uniting forces in fighting information security threats and creating a “peaceful, secure, open and structured information space based on cooperation.”

The declaration attributed a “special role” to the SCO Regional anti-terrorist structure and called for its “further improvement ... including considering the organization of a monitoring system of possible threats in the global information space and counteracting them.”

The member states made a pledge in the declaration to “strengthen their cooperation in combating the spread and propagation of terrorist ideology through the Internet, including publicly justifying terrorism, recruiting members to terrorist groups, inciting and financing terrorist attacks, and promoting online tutorials on methods of committing terrorist acts.”

In backing a Russian initiative, SCO member states called for bringing out an international legal document under the auspices of the United Nations on measures against the criminal use of ICTs.⁸ Hence, the SCO member states have harmonized their policies on building an international information security system, and this enables them to coordinate their actions in various international frameworks.

BRICs is an association that was born at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in June 2006 and initially brought together Brazil, Russia, India, and China and was known as BRIC but changed its name to BRICs after South Africa joined the group in February 2011.

Ever since, this association of five nations with developing economies has had international information security on its priority agenda.

The Ufa Declaration stated the commonality of the member states’ positions on ways of attaining the main goal of creating an international information security system. “We recognize the need for a universal regulatory binding instrument on combating the criminal use of ICTs under the UN auspices,” the declaration said.

There remains a large amount of hard work to do, work that will demand joint efforts and close coordination on the part of the two organizations’ member states in various international discussion frameworks.

The most important work would need to be done in the main framework, that of the united nations, where an open-ended working group and a new gge are due to meet in 2019 to ponder ways of putting the above-mentioned general assembly resolutions into practice.

Norilsk Nickel:

ICT as Key to Successful Development

Author: Dmitry Grigoryev, head of the Information security and ICT Infrastructure Department at Norilsk Nickel.

ICT is certainly not part of Norilsk nickel's business, but it is key to successful development. The security of corporate information resources and infrastructure is a major factor in the stable and continuous operation of our enterprises, where thousands of people are employed.

Modern entrepreneurship involves a considerable social component based on international practices and standards. In keeping with them, these days, a successful company is not only a business entity, but also a subject of social and cultural impact in regions of its presence.

While contributing to the country's economy, Norilsk nickel is implementing large-scale projects of social importance, such as the construction of a 1,000-kilometer high-speed optical telecommunication line beyond the arctic Circle. Now all residents of the Norilsk industrial region can enjoy broadband access to information and diverse online services.

International experience shows that hacking attacks are beginning to be used for entirely different purposes – for example, causing large-scale, but at the same time nonlethal damage to a country's economy. In attempting to breach corporate systems, hackers thoroughly study their specifics and ICT organization, and use elements of so-called destructive social engineering.

This is why it is so important for information security services in both the public and private sector to study and understand the "anatomy" of an attack, its genesis and source of origin.

This is not only about Norilsk Nickel's experience, but also that of Russian companies, as presented in a document entitled "Charter on Information security for Critical Industrial Facilities." I would like to stress that the idea and draft of the charter were initially discussed at the expert level, specifically by heads of cyber security departments at major Russian corporations. To that end, the Information security in Industry Club (ISI Club) was formed on our initiative.

Norilsk Nickel's initiative received the approval conference participants, and the text of the charter was submitted to the OSCE secretariat for further study in a package of measures to counter unlawful interference in the information infrastructure of the economic and social sectors.

“We’re People of the Same Race – We’re Slavs”’: The Problem of Identity in Regions Along the Russian-Ukrainian Border

Author: Igor Tatarinov, *assistant Professor, Department of Political studies and International Relations, Vladimir Dahl Lugansk east ukrainian national university, Candidate of science (history); igortatarinov76@gmail.com*

Frontiers are an inseparable feature of statehood. They are both barriers and points of contact. simultaneously, as identifiers of borderland residents, they facilitate “our own vs. foreign” identification. The border between Russia and Ukraine is artificial and controversial, and this problem, exacerbated by the recent souring of relations between the two countries, has been leading to territorial claims put forward at various levels.

Historically, borderlands have been populated by defenders of their country who drew a clear distinction between what was part of their own country and what was not.

As regards the term “borderland,” it might mean a relatively narrow strip next to a frontier, but it can also be applied to larger areas near a frontier, although in many respects life in such areas may be similar to life in territory in the immediate vicinity to the frontier. Oleg Bresky and Olga Breskaya argue that there is “no consistent theory” distinguishing these two types of territory and that borderland understood as larger areas than just narrow strips along a border has “rather an imaginary, symbolic, social dimension” [7, pp. 56-57].

Areas along the Russian-Ukrainian border are sites of intensive interactions of regional, ethnic, political and other identities that combine to form a multi-component borderland identity.

This study aims to systematize interpretations of the Russian-Ukrainian borderland identity concept and examine dynamics of interaction between various types of borders. It is important to trace evolution mechanisms and dynamics of borders, find out principal reasons for territorial division and their impacts on Russian-Ukrainian borderland identity, supporting such studies with empirical evidence.

The “Ukrainian idea” was also exploited by the Bolsheviks, who tried to implant the belief that there existed a Ukrainian soviet identity into public opinion. Ukrainianization also aimed to give the alleged Ukrainian identity a high prestige with the potential redistribution of social roles between the Russians and Ukrainians [5, c. 174].

By taking advantage of the disappearance of imperial-era pan-Russian identity, the Soviet leadership succeeded in making public opinion accept the idea that there existed a distinctive Ukrainian identity different from Russian identity and was emphasizing that the Ukrainians were a nation in its own right. “little Russian” was given a negative connotation while “Ukrainian” was intended to be associated with socialist achievements [5, c. 176].

The soviet leadership ran across serious problems in drawing boundaries and looked for solutions in Vladimir Lenin’s books *The Right of nations to self-Determination* and *Critical Remarks on the national Question*. study of those books led to the decision to give the status of a republic to a territory whose population spoke the same language. such population groups were claimed to be nationalities. While

language was the criterion, ethnic and cultural self-awareness, which historically had been a key factor in ethnic identification, was completely disregarded [15, c. 254].

As a result, the ethnically homogeneous population of some regions was divided between two republics and some of the regional economic systems were ruptured, causing changes in economic specializations or bringing about the collapse of some economic centers. on the other hand, the situation that had taken shape ruled out any other solutions.

The development of statehood always implies the strengthening of border control. on the other hand, quite often state frontiers interfere with economic ties and contradict ethnic and historical regional boundaries.

The self-identification of the present-day population of lands near the Russian-Ukrainian border areas often fails to fit into common methodological patterns.

In some respects, territories along the Russian-Ukrainian border are not typical borderlands. apparently, people living near Ukraine's eastern border with Russia see it as a border between "ourselves," and that conflicts with government policies.

Noteworthy, the population on one side of the border is not different ethnically or culturally from the population on the other side, and both sides profess the same values.

Empirical studies confirm that the official frontier between Russia and eastern Ukraine conflicts with ethnic and historical regional borders. The population of Ukrainian borderlands consider those living on the other side of the frontier "our own people." The population of Donbass does not consider the border with Russia as a border with foreigners. The population of Russian regions along the Ukrainian border fragmentarily identifies itself as ethnic Ukrainian but all residents of those regions identify themselves as parts of the Russian nation.

The population of eastern Ukraine has consistently seen Russia as a culturally close country, as a country of friends and brothers, despite outbreaks of tension between the two countries' governments.

Moldova's East-West Dilemma

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In recent years, the territory of the former soviet union has been the site of escalating east-West rivalry. on one side there are Euro-Atlantic bodies – the European union and NATO. on the other there are the Collective security Treaty organization (CSTO) and the Eurasian economic union (EAEU), organizations active on former soviet territory. This rivalry was made more intense by the crisis of 2013 and 2014 in Ukraine and the reunification of Crimea with Russia. The future nature of international relations in ex-soviet territory and those in Europe as a whole largely depends on whether former soviet republics will

prioritize relations with the EU or activities in the EAEU format. For Moldova, this is a vital choice to make for historical (and geographical) reasons.

Moldova's constitution declares the country a neutral state. Moldova has announced repeatedly that it seeks to join the EU, which on the whole does not contradict its official neutral status as the EU is not a military bloc. After becoming an independent state, Moldova has intensively developed its relations with Romania. The replacement of Moldovan with Romanian as the name of Moldova's official language and the idea of Romanianizing Moldovan society has gained considerable public support in the country. But Romanianizing was not to everyone's liking. The main opposition to it came from the chiefly Russian-speaking population of Transnistria and from the Gagauz, a Turkic people living in southern Moldova.

At the referendum in Gagauzia in February 2014 that had a turnout of 70% but was not recognized by the Moldovan government, 97% of voters rejected Moldova's proposed accession to the EU and 99% supported a proposition for Gagauzia to secede and become an independent state if Moldova became an EU member.

Russia has had a rocky relationship with Moldova for a long time. One reason is that Chisinau accuses Russia, which has no border with Moldova, of backing separatism in Transnistria. However, the election of Igor Dodon, leader of the Party of Socialists (PSRM), as president of Moldova in November 2016 brought about some positive changes in Moldovan-Russian relations.

Dodon launched a constructive policy toward Russia, described Moldovan-Russian relations as a strategic partnership, and called the Russian people brothers.

It is obvious to any analyst that neither option means instant solutions to Moldova's main problems. One of these is its traditionally agrarian economy with a poorly developed industry. Other are increasingly serious social problems caused by unemployment, which leads to mass outmigration.

It is not quite clear what Moldova's role would be in the European division of labor, even in EU agriculture, which is rather strictly regimented by Brussels. The pro-EU lobby in Moldova hasn't been able to suggest any realistic way of ensuring significant growth for the country's economy.

Moldova's society, including its ruling elite, is deeply divided with one part wanting closer cooperation with Russia and the other being pro-Western, and naturally anti-Russian.

While the EAEU is willing to admit Moldova quickly and without any significant conditions, the EU presents the country with a set of tough accession criteria. For objective reasons, Moldova would be unable to meet many of these criteria.

Dodon, after taking office in December 2016, has said repeatedly that he plans to initiate the abrogation of the EU-Moldova Partnership and Cooperation agreement, which was signed in November 1994 and came into force in July 1998. He has argued that the accord inflicts heavy losses on Moldova by putting the country under Russian countersanctions against European goods. However, the agreement remains in effect.

Moldova's pro-EU lobby has meanwhile made some progress. In an agreement with Romania signed

back in 2012, Moldova pledged to put its armed forces under the command of the Romanian general staff, and hence under NATO control, something that runs against Moldova's constitutional status as a neutral state.

Russia still has a good chance of building a fruitful relationship with Moldova, which is an important country for Russia to be on good terms with. although it is Moldova's number two trading partner after Romania, Russia is the biggest foreign investor into Moldova's economy, and Russian-Moldovan cooperation is based on about 150 agreements. The Moldovan community in Russia is a serious source of state revenues for Moldova. about one million Moldovans are working abroad, and about 700,000 of them have jobs in countries east of Moldova, mainly in Russia.

There are purely economic factors as well. Moldova sends about 70% of its agricultural exports, mainly wine, fruit and vegetables, eastward – to countries such as Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. agriculture is the basis of Moldova's economy, and EAEU member countries are used to Moldovan agricultural produce. The EU neither wants nor can replace EAEU countries as importers of farm products from Moldova.

The Political Party Landscape of Germany

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The political party landscape of Germany has been undergoing serious changes recently. The picture used to be quite simple: There were two large "people's" parties, and there were two smaller parties, one of which would sometimes join one of the bigger parties in a government coalition; there also were regional parties that stayed out of federal politics; and sometimes there have been "grand coalitions" – alliances of the two large parties.

The CDU/CSU was generally seen in Germany as a bourgeois party championing a market economy and the conservative values of the postwar world order. On the other hand, the SPD continued to defend the rights of workers and advocate higher social expenditure. There existed a saying that the Christian Democrats know how to earn money and the social Democrats know how to spend it.

By moving into parliamentary politics and ditching extremist tactics, the greens attracted numerous voters for whom until then the SPD had been the only alternative to the conservative CDU/CSU.

Moreover, the greens are constantly looking for new leaders, and this also increases their popularity.

After the emergence of new left-wing and socially oriented parties in Germany, the SPD has been continuously losing support, practically having failed to update its agenda.

The SPD also owes some of its problems to the activity of some of its outstanding members. one of them is scandalous Thilo Sarrazin, a former senator of finance for the state of Berlin. What explains his high profile are not the senior posts he has held but radical and politically incorrect views he has expressed in his books.

Many in Germany believe that Sarrazin's books have accelerated German society's overall rightward drift. It is seen as a serious mistake that the SPD still hasn't expelled him.

In 1995, Lafontaine was elected SPD leader, and three years later, the social Democrats won Bundestag elections and formed a coalition government with alliance 90/The greens. Schröder became chancellor and Lafontaine economics minister, but this was a setup with a preprogrammed conflict. Disagreements with Schröder over the latter's social policy made Lafontaine resign as economics minister and SPD leader early in 1999, just a few months after such a difficult electoral victory. Lafontaine's unexpected move was covered in practically all German newspapers, and many rank-and-file social Democrats felt sorry that this true champion of working people's interests had withdrawn from big politics. In 2013, yet another prominent social Democrat, novelist Günter Grass, a recipient of the 1999 Nobel Prize in literature, said: "In the history of the social Democratic Party, there has never been a dirtier treason than Oskar Lafontaine's betrayal of his fellow party members." An attempt by the SPD to put forward a top-caliber politician from among its ranks was a failure.

This new politician was Gesine Schwan, whose star rose in the first decade of this millennium. Schwan is a political scientist and from 1999 to 2008 was president of the Viadrina European university in Frankfurt (Oder), where many of the students come from eastern European countries.

In those days, it was unthinkable that women could hold both top state posts. Moreover, Schwan would have become Germany's first woman president had she won. In 2005, Angela Merkel became the country's first woman chancellor. Obviously, Schwan had no chance of becoming president. Today, at a time of maximum gender tolerance, when same-sex marriages are legal and a third gender may be stated in a birth certificate, the gender of German leaders is no longer perceived as such an issue, but in 2004 Germany was just at the outset of the long road that preceded this.

The parliamentary elections of September 2017 were won by the Merkel-led CDU/CSU, but it was a hard victory to win. Although the German press was full of appeals not to vote for Merkel or even boycott the elections, the turnout reached 75%.

Then came a lengthy and agonizing period of forming a government coalition, with the SPD becoming the CDU/CSU's partner once again. The coalition took shape in March 2018. This time round, though, the social Democrats were able to wrench more power from Merkel and to secure two highly prestigious and important portfolios, that of economics and that of finance.

No matter who is German interior minister, he or she will inevitably have to deal with the highly complex and practically unsolvable program of migration, a problem whose nature no one has been able to explain coherently.

The majority are economic migrants, and economic migration has always existed and always will exist because it's part of human nature to look for better life. But economic migration needs a different way of handling. In any case, uncontrolled entry, admission of everyone, including people with no documents or clear explanations as was the case in 2015, is the wrong practice. Merkel said in those days: "We will cope with it." It doesn't seem Germany has coped, but the reckless politically correct decision brought about a radical change in the country's political landscape. Lamya Kaddor, a German specialist in Islamic studies, has described Germany as an "immigration country." Roughly every fifth person living in Germany has a migrant background, she said.

At a conference on December 7, the CDU elected Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer as party chairman. Kramp-Karrenbauer, who is sometimes referred to as AKK, was general secretary of the CDU before being elected leader. The CDU won't undergo any significant changes under her stewardship. She is an experienced party functionary, and some observers dub her mini-Merkel or Merkel II.

However, it would be a mistake to see AKK as no more than a somewhat younger replica of the chancellor, at least because she faces a job that one can't carry out without breaking out of the Merkel image.

The returns of the last parliamentary elections included a sensation, albeit a predictable one – the double-digit result of Alternative for Germany (AfD), a right-wing populist party set up in February 2013. AfD did better than all the parties that have traditionally been following in the wake of the “people's” parties.

As we can see, in today's 19th Bundestag, as in former legislatures, parties are in a state of war with one another. Even natural allies such as the Social Democrats and the Greens or the Christian Democrats and the Free Democrats watch each other closely and never miss a chance to earn some dividends at each other's expense.

Germany's party landscape is not a motionless picture but a continent that is in continuous motion with no taboo stay on forever.

Paradoxically, it is the left that is the most stable party. The party has a specific category of voters, a clear program, and charismatic leaders. Plus, today is an excellent moment to play on weaknesses shown by other parties. And that's what Sahra Wagenknecht is trying to do in her *Aufstehen* activities.

Instability is the main feature of Germany's political landscape. But instability is a feature of world politics as well. Apparently, external factors will exercise a powerful influence on Germany's domestic politics. Each party will try to align its course with these factors.

Russia and Cyprus: **Active Cooperation Despite Difficulties**

Author: Stanislav Osadchiy, ambassador extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Cyprus

Regardless of the situation in the world, Russia and Cyprus have always worked to build relations based on mutual respect and a desire on both sides to develop multidimensional and mutually beneficial cooperation. At present, there is practical cooperation in a wide range of areas thanks to an active political dialogue at the highest level, an extensive legal framework created over the decades, and close economic, cultural, religious, and humanitarian ties between our countries and peoples.

To be sure, some changes began to take place when Cyprus joined the EU in 2004. The impact of its EU membership has become particularly noticeable since 2014, when the West launched an aggressive, politically motivated anti-Russian campaign and imposed sanctions on our country. At the same time, it

should be noted that in recent years Cypriot political leaders at different levels have criticized such measures.

In 2013, a year of crisis for Cyprus associated with the collapse of the local banking sector and the resulting “haircut” on deposits at Cypriot banks imposed by the Cypriot government, Russia’s investment position in the republic weakened significantly. According to various estimates by Cypriot and Russian experts, our businesses and ordinary depositors lost a total of 10 billion to 20 billion euros. at the same time, coordinated action by the governments of Russia and Cyprus made it possible to offset some of the losses and maintain the Russian presence on the island.

According to the Cyprus Russian Business association, the past year has brought a qualitative change in investment flows from Russia to Cyprus. Today, they are largely private, being used to buy residential real estate and luxury goods, to take part in the Cyprus Citizenship by Investment program and resolve other personal issues.

Unfortunately, the trend toward a decline in trade and economic relations between our countries continued in 2018. In January-august 2018, according to the statistical service of Cyprus, bilateral trade totaled 108.4 million euros, down 20.8% year-on-year. In particular, Cyprus imports from Russia fell by 12.3% to 91.8 million euros, while exports to Russia fell by 48.6% to 16.6 million euros.

Given the geographical proximity of that country, the Cypriot authorities are naturally concerned and keep a close watch on events in Syria. our approaches are close as regards the need to eradicate terrorist organizations, maintain the sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic, and restore peace and security throughout its territory. Cypriots call for the earliest possible achievement of a political settlement and agree that Syria’s future should be decided by the Syrian people themselves.

The problem of Syrian refugees, which has troubled Europeans for more than five years, has affected Cyprus as well. Recently, there has been a significant increase in the flow of illegal migrants from Syria to Cyprus.

Nicosia denies plans for the construction of a U.S. military base. as we are told, it can only be a question of creating a “way station” for the so-called humanitarian evacuation of U.S. citizens from zones of escalating armed violence in the region. In any case, we believe that such intentions should be given wide publicity. The Americans make no secret of their plans to create some kind of security system in the region to contain Russia’s growing influence in the Mediterranean. We hope that Cyprus foreign policy, traditionally oriented towards the development of partnership relations with all countries, will not be part of the logic of confrontational policy towards Russia pursued by the West led by Washington.

Non-Permanent Members of the UN Security Council: The Case of Chile

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The 1990s were a time of change for Chile. March 11, 1990 was the first day in office of the first democratically elected president in 17 years, Patricio Aylwin. Aylwin succeeded dictator Augusto Pinochet, who had ruled the country since 1973. Pinochet's Chile was generally ostracized by the international community. His radical right-wing regime was condemned by the Soviet Union and its allies. Most of them, including the Soviet Union, severed their diplomatic relations with Chile after the military coup of September 11, 1973, and the death of the overthrown president Salvador Allende. The majority of Western states denounced mass violations of human rights in Chile.

Chile's democratization brought about radical changes in its foreign policy. The country embarked on a strategy of reintegration into the international system, launching wide-scale diplomatic efforts that were based on the principle of multilateralism and included activities in the UN framework. The international community hailed this process and supported it via UN mechanisms.

Chile's efforts to return into the international system and its multilateralism-based diplomacy coincided in time with deep-going changes in the Security Council itself. In those years, the Council ceased to be a site for ideological battles and began to transform into an institution for developing legally binding mechanisms for the settlement of international conflicts.

During Chile's membership of 1996-1997, the Security Council held 180 meetings and passed 110 resolutions, and the Council president issued more than 100 statements. Chile's priorities as a Council member in those years were looking for consensus-based solutions to international crises, insistence on compliance with international law, mainly the UN Charter, and defense of fundamental human rights and freedoms.

The Iraq Issue dominated the agenda of Chile's Security Council membership period of 2003-2004. The president of Chile, Ricardo Lagos, refused to support a draft Security Council resolution to approve the armed invasion of Iraq and firmly rejected a proposal by U.S. President George W. Bush that Chile join a proposed American-led armed coalition that was going to invade Iraq in circumvention of the Security Council.¹² In doing so, Lagos ignored unprecedented U.S. pressure and a danger that the United States would refuse to sign a bilateral free trade agreement with Chile.

Chile's Security Council membership in 2003-2004 was in a sense the period that completed the democratization of the country's foreign policy. By its position on the Iraq issue and on related developments Chile demonstrated that it could pursue an independent foreign policy and consistently follow its multilateralism principle.

Chile's latest stint of Security Council membership were the years 2014 and 2015, a period during which the conflict in Ukraine, the crisis in Syria and the North Korea issue dominated the Council's agenda. Chile essentially sided with the West on those issues: it refused to recognize the Crimean referendum on reunification with Russia, supported the Minsk agreements, and voted for Security Council Resolution 2254 on Syria, although it argued that Bashar al-Assad's removal as president of Syria could not be an essential condition for the settlement of the conflict.

Reforming the Security Council is an issue that the Council debated during all the periods of Chilean membership. Chile has argued that post-Cold War changes in the international system made it essential

to reform the council. Chile has consistently put its multilateralism principle at the basis of its views on council reforms.

An analysis of Chile's three periods of non-permanent security Council membership leads to the following conclusions about Chile's vision of its role in the council. Firstly, Chile believes that its council membership reflects a high degree of confidence vested in it by the international community and the recognition of the country as a reliable and responsible partner.

Secondly, as Chile is neither a member of the nuclear club nor one of the world's key military powers, it plays a limited role in international security debates, and therefore often allies with large Western countries.

Thirdly, Chilean initiatives have consistently had strong humanitarian aspects to them, aspects that have seemed to be more in tune with issues addressed by ECOSOC. It is partly humanitarian proposals by Chile that explain the trend in the security Council to include humanitarian issues in peace and security debates.

Fourthly, Chile has consistently advocated selectivity about international bodies where bilateral issues should be raised.

This and other above-mentioned achievements mean that Chile has a successful record as a non-permanent member of the security Council.

Who Is Doing Well in Ecuador? Social Reforms and *Buen Vivir*

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Decent life, well-being, the common good, progress, and development are universal concepts, but they take different cultural and historical forms. In the early 21st century, the government of Ecuador launched a unique sociopolitical project with social inclusion, eradication of poverty, and equal opportunities being priority objectives.

Buen vivir has no strict boundaries, but its main principles are peaceful coexistence, tolerance, ethnic diversity, pluralism, and harmony with nature.

Buen vivir is not limited to any economic strategies. It represents a new vision of national development, transparency and civic engagement, principles that it holds can be asserted through civil and social rights, economic opportunities, and ethical standards.

Rafael Correa, during his three terms as president of Ecuador from 2007 to 2017, launched economic and social reforms that mitigated impacts of external factors such as the global financial crisis of 2007-

2008 and the past few years' declines in world energy prices and laid the basis for higher living standards.

Ecuador's current constitution, approved by a referendum in 2008, bases the country's political system on new principles: It is considered unique and one of the world's most progressive constitutions. It prioritizes humanism and social justice.

In addition to the constitution, more than 170 laws were brought out during Correa's first term reforming the political system. one third of them established civil rights guarantees.

Inequality also fell – as measured by the Gini coefficient, it went down from 0.55 to 0.47 [23, p. 2]. These achievements, which can be considered a breakthrough after mounting inequality between 1996 and 2006, were based on economic growth, job creation, and state support programs for the underprivileged.

The government has paid special attention to children. It has launched a priority program for children aged six months to five years that included the construction of kindergartens.

According to the World Bank, in 2015, Ecuador was one of Latin America's biggest education spenders – education money made up 13% of that year's total state expenditure [13].

The 2008 constitution guarantees the right to education to every Ecuadorian regardless of their gender, race or ethnicity. It is one of the state's main duties to ensure equal access to education for everyone.

Child labor remains a problem in Ecuador. as of 2012, children aged between five and 17 made a workforce of 360,000 in the country with 71% of them employed in agriculture, 21% in the service sector and 8% in industry [17, p. 138]. however, it has been possible to reduce the scale of child labor.

The Whole Life. National Development Plan 2017-2021 prioritizes social policy and sets objectives including broader guarantees of social integration and economic, cultural and territorial equality; better health care; more opportunities for young people to develop their potential; more effective use of the nation's productive capacities; guarantees of the preservation of traditional languages and multilingualism; creation of a stable intercultural education system; and diplomatic action against climate change and for respect for nature (green diplomacy) [19].

however, Ecuador's progress in education and health care, sectors that need constant financial inputs, has not yet resulted in achievements that can guarantee sufficient systemic changes. Ecuador continues to be plagued by wide-scale undereducation, gender and ethnic inequality, labor market problems, and growing unemployment. It is imperative that today's government should act to sustain what has been achieved since 2007 and to attain the objectives set by *The Whole Life. National Development Plan 2017-2021*.

The Creative Potential of Russian Public Diplomacy

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Making the effective use of public diplomacy has for years been a keynote of all analytical studies devoted to soft power and its derivatives. even though the concept of public diplomacy is clearly defined and has already entered the Russian political lexicon, the extent of its practical application is far behind the pace of scientific research and needs fleshing out in more detail. We believe that this can be ensured with the help of a person's social quality, such as creativity.

Regarding terminology, in this article, we propose our own definition of public diplomacy: the activities of public organizations and nongovernmental entities, carried out in accordance with the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation and designed to protect national interests; impact a foreign audience to take a positive view of the state's foreign and domestic policy objectives and ways of achieving them; ensure a better understanding of national values and state institutions abroad.

It should be mentioned that a different approach is also represented in Russian scientific and applied literature: "Public diplomacy is not a political concept; it is a manifestation of any civic activity in the cultural, scientific and (or) humanitarian spheres that, as a general rule, is not related to government contracts or the active participation of the state."

The close connection and interdependence between public diplomacy and creativity in both theory and practice stem from the fact that the sociopolitical activities of public organizations, in contrast to the institution of civil servants, are far less limited by norms and regulators, and therefore, have an incomparably greater room to pursue qualitatively new ideas and breakthrough methodologies in society, as well as contribute personal achievements to society.

In other words, in international relations, public diplomacy can effectively employ the creative potential as a driver of social progress and evolution.

A thorough analysis of the current sociopolitical situation causes concern that, devoid of creativity, public diplomacy will be unable to develop qualitatively. The reason for that is not the lack of financing. The situation in this regard has changed for the better: state grants and specialized foundations provide the necessary financial support. The problem is that all parties concerned lack the expertise, knowledge, experience, and willingness to develop this kind of diplomatic practice.

Monitoring the state of public diplomacy in Russia has identified several significant conceptual problems limiting the creativity potential: 1) a lack of systemic mechanisms regulating the sociopolitical practices of public diplomacy; 2) structural amorphousness due to the lack of a single coordinating agency; 3) a shortage of professionals capable of implementing innovative practices; 4) the inarticulate presentation of Russian society values to foreign audiences.

We share the following view expressed by N.V. Burlinova: "since the early 2000s, public diplomacy in Russia has been developing absolutely spontaneously, in isolation and without support from the state, which failed to appreciate its importance for Russia's geopolitical situation."

We believe that the development of the public diplomacy institution entered an active phase in 2012, following the publication of an article by Russian President V.V. Putin that first stressed the need for soft power, public diplomacy being one of its tools. until then, this topic had been discussed only within narrow diplomatic, political expert and specialist circles.

In analyzing the problematic area of public diplomacy in search of creativity potential, we proceed from the fact that Russia is very far behind major world powers, so defined only on the basis of economic stability and civic activity principles.

Modern international relations are a constantly changing reality. Whereas in the past, before the rapid development of information and communication networks, it was possible to wait until a particular technology proved itself, now a lot has changed.

The current situation around public diplomacy practices is reminiscent of a well-known joke: "What are you doing?" "I am looking for my key." "Where did you lose it?" "up there in the park." "Then why are you looking for it down here?" "The light is better here!"

It seems that the time has come to shed more light on other, previously inconspicuous aspects of public diplomacy in Russia.

Bioethics and Global Challenges

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The United Nations educational, scientific and Cultural organization (UNESCO) pays special attention to bioethical issues when considering the social and ethical challenges facing humanity. Bioethics, as an interdisciplinary field of knowledge at the intersection of philosophy, law, medicine, sociology, political science, demographics, and cultural and religious studies, addresses moral aspects of people's attitudes toward life and death. It comprises a wide range of socioeconomic, ethical and legal issues on the assumption that human values must not be considered separately from biological facts, and strives to develop moral and ethical norms, requirements and principles, establishing mechanisms for using scientific and technological achievements to benefit people and nature.

It encompasses analysis by doctors, biologists, philosophers, theologians, lawyers, psychologists, political scientists, and representatives of other scientific and academic disciplines. It includes educational activities and is a thriving social institution with a sophisticated system of international, national, regional and local ethics committees. In a certain sense, bioethics is a human rights movement in its field.

UNESCO contributed significantly to the successful completion of the human genome project, which has opened up unprecedented opportunities for health care but at the same time raised new ethical and social challenges. The renowned French research hematologist Jean Bernard was among the first to outline the basic ethical principles of biological research.

Considering the new social and ethical challenges brought about by scientific and technological development, UNESCO set out to elaborate the topic of human genetics and bioethics at the global level. an important achievement in this effort was the adoption in October 2005 of the universal Declaration on Bioethics and human Rights.

The risk of the knowledge possessed by modern humankind is the emerging possibility that humans will interfere with the foundations of life on earth, and that the latest technological innovations will change lifestyles and ways of thinking. Society is now facing questions about how humans will survive as a species and how to conserve the earth's biosphere.

Biotechnology helps expand production and cut the manufacturing costs of drugs for treating rare diseases. But pharmaceutical companies, for commercial reasons, are either not producing them or keeping prices artificially high. The rights of subjects in clinical trials of new drugs are being violated.

The use of modern diagnostic methods helps identify people suffering from rare genetic and congenital diseases. But information about such diseases could be used for discriminatory purposes: terminating employment, denying insurance, inflicting moral damage. It is possible that a biologically lower class emerges whose members will become pariahs of society.

Complex bioethical issues affect many aspects of the development of modern societies. The conclusions and recommendations of ethics committees have a significant impact on the quality of public opinion, preparing it to tackle the most complicated moral and legal issues concerning every individual. After all, for example, the world's first heart transplant operation, performed by South African surgeon Christiaan Barnard on Dec. 3, 1967, was met with delight as well as accusations of murder.

Hypertrophic tolerance has led to gender schizophrenia, to the normalizing of the abnormal and to attacks on family life, all of which are extremely dangerous to the bioethical well-being of society. The promotion of homosexuality, which has become indoctrinated in Western intellectual products, is now manifesting itself, for example, in the mandatory inclusion of perverted heroes in films. This was compounded by the recent campaign against so-called "harassment" that declared men's natural interest in women a "demonic phallocracy."

Viruses developed for military purposes are invisible and less expensive than nuclear weapons but could pose no less a threat. The Americans are now using former Soviet biotechnology labs in Georgia and the Baltic states. No less dangerous is biotechnology designed to control humans.

Those who oppose GMOs because of the unstudied and unpredictable consequences of their use are harassed by those who make a lot of money in this business. This has directly affected Russian scientists. For example, Russian biologist Irina Yermakova, who opposes GMOs and has been prevented from publishing in foreign scientific journals, stopped getting invited to international symposiums and was forced to abandon her positions through threats. As we stand on the threshold of a new technological paradigm, we should prepare for genetic wars that could determine who has a chance to survive.

Bioethics: Solving Tomorrow's Problems Today

Author: Justice Christian Byk, Chairperson, UNESCO Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee

The discussion of bioethics-related problems at UNESCO started in the 1990s with the issue of a human genome program. Scientists expressed concern about the possibility of some human genome modifications being developed with the help of new technology.

In 2017, the Declaration on ethical Principles in Relation to Climate Change was adopted. so, this is something more global. In the next several years, UNESCO will launch a program on ethics and artificial intelligence.

There are situations where soldiers fight for three days in a row and have no time to sleep. In this case, soldiers of the future will be able to sleep for just one hour a day to improve efficiency. according to media reports, the U.S. Defense Department is subsidizing all research projects of this kind. other countries are also studying such technologies and using them. as you know, there is a technology that allows soldiers to see clearly at night, and in the future, there will be a technology that will enable them not to talk, but to communicate by transmitting brainwaves so that the enemy will not hear them. I know that this has not yet become a reality, but this work is underway.

There are many bodies studying bioethics. First of all, in 1988, we created a network of ethics committees to review medical research projects, and today it is part of the European legal framework. In areas where European legislation applies, they are part of the process of bringing new drugs to the market. however, we also believe in public discussion. We also have ethics forums at the regional level, where the public can receive information and where professionals discuss mostly medical issues with members of the public.

Bioethics expands the concept of scientific ethics; this is about the convergence of ethics. It raises ethical questions in medicine. The revolution of the past decade has brought various disciplines closer together to study not only ethics, not only social and medical disciplines, but also other disciplines. another important question is how to get society involved in this process and why it should be involved. our present-day way of life greatly depends on technology, without which it is difficult for us to exist. If electricity and communication disappear, society will fall on hard times. If there is no electricity, we will have to go back to the 17th or 18th century. People need to understand the importance of technology in society, and they need to participate in discussing ways of using technology. scientific achievements must be accessible to all. however, the problem of limitations also exists today. I cannot tell you more right now because I do not even know what we will look like in 100 years, but we know that we are going to be more technological and cultured people.

Russia: The Past and Present of Its Federation Model

Author: Yury Bulatov, *Dean, school of International Relations, Moscow state Institute (university) of International Relations, Ministry of Foreign affairs of the Russian Federation, Professor, Doctor of science (history); mo@inno.mqimo.ru*

In 6the last days of czarist autocracy, the public displayed a lot of interest in the future political organization of Russia. People addressed all political parties with “Down with autocracy!” and “long live the Republic!” slogans and wanted all political parties in the center and the provinces to present clear programs of Russia’s future state order and national construction.

The parties that appeared at the national outskirts of the Russian empire at the turn of the 20th century lost no time to come up with their projects of a federative system.

Each of the national parties had its own ideas about the future federation.

Everything that was said about the future federation was fairly vague; nobody knew how to build it “on the ruins of despotism.” The federalists, however, agreed that the federation would, in the course of time, develop into a complex union state consisting of state units with limited political and juridical independence.

The standoff between the unitarists and federalists, in which the latter obviously outweighed the former, was obvious for all, the dissenting elite of czarist Russia being no exception.

The Russian social Democratic labor Party (Bolsheviks) headed by Lenin opposed the idea of a federal state for the following reasons:

- (1) a federation did not harmonize with the Marxist teaching of the dictatorship of the proletariat, since, according to Karl Marx, a unitary state was the best possible variant of a proletarian state;
- (2) federalism was weakening the proletarian movement since it divided the workers by nationalities contrary to the slogan of proletarian internationalism.

In their program, the Bolsheviks supported only the right of nations to self-determination and bypassed the future political organization of Russia. This issue was pushed aside till better times.

The Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia of November 2, 1917 defined the future soviet state as “a voluntary and honest union of the peoples of Russia.” It seems that the meaning of this vague formula was clear only to the leader of the Bolshevik Party. an “honest union” is a fairly subjective definition; as for the “voluntary,” all those who lived in the Soviet Union know what the word meant in soviet parlance. To keep all citizens of the new Russian state within soviet system, Lenin had to take into account the wide support of the idea of federalism by the peoples of the former Russian empire. This explains why several months later he had gathered enough determination to proclaim the soviet Republic a federation.

Bolsheviks demonstrated a lot of caution and pragmatism when moving toward a federation: the workers and peasants of all nations were invited to decide, at their national congresses of soviets, whether they wanted and on which conditions to take part in the federal government and in all other federal soviet structures.

It should be said that the disagreements between Lenin and Stalin were related to tactical, rather than strategic issues: the Bolshevik leaders were always unanimous when it came to the future of the soviet federation; the latter was considered just a temporal form of the state order in Russia.

The course at the victory of socialism in one country resulted in stronger unitarist trends in the Soviet national construction.

In 1971, speaking at the 24th Congress of the CPSU, Leonid Brezhnev said that “during the years of socialist construction, a new historical community of people, the soviet people, has been formed.”

The 28th Congress of the CPSU held in July 1990 delivered the final blow: it adopted a new version of the Charter of the CPSU that established the federative status of the party; all Communist parties of the union republics became independent. All first secretaries of the Central Committees of the Communist

parties of the union republics followed the example of Gorbachev to become presidents of their “possessions.” The CPSU, the main unifying bond of the Soviet Union, was eliminated.

In the mid-1990s, Russia was living amid the parade of sovereignties and constitutional and legal nihilism. Constitutions or Charters adopted by the federation subjects that in parts contradicted the 1993 Constitution of the Russian Federation became the fashion of the time.

In the late 20th century, Russia moved dangerously close to the line behind which the federation could become a loosely connected confederation. In 1990, in his first address to the Federal assembly of the Russian Federation, Putin critically assessed the quality of the federation status quo of post-soviet Russia: “We still do not have a full federal state. I want to stress this: we do have a decentralized state” and “federal relations in Russia are incomplete and undeveloped.”

Today, the RF subjects are asymmetrical which means that their legal statuses are different: there are republics, territories, regions, federal cities, autonomous regions, and autonomous districts. The RF subjects are not only asymmetrical; they are hierarchical since their territories, population strengths, political and economic weights are incomparable – this is a “federation of ants and elephants,” according to certain Russian and foreign editions.

Further development of Russia’s federation model should take into account the soviet experience. It should be said, first and foremost, that the soviet union’s disintegration was not only the biggest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century but also a lesson of historic importance to all peoples of the world: all federations based on the nationality principle are short-lived in the context of history. Territorial federations are much more viable.

Russia’s Diplomatic Service in the Second Quarter of the 19th Century

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Any state realizes its foreign policy through its diplomatic corps. as an official representative of his country, any diplomat defends the interests of his state and of its citizens and participates in talks and other events.

By the 19th century, relationships with foreign diplomats had already developed into the ambassadorial law as a legal branch on its own right. It allowed independent governments to send and receive diplomats to represent their interests while a system of ranging specified the rights of diplomats depending on their ranks.

A unified system of ranks accepted by all participants in international relations appeared after 1815; before that, each country had relied on its national system of ranking in which the rank of a diplomat depended on his specific mission.

The system of ranks of the early 19th century survived till our times practically intact; legally, the diplomats were equal irrespective of their ranks; the rank differences might be observed at receptions.¹ appointments at certain posts followed certain rules: kingdom appointed ambassadors to other kingdoms; as direct representatives of monarchs, they expected royal receptions.

In the second quarter of the 19th century, Russia was represented practically in all states. under Catherine II, there had been 21 ministers; by the end of the first quarter of the 19th century, there were 24 of them.

Diplomats were immune to the taxation laws of the host country as well as to its criminal and civil laws. It was prohibited to lodge soldiers in the houses of foreign envoys; the local land taxes, however, were paid. The ministers could organize private religious service. Diplomatic correspondence was treated as secret yet states regularly violated this rule.

The staff of the Russian diplomatic missions abroad was determined by the staff payroll of 1800. excessively big staffs were not only too expensive; they made it much harder to keep secrets.

The highly important and far from simple relations with the Ottoman empire were the reason for the multifaceted tasks carried out by the Russian mission in Constantinople. Navigation in the Black sea straits was critically important for Russia's trade with the Mediterranean countries and Russia's safety. The Christians of the ottoman empire counted on Russia's patronage; the lion's share of armaments that allowed mountaineers to continue fighting in the Caucasus arrived from Turkey. The sultan and his closest circle protected their power by maximally restricting foreigners' activities in Turkey.

Talking about Russian missions in oriental countries should include discussing the role of dragomans (interpreters) in diplomatic activities. Most of them were local people with European roots who had spent a larger part of their lives in Istanbul (many of them were born here).

Dragomans were necessary because Europeans were not fluent in oriental languages, while the specifics of local mentality and the rules of negotiations made it much harder to achieve the desired results.

Tasks of the Russian embassies changed, sometimes fast, together with the changing situation. In the 1820s, for example, the Russian mission in France was expected to restore interaction with the country that had reestablished the monarchy. Ten years later, the Russian diplomats stationed in Paris worked hard to prevent revolutionary ideas from infiltrating Europe, and Russia in the first place.

Unrelated to diplomacy Russian diplomats needed a high level of professional training. It required specialized educational establishments Russia didn't have at the time.

For several years, aspiring diplomats were learning the skills inside the country as officials of the Foreign Ministry: they were taught the basics of diplomatic work and the rules of diplomatic correspondence. after that they could count on being posted abroad.

It should be said that the editing skills were highly important for a diplomat. To be adequately understood in European capitals, any document should have precise wording. adequate responses depended on the right understanding of information received.

All countries, Russia being no exception, combined their diplomatic work with intelligence activities; representatives of the finance and war ministries were members of diplomatic missions. It was the prerogative of the Foreign Ministry to appoint diplomats to Russia's missions abroad. once stationed abroad, the diplomats from the central apparatus never returned to the ministry. experience was highly important at the time when communication required a lot of time: any diplomat was expected to rely on his knowledge and skills, which was especially true at the time of crises when promptness was very important.

This means that Russian diplomatic service was moving in the right direction.

“Electrician”: A WWII Spy Story

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This article is a chapter from a new book by Sergey Brilev and Bernard o'Connor describing cooperation between the intelligence services of Moscow and London during the second World War, adapted for publication in International affairs. In agreement with the editors of the journal, the article includes additional material the Russian co-author obtained from the Russian Foreign Intelligence service (SVR) after the book was sent to the printer.

Remember Pastor Schlag from the TV series “seventeen Moments of spring”? Remember when in the spring of 1945, the poor bloke played by Rostislav Plyatt stumbled on skis from Germany to Switzerland with only a hunch that the person who sent him there, Stirlitz, was not a German patriot but a soviet intelligence officer?

Did such a pastor really exist? Yes! only he was Dutch, not German. and he crossed the border in a plane, not on skis. and he was flying not from Germany to Switzerland, but from England to Belgium. and he was working for the USSR quite willingly. his name was John William Kruyt.

Interest in the West in the fascinating figure of Kruyt appeared after the TNA in London declassified a large number of documents related to operation Ice Pick, a joint British-soviet operation in 1941-1944 to send covert agents from the USSR through Britain and across the English Channel.

In his recent book, British researcher Stephen Tyas recalls that, even though Trepper had a falling out with the official communist authorities of the socialist camp countries after the war, he was still regarded in the West as all but a triple agent. In his book on the Red orchestra, French historian Guillaume Bourgeois implies that Trepper deliberately sowed confusion by sending those who wanted to learn more about Nico Kruyt, who continued to live in the Netherlands even after the war, on a false trail.²

Be that as it may, Leopold Trepper always emphasized that he and his Red orchestra intelligence network were not part of the NKVD or military intelligence. so, if Trepper wrote about the Kruyts, that means they were from the GRU.

Strictly speaking, Pastor Kruyt was not the only minister to come on the radar of the Cheka-GPU-NKVD as a special agent, not a victim of repression.

But were there Christian ministers from the West helping the USSR? Yes. Both in the Comintern and in intelligence agencies. For example, Pavel Sudoplatov himself identifies Hungarian Catholic priest Theodor Maly as an covert agent working in England and France before the war.

Pastor Kruyt, the subject of this article, holds a truly special niche. he was not a skier but a parachutist. and although once a pacifist, he became an active communist (but probably not a militant atheist).

Kruyt's election to the Dutch parliament is recorded in his personal file at the Comintern.¹¹ But more details of his time as a Dutch parliamentarian are contained in Western sources.

It seems Kruyt's fellow party members still remained god-fearing people, and his "flock" opposed joining the Comintern. This is unsurprising: From Russia, where the communists had begun to put their theories into practice, reports were coming about persecutions of the church. The topic of whether Dutch Christian socialists would join the Communist International was one of the first items recorded in a case file opened on Kruyt by British intelligence.¹² Indeed, MI-5 had been keeping a close eye on Kruyt since the early 1920s. his personal case file was recently declassified.

If the pacifist Pastor Kruyt's visit to Yasnaya Polyana really did take place in 1921, did he realize that Lenin blessed this trip for reasons that had only very indirect relevance to Kruyt? Did the pastor, who was clearly out of touch with the domestic Russian political situation, realize that he was making a U-turn from Christian socialism to the militantly atheistic Bolsheviks? I'm afraid he did not.

Meanwhile, Kruyt was head over heels. It is known, for example, that when asked at a rally in the Netherlands after returning from soviet Russia about the state of health care in the new Russia, he replied that "there are no sick people in communist society." at home in the Netherlands, he was called among other things "Tolstoy's fig leaf on communist terror." But he clearly believed he had seen the right path.

Kruyt senior's Comintern file shows that in 1921, he was "excommunicated from the church for revolutionary activities."¹⁵ In the same year, Kruyt switched to the Communist Party and even ranked fourth on its list in the 1922 elections to the Dutch lower house of parliament.

IF You examine the conclusion of Kruyt's MI-5 dossier that states that his home addresses in the Netherlands and in France were used for Comintern correspondence, then we see that he was very much a liaison.

French researcher Guillaume Bourgeois emphasizes that Kruyt's work in the Berlin agencies of the Comintern and the soviet Trade Mission coincides exactly with the time when soviet intelligence recruited through these organizations such emblematic figures as Henry Robinson (who would become Trepper's collaborator in the Red orchestra) and Sandor Rado (who would be in charge of soviet intelligence in Switzerland). and what about Kruyt?! Did he just passively watch this? let me put it this way: he was no passive liaison. at least, you can certainly argue that he participated in clandestine work. From Comintern records: "During the underground period of the German Communist Party, he furnished foreign material for illegal publication that he himself had translated."

In Moscow, the Kruyts were given all possible amenities and even deference: Kruyt senior was registered in the Usachevka quarter, which was specially built for the new soviet mid-level elite in Khamovniki. address: ul. Malye Kochki (now Dovatora), house 7, Building X, apt. 393.

In 1942, SOE records show Kruyt senior said he worked in Moscow at the Lenin library. This detail is frequently cited by Western authors who write about him.

Meanwhile, if you dig through his RGASPI file, you will find that in Moscow, he initially worked as a “political censor at glavlit and narkompros” (a position only very indirectly related to library work) and he filled out a “Form for literary Translators” at another library.

Kruyt senior somehow very laconically answers questions that could reveal that he was more than just a linguist. That is, he seems to be telling the truth, but in a way that sheds only partial light on a lot of truly substantial information. For example, to the question of where he learned the relevant languages, Kruyt answered: “In the relevant countries and schools.” But in which ones? This was not spelled out. Meanwhile, there is an interesting twist behind this phrase; one regarding his previous trips to the UK (one of the most “relevant” countries with a “relevant” school).

In principle, it would seem that by filling out the IWI form so circumspectly, Kruyt senior assumed, based on the knowledge he had acquired in the USSR, that it would be better not to take risks with some nonstandard information like his nonproletarian origin and not very common education.

No matter how radical the views Kruyt embraced on his occasional trips to soviet Russia, the system he encountered on a daily basis after moving to the soviet union for permanent residence undoubtedly changed some of his habits.

In May 1942, the NKVD prepared passwords for “electrician.” In this document, he was given an interesting name: “our man who needs help.”³³ The password for Kruyt was: “We have seen nothing in ghent.”³⁴

Based on what we read in the SVR archives, “electrician” was given a Comintern two-way radio in Brussels that was stored at a safe house.

The Germans came for Kruyt at dawn: 4:30 a.m. on June 30, 1942.

Kruyt asked to use the toilet. and there he took the poison that he had hid somewhere. Wasting no time, the Germans dragged the parachutist to a car and took him to Brugmann hospital, where they flushed his stomach. he was transported in an ambulance to a Luftwaffe hospital and then transferred to Breendonk fortress, where other members of the Red orchestra were being held.

As far is known, just like Pastor Schlag in the movie, Kruyt told the Germans nothing – no matter what stooge they planted in prison with him or how they interrogated him. More precisely, he told them anything about his past life but no secrets about the assignment that took him to Belgium.

The Germans killed him in July 1943 in Moabit prison in Berlin.

Free Journalism: **Challenges of Our Time**

Author: Mikhail Kurakin, Deputy editor-in-Chief of International Affairs; mkurakin@mail.ru

In December 2018, an international forum, “Freedom of Journalism in the Context of human Rights, new Technologies and International Information security,” took place in Pezinok, a suburb of Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia. It was attended by more than 70 experts and members of the media from 12 countries. The forum was organized by Moscow state university, the *International Affairs* journal, the Russian union of Journalists, and several foreign media outlets. Russian ambassador to Slovakia Alexey Fedotov said in his welcoming remarks that Bratislava is perhaps the best venue for such international conferences, considering the high level of mutual understanding that exists between Russia and Slovakia, as well as common Slavic historical traditions.

Representatives of various international organizations showed great interest in the conference, which was due to their concern about the situation with the dissemination of information, threats related to the surge in the use of so-called fake news and risks to reporters’ lives, as well as many other problems accompanying professional journalistic activities. This was the focus of remarks by Marius Lukošiusas, a program specialist at UNESCO headquarters in the Division of Freedom of expression and Media Development, who presented key points of a special UNESCO report on the issue.

Responding to a question from an *International Affairs* correspondent regarding the problem of objective news coverage on social networks, where a large amount of fake news circulates, the UN representative said that disinformation has become a serious problem recently.

In his remarks, Andrei Richter, senior adviser at the OSCE office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, recalled that the problem of media disinformation has been around for much more than one decade, and all this time international agencies have been trying to tackle it.

The first document specifically devoted to the issue of false news was a convention adopted by the league of nations in 1936, which is officially still in force. It is on the list of existing un treaties. In practice, the convention urged governments to issue guidelines for state broadcasting services to ensure the verification of information concerning international relations, as well as issue similar recommendations for nonstate broadcasters, Richter recalled. according to him, following the creation of the UN, false news was one of the first key issues in discussing documents related to human rights. limiting the dissemination of false information was viewed as an important factor in maintaining peace throughout the world.

In closing, the OSCE representative commented that the international court and other agencies believe that the right to receive information also means the right to receive false information, the right to disinformation, and that such decisions have been made, in particular by supreme courts in the U.S. and Slovakia. Stefan Garabin, justice of the supreme Court of Slovakia, said that with modern information technology and social networks, countries are losing the ability to control and influence public opinion and people’s behavior to achieve their own goals.

Revise Values or Protect Them?

Sorrowful Reflections on a Book by My Contemporary

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In the course of human history, democracy, a child of European Christian civilization, a form of individual involvement in political life of a state was changing – it lost some features and acquired new ones. Born in small Greek mono-cultural and mono-national republics, democracy today is functioning in fundamentally different contexts.

Several mighty powers armed with atomic weapons and airspace delivery systems have spread their interests far and wide to become the de facto close neighbors of any state irrespective of its geographic location. There is another and no less important factor: the world is divided along the religious-cultural rather than national-racial lines; the development has become even more uneven than before: some states have remained at the early stages of human civilization while others have entered the 21st century.

This multidimensional and contradictory conglomerate of states has embraced democracy as the form of their political organization. The majority (there are over 200 states on our planet) speaks of themselves as democratic. Despite its considerable shortcomings, democracy has no alternatives in the contemporary world.

In an effort to arrive at plausible answers, political scientists and sociologies have already produced piles of scholarly books and thousands of essays. The discussion has been going on for many years now.

The work by Professor Robert Yengibaryan, prominent Russian jurist, Doctor of law, honored Worker of science, scientific Counselor of the Department of legal Foundations of governance and Policies, MGIMO (U), has made an important contribution to this discussion. his encyclopedic and varied knowledge of cultures, mythology, religious texts, and philosophy made his contribution highly valuable. he has revised the fundamentals of political science, ethics and culturology, while remaining loyal to his subject and his type of reflection.

One of the key chapters analyzes the crisis of liberal ideology that has undermined the pillars of European democracy, life style and civilizational identity of the majority of the West European countries. The author has analyzed the internal and external problems of the Russian Federation related to the process of building up a civil society governed by law, the federal form of the state and the deepening confrontation with NATO.

The author has written that European democracy and tolerance – more fragmented and shapeless than all other similar political cultures – are facing a severest test.

Very much like in his previous works, Prof. Yengibaryan has offered a very careful analysis of the role of the Islamic factor in the development of Russia and the rest of the world. The author insists that the opposition between Christian and Islamic civilizations along the perimeter of their cultural confrontation stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific is a permanent factor of human history. This is confirmed by the repeated waves of Muslim expansion in this region.

The chapter about the Russian dimension of the Islamic challenge, demography and migration as the main methods of Islamization of Europe and Russia has been obviously written with a lot of pain and concern. The author looks at the demographic outbursts in Islamic countries and massive uncontrolled migration of Muslims to Europe and Russia organized by Turkey and Saudi Arabia as a serious threat to Christian civilization.

Another equally important chapter offers a profound analysis of the new features of America's policies. The chapter dealing with the confrontation between the liberal Congress and the 45th president of the united states, whom Prof. Yengibaryan has assessed as a traditionalist, is especially interesting.

In his new book, Prof. Yengibaryan develops and specifies his previous course at defending consistently, passionately and argumentatively the traditional values of our civilization and strives to persuade his readers that abandonment of these values will push Christian civilization into a crisis which will become the beginning of its end.

From the Ten Commandments to the Modern Definition of “Human Rights”

Author: Maria Kozhemyak, independent analyst.

The year 2018 saw the publication of the book “human Rights in Judaism and the Jewish legal Tradition.” It includes a translation of an article with the same title previously published in 10 foreign languages. Its authors, ambassador extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Doctor of science (law) Valery Vorobiev and President of the synergetics Foundation for the study of Civil society and human Capital Roman Iliyev, have dealt with this topic before.

In examining the development trends of the concept of “human rights,” the authors clearly show that, even though the modern understanding of the concept was conclusively articulated in documents such as the 1776 American Declaration of Independence and the 1789 French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, the first mention of “rights and freedoms” can also be found in the Jewish religious tradition.

The authors approach interpretation of the term “human rights” with caution, asserting that “the very concept was formulated within the framework of Jewish religious tradition, and Judaism is one of the richest and most intelligible primary sources on the issue, but it is nevertheless not the only source. however, the modern definition of ‘human rights’ to a large extent is based on the principles identified in this religion.”

In the first part of the work, Vorobiev and Iliyev draw a parallel between exodus 20 and the 1948 universal Declaration of human Rights. The authors reveal that both texts virtually overlap, suggesting

that the foundations of Jewish legal tradition originate from sacred Jewish writings. The authors cite examples from other sacred Jewish texts where such familiar modern concepts as the right to life, self-defense and rest and leisure are fundamental provisions.

When speaking about freedom, the authors touch on such concepts as the freedom of speech, the freedom of self-determination and the freedom of belief. Vorobiev and Iliyev acknowledge that the Bible and the Talmud contain many provisions limiting free speech; however, these restrictions have a purely moral and religious nature, the most important of which is the prohibition of defamation.

In general, when talking about the intrinsic value of every individual, the authors of the article, using the method of comparative analysis, cite many quotations from sacred Jewish works, explaining that the basic idea of Judaism is that the existence of every person has specific meaning and is an integral part of god's plan. That is why murder is not a crime against the individual but against god.

The authors pay special attention to the currently topical issue of women's rights. Applying the method of content analysis, they quote the Talmud, which states that men and women are equal before all the laws of the Torah.

significant attention is also given to the establishment of a judicial system. a concept taken for granted today was first mentioned in the Talmud: The last of the commandments to the sons of Noah in fact acknowledges "the need for every member of society to obey laws, thereby giving everyone the opportunity to rely on legal protection."

Even though idea of drawing a parallel between the modern understanding of the term "human rights and freedoms" and provisions in Jewish scriptures is interesting, it is debatable that the foundations of this concept were derived precisely from Jewish religious tradition. It is worth noting that the authors do not deny the fact that Judaism is not the only pioneer of the concept of "human rights," mentioning in their article the Roman empire and the possibility of the existence of such provisions in other religions.

In their study, the authors graphically illustrate the fact that Judaism has historically played a significant role in the development of the concept of human rights and freedoms, and has had a major impact on the formation of the Israeli legal system. however, despite all the evidence the authors provide, it is difficult to conclusively state that the Jewish religious tradition was a pathfinder that laid the foundations of the modern understanding of the term "human rights."

