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The collection of essays provides an analysis of the dynamic changes of the contemporary world order and Russia's role in these transformations. The interplay of domestic and foreign policies is considered. Special attention is paid to the geopolitical competition of the great powers in the post-Soviet space.

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PREFACE

This collection comprises essays mainly published in 2010–2017 in the journal “Russia in Global Affairs”. The author expresses his sincere gratitude to the journal’s editor-in-chief Fyodor Lukyanov for his kind permission to publish these essays in the present collection. The texts reflect the evolution of Russian foreign policy, starting with Vladimir Putin’s Munich speech (2007) and culminating in the 2014 Ukraine crisis; they attempt to grasp the fundamental geopolitical transformations unfolding before our eyes. An attentive reader will certainly also notice the evolution of the author’s own assessments, for instance with respect to the extent of potential rapprochement and level of partnership between Russia and China in the transformation of the post-bipolar world order.

Success in foreign policy is not only determined by the art of diplomacy. In the long term, foreign policy efficacy depends on internal factors, foremost on social stability, interethnic accord, the degree of development of political institutions, relations between elites and mass groups. Thereby, articles on political and economic processes in Russia at the turn of the 21st century are included in the collection as annexes. Finally, as a separate annex, the book contains sections of the Report of the Valdai Discussion Club “Global Rightists Revolt: Trumpism and Its Foundations” (2017) written by the author.

**FORCED OR DESIRED MODERNITY?
Russia's Chances in the Post-American World¹
(2010)**

The past decade witnessed a spate of manifestoes by political analysts who unanimously predicted an early decline of the American Century. “The Post-American World”, by Fareed Zakaria², was one of the most significant ones in this respect. The author mercilessly exposes the mistakes and failures of American leadership, which resulted in the compression of the period of absolute U.S. dominance since the end of the Cold War. Zakaria’s book was published in the first half of 2008, before the first thunders of the global financial tornado could be heard. The crisis also became a point of no return in the process of “post-Americanization.” It imparts a markedly new quality to international relations which all the players will have to adapt to. Russia is no exception, of course.

A multipolar, post-American world is something Russia has sought at least since the memorable U-turn of Yevgeny Primakov’s airliner over the Atlantic. But now that the long-cherished world order is an ever starker political reality, time is ripe for asking oneself: Is Russia prepared to enjoy the fruits of this new world order? Are its leaders aware of not only the new opportunities the erosion of American hegemony is opening up, but also of the daunting perils of existence in a world of strength-based multi-centrism? After all, since

¹ Source: Yefremenko D. Forced or Desired Modernity? Russia’s Chances in Post-American World // Russia in Global Affairs. – 2010. – Vol. 8, N. 4. – P. 36–49.

² Zakaria F. The Post-American World. – New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008.

the Cold War was declared over, Russia has had to experience not only the bitter taste of being treated as a second-rate state on the international scene and the permanent threat of attempts to minimize its influence in the post-Soviet space, but also the comforts and amenities that go with the status of a major exporter of energy and fuels. True, the very existence within the confines of that niche can be viewed as a sign of economic degradation, but Putin has successfully used the “fat years” for healing the social scars left by post-Communist transformations, and for the buildup of resources, significant enough to take the liberty of a “frank conversation” with Western partners in Munich. Now, these “advantages of discrimination” are gradually waning, while the implementation of new opportunities is still to be fought for tooth and claw.

The Rise of China as a Risk

“The rise of the rest” as the driving force of post-Americanization spells the emergence of many players who lay claim to a significant growth of their international status. But at the present stage of the multipolar world’s formation everybody’s eyes seem to be riveted on China. The global economic and financial crisis is largely the reason why the Chinese model is increasingly often looked at as an alternative to the Washington Consensus, and the growing rivalry between China and the West appears as an inevitable clash of civilizations or ideologies.

The Russian view of China will inevitably differ from the one the West may ever have. Back in the 19th century Konstantin Leontyev warned: “Russia’s death can come in either of the two ways – from the East, by the sword of the awakened Chinese, or through voluntary merger with a pan-European republican federation”¹. The awakening of China had been waited for and feared in this country for decades. It is not accidental that despite all the zigzags of Russian (Soviet) domestic

¹ Leontiev K.N. Vostok, Rossija i slavyanstvo. Philosophia i politicheskaya publicistika. Dukhovnaya proza (1872–1891) = The East, Russia and the Slavdom. Philosophy and Political Publicism. Spiritual Works (1872–1891)]. – Moscow: Respublika, 1996. – P. 445.

and foreign policies, the desire for “normalization of relations,” and then for strategic partnership remained a foreign policy constant since Yuri Andropov. And it is undeniable that the current level of Russian-Chinese relations is a precious asset, which, however, still does not save us from complications in the future.

Now that China is “wide awake,” speculations about the threat can be more dangerous than the actual threat. The rise of China should be seen not so much as a threat to Russia, as a risk, that is, a situation where the chances of losing and winning are approximately the same. One tactical win for the Russian political regime is already evident, though. First of all, the comparison of historical experiences of the two countries provides additional arguments in favor of modernization under strict government control. China’s achievements are also changing the scale of political values, since success and effectiveness stop to be unequivocally associated with liberal democracy.

The need for Russia’s sustainable presence in the Asia-Pacific region – a key part of the world in the 21st century – is beyond doubt. The central problem today is avoiding Russia’s conversion into its satellite. In other words, the actual weakness of our current positions in the Asia-Pacific region should be compensated for by an active policy of maximizing the diversification of economic and political opportunities.

Among the reasons why Russia should prefer the option of a stable, but somewhat remote partnership with China, one finds not only in the huge difference in the demographic potentials on either side of our common border. The threat of Chinese population of Siberia and the Far East is rather a “paper tiger.” At least it will be so in the medium term. A risk far more serious is the perpetuation of structural imbalances in bilateral trade and a quick slide into the position of a raw material appendage of the newly-emerged “world workshop.” But getting out of the commodity export niche is the most fundamental issue of modernizing the Russian economy as such, and not just of trading relations between Moscow and Beijing. Perhaps the most serious reason why Russia should avoid too close a connection to the Chinese locomotive is its speed. It might seem that the double-digit (or nearly double-digit) growth rates that have been maintained for more than two decades are precisely what we have lacked for the success of

modernization. But the longer the Chinese economic miracle lasts, the greater the economic, social and regional disparities get, and the more dangerous consequences may ensue in case of an abrupt slowdown. Accordingly, Russia will feel an ever-greater need for establishing safety mechanisms, alternative options and new opportunities.

What are these options? First of all, it is important that Russia maintain the position of openness towards deeper cooperation with Japan in the economy, science and technical science, as well as in matters of regional security. However, the unresolved territorial dispute leaves no chance for considering Japan as a partner for cooperation significant enough to balance the Chinese factor. Intensifying relations with the follow-up echelon of regional actors – South Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, Indonesia and other ASEAN countries looks a more promising direction. None of these actors alone can serve as an alternative to mainland China, but together they can be considered as a set of potential points of reliance along the edges of the Middle Kingdom.

On the pan-Asian scale, India is a most valuable partner. The absence of a potential for conflict and the tradition of friendly bilateral relations dating back to the early days of India's independence are the solid foundation of strategic cooperation between Moscow and New Delhi in the 21st century. However, there are difficulties, too, primarily of a psychological nature. Many in Russia are still not accustomed to the idea that India can no longer be regarded as a wingman, that by a number of key parameters that country is an equitable partner, and in the near future it may prove a more powerful center of the post-American world than Russia. But in any case, India is a top-tier partner to discuss the growing might of China and any other serious problem of Eurasia. It should be borne in mind that India, with its experience of the military conflict of 1962, may be more cautious towards rising China than Russia, which has settled its border disputes with China.

The Russian strategy of a “turn to the East” must fully match the American influence in the Asia-Pacific region. Both the U.S. and Russia are aware of that region's key importance for their future in the 21st century, as well as the absence of any serious conflict of interest in the region on either side. As far as the line-up of forces and regional security trends are concerned, it should be recognized that the U.S.

military presence in Asia Pacific in no way contradicts Russia's interests. The situation there differs significantly from that on the western and southern borders of Russia, where any strengthening of the U.S. and NATO is at least a factor for discomfort. In any case, it hardly makes sense for Russia to join the ranks of the Okinawa-without-the-Americans enthusiasts, a slogan Japan's former Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama tried to translate into reality with little success.

This does not mean that Russia should hurry to team up with the United States to form some new regional security patterns, which would inevitably be seen by Beijing as aimed against its own interests. Here, in fact, it is important to see the borderline between finding a balance of forces optimal for Russia and the creation of real or virtual anti-Chinese coalitions, something Russia should by all means avoid. At the same time, tapping the potential of Russian-American cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region might furnish the basis for future relations between Russia and the United States and for preserving and following up the extremely fragile results of the 'reset' of their relations.

Relations with Number One Power of the Post-American World

It sounds ironic and banal at the same time: number one power in the post-American world is the United States. America's might keeps shrinking, but one should not think this process will go on indefinitely. Firstly, the steady rise of the main competitor – China – is also not something predestined. Secondly, even if another, even more powerful impact of the crisis follows, one can expect that America will eventually achieve some sort of a plateau, and the further (relative) reduction of its global role will halt. On the other hand, the problems of America as a waning superpower are truly global, for any of their likely solutions will reverberate throughout the world. The crisis has shown not only the dependence of the rest of the world on America as the world center of financial might and the main source of destabilization for the world economy, but also the huge social price that will have to be paid by all sooner or later for streamlining that system.

It is quite natural that Russia's interest is in NOT paying more than necessary for the recovery of the U.S.-centered global economy. This consideration alone is an incentive strong enough to Russia's constructive participation in all global institutions and mechanisms of anti-crisis management. Russia is interested in facilitating Washington's "soft landing" onto the post-American globe and preventing attempts (strategically hopeless, but risky for Russia) at regaining elusive global hegemony. It is equally important for Russia to create in the foreseeable future favorable conditions for a constructive and stable partnership with the United States.

Apparently, the "reset" as an important foreign policy project of the Obama administration is part and parcel of the comprehensive reassessment of the United States' global role in the context of the world crisis. Obviously, the common understanding was Russia in the 21st century world will not be America's worst problem. But what is the real effect of the 'reset' then? In Russia, as soon as the first global tremors rocked the world economy, many were quick to triumphantly herald "the decline of America," while in America many commentators were rejoicing at "Russia's fall from heaven on earth." In a word, at first the "reset" looked only slightly different from the U.S.-Russian interactions of the post-Soviet era – and those were clashes of resentment and arrogance. Meanwhile, the crisis made both countries feel like losers, and precisely this circumstance was to become a realistic basis for a dialogue proceeding from a balance of interests. But there has surfaced another paradox. For example, Sergei Karaganov, together with several colleagues from the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, has formulated a very radical program called the "Big Deal"¹ – a compromise balancing the interests of Russia and the U.S. Apparently, it fell on attentive and friendly ears of the advocates of a realistic approach close to the Obama administration, and the dynamics of bilateral relations observed over the past year produced an impression that the parties tacitly followed the basic parameters of the "Big Deal." Russia demonstrates a constructive approach to American interests in various regions of Asia and restraint to the post-Soviet

¹ Karaganov S., Bordachev T., Suslov D. Russia and the US: Reconfiguration, Not Resetting // Russia in Global Affairs. – 2009. – N 3, September. – P. 108–122.

space, while the United States, in turn, refrains from further attempts to weaken Russia's positions in the CIS countries and from forming an architecture of security in Europe still more discriminatory against Russia. Just one word 'tacitly' says it all. At any official level, these parameters cannot be even verbalized, let alone transferred into the status of complex formal arrangements.

As a result, even after the signing of the New START Treaty in Prague and Russia's support for sanctions against Iran in the UN Security Council, it all looks very much like a very selective improvement of bilateral relations. After each single step (even the tiniest one) taken in conformity with the "reset guidelines" there follow statements or actions designed to mitigate their effect, to demonstrate their local character, to prove that the U.S. still follows the course of "democracy promotion" and rejects any claims to any "spheres of influence," whoever may be making them. Therefore, it is necessary to remember that at the moment of the very first serious internal political turn in the U.S. the benefits of "resetting" may be ditched for the sake of electoral prospects of some major group of influence in the American political elite.

Does this mean that the ideas of "resetting" or – still more so – of the "Big Deal" do not work in principle? If applied selectively, the policy of resetting can hardly be expected to succeed, but if it is understood as scrupulous and painstaking work to lay a firm groundwork of Russian-U.S. relations in the 21st century, then it may have good chances. In this sense, the Asian focus in the search for a mutual balance of interests can be crucial. However, that balance must ultimately formalize changes that have occurred in the overall makeup of the world, in which the U.S. is still the most powerful state of the post-American world and Russia is one of the poles of the new world order. The political consequences of such a balance of interests must be verbalized at the level of political elites in the United States and Russia, and then transformed into a combination of formal and informal commitments.

How far can (and should) these commitments stretch? The main context of Russian-American partnership is the rise of China and the related emergence of a new area of close alignment of Russia's and America's interests. Given the "low start" of bilateral relations, Russia

is interested in a level of partnership with the U.S. that in the foreseeable future would be comparable to the current level of Russian-Chinese relations. But if one moves further in this direction, the strengths will begin to be transformed into weaknesses at an increasing speed, and Russia may eventually be drawn into a game in which at best it will remain on the sidelines, and at worst, will have the plight of a chess piece the players are free to sacrifice, if need be.

Apparently, in the second decade of the 21st century the debates about Russia's integration into NATO or any other form of military-political alliance with the U.S. and the EU will only gain momentum. For the time being such conversations are far from concrete, but they have begun, and not by accident. The dynamics of this process can be judged by the nature of discussions over the draft of a pan-European treaty on collective security the president of Russia has proposed. Nobody has dared dismiss the idea offhand as such, and it is for three years now that Moscow has heard polite statements of the intention to "examine carefully" and "fully consider" the Russian initiative. Pronouncements about fundamental support for the proposed treaty and of solidarity with its basic postulate of the indivisibility of European security can be heard far more rarely. The examination and consideration of the project can last indefinitely – until a certain point, though, where our partners in Washington and Brussels may decide that essentially the agreement provides for a single security system not only for Europe but for the industrialized North in general, but at the same time excludes from this system China and other countries in the booming South.

It looks like the Russian foreign policy's nightmare – NATO's further expansion to the East – will not become a reality. In fact, this is the main achievement of Vladimir Putin's "Munich course," although NATO's expansion to the post-Soviet space will ultimately lose its relevance in the context of the general "post-Americanization" trends. The draft of a European security treaty is also designed to block the expansion of NATO, but if this happens, it will be just international legal recognition of a *fait accompli*.

Consequently, it is no longer a prize to be sought at any political cost. Of much greater importance is the very possibility of equal participation in setting the rules of the game in European security matters, and in regard to a wider range of relationships in Greater Europe.

The Quest for a Greater Europe

With Europe Russia associates some of its fundamental interests. But the situation here is almost a stalemate. It seems that the more Russia and the European Union interact, the greater their mutual alienation grows. The very institutional design of the EU actually blocks any significant rapprochement with Moscow. And expecting some kind of a breakthrough in relations between Russia and EU institutions (the eloquent declarations of partnership and long-term action plans are not exactly what one may call breakthroughs, of course) is hardly possible. The worst thing of all is that participation in the EU inevitably limits the freedom of political maneuver for each of its individual members, including the most powerful ones, with which Russia seeks to develop privileged relations on a bilateral basis. In these circumstances, it is of special importance for Russia to use to the maximum extent the opportunities opening up with the shift of the center of the global financial and industrial might to the Asia-Pacific region. Only if and when it has established itself there as an active and influential player, Russia will be able to conduct dialogue with other European countries with more confidence. And, most importantly, Russia's territory lying east of the Urals should become a tapped reserve of national development, and not a space of demographic and industrial vacuum.

After all, nothing in the world lasts forever, including the stagnation in Russia-EU relations. Russia, its political and intellectual elite, should by no means turn its back on the EU machine. It should maintain a dialogue with its functionaries, and with the European public, in other words, with the force that just recently was associated with so many hopes for "a second birth of Europe." These hopes were premature, but the European public sphere still plays a very important role in determining the situation. Therefore, when a new situation is to be determined, it would be in the interests of Russia to ensure the idea the EU is not tantamount to Europe and that a different, greater European architecture may be possible.

Even if Russia defines its own role as participation in "the rise of the rest," its openness to a broad dialogue with individual countries of the EU and with the European Union as a whole must remain.

Of particular importance in this case will be the ability to generate some extraordinary ideas and moves setting guidelines for the dialogue to follow. In this sense, we can only welcome the idea of a “Alliance of Europe” Sergei Karaganov¹ intends to promote. Being very problematic as an ultimate goal, it is very important in procedural terms, because it can substantially expand the room for maneuver by Russia, the EU member-states and other European or semi-European countries.

International Relations and Civilizational Choice in the Modernity Interregnum Era

In discussing Russia’s prospects in a multipolar world one cannot ignore arguments of a more general nature. Zygmunt Bauman² in his analysis of modernity’s dynamics in the early 21st century refers to the term “interregnum,” which Antonio Gramsci used to describe the situation of expectations of radical change caused by the social upheavals of the Great Depression.

The process of post-Americanization also fits in this picture of interregnum, but does not exhaust it. There is a whole lot more at stake. Fareed Zakaria’s somewhat calmer term “the rise of the rest” actually means that the five-century-long period of unipolarity in the Western civilization is drawing to a close. At the same time with every passing day there increases the number of facts that refute the idea the European (Western) variety of modernity is singular and unique.

As is known, the theory of the plurality of modernities was put forward by Shmuel Eisenstadt³, who stipulated that the structural differentiation of non-European societies does not necessarily replicates the European model. In his view, the European model fosters the emergence of different institutional and ideological patterns outside

¹ Karaganov S. Soyuz Evropy. Poslednij shans? = Alliance of Europe. The Last Chance? – Mode of access: <http://www.globalaffairs.ru/pubcol/Soyuz-Evropy-poslednij-shans-14943>

² Bauman Z. Communism: A Postmortem? Two Decades On, Another Anniversary // Thesis Eleven. – 2010. – Vol. 100, N 1, February. – P. 128–140.

³ Eisenstadt S.N. Multiple Modernities // Daedalus. – 2000. – Vol. 129, N 1. – P. 1–29.

Europe. In the context of Eisenstadt's theory the metaphor of "interregnum" could mean that the Western version of modernity by and large exhausts its mission of "reconfiguring" non-Western cultural programs and enters a period of coexistence and competition with other versions of modernity that have emerged out of these programs. This coexistence implies the recognition of the pluralism of values, institutions and models of political systems.

Just one look at the dynamic changes of the system of international relations is enough to notice numerous manifestations of shifts. Suffice it to point to the BRIC phenomenon and, in particular, the rapid transition of Russian leaders from taking special pride in the nearly full-fledged membership of G8 to the enthusiasm of a co-founder of a club of new leaders of global economic growth. Russia's activity in this capacity is not welcomed by all, but by strange coincidence in the chorus of those who question the value of Russia's presence in the BRIC most harshly the voices of China, India or Brazil are barely heard, if at all. It is noteworthy that the author of the term 'soft power,' Joseph S. Nye, who is very reserved in his comments on the BRIC phenomenon as such¹, fails to mention that this construction, even while remaining largely a virtual association, is already becoming a new source of soft power and beginning to produce and consolidate regulatory authority. The BRIC's normative message is not only in defending the Westphalian principles of sovereignty and striving for multipolarity, but also in the fundamental recognition of a plurality of values, cultural programs and models of political systems. In fact, the normative message from the BRIC is nothing but a translation of Eisenstadt's theory of multiple modernities into the language of global politics.

The development of a post-American world is an imperative to adjust the prevailing conceptualizations of international relations. One option of such adjustment is to separate the qualitative characteristics of the international order from changes in the global role of the United States. For example, G. John Ikenberry is prepared to consider only a "crisis of success" of the Western project of modernity, and not a crisis of the very

¹ Nye J.S. What's in a BRIC? // Project Syndicate. – 2010. – May 10. – Mode of access: <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/what-s-in-a-bric?barrier=accesspaylog>

idea of that project's singularity¹. If one follows this logic, the driving force behind the common modernity project is the common interest of major international actors in the reproduction of the liberal order, which, at least in theory, brings benefits to everyone. It turns out that the needs and interests of non-Western powers can be met only through the further dissemination of the principles and practices of Western liberalism.

The international order is quite inert, and in the situation of an "interregnum" it is hard to expect its rapid reformatting. Most likely, many sustaining global interdependences in security, trade, finance and the environment will evolve much more slowly than the changes in the economic and political weight of leading global players. However, the fundamental feature of the liberal international order is the establishment of hierarchical relationships, which in the long run is incompatible with the "rise of the rest."

Not surprisingly, the reaction from the expert community to the rise of non-Western powers is that of confusion and alarm, when those powers are seen as menacing outsiders. At the same time, calls can be heard in favor of looking at the booming non-Western countries as "our likes" who need to be socialized and taught to respect the rules. As Tim Dunne has noted, in the context of contemporary international politics both strategies, in fact, postulate the absence of any alternatives to the Western version of modernity, and this approach remains in great demand even despite its progressing inadequacy².

Does this mean that Russia, too, is "doomed" to adapt itself to the post-American world and at the same time stay faithful to the dogma of the singularity of modernity? Does it make sense in the era of "interregnum" to accelerate the civilizational choice, or at least, to agree to be bound by rigid foreign policy commitments for the sake of demonstrating loyalty to the Western version of modernity?

Not that the civilizational choice in favor of the West is impossible or unacceptable, or the seeds of liberal values, if planted in Russian soil, germinate as some ugly weeds. One of the main reasons for the mutual frustration of Russia and the West was the area where

¹ Ikenberry G.J. Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of Liberal World Order // Perspectives on Politics. – 2009. – N 7, April. – P. 71–87.

² Dunne T. The Liberal Order and the Modern Project // Millennium: Journal of International Studies. – 2010. – Vol. 38, N 3. – P. 615–640.

there values proved identical or close was very vast, while differences looked eventually surmountable. But finally in Russia there developed a firm belief that discussions about values are aimed at undermining Russian interests, while many in the West traveled all the way from unjustified illusions during Gorbachev's perestroika and Yeltsin's reforms to the certainty Russia is "incorrigible." In these circumstances translating political discussions into the language of interests can be the only constructive solution; debates about values are better left to the scientific community and NGO activists.

Although the 20th anniversary of the Soviet Unions's breakup is round the corner, it is too early to say that in Russia there has emerged a new political nation and the post-Communist transformations have been completed. The very instance a course towards modernization has been declared indicates at least partial failure of all post-Soviet socio-economic policies and of their main vector, which has remained liberal and westernizing even throughout the years of restoring the vertical chain of command. Clearly, there must be a turn and a serious correction of the course. Once it has been decided to call this turn "modernization," then it should be understood that modernization in the era of modernism's interregnum must be a purely pragmatic action. In a sense, it is Deng Xiaoping's cat, whose most important quality is effectiveness in catching mice, and not conformity with the standards of the Western breed of modernity.

The main thing is Russia has discovered it has a choice, and the commandments "Thou shalt not drop out of Europe," and "Thou shalt stand by the West"¹ do not imply waiving participation in the "rise of the rest" or the formation of new institutions and mechanisms of a world order that would herald the end of the era of modernity's interregnum.

Indispensable Pole and the Freedom of Choice

The largest fragment of the former Soviet Union, Russia objectively still has quite a few reasons to lay claim to being one of the poles in a

¹ Surkov V. Nationalization of the Future: Paragraphs pro Sovereign Democracy // Russian Studies in Philosophy. – 2009. – Vol. 47, N 4. – P. 8–21.

multi-polar world. However, the general trend over the past two decades in Russia's case was a descending one. As for the 1990s, there is only one way of saying it – a slump. Even the stabilization and the oil and gas boom during Vladimir Putin's presidencies can be considered only as a temporary slowdown of this steep downward spiral. In other words, that it has remained one of the poles in world politics Russia owes to the force of inertia, but in the future the Russian authorities will have to attract ever more additional resources to retain this status.

It is likely that pretty soon we shall start hearing calls in favor of another downgrade of Russia's ranking in world affairs. The arguments will be confined to the impermissibility of spending major resources for the purpose of maintaining a high international status, and to claims that entering the zone of attraction of some other pole would optimize the risks of existence in a turbulent multipolar world. Rejecting this position only because Russia must be great and strong and nothing else would be at least shortsighted. Under certain circumstances, we may have no other choice. But surely, any government in Russia should seek to prevent such a situation.

For Russia, there are specific reasons for retaining the status of a center in a multipolar world. Russia's multi-vector and highly maneuverable foreign policy in the current circumstances is an important mechanism to compensate for the weaknesses stemming from the economy structure, population dynamics, low-quality governance, corruption and technological backwardness. However, besides solving tactical tasks, maneuverability must also have a "super-task." Although absent from the top three centers of power in the post-American world, Russia must be a pole significant enough for any of the main centers of power to seek full-scale partnership with to enjoy indisputable and decisive superiority.

It is worth saying it again: all of these benefits will be available and lasting as long as Russia remains in the position of an independent center of power in a multipolar world, having a freedom for maneuver and staying open to the development of partnerships with various global players. As soon as this status is exchanged for involvement in some strict alliances or integration mechanisms involving more powerful centers of power, these benefits will be gone in an instance. It turns out that Russia should be everywhere and all by itself.

Ultimately, retaining the status of an independent global player, even if it requires attracting significant additional resources, will be less costly and risky for Russia than entering the zone of attraction of one of the stronger centers. In the latter case, the resources to be spent and the risks involved would depend on growing internal tensions resulting from the need to maintain the country's development along the lines set from outside. The logic of advocates of this approach, eager to use binding international commitments to accelerate belated internal changes, is easy to understand.

Unfortunately, the risk of a totally different scenario looks far more real. Internal changes, shaped according to imported templates, may start a new wave of imitations of institutional legal practices and a chain reaction of very real destabilizing shifts in the field of international and federative relations.

The range of opportunities opening up before Russia in the process of the emergence of a post-American world should be used to create favorable conditions for internal development, and not for complicating them with involvement in strict alliances and hasty selection of any of the available versions of modernism. At the same time, Russian society is in need of genuine openness to the world, of a broader dialogue with a variety of cultural programs, and readiness to perceive and borrow from outside everything that can contribute to practical solutions of internal problems. The freedom of choice is a truly precious asset in the era of multipolarity. Not just the freedom to choose strategic partners, but also the freedom to choose the ways and methods of modernization, and even the image of the desired modernity.

**AFTER THE TANDEM:
RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY GUIDELINES.
Russian Foreign Policy in the Era of Turbulence¹
(2011)**

A tragic death in the provincial Tunisian town of Sidi-Bouزيد brought world politics into the second decade of the 21st century. A young trader set himself on fire after a local official insulted him. In any other circumstances the incident would have incited talk at local shops or cafes for just a few days, but this time it sparked a wave of protest that swept across northern Africa and parts of the Middle East. Although systemic problems were behind the ouster of Tunisian President Ben Ali and Egyptian leader Mubarak, and subsequently the civil war and NATO operation in Libya, it was the young man's death that set off fundamental changes in this key region.

Global Turbulence in 2011

The revolutionary upheavals in northern Africa have become the subject of political analysis, with the supporters of one approach or another rushing to find in these events either a confirmation of their ideas or a reason to adjust them. Much depends on the way the international situation is viewed – as a non-linear, multidirectional

¹ Source: Yefremenko D. After the Tandem: Russian Foreign Policy Guidelines. Russian Foreign Policy in the Era of Turbulence // Russia in Global Affairs. – 2011. – Vol. 9, N 2. – P. 36–49.

process with no predetermined outcome – that is, in line with Francis Fukuyama’s *The End of History* – or as a movement on the heels of the civilized vanguard, which definitely knows where it is heading. It is more appropriate to describe the events of the past few months and those in the foreseeable future in terms of political turbulence, not “waves of democratization.”

Small events generate a chain reaction of mass protests, which well-organized political forces of all kinds – from political parties and movements in Arab countries to foreign states, international organizations and military and political blocs – have to follow, while trying to guide them in the proper direction. Thus, there is far more reason to interpret the ongoing upheavals as harbingers of the global community’s ventures into the unknown, where it might face an even stronger shake-up.

In international relations theory the idea of turbulence in world politics was defined by James Rosenau, who published an insightful book¹ at the beginning of another period of powerful turbulence that resulted in the collapse of the Berlin Wall and, soon after, the Soviet Union. Rosenau, in taking an extremely radical approach to the theory of mutual dependence, wrote about the world entering an era of “post-international” politics, when global processes will be affected by the multidirectional actions of a previously unthinkable multitude of collective actors, each guided by different objectives and using the newest technology. Subsequently, this results in prolonged chaos in international relations, which continues unabated or even gains momentum, despite stable political governance institutions. In this case turbulence becomes an integral part of global development which underscores not only the upheavals that accompany “scheduled” changes in the key parameters of local or global processes, but also changes that frustrate the established rules and models of development.

Two decades have passed since Rosenau’s paper was published, but the world is still being carried along the same current; its force and duration suggest that these are fundamental global changes. It is true that over the past twenty years the world has seen periods of relative

¹ Rosenau J.N. *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity*. – Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

calm. However, these were transient periods and showed that the sources of turbulence were far from exhausted (as many analysts had expected with the end of the Cold War) and they continue to expand, emerging in quite unexpected places.

It looks like a new kind of turbulence has begun that involves two inter-related processes. Globalization is already commonplace, while the other, post-Westernization, is just beginning to find a niche in social-scientific discourse. The latter, however, should not be confused with de-Westernization. Global civilization, supported by five centuries of Western domination, is rethinking this legacy and is not going to develop along Western lines; however the specific parameters of the new phase of civilization's development are not yet clear. What we are witnessing today is an extended turbulent period – an “interregnum of modernity” – which is an alarming threshold to a new era.

The main characteristics of 21st century turbulence (which, incidentally, began in 1991, after the end of the “short 20th century,” using a term coined by Erick Hobsbawm¹) are associated not only with the end of Western domination, but also with the global nature of world trends. The matter at hand is not just increasing global interdependence and transnationalization, but also a new quality where the world, as a system working towards unification, finds itself locked in and devoid of any outside periphery. This new quality implies that turbulence is taking place within a confined system, with no opportunity to expand, and consequently, reduce internal pressure.

There is no question that the confined global system has retained quite a few internal partitions and barriers that are the surviving vestiges of a divided world. One can still find a place for economic activity, an outflow of “excessive” population, or for collecting industrial waste. Preserving such vestiges of sovereignty and particularity causes differences in internal pressure and, consequently, turbulence flows. Much depends on the stability of these barriers inherited from the Westphalian era; they are either a useless wreck or an old-fashioned, yet relatively reliable, bulwark capable of providing protection from average-force vortex flows. At any rate, when studying

¹ Hobsbawm E. *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991*. – London: Abacus, 1994.

the causes of modern turbulence one should take a close look at the asymmetry of sovereignty in the system of international relations and an increasing variety of the existing types of statehood.

As previously, economic factors are crucial to ensuring stability, or, visa versa, disrupting social systems and political regimes. In a confined world the movement of capital flows, less than ever before, conforms to the ideal of a “natural regulator” of economic processes. Instantaneous overflows of capital, often caused by speculative operations or momentary considerations, can push prosperous nations to the brink of economic collapse and social explosion in a matter of days. Shrinking opportunities for the territorial expansion of capital, above all finance, is compensated for by a frenzied expansion in time, i.e. various forms of living on credit, and creating bubbles in all economic and financial sectors wherever possible – from raw materials and real estate to the hi-tech sector.

The majority of these bubbles burst consecutively in the 2000s. Today, the growing bubble of state debt is becoming the last resort for the timely expansion of capital. In the case of the U.S., the world’s largest economy and an issuer of world currency, it is fraught with global collapse, whose magnitude might surpass that of the 2008–2009 financial crisis. However, economic normalization measures can also cause turbulence, which will imply a considerable decrease in spending in the U.S. state and private sectors. This may result in an overall dramatic decline in consumer demand and a new global economic recession.

In world politics, turbulence is linked, as never before, with what can be called natural turbulence, i.e. the increasing vulnerability of socio-technological systems to natural calamities. Some of these disasters stem from the effect of man-made factors on climate and ecological systems critical for balancing the global environment. There has been ever more evidence lately that the global environment is increasingly determining the behavior of individuals and social communities through natural anomalies and catastrophes¹. A direct consequence of these processes is the increasing problem of food

¹ Yanitsky O.N. “Turbulent Times”: What does it Mean? // *Russian Sociology in Turbulent Times* / ed. by V.A. Mansurov. – Moscow: RSS, 2011. – P. 188–192.

supply, a growing inequality in access to freshwater reserves, an increasing lack of control over migration flows, and the appearance of hotspots of social tensions, even in countries which did not have a history of such problems.

However, even in cases when there is no direct link between the scale of natural disasters and man-made factors, we can see that a natural catastrophe causing destruction and human casualties in one country may have complex and long-term consequences across the globe. One recent example is the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan, which, in addition to killing thousands of people, sparked the most serious nuclear accident in history since the Chernobyl disaster. This will have long-term consequences for global energy policy, thus reducing even further the already scarce opportunities to resolve the energy problem.

Russia's position in this setup is rather controversial. Although it is integrated in global processes, its involvement is not complete; so it has managed to avoid some of the waves of global turbulence. None-the-less it has been impacted. The 2008 financial crisis easily crushed the hopes of the Russian authorities that Russia would be perceived as a "safe haven." Yet the old-fashioned bastions of sovereign state have been coping quite successfully with smaller flows, while stronger winds have only slightly impacted Russia so far.

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, the present-day generation of Russians was slightly ahead of other leading nations in gaining experience in weathering great upheavals, so Russia seems to have had a better ability to adapt. Furthermore, Russia is in a unique position, where relations with a majority of countries are good or satisfactory, largely because Russia is able to deftly maneuver its foreign policy in a chaotic world.

Even in economic terms, Russia's position as the largest fuel supplier turned out to be more solid than the honorary position as leader of the knowledge economy. This most likely is a transitory state, like the calm within the "eye of a hurricane." While Russia has been successfully accommodating itself within this zone, it has been extremely lucky, as political scientist Sergei Karaganov noted recently¹.

¹ Karaganov S. Lucky Russia // *Rosyiskaya gazeta*. – 2011. – 29 March. – Mode of access: <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/pubcol/Lucky-Russia-15154>

The question is how long Russia will be able to keep this advantageous position amid mounting turbulence.

There are at least two challenges here. The first is to continue skillfully navigating Russian foreign policy through turbulent weather, leaning on a world outlook that is adequate for modern global processes. Second, and most important, Russia has to be careful not to become a new powerful source of global instability. It is this last circumstance that is crucial to the discussion about the possible evolution of Russian foreign policy after the country's upcoming parliamentary elections in 2011 and presidential election in 2012.

Foreign Policy Conceptions and Group Interests: The Russian Case

During the first three years of the power-sharing tandem of Putin and Medvedev, Russian foreign policy was not a matter of dispute (real or imaginary) between the two teams. The immediate goal of Putin's Munich speech, that of putting a brake on NATO expansion into the post-Soviet space, was achieved in 2008. After that, Moscow, while keeping its foreign policy reference points, needed to demonstrate a decrease in the intensity of arguments, openness to dialogue and readiness to build partnership relations with the West within the context of global efforts to overcome the consequences of the global economic crisis. President Medvedev was effectively fulfilling these tasks, which were certainly part of his joint strategy with Putin.

The Putin-Medvedev rift over UN Resolution 1973 – which paved the way for a military operation against Libya – was unexpected against this background. Curiously, the controversy began after the Kremlin made a decision (most likely mutually agreed on in principle) not to veto the resolution. The Kremlin had obviously weighed the advantages and disadvantages before deciding not to create obstacles to Western involvement in a new war in the Islamic world. The difference was that Putin, immediately after the initial bombing of Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi's military facilities, did not feel constrained by any obligations before the new coalition and went ahead

with standard anti-Western statements, while Medvedev stood up to the resolution, if not to the West's attack.

In the ensuing flow of opinions and comments by experts eager to find new signs of a split in the tandem, few paid attention to the fact that the Russian leader had used the term "humanitarian intervention" in his arguments. Earlier, a similar reason was cited during Russia's five-day war with Georgia in August 2008. However, humanitarian intervention in general is not a popular idea for political discourse in Russia. Before asking what the prospects are for such a discourse in Russia, we might want to think about why, aside from political realism, Russia obviously lacks stable foreign policy movements or schools of thought comparable to liberal Wilsonianism or Jacksonian populism in the U.S. After all, such ideas are voiced. Russian experts are quite capable of offering them a la carte, or, at least, relaying them from foreign sources. However, demand is needed in addition to supply.

What are the sources and mechanisms that create demand? This or that line of foreign policy thought will only be viable if it is linked with stable and influential interest groups and if these interests are represented by the appropriate conceptions. Understandably, Russia does not have any movements on the scale of Jacksonian populists or Wilsonianists in the U.S., as historical succession was disrupted in the 20th century. Could such movements have appeared if these disruptions had not taken place? They certainly could have. The 19th century Russian historian Nikolai Karamzin, whose book "Memoir on Ancient and Modern Russia"¹ became a paradigmatic text for Russian conservatism, projects the historical arguments in support of the autocratic "power vertical" onto concrete conditions of European policy after the Peace of Tilsit. However, if Karamzin's ideas about the nature of Russian government partially hold true for the internal political situation at the beginning of the 21st century, his opinions about the turbulent times of the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars will at least be instructive for those who are trying to find their bearings in the turbulent world of post-Westernization.

¹ Karamzin's *Memoir on Ancient and Modern Russia: A Translation and Analysis*. – Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005.

Projecting the foreign policy ideas of pre-Revolutionary liberals onto the modern world will be more difficult. An analogy between the imperial aspirations of the Kadets' leader Pavel Milyukov and Boris Chubais's idea of "liberal empire" would look like a coincidence. The latter caused brief, albeit lively, polemics at one point, but never developed into a serious concept.

The stability of foreign policy ideas and demand for them depend directly on the interests of influential forces and on voicing those interests in public. In the post-Soviet period new groups of interests emerged, which steadily gained support among the public (beginning with the mass media) in the 1990s. Recreating the power vertical did not imply eliminating interest groups; on the contrary, they continued to consolidate. However, the forms of articulation and mechanisms to coordinate various interests and resolve conflicts changed dramatically. These forms were heavily dependent on the government during Putin's presidential term. Yuri Pivovarov, a historian and political scientist, probably offers the best illustration of the specifics of this situation. The political metaphor he uses – "the power plasma"¹ – successfully brings together the incompatible clusters of Russian elites through specific regulation of the government-property relationship. This amorphous substance is the medium where conflicts between the main groups of interests are settled and new conflicts arise. The "power plasma" is the breeding ground for structuring and differentiating groups of interests, some of which already have quite definite geoeconomic and geopolitical preferences (post-Soviet space, the European Union, the U.S., China and Asian-Pacific countries). However, these preferences have not been articulated clearly so far.

The political discussions during this pre-election year, which began to involve Russian policy issues, show that the "power plasma," as a mechanism for political-economic governance and for settling conflicts, is no longer satisfactory for many influential forces and large groups. The very reconfiguration of government and the beginning of the first long (six-year) presidential term means not only the end to the interim period of "tandemocracy," but also a possibility to unfetter key

¹ Pivovarov Yu.S. *Russkaya politicheskaya traditsia i sovremennost* = Russian Political Tradition and Modernity. – Moscow: INION RAN, 2006.

interest groups. If these groups emerge after the Putin-Medvedev tandem and change the state of the “power plasma” to a full-fledged existence in the public political arena, then they will most likely launch the process of forming stable foreign policy doctrines. These doctrines will rely on demand formed by stable structures that have a strong foothold in society, rather than on the preferences of individual experts.

This process is based on overall macro-social changes related to the strengthening of the Russian middle class and the shaping of its identity. It also concerns the further restructuring of elites. The middle class, like other large social groups, is unlikely to formulate a clear demand for one foreign policy line or another anytime soon. The middle class will remain vague and self-contradictory, bearing a slight resemblance to the eclectic foreign policy aspirations of the broad strata of the U.S. These are the people on whom President Barack Obama’s opponents, including those in the Tea Party movement, rely at present. In the U.S., however, elite groups are capable of articulating the interests of a wide range of people and match them with those of the business community, the military-industrial sector, various minorities, etc. Immersed in the “power plasma,” the Russian elite are “stewing in their own juices,” with little need (until recently) to interact with large groups. Ultimately the matter at hand is the quality of the current Russian elite, the extent of its rootedness in modern Russian society, and the awareness of its responsibility before society.

The Russian urban middle class, or “the new angry ones,” as journalist Alexei Chadayev¹, a member of the Russian Public Council, aptly called them, is already integrated in the globalized world – both through information and technology. This does not imply, however, that despite its severe criticism of the Russian government and elite, the middle class will generate pro-Western and pro-modernization demand. It is more likely that the middle class will expect Russia’s relations with the outside world to finally begin to work for its benefit. The critically-minded middle class will be the first to not support a policy, which, despite all the declarations of openness to the West and a striving for modernization, will only be in the interests of a few elite groups.

¹ Chadayev A. “Dramaturgija 2011-go” = “Dramaturgy of 2011” // Vzglyad. – 2011. – 21 March. – Mode of access: <https://vz.ru/opinions/2011/3/21/477289.html>

Broad coalitions could appear in the mid-term in support of stability or renewal that would reflect large-scale demand and the interests of certain elite groups. Such coalitions could lay the groundwork for reconfiguring the socio-political order and overcoming the current “power plasma” pattern. One of the countless consequences could be that various schools of foreign policy thought will gain a stronger foothold among the Russian public. The question is whether these changes will be expedited by the 2011–2012 election campaigns, or whether they will be accompanied by other, possibly alarming, events.

Elections and Turbulence

The new configuration of power after the 2011 and 2012 elections will not so much determine a radical change in Russian foreign policy (which is unlikely), but indicate whether or not Russia will become a new source of global turbulence. In the end it is the election, not the winner, that matters, i.e. its ability or inability to secure the legitimacy of the next president. Full-fledged legitimacy is necessary because the “power plasma” model is losing its efficiency and is no longer meeting the needs of a number of elites and social requirements of large groups of the population.

This legitimacy should above all be proven to Russian citizens (the criteria of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe or other supra-national bodies that comment on electoral procedures are of secondary importance in this case). This legitimacy should not be merely reduced to an election free of fraud; it is also a measure of how the policy of the elected leader meets the expectations of the people. In this sense, the legitimacy of Boris Yeltsin’s presidency rested not just on his victory in fair elections on June 12, 1991, but essentially on the tremendous potential of hope that various strata of the population pinned on him. The 1996 election did not strengthen his legitimacy, but the initial hope was strong enough to continue throughout the 1990s. In Putin’s case it was not the competitive election that played the key role in legitimizing his authority, but his conformity to changing demands in

society. The legitimacy of the Putin-Medvedev tandem was inert, a sort of a follow-up to Putin's presidency.

Securing new legitimacy is the main problem of the upcoming elections, and an increasing number of representatives with a wide range of political views agree that an election won in a truly fair fight is the best way to attain this goal. As it stands now, any candidate with administrative leverage can win an election, but this kind of victory will not make the new president truly legitimate. At best, Vladimir Putin might hope to exploit what is left of his earlier legitimacy by leaning on the paternalistic-minded electorate and offering it a kind of a new social contract in the style of renewed political conservatism or a modified solidarity. If the use of all administrative levers brings victory to a liberal candidate, one may expect, with a high degree of probability, that the new president will not be legitimate (the consequences of this can be seen in the final years of Gorbachev's term) or there will be a radical turn implying a departure from the principle "freedom is better than non-freedom."

Alternative free elections are not a panacea; using this instrument amid conditions of "vegetarian authoritarianism," as political scientist Ivan Krastev¹ termed it, is fraught with unpredictable consequences. Russian politics today needs an objective evaluation of the real setup of forces and interests, including foreign policy, instead of trying to lull oneself with talk about "irreversible modernization," or the everlasting value of political stability. Granting political representation to varied forces that exist in society, but which are absent in the official political setup, is a means to prevent domestic turbulence.

Meanwhile, there were clear signs in late 2010 of a loss of control and legitimization when it became apparent that a new non-systemic force had surfaced on the public and political stage. Fans of the Spartak football club clashed with the police in Manezhnaya Square outside the Kremlin on December 11, 2010, an event that was a symptom of mounting internal political turbulence. It demonstrated the spontaneity and potential of public involvement, the quick mobilization and defiance of legal political forces, as well as confusion among law

¹ Krastev I. Paradoxes of the New Authoritarianism // Journal of Democracy. – 2011. – Vol. 22, N 2. – P. 5–16.

enforcement officials. The vector of the protests was a particularly alarming indicator. Muscovites were not only witness to an upsurge in xenophobia based on a primitive, “friend-stranger” division, but there was a readiness to apply this division nationwide, fence themselves off from others, or secede from part of Russia. “National isolationism” is the term for this trend. With strong ideological support this is an extremely dangerous utopia, and any attempt to implement it will automatically turn Russia into one of the major zones of global turbulence.

The protest that broke out late last year quickly exposed the structural vulnerability of the current Russian state, although this was not a surprise to anyone.

It was inevitable that the collapse of the Soviet Union would lead to the emergence of dangerous cracks in the government structure of the Russian Federation. Throughout the 1990s the Kremlin tried to prevent these cracks from spreading to a critical level. It seemed that the government had managed to make significant achievements in the following decade: the cracks were stopped and plastered. Now the plaster has begun to fall off and even a mid-sized shake-up could widen these cracks. Under these circumstances, free and fair elections, as the most effective method of legitimizing the authorities and ensuring that the main interest groups are represented, could help strengthen statehood and find a reasonable balance between stability, modernization and strengthening Russia’s position in a turbulent world.

Foreign Policy Options after 2012

The inner vulnerability of the state structure and external turbulence are the framework conditions for the next presidency. Any efforts to develop a Russian foreign policy strategy in the second decade of the 21st century will be futile, if the end of the Putin-Medvedev tandem contributes to internal instability, tensions in ethnic and federative relations, or makes Russia a new source of global turbulence. How Russia overcomes the landmark year of 2012 will be crucial from the point of view of the effectiveness of its foreign policy.

Obviously, the elected president (no matter who it is) must have a new full-fledged mandate, without trying to clutch at the helm by exploiting what is left of the previous legitimacy. Naturally, the key foreign policy events of the initial period of the next presidency will contribute to the strengthening of new legitimacy. If state power is consolidated without causing social resentment and political tensions, then the new president will certainly seek to have a complete array of foreign policy instruments at his disposal.

In this sense it is hardly justifiable for someone to limit one's own political maneuverings and follow a standard doctrine. Global turbulence will not disappear after the inauguration of the new president. Rather, one should expect new upheavals mostly fueled by the global economic situation, namely the consequences of the 2008–2009 financial crisis that have still not been eliminated. Moreover, post-Westernization is likely to generate several new problems.

A look at the basically tentative “interregnum of modernity” and global turbulence as the *Zeitdiagnose* of the beginning of the 21st century suggests that Russia's foreign policy needs to resolve three interrelated tasks:

- Prevent or minimize the destabilizing influence of global turbulence on domestic politics;
- Use global turbulence in Russian interests as much as possible;
- Seek Russia's full-fledged participation in determining the future rules of the game – the new world order, which will replace the “interregnum of modernity” sooner or later.

The first two tasks are an attempt to use the country's luck and the “eye of the hurricane” for as long as possible. In order to cope with this, Russia will need a maximum degree of foreign policy maneuvering, an openness to constructive interaction with other influential world political actors, and the prudence to stay away from hasty moves to fit into this or that rigid configuration of military-political unions or integration mechanisms, where it will find itself playing second fiddle.

The increasing rivalry between the U.S. and China for global leadership will obviously become one of the key trends of this decade. Objectively, Russia has a potential capable of securing strategic superiority for one of the sides. But Moscow should learn lessons from

Beijing, which was in the same situation for two decades during the Cold War. Mao Zedong's tactics of the "monkey watching two tigers fight" proved to be beneficial, with the triumphant monkey eventually siding with neither. In the present circumstances, Russia may make the most use of its advantage without joining any of the opponents, while trying to build partnership relations with each.

At present, U.S.-Russian relations have not moved any closer to the level of Moscow's relations with Beijing, despite the significant achievements of the "reset" policy. The main difficulty is the inability of Moscow and Washington to agree on a basically new agenda for bilateral relations that would meet present-day realities. As a result, by the end of the (first?) presidential terms of Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev, missile defense may become the key problem determining the further agenda of bilateral relations. It could expose the limits of the U.S.-Russian "reset" policy or dismantle it altogether. At the same time, the rise of China will eventually make Moscow and Washington work out a new format for bilateral relations, regardless of who the future U.S. and Russian leaders will be and what political parties they will represent.

A dramatic change in U.S.-Russian relations also depends on whether Russia will be able to secure full-fledged participation in establishing the framework conditions and institutional mechanisms of the new world order. However, this search cannot be the sole prerogative of either Moscow or Washington. In the short and mid-term, the key international actors might take joint actions to ensure relative governability amid the growing conflict potential in a number of important regions of the planet, turbulence on the commodity and financial markets, new waves of migration, the growing activity of various online communities, environmental degradation, man-made disasters, etc. The search for a new model of global governance is a multilateral and competitive process, and in this sense it may also produce turbulence. In recent months, we have seen a frantic search for effective crisis-resistant global governance mechanisms. We have also seen attempts to revive the institutions of the Washington consensus, efforts to form a more representative club of the leading players in world politics (the G20), and new multiparty cooperation institutions, such as BRICS. It is in Russia's interests to take an active part in the majority of possible configurations targeting the formation of a new

system of global governance. The exceptions would be political configurations that may directly involve Russia in regional conflicts or in a situation where one of the major aspirants is in competition for world leadership.

Russia's foreign policy is likely to remain multidirectional after the 2012 presidential elections. Even if its foreign policy is strictly tied to the objectives of modernization, largely associated with a sense of "hardware," it will still have to be ready to quickly react to turbulence, situational coalitions, and various doctrines geared up to substantiate moves justified by certain circumstances. Accordingly, Russia should keep the ideas and rhetoric of humanitarian intervention in store in case it needs to take action in the territory of the former Soviet Union, which is something that cannot be ruled out. Of course, it would be strange if such ideas became the cornerstone of the new president's foreign policy.

Russia should be prepared to endure turbulence in the post-Soviet space or in its immediate proximity during the first "long" presidency. In the first place, the situation in Central Asia could worsen, possibly fueled by large social protests, ethnic clashes or natural changes in political leaders. This has already happened in Turkmenistan and may take place in other countries of the region. Even if the region is stable, Afghanistan will remain a constant source of turbulence, as various scenarios could emerge after the death of Osama bin Laden to considerably reduce or even put an end to the West's military presence in that region.

A new flare-up of the Karabakh and Transnistria conflicts would be extremely dangerous for Russia. An open confrontation in these regions would result in a large-scale disruption in the fragile balance that is in place all over the former Soviet Union. It would also provoke direct interference by some Western countries, the Western military or political institutions in the affairs of former Soviet republics. Furthermore, Russia could find itself directly involved in those conflicts.

The establishment of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan has been one of the unquestionable political achievements of the Putin-Medvedev tandem. However, the situation is still unstable for both economic and political reasons, above all, due to the problem concerning the stability of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's regime. Admittedly,

strengthening these achievements will be an important task during the new presidency, along with attempts to stabilize the situation in the Customs Union member-states and the CES.

Positive changes in Russian-Ukrainian relations after the election of Victor Yanukovich as Ukrainian president were an important event in 2010. This potential could be wasted if Moscow and Kiev stick to the existing stereotypes of interstate relations in the post-Soviet space. “The flight from Moscow” – the Alfa and Omega of the previous Ukrainian administrations – proved to be a breakthrough to a geopolitical dead end, not to Europe. Yet drastic moves in the opposite direction do not promise large dividends for Kiev either, especially if these moves follow the existing patterns of institutional cooperation between post-Soviet states. Russia should help the incumbent Ukrainian administration determine Ukraine’s special place in Greater Europe, where it could play a truly active and unique role, which Moscow, Brussels and Washington would treat with equal respect. In strategic terms, the stability and prospects for developing the post-Soviet space will directly depend on whether Moscow and Kiev are able to find a new formula for Russian-Ukrainian partnership.

* * *

Avoiding internal instability in the next few years will be crucial for Russia’s role in the “interregnum of modernity.” If things remain stable, Moscow will play an increasingly active role in the international arena regardless of who takes the presidential oath in the Grand Kremlin Palace in 2012. At the same time, the evolution of domestic policy will steadily stir demand for particular doctrines on the part of interest groups. These doctrines will begin to affect Russian foreign policy to a greater degree. In other words, Russia’s foreign policy in the mid-term will no longer reflect the “power plasma” consensus over relations with the outside world. It will begin to reflect the more explicit interests of influential groups, both among the public and the elite. Meanwhile, global turbulence and post-Westernization collisions might significantly alter daily foreign policy and conceptual interpretations of its key objectives.

**WAITING FOR A STORM.
Russian Foreign Policy in the Era of Change¹
(2012)**

Whatever may be happening in the world these days, turbulence is Mr. Analyst's label of choice. This catchword largely owes its popularity to the world financial and economic crisis, which now looks as infinite as it did back in 2008. Uncertainty about the capacity to exercise control of one's own future, which Pierre Bourdieu² discussed in relation to the individual at the end of the 20th century, is now enveloping states and their economic systems, as well as transnational associations. Nothing is ruled out and nothing is predetermined – this is what the uncertain system of coordinates, in which world leaders have to make decisions, looks like now. Vladimir Putin, who has extended his stay in office till 2018 (without any guarantees, though), can for a good reason be considered one of the oldest old-timers. The world and the country where he has taken presidency for a third time is markedly different from what it was when Boris Yeltsin handed over the reigns of power to him. That the changes have proved so significant is largely a merit of Putin himself. But that by no means makes his future tasks easier.

¹ Source: Yefremenko D. Waiting for a Storm. Russian Foreign Policy in the Era of Change // Russia in Global Affairs. – 2012. – Vol. 10, N 2. – P. 18–32.

² Bourdieu P. La précarité est aujourd'hui partout [Precariousness is Everywhere Nowadays] // Bourdieu P. Contre-feux. – Paris: Liber Raisons d'agir, 1998. – T. 1. – P. 96–102.

About out Near-Revolution

The range of foreign political options, which the Russian political leadership will be able to choose from in the near future, will be determined by internal political opportunities to a far greater extent than at the beginning of the past decade. In my previous publications I dared speculate that in the election campaigns of late 2011 and early 2012 Russian foreign policy may become hostage to an uncontrolled march of events as a result of the lack of the authorities' legitimacy won in elections devoid of genuine competition. Now that the dramatic threshold is way behind, one should consider the possibility for Russia falling victim to the latest changes and turning into a new trouble spot of world turbulence. But first, a few words about what really happened between December 4, 2011 and March 4, 2012.

'Near-revolution' seems to be the most appropriate word to describe the events. The term was coined by some leaders of the student unrest of 1968 to describe the scale of youth protests against the social and political system in the countries of the West.

The dwindling electoral support for the ruling party United Russia (even according to the official results from the State Duma elections) and, above all, the protest demonstrations that followed the December 4 voting have demonstrated that the political consensus of the early 2000s is gone. The scope of the demonstrations in Moscow's Bolotnaya Square and in Sakharov Avenue indicated a cumulative growth in the number of those having "stylistic disagreements" with the authorities. Although a detailed sociological profile of the "people with white ribbons" is still to be drawn, one can say with certainty that the vertical chain of command has lost the support of a considerable segment of the middle class in major Russian cities.

Apparently, the awareness of the new situation has thrown the ruling Putin-Medvedev tandem into confusion. The protest sentiments forced them to agree to partial political liberalization, which had begun to be considered long before the December elections. Simultaneously, the editorial policies of the government-controlled electronic mass media showed certain change, similar in scale to the glasnost breakthrough of the 1980s.

However, in January 2012, the Putin team revised its election tactic to shift to confrontationist rhetoric towards the protesters and the sympathetic external forces (the just-appointed U.S. Ambassador, Michael McFaul fell victim to that campaign, too). In this way a new basis of Putin's electoral support was consolidated and preconditions were created for a considerable shift in the balance of forces at the level of the political elite. The presidential election proved surprisingly competitive, but it was a competition between the authorities and a patchy opposition not represented in the ballot papers. In February, the pro-Putin forces achieved superiority in the scope of street demonstrations. Eventually, Putin for the first time emerged winner in a political standoff, and this fact will have major consequences for Russia's politics.

It looks like the scope of protest demonstrations was a no smaller surprise for the leaders of the anti-Putin opposition than it was for the authorities. Almost spontaneously a weird coalition emerged that united supporters of liberal values, leftwing radicals and nationalists. In a configuration like this the emergence of one coordinating center, capable of formulating an integral list of political demands, proved impossible. Seeking to gain massive support of demonstrators in street protests, the oppositional leaders missed the chance of distancing themselves from dubious personalities and organizations that had joined the rallies in the first days. As a result, protest activity developed a downtrend before the March 4 election. The scope and intensity of grass roots support for the oppositional protests were not enough for destabilizing the regime. But nothing is settled yet. The number of opponents critical of Putin and of the system he represents has not reduced, and it is hard to believe they will be calmly waiting for the end of his third term.

From the very moment of his inauguration, Putin was confronted with a stark dilemma – either to go ahead with strengthening the authoritarian rule in every possible way, or to undertake fundamental political reforms, including a constitutional one, which would at last build the presidency into the system of power sharing, establish guarantees of the independence of courts and the mass media, and make genuinely free elections inevitable. Most probably Putin and his entourage will at first try to consolidate power with regard to the new

political realities. The under-revolution of the winter of 2011–2012 highlighted the non-efficiency of the previous coalition of *siloviki* and systemic liberals Putin had relied on since 2000. In the new conditions, Putin will have to recruit a new generation of the managerial and political elite to count on. In the long term, the “newcomers” will be determining the country’s future to an ever larger degree.

In the near future the Russian authorities will be taking any significant step with double caution, because the risk of another outbreak of protests is still high. Putin’s political opponents will continue to question the legitimacy of his third presidency and the current composition of the State Duma. In the event of another tide of the economic crisis Putin will have to establish a dialogue again with various political forces, including the advocates of Western-type liberal democracy and radical nationalists. The task of the political leadership will be to integrate both groups in a legal political process by giving them a chance of full-fledged participation in regional and municipal elections, and then in federal election campaigns. The normalization of political processes would be far easier to achieve should there be an unambiguous signal that Putin and his entourage are prepared to confine themselves to a six-year presidency and will not seek to prolong it to 2024. In fact, time is ripe for Putin to start working on a strategy of a civilized exit from the ruling officialdom within the deadlines established by the Constitution.

The Russian near-revolution has demonstrated the Opposition’s indifference to foreign policy issues. The oppositional activists’ response to Putin’s statements throughout the election campaign was slack, none of them even tried to propose some policy benchmarks in that sphere, at least in response to the Putin’s article in *Moscow News*. It is very unlikely that there is a broad consensus of Putin’s supporters and opponents as regards foreign policy issues. The Opposition remained reluctant to get involved in the foreign policy discussion, most probably because the alternative platform does not look attractive enough for mobilizing the electorate and political activists. In fact, the Opposition allowed Putin to retain monopoly on shaping and interpreting Russia’s foreign policy agenda.

The social processes that have been unfolding in Russia since late 2011 are undoubtedly consonant with the main trends of the global

political turbulence. But, if one considers the March 4, 2012 election as an interim threshold, then one must admit that by the moment it was reached Russia had avoided the plight of turning into another source of global chaos. Russia's foreign policy has not yet become hostage to the internal political change, of which Russia's independent stance on Syria in early 2012 is evidence. Nevertheless, the likes and dislikes of Russia's main foreign partners regarding the actors of the political process within the country have clearly manifested themselves. In the future, especially in a situation of a growing internal political turbulence, outside pressure in support of this or that force inside Russia will increase. Accordingly, the Kremlin's foreign policy choices may be derivative of a "friend-or-foe" approach, with all other factors of significance fading into the background.

Eurasian (Post-Soviet) Integration

The Putin-Medvedev duumvirate's rule has seen a major change in interstate cooperation in the post-Soviet space. In fact, there has developed a change of trend for the first time ever since 1991. True, it would be too bold to say that disintegration and nation-state building has given way to a unification boom. But the creation of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan is increasingly often seen as a project with greater-than-zero chances of success. It is also noteworthy that it was none other than Vladimir Putin who played the most important role in launching this initiative (although by and large he avoided disputing Dmitry Medvedev's foreign policy prerogatives).

Why did it become possible? It would be an exaggeration to say that the economic integration of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan materialized in favorable external conditions, but the general background was surely neutral. The world economic crisis noticeably reduced the capabilities of the key world players in the post-Soviet space. Besides, as one may speculate, the resetting of Russian-U.S. relations implied bilateral tacit awareness that the U.S. activity in matters related to the political and economic development of the CIS countries would be surely less intensive than it was under George W. Bush. While refusing to

recognize Russia's right to a zone of privileged interests, the United States under Barack Obama apparently deemed it impossible to resist Russia's growing strength in the post-Soviet space too firmly. As for the European Union, the Eastern Partnership program, formulated at the initiative of Poland and Sweden, has failed to become an effective instrument for exercising influence in the post-Soviet space. In a word, by 2012 Russia had achieved considerable progress in advancing its integration initiatives.

True, these initiatives still remain mostly a political project. The idea of a Eurasian Union, which Putin breathed a new life into in the autumn of 2011, is still feeding the political component of the integration activity. However, this policy is fraught with certain risks, such as the disruption of unification efforts. The establishment of a trilateral Customs Union and the proposed formation of a Eurasian Union on its basis is a project of three personalistic authoritarian regimes, of which the Russian one is the softest, particularly so after the turbulent political winter of 2011–2012. Therefore, it is logical to focus efforts on minimizing the project's costs so as to make the integration trend irreversible and ensure stability of the union structures irrespective of what may be happening “after Nazarbayev,” “after Lukashenko,” or “after Putin.” Conversely, any steps towards expanding the Customs Union and the Eurasian Union territorially, for instance, to Kyrgyzstan or Tajikistan, would hardly contribute to making the economic basis of integration stronger. Alongside greater economic pressures this would be tantamount to the import of instability and conflicts. For instance, in view of the strained relations between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan it would be careless to agree to a radical rapprochement with Dushanbe, thereby complicating the dialogue with Tashkent.

Creating a firm and sound (at least economically) core of integration in the post-Soviet space is a major task that will take years, if not decades, to accomplish. Beyond the scope of the “top three” – Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan – it would be correct to opt for a model of multi-speed integration, making it possible to gradually create economic and political prerequisites for closer relations among ever more countries in the post-Soviet space. In relation to Ukraine, the optimal scenario might be to put it in the follow-up integration echelon. Ukraine's hypothetical membership of the Customs Union, the

Common Economic Space and, eventually, of the Eurasian Union, would considerably ease the integration impetus and, in case of another change of power in Kiev, result in the deconstruction of the emerging associations. One has the impression that Moscow seeks to use the weaknesses of Ukraine's current authorities to address issues concerning the future of the gas pipeline system, as well as involve Kiev in some sort of partnership that would prevent Ukraine's ultimate reorientation towards the European Union. However, the march of events in the neighboring country after the "Orange Revolution" has convincingly shown that any "final" solutions there are impossible. For Moscow it would be reasonable to proceed precisely from this understanding of Ukrainian specifics. If the idea of Greater Europe "from Lisbon to Vladivostok" is to be considered in earnest, Kiev might play a modest but independent part in such a European concert. Russia should recognize this and even help Ukraine find a constructive role of a link between the European Union and the Eurasian one.

The European Impasse

That the relations between Moscow and the European Union have been in an impasse for years is on everybody's tongue. Even those who are still prepared to offer solutions are beginning to feel bored. Russia can only wait and watch the EU trying to find a way out of the debt and institutional crisis. Naturally, it can make its moderate contribution to resolving the debt problems and to eventually take a tactically beneficial position of a lender. On the EU scale Moscow's support will be hardly noticeable, but it would be tangible for individual countries, for instance, Cyprus. Possibly, the current moment is most convenient for laying hands on low-priced European assets, but a massive buy-up of the heftiest chunks of property, for instance, in the high-tech sector, will not happen.

In his last pre-election article¹ Vladimir Putin made it clear that he was an advocate of the version of anti-crisis reforms and institutional

¹ Putin V. Rossija i menyajushiisa mir = Russia and the Changing World // Moskovskie novosti, 2012. – 27 February.

transformation that Berlin and Paris were insisting on. To be more precise, not of the version as such, but of the idea that its implementation will help consolidate German-French domination in united Europe. It is hoped that such transformation would have the most favorable effect on Russia-EU relations. However, if this shift is bound to occur, it will not happen in the near future.

Europe's debt crisis has exposed things which everybody knew all the way but which were painstakingly camouflaged: whereas before the crisis Germany's leadership was kept under the veil of a consensus political decision-making (even with certain adjustments the Lisbon Treaty had introduced), which diluted political responsibility, now Berlin is forced to assume the role of a full-fledged leader. Germany's cautious Chancellor, Angela Merkel, is still trying to share the burden of responsibility with France, but this does not make much difference. Most probably, when the crisis is at its peak, the majority of EU countries will accept Berlin's terms of exit from the debt depression, but the London-led camp of opponents will get stronger, too. As they overcome the crisis, the number of countries, prepared to contest Germany's key role in solving various problems, will grow. A variety of scenarios is possible here.

One scenario suggests that the mechanism of decision-making in the EU will be rather quickly adjusted to the new economic realities, and the "multi-speed Europe" principle will be institutionalized. This would be most favorable for taking practical steps in favor of implementing the idea of "Europe from Lisbon to Vladivostok." The European Union's stratification into several integration tiers would help bring about more zones of cooperation, serving as "bridges" from the European Union (its core) to the Eurasian Union. Implementation of a differentiated model of multi-speed integration would lay the basis for new mega projects with points of support in Paris, Berlin, Warsaw, Kiev and Moscow. For the time being this scenario looks purely hypothetical, though.

Under another scenario the reformatting of the EU will last a while, and Berlin will have to make concessions to partners on issues of secondary importance again and again. Possibly, the policy towards Russia and other countries in the post-Soviet space will be one of the victims. On the Eastern track, the simulacrum of the European Union's

common foreign policy has chances to last longer. Then the stagnation in relations between Moscow and the European Union undergoing internal transformation will last for years. Europe will be a priori unable to discuss strategic partnership matters with Moscow, and Russia will hardly like the idea of waiting in uncertainty in front of the European home's locked front door. Respectively, Moscow's partnership with Brussels will not become a tangible factor, contributing to Russia's positions in the Asia-Pacific region, which Putin mentioned in the pre-election article "Russia and the Changing World" as a goal to be sought. Most probably, it will turn the other way round, and a resolute surge in Russia's policy in Asia and the Pacific will sooner or later force the EU countries to take a fresh look at the prospects of relations with the largest country in Eurasia.

The third scenario may involve a sharp worsening of the military-political situation in the Middle East, and also its long-term geopolitical and geo-economic consequences. A clash of Israel and the United States with Iran would make the problems of energy security more acute. The effects of such a clash will produce serious long-term challenges for all: the redrawing of borders in the Middle East, refugee flows, Turkey's struggle for asserting its ambitions of a regional dominator in the Eastern Mediterranean, the South Caucasus and Central Asia and the comeback of the specter of a Sunni Caliphate from Mecca to Casablanca. Awareness of common threats is certainly one of the strongest arguments for countries to unite.

Asia-Pacific Window of Opportunities

Remarkably, Russia's chairmanship of this year's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum has coincided with the shift of the world policy focus on that region. If the struggle for global leadership between the United States and China is to become the key factor in the transformation of the system of international relations, then the expanses of East Asia and the Pacific are bound to serve as the competition field. The more so since the center of gravity of world industrial and financial activity is moving from the Euro-Atlantic area to the Asia-Pacific region. A realignment of forces is afoot, and Russia

is not taking an active part in it yet, reluctant to get involved in any political-economic configuration prematurely. However, despite the growing tensions caused by this realignment, the Asia-Pacific region still remains a fairly stable and economically safe part of the world, and presence there is a basic condition for Russia's successful development in the 21st century. "An eastward turn" will entail major risks, but staying idle will be far more risky, for the window of opportunity may be shut to never open again.

A radical change in the agenda of Russian-U.S. relations will be possible only if the sides succeed to jointly define a balance of interests in the Asia-Pacific region and to consider it as the main context-formatting factor for the entire range of cooperation relations between Moscow and Washington. Firstly, the balance of interests should involve economic cooperation, including creation and development of regional free trade areas. Secondly, it suggests support for Russia's active contribution to supplying energy resources to the Asia-Pacific region, including wide diversification of routes of delivery and destinations. This sort of mutual understanding in questions of energy supply to the Asia-Pacific region means a departure from confrontational policies in the field of European energy security, where the United States had until recently acted as the main lobbyist for alternative oil and gas supply routes that would ease Europe's dependence on Russia. Thirdly, the new balance of interests suggests the United States and the Asia-Pacific countries leaning on it will enjoy vast opportunities opened up for the development of Siberia and Russia's Far East. At least, the same opportunities as China enjoys. Fourthly, Russia should recognize that the considerable military presence of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region does not endanger its security. Moreover, a further U.S. military buildup in the region may be deemed acceptable on the condition it does not undermine Russia's own strategic security efforts. At the same time, the United States will have to demonstrate its readiness to take into account the interests of Russia's security in the post-Soviet space, in Europe, and in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, however, the chances for a positive "resetting of the resetting" of the U.S.-Russia relations are slim, and they will remain so for years to come. Relations with Russia have long ceased to be a matter of bipartisan consensus in Washington. Quite probably,

fundamental efforts in favor of a U.S.-Russia rapprochement will for a long time be blocked by an influential group of U.S. legislators interested in the votes of anti-Russia minded migrants from Central and Eastern Europe and their descendants. The rhetoric component of Russian-U.S. interactions may even get stronger. For instance, a swap of the vintage Jackson-Vanik amendment for the Magnitsky Act that John McCain and a number of his colleagues have proposed will exacerbate the distrust between the two countries, without resolving a single practical problem. The publication of a conversation between Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev, caught by a live microphone in Seoul, and the ensuing anti-Obama and anti-Russia campaign by Mitt Romney and other Republicans were yet another illustration the chances of shrugging off the power of stereotypes are scarce.

Instead of searching jointly for opportunities for cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region as the basis of a new agenda of U.S.-Russian relations we will see a further erosion of the modest achievements of the resetting. The current agenda of bilateral relations, in which the missile defense problem takes center stage, will be perpetuated till the end of the current decade. And then, especially in case of another surge of internal political tensions in Russia or of another aggravation of relations with the West, Moscow may take a step towards still closer relations with Beijing.

The current level of Russian-Chinese relations is optimal by and large. A search for a balance of interests and new mechanisms of cooperation by Russia and the United States in the Asia-Pacific region might help achieve a better balance and avoid unilateral dependence on China. For Moscow, it would be equally risky to get involved in anti-Chinese and anti-American alliances. At this point it would be reasonable to lessen the disproportion in China's favor by stepping up cooperation with the United States. Such restoration of balance would provide the most comfortable ground for the further advancement of Russia's interests in the Asia-Pacific region.

The opportunities for economic cooperation and the development of trade are most significant in this context. Russia's crucial task following the access to the World Trade Organization is choosing partners for the establishment of free trade regimes. Already now discussions are underway on free trade by the Customs Union countries

with New Zealand, Vietnam and Mongolia (beyond the Asia-Pacific region consultations are being held with the member-states of the European Free Trade Association). The talks may serve as a model for further wider dialogues over the establishment of relations with the existing and emerging free trade areas or even over full-fledged participation in one of these areas. In contrast to the European Union, multilateral structures of economic cooperation and free trade in the Asia-Pacific region keep cropping up. Besides accepting the conditions for cooperation in the region established earlier by other actors, Russia may also participate in setting the rules of the game.

The Asia-Pacific region still lacks a major project for multilateral economic cooperation, but there is a variety of competing projects. In the final count the choice will be confined to which project is preferable – the one involving the United States or China. This situation will not last indefinitely, but now Russia has a chance to consider various options. The free trade regime is by no means a harmless thing, particularly so for a one-sided economy like Russia's. Nevertheless it makes sense to analyze the existing options, above all the possibility of closer relations with the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The United States will dominate this emerging economic group, so a probe into the chances of close cooperation with the TPP will also put to test the chances of “resetting the resetting” on the basis of a balance of interests of Washington and Moscow in the Asia-Pacific region. One should not brush aside offhand the possibility of taking part in some other configuration, for instance, the ASEAN+6 format.

Russia should look for regional partners (in other words, sherpas, if one is to use a word from the diplomatic vocabulary) that would be prepared to provide assistance to Russia in turning eastwards. They should not be stronger than Russia itself, or have some insurmountable differences, like a territorial dispute. Clearly, Moscow should create powerful incentives to persuade these countries to take into account its interests in earnest. Such incentives may be varied – supplies of fuels and energy, joint infrastructural projects, the opening of the Russian labor market, creation of favorable conditions for economic activity, assistance in resolving conflicts, etc.

Vietnam and South Korea may easily become such regional players. With Vietnam Russia shares the political and economic

heritage of the Soviet era. Naturally, that heritage suffered serious erosion, but, despite the years of mutual estrangement, a number of successful economic cooperation projects have been preserved, and many people in both countries are keenly interested in reviving Russian-Vietnamese cooperation on a new basis. Vietnam largely follows the Chinese model of modernization, and in terms of the structure and quality of its workforce Vietnam looks very much like China of 10–15 years ago, but the gap is narrowing. At the same time, the Vietnamese economy is tiny compared to the Chinese one. Besides, Russia and Vietnam do not have a common border, which lifts certain concerns which invariably surface whenever plans for a massive invitation of Chinese workforce into Russia are discussed. Lastly, Vietnam is not just an ASEAN member, but a participant in the TPP, and the specific features of Vietnam's political regime are not an obstacle to this.

The situation with the Republic of Korea is different, of course, but even in that case Russia may discover some potentially favorable opportunities. First and foremost, Moscow is sincerely interested in the peace settlement of controversies over North Korea's nuclear program. Russia has every reason to demonstrate support for a constructive dialogue between the two Korean states, because it is a necessary condition for the implementation of projects for developing transport and energy infrastructures in the Korean Peninsula. Peaceful unification of the two Koreas would be consonant with Russia's strategic interests. Naturally, it would be preferable to see not some dramatic scenarios, like the fall of the Berlin Wall, but gradual and steady progress in the inter-Korean dialogue based on the principle "one country – two systems." Moscow has enough reasons to seek a situation in which still-divided Korea would be its privileged partner in East Asia, similar to what Germany is in Europe. Also, Korea may counterbalance the influence of China and Japan somewhat.

However favorable the foreign economic opportunities might be, Russia's "turn eastwards" will require resolute internal political action. The plans for creating a government corporation for the development of the Russian Far East seem to point to the seriousness of such intentions. However, it looks like they have already fallen behind the pace of depletion of the region's human potential and the scale of external

challenges. In the current situation moving the center of political power to that region may turn the tide of negative trends. Dmitry Medvedev's initiative, voiced last year, for doubling the territory of Moscow and moving political governance structures to a new site would resolve only some of the Russian capital city's problems. At the same time the project will cause further growth in the disproportion between the central region and the rest of Russia. A decision to move the capital to the Asian part of the country, or at least to disperse the capital city's functions geographically will not only prove that Russia wishes to fit in with the new configuration of political and military power, but also herald the beginning of a new political era. Lastly, relocating Russia's government center eastwards would let the authorities distance themselves from such a hotbed of political turbulence as the Moscow megalopolis.

* * *

Turbulence is characteristic of a situation where long-term forecasts are not worth a dime. Minor causes may trigger macro-processes and scenarios that seemed exotic or utterly improbable just recently, but today are a fact of life. Most global turbulence factors lie outside Russia, and changing something radically is beyond its leaders' ability. The economic system of global capitalism has accumulated a tremendous potential of internal destruction and chaos, and over the years of the economic crisis that potential has not only eased, but kept growing. Globalization has put a cap on the territorial expansion of world capitalism and encouraged it to start temporal expansion, to try to maintain economic growth and well-being at the expense of the future. What makes the current crisis particularly dangerous is that this resource seems to have been exhausted, too. No one knows though whether all bills will be presented for payment instantly, or several generations will have to redeem them by installments.

The old U.S.-centered world order has been losing supports one by one. Moscow may watch this happen with a mixed feeling of satisfaction and alarm. The reasons for alarm are many, because even the general outline is still unclear, and, consequently, the period of

turbulence will last. Russia is, of course, capable of making its contribution to the gradual emergence of a new world order, hoping for a worthy place in it. However, one should not rule out a synergy of internal destabilization and external turbulence, witnessed many a time in the past, for instance, in the second half of the 20th century. At this point one can say with certainty only that no vector of historical evolution is predetermined.

The above-described options of Russia's action in the international arena during Vladimir Putin's third presidency are based on the assumption of relatively inertial transformation of the world order. They rest upon the assumption of moderate turbulence. At the same time there are no guarantees that in 2012–2018 the world and Russia will avoid getting into a real storm. The causes may be varied – an escalation of currency wars, a chain of defaults that nation states may declare on sovereign debts and, lastly, tensions in the Middle East growing into a large-scale military conflict. The ineffectiveness of anti-crisis measures may add to the temptation to try an unconventional exit from the crisis through a military shakeup. Many have been writing about this option and still keep doing so, but the important thing is that such options have begun to be considered in earnest by the most authoritative analysts, such as Paul Krugman.

In the years-long saga over Iran's nuclear program the most menacing factor is the pace at which tensions have been soaring. This pace narrows the room for maneuver by politicians making decisions, and increases the role of random factors which can result in the total loss of control. This pace brings to mind the way tensions grew over the Balkans in the period from the Bosnian crisis in 1908 up to the fatal shot in Sarajevo. Fortunately, in contrast to the events of a hundred years ago the current situation still gives enough reasons to believe that Russia will be able to avoid direct involvement in the conflict. But it will be unable to stay aloof altogether, either, because the economic effects of the military cataclysm will be global. Consequently, the hope for a relatively smooth and soft transformation of the world order will be shattered.

The good news is that turbulence does not mean that this or that scenario is predetermined. The combinations of factors increasing the likelihood of a military scenario are transient. A minor push may

trigger a chain reaction of decisions and actions that will make a conflict inevitable. But it is likewise possible that a “war-inducing” combination of factors will begin to be eroded, too, while the trends enabling one to edge back from the fatal line will be gaining strength.

However, those responsible for planning and political decision-making in a turbulent environment must take into account the possibility of the worst-case scenario. There is not enough certainty that political planning in Russia is done at the appropriate level. There is still less certainty that the country will remain strong enough to stand the gusts of the storm during Putin’s third presidency. The much needed reforms of the political system, although creating extra problems when being implemented, can contribute to greater resistibility to external challenges in the long-term. Such reforms do not guarantee Moscow’s success in foreign policy, but they will certainly ease the risks stemming from internal political polarization.

LIFE AFTER VILNIUS.
A New Geopolitical Configuration for Ukraine¹
(2013)

A political anniversary passed largely unnoticed on 12 September 2013: fifty years ago on that date Turkey and the European Economic Community signed an association agreement. Although it might be a good time to look back on what has been achieved since then and make plans for the future, Turkish politicians have largely ignored the anniversary. And for good reason! While the association agreement resulted in tangible economic benefits for Turkey, in the political sense it doomed that ambitious country to 50 years of humiliating uncertainty in the antechamber of a unifying Europe. Today Ukraine, another large country, is impatiently waiting to be let into that antechamber. But no political analyst in his right mind will state that Ukraine will not have to wait longer than Turkey for full-fledged European Union membership.

And still, the agreement of association between Ukraine and the EU, scheduled to be signed on 28 November 2013 in Vilnius, Lithuania, will be a landmark in the history of post-Soviet countries. The agreement envisages the creation of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA). The event as such will not bring about instant economic or institutional transformation; on the contrary, Ukrainians will either notice that everyday life has improved slightly or has gotten worse. However, in the geopolitical sense, Ukraine will enter

¹ Source: Yefremenko D. Life after Vilnius. A New Geopolitical Configuration for Ukraine // Russia in Global Affairs. – 2013. – Vol. 11, N 3. – P. 47–61.

a new orbit and by zero sum game logic, to which Russia and the West have in fact returned, this will be seen as a strategic loss for Russia.

What Should Russia Do?

The Vilnius agreement will likely have a greater impact on how the Russian political elite and society view the world rather than on Russia's immediate interests. However, this is not the end of the world! The emergence of a new, unfavorable geopolitical configuration will force the Russian leadership to choose from a variety of options, depending on strategic targets. In the most abstract terms, this choice will be limited to returning Ukraine to the former geopolitical orbit or fundamentally revise the rules of the game in relations between Russia and the EU.

Will Ukraine turn towards Russia after Vilnius? Statements about the “irreversible European choice” are better left for Ukraine's domestic political use. After all, the point at hand is the scale of material, political, diplomatic, information, and other resources Russia might be prepared to employ to influence Ukrainian elites and public opinion. For the past few months a great deal has been said about Ukraine's annual economic benefits from joining the Customs Union, which will range from \$6-12 billion. These benefits could be achieved through a drastic reduction in the price of Russian gas, the lifting of export duties on petroleum products, and the creation of a preferential regime for the supply of Ukrainian food products. Moreover, Ukraine will be entitled to compensation with its transition to the Customs Union's unified customs tariff. Undoubtedly, the brunt of this burden will be placed on the Russian taxpayer during the first phase of Ukraine's geopolitical membership in the Customs Union. Yet all of this was not enough to persuade Ukraine not to sign the DCFTA or to join the Customs Union. No doubt the stakes will increase after the agreement on association and free trade takes effect between Ukraine and the European Union. With a sluggish Russian economy, relatively high oil prices, and renewed growth in Western economies, geopolitical expectations will serve as an excuse for such a financial burden. Russia has no guarantees that such a strategy will be successful, because

relations between Russia and a united Europe could become confrontational within the framework of that scenario.

The alternative looks very hypothetical at this point. It concerns fundamental changes in relations between Russia and the European Union, and Ukraine's integration into this system of relations as a full-fledged participant. The key to this strategy should be based on recognizing Ukraine as a key factor in Russian-European interaction and devising an inclusive approach to Kiev. Clearly, this condition alone will be very hard for the Russian leaders to accept. However, the political and institutional incompatibility of modern Russia and EU countries is a much harder obstacle to overcome on the road towards a strategy of mutual benefit. Harmonizing the diverse interests of countries with similar political regimes is one thing, but doing the same in relation to countries whose political institutions, norms, and practices are moving in the opposite directions is something very different. Over the past eighteen months this discrepancy has acquired a new quality and has considerably narrowed the maneuvering room in Russian foreign policy towards the West. Even Russia's recent diplomatic success on the Syrian issue merely emphasizes this. It looks like the European Union and the U.S. will take extra efforts to ensure that Russia's triumph in Geneva is counterbalanced by a geopolitical knockdown in Vilnius.

Political transformations are not a guarantee that Russia, Ukraine, and the European Union will achieve a strategic partnership. What is of decisive importance for Russia's future is a real division of power and reconciling the institution of the presidency with the system. Additionally, the Russian government needs to separate the state from property, ensure genuine free and fair elections, promote a new generation of political leaders, and replace the old political and economic elites with new people. These changes, however, will at least create the possibility of conducting a dialogue in a common language and enable all participants to understand that a policy that guarantees joint gains is far more preferable. Apparently, none of these strategies can be implemented in full within months or years after the agreement is signed in Vilnius. Under one scenario, the economy will be the stumbling block; under another, the logic by which the Russian political regime operates will cause problems. Nevertheless, even if Russia does

not take any harsh, emotional steps in retaliation for Ukraine's joining of the DCFTA, a number of quality changes in Russian policy towards Ukraine will manifest themselves before long. Firstly, Russia will have to take protective measures when trade barriers between Ukraine and the European Union are removed. It is important that these measures agree with the principle of reasonable sufficiency and not look like simple revenge. After the Vilnius conference, there will be no reason to preserve the preferred trading and economic relations that Ukraine enjoys, which Russia introduced with a view to that country's future full-fledged participation in Russia-centered integration projects. At the same time, a wrong decision could follow that would curtail programs for inter-regional cooperation, which would hit primarily the residents of the Crimea and Ukraine's eastern and southern regions, many of which are still pressing for a special relationship with Russia. It would make more sense to expand such programs.

Russia will make a serious mistake if it closes its labor market to Ukrainian workers. Soaring social tensions over the problems of labor migration are certainly not caused by Ukrainian guest workers looking for jobs in Russia. On the contrary, job qualifications, knowledge of the Russian language, and cultural similarities should, in theory, make Ukrainian migrants welcome guests in Russia. The economic problems Ukraine will face after it signs the association agreement with the EU might fuel an influx of labor migrants to Russia. If that happens, those workers should not be sent back to Ukraine.

The launch of a major student grant program to attract thousands of students from southern and eastern regions in Ukraine to Russian universities could be one of the asymmetric responses to Ukraine's geopolitical reorientation. The size of the grants should be competitive with those under similar EU programs. This student program might help form a youth cohort of campaigners who want to prioritize developing relations with Russia. Also, it might spell tangible benefits for participating universities in Russia. It is reasonable to offer university graduates involved in this program a wide variety of opportunities, envisaging not only their return to Ukraine, but also various options of further employment in Russia.

Of special note is Ukraine's hypothetical presence in two free trade zones after the DCFTA becomes effective; that of the CIS and the

European Union. Although not unique in the global economy, this situation is unprecedented in post-Soviet space. All the effects of Ukraine serving as a link between the two free trade zones are hardly possible to assess at this point, although Russian officials prefer to focus on the negative aspects. It cannot be ruled out that the worst damage will stem not from the transit flow of European goods across Ukraine to the Russian market, but from preventive measures Russia might take and retaliatory measures by Ukraine and the European Union. In any case, this kind of situation will not last long. Ukraine may try to derive political gains from its special position and to propose some trilateral mechanism to regulate trading relations, which, once operational, might change into a discussion to consider the idea of creating a free trade zone from Lisbon to Vladivostok. Brussels will hardly dismiss this idea offhand, because (1) European exporters will benefit the most from the liberalization of mutual trade, and (2) Russia's participation in trilateral negotiations would be tantamount to actual recognition of the geopolitical transformation that is about to take place. Russia will likely face a dilemma. If the trilateral dialogue concept implies only a discussion of free trade zone issues, then the Russian leadership will most probably prefer to avoid such talks. If Russia is eager and able to propose a wider agenda, then it is precisely this format that will help steer Russian-EU relations out of profound stagnation.

Events could also develop quite differently. Refusing to hold a trilateral dialogue and escalating protective trading measures will in fact push Ukraine out of the CIS free trade zone. This process will not be smooth and in all likelihood will end the CIS era. Strictly speaking, the whole process was triggered nearly a decade ago with the series of 'color revolutions' in a number of post-Soviet countries. The possibility that some CIS countries may conclude association agreements with the EU played the role of a catalyst, for Russia followed in the EU's footsteps to make those countries face a clear 'either-or' choice. Armenia's difficult decision to give up the idea of rapprochement with the European Union and its declared intention to join the Customs Union is a clear indication that the geopolitical polarization of post-Soviet space is becoming more intensive. If Russia decides to push Ukraine out of the CIS free trade zone after that country signs the

association agreement, then, as a result, practically all of the post-Soviet space will be split into two unequal sectors, except for Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. One of them will be economically tied to the European Union, and the other to the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan.

This polarization of post-Soviet space will result in divisive consequences for the Customs Union, which may see a steady extensive growth trend for two or three years in the future. The risks of the Customs Union's hasty expansion have been grossly underestimated so far. The Customs Union's quick start raised the hope initially that it would be the first successful integration project in the post-Soviet era. However, initial positive effects from the emergence of the Common Economic Space and the common customs territory of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan gave way to what is sometimes called 'the growth crisis' and of gradually increasing internal tensions between the association's members. A growth crisis is a natural phenomenon, but in the Customs Union's case, the specifics of the personality-dependent regimes of the member-states and related excesses, like the 'Baumgartner affair,' turned out to be an additional burden. Nevertheless, joint efforts to resolve disagreements and to unify domestic legislation strengthen the Custom Union's institutional base. Also, coordinating strategic goals could give a fresh impetus to the process of integration. A shift in focus to co-opting several new countries would considerably complicate efforts to achieve the main target of the upcoming months – getting the Eurasian Economic Union up and running by the beginning of 2015. In particular, the efficiency of the Eurasian Economic Commission, whose decisions are consensus-based, may decrease considerably with the admission of new member-states into the Customs Union. Some kind of intermediate participation format might work as a pragmatic alternative to the Custom Union's rapid expansion; for instance, agreements of association or privileged partnership. However, in the context of growing geopolitical competition, the most likely choice will be in favor of expanding the list of full-fledged Custom Union members, which will hurt its effectiveness.

The European Abduction of Ukraine

Among the series of events leading up to the Vilnius summit, 8 November 2011 is a key date. On that day the Nord Stream pipeline started transporting gas to Western Europe to dramatically ease Russia's dependence on Ukraine as the main transit country for Russian fuel. It might seem that the Putin-Schroeder policy of establishing an exclusive energy partnership between Russia and Germany triumphed in spite of all the obstacles, which would give the two countries an even greater political edge in post-Soviet space and in the European Union respectively. In addition to Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, and other countries transiting Russian gas have also lost previous political and economic advantages. Yet on the very same day German foreign minister Guido Westerwelle and his Polish counterpart Radoslaw Sikorski (the latter had compared the Nord Stream project to the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact shortly before that) stated that Germany and Poland had agreed on a joint policy towards Russia. It turned out that the statement was not just a token compensation addressed to Poland. The Westerwelle-Sikorski message heralded a new distribution of the 'spheres of responsibility' between Germany and Poland. In fact, Poland hinted that it was prepared to recognize Germany's leadership in the further reforming of the European Union. For its part, Germany agreed with Poland's critical attitude towards Russian foreign and domestic policies. While remaining focused on EU institutional and economic problems, avoiding excessive involvement in post-Soviet affairs, and reconciling itself with the gradual stagnation of German-Russian relations, Germany gave Poland and its backers in the Baltics and the Visegrad Group of countries a greater say in formulating the EU's eastern policies.

The European Union's eastern policies have begun to look increasingly Jagiellonian. Leaving aside the specifics of purely intra-Polish political and ideological rifts from many centuries ago, the term Jagiellonian can be applied to coordinated efforts by the elites of Central European and Eastern European countries based on resistance to a foreign presence, i.e. Russia. Historically, those countries were once either part of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (later the Polish Rzeczpospolita), or at least were adjacent to

the vast area between the Baltic Sea and Black Sea. In the modern context, the Jagiellonian policy boils down to an attempt to pull several countries out of the 'grey geopolitical zone,' where they have been since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The policy is targeted at cementing those countries' political and economic attachments to the European Union, as well as preventing their participation in integration projects that may constitute alternatives to the EU.

The latest phase of Jagiellonian policies towards Ukraine began in an adverse environment. Amid the global financial crisis, the European Union and the U.S. paid less attention to the CIS, while the Russian foothold in the post-Soviet space grew much stronger. In Ukraine, the leaders of the Orange Revolution suffered an election defeat and either disappeared into political oblivion or they were imprisoned. The very possibility of a dialogue with the new Ukrainian authorities, which launched the prosecution of former Prime Minister Yulia Timoshenko and her associates looked very doubtful to many in the European Union. Nevertheless, the proponents of Jagiellonian policies continued to build a relationship with President Victor Yanukovich and his team, for which purpose they skillfully used mounting tensions between Russia and Ukraine. At first, Yanukovich regarded the unfreezing of dialogue with the European Union as an opportunity that gave him a better bargaining position in tough negotiations with Gazprom and Vladimir Putin. However, in the long-term Jagiellonian diplomacy persuaded him that seeking an agreement of association with the European Union might be an alternative for him and his inner circle.

With the European integration project in crisis, EU institutions are in dire need of fresh evidence of their own attractiveness and political success. This is one of the major reasons why the EU's eastern policies have turned Jagiellonian. Dragging Ukraine into the EU realm of economic and political influence may prove successful and receive a great deal of publicity, but at the same time will not require European taxpayers to bear any considerable additional costs. Moreover, the opening of Ukraine's vast market will surely benefit the export-oriented economies of the EU, especially the German economy. At the same time, the association format means that Ukraine will not receive

financial subsidies from Brussels, which are only available to full EU members.

Ever since Russia and the U.S. failed to reset relations following Putin's return to the Kremlin, Jagiellonian policies towards Ukraine have relied on growing support from the U.S. At the same time, negotiations between the U.S. and the EU to create a trans-Atlantic free trade and investment area may explain to a great extent the U.S.'s interest in Ukraine. If this global project is successful, Ukraine will be a free bonus complementing the unification of the two largest global economies.

What are the chances that the EU's eastern policy will follow the Jagiellonian course after the Vilnius summit? Much will depend on changes the European integration model will undergo in the course of its internal restructuring and, as a result, the creation of a free trade zone with the U.S. It is most likely that key EU countries will return to the Jagiellonian policy. Indeed, Belarus and Transnistria have good chances to come into the focus of Jagiellonian policies after Ukraine. In both cases the conflict potential may turn out to be blown out of proportion. In all likelihood the costs of such Jagiellonian policies in post-Soviet space will look unreasonably high to leading EU countries. If this happens, Germany and France will find it far more convenient to return to a dialogue with a geopolitically weakened Russia than to try to drive it into a corner. At the same time, Jagiellonian connotations in the EU's eastern policies will not likely disappear altogether.

The Morning After...

Nothing special will happen the morning after the association agreement is signed between Ukraine and the European Union. A large share of Ukraine's political establishment will celebrate Europe's triumph and get ready for a new round of Ukraine's traditional internal political struggle that pits everyone against each other. The Western press will not miss a chance to declare a geopolitical defeat of Putin's Russia. The Russian media will report on Ukraine's loss of real sovereignty and the gloomy prospects for the Ukrainian economy. However, several serious problems will surface before the ratification

of the Vilnius agreement. Russia will most likely reduce its direct investment in Ukraine, and Russian financial institutions will curtail their lending programs to the Ukrainian economy. Possible exceptions will include programs that are the most sensitive for major Russian economic players who cooperate closely with Ukrainian industries.

In a situation like this, the risks will soar for a Ukrainian economic default. A possible default could be prevented through a politically motivated easing of terms for Ukrainian access to IMF loans. At the same time, it is very unlikely that the European Union will rush to grant direct subsidies to the Ukrainian economy even after the DCFTA comes into force. The first months and years of the DCFTA's operation will see Ukrainian goods phased out of the domestic market by lower-priced goods of better quality from EU countries. These tendencies will increase with the transition to EU technical standards, a key DCFTA requirement. The simultaneous introduction of protectionist measures in Customs Union countries will bring many Ukrainian enterprises, and even whole industries, to the brink of collapse. The crisis may peak in 2015 and coincide with the Ukrainian presidential election.

There is a sense that Victor Yanukovich and his citadel in parliament – the Party of Regions – are about to launch a very risky game, if not commit political suicide, by betting on the agreement of association. The current political consensus for closer relations with the EU will disappear the moment the ink is dry on the Vilnius Agreement. Subsequently, the entire responsibility for the economic turmoil will be placed squarely on Yanukovich and his team. The electorate, on which Yanukovich and his Party of Regions currently rely, will be split.

The Yanukovich case is extremely important to understanding the behavior and further evolution of post-Soviet political elites. Earlier, Moldova's former president, Vladimir Voronin, followed the same path. Pro-Russian slogans propelled him to power, but when he was half a step away from the Moscow-proposed Transdniestrian conflict settlement plan, he made a U-turn under Western pressure. After he was elected president in February 2010, Yanukovich took some resolute steps to mend relations with Moscow. He and then Russian President Dmitry Medvedev concluded the Kharkov accord to extend the presence of Russia's Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol for 25 years and introduce a thirty-percent discount on the price of Russian gas. However, both the

Kharkov Accords and the Ukrainian parliament's adoption of a special law on Ukraine's non-bloc status indicated that the Yanukovich team was eager to get back to the traditional Ukrainian policy of balancing between Russia and the West. At that moment Russia must have misjudged the motives of the new Ukrainian authorities and the opportunities to put pressure on them. At first, the Russian negotiators employed all the tactical and strategic arguments available while negotiating the future of the Ukrainian pipeline system; later they relied on a wider range of issues in Russian-Ukrainian relations. The most influential oligarchic groups, one of which is represented by Yanukovich, interpreted such pressures as a major threat to their long-term business interests. Although in domestic policies the Ukrainian authorities used the tactics of their Russian counterparts quite successfully in fighting their political opponents, in foreign policy Ukraine started drifting towards Brussels again.

Ukraine's entry into a new geopolitical orbit will certainly propel Yanukovich into a position with which Western political quarters will be prepared to negotiate. Yet that does not mean the West will give him a free hand in building up his potential inside of the country using the very same methods he has resorted to so far. The reverse is more likely: not a single major abuse of administrative resources will remain unnoticed in European capitals. Brussels will demand that Yanukovich hold free elections and nobody will be upset if he loses.

Will Yanukovich lose the votes of those Ukrainians who still view Russia favorably? Most likely, the euphoria over the EU agreement will disappear soon, resulting in a great deal of disillusionment over the Euro-integrationist rhetoric, especially in eastern and southern Ukraine. Moreover, a split could also occur in the Party of Regions, where certain tensions are already intensifying after the presidential team deviated from the eastern integration vector. However, this does not mean that some new political force will appear before the 2015 presidential election and new leaders will gain power capable of uniting those Ukrainians unhappy with the country's geopolitical reorientation. Victor Medvedchuk and his movement Ukrainian Choice are not convincing contenders for this role. As for the Communists, they will have somewhat better election prospects, but will still be unable to bring about any qualitative restructuring of Ukrainian politics. Apparently, after the Vilnius

agreement is signed, Yanukovich will make several conciliatory statements regarding Russia. They will be addressed not so much to Putin or the Russian public, but to his own voters. Russia will not react positively. Yet these statements may prove to have something more than trivial political maneuvering behind them. There have been certain signs of an emerging new political and ideological phenomenon, which could be called 'East Ukrainian Europeanism.' In contrast to Ukrainian ethnic nationalism, of which western Ukraine is the stronghold, East Ukrainian Europeanism wants to create a political nation that unites all citizens irrespective of language, religion, or ethnic affiliation on the platform of sovereignty and with the strategic goal of Ukrainian admission to the EU in combination with exclusive relations with Russia. In that formula the European vector means: (1) receiving foreign guarantees of state independence; (2) a determination to enhance the positions of Ukrainian financial and industrial groups in relations with partners in the East; and (3) consent to institutional transformations in accordance with EU recommendations. At the same time, an exclusive relationship with Russia must be a mandatory part of that formula, because only this sort of relationship may give Ukraine extra political arguments in all interactions with Brussels. Ukraine will never get additional arguments if it is used as part of an anti-Russian 'sanitary cordon' after the EU agreement.

Under the Jagiellonian scenario, Ukraine will likely act as a policy instrument in the hands of its neighbors in the West. In other words, the super-task of East Ukrainian Europeanism should be the creation of a triple-tier model of strategic partnership, in which Ukraine will act as the main link between Russia and the EU.

Russia still has too few politicians who are prepared to regard the advocates of East Ukrainian Europeanism as reliable partners. As long as Yanukovich is the main speaker for East Ukrainian Europeanism, the level of trust towards these ideas and related initiatives will remain minimal. If calls to join the Customs Union increase in eastern Ukraine, those in Russia will gain strength who want to take a harder line towards the current Ukrainian authorities. They would prefer to see Yanukovich lose, even if he is defeated not by proponents of integration with Russia, but by representatives of nationalist or anti-Russian forces.

Neither a miracle nor a tragedy will take place in Vilnius, but the effects will be serious. Ukraine will experiment on itself and all the other countries in the post-Soviet space are looking forward to watching how it ends. Whether the ensuing economic or institutional changes over rapprochement with the EU appear tangible and positive will determine Russia's own conduct and the conduct of countries that still rely on it.

Association with the European Union will provide Ukraine with no guarantees of being plugged into this major international project, which still has to prove its viability in the context of the turbulent twenty-first century world. Naturally, the Ukrainian authorities will be quick to declare their intention to acquire full-fledged membership in the EU and, possibly, some confirmation of the seriousness of these intentions may still come to light under Yanukovich. But then Ukraine will approach a threshold where, for the sake of a "bright European future," it will have to take action to change the very nature and mode of operation of its state machinery and social institutions. It is not certain that the post-Soviet Ukrainian elite will be able and eager to step across that border.

The most important task for the Ukrainian authorities is to preserve the country's importance and its existence as a political entity. In future, Ukrainian leaders will be confronted with powerful pressures from internal and external forces that would like to see Ukraine abandon its neutral status and join Jagiellonian policies. Along with this, the advocates of Ukraine's non-bloc status will bolster their unity. In the context of this confrontation, East Ukrainian Europeanism may be the political course that at least will ease the heated internal debates and force external players to take Ukraine's special opinion into consideration.

The struggle for Ukraine's geopolitical choice unfolded in strict conformity with zero sum game logic. For the current Russian political regime, this logic is organic. It serves as a natural extension of the golden rule of totalitarian domination: "For my friends, everything; for everyone else, the law." But the European Union, which in fact inherited the Jagiellonian vision of the Russian Federation as a

half-ruined, revenge-driven empire, also follows zero sum game logic and acts in an imperial way. Even though many Europeans, Ukrainians, and Russians are prepared to see the EU as a collective ‘good empire,’ this will not change the very essence of imperial rivalry and related long-term consequences for Europe and Eurasia.

The European Union, Ukraine, and Russia could pool efforts after the Vilnius summit in an attempt to devise a fundamentally new format of trilateral cooperation based on the logic of mutual benefit, but the chances for this are very slim. Probably, EU leaders will try to avoid further escalation of geopolitical rivalry in the post-Soviet space, but that does not mean any of them will be prepared to exert great efforts to harmonize relations with Russia before the future of the European integration project has been clarified. In all probability, everything will come down to closer monitoring of what Russia’s strategic response to the Vilnius summit will be and how this geopolitical weakening will influence internal political processes in Russia.

The Russian leadership is facing a limited number of choices, and the options still available depend on costs and risks. As for Russian society, the EU agreement may serve as a bitter lesson that brings Russians closer to realizing that the political system and economic policy must undergo fundamental reform. After Vilnius, life will go on, including in Russia, but it will be life in anticipation of change.

CROSSING RED LINES.
Russia Takes the Lead in Revising the World Order¹
(2014)

Minor causes may have major consequences. A hundred years ago a terrorist act masterminded by a small group of Serbian nationalists set in motion a chain reaction that eventually led to a world war and the collapse of several empires. In our days, a short Facebook message calling on likeminded people to gather in Kiev's central square led to a crisis that shook Europe and dramatically expedited changes in the existing world order. The Ukrainian crisis is at its apex and is likely to cause much more trouble. The national democratic revolution and the breakout of an armed conflict in the east of Ukraine can hardly be classified as anything else but a tragedy of the country that was brought into independent existence by the emergence and subsequent disintegration of the Soviet Union. Russia's active role in this crisis also stems from our common past, but not only the past. A future where Russia and Ukraine stand apart and participate in different integration projects and military-political alliances appeared to be unacceptable to too many people in Moscow. The crisis prodded the Kremlin into taking steps that can be regarded as a desperate attempt to defend its crucial geopolitical position and as a determination to break out of the world order's "red lines" within which Russia is doomed to constantly be a Cold War loser.

¹ Source: Yefremenko D. Crossing Red Lines. Russia Takes Lead in Revising the World Order // Russia in Global Affairs. – 2014. – Vol. 12, N 3, – P. 34–47.

The Putin Factor

The Ukrainian crisis certainly has objective causes which include, among others, the lingering inertia after the breakup of the Soviet Union, ticking time bombs in relations among post-Soviet countries, planted back in Soviet times, and post-bipolar world realities. But the personality factor has also become extremely important. Russian President Vladimir Putin played a crucial role at some points during the crisis. Back in 2004, he regarded the “orange revolution” in Ukraine as a geopolitical challenge and a model for destabilizing the political regime, which, under certain conditions, if they were allowed to form, could be transferred to Russia as well. The subsequent events – the Russian-Ukrainian “gas wars,” the rifts among the Maidan leaders, their political fiasco, Victor Yanukovich’s fatal policy of trying to balance between the European and Eurasian integration projects, and finally the second Maidan – clearly showed that Ukraine was to be one of the most crucial political battles Putin had to fight. Ukraine had never been as important for any other external actors concerned. This was why the Russian president’s decision to move from the drawn-out trench war to active steps came as a surprise. And yet, Putin’s policy with respect to Ukraine should be regarded as nothing else but an active counterplay and his readiness to reverse the negative trend by employing all available resources and taking unexpected moves.

At the same time, one should exercise great caution when hearing that the Russian president’s actions are predetermined and stem from the underlying logic of his efforts to get a firmer authoritarian grip or live up to the demands of a large number of great-power-minded people stupefied by the aggressive anti-Western propaganda. On closer scrutiny, Putin’s political moves taken during his third presidential term reveal a much more sophisticated picture showing not only his determination to defend more firmly Russia’s geopolitical interests, as they are understood by the Kremlin, but also to resume a constructive dialogue with the West. At any rate, this is borne out by the release of Mikhail Khodorkovsky and, even more so, by the efforts to create a positive image of Russia as the host of the 22nd Olympic Winter Games which were so important for Putin. This is why the change of power in Kiev brought about a very painful reaction. For one thing, the

triumph of the major sport event was overshadowed by the Euromaidan's triumph; for another thing, the Russian leadership's hands were tightly tied. It seemed that after the brilliant Olympic Games closing ceremony the Kremlin had no choice but to recognize the new authorities in Ukraine. At least, this is what the Russian leadership was prompted to do by the United States and the European Union which, however, made no promises that Ukraine would take into account Russia's interests. During those days the reformatted majority in the Verkhovna Rada and the interim government in Kiev were working in frenzy, making one decision after another which called into question Ukrainian statehood as such. These decisions included an attempt to cancel the Kolesnikov-Kivalov language law and the disbandment of the Berkut special police force. They could have been followed by a revision of Ukraine's non-bloc status and the Kharkov Agreement.

Putin's decision in favor of reunification with Crimea was undoubtedly provoked by the coup in Kiev and expectations of its dreadful geopolitical consequences. But it would be superficial to assess this decision as spontaneous. On the contrary, all the previous years of Putin's presidency can be regarded as preparations for crossing the Crimean Rubicon. At least, the time between his two most prominent foreign policy statements – the speech at the Munich Security Conference on February 10, 2007 and his almost confessional Crimean speech on March 18, 2014 – was a period of final disappointment at the impossibility to build equal partnerships with the United States and the European Union. As this disappointment deepened, he grew more and more convinced of an impending crisis in relations with the West, with Ukraine being its most probable center. However, open confrontation was expected not earlier than 2015 when the next presidential elections were to be held in Ukraine. Obviously, not only the Kremlin but also the West, the previous Ukrainian authorities and their opponents were preparing for this event as a crucial battle. But Kiev-based journalist Mustafa Nayyem's post on social networks, in which he urged the supporters of Ukraine's pro-European choice to come to the Maidan, messed everything up.

The subsequent uncontrolled developments in Ukraine looked like a torrent that no one could divert. Putin dared do it by countering

the Euromaidan's will with the will of those who advocated Russian irredentism. By so doing he took an irreversible step not only in relations with Ukraine and the United States but also in relations between the authorities and society inside Russia.

Until recently, the voice of the Russian public in discussions on relations with Ukraine was not very strong. Calls for maximum integration between the two countries were broadly supported but their cooperation was not among issues considered vital by society. The discussion before the crisis went livelier in the expert community, but ties between experts and agencies that shaped policies were waning. By that time, an ultimate degree of centralization had been achieved in making political decisions on Ukraine and the success of Crimea's reunification with Russia was largely owed to such hyper-centralization and direct control by the head of state.

The reestablishment of Russia's sovereignty over the Crimean Peninsula predictably received broad popular support and raised the president's popularity rating to an unprecedented height. What until March used to be Putin's sole business became a common cause and responsibility shared by the authorities and society. The rise of irredentism gave the full legitimacy to Putin's third term, closing the chapter of Russia's modern history associated with political protests in Bolotnaya Square and Sakharov Avenue. The authorities received a free hand in using the mobilization model of development although there is no confidence that Russian society, when faced with the hardships of the "Russian world" mission, will stay as monolithic as it was during the Crimean euphoria. At the same time, there formed a strong public demand for all-round support to millions of ethnic Russians and Russian-speaking people outside the country, about which Putin spoke in his Crimean speech. The need to live up to this demand is becoming a factor that may not yet be determining the Russian foreign policy but that is certainly outlining the limits for compromises with Ukraine. This demand for solidarity with the "Russian world" may give rise to new forces and figures that can change the Russian political landscape in the future.

At the same time, for some political and economic elites in Russia the return of Crimea became some sort of "white elephant" and they had nothing else to do but join the "Crimea is ours" jubilation, while carefully

hiding their confusion and concerns about their own future. As the March celebrations marking the reunification with Crimea and Sevastopol subsided and as the West started imposing sanctions, hidden pressure from these elites increased and evidently affected the Kremlin's readiness to provide direct support to the militia in Donbas.

Putin's crucial role in the Ukrainian events and the related disintegration of the world order clearly added an edge to personal competition among world leaders. This appears to be especially intriguing in the case of U.S. President Barack Obama who is not particularly inclined toward excessive personification in state affairs and world politics. But this should rather be "credited" to the president's conservative opponents in America who kept talking about "a strong Putin" and "a weak Obama". The understanding by Western partners of the specifics of the political decision-making process in Russia is even more significant. Putin's *vertical of power*, which he was preparing for confrontation with the West over the past several years (the so-called nationalization of elites) proved quite efficient during the Crimean phase of the Ukrainian crisis. But the Russian personalized regime has its structural weaknesses which however are made up for by tight control exercised by the leader. The weakening of his positions would jeopardize the system of power as a whole. In this context, the Western sanctions directed against Putin's closest aides are not as symbolic as they may seem to be.

There is no doubt that in the foreseeable future Putin will have the final say in shaping up Russia's Ukraine policy. But now he will have to take into account not only the Western pressure and controversial signals from the Russian elites but also the growing irredentist attitudes.

Venus and Mars Team Up in Ukraine

Robert Kagan's well-known metaphor which likened the belligerent United States to Mars and effeminate Europe to Venus¹ is

¹ Kagan R. *Of Paradise and Power. America and Europe in the New World Order.* – New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.

well applicable to the Ukrainian crisis. The European Union and its Eastern Partnership policy made a major contribution to the escalation of the crisis by having embarked for the first time on the hitherto unexplored path of geopolitical competition. But no European strategy for the post-Soviet region, which would combine the interests of EU countries, had essentially been stated. Instead, the European bureaucracy chose to tread the well-beaten path, preferring to entrust the task of charting the political course to a group of countries that claimed to have special experience and knowledge of the region. This move was justified when the leading role in determining the European policy for the southern and eastern Mediterranean was played by France with its colonial experience and broad ties with countries in the region, with no other powerful geopolitical player standing behind them. On the contrary, the Eastern Partnership policy, conceived by its major advocates as a way to force Russia's influence out of the western part of the post-Soviet area, inevitably drew the European Union into geopolitical competition. As a result, no alternative version proposing long-term economic integration of the EU, Russia and other post-Soviet countries from the Baltics to the Black Sea, rejecting the zero-sum game logic and shifting the focus to a mutually beneficial strategy was seriously considered even by experts.

Raised stakes in the geopolitical standoff often caused confusion in the EU structures responsible for a common foreign policy. With Victor Yanukovich refusing to sign the Association and Comprehensive Free Trade Area Agreement with the EU, with the compromise reached on February 21 with the mediation of the foreign ministers of Germany, France and Poland not holding even a day amid the revolution and with the United States insisting on sectoral sanctions against Russia, the effectiveness of a common European foreign policy dropped to a level that was close to paralysis. In those circumstances, self-assured Mars hurried to disconcerted Venus' rescue.

With the start of the second Maidan, the United States became the main opponent of Russia, as it saw the Ukrainian crisis not only as a threat to European stability but also as an opportunity to breathe a new life into its own withering global leadership. Up until Russia's incorporation of Crimea, the United States was solving mainly regional tasks, making up for European diplomacy's weaknesses over and above

(its figurative assessment by Robert Kagan's wife and Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland made quite an uproar¹). The reestablishment of Russia's control over Crimea immediately added a global dimension to the crisis as Moscow's move indicated a transition from the erosion of the post-bipolar world to its purposeful revision.

Russia's sovereignty over Crimea is of exceptional value as a precedent signifying its refusal to adhere to the world order where rules are set by the United States. Although the Crimean challenge is not big in scale and poses no threat to America's positions in the world, the very possibility of unauthorized territorial changes is a factor that gauges Washington's ability to maintain the order where it has the final say.

From this point of view, active U.S. moves to mobilize allies for deterring Putin's Russia appear to be quite predictable. What is important in this case is not deterrence as such but mobilization which lends a new meaning to the U.S.-led military-political alliances. The European Union has to agree to further American military presence in Europe and, above all, to the creation of significant military infrastructure in countries that once were members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. The division of Europe into "old" and "new" proposed by then-U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld a decade ago came to its logical conclusion during the Ukrainian crisis: with the active U.S. support "a new" Europe's positions on energy and military security issues have become so strong that "the old" Europe's major powers have to follow it, at least declaratorily. As regards Russia, "the new" Europe is turning into a *cordon sanitaire* that can be reinforced with Ukraine (at least its central and western regions) and Moldova (except for Transnistria and presumably Gagauzia). However, the configuration of "the new" Europe can differ substantially from the one that existed ten years ago. Poland, the Baltic countries and Romania are ready to join the *cordon sanitaire*, but Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic are showing much less enthusiasm for different reasons. Nevertheless, in tandem with "the new" Europe, Washington can effectively control both security policy in the whole of the European Union and its efforts to resume dialogue with Russia.

¹ Ukraine Crisis: Transcript of Leaked Nuland-Pyatt Call // BBC. – 2014. – February 7. – Mode of access: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26079957>

It seems that the Obama administration will try to use tensions around Ukraine in order to solve a more ambitious task of coming as soon as possible to agreement with the EU on the creation of a trans-Atlantic trade and investment partnership. The emergence of such a large economic bloc will signify the creation of a new pillar to shore up the shaken U.S.-centered world order. The United States is also stepping up the creation of a similar grouping in the Asia-Pacific region as a competitor of the “Chinese dragon”.

The purpose of regional and global stratagems used in the context of the Ukrainian crisis is far from building a decent future for people in different regions of Ukraine. This country just has had bad luck to be an arena of the first in a series of battles for the future world order. And the Ukrainians will be on the losing end of it regardless of the outcome.

Inevitable Turn to the East

Having decided to lead the way in revising the world order, Russia has taken the main blows from the United States and its allies. Such revision can potentially benefit a large number of global and regional actors that have been watching with sincere interest the standoff between Russia and the West, with China being the major beneficiary among them on the way to open confrontation with the United States in the fight for global leadership. The Ukrainian crisis will give China a break (possibly for several years) and allow it to retain its potential for pushing America off the podium as the number one economy, while avoiding direct confrontation with it. But there is more to this for Beijing than that.

A new round of Russian-Chinese integration was expected by many experts since the day when Vladimir Putin made the decision to return to the Kremlin as president for a third term. Many analysts warned that overly zealous attempts “to catch the Chinese wind” in the Russian sails would seriously complicate relations with the United States and the European Union. A strong lean toward China limits Russia’s ability to maneuver among key global actors. However, Putin’s Crimean choice made the use of the previous model of

partnership with the United States and the European Union impossible and necessitated new steps toward China.

With the Ukrainian crisis at its peak, Moscow undoubtedly hoped to get China's strong support. And its expectations came true. While refraining from expressing solidarity with Russia's actions, Beijing nonetheless helped to avert its international isolation and largely alleviated the effects of Western sanctions. The signing of a \$400 billion gas contract showed that the Chinese leaders were considering relations with Russia from a long-term strategic perspective. Beijing had secured preferential terms of gas supplies but did not "put the squeeze" on embattled Moscow and gave it a trump card to conduct a firm energy dialogue with the European Union. As a result, Russian-Chinese cooperation is entering a phase where, while remaining neighbors and strategic partners *de jure*, they are beginning to gravitate toward the logic of allied relations *de facto*. And yet this cooperation is not quite equal as it is and it's likely to stay that way in the future.

The sanctions imposed by the West upon Russia create good conditions for cumulative growth of Chinese investments in the Russian economy. It seems that Moscow will have to lift most of the restrictions on Chinese investors' access to Russian assets, which were put in place for security reasons or for equalizing bilateral economic relations. If this happens, prospects for the Eurasian Economic Union to be created from January 1, 2015 will also look differently. This Russia-led integration project may as well be combined with the New Silk Road initiative put forth by Chinese President Xi Jinping. Such synergy will facilitate ambitious infrastructure projects that can substantially simplify Chinese producers' access to markets not only in the Eurasian Union but also in Europe. In a more distant future, sectoral alliances based on China's enormous economic potential can be created in North Eurasia. This would become an impressive antithesis to the idealistic notion of common economic space "from Lisbon to Vladivostok", the discussion of which never developed into anything substantive before the Ukrainian crisis and the subsequent acute geopolitical confrontation.

In its new paradigm of cooperation Russia will have to prove that it can provide a reliable rear for China and thus prevent U.S.-oriented countries from closing in on it. It seems that Russia will even have to change some of the emphases when assessing the mounting tensions in

the South China Sea: while last year Moscow showed cautious cordiality for Hanoi, now it will most likely have to demonstrate its complete impartiality or understanding for China's arguments. Likewise, it will be extremely difficult to keep the balance within the Moscow-Tokyo-Beijing triangle even despite the demonstrative reluctance with which the Shinzo Abe government joined in the anti-Russian sanctions initiated by Barack Obama.

On a global scale, the new quality of Russian-Chinese cooperation is likely to lead to systematic, albeit cautious, bilateral steps to dampen the global domination of Washington Consensus institutions and practices. The gradual replacement of the U.S. dollar in trade among SCO and BRICS countries, the development and mutual recognition of their national payment systems, the establishment by the BRICS countries of their own Development Bank, and the creation by Russia and China of an international rating agency as a counterbalance to the big three – Moody's, Fitch and Standard & Poor's – can become the first signs of global economic restructuring, and Russia may have to bear the brunt of initial costs incurred by this transition. But one should not entertain any illusions: there can be an alternative to the Washington Consensus, but it will be a Beijing Consensus. And yet, in the long term Russia and other countries that decide to go ahead with these changes will benefit from the very idea of competition between the centers of economic power, international financial institutions and macroeconomic models.

Russia's post-Crimean turn to China may have a rather unexpected result with equally significant consequences, namely, "nationalization" of the Internet. Apart from the similarity of the two countries' positions on the role of ICANN and the management of the Internet, Russia's determination to create its own analogue of the Great Firewall can be a kind of revenge of the Westphalian order in the World Wide Web. The well-known principle *cuius regio eius religio* ("Whose realm, his religion") may be restated in the second decade of the 21st century as "Whose server, his Internet."

The Ukrainian crisis made Russia's turn toward China unavoidable. But did it make it irreversible? Charles Krauthammer, who said that Putin had repeated the famous Nixon-Kissinger maneuver in Shanghai and that a similar geopolitical combination was now

directed against the United States¹, might as well have been right. According to Krauthammer, enhanced partnership between Russia and China “marks the first emergence of a global coalition against American hegemony since the fall of the Berlin wall”. Obviously, this coalition will exist until it fulfills at least some of its missions. Apparently, only the understanding that the loss of dominant positions is inevitable can make a future American administration take effort toward restoring relations with Moscow by recognizing, in whatever form, Russia’s interests in both Ukraine and the whole of the post-Soviet area. The problem is that this may happen too late when Russia becomes heavily dependent on the economic power of China. Besides, as the policy of reset showed, it’s hard for the U.S. leaders to make truly attractive offers to Moscow even if this is necessitated by American interests. Nevertheless, the determination to stay in the vanguard of efforts for revisiting the world order, while leaning on nearly allied relations with China, should not mean that Russia will inevitably give up the search for a new model to keep the balance of power both globally and in the Asia-Pacific region in particular.

Ukrainian Prospects: Finland? Bosnia? Transnistria?

Although the general outlines of a settlement that could have resolved the geopolitical confrontation or at least reduced its degree to a level acceptable to the majority of the parties involved became obvious nearly on the following day after Yanukovich’s flight, none of the key actors in the Ukrainian drama has so far dared state his readiness to make such a compromise. This compromise can well be described by the term “Finlandization”, which Zbigniew Brzezinski proposed as the best solution shortly after the start of the crisis² and Henry Kissinger

¹ Krauthammer C. Who Made the Pivot to Asia? Putin // The Washington Post. – 2014. – May 22. – Mode of access: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/charles-krauthammer-who-made-the-pivot-to-asia-putin/2014/05/22/091a48ee-e1e3-11e3-9743-bb9b59cde7b9_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.71bde7808cc0

² Brzezinski Z. Russia Needs a “Finland Option” for Ukraine // The Financial Times. – 2014. –February 23. – Mode of access: <https://www.ft.com/content/e855408c-9bf6-11e3-afe3-00144feab7de>

prior to Crimea's accession to Russia¹. "Finlandization", as they interpreted it, would have meant respectful good-neighborly relations, Ukraine's non-participation in military alliances and active development of economic cooperation with both the European Union and Russia. Russia was supposed to recognize the changes and give up all claims on any part of Ukraine's territory and attempts to destabilize the new government in Kiev. As an additional bonus to Moscow they proposed large-scale cooperation with the EU.

In principle, "Finlandization" of Ukraine is what could have happened if the European leaders had not insisted on unconditional signing by Ukraine of the Association and Comprehensive Free Trade Area Agreement in Vilnius but would have heeded Moscow's call to find a mutually acceptable solution in trilateral talks. In this case Russia would not have felt isolated due to the neighboring country's joining an alternative integration project, and Ukraine, making full use of the benefits offered by exclusive relations with Russia, would have kept drifting toward the European Union but slower. One way or another, "Finlandization" means that Ukraine will gradually break away from the "Russian World".

Immediately after the triumph of the Euromaidan, "Finlandization" appeared to be a less attractive option for both Yanukovich's opponents who had come to power and for the Kremlin. For the former, the very possibility of recognizing Moscow's certain special interest in Ukraine, even partially, was unacceptable and contrary to the revolutionary mandate. For the Kremlin, "Finlandization" would have meant that it had to admit another *fait accompli* and accept not only the need to work with a new unfriendly government but also the forcible change of the extremely corrupt, although legitimate, regime.

Russia's solution to the crisis in Ukraine provided for the latter's non-bloc status, federalization and constitutional guarantees for the use of the Russian language. Objectively, federalization does not run counter to the liberal and democratic development of Ukraine (i.e. the ideals declared by the Euromaidan). Moreover, it facilitates it through

¹ Kissinger H. To Settle the Ukraine Crisis, Start at the End // The Washington Post. – 2014. – March 5. – Mode of access: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/henry-kissinger-to-settle-the-ukraine-crisis-start-at-the-end/2014/03/05/46dad868-a496-11e3-8466-d34c451760b9_story.html?utm_term=.a0d69b164f70

interaction between the central authorities and regions. However, federalization raises a barrier against ethnic nationalism by encouraging constitutional guarantees for the rights and balanced interests of different territorial communities, ethnic and language groups. And this is clearly at odds with the radical nationalistic principles that dominated the Euromaidan program before the dismantlement of the Yanukovich regime.

The transformation of Ukraine into a federative state where regions can influence decisions on accession to economic associations or military-political alliances could provide an additional constitutional guarantee of its non-bloc status. Such radical redistribution of powers between Kiev and Ukrainian regions is essentially compatible with “Finlandization” but means that external actors would be able to realize their interests not only by working with the central authorities but also by influencing regional political and economic elites.

Crimea’s accession to Russia and the adamant refusal by Kiev and the West to recognize the legitimacy of this move led Ukraine to a situation similar to that Georgia has been in since 2008 as a country with an unresolved territorial dispute with its neighbor. Membership in NATO becomes a hypothetical possibility for such a country. And in this respect, constitutional guarantees of its non-bloc status would turn into an architectural extravagance, into some sort of superstructure above the harsh reality of the state where a revolutionary coup has created a vacuum of legitimate power and the risk of losing territorial integrity. But at the same time, such a formally non-bloc country, if it stays as a unitary state, will be able to consolidate itself through radical rejection of all things associated with Moscow. While in the first 23 years of its independent existence the country was falteringly developing under the “Ukraine is not Russia” motto, now its slogan will change to “Ukraine is anti-Russia”. If anti-Russianness becomes a nation-building idea, even federalization will most likely be unable to make much change there. It may at best enfeeble or slow it down.

The inevitability of long-term Russian-Ukrainian resentment and the real risk of secession of several south-eastern regions from Ukraine necessitate the search for a new formula of compromises modeled not on Cold War-era Finland but on the Bosnia and Herzegovina experience after the Dayton Agreement of 1995. Like Bosnia, Ukraine

could use the mechanism of confederation in order to extinguish the conflict by minimizing the powers of the central authorities and giving broad autonomy to regions, including in relations with the neighboring states. However, under the Dayton Agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina's entities may not secede from it even though they are connected much more loosely with each other than one of them is with Serbia and the other with Croatia. The advantage of the Dayton model for Moscow could be that by giving a special status to Donbas and legalizing its pro-Russian positioning (this may apply to other regions in the south-east of Ukraine as well), it will dramatically limit a "Bosnianized" Ukraine's legal capacity as an international actor. Practically all efforts of the Ukrainian state, stabilized by the Dayton model, will be directed toward maintaining internal balance between its regions. At the same time, the use of the Dayton formula in Ukraine may not only give it relevant internal stability but in the medium term can also create better conditions for economic growth than a unidirectional commitment to the European Union.

However, one should not forget that the Dayton peace deal was made by the parties to the Bosnian conflict under unprecedented pressure from the United States which, together with its NATO allies, used such an argument, among others, as bombings (Operation Deliberate Force). At the time when this article was being written, Russia had not used such arguments. It is also obvious that Moscow alone will not be able to convince Kiev to accept the Dayton model without cooperation from the United States and the European Union. It would be much easier for the weak Kiev authorities (which still remain weak after the election of Petro Poroshenko as president) to continue the ineffective army operation against the rebels in Donbas than to recognize their representatives as a full-fledged party to the talks. If the talks proceed in the absence of one of the sides and if compromises are based on behind-the-scene agreements between the great powers, the consensus reached there may be revisited at the first opportunity. However the sustainability of the Dayton Agreement was based on thorough preparation of all of its terms and conditions, which left almost no room for free interpretation (the undecided status of the strategic District of Brko was for a long time the only serious exception).

Today the Dayton deal seems to be the best solution. However, Moscow can hardly succeed in persuading Kiev and the West to accept it under the present circumstances. As a minimum, the positions of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk Republics should be just as strong as were the positions of the Bosnian Serbs before the Dayton talks. Unfortunately, the Dayton option can hardly be implemented without resolving the Transnistrian issue first. But that is a matter of the price Moscow can and is prepared to pay for the “Transnistrianization” of Donbas, including the price of new sanctions. However, what makes President Putin’s upcoming choice so dramatic is that a rejection of the Transnistrian scenario will also have a significant political, economic and symbolic price.

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This article was contributed to *Russia in Global Affairs* during a brief relaxation of tensions following the inauguration of the new president of Ukraine and the talks between the key parties to the conflict which were held during the celebrations in Normandy. The intensification of international contacts and specifically the meeting between Vladimir Putin and Petro Poroshenko suggest that the crisis is becoming too heavy a burden for everyone. The election of oligarch Poroshenko as the new president of Ukraine three months after the revolution, which was not only nationalistic but also anti-oligarchic in nature, indicates that most people are tired of both the revolution and the confrontation that is tearing their country apart. However, this does not mean that Poroshenko has been given a mandate for a settlement that would be acceptable to both Russia and the Donbas rebels. Poroshenko’s power is not cemented; he has no strong support in the present Verkhovna Rada and no constitutional powers to appoint key members of the government. So the former “chocolate king” will focus on strengthening his positions in the political arena by holding early parliamentary elections. And yet, there is a long way to go before the DPR and LPR forces can be declared defeated. However, any serious compromise between the new president of Ukraine and the separatist movements in Donbas would pave the way to a third Maidan and a new

round of destabilization. The crisis has not yet run out of steam and its temporary lessening may once again be followed by new flare-ups.

The Ukrainian crisis has already had a strong impact on Russia's internal policy. The refreshed (Crimean) legitimacy of Vladimir Putin's third term can be used for implementing a mobilization scenario, which will be prompted by the Western sanctions that have already been imposed and those that are still under discussion. The revival of the American attempts to push Russia away will not only force the Kremlin to change its methods of economic management but will also accelerate the renovation of Russian elites and lead to further curtailment of civil society freedoms. Modernization in partnership with the West has lost its relevance for many years to come, leaving mobilization in partnership with China as the only viable option.

Restoration of Russia's cooperation with the West and primarily with EU countries would depend on stabilization, at least partial, in Ukraine. But the nature of relations will change dramatically anyway. The EU policy with regard to Moscow, which was based on the expectations that sooner or later Russia would follow Central and Eastern European countries along the road of democratic transition, has come to a dead-end. A new policy should be based on a new perception similar to Europe's perception of China. Such a turn would help to pragmatize and instrumentalize relations between Russia and the European Union. Discussions on values and civilizational closeness should be suspended for a while. Instead, priority could be given to the creation of an effective multilateral mechanism for preventing and settling crises in Europe and North Eurasia. Such a mechanism will prove very useful as the post-bipolar world order continues to be revisited. The Ukrainian crisis is just ushering in a series of conflicts amid which a polycentric system of international relations will form.

THE BIRTH OF A GREATER EURASIA. How the Post-Cold War Era Ends¹ (2017)

Nearly twenty-five years separate two symbolic coincidences, each of which caused tectonic shifts in world politics. On December 8, 1991, a treaty signed in Belovezhye, Belarus, put an end to the Soviet Union; the following day the leaders of twelve Western European countries approved the Maastricht Treaty. On June 23, 2016, a majority of voters in the United Kingdom chose to leave the European Union. Around the same time India and Pakistan signed memorandums in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, to join the conventions of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, thus bringing its membership to almost a half of the world's population.

But one must not simplify things. Brexit does not mean Europe's decline. And yet it would be wrong to underestimate the importance of the changes presaging the rise of a Greater Eurasia.

Greater Eurasia: Long-Term Strategies and Self-Organization

When I speak about Greater Eurasia, I mean the fundamental process of geopolitical and geoeconomic changes in Eurasia and the adjacent regions of Africa (or maybe even Africa as a whole). This article does not consider Greater Eurasia solely as a synonym to the

¹ Source: Yefremenko D. The Birth of a Greater Eurasia. How the Post-Cold War Era Ends // Russia in Global Affairs. – 2017. – Vol. 15, N 1. – P. 150–164.

Russian-Chinese strategic partnership, which attracts or may attract other countries. Greater Eurasia cannot be reduced to the notion of a heartland and the spatial factor cannot be the only determinant in ongoing changes. Certainly space is important, but in order to grasp the essence of current events one should consider history, multiple ways of global development, and alternatives to the processes, of which until recently there seemed to be none. Today some tendencies that surfaced in the 1990s and 2000s are gaining momentum, while certain aspects of globalization associated with the triumph of the post-bipolar world order are withering away.

One of the key conditions for the emergence of a Greater Eurasia is the strengthening of semi-peripheral and peripheral countries that have been sailing with the fair wind of globalization and catching up with developed countries. Within a short period of time in modern history when globalization seemed to be offering benefits to all, a number of non-Western states sought international legal personality (independence of action on the international stage) – from countries producing raw materials to those claiming to have taken a leap into a post-industrial era. But as we all know, this *Belle Époque* ended abruptly in 2008.

The crisis of 2008 clearly showed that globalization – understood as the global triumph of the liberal politico-economic model – was faltering. All of a sudden it turned out that in order to retain its dominance, the West needed to reverse many of the processes it had launched previously. In fact, China was very successful in dealing with the hardships of the crisis; not only did it consolidate its status as the world’s number two economy, but it also announced its global ambitions. China did so after it had extracted everything it could from its export-oriented growth strategy. The shift in economic policy coincided with the ascent of a new generation of leaders like Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang. Their names are now associated with reorienting the Chinese economy to domestic demand, structural reforms, correcting disproportions, and stimulating innovative activities.

Xi’s strategic initiative “One Belt, One Road” is unparalleled in scale and outreach. For the first time since the voyages of Vasco da Gama, a country is trying to build economic ties from East to West.

China's attempts to project its economic power and create a dense network of communication, economic, and trade ties between major Eurasian markets is often construed as a sign of self-interest aimed at tapping the potential of both neighboring and distant countries for the sake of its own development. Naturally China will not take steps that could harm its interests, but the Chinese culture of political administration committed to long-term strategic planning goes further and seeks to create favorable conditions for the prosperity of the country. The stability and wellbeing of the countries willing to service Chinese interests are requisite for that.

The "One Belt, One Road" initiative will usher in a new kind of competition between countries contending for Chinese investments and loans, and those that want to host transport infrastructure to secure the unity of a Greater Eurasia. But what is even more important is that the process China has launched is acquiring its own inner logic, and other countries are doubling their efforts to build their own logistic chains.

A clear example is accelerated work to create a North-South transport corridor that will link Russia with Iran, and eventually with India via Azerbaijan. The project has engendered a trilateral strategic partnership between Russia, Iran, and Azerbaijan. In fact, Pan-Eurasian transport projects increase competition among corporate players. For example, investors from the German Initiative consortium offer financial support for the construction of a high-speed railway from Moscow to Kazan (a section of the future transcontinental railroad between the capitals of China and Russia) as an alternative to Chinese funding. Desiring to keep China from seizing the initiative completely, the Japanese government has come forward with a new approach to the territorial dispute with Russia, offering broader cooperation to develop energy and transport infrastructure in the Russian Far East.

The development of Greater Eurasia is beginning to look like a process of self-organization. Premises for such development emerged a long time ago, but there were no proper conditions until now. However, some factors have had a negative or destabilizing effect, preventing Greater Eurasia from becoming an independent key subsystem in the emerging new world order.

Greater Eurasia vs. Oceania?

One such factor is the U.S. policy of containment along the gigantic external perimeter of China and Russia. Whether intentionally or not, by pushing NATO towards Russia's western border and reinforcing military alliances in the Pacific, the U.S. is bringing Russia and China closer together in how they see U.S. strategic goals; thus encouraging closer military-political coordination between them. However, many countries along the lines of confrontation find themselves in a difficult situation because a more active role in building Greater Eurasia could serve their national interests much better. Yet they have to match, and more and more often subordinate, their aspirations to U.S. military-strategic interests.

One example is South Korea, which has agreed to host a THAAD antimissile system. According to official statements made by the U.S. and South Korea, the system will be deployed as a response to the nuclear threat from North Korea. However, South Korea will have no control over the system's infrastructure and U.S. commanders will make all the decisions. The deployment of such a system on the Korean Peninsula will make it possible for the U.S. to degrade the effectiveness of nuclear missile capabilities in China and, to a much lesser extent, in Russia. It is not surprising that initial reactions from Russia and China were quite painful. South Korea has become engaged in the strategy of containment with regard to China and Russia, even though its long-term interests could best be served by making maximum use of the opportunities Greater Eurasia can offer. South Korea will have to embark on a long search for a median line between preserving its security alliance with the U.S. and tapping the potential of transcontinental cooperation and division of labor.

If the U.S. continues its confrontation with China and Russia under Trump, there will most likely be new attempts to crank up social and ethnic tensions in countries that are important to Russia or China. The biggest bet will once again be placed on global trade and U.S. attempts to retain its dominance after the failure of the globalization model in 2008. The trend towards liberalization in global trade has given way to a new generation of trade and economic groupings, the creation of which is necessitated not only by market sensibility, but also

by geostrategic interests. NATO and different U.S.-led formats of military-political interaction in the Asia-Pacific region can be viewed as some sort of power “bonds” in the zone of American economic dominance. If U.S. strategy is fully realized, George Orwell’s Oceania will become a reality, at least in terms of control over vast territories from one center.

But one must not oversimplify the situation. Presenting the future system of international relations as a binary opposition between *heartland* and *rimland*, as a space of democracy and a space of autocracy, would be no more than an artificial framework used to solve specific tasks. Yet such a system would hardly be capable of factoring in all the complexity and diversity of relations between different actors in the changing world order. A truncated perception like this would only intensify centripetal tendencies and strengthen the forces that benefit from new dividing lines and exaggerated contradictions. The danger lies not only in distortion per se, but also in the fact that, as the Thomas theorem suggests, the perception of such a picture of the world as real will have real consequences.

Confrontation between the U.S., on the one hand, and China and Russia, on the other, is already a fact of life, but hard power and economic power will gradually lose their relevance, and the two largest Eurasian powers will try to avoid forming a military-political alliance. However, competition in interpreting reality, defining meanings, and translating values will play an increasingly growing role. While only recently the West’s dominance in these fields looked absolute, now it has become clear that in discussions on meanings and values the roles of the teacher and the student, the leader and the straggler, are no longer definitely assigned to certain nations and socio-political models.

Eurasia’s Western Peninsula

Discussions on the mixture of changes facilitating the emergence and development of Greater Eurasia inevitably raise questions about Europe’s role in this new reality. If Greater Eurasia is considered within the geostrategic context of Chinese leaders, then it is easy to see that

the “One Belt, One Road” initiative is designed to build multiple links with Europe.

Brexit has made it obvious to everyone (even European integration enthusiasts) that the European Union and Europe are not the same thing. One may assume that even before its official exit from the European Union, Great Britain will participate in multilateral talks on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership as a party in its own right. Great Britain may gain more maneuvering room for some time and diversify its policy, finding space for Greater Eurasia as well. As it leaves united Europe, Great Britain will try to secure the most advantageous position for itself in the world economy.

Once Great Britain is out, the EU will quickly limit its enlargement. Overstrain will erect hurdles on the way of enlargement into the post-Soviet space. There is no guarantee that other countries will not want to follow the British example.

Although Germany will dominate Europe after Brexit, this does not mean that the European leader can impose its own scenario of deeper integration on the other 26 member states. It is more likely that the EU will regroup and reevaluate integration processes to return to the Europe of nation states. The level of foreign-policy coordination will change and a new space will emerge for differentiated interaction between countries and external actors. The EU will become more porous and more flexible in establishing numerous and multilevel contacts and ties with state and non-state actors in a Greater Eurasia. For example, one can imagine the European Union, the U.S., Canada, and Great Britain establishing a common free trade regime (TTIP) and sharing military-political obligations (NATO), but at the same time becoming increasingly engaged in different forms of interaction with Greater Eurasia at the micro- and meso-levels.

The Reverse Side of Eurasia

The most dissimilar factors have begun to act synergistically, strengthening mutual transcontinental bonds, even though in many instances this can have a negative effect and produce high risks and political turbulence.

We can see processes intensifying that thousands of years ago made people in European centers of civilization realize that their prosperous towns and provinces were no more than the fringes of a gigantic oecumene and that outlanders could come pouring in at any moment. In today's Europe problems related to migration and co-existence of the local population and migrants from Asia and Africa date back to colonial times and are rooted in a decades-long liberal immigration policy. It was a truly dramatic moment when it became clear that migrants from Muslim-majority countries do not fully integrate into the new society, but form enclaves with an alien culture instead of a cohesive community. Migrant communities in European countries keep their own religious and cultural identity, and in some instances their ties with the home countries are much stronger than those with the host ones. The information and communications revolution has made many migrant communities more resistant to attempts to integrate them into the new environment and makes it possible for them not only to communicate with their faraway relatives and friends, but also remain tightly attached to their sociocultural realities. When such enclaves grow into a dense network of no-go zones to the native population (there are about 800 such areas in France alone), multiculturalism becomes impossible.

The failure of multiculturalism and ethno-demographic dynamics in EU countries irreversibly tie Europe to the Muslim part of Greater Eurasia. However Western political elites have succeeded quite well in unleashing the destabilizing potential that has accumulated in Middle Eastern countries. All obstacles to the growth of radical Islamism were consistently removed – from the overthrow of Saddam Hussein to support for the Arab Spring – sending a large region adjacent to Europe into chaos. Terrorist acts in Europe and the biggest migration crisis since World War II clearly showed that the turbulence in the Arab world was beginning to spread into prosperous Europe, changing its understanding of domestic security and messing up its customary electoral patterns. These were followed by events that accelerated the transformation of geopolitical reality in the Eastern Mediterranean and Eastern Europe.

In 2015–2016, two of the three countries situated both in Asia and Europe took steps that confused the West. For all the difference in

their goals, both Russia and Turkey sought to show that they held the key to the Syrian conflict, or at least could regulate instability caused by the destruction of statehood in Syria and Iraq. In fact, the participation of Russia and Turkey in the Syrian conflict prompted EU countries to become immersed in the Eurasian context.

By becoming involved in the Syrian conflict on the side of Bashar al-Assad, Russia showed that it could not only act effectively on several theaters at the same time, but could also tie together all conflicts that European countries considered isolated. Although the Kremlin's Syrian gambit did not lead to a primitive "Levant for Donbass" swap (which was never the point), it helped erode the anti-Russian orthodoxy and revealed the real price of the sanctions. Now the West has to accept Russia as a key partner in dealing with the threats posed by Islamic fundamentalism and the destabilization of Middle Eastern countries.

The objective reason for Turkey's involvement in the Syrian conflict is security problems, Kurdish separatism, and threats to vital national interests. But these factors were magnified immensely by President Erdogan's neo-Ottoman ambitions. The situation was further compounded by the internal political confrontation, which culminated in a coup attempt in July 2016. The Turkish leader's maneuvering during the Syrian conflict was especially risky. Erdogan readily raised the stakes, but only to achieve temporary success, after which Turkey's position became even worse. At a critical moment during the migration crisis, Erdogan essentially tried to dictate his conditions to Brussels and Berlin, taking advantage of a position that allowed Turkey to regulate the intensity and scale of refugee flows. Baffled European bureaucrats and EU leaders made a deal with Turkey, which Amnesty International described as "a dark day for the Refugee Convention, a dark day for Europe and a dark day for humanity." Turkey had obviously overdone it, and its apparent rapport with Brussels quickly turned into mutual frustration and estrangement. And that meant almost total political isolation, given the tense Turkish-U.S. relations, a breakup with Israel, rivalry with Iran, and confrontation with Russia.

Relations between Russia and Turkey remained in deep crisis when the Turkish Air Force shot down a Russian Su-24 aircraft. The two countries were about to plunge into a long-term confrontation that

could have weakened both of them. The realization of this threat helped the two countries find ways to overcome their antagonism.

The revived partnership between Russia and Turkey can substantially influence the development of a Greater Eurasia and adjust ongoing geopolitical transformations. But there are certain restricting factors to take into account as well. These include remaining differences over Syria, Erdogan's growing personal power, and the overall internal tension caused by the rearrangement of the political landscape in Turkey after the failed coup attempt.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization as an Incubator

The SCO would be the best choice as an international organization capable of streamlining the emergence and development of Greater Eurasia. The admission of India and Pakistan to the SCO will most likely lead to qualitative changes in the Organization's mission and regional agenda. Rivalry between these two countries can block some initiatives and adversely affect decisions adopted by consensus. There is a risk that the current institutional format will not be able to cope with the strain of speedy enlargement and the creation of a new structure for larger membership and future tasks may drag on. Trying to implement less ambitious but more realistic scenarios could be a solution.

The SCO needs greater flexibility to increase its role as a platform for dialogue and regular interaction between states, the number of which keeps growing. But while doing so it will have to avoid the temptation of prematurely drafting universal documents, like the Helsinki Final Act of 1975; nor should the SCO turn into a forum for rhetorical exercises on transcontinental cooperation. While preserving the achievements made over its 15 years of existence, the SCO could act as an incubator for a wide range of agreements and initiatives, covering such issues as security, trade, environmental problems, and cultural, scientific and technical cooperation. It should move forward gradually. As it does so, the SCO will see a network of formalized ties, partners, and institutions emerging at the regional, interregional, and trans-regional levels, and eventually across Greater

Eurasia as whole. Only after all of these interim steps have been completed would it be reasonable to begin a substantive discussion about the formation of a community of Greater Eurasia.

A Minor Eurasia within a Greater Eurasia

Once a very promising integration project in the post-Soviet space, the development of the Eurasian Economic Union has not always been progressive. One reason is Russia's natural dominance, resulting in a high degree of dependence by other EEU members on the state of the Russian economy. The crisis of Russia's economic model coupled with Western sanctions and falling oil prices has caused its EEU partners to sustain serious economic losses. Attempts by Belarus and Kazakhstan to minimize those costs (or, whenever possible, reap benefits from U.S. and EU restrictions against Russia and its countermeasures) are as much egoistic as they are rational.

The idea of connecting the Eurasian economic integration process with China's Silk Road Economic Belt initiative was partly defensive and designed to ease the tension that would otherwise have developed inevitably amid unregulated competition between further efforts to develop the EEU and Chinese activity in the post-Soviet space. Having recognized China's role and declared the possibility of their coordinated participation in its projects, the EEU member states strengthened the positions of their association.

The EEU's further evolution has become increasingly influenced by the multidirectional policy of such countries as Kazakhstan and Belarus. The former is facing a period of uncertainty due to the unavoidable change of its leader and possible instability during the handover of power in the country. The terrorist attack in Aktobe in June 2016 badly damaged Kazakhstan's image as a haven of stability and order in Central Asia. Regardless of whether those events were a result of the struggle between elites or Islamic extremist activities, it is clear that the ongoing processes in Kazakhstan are a long-term problem which Russia will have to face.

Both the ruling circles and opponents of President Nazarbayev criticize Kazakh membership in the EEU and, in particular, its economic troubles (not all of them are related to Eurasian integration). Nazarbayev, however, does not use this criticism of Eurasian

integration institutions and mechanisms to weaken them, but rather to strengthen Kazakhstan's positions both in the EEU and outside it. Apparently, Nazarbayev's vision of a Greater Eurasia is not fully identical to that of Russia. He emphasizes securing the best possible positions for Kazakhstan in a new configuration that may be formed by China, the European Union, Russia, and the Islamic world as its key players. Nazarbayev's proposal put forth at the St. Petersburg Economic Forum to integrate the European and Eurasian Unions clearly bears this out. At first glance, the proposal takes the idea of a Greater Eurasia to its logical conclusion. But it is Kazakhstan that can benefit the most from the institutionalization of the dialogue between the EU and the EEU, without actually expecting the two projects to be really integrated. In fact, in the current situation (even after Brexit) one can hardly hope for anything more than Brussels' invitation to the EEU countries to accept EU norms and rules without being able to play any part in their development. The "integration of integration" scenario is no more than wishful thinking, premature implementation of such a plan may have dangerous consequences.

The Kazakh leadership's call for dovetailing the stalled Eurasian integration to European standards may be an attempt to overcome the discomfort of being in the EEU. But one cannot rule out that the Kazakh leadership may be hesitating between "improving" the EEU (for example, by pressing for a reduction in the list of exemptions from the free trade regime) and steps that may erode the project. The latter include Kazakhstan's decision to accept the WTO tariff policy, which differs from the common customs tariffs approved by all EEU states.

Kazakhstan has achieved many impressive results through economic cooperation with China as part of the Silk Road Economic Belt initiative. As of the beginning of 2016, Kazakhstan was ahead of Russia in terms of cooperation with China and was carrying out more than 50 joint industrial and logistic projects worth over \$24 billion. However, some of those projects will be futile without Russian participation, such as the Western Europe-Western China road, which ends precisely on the Russian-Kazakh border. But Kazakhstan is involved in the construction of routes bypassing Russia via the Caspian Sea and the South Caucasus. Kazakhstan is seeking to turn the country into a major transport and logistic hub, and this is where the interests of Russia and Kazakhstan

diverge. Nevertheless, if transport infrastructure is developed further, cooperation between China, Russia, and Kazakhstan appears to be very promising and may only strengthen the positions of the latter two if they pursue a policy coordinated within the EEU.

The EEU's institutional weaknesses have been discussed many times. The main mechanism for counterbalancing Russia's economic dominance in the EEU is the right to veto and the principle of equality in the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC). But this principle does not apply to the financial contributions member states make to this institution, the costs of which have increased exponentially over the past several years. The EEC has very limited possibilities as a supranational body and may not even make proposals for further development of cooperation within the EEU. It is not surprising, therefore, that the EEC plays an increasingly small role compared to national institutions even in Russia. The consensus trap seems to have closed, and the admission of Armenia and Kyrgyzstan to the EEU highlighted institutional efficiency problems. Changes in the decision-making mechanism (which will have to be made sooner or later) may cause a serious crisis in relations between EEU countries. To avoid that, the EEU should redefine its mission and the purpose of its institutions, turning them into a collective mechanism allowing member states to fit into the emerging network of ties within a Greater Eurasia in the best possible way.

A new mission of EEU institutions could develop a common position for all member states on issues concerning various integration initiatives, and trade and economic cooperation formats both in Eurasia and worldwide. The Silk Road Economic Belt initiative is a serious challenge to EEU countries. But if Russia succeeds in convincing its EEU partners to work out a common position on China's economic development strategy for Eurasia, then this will be a fundamental achievement. The stakes are so high that a revision of the EEU institutional model will be justified.

Some Conclusions Regarding Russia

China is sending a strong signal for the need to accelerate changes in Greater Eurasia. Russia has to respond to these transformations and

can influence them significantly. The problem is that regional and global contradictions are also growing and becoming increasingly complex, affecting not only security, economic, trade and financial spheres, but also information flows and virtual space. Russia may be one of those who will benefit from building a Greater Eurasia. At the same time, there is a danger of turning into the main magnet for risks and threats in this process.

Strategic partnership with China is becoming a key factor for Russia. Bilateral cooperation should not develop into an official military-political alliance directed against the U.S. or any other country, but China and Russia should act jointly to dismantle the U.S.-centric world order and build a fairer and safer system of international relations in Eurasia and the world. Russia will not be able to avoid recognizing China's leadership, but it can preserve equality and the freedom to maneuver in building strategic partnerships with third countries.

By developing strategic partnership or constructive dialogue with India, Vietnam, Iran, Israel, and Egypt, as well as (under certain conditions) with Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Japan, and South Korea, Russia will help make Greater Eurasia a more balanced system with several centers of power. Russia should not only seek to build a balance of power that will serve its own purposes, but it should also try to expand the circle of countries with which it can jointly solve tasks on the basis of trust and mutual interests.

Russia will also have to prepare its own institutions of influence in the post-Soviet space for integration into Greater Eurasia and, acting together with other allied states, make the EEU and the CSTO much more efficient and flexible. That is not an easy task. A lack of experience, insufficient expert support, and the inertia of previous relations will be a major hindrance. But there is no alternative to integrating the post-Soviet space into Greater Eurasia, and it is better to lead this process rather than fight it. If these efforts proceed in unison with development processes ensuring faster and better economic growth in third countries, then the risks will turn into mutual gains.

Naturally, Russia will remain a country of European culture. But there is no need to carve out a new window to Europe. Just recently, leading European countries scornfully dismissed the idea of a Greater Europe "from Lisbon to Vladivostok." Now Russia will have to join in

the efforts to open up the shortest way to Europe for Asian economic giants, but acting solely as a transit country will hardly be sufficient. Russia can come up with its own, quite impressive, proposals including not only routes and logistic centers, raw materials, food, military and industrial products, and space technology, but also security. This is necessary as a protection against the sources of instability that are threatening not only old Europe, but also Asian centers of global economic growth. Russia's contributions to the fight against Islamic terrorist networks and the liberation of parts of Syria and Iraq can be regarded as a kind of test for the role of sheriff in a Greater Eurasia. It would be reckless, of course, to claim such a role for itself alone. But if this burden is shared with other influential players in Greater Eurasia, the export of security can be quite profitable, both economically and politically.

As far as the European Union is concerned, Russia cannot do much more than show Europeans that some of the persistent problems that trouble Brussels can be solved within a Greater Eurasia. There is no need to try and reach universal agreements to regulate the entire range of relations between the EU and the majority of post-Soviet countries (EEU), let alone other parts of Greater Eurasia. The EU is at a crossroads and needs time to choose the right direction for its own transformation.

Russia has the necessary experience and possibilities to deal with the risks arising during the emergence and development of a Greater Eurasia. One of the keys to success is the optimum division of labor as part of the strategic partnership with China and other Asian and African countries, and eventually with leading European states. Another key is sustainable economic growth, political stability, modernization of public administration, and the effective operation of public institutions. The experience of China and other Asian countries will be very useful as a working model for economic development, but ultimately it is the joint efforts of the government and society that will secure a worthy place for Russia in Greater Eurasia and the world.

POLITICS OF MEMORY, KIEV STYLE.
Ukrainian Identity Strategies
in the Context of European Integration¹
(in co-authorship with A. Voronovich, 2017)

French philosopher and historian of religion Ernest Renan in his speech at the Sorbonne in 1882 defined a nation as follows: “A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle. One lies in the past, one in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form.”²

Undoubtedly, two components of a nation are closely interconnected, and the *political management* of the rich legacy of memory provides an important stimulus for life. Nowadays, such management is increasingly often described by the term ‘*politics of memory*.’ It can be considered as a functioning system of interactions and communications between different actors with regard to political uses of the past. In other words, the politics of memory is one of the key instruments for shaping macro-political identity of a community.

A complex system of interactions and communications occurring as part of the politics of memory cannot be reduced to a linear process

¹ Source: Voronovich A., Yefremenko D. The Birth of a Greater Eurasia. How the Post-Cold War Era Ends // Russia in Global Affairs. – 2017. – Vol. 15, N 4. – P. 184–197.

² Renan E. Qu'est-ce qu'une nation ? = What is a Nation? – Paris: Mille et une nuits, 1997. – P. 7.

of nation-building, using different practices of commemoration, the teaching of history or the presentation of historical events in the media. Things are much more complex as the parties involved often have opposite aspirations and may be driven not only by the idea of national consolidation but also by much more mundane objectives of strengthening a concrete sociopolitical order or, on the contrary, undermining it. External factors also play a role through a positive or negative attitude towards the macro-political identity of a community.

It must be said that the main driving force in a country's politics of memory is the interests, aspirations and actions of internal agents seeking to advance a certain interpretation of history. But at some point external actors may start playing a greater role if they can significantly influence the politics of memory in that country. More and more often politics of memory becomes the subject of interstate interaction, and supranational bodies (in the European Union in the first place) are beginning to work out their own policy on these issues.

Diverging Paths of European Politics of Memory

Issues concerning the politics of memory have often been discussed in the *Russia in Global Affairs* journal, particularly in the articles contributed by Alexei Miller and Olga Malinova¹. This discussion is likely to go on since the politics of memory in certain communities can be a factor of internal and international conflicts. The politics of memory can be used to incite conflicts or plan post-conflict settlement. Strictly speaking, in post-war Western Europe the politics of memory played a major role in assessing the tragic experience of World War II and Nazi crimes, and building a consolidating historical narrative on that basis.

German scholar Aleida Assmann showed convincingly that the Holocaust became the basic element of the European politics of

¹ Miller A. Memory Control // *Russia in Global Affairs*. – 2016. – Vol. 14, N 3. – P. 146–163; Malinova O.A Workable Past // *Russia in Global Affairs*. – 2017. – Vol. 15, N 3. – P. 162–180.

memory¹. It is based on the understanding of the Holocaust as the main European tragedy of the 20th century and on the recognition of all European nations' collective guilt and responsibility for that tragedy. The collective responsibility of Europeans stemmed from the understanding that the Holocaust was carried out by Nazi Germany and its collaborators but that it also involved the population of the occupied countries. The Holocaust became the binding thread for the European historical narrative in the twentieth century. The key role of the Holocaust in Europe's politics of memory was institutionalized in such bodies as the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, the World Holocaust Forum, and others. The Holocaust was gradually turning into a key element of the politics of memory in Western Europe in the 1970s-1980s and became an inalienable part of European commemorative practices in the early 2000s.

The recognition of the Holocaust as a central element of the European politics of memory coincided in time with the admission of many former socialist Central and Eastern European countries to the European Union. The commemoration of the Holocaust essentially became one of the main requirements for the new EU members to meet in order to prove that they belong to the "European family" and adhere to the "European values." However, this politics of memory vexed the political elites of Central and Eastern European countries. One of the reasons was that local actors, who had been linked to Nazi Germany and involved in the Holocaust, spearheaded anti-Soviet resistance after the war and are now loudly acclaimed as national heroes, especially in the Baltic States. Having become full members of the EU, these countries only superficially accepted the European policy of memory agenda focused on the Holocaust.

They started advancing their own politics of memory, which presented them as victims of Communism and, to a lesser extent, of Nazism. Aided and supported by some leading Western European politicians and intellectuals, the new members of united Europe have made great progress in this respect. By drifting away from the central

¹ Assmann A. *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit – Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik* = *The Long Shadow of the Past – Remembrance Culture and Historical Politics*. – Munich: C.H. Beck Publishers, 2006.

meaning of the European responsibility for the genocide of Jews and by emphasizing self-victimization and shifting responsibility to external totalitarian forces, they laid the foundation for new conflicts and even “memory wars.”

Declarations adopted by the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE in 2009 can be interpreted as a victory of the new edition of the politics of memory¹. Both resolutions mentioned the unique nature of the Holocaust and did not conspicuously equate Communism to Nazism, but a change of emphasis was already obvious.

We can speak of more long-term effects of this shift in the European politics of memory. The enlargement of the European Union in 2004 essentially ruined all hopes that a consensus on the past could become a factor facilitating its further consolidation. As Alexei Miller has rightfully observed, “the politics of memory, or in broader terms the culture of memory, is not the glue but the dissolvent which is eroding the EU’s unity.”² The disuniting role of the politics of memory could be ignored only until the European Union itself was regarded as a unique example of a successful integration project, but no more. Brexit has made a major realignment of forces in the EU inevitable, with “a Europe of different speeds” being the most likely scenario even though Jean-Claude Juncker and other European officials claim otherwise. This is where the politics of memory may become an effective instrument of divergence.

¹ European Parliament Resolution of 2 April 2009 on European Conscience and Totalitarianism // Official Journal of the European Union. – 2009. – 27.05. – Mode of access: <http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:137E:0025:027:EN:PDF>;

Resolution on Divided Europe Reunited: Promoting Human Rights and Civil Liberties in the OSCE Region in the 21st Century // Vilnius Declaration of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and Resolutions Adopted at the Eighteenth Annual Session. – Vilnius, 2009. – 29 June – 3 July. – Mode of access: <https://www.oscepa.org/documents/all-documents/annual-sessions/2009-vilnius/declaration-6/261-2009-vilnius-declaration-eng/file>

² Miller A. Politika pamyati v postkommunisticheskoj Evrope i ee vozdeistvie na evropeiskuyu kulturu pamyati = Politics of Memory in Post-Communist Europe and its Influence on European Memory Culture // Politeia. – 2016. – N 1. – P. 111–121.

But there is more to it. When extended to post-Soviet countries, all Central and Eastern European mechanisms of collective memory, which have taken over the European politics of memory, generate tension by conflicting with both the macro-political identity Russia is building and the identities dating back to Soviet times. The Ukraine crisis, especially the separation of Crimea and the proclamation of “people’s republics” in the east of Ukraine, cannot be understood without taking into account this clash of identities. The scenarios of further developments in the territories controlled by Kiev should also be considered in the context of this conflict of identities, which only seems to have been quashed.

Ukrainian Historical Narratives

There are two main historical narratives competing with each other in independent Ukraine. Academically, both are based on the interpretation of Ukraine’s history proposed by Mikhail Grushevsky and his followers. But modern interpretations are reversive, tend to adapt historical facts to the realities of post-Soviet Ukraine (“Ukrainization” of Kievan Rus’ history is only one of the examples), and emphasize Ukraine’s uniqueness even when it was part of the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union.

A more radical narrative can be described as nationalistic. It reflects the teleological movement of the Ukrainian people to its own statehood and is based on the glorification of persons who fought for its independence and development. It also emphasizes the status of the Ukrainian people as a victim of external forces, especially Russia and the Soviet Union. Naturally, this approach vilifies the Soviet period in the history of Ukraine and praises those who resisted it, with the glory of heroes bestowed upon OUN-UPA nationalists as anti-Soviet fighters for the Ukrainian state. However, their role in the Holocaust and anti-Polish campaigns is largely hushed up or even denied. It should be noted that this approach is actively supported by the Ukrainian diaspora which plays a significant role in Ukraine’s political history.

Its opponents also appeal to numerous elements of the national narrative, especially when it comes to the history of the country in the

20th century. They do not assess the Soviet period as negatively as their vis-à-vis do. For example, the Holodomor occupies an important place in their interpretation, but it is not portrayed as the genocide of the Ukrainian people. They also oppose radical nationalism and appeal to the nostalgia for the Soviet past among part of the population. Former President Leonid Kuchma's book with the eloquent title *Ukraine is not Russia*¹ conveys the quintessence of their approach.

Differences in the culture of memory undoubtedly have a regional dimension which remained even after 2014. But a simplified division into the west and the east should be replaced with a more nuanced political, geographical and sociocultural landscape.

“Ukraine is Europe” as the Leitmotif of the Politics of Memory

Different versions of Ukraine's politics of memory have always made, in different proportions and forms, attempts to distance the country from Russia and set it on the historically “destined” European path (even though the radical nationalistic version tends to mistrust the European West). The Ukrainian politics of memory received a truly powerful impetus towards “Europeanization” after the Orange Revolution when the policy of European integration became one of Kiev's priority objectives. Subsequently, even political forces or leaders who came to power with pro-Russian slogans or who were generally viewed as loyal to Moscow continued to steer the country towards Europe.

The European Union, in turn, tried to support as much as possible European aspirations in Ukraine, Moldova, and other post-Soviet countries. In 2009, Brussels launched the Eastern Partnership program designed to establish closer cooperation with the member states and gradually harmonize their norms and values with European ones. The program was expected to step up institutional reforms started in those countries in order to adapt them to European standards of democracy, political management and market economy. The signing of

¹ Kuchma L. *Ukraina – ne Rossija = Ukraine is not Russia*. – Moscow: Vremya, 2003.

association agreements with Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia, and the introduction of visa-free travel regimes was a sort of interim culmination of this policy. The question is whether Brussels' decisions were prompted by the real successes of those countries or by their geopolitical confrontation with Russia. Ukraine's and Moldova's achievements in promoting democracy, building a free market economy, implementing social programs, and developing infrastructure draw strong criticism. However, European integration was not reduced entirely to the implementation (and often imitation) of political and economic reforms. One of Brussels' unspoken requirements for post-Soviet aspirants was the adoption of the European politics of memory. Compliance with these requirements gave an admission pass to the "European family."

The governments that replaced one another after the Orange Revolution had to play by the rules accepted in the European politics of memory. But they could also use the European politics of memory for their own purposes. The gradual emergence of two opposing trends in the European politics of memory gave Ukraine room for maneuver. Both the authorities and the opposition tried to use the key tenets of the European politics of memory for fighting their political opponents.

During Victor Yushchenko's presidency, Ukraine's politics of memory was clearly underlain by the nationalist narrative, with the Ukrainian diaspora playing a much greater role than before. Key elements of Yushchenko's policy were glorification of OUN-UPA nationalists, with a focus on the sacrificial narrative of Ukrainian history in Soviet times and on the Holodomor as the genocide of the Ukrainian people. The European politics of memory, which at that time was underpinned by the notion of pan-European responsibility, created certain problems for Yushchenko's agenda.

Yushchenko's attempts to glorify OUN-UPA fighters and his large-scale national and international campaign to recognize the Holodomor as genocide met with a controversial reaction in the world. Both aspects of his policy ran counter to the European precept of pan-European responsibility. Attempts to recognize the Holodomor as genocide, with the number of casualties exceeding those of the Holocaust, called into question the unique nature of the latter in European history and concurred with the search by many other Eastern

European countries for their own “genocide.” The glorification of OUN-UPA fighters, notoriously known for their role in the Holocaust, denied the responsibility of the local population for the tragedy. Paradoxically, key elements of the politics of memory pursued by pro-Western President Yushchenko contradicted the European politics of memory at that time. This aroused resentment in Europe as a whole and in individual countries in particular. No wonder, Ukraine’s relations with Israel became quite strained.

Yushchenko did not ignore the Holocaust. On the contrary, he used it quite actively to advance his own policy. In 2006, when the international community marked the 65th anniversary of the Babi Yar massacre, during which the Nazi and their local collaborators had executed more than 30,000 Jews, Kiev hosted a Holocaust remembrance forum where Yushchenko stressed the importance of that tragedy not only for the Jews but also for all ethnic groups living in Ukraine. He omitted the participation of Ukrainians in the Holocaust, mentioning only the role of his compatriots who had helped save the Jews. This approach was also quite manifest in the subsequent Holocaust commemorative events attended by Yushchenko and other representatives of official Kiev. A year later, when the next anniversary of the Babi Yar tragedy was marked, Yushchenko laid flowers at the monument to OUN fighters who had been killed there too. He also made numerous attempts to portray the Holodomor as the “Ukrainian Holocaust.” In declarations and regulatory documents concerning the Holodomor, these two tragedies were often mentioned together. The Holocaust was used as an example and an argument for recognizing the Holodomor as an act of genocide and imposing criminal penalties for refusal to do so. Yushchenko tried to use the symbolic significance of the Holocaust to justify and fortify his own policy. He used the commemoration of the Holocaust for utilitarian purposes both in order to reinforce his argument about the “genocidal” nature of the Holodomor and to placate his Western partners angered by some of his decisions concerning the politics of memory. Yushchenko denied the very fact of OUN-UPA fighters’ participation in the anti-Jewish violence, which, however, could hardly convince his opponents both inside and outside the country.

On the whole, his policy fitted into the concept, quite popular in Eastern Europe, which equated the victims of the two totalitarian regimes – Nazism and Communism – and relieved his own nation of all responsibility for those crimes. Such radical policy mobilized those sections of society which did not share his views. To some extent, Yushchenko's politics of memory helped his opponents win the following presidential election.

Victor Yanukovich's victory in 2010 was viewed by many observers as the triumph of pro-Russian forces and the related narrative of Ukrainian history. In fact, the new Ukrainian leadership was much more open to cooperation with Russia in various areas, including those concerning the politics of memory. For example, in 2010, Presidents Medvedev and Yanukovich together laid flowers at the monument to the victims of the Holodomor. Two years prior, Medvedev had refused to go to Kiev to attend a similar event at the invitation of then President Yushchenko. Nevertheless, Ukraine continued to drift towards Europe until November 2013 when Kiev unexpectedly decided to suspend the negotiations on an association agreement with the EU, which precipitated mass riots now known as the Euromaidan.

Contrary to Yushchenko's policy, the new Ukrainian authorities sought to promote the culture of memory that offered a more positive look at the Soviet period and Russian-Ukrainian relations over several centuries of common history. At the same time, they showed a negative attitude towards radical Ukrainian nationalism in the twentieth century. And yet, the concept of national history prevailed in politics and education. Being predominantly a technocrat, Yanukovich had no clearly defined politics of memory, which was largely confined to the revision of some of his predecessor's decisions and abolition of some of the regulatory acts that glorified nationalist leaders Shukhevich and Bandera.

Speaking of the influence of the European politics of memory at that time, two aspects are worth mentioning. The first one concerns the introduction of new textbooks in schools by Minister of Education Dmitry Tabachnik, whose appointment and activities drew a lot of public attention. Tabachnik is known in Ukraine for his pro-Russian views. In a major article published in 2010, he suggested that the work on new textbooks should focus on "the humanitarian, anthropocentric

approach to history.” The only significant reference to the “European tradition” materialized in the decision to exclude the last decade in the history of the country from textbooks.

Another important step was the establishment of Holocaust Remembrance Day in 2011 by the Ukrainian parliament’s resolution passed on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Babi Yar tragedy. However, it suggested marking the Day on January 27, that is, when International Holocaust Remembrance Day is observed, a date not in any way related to the Babi Yar massacre. But the explanatory notes to the draft resolution did not even mention January 27 although it clearly had an international connotation. Interestingly, the draft was proposed by a lawmaker from the Communist Party. Apparently, it was an attempt by political forces opposing the rehabilitation of the OUN-UPA to establish a commemorative day which they could use against their ideological opponents.

After Euromaidan: Separation of Memory and Responsibility

Anti-communist motives in Ukraine’s politics of memory have become relevant again in the present-day political landscape, which has changed drastically. Following the Euromaidan, Yanukovich’s flight, and events in Crimea and Donbass, the new Ukrainian leadership thought it could reap some benefit from reformatting the symbolic space and fanning the flames of the “memory war.” In April 2015 the Ukrainian parliament hurriedly passed a package of four laws: “On the Denunciation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes,” “On the Commemoration of the Victory over Nazism in World War II,” “On the Legal Status and the Honoring of the Fighters for the Freedom of Ukraine in the 20th Century,” and “On Access to the Archives of the Repressive Bodies of the Communist Totalitarian Regime.” These documents launched the official process of “decommunization” in Ukrainian society. Some supporters of the new regime explained the adoption of the laws by security needs, because the Soviet past was regarded as a national security issue. Obviously, this interpretation stemmed from the ideological confrontation with Russia and those Ukrainians who were skeptical about Kiev’s new

policy. But there is no doubt that these laws reflect the dramatic rise of nationalist ideas and their increased influence on the Ukrainian ruling circles after the Euromaidan.

Ukraine's Institute of National Memory played a key role in the development of these laws. The institute, modeled on similar bodies in other post-socialist countries, has in recent years adopted a number of controversial decisions and declarations. The institute is headed by Vladimir Vyatrovich, known, among other things, for denying the OUN-UPA's role in the Holocaust. In one of his books he claimed that the OUN-UPA had actually saved Jews from the Nazi, not helped to exterminate them¹.

The first of the abovementioned laws, "On the Denunciation of the Communist and National Socialist (Nazi) Totalitarian Regimes," was fully in line with the policy of self-victimization. Its preamble linked the law to six decisions of the Council of Europe, the OSCE, and the European Parliament in a bid to legitimize it as part of the pan-European trend. The Ukrainian parliament's move has far-reaching goals and envisages a wide range of measures from banning "totalitarian symbols" to dismantling monuments to Soviet leaders and renaming cities, towns and settlements. Nazism mentioned in the law is no more than just a suitable backdrop and an argument for criminalizing Communism by equating two types of totalitarianism. Clearly, this is a strategy designed to suppress an alternative historical memory. The latest European tendencies in the politics of memory provided a convenient basis for justifying such methods of solving domestic political problems. In addition, the dramatic deterioration of Russian-European relations after 2014 gave Eastern European countries more room for maneuver in their politics of memory. The European Union closes its eyes to campaigns and decisions which previously were viewed as detrimental to relations with Russia.

The Law "On the Commemoration of the Victory over Nazism in World War II" places emphasis on the term 'World War II' and excludes the "Great Patriotic War" wording used before. By so doing

¹ Vyatrovich V.M. Stavlennya OUN do evreiv: formuvannya pozitsii na tli katastrofi = Attitude of the OUN to Jews: the Formation of a Position against the Background of a Catastrophe. – Lviv, 2006.

the Ukrainian parliament tried to obliterate the culture of memory connected with the “Great Patriotic War” narrative which bound Ukraine with other former Soviet republics, primarily Russia, through joint struggle against Nazism, starting from 1941 but omitting prior events. Instead, the parliament proposed alternative wording, “World War II,” in which Ukraine is portrayed as a victim of the two totalitarian regimes starting from 1939. The law ignores the fact that Ukrainian territories were consolidated into one republic, firstly, as a result of the events of 1941-1945, and secondly, due to the decisions adopted by one of the “totalitarian regimes.” An important novelty in the law, which reflects a collision between two interpretations of that period, is that it establishes Remembrance and Reconciliation Day on May 8 and at the same time proclaims May 9 as Victory Day over Nazism in World War II (Victory Day). The decision to mark May 8 as Remembrance and Reconciliation Day was not accidental. On this day many European countries mark the end of World War II even though the UN resolutions cited in the Ukrainian law mention both dates, May 8 and May 9, as suitable for commemorative events. However, Ukraine is trying to get rid of the previous pattern in commemorating the end of the war under the pretext of following “European moral and cultural values.”

And yet, this is largely a half-measure. Ukrainian leaders apparently were aware of how strong the tradition was and did not dare ban Victory Day completely and replace it with the “European” alternative. They are trying to put a different meaning into this date as one can see from its full official name. Some were clearly dissatisfied with the changes as insufficient. In 2017, the Institute of National Memory proposed a new version of the law on state holidays and commemorative days. Transferring a day-off from May 9 to May 8 was one of the major changes. Vyatrovich said this decision should stress “the European tradition of concluding World War II.” However, in this particular case, observance of the “European tradition” underscores the division of Ukrainian society as borne out by constant clashes between different groups of people occurring these days.

And yet, one cannot say that the “Great Patriotic War” narrative is a taboo among Ukrainian leaders. They often refer to its elements as part of the ideological struggle over the armed conflict in the east of

Ukraine, trying to fill them with a new meaning and use their symbolic power. Sometimes events are presented as a new stage in the “heroic fight of the Ukrainian people” against invaders, including the World War II period, using well recognizable constructs and symbols such as “our Stalingrad.” The leaders of the breakaway republics also actively use the “Great Patriotic War” narrative for commemorating the armed conflict. For example, they carry the photographs of killed separatist military commanders during the Immortal Regiment march on May 9 as part of this trend.

Going back to the European politics of memory, it is necessary to say that its other element focused on the Holocaust continues to influence Ukraine’s politics of memory after the Euromaidan. On the whole, its influence has decreased, but the commemoration of the Holocaust remains part of the repertoire obligatory for members of the “European family.” This allows Eastern European regimes to use the Holocaust as an “inexpensive” (compared to structural reforms) way to improve their image in the eyes of their Western partners. The commemoration of the Holocaust becomes largely a ritual when the Ukrainian authorities make public declarations, organize events marking Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27, unveil new monuments, and inaugurate new museums. However, as a rule, none of these activities requires the recognition of their own people’s guilt for the Holocaust as a central element of the pan-European responsibility in the politics of memory. The Ukrainian Law “On the Legal Status and the Honoring of the Fighters for the Freedom of Ukraine in the 20th Century” has essentially excluded many local actors from the list of possible perpetrators of the anti-Jewish violence. So although the Ukrainian authorities have been actively exploiting the Holocaust theme lately, primarily for foreign policy purposes, they have not suffered any significant political losses on the domestic front, which they would if the role of local residents in the genocide of Jews would be assessed comprehensively and unbiasedly. Responsibility for the Holocaust is placed entirely on external forces, the Nazi, and sometimes even the Soviet Union.

This narrative dilutes the Jewish tragedy in the overall tragedy of the country as a victim of external “totalitarian” forces.

The post-Maidan version of Ukraine's politics of memory, coupled with other steps undertaken by official Kiev in the field of education, and language and information policies, will have long-term consequences for the future of Ukraine and its relations with the European Union, Russia, and other countries. In terms of importance, they will be comparable with any of the possible scenarios of the conflict in the east of the country (or, hopefully, its resolution). But one cannot be separated from the other. The conflict itself, its events and participants are already becoming the object of the politics of memory both in the territories controlled by Kiev and in the breakaway "people's republics" in Donbass.

It is necessary to understand that macro-political identity emerging on this basis will inevitably be ethnocentric, with the dominant historical narrative promoting the complex of a victimized ethnos and the ban on topics that may imply the recognition of one's own guilt and responsibility for the past and present tragedies. The nationalist narrative in the politics of memory amid constantly stoked tension over the "Russian threat" makes resentment the main motive of Kiev's policy with regard to Moscow.

In the political turmoil of recent years, the Ukrainian authorities have been harshly cracking down on the alternative historical memory kept by millions of people in the country. However, even after the loss of Crimea and part of Donbass Ukraine cannot be considered a consolidated nation with one identity and a common view on history as borne out by numerous public opinion polls. Regional differences remain, and attempts to erase them quickly may produce the opposite result. Depending on how aggressively the Ukrainian political elite cultivates ethnocentric identity and how drastically the central authorities overhaul their language and regional policies, a combination of these factors may exacerbate social, ethnic and political tension. In the long term, Ukraine may end up as a "problem country" not only for Russia but also for other neighboring countries and the European Union.

ANNEX 1.
Trumpism, European Rightists and Russia
(Excerpts from the Valday Discussion Club Report
“Global ‘Rightists Revolt’: Trumpism and Its Foundations”, 2017)¹

Trumpism as an ideology and a system of values is much broader than the political figure of Trump and is not directly tied to his current political activities. This being said, the question of whether Donald Trump will be able to stem the onslaught of the old Washington establishment, rather than walking away from his election platform, is not that important for the given discourse. Much more important is the fact that a global political wave caused by Trump’s electoral success formed a fundamentally new ideology and even a system of values which could conventionally be described as ‘Trumpist’ (once again, without any tight conjunction with the future evolution of Donald Trump himself). ... Trumpism is definitely a new phenomenon, but it is rather deeply rooted in the American political history. As was rightly noted by Walter Russel Mead, Trump and Trumpism demonstrate good compliance with the Jacksonian paradigm, i.e. American nationalist populism². Jacksonianism implies a vision of America and its role in the world that substantially differs from the vision of the Founding Fathers, for whom the top priority was nation-building based on the

¹ Source: Global ‘Rightist Revolt’: Trumpism and Its Foundations: Valday Discussion Club Report / Barabanov O., Efremenko D., Kagarlitsky B., Koltashov V., Telin K. – Moscow, 2017. – September. – P. 5, 6, 8, 21–22, 24.

² Mead W.R. The Jacksonian Revolt. American Populism and the Liberal Order // Foreign Affairs. – 2017. – March / April. – Mode of access: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2017-01-20/jacksonian-revolt>

totality of political principles. Jacksonian nationalism, on the contrary, is based on the vision of America as the Promised Land conquered, seasoned and sanctified with sweat and blood. Sovereignty is one of the most important categories for Jacksonians. In case of Andrew Jackson protecting or spreading the American sovereignty was not only about the territory, but also about restoration of the federal government's sovereign control over the financial system. In this sense, the Jacksonian "I killed the Bank" is tantamount to Trump's escapades against supranational financial structures stripping Americans of control over their own national economy. Jacksonianism in America has gone through ups and downs, but it never died. In the evolution of American conservatism, the Jacksonian paradigm was obviously on the rise during the two recent decades until it led to the temporary consolidation of forces determined to topple the order symbolized by Clintons and Obama. American conservatism is a heterogeneous phenomenon, to be sure, uniting polar movements – from libertarians to paleoconservatists. Trumpism became a reality by virtue of the high demand for a figure capable of consolidating protest sentiments and expressing the hopes of numerous electorally significant interests. Yet, the success of the rightist populism personified by Trump does not boil down to the figure of an establishment-rejecting rebel. The electorate and stakeholder groups who brought Trump to the White House voice a broader demand for transformation of the American political system, the model of social mobility and access to resources. The fact that this model was turning increasingly closed for millions of Americans, generated Trumpism.

At any rate, given Brexit and the rise of Trump, which signify profound upheavals for the western world on both sides of the Atlantic, there are weighty grounds to talk about an antisystemic 'rightist revolt'. Who has revolted against whom or what? And what are the possible consequences? How should we respond? In general terms we are witnessing a change of eras and a related change in ways and styles of political thinking. Not in vain did Zygmunt Bauman, analyzing the civilizational dynamics of the early XXI century, applied the term *Interregnum* used by Antonio Gramsci in his 'Prison Notebooks' to describe the anticipation of radical reforms caused by social disruptions of the Great Depression. Gramsci meant upcoming simultaneous and

profound changes of the sociopolitical and legal order. Today, as at the time of Gramsci's imprisonment in Torino, many global concepts, institutes and mechanisms demonstrate progressive dysfunctionality, with no fulfilled replacement of these pillars heaving in sight for now. Under these conditions the political scene on various levels, from local to global, is being entered by forces interested to speed up the demolition of the ineffective order where too many actors and groups turned out to be outsiders. Yet, formulating an intelligible alternative is a lot more daunting challenge which can nevertheless be observed in competitive political systems, where electoral procedures enable the mainstream opponents to make a statement and offer the electorate a programme, which can be described as creative destruction. It can be situational, focused on one or two problems, which are crucial or considered as such under the current circumstances. The revolt against the neoliberal political-ideological mainstream of national and supranational elites is compound, strangely blending seemingly incompatible aspirations and interests. Above all, we see a protest against globalization, for the first time in history supported by significant electoral groups in both the United States and Europe. It suddenly dawned upon these groups that the current thrust of globalization processes marginalizes them. The migration threat and fears of cultural identity being undermined just open a list of globalization effects quite unexpected for a western man in the street. The erosion of national sovereignty is increasingly often interpreted by many western voters as the loss of control over one's own destiny. The revolt against the neoliberal mainstream is largely turned against its political, ideological, discursive and sometimes even aesthetic components related to postmodernism. At least the 'rightist revolt' is an organic reprobation of eclecticism, construing any truth as relative and conventional, relegation of the common good principle to something of secondary importance, etc. This is also a revolt against political correctness as a deeply layered system of double standards, tabooing and self-censorship. As regards the 'rightist revolt' in EU the main difference of the U.S. situation from the European one is that internal split is not a surprise. The bipartisan consensus is a thing of the past – at least starting in mid-1990s, when Newt Gingrich (a close friend of Donald Trump) led the Contract with America resulted in deeper

polarization within the American elite. In EU countries (at least in ‘old Europe’ as referred to Donald Rumsfeld) the situation was different. 1990s and 2000s were characterized by gravitation towards the political center and even partial ideological convergence of political mainstream parties. But now the polarization trend and the demand of voters for a sharply defined stance has reached the ‘old Europe’. Under greatest pressure are traditional conservatives increasingly affected by rightist conservative populism with its radical ideas gradually transforming the respectable conservative philosophy. In the meantime, mainstream conservatives try to keep away from ‘non-handshakable’ populists, while poaching some of their slogans, tactics and thus increasingly distorting the classical ideological matrix of political conservatism. In Europe the rightist populism is now equivalent to Euroscepticism, even though Euroscepticism is not tantamount to rightist populism. Nevertheless, the very existence of the European Union and its institutes is like a gift of heaven for rightist populists in Europe, because this gives them a universal basis for bashing the political mainstream as the key instrument for stripping European nations of their sovereign power, stressing that supranational authorities have no legitimacy within the framework of the national state. The problem of political sovereignty, incidentally serving as a political basis for the rapprochement of Eurosceptic activists with modern-day U.S. Jacksonians, is coming to the fore. Ralf Dahrendorf succinctly formulated the gist of the problem almost a quarter of a century ago: “Constitutions institutionalize the rights, which are legal guarantees, rather than just empty promises and nice words... The rights necessitate instruments of coercion or enforcement bodies. All three classical branches of power find their place here. But these authorities can function only in a perfect form of the nation state. The ones rejecting the nation state also lose effective guarantees of their main rights. Those who consider the nation state superfluous also announce the civil rights superfluous, even if unintentionally.”¹ In the modern political context this logic provides a strong posture for those willing to embrace it, and gathers further momentum, when aversion to Eurocratic elite is

¹ Dahrendorf R. Die Sache mit der Nation / Jeismann M., Ritter H. (Hrsg.) // Grenzfälle: über neuen und alten Nationalismus. – Leipzig, 1993. – P. 109.

supplemented by disillusionment in the national pro-European elites. The latter are not only willing to assign sovereign rights to Brussels, but also pursue a common migration policy (i.e. beyond the pale of the nation state), a common policy towards minorities, making a case for special norms and values essentially based on self-censorship and actual renunciation of the cultural-historical foundations behind the national identity. If it is accompanied by the aggravation of socioeconomic problems, the electorate changes its perception of globalization turning its ugly face on the European voter. What more general conclusions can be drawn? As for the outlook of conservatism and its transformation under the impact of populism, one should be more cautious here. The ‘rightist revolt’ in the United States and Europe is global in terms of its political repercussions. Trump is a very American story; Marine Le Pen is a French story. For now, the national context retains primacy, so the development of events will vary in different nations. Somewhere we will see traditional conservatives crashing and being replaced with rightist populists, but in other countries conservatives will borrow the populist rhetoric, evolving in this direction, incurring painful losses, but nevertheless retaining stable positions.

Britain is quite an indicative case in this respect. It is obvious that the post-Brexit conservatives will be different from the preBrexit ones. The Party of Independence played its part, but it is the Tory who have to implement the new agenda. It is next to impossible for the British Tory to become pro-European once again. But while implementing the exit program, they still try to steer clear of Nigel Farage and his followers. On the whole, the red lines will move further away and populist forces will not only grab more seats in European parliaments, but will also get involved in government coalitions in some places. And then the liberal West will still become different from what it was a quarter of a century ago, at the dawn of the post-history era that was never ushered.

What should Russia’s attitude towards the ‘rightist revolt’ be? The temptation of simple decisions is difficult to resist: Russia is interested to revise the post-bipolar world order, which is perceived as unfair; it criticizes the current globalization model while capitalizing on the opening opportunities to the best of its ability; many in Russia reject the postmodernist value matrix. Consequently, those who contribute to

the erosion of the world order, whether it is deliberately or not, criticize globalization and question the values prevalent in the West can be viewed as our allies. But we should be careful not to go too far. The western media did their best to place Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump within one symbolic field. This is not to say that the Russian leadership should thus position their nation. Rather it is necessary to be always open and ready for dialogue with everybody. In fact, any force or politician trying to get western nations back from postmodernist heaven to the earth of national interests, i.e. to the frame of reference where an intelligible dialogue is possible, could be a potential partner for Russia. In the meantime, we should be aware of potential risks: the language of national interests can be better understood, but the interests can be antagonistic. The conflicts of national interests can be a lot more intensive and dangerous, than conflicts around values. If Moscow suddenly decided that it should align with the rightist populism, this would mean the narrowing of political opportunities. Moreover, Russia would not only share the success of these forces, but also their failures (which are inevitable). Therefore, it is important to stake on a certain frame of reference for the dialogue, acceptable to Moscow, Europe and our overseas partners, rather than on certain political-ideological forces or movements.

ANNEX 2.
Perestroika and the “Dashing Nineties”:
At the Crossroads of History¹

In this article, an attempt is made to study issues of sociopolitical transformations in the Soviet Union and post-communist Russia in the late 1980s to the early 2000s. Particular attention is paid to those junctures that brought about the catastrophe of the Soviet state and the subsequent emergence of neopatrimonialism in post-Soviet Russia. The regime transformation at the turn of the 1990s – 2000s is regarded as the completion of the critical phase of post-Soviet development and the onset of a long stage of stabilization, which means achieving a relative balance between hierarchy and networks, formal and informal institutions, agency and structure.

Some lessons of the collapse of the USSR

Vladimir Putin’s famous statement that the collapse of the Soviet Union became “the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century”

¹ This essay is based on two sources first published in Russian: 1. Efremenko D.V. Posttravmaticheskaya Rossija: Sozialno-politicheskie transformatsii v usloviakh neravnovesnoj dinamiki mezhdunarodnikh otnoshenij = Post-Traumatic Russia: Social and Political Transformations under Conditions of Turbulent Dynamics of International Relations. – Moscow; Sankt-Petersburg: Zentr humanirnikh initsiativ, 2015. – P. 7–8, 16–17, 45–54; 2. Efremenko D.V., Dolgov A.Y., Evseeva Y.V. Rossija mezdu sistemnymi katastrofami i evoluzionnymi transformatsiami: Politiko-ontologicheskie aspekty = Russia Between System Catastrophes and Evolutionary Transformations: Aspects of Political Ontology // Polis. – 2017. – N 5. – P. 29–35.

is often interpreted in the West as a direct indication of the Russian leader's revanchist aspirations and revisionism regarding the existing world order. However, in fact, such interpretations only disorient those trying to understand the priorities of Russia's domestic and foreign policy. The attribute "greatest" certainly contained evaluation, addressing millions of residents of post-Soviet states, who feel nostalgic when they hear the abbreviation "USSR". The term "catastrophe" is descriptive. An attempt to analyze the collapse of the Soviet state and the communist regime as a systemic catastrophe can, indeed, yield results worthy of notice.

The Soviet Union can be viewed as a complex system that included ideological, symbolic, organizational, material, and technical components. As Charles Perrow shows, in complex technical or organizational systems, catastrophic failures leading to the destruction of the system are inevitable and at the same time unpredictable¹. Dysfunctions or failures at the level of discrete elements of the system, which do not individually pose a serious danger to it, at some moment enter a resonant interaction, capable of destabilizing the system as a whole. At this moment, what can become decisive is the factor of the operator, who, even without making gross mistakes (within the logic of the regular functioning of the system) or successfully coping with familiar technical issues, proves unable to respond adequately to such systemic failures. In other words, the possibility of catastrophic self-destruction is initially attributed to any complex system, which, however, does not mean that this possibility will necessarily be realized during the projected period of its functioning. However, it is impossible to predict a catastrophic systemic failure based on traditional methods of risk assessment.

If we literally project Charles Perrow's logic onto the Soviet communist system, then we can say that the possibility of self-destruction was inherent to it in exactly the same way as it is inherent to any other complex system. This did not mean at all that the collapse of the system was to occur precisely at the turn of the 1980s – 1990s. There is no doubt that in the early 1980s the Soviet system was

¹ Perrow C. *Normal Accidents. Living with High-Risk Technologies.* – New York: Basic Books, 1984.

undergoing stagnation, but, as a matter of fact, this state could continue indefinitely. In the very process of formation, some internal flaws were part of the system; seemingly insignificant, under certain historical circumstances they could launch processes leading to the destruction of the system¹. Such historical circumstances had begun to take shape by 1985, when Mikhail Gorbachev became head of the USSR. Starting with 1985, the Soviet Union over a short period passed through several historic forks and did that in such a way that the onset of a devastating systemic failure became irreversible.

For the period of *perestroika*, the historic fork at the turn of 1986–1987 can be considered the key one. By that moment, it had become obvious that the regular strategy of transformation was, indeed, stalled. The initial impulse was practically exhausted, and the mass expectations of indefinite positive changes were about to transform into deep disappointment with the new leader and his rhetoric. Realizing the need to correct the course, Gorbachev and his closest associates apparently underestimated the seriousness of the economic situation. In fact, in early 1987, the last opportunity to shift the reforms to the Chinese way was missed. Of course, differences in the social structure, levels of industrial development and urbanisation, labor qualification and costs did not allow Deng Xiaoping's reforms to be copied in detail in the USSR². Still, their general principle, i.e. transition to a market economy, while maintaining strict political control by the ruling Communist Party, could well have been realized in the concrete historical conditions of the beginning of 1987.

As we know, Mikhail Gorbachev and his associates made political reforms their priority. Gorbachev actually blamed the failures of the first stage of *perestroika* on the Soviet party nomenklatura. A shake-up of personnel at all levels of the nomenklatura hierarchy and the introduction of alternatives in the election of candidates for party and Soviet bodies began to be regarded not only as steps towards political change, but also as tools for solving economic problems.

¹ Sakwa R. *Soviet Politics in Perspective*. – London: Routledge, 1998. – P. 285.

² Lai H. *Contrasts in China and Soviet Reform: Sub-National and National Causes* // *Asian Journal of Political Science*. – 2005. – Vol. 13, N 1. – P. 1–21; Lynch A. *Deng's and Gorbachev's Reform Strategies Compared* // *Russia in Global Affairs*. – 2012. – N 2. – P. 84–100.

However, trying to recruit new people into the ruling corporation and thus increase its internal mobility, Gorbachev eventually destabilized the supporting frame of the system as a whole. The decisions made led to the reduction of the unity of the nomenklatura, its differentiation, and the formation of inner-party trends.

Further radicalization of these processes became possible due to the policy of *glasnost*. Today, thinking back to the events of the era, one cannot but admit that the freedom of intellectual search and expression attained owing to Gorbachev's *glasnost* is the greatest achievement. But for the old Soviet system, it was *glasnost* as a trigger of 'collective culture shock' that made the catastrophic dynamics irreversible¹. In this sense, one can agree with the thesis by historian Mikhail Geller that the Gorbachev era was "a victory of *glasnost* and a defeat of *perestroika*"².

Having made a choice in favor of the primacy of political reforms, Gorbachev not only pushed economic reforms into the background. After 1987, every new step towards a market economy was complicated by the need to "fit" into the rapidly changing political context, and the political effect expected from the planned economic measures at first prompted Gorbachev and his entourage to choose from possible solutions those that seemed less risky. As a result, economic activities were merely a set of palliative measures, carried out selectively and without any clear sequence³. In this fashion, such measures were leading to further widening of economic and social disparities, to further deepening of the overall crisis of the system. The replacement of directive planning with indicative planning, expansion of economic autonomization of the Union republics, transfer of enterprises to self-financing, election of their directors, lifting of restrictions on wage and salary growth were a set of actions that

¹ Feichtinger C., Fink G. The Collective Culture Shock in Transition Countries – Theoretical and Empirical Implications // *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*. – 1998. – Vol. 19, N 6. – P. 302–308; Kramer M. The Collapse of the Soviet Union (Part II) // *Journal of Cold War Studies*. – 2003. – Vol. 5, N 2. – P. 3–42.

² Geller M. Gorbachev. Pobeda glasnosti i porazheniye perestroiki = Gorbachev. The Victory of Glasnost and Defeat of Perestroika // *Sovetskoye obshchestvo. Vozniknoveniye, razvitiye, istoricheskiy final* / Afanasyev Y. (Ed.). – Moscow: Rossiyskiy gosudarstvennyy gumanitarnyy universitet, 1997. – Vol. 2. – P. 558.

³ Goldman M. What Went Wrong with Perestroika. – New York: Norton, 1992.

undermined the foundations of the administrative command economy, but did not result in the launch of a new economic model, let alone macroeconomic stability.

The years 1987 and 1988 can be considered decisive for the fate of the USSR in the sense that at that time, several powerful mechanisms leading to its destruction were simultaneously activated, i.e. elimination of ideological monopoly and censorship, weakening of the internal unity of the CPSU as well as emergence of opportunities for the coming into power structures of people positioning themselves as opponents of the regime, erosion of the planned economy, rise of separatism in a number of Union republics and the use by its activists of legal methods of struggle for national self-determination and independence. Those destructive processes were mutually reinforcing other; the load on the system was increasing with each month. At the same time, the number of people, social strata and elitist groups still linking their fate to the old regime began to decline rapidly. On the contrary, there was an increasing number of those who, due to various reasons (moral, ideological, career, nationalistic or material), were leaning towards the collapse of the system. However, the absolute majority of people were disoriented; they were vaguely aware of the threat of the downfall of the communist state and the habitual way of life associated with it, but could no longer stand up for their protection.

Without touching upon other historic forks that preceded the collapse of the USSR, it should be emphasized that the social and political dynamics of the perestroika era generally correspond to the logic leading to the onset of a “critical moment”. The weakening of the rigid hierarchical structure (the Soviet party vertical edifice) created conditions for new actors (individual and collective) to enter the political arena, and the scope of their actions was rapidly expanding. But it is not enough to merely state that.

The Soviet party hierarchy was the framework of the regime, but the system as a whole was not reduced to it. The Soviet system was imbued with a multitude of informal network interactions that ensured the circulation and redistribution of resources. Those interactions eventually transformed the essence of the system adapting official ideological attitudes and repressive practices to the vital realities of late

Sovietism¹. The discrepancy between the official, ideologically sanctioned power hierarchy and the formation of structures of network interactions manifested itself in a variety of areas, from double morality to shadow economic activity. In the situation of the imminent collapse of the Soviet party hierarchy, some of these networks were only growing stronger; the rapid development of cooperatives against the background of the simultaneously degrading public sector may serve as an example of the process in question.

The law “On Cooperation”, adopted in 1988, is usually referred to as one of the most decisive steps towards a market economy in the entire perestroika period. But the framework conditions for the development of this form of entrepreneurship were determined not only and even not so much by this law as by the decision previously made regarding progressive taxation of cooperatives. The statistical data on the growth of the cooperative movement in the last years of perestroika cannot but impress: as of January 1, 1988, there were 13,900 cooperatives in the USSR, and as of January 1, 1990, 193,000. The volume of annual production (in the prices of those years) increased from 350 million to R 40.4 billion. In the volume of GNP, the share of cooperatives was less than 1% in 1988, whereas in 1989, as high as 4.4%². But it is necessary to take into account that 80% of the cooperatives were created in state enterprises and in fact served as a legal channel for the withdrawal of resources of those enterprises.

The expansion of cooperatives, like no other economic measure of Gorbachev’s leadership, contributed to the disintegration of the planned model of economy. In this sense, the data regarding the growing output of the cooperatives correlate with those showing a production decline in the public sector – of course, with an adjustment for the schemes of “optimising” the tax burden by concealing the profits of the cooperatives. Tax evasion, access to scarce supply funds, selling products of state-owned enterprises through cooperatives

¹ Afanasyev M.N. *Kliientelizm i rossiyskaya gosudarstvennost* = Clientelism and Russian Statehood. – Moscow: Moskovskiy obshchestvennyy nauchnyy fond, 2000; Ledeneva A. *Russia’s Economy of Favours. Blat, Networking and Informal Exchanges*. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

² *Trudnyy povorot k rynku = Difficult Turn to the Market* / Abalrin L.I. (Ed.). – Moscow: Ekonomika, 1990. – P. 184.

became possible due to the formation of a corruption symbiosis between cooperators, management of state enterprises, local party-state *nomenklatura*, officials of sectoral ministries, representatives of law enforcement agencies, and criminal structures. In fact, in the non-market system, plenty of quasi-market actors appeared who began to use multitudes of its gaps, including legislative gaps, to again maximum profit. Networks of those actors were thriving on the disintegration of the old, hierarchically organized command administrative system, but for the creation of a new, market system, they were giving little – at best, a startup capital, specific experience and connections needed to profit from the disintegration of the Soviet public sector and to cream it off. The downfall of the CPSU hierarchy removed of a major instrument for intra-elite conflict regulation. In this situation, the most reckless could attain wealth and power in a very short time¹.

The issue of the institutional legacy of the “critical period” that crowned Mikhail Gorbachev’s political and economic reforms is utterly important and interesting. To the formal institutions that post-Soviet Russia inherited from the USSR of the later period belong the revived multi-party system and alternative elections. But no less important were informal institutions, nurtured by network interactions. Douglas North points out the possibility of a favorable combination of formal and informal institutions providing optimal conditions for evolutionary changes². Unfortunately, the end of perestroika as a critical juncture did not contribute to the formation of such an ideal constellation of formal and informal institutions. The inconsistency and general lag in institutional infrastructure led to the fact that after the collapse of the communist regime and the disintegration of the USSR, informal institutions primarily became tools for correcting the functioning of formal institutions.

¹ Zon H. van. *Russia’s Development Problem – the Cult of Power*. – London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008. – P. 18.

² North D. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

The “Dashing Nineties”: A Thorny Path to a New “Old Order”

The catastrophe of the Soviet system by no means ended in Belovezhskaya Pushcha or on the frosty night of December 25, 1991, when the red flag was taken down from the Kremlin flagpole. The Gaidar reforms also cannot be regarded as transformations started from scratch. In addition to the reformers' explicit and implicit intentions, one ought to see in them the dynamics of the final stages of the collapse of Sovietism, and even an attempt to institutionalise the by-products of systemic decay¹.

For Russia and most of the post-Soviet countries, the historical meaning of the 1990s era consisted primarily not in the construction of a new statehood, a market-democratic transit, the formation of civil society, but in the exhaustion of the dynamics of decay and in rendering habitable the ruins of the Soviet system. Rich in events, the first stage of post-Soviet history turned out to be rather poor in terms of original internal content. The strategic intent of the transformations of the 1990s, which the reformers themselves characterized as “an exchange of power for property” and “the buyout of Russia from the nomenklatura”², can hardly be considered something fundamentally new in comparison with the objective orientation of the economic policy of the Gorbachev leadership of the 1988–1991 period. It was actually not an exchange, but a market-style modification of the dualistic unity of “power / property” and the social order derived from it. Even the changes in the makeup of the elite give reason to speak of a continuum or evolutionary transformations rather than a revolutionary change of the ruling stratum.

The liberal reformers certainly intended to radically transform society itself, but they sought to do it with the help of the “invisible hand of the market”. In order to achieve that, the state was to “leave” economy and to reduce as much as possible its “sphere of responsibility” for social security. Consequently, Russian society remained without traditional state guardianship for most of the 1990s.

¹ Kotkin S. *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970–2000*. – Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

² Gaidar E.T. *Gosudarstvo i evolyutsiya = State and Evolution*. – Moscow: Eurasia, 1995. – P. 103.

The task of targeted institutional formation was never translated into practice; it was assumed that the new institutional environment would be formed as a result of measures to denationalize the economy. At the same time, despite the externally innovative forms of the “withdrawal” of the state from the economy (voucherisation and, a little later, mortgage auctions), in fact this process was carried out using traditional machinery that provided redistribution of command positions within the “power-property” system. To some extent Gorbachev’s mistakes¹ were repeated by Gaidar and other liberals by using the old machinery of government to reform.

Over two years separating the revolution of August 19–21, 1991, and the adoption of the Constitution of the new Russia on December 12, 1993, undoubtedly became the time of the decisive transformation of the political order and determination of the vector of its subsequent development. During the same period, Russian society experienced a severe traumatic shock², accompanied by a loss of life guidelines for dozens of millions of people. While the struggle for power, between Boris Yeltsin and Mikhail Gorbachev in the last months of the nominal existence of the Soviet Union, then between Yeltsin and the Supreme Soviet, made the social trauma even more painful. The nature of that struggle was determined by the decisions and actions of the main political actors, whereas the structural limitations proved insufficient to prevent the violent outcome of October 3–4, 1993.

The forcible resolution of the political crisis of the autumn of 1993 meant the closure of the “window of opportunity” for the establishment of a new constitutional order on the basis of a political compromise. The versions of constitution that could be agreed upon in the course of the dialogue between the parties to the conflict provided for a greater or lesser degree of balance between the executive, judicial and legislative powers. A conciliation process similar to the 1989 Polish Round Table Talks or the negotiations of the Spanish political forces that culminated in the signing of the Moncloa Pact (1977) would most likely have become an obstacle to the adoption of the politico-

¹ Galeotti M. Gorbachev and his Revolution. – New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997. – P. 66.

² Sztompka P. Cultural Trauma. The Other Face of Social Change // European Journal of Social Theory. – 2000. – Vol. 3, N 4. – P. 449–466.

legal model that places the presidency institute above the system of separation of powers. But the chance of reaching a political compromise was missed. The Constitution of the Russian Federation, approved at the referendum of December 12, 1993, actually codified the political order established after the forcible dispersal of the Supreme Soviet. Following the principle “Winner takes it all”, Yeltsin clearly determined to secure political stability through a pro-presidential constitution coupled with a rigid amendment procedure¹.

The adoption of the Constitution was supposed to promote the consolidation of formal institutions. However, institutional and structural stability was not achieved immediately. In fact, something different was taking place. Both during the acute political confrontation of the first post-Soviet years and in subsequent years, political actors increasingly realized that the use of informal institutions was often more effective in minimizing transaction costs, achieving short-term and medium-term goals. The environment that ensured maximum effectiveness of informal institutions had already taken shape by the end of perestroika: first of all, those were symbiotic network structures, which included representatives of the party / *Komsomol* nomenklatura, former black marketeers, and the most successful cooperators. The reformist government, nevertheless, actively influenced further structuring of that environment, using such tools as concessional loans, export and import subsidies, voucher privatization, and later, mortgage auctions.

In the 1990s, Russia made a breakthrough to capitalism, but did it just as it could, reproducing the familiar combination of power and property under qualitatively new circumstances. A specific version of neopatrimonial capitalism arose in Russia as a result of that. Reproduction of the patrimonial model in a new guise provides rich material for further discussions about Russia’s historical path. It all looks as if in the early 1990s, Russia almost got out of the deep track of its dependence on the past and by the end of the same decade, gladly returned to it. It is quite difficult to explain such a trajectory of

¹ Sharlet R. Russian Constitutional Change: An Opportunity Missed // *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*. – 1999. – Vol. 7, N 3. – P. 438.

development only by the effect of cultural codes and the power of tradition. The history of Russia in the XX century is a story of most brutal forcible breaking of traditional culture. However, to break a tradition does not mean to destroy it. Modern Russia is not a country without traditions, but rather a country with scraps of tradition. In any case, there is no reason to assert that such formal institutions as alternative elections of representatives of state power or an independent court contradict the traditional values of an average Russian.

The institutional constellation at the time of the catastrophe of the Soviet system was characterized by the discreteness and instability of formal institutions. Simultaneously, the importance of informal institutions increased; an appeal to them could reduce uncertainty for individuals and social groups. Those were informal institutions that contributed to the further reproduction of certain culturally conditioned reactions and patterns of behavior. However, not everything was reproduced, but only those elements that helped with post-catastrophe adaptation and more or less successful habitation of the debris of the collapsed system. Not cultural factors as such, but the atomization of society, a sharp increase in the level of mutual distrust and fear, awareness of the precariousness and unpredictability of everyday life particularly hampered a successful development of formal institutions. A social involution was taking place in Russia, i.e. consolidation of private and small group space at the expense of public space¹, a direct consequence of this being the dominance of particular solidarities to the detriment of civic solidarity.

The reincarnation of patrimonialism occurred as a result of the aspirations of the key political players to find an optimal way to achieve their goals in the given conditions as well as owing to the implementation at the level of mass social groups of strategies for avoiding uncertainty and minimizing risks. On that path, during the 1990s, important forks in the road were passed. In the second half of the 1990s, there already emerged a prospect of the mutation of the “power-property” formula and its replacement with the formula “property-power-property”.

¹ Burawoy M., Krotov P., Lytkina T. Involution and Destitution in Capitalist Russia // *Ethnography*. – 2000. – Vol. 1, N 1. – P. 43–65.

ANNEX 3. “Deoligarchisation” in Post-Soviet Russia: Retrospective View¹ (2018)

The history of Russia of the past two decades was marked by several significant turns, and the way of meeting them, and the vector of further movement have considerably influenced the transformation of the political regime and the role of Russia in the system of international relations. Among these turns was a struggle against the attempts to political domination of several oligarchic groups, which unfolded in the period of Vladimir Putin’s first presidential term (2000 – 2004).

The term “oligarchy” in the Russian historical context is associated with the 1990s. But the sources of this phenomenon go down to Gorbachev’s *perestroika*, when a new social group of entrepreneurs almost without experience of organizing production and business in the conditions of open market competition came to the fore. Their road was different, they were able to achieve success not contrary, but thanks to the disintegration of the Soviet economic system, and their method of doing business included, among other things, the ability “to solve problems” at different levels - from local criminal groupings to the federal government. Due to such interactions it was possible to ensure reproduction in the qualitatively new conditions of the “power / property” tie, freeing it from the political and ideological restrictions of the Soviet epoch.

¹ Source: Efremenko D.V. “Deoligarchisation” in Post-Soviet Russia: Retrospective View // *Russia and the Moslem World*. – 2018. – N 3. – P. 6–18.

During the 1990s a specific version of neopatrimonial capitalism emerged in Russia. Max Weber characterized relations between power and property in Russia in the 16th – 19th centuries as a specific version of patrimonialism – czarist patrimonialism¹. In the latter half of the 20th century Richard Pipes made a considerable contribution to the elaboration of the concept of patrimonialism in Russia, regarding the absence or vagueness of the dividing line between property and political sovereignty as a factor determining specific features of Russian history during the prerevolutionary period². Shmuel Eisenstadt, adapting Weber's concept to the problem of modernization used the term *neopatrimonialism*³. Neopatrimonialism can be regarded as a combination of two types of political domination – rational bureaucratic and patrimonial. The functioning of power in the conditions of neopatrimonialism is subordinated to formally legal standards only outwardly, whereas the real practice is informal and is determined by patronage and clientelism. Neopatrimonialism is characterized by the authoritarian organization of socio-political relations and the rent-seeking model of economic behavior⁴. In the specific circumstances of Russia in the mid-1990s the main agents of political transformation staked more willingly on informal institutions, right up to actual transfer to “outsourcing” of the economic groups of interests of a number of functions of state governance. Such order of doing business compensated the weakness of the state and at the same time created additional insuring mechanisms for the political actors who were not sure of their political longevity, relying only on formal institutions. The culmination of neopatrimonial socio-political transformation was the

¹ Weber M. *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie. [Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretative Sociology].* – Tübingen: Mohr, 1976. – S. 621–623.

² Pipes R. *Russia Under the Old Regime.* – New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974.

³ Eisenstadt S.N. *Traditional Patrimonialism and Modern Neopatrimonialism.* – London; Beverly Hills: SAGE, 1973.

⁴ Erdmann G., Engel U. *Neopatrimonialism Revisited: Beyond a Catch-All Concept.* – Hamburg: German Institute of Global and Area Studies, 2006. – (Working Papers; 16). – Mode of access: <http://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=ceas20&page=instructions>

presidential elections of 1996, the period of “seven-bankers-rule,” “loans for shares” auctions, and finally the Default on August 17, 1998.

Evidently, the economic reforms of the 1990s were either non-oriented to overcoming the patrimonial system, or at the very first contacts of the reformers with the Russian reality, a tacit substitution of the aims of transformation. There is no need to talk at length about facts of real corruption or specific ways of life of certain members of Gaidar’s team, for whom their stay in the government was only a transit point on the way from academic institutions to the Russian “Forbes list”. Realizing the inevitability of the reemergence of the “power-property” model in the new conditions the reformers of the 1990-s tried to make it serve them and their customers. In this sense reforms may be regarded as a kind of “social engineering.”

In Russia of the mid-1990-s, the political power formed a new stratum of big owners, who, taking advantage of the weakness of the state proclaimed their privileges in establishing control over the power which has created them. Informal institutions were substituted for formal ones and, as a consequence, political power was privatized by economic groups of interests after the Default of 1998, which concentrated about one-third of the Russian GDP under their control¹. However the very essence of the economic crisis, which started on August 17, 1998 with the announcement of technical default and ended with the transfer of presidential powers from Boris Yeltsin to Vladimir Putin on December 31, 1999, boiled down to the recreation of an ultimate patrimonial model of state power more acceptable to the majority of political and economic actors as well as mass social groups, with state power playing the main role.

Even for a considerable part of influential interest groups, each of which represented a powerful network unit, the need for the function of state arbitration was quite evident. But more important was the fact that the state as the supreme arbiter had to ensure the preservation of a new structure of large property which did not have enough legitimacy in the eyes of a big part of the Russian population. For most Russian citizens privatization became an inalienable part of individual and collective

¹ Rutland P. Putin’s Economic Record. Is the Oil Boom Sustainable? // *Europe-Asia Studies*. – 2008. – Vol. 60, N 6. – P. 1051–1072.

painful experience, a symbol of crying social injustice and monstrous corruption. No wonder that about one-third of respondents even at the beginning of the 2000-s spoke in favor of the renationalization of big companies, and behind the “stable and widespread negative attitude toward the results of privatization one could feel and see irritation and revengeful expectation of “game change”. Paradoxically, this was combined with almost complete absence of any hopes for the restoration of “social justice.”¹ Insufficient legitimacy of the structure of big property remains a time bomb to this day, which can explode at the moment of destabilization of the social system, which is conditioned by a combination of external and internal pressure.

At the beginning of the 21st century the demand for “return of the state” was a mass phenomenon and it was largely connected with the further expansion of informal institutions and relations, which could turn into a source of new social risks. On the contrary, the ability of a political leader heading the hierarchy of power to control ambiguity and risks, even if this control was effected on the basis of the combination of using formal and informal institutions, proved highly in demand. In this sense the desire for “return of the state” meant that public expectations began to merge on one point, just as the interests of a considerable part of political actors, as well as apprehensions of influential interest groups. In essence, it was a demand for systemic stabilization, establishment of understandable and acceptable “rules of the game” in a compromise variant, excluding the repartition of property and “privatization” of the state by interest groups. Solution of this task became one of the key directions of Putin’s policy during his first presidential term. It is precisely in this context that Putin’s struggle with such figures as Boris Berezovsky, Vladimir Gusinsky and Mikhail Khodorkovsky should be viewed.

Putin-proclaimed “equidistance” of oligarchs meant that in the “power / property” combination it was power that played the dominant role. Putin’s resolute actions aimed at curbing the influence of big business and its certain representatives on power bodies were at first

¹ Zorkaya N.A. Privatizatsiya i chastnaya sobstvennost' v obshchestvennom mnenii v 1990-2000-ye gody = Privatization and Private Property in Public Opinion in 1990-2000 // Otechestvennyye zapiski. – 2005. – N 1. – P. 94.

carried on with the use of less political resources. The first of “equidistant” oligarchs was Vladimir Gusinsky who made the erroneous stake on the success of the Luzhkov-Primakov tandem at the parliamentary elections of 1999, and Boris Berezovsky who repeatedly hinted on his own resolute contribution to Putin’s electoral success. Both of them were the living symbols of an epoch rapidly receding to the past. Their banishment from Russia should have vividly demonstrated the oncoming of a new epoch. The main result of the first round of the fight against the oligarchs was the return of the key media-assets under the control of the Kremlin; these media-assets were used by Berezovsky and Gusinsky as the most powerful instrument of strengthening their influence and expanding the business-empires controlled by them.

Although the forced change of the editorial policy of the NTV Channel and other mass media in Vladimir Gusinsky’s holding have evoked serious fears for the fate of freedom of speech and freedom of the press in Russia, the departure of the country’s new leader from the influence of oligarchic groupings was completely in line with public aspirations. Meanwhile, the authorities did not demonstrate any intentions to revise the results of privatization, moreover, in case of adoption by business of new rules of the game the powers that be became the main guarantor of the preservation of that form of property which was formed by the end of the 1990s. After the departure of Boris Berezovsky from Russia this silent pact was adopted by almost all business-structures. The only exception was the YUKOS Company of Mikhail Khodorkovsky.

Khodorkovsky’s challenge was of a systemic character and therefore it was regarded by Putin and his inner circle as a much more serious threat than Berezovsky’s and Gusinsky’ claims to political influence. The scope and direction of the challenge to fundamental political and economic changes were not disputed or denied by convinced supporters of Mikhail Khodorkovsky:

“The efforts of the “YUKOS shareholders at the beginning of 2003 could be joined in a certain general picture: they turn against corruption, take the biggest oil company from state control, finance the opposition, breed a new generation of freedom-loving citizens, develop humanities, moreover they have a certain business-plan for Russia. In a

little time Russia will be able to extricate itself from the personal control of President Putin and will become a full-fledged western country. In a sense, it was a sort of a virtual plot aimed at changing the social order. It was foolish to think that the persons in the Kremlin did not notice that plot.”¹

Apparently, the decisive motive of the authorities’ decision to dismantle Khodorkovsky’s business-empire was the fact that following the deal of a merger of YUKOS with Roman Abramovich’s giant SIBNEFT (April 2003) negotiations began on the sale of the blocking equity participation of the joined company with ChevronTexaco and ExxonMobil. The successful negotiations meant the transfer of Khodorkovsky’s business-empire to the high league of transnational corporations, and its owner himself, having entered the Areopagus of the global entrepreneur elite could become practically invulnerable and untouchable for the Russian authorities. The loss of political and legal control of the Kremlin over the crucially important asset of the Russian oil industry could bring about not only a sharp growth of the alternative center of influence on the country’s economy and policy, but also a revision of the very formula of neopatrimonial capitalism. The success of Khodorkovsky’s project should have opened the gates to convert property into political power, and the latter – into new property. There is not enough grounds to believe that this spectacular deal was planned by Khodorkovsky in order to do away once and for all with patrimonial relations, corruption and the specific instruments of Russian business in the 1990s.

By the fall of 2003, when the confrontation between the Kremlin and YUKOS ended with the arrest of Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon Lebedev, it was found out that the authorities had exhausted all sound legal instruments to complete this struggle. The YUKOS Company has been able to put up serious resistance to the Russian government pressure, which is shown by the multi-billion claims presented to Russia by its shareholders. The obvious political background if the sentence on Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Platon

¹ Panyushkin V. Uznik tishiny. Istoriya pro to, kak cheloveku v Rossii stat svobodnym i chto emu za eto budet = Prisoner of Silence: Story about How Man Can Become Free in Russia and What He Will Have to Pay for It. – Moscow: Sekret firmy, 2006. – P. 21.

Lebedev explained the attitude to it of Russian citizens depending on their political preferences. In many cases the criminal component of the “YUKOS case” turned out to be beyond the framework within which the supporters of some or other political positions were ready to regard the Putin-Khodorkovsky confrontation.

According to a widespread view, the “YUKOS case” was a major event in the first two terms of Putin’s power. In many ways it could well be regarded the main dividing line. For one, the consequences of Khodorkovsky’s arrest, YUKOS bankruptcy, and the use of the virtual “Baikalfinancegroup” for the redistribution of the basic YUKOS assets were of great importance for the relations of Russia and the West. Naturally, the main reason for the tension that arose between Russia and the West was not the arrest of the leader who allegedly offered the Russian people a democratic alternative. Having crushed Khodorkovsky’s business-empire Putin has clearly outlined the bounds of the penetration of transnational and American capital in the key sector of the Russian economy. The demonstration of the fact that the master of property in Russia is the Russian power also meant that in its foreign relations Moscow would resolutely claim equal partnership. Besides, the “YUKOS case” coincided with the first diplomatic opposition of Moscow to American invasion of Iraq. From that time on, a possibility of possible integration of Russia in the American system of global management, which was examined seriously enough during the first two years after the September 11, 2001, terrorist act ceased to be considered by leading world actors as a real option.

The Khodorkovsky-Lebedev affair has become a serious political event for the Russian liberally-minded public. Back in 1999 the electoral bloc “Union of Right Forces” which took the baton of liberal ideology from the “Democratic Choice of Russia” undertook active and relatively successful efforts in order to join the future Putin’s coalition of winners. Approving the resumption of military hostilities in Chechnya, the leaders of the Alliance hoped to see a new Pinochet in Putin, who would not only suppress separatism, but also break internal opposition to the neoliberal economic course. As a result, the “Union of Right Forces” (URF) overcame the 5-percent barrier and formed its own faction at the State Duma (the lower house of Parliament). However, the presence of liberally-minded figures in the government,

who were ready and willing to continue the course of the Gaidar' reforms were in no way connected with the electoral success of the URF. In the 2003 elections it was not enough to support the actions of the authorities, but it was also necessary to formulate one's own attitude to all major aspects of policy, including the campaign against the YUKOS Company. It was necessary to dissociate from Khodorkovsky and support Putin, although with certain reservations, or, on the contrary, to make the overthrown oligarch their banner and resolutely break up with the existing ruling regime. The URF leadership was not bold enough to do either one or the other, although under the pressure of the opposition information mainstream it was forced to denounce the actions of the authorities against the YUKOS management.

The image of regime victim, the courageous behavior of Mikhail Khodorkovsky at the trial and in prison camp and his talent of a political analyst have largely contributed to the growing respect of this man on the part of liberal-minded people. However, these positive feelings proved rather controversial. Respect for Khodorkovsky as a courageous fighter against the ruling regime made it possible to put forward several different interpretations of the past activities of the disgraced oligarch. In one case, one could speak of the insight of the new management of the YUKOS Company, who decided to renounce once and for all the old methods of the accumulation of wealth and sacrifice their assets and freedom for the sake of establishing democratic institutions, rule of law and free market based on honest competition in Russia. In another case, it was necessary to present Khodorkovsky's business as a miraculous exception among business ventures of other oligarchs. Finally, the third strategy presupposed apologetics of the Russian financial oligarchy as one of the excesses of the historically inevitable stage of the primitive accumulation of capital. All these strategies were based on a whole number of reservations and defaults and thus they proved vulnerable to both the supporters of the existing authorities and to those who did not recognize legitimate the redistribution of property undertaken in the 1990-s despite the sad plight of Khodorkovsky.

After his arrest, the so-called systemic liberals have found themselves in a rather delicate situation. Although this term emerged

only at the end of the first decade of this century, the arrival of systemic liberals in the Russian political arena can be synchronized with the coming to power of Vladimir Putin. Throughout the 1990-s the neoliberal reformers had the opportunity to exert considerable, if not decisive, influence on choosing strategic development direction for Russia. Under Putin, they continued to use this influence, however, it was already the influence of executors or supervisors within the framework of any system or subsystem controlled by other forces. Sometimes things were going as far as to their readiness to fulfill the role offered by the authorities, which could hardly have been tackled by any ideologically motivated state-oriented political figure. A case in point was the participation of one of the main organizers of “loans for shares” scheme Alfred Koch in establishing government control over the NTV television channel owned by Vladimir Gusinsky. For real democratic reformers with the *perestroika* spirit, like, say, Yuri Afanasyev, such “systemic liberalism” was tantamount to collaborationism¹. Along with unfolding the YUKOS case, accusations levelled against systemic liberals of collaborationism from the radical enemies of the regime became ever more resolute. It was more difficult to find convincing arguments to approve the active participation of systemic liberals in the vertical of power.

The traditional self-defense of systemic liberals boiled down to the contention that participation in bodies of power or cooperation with them makes it possible to minimize damage from “a turn to authoritarianism,” preserve the basic gains of the 1990-s, and prevent the total domination of representatives of law-enforcement agencies in the key sectors of the economy and the abolition of the autonomy of civil society. Along with this, appeal was preserved to the Pinochet model, allowing to make socio-economic transformations under the protection of the security and military services - something which the liberal forces were unable to achieve through free elections. Finally, the thesis was put forward from time to time that the very existence of systemic liberals would contribute to a softening and further on a

¹ Afanasyev Y. Vozmozhna li segodnya v Rossii liberalnaya missiya? = Is Liberal Mission Possible in Russia Today? // Kontinent. – 2011. – N 148. – Mode of access: <http://magazines.russ.ru/continent/2011/148/a51.html>

change of the regime. The “YUKOS case,” as well as the forced resignation of Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov in February 2004 gave enough grounds to speak of the degeneration of liberals themselves continuing to stay in the ruling bodies. In essence, at the beginning of the second presidential term of Vladimir Putin the pact between the elites was revised and in accordance with the new version systemic liberals were not only given, on the outsourcing basis, some major spheres of economic, social and scientific and educational policies, but they were duty bound to be drawn in the system of relations between branches of power. At the same time, having stopped to occupy key positions in the high echelons of state power, they did not turn into a screen to cover the consolidation of the autocratic ruling regime. The systemic liberals rather play the role of some balance beams or cut-outs allowing the authorities to avoid the overstrengthening of other interest groups or keep their confrontation within an acceptable framework.

* * *

In 2018 the Putin’s “deoligarchisation” turned fifteen-years-old. No doubt, without it, and the struggle accompanying it, the development trajectory of Russia would have been considerably different. The outcome of the struggle, above all, meant that the removal of a serious threat to the vertical of power and the latter remains on the present dominating position. In a way it can be regarded a return to the Russian “historical rut,” or a system of relations formulated by Emperor Paul I in the latter half of the 18th century: “Il n’y a de grand chez moi celui je parle et pendant que je lui parle.” (He spoke in French) [“There is no important person in Russia apart from one to whom I talk and while I talk to one”]. Anyway, at the beginning of the 21st century possession of a really big property in Russia is possible only on the actual permission of the political power and only until this permission is valid. A possibility of conversion of property into political influence, if not completely abolished, is reliably restricted. It can be said that these restrictions have been established quite in time: the first of the so-called color revolutions in the post-Soviet area – the “rose revolution” in Georgia – broke out one month

later after the arrest of Mikhail Khodorkovsky. Meanwhile, one of the most important mechanisms of developing political crises called “color revolutions” is the readiness of some or other groups of the economic elite of a given country to render a sizable resource support to the forces striving to seize power. In the absence of this crucial factor outside pressure aimed at destabilization or change of the ruling regime proves ineffective. This is why the weakening of oligarchs’ influence should be a must for strengthening the sovereignty of Russia as one of the most important international actors.

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