

ОТ АВТОРА

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В сборник включены статьи, анализирующие динамику трансформации современного мирового порядка и роль России в этих процессах. Рассматриваются проблемы взаимосвязи внутренней и внешней политики России. Особое внимание уделяется геополитической конкуренции ведущих мировых держав на постсоветском пространстве.

Для специалистов в области политологии и международных отношений, преподавателей вузов, аспирантов и студентов.

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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 express 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 on 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.