



A PICTURE OF THE EMERGING WORLD: BASIC FEATURES AND TRENDS

REPORT

2024

CONTENTS

PREFACE	3
INTRODUCTION	4
I. BIG TRENDS	8
II. SECTORAL ANALYSIS.....	20
Global Economics and Finance	20
Global Politics	22
The New Economic Order	25
Technology and information	27
Artificial intelligence technologies and the world of the future.....	28
III. SOME SCENARIOS, OPTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EVENTS AND "GRAND STRATEGIES"	30
1. The internal transformation of the West. USA: three scenarios	30
2. Double containment: the "Thucydides' trap"	36
3. Geopolitical reality: Bipolarity 2.0?.....	39
4. Military strategies and the "Battle of the Leviathans"	41
5. The post-Ukrainian future of Europe: post-liberalism and populism..	43
6. The post-Soviet space: the "spoiler" tactics of the West.....	48
7. Asia-Pacific region: the sun rises in the East.....	49
8. The future world order: moving forward to the historical norm through the thorns of dystopias?	51



PREFACE

The proposed analysis used an extensive array of Russian materials and research, including the Report of the Valdai Club "Certificate of Maturity, or the Order that has not yet been" (October 2023), articles and opinions of a number of leading Russian and Western experts. Of course, the report broadly reflects the political thought of the BRICS countries and other countries of the World majority/The Global South.

Due to the importance of the factor of the state of the West and its society for predicting the evolution of the geopolitical situation and the formation of a new world order, the authors relied on the considerations of such authors as the British philosopher John Gray (his book "New Leviathans. Thoughts after liberalism", 2023) and the French postmodern philosopher Jean Baudrillard (collection of his essays "Transparency of Evil", 1990), a number of whose predictions (for example, about recreating the "human space of war" in the presence of nuclear weapons and about the transition of the arms race to the format of "technological mannerism") were fully justified nowadays.

Among the sources is A.V. Yakovenko's book "The Geopolitical Turning Point and Russia" (2023), which provides a reasoned narrative of the current geopolitical situation, including its origins.

The staff of the Institute of Current International Problems of the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation was involved in the work.



INTRODUCTION

The current comprehensive crisis of the world order, or rather revolution, is due to differences in expectations of a "new world order" between the West and the non-Western world after the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact Organization. While everywhere in the world a new beginning was expected in international relations on the de-ideologized basis of the "Westphalian" principles of the UN Charter, the West, with Washington's leading role, chose an inertial policy, assuming an "automatic" extension of its sphere of dominance to the rest of the world as a natural consequence of its "victory in the Cold War." The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was not dissolved and a region-wide, inclusive system of collective security was not created in Europe within the meaning of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, which the continent had not known for a century and a half. There was no post-Cold war settlement, as happened after any "big war" in Europe, although Western capitals have been referring to it for some time, indirectly recognizing its necessity.

In 1994, the United States decided to expand NATO to the East, which George Kennan immediately described as "the most fateful in the entire period after the end of the Cold War." As a result, a new stage of confrontation between the West and Russia was set in motion, which served as a catalyst for the destruction of the post-war international legal order with the central role of the United Nations, launching the process of what can be called a new 'Thirty Years' War in Europe (this time in the Euro-Atlantic). Like the totality of the two world wars and the interwar period, it refers to the Wars of Religion, the line under which was drawn by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 – it brought religious (ideological and value) differences beyond the framework of interstate relations.



The Ukrainian crisis provoked by the United States, including Russia's Special military operation (SMO) in Ukraine with the aim of its demilitarization and denazification, marks the endgame of this thirty-year conflict. The West's refusal to radically transform the world order on collectively agreed principles drove the disease deep, promising a sharp, and not without shocks, course of this process, which meets the imperatives of world development, stomping on the spot, if not going "negative". Especially if we take into account the new quality of the common challenges and threats of our time, which require collective efforts of the entire world community, which is impossible, as experience shows, without overcoming the old agenda of world politics, its instincts and ideological prejudices.

Henry Kissinger, in his 2022 book "Leadership," referring to the experience of "transformational diplomacy" by R. Nixon, who established diplomatic relations with China, writes that he thereby "introduced multipolarity into the global system." In his opinion, America is now facing what Nixon inherited from his predecessors, referring to the Vietnam War. And at the heart of the current crisis in American diplomacy lies, first of all, the fact that Nixon's legacy has not become "a lasting school of American foreign policy, which would involve recalibration not only of strategy, but also of mindset." Among other things, it would have to be about the "agreed-upon framework of legitimacy as the soundest structure for peace" and on this foundation – about the "global balance of power".



The United States, through the thesis of some "rules-based order" launched into circulation, actually denies and destroys the post-war world order based on collectively agreed, universal, that is, binding on all international legal instruments, primarily the UN Charter. It is one step from the denial of international law to the denial of law in general, including the basis of Anglo-Saxon market capitalism - the right to inviolability of private property. And this step is being taken by the United States and its allies, undermining one of the fundamental foundations of its constitutional order, which indicates the presence of a systemic crisis in Western society - another dimension of the current global transformation, which refers to its previous crisis, which was resolved in the events of 1914 to 1945. As then, everything is accompanied by a crisis of liberalism and the very liberal idea, mutating in the direction of totalitarianism, suppression not only of freedom of speech, but also of freedom of thought.

Russia, in turn, has always consistently defended international legitimacy, whether it were attempts to prevent the First World War by convening the Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907, or efforts to conclude an Eastern Pact in the second half of the 30s in order to guarantee the borders of Germany's eastern neighbors, which could prevent a new German aggression and a Second world war. Alexander Gorchakov also wrote in his famous ("Russia is not angry. Russia is concentrating") circular dispatch dated September 2, 1856: "we have spoken up in all cases when we considered it necessary to speak in support of law." And what is no less appropriate, in his dispatch dated October 31, 1870, we find: " His Imperial Majesty is convinced that this peace and this equilibrium will acquire a new guarantee when they rely on foundations more just and durable than in a situation that no great power could accept as a natural condition of its existence."



Thus, we are faced with two directly opposite historically determined approaches to the creation of a new world order. These fundamental differences, which could have been avoided if Western elites had behaved differently after the end of the Cold War, have set the geopolitical dynamics of the last 30 years and led to the current conflict. They have acquired a material appearance in the pressure on Russia – military-political, sanctions, at the level of identity and history, including the "cancellation" of Russian culture, and information and propaganda, but also in countering it by the Russian side. In the focus of this confrontation and the ideas, that lie behind it about the substance of modern international relations, there turned out to be all the trends in world politics and world development, which are discussed in the proposed report.



I. BIG TRENDS

1. The dynamics of events on the world stage today is characterized by the ongoing polarization and disintegration of the fabric of international cooperation. The relevant processes were initiated by Western countries in the framework of waging a hybrid (including total sanctions and economic) war against Russia, unleashed clearly without a sober assessment of the situation and the prospects for its outcome. The policy of inflicting a "strategic defeat" on Moscow has already led to the rupture of logistics chains, the degradation of globalization processes and the transformation of the "great power rivalry" into a full-fledged "cold war", with the risks of nuclear escalation and direct armed conflict between Russia and NATO.

The situation is amplified by the dependence of the position of Western elites on domestic political turbulence in both the United States and Europe, against the background of worsening socio-economic problems. Using the Ukrainian crisis as a means of solving electoral problems and rallying allies, the Biden administration and forces oriented towards it have relied on the depletion of Russia's military and economic potential and consider what is happening as a means to restore the unipolar world order in the format of globalization and preserve its global dominance, the immediate threat to which comes from Russia's sovereign and independent policy. Moreover, this time Russia has been challenged not only by the traditional military and political challenge, but also by a threat to the civilizational order - at the level of identity and history, which determines the existential nature of the current conflict.

2. At the instigation of the West, attempts to shape a global agenda have practically lost their relevance. We can say that it collapsed. The refusal to cooperate with Russia on key issues such as arms control and nuclear non-proliferation, preventing the militarization of outer space and cyberspace, countering global warming, combating poverty and inequality, maintaining



food security and many others, has affected the effectiveness of international cooperation in finding collective responses to new challenges and threats, at least, it got complicated. In fact, even the prerequisites for the formation of unified approaches have disappeared. In the meantime, the West has taken a major step towards its self-isolation from the entire non-Western world, marking the beginning of the self-organization of the World majority, including Russia, China and India, as an alternative pole of world development, and in the format of such platforms as BRICS, SCO and NAM/Group of 77, which can form the basis of a new, inclusive and effective system of world order.

3. Regional security systems are rapidly deteriorating, in particular in Europe and Asia. The established architecture of European security, due to its NATO-centricity and the West's refusal to compromise with Moscow, practically ceased to exist with the aggravation of the Ukrainian crisis. All the frozen conflicts, ranging from Cyprus and Kosovo to the Middle East settlement, faced the threat of full-scale reactivation, while the international community lost tools, already insufficiently effective, to maintain control over the situation. In Asia, Washington's formation of a network of anti-Chinese alliances creates prospects for the start of a full-fledged arms race and an increase in artificially provoked confrontation between regional powers.

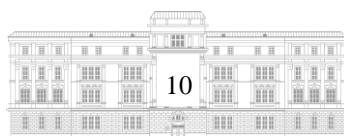
This is also supported by the current aggravation of the Middle East conflict, which has become a consequence of the US monopolization of the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian settlement, and Washington's desire to abandon the very principle of a two-state solution to the Palestinian problem. This situation, which threatens to turn into a full-scale regional conflict involving non-regional participants, indicates the danger of delaying the resolution or freezing smoldering conflicts, which should include the domestic civil conflict in eastern Ukraine, which could well have been resolved on the



basis of generally recognized norms and principles laid down in the Minsk Agreements of 2015, approved by the UN Security Council. No matter how the crisis in the Middle East evolves, it is already working to further consolidate the trend of the separate existence of the West and the World majority, which acquires a distinct cultural and civilizational dimension.

The growing polarization and bloc-building in international affairs have dealt a blow to the existence of a single information and economic space. There is a rapid compartmentalization of the Internet. Against the background of the disintegration of the foundations of the Bretton Woods system, there is a demand for regional trade and economic unions. Against the background of an obvious civilizational schism, the tools of the "soft power" of the West have shown their ineffectiveness, the West taking the risk of using interdependence as a weapon with catastrophic consequences for themselves. As a result, there is a destabilization and disintegration of the global world into regional clusters, which serve as material for building a new world order on a polycentric basis, reflecting the cultural and civilizational diversity of the world (including Russia as a state-civilization), which has been suppressed by Western domination for centuries.

4. All this suggests that the world is once again experiencing a turning point in its development, the outcome of which will determine, among other things, the horizons of international relations and the parameters of global governance by the turn of 2030, and, most likely, the processes of world transformation will take another 5 to 10 years. The coming years will be a period of rethinking of the conceptual approaches of all international actors to what kind of system of international relations should be that meets the requirements of the time. There is no doubt that Western hegemony has worn out and brought the world to a dead end, has become equal to itself and no longer serves as a provider of international "public goods".



The paradigm of further development of the emerging system we are witnessing will be formulated largely depending on the results of the SMO in Ukraine. Being played out in a hybrid format limited to the territory of Ukraine, this conflict will essentially have the consequences of a world war due to the close involvement of the collective West (including NATO and the European Union) and Russia in it. After the SMO, the world will no longer be the same. The outcome of this conflict, as the endgame of an eight-century long "showdown" between the Western world and Russia, will serve as a powerful catalyst for the formation of a multipolar order that will provide a space of empowerment for all states and peoples. There will be a disintegration of the historical West in its geopolitical configuration that took shape after World War II, with the prospect of reintegration of all the three of its constituent parts into their respective regional layouts – North America, Eurasia and East Asia/APR.

5. Most likely, the painful parting of the United States from the role of leader will continue, accompanied by an increase in domestic turbulence in the country. It is obvious that the consolidation of Western political forces in the face of the artificially imposed "Russian threat" is temporary. Numerous internal conflicts in both the United States and Europe have gone into a latent mode, but they will require their resolution, since we are talking about a complex crisis of Western society comparable to the Great Depression of the 30s. The way out of the intermediate crisis of the late 70s was found on the path of transition to neoliberal economic policy (Reaganomics-Thatcherism) and globalization, which subjected the post-war "social contract" in Western countries to a "creeping" revision.

The West was not ready for a protracted conflict in Ukraine, while the plan for a "hybrid blitzkrieg" against Russia failed. So far, Washington is striving to end the conflict in Ukraine in 2024 or 2025 through a negotiated settlement on its own conditions unacceptable to Russia: a cease-fire, the



preservation of the current Ukraine with the current regime and ideology in a geographically reduced form with the possibility of continuing its militarization by the West (but without formal membership in NATO) while refusing to recognize our new borders and, accordingly, discrimination against citizens living in new Russian regions. The sanctions regime is supposed to be maintained until the final settlement, with some concessions. The main motive for this approach is the inability of the United States and its European allies to wage a "two-front war", despite the fact that China is seen as a long-term challenge to Western hegemony.

Accordingly, the general structure of the geopolitical world order, created by Washington after the end of the Cold War and experiencing a systemic crisis, can hardly be revived. The inherent political bloc mindset can only lead to a large-scale conflict on a global scale, which the main actors, including the United States and the collective West, will strive to avoid in every possible way. This is due to the interests of the business, which needs stability and predictability. An alternative in the form of a more or less systemic consensus that meets the needs and approaches of various centers of power in Eurasia, Africa and Latin America, as happened at the time of the collapse of colonial empires in the first half of the twentieth century, seems more plausible. In general, the situation in the Russia-USA-China triangle will obviously have a predominant influence on the future global configuration, encouraging the United States to accept multipolarity as a "new normality". The US policy of simultaneously containing Russia and China actually contributes to the redistribution of economic power and influence in the Western Alliance in favor of the United States.

6. The increasing role of the factor of military force in world politics, with the apparent unwillingness of the West to engage in a direct conflict with Russia and China, causes uncertainty about the prospects for maintaining global and regional stability in the coming 10 to 15 years. Much will depend



on the pace of change of the present generation of Western elites, formed in the greenhouse conditions of the "unipolar moment" of the last 30 years.

7. It is possible to predict the erosion of the European Union system, which unites the most consistent allies of the United States, which continue to lose their sovereignty and, despite the obvious political and economic costs to themselves, slide into position of unquestioning subordination to Washington's policy, using European business, including German, to reindustrialize America and strengthen the Anglo-Saxon Washington-London-Canberra axis. This situation, objectively, conceals, in the future, the possibility of strengthening centrifugal trends in the EU and increasing the potential for Western European countries to take protective measures to ensure national interests. The current geopolitical nullification of the EU does not give reason to expect "strategic autonomy" and "European defense identity" in the foreseeable future: most likely, the time for such projects is irretrievably lost, and in the new reality those will not be in demand.

8. The further increase in the processes of deglobalization seems obvious. Factors of achieving economic, industrial, scientific, technological, monetary and financial sovereignty are becoming increasingly important for States claiming to be regional leaders. Along with this, the center of gravity of foreign policy activity will inevitably shift towards the Global majority – the regions of Asia, Eurasia, Africa and Latin America.

9. In the context of deglobalization and regionalization of international relations, the active formation of macro-regions (large spaces, supra-regions) begins, which will have, depending on their subject matter (issues of a political or financial and economic nature, issues of security and food security, etc.), varying compositions of countries.

Due to the active development in the era of rapid globalization of information technologies and extensive logistics links in recent decades, macroregions will be predominantly supra-regional in nature (going



beyond the traditional format of geographical proximity and classical regionalism). For the next 10 to 15 years, the two largest macro-regions that are currently taking shape will most likely be two macro-regional blocs - the countries of the West and the states of the World majority.

Future international institutions and organizations will set and geographically cover the borders of new macroregions, taking into account the subject matters of interstate interaction within the relevant macroregion. Economically, the minimum demographic basis for the emerging macroregions will be areas with a population of at least 600 million people, which will be a sufficient minimum for the development of the market of the corresponding macroregion.

10. The international legal order established in the post-war period with the central role of the United Nations and universal international legal instruments has actually suspended its operation in the context of a systemic confrontation between the West and Russia. This applies primarily to the maintenance of peace and security. In addition, the main multilateral treaties and agreements aimed at preventing nuclear tests, maintaining nuclear parity, arms limitation and putting limits on dangerous military activities have ceased to operate as a result of the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from them or the suspension of their application by the Russian side in response.

At the same time, there is a growing demand from the majority of the world's States, primarily developing countries, for inclusiveness of the existing global governance architecture. There is also a political will on the part of these countries to reflect their cultural and historical identity in their foreign policy and world affairs. These trends are already recognized by the leaders of the administration of J.Biden. The question is how far Washington can go in adapting the institutions it controls to these imperatives. It is possible that this will be too little and too late. Therefore, it is also possible



that the transformation, renewal or restructuring of the UN system on a truly inclusive basis will not be without institutional upheavals.

11. The process of transformation and reform of the monetary and financial system, founded in Bretton Woods on a dollar basis, which began in 1971, is consistently and at an accelerated pace moving towards reducing the international role of the dollar and other Western currencies. Using the dollar as a weapon undermines the very legitimacy of this system. At the same time, there are real prospects for the formation of a multi-element system of regional currencies used in international payments, primarily in the regions.

12. Integration associations of states, mainly located in the Eurasian zone – BRICS, SCO, EAEU, ASEAN - are making an increasingly prominent bid to become a powerful economic center of power. The basis for the implementation of the concept of the Greater Eurasian Partnership will inevitably be strengthened by the destruction – institutional and otherwise – of Western control in this region.

Among the defining trends is the continued shift of the focus of global political and economic activity to the Asia-Pacific region. The combination of geopolitical processes in the Asia-Pacific region and the peculiarities of regional political culture distinguishes it as a promising platform for the transition to a new architecture of regional security, in line with the changed realities. So, it is fundamentally important that in Asia, the tradition of searching for solutions to emerging problems on an inclusive and consensual basis, within a rather unique system of "checks and balances", without using "foreign" models borrowed from outside, is firmly rooted, and integration here, unlike in Europe, is not accompanied by initial geopolitical rivalry (despite differences in development models and, so far, despite attempts to "break" the specific "Asian paradigm" of interstate relations from the outside).



Only in this region of the world could there be forecasts and projects like the "Great Convergence" of Kishore Mahbubani (Singapore). The mood for positive multilateralism, international law and the central role of the United Nations, multi-vector diplomacy, pragmatism and de-ideologization clearly prevails here. As a legacy of the Non-Aligned Movement, the theme of peaceful coexistence has once again "played out" in the current situation. These are the foreign policy ideologies of China ("Community of the common Destiny of Mankind"), the multi-vector, with a various geometry, Indian strategy ("Act East Policy" and "Act West Policy", as well as "reformed multilateralism" in relation to the UN, WHO, WTO, IMF/World Bank). The activities of such formats as BRICS, SCO and the G-20 meet these principles. With varying degrees of certainty, the countries of the region, if they are not military and political allies of the United States, oppose Western strategies, including sanctions, politicization of development issues and the priority of security issues in their traditional reading over development issues and new challenges and threats common to all mankind.

There are enough sober forces in the Asia-Pacific region that adhere to a system of views according to which the imposition from the outside of artificial formulas of "order" leading to a split in regional politics is categorically unacceptable. Therefore, one of the scenarios for extrapolating such a trend is a healthy consolidation of these forces, in particular, in the continental part of Asia, where integration processes are more advanced, where there are noticeably fewer potential "chains of allies" of Washington (compared with the "Pacific" part of the Asia-Pacific region), and finally, where Russia and China play primary roles based on their strategic cooperation. Therefore, it is reasonable to proceed from the assumption that strengthening Russian positions here and conducting active diplomacy in the region acquire a strategic character for Russia – a



kind of "pivot to the East" while rejecting the very idea of "embedding in the West", which turned out to be an illusion. Now Russia's cultural and civilizational self-determination is under way, predetermined by its entire history as a multinational and multi-confessional state compatible with other cultures and civilizations in contrast to the Western civilization, which fails the test of any kind of polyvalence. The West will seek to "kill" the Russian idea, which, according to the definition of N. Berdyaev (in his book "The Russian Idea" of 1946), boils down to "the idea of communitarianism and brotherhood of men and peoples."

13. The importance of resource availability to States, including minerals, especially those of strategic importance: energy, food, water resources, including freshwater reserves, is increasing. In the context of increasing temperature fluctuations and weather anomalies in recent decades, degradation of agricultural lands, pollution of freshwater sources, as well as the active growth of the world's population, food security issues along with access to energy resources (including fertilizers as the "second cycle" of energy resources processing) come to the fore.

We should expect a sharp increase in interest and competition for the resources of underdeveloped regions, primarily the Arctic, and later the Antarctic. The next steps will be the "offshore" spaces of the World Ocean. Rivalry and competition for the development of these zones, in addition to their own exceptionally great importance, in the near future will become the main drivers of economic and technological development of countries, factors determining their place in the emerging new, horizontal international system.

14. At the same time, advances in technology, especially in areas such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology and renewable energy sources (RES), will continue to shape a new political economy of global development, the contours of which are not yet in sight.



The dynamic development of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, the explosive growth of computing power and the creation of quantum technologies, transformations in the field of production, accumulation and storage of electricity (including the development of renewable energy technologies, hydrogen energy and fast neutron reactors) collectively lead humanity towards another technological leap. The inevitable consequence of such a leap will be tougher competition between the leading technological powers for the form and on the basis of whose technologies the transition to a new technological order will be carried out.

A clear evidence of this competition is the process of energy transition in the context of combating climate change, actively carried out by a bloc of Western states within the framework of the international climate agenda and involving the use of Western technological solutions and investment opportunities in the transition of the world's states to a carbon neutral economy.

15. The 21st century is likely to be the Century of Migration, as the authors of the study of the same name Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas and Mark J. Miller are convinced (Fifth Edition, translation of 2022). It will have contradictory consequences for all States, including the crisis of the policy of "multiculturalism". In part, the motives will be the usual ones: economic or the inability of the world community to resolve internal and regional conflicts. But it is also about the legacy of the colonial era and the politics of neocolonial dependence, bearing in mind the unequal terms of trade that developing countries were forced to put up with. But the main and inevitable trends are the "increase in ethnic and cultural diversity in most countries", which becomes a test of cultural and civilizational compatibility for all states, especially the Western ones, where migration issues, superimposed on the crisis state of their societies, will be one of the most important factors in domestic political and integration processes (this topic

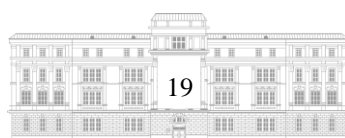


outweighed the scales in favor of supporters of the UK's withdrawal from the EU of the 2016 referendum).

16. At the same time, the Western elites making good on their biopolitical temptations cannot be ruled out as a way to control population growth, including neo-Malthusianism, ecofascism, eugenics, lgbtiism and transgenderism.

17. As for the ideological basis of public life, the jux-to-position seems inevitable of the spheres of worldview, ideology and cultural and historical identification. This will create prerequisites for restoring the importance of the factors of attractiveness of societies and States in international relations, but on a balanced and truly competitive basis. The unifying trend of Western politics will be eliminated, as well as the interventionism it serves.

It is necessary to proceed from two options for the development of these processes: a "soft landing", that is predominance of rational approaches and principles of modern policies and a "hard landing", that is the accumulation of critical mass in a complex system with a landslide scenario at any moment of time, any event, whether of a geopolitical, regional or domestic nature, serving as a trigger, regardless of its size and significance within the existing and increasingly "hyperreal" coordinates.



II. SECTORAL ANALYSIS

Global Economics and Finance

- There is a kind of "black redistribution" in terms of the importance of natural resources, including minerals, energy and food. At the same time, the dismantling of the Western system of neocolonial domination and exploitation of developing countries begins while the United States attempts to restore the real sector of its economy.
- With the continuation of the energy transition (regardless of its speed), international contradictions on access to hydrocarbons (as the basis of the current technological order) will be supplemented by contradictions on access of the world's states to rare earth metals (as the basis of the future technological order) used in the production of most technologies in the field of renewable energy. It is also important that, as in the case of hydrocarbon resources, the number of countries with the largest reserves of such rare earth metals is limited.
- At the same time, the United States and its Western allies are building a new rigid framework that hinders the development of developing countries, using such global challenges and threats as, for example, climate change. Appealing to the imperative of solving this and other problems, to the interests of all mankind, the West puts developing countries in a deliberately losing position, not taking into account their level of development, which is difficult to interpret other than cultivating their neocolonial dependence, including technological, and solving their own problems at someone else's expense.
- The problems of their own development come to the fore for all countries, including the Western ones. This circumstance, in principle, serves as a powerful unifying factor in global politics, the effect of which will gradually make its way and find recognition in a wide range of states, regardless of their level of development.



- Shortages of raw materials and food due to sanctions, disruption of logistics chains, retooling of production and problems associated with excessively high pace of energy transition, create prerequisites for a qualitatively new economic environment in which traditional methods and tools of macroeconomic regulation will not work.
- The financial burden is increasing due to high interest rates, primarily in Western countries, which have to respond to the challenge of the decline of the financialization of the economy and reindustrialization. In this regard, it is necessary to reduce spending, including on defense and social security. Inevitably, the costs of accommodating immigration from other regions of the world and attempts to integrate them into the society of Western countries will increase.
- In general, the new economic system will be characterized by a transition from a financial and economic model based on the principles of speculative economics and the dominance of derivative financial instruments towards a return to the real economy, which will be key to solving the problems of one's own development and ensuring economic, technological and industrial sovereignty.
- Beijing's Belt and Road initiative is gradually expanding China's influence in Eurasia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, North and East Africa, as well as in Mediterranean Europe. Thanks to this project, Beijing's indirect influence in these regions is gradually replacing the American one, which persists on the British Isles and in Northern Europe, including Germany.



Global Politics

- The bloc formed by the collective West to contain Russia and China is isolated, including geographically, from the rest of the world, including the fastest growing economies and markets. Countries outside this American bloc refuse to make a choice between Washington and its alleged opponents, remain open to doing business with both sides and take a detached position towards the sanctions policy of the West, including the indirect transfer of export products to end consumers.
- The ability to organize a global response to problems, such as climate change or pandemics, is drastically reduced. Within the framework of comprehensive regionalization, responses to the relevant challenges will take shape at the regional level. Naturally, the problems of the global response will persist and worsen, contributing to the secondary self-organization of the world community coming from the regional level.
- The basis of the US global influence – military capabilities – is losing its importance against the background of the challenges of the emerging world order, which require an economic response and coordinated collective efforts of the entire world community in order to take advantage of the increased interdependence of states.
- The military superiority of the United States is becoming a thing of the past, regional forces are increasing their military capabilities; Russia, China, India, Iran, North Korea and a number of other regional leaders are developing new weapons systems.
- Given the risks of escalation of a proxy war in Ukraine between the United States, NATO and Russia, the growing likelihood of a war between China and the United States in the Taiwan Straits, the DPRK's policy, which considers nuclear deterrence necessary for the survival of the state, the nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan and the current aggravation of



the Middle East crisis, the danger of using nuclear weapons is much higher than in the Cold War era.

– Russia rejects the West-centrism/Eurocentrism of the last three hundred years of its development and international positioning and is turning towards the Global majority represented by non-Western countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, strengthening cooperation with China, India, Brazil and South Africa within the framework of BRICS, SCO and other open formats, including situational ones - to search for solutions to certain specific tasks of their own and global development.

– Turkey is reassessing its historical past, starting with its participation in the Crimean War, and defines itself as a West Asian and Islamic state, increasingly avoiding making good on its obligations in NATO.

– NATO and other closed military-political, trade and economic unions with a strong ideological component are losing their *raison d'être*, unity, and their members are gradually reducing the scope of their respective obligations or even withdrawing from these alliances.

– Germany, Japan and other states that were dependent on the United States after World War II and under their occupation ever since, are starting to rearm and begin to pursue their own foreign policy. At the same time, attempts are being made to rethink their past, including the recent one, with an inevitable period of "confusion and vacillation" within their own society, ideological and other self-identification, as well as in foreign policy.

– Latin America is developing relations with China, India, Iran, Russia, Turkey and other countries, which is gradually weakening American hegemony in the Western Hemisphere.

– Africa is the largest reserve of raw materials; the continent's economies, liberating themselves from neocolonial dependence, are increasingly strengthening ties with Brazil, China, India, Russia, Iran and Turkey.



- The most important burden of Western policy will remain the fact that sustainable solutions to world development have not been found within the framework of the coordinates controlled by it, primarily in developing countries, up to the outright disregard of the problems of their development in the last 30 to 40 years within the framework of neoliberal economic policy.



The New Economic Order

- Russian energy, metals, minerals and other natural resources feed the economies of the Global South and are no longer available at the same prices for the United States and members of the coalition hostile to Russia.
- American sanctions give China and Russia a powerful incentive to create consortia with Iran and other countries to overcome dependence on America in the field of civilian and military production, as well as the production of dual-use products, including, for example, passenger aircraft.
- The ability of the United States to finance the projection of its global influence with long-term Treasury bonds is increasingly questionable, given the reputational damage caused by the confiscation of dollar reserves of Iran, Venezuela, Libya, Afghanistan and Russia.
- The growing risks of unilateral US sanctions are forcing countries to settle exports and imports in national currencies, use swaps for exchange rates with major trading partners, switch to hard currencies other than the dollar, introduce cross-border digital currency terminals and create additional settlement centers for international trade. The exorbitant privileges that ensured the global dominance of the United States are gradually being lost.
- China, India, Russia, Arab oil producers and other growing economic and financial powers are responding to incentives to create a separate financial world order that will become an alternative to the SWIFT dollar system and undermine the effectiveness of American sanctions as a foreign policy tool.
- The dependence of the United States and its allies on fuel supplies for nuclear power plants is increasing due to the fact that Russia and its friendly countries have the main resources.
- The exhaustion of the American-centric model of globalization generates many regional trade and investment regimes and breaks up global markets, from which major players, primarily the United States and the EU, can be excluded; the tone is set by leading regional players and regional



integration associations where they exist or are being created, for example, ASEAN and the African Union.

- Disputes over international transactions are resolved bilaterally or through regional processes; States are increasingly resorting to global dispute resolution mechanisms, including the WTO.

- The world continues to appeal to specialized UN bodies to solve technical problems, but the Security Council and other international organizations, paralyzed by the rivalry and disagreements of the great powers, have lost their diplomatic potential. It will take 10 to 15 years to recreate effective global governance structures, during which all processes will be "settled" at the regional level. Only then will it be possible to judge the specific parameters of the new global architecture.

- Practically no new global, universal treaties and agreements that establish binding rules for all are concluded. There is a further atrophy of global regulatory regimes. At the same time, an intercivilizational consensus is maturing, which reflects the cultural and civilizational diversity of the world and will serve as the basis for a new system of global governance - most likely, an updated UN with an increase in the number of permanent members of the Security Council, designed to make it truly representative and effective.

However, the experience of historical analogies and transformations of existing systems and subsystems of international relations indicates that, as a rule, the tools and mechanisms of the aging system of international relations ceased to exist (although individual elements, of course, could be borrowed within the framework of the new system). With this in mind, there is reason to believe that the probability of successful reform of the UN system exists, but such prospects are far from guaranteed.



Technology and information

- There are different technological standards in the regions, new technologies are sometimes available only where they were developed.
- Cyberspace will become a new stage for both interstate interaction and regulation, as well as for fierce confrontation (especially given the desire of nuclear powers to avoid direct military confrontation, as well as taking into account the possibility of using proxy warfare tools in the field of cyberspace, which minimizes the risks for a particular state to be accused of aggression).
- The Internet is being transformed into regional and national zones, separated from each other by firewalls. The main tasks of states in the field of Internet development will be the regulation of the global Internet (or its macro-regional elements in case of non-negotiability of certain countries on a global scale), the fight against anonymity, configuring the Internet to meet the needs of its use in the interests of developing digital trade and using digital currencies, ensuring the security of critical infrastructure from the consequences of cyber attacks, etc.



Artificial intelligence technologies and the world of the future

One cannot simply compare the rapid development of AI to the breakthrough technologies of the past (from printing to nuclear energy), which radically impacted global development and international relations. Due to the very nature of this technology, future qualitative progress in the development of AI will mean the possibility of a qualitative and rapid breakthrough in all areas of scientific knowledge and technology, which will have no analogies in the history of mankind and which is fraught, among other things, with serious geopolitical consequences.

There is a transition from the usual forms of narrow AI to more complex ones. Multimodal and multitasking intelligent systems are rapidly developing, which is a significant step towards the creation of general artificial intelligence (GAI), which, experts believe, will equal and surpass the capabilities of modern humans in all areas of cognitive activity. The creation of an GAI that does not go beyond machine intelligence and remains under the general control of man, in synchronous conjunction with the corresponding intelligent robots, will objectively create decisive prerequisites for a radical transformation of the modern world, which can be characterized as cyberphysical. A breakthrough in creating a strong AI based on qualitatively different principles becomes the most important condition for the formation of a multipolar geopolitical reality, which involves the protection and export of digital sovereignty, as well as understanding the place of man in this new world – in order to counter approaches that are in line with the ideas of transhumanism.

Further progress in the field of AI can and should provide qualitative improvement and development of all aspects of human life with socially oriented, balanced development of this industry, whose potential is truly enormous. However, due to the acute contradictions of modernity, the presence of influential state and non-state antisocial actors, quantitative



and qualitative progress in the development of AI can give rise to various negative scenarios, up to the destruction of humanity.

AI technologies can have a profound impact on the system of international relations through the creation of new, unbalanced geopolitical hierarchies. This growing impact may not be related to a specific crisis or war or a limited time sequence of events, but will nevertheless have long-term consequences, blurring the boundaries between war and peace.

There is a tendency towards attempts at cybercolonization, which will increase the difference between the few states that possess and have mastered new technological tools of geopolitical power, and the vast majority of countries – consumers of advanced technologies.

It is possible to foresee that these destabilizing trends will manifest themselves with new intensity and speed due to the rapid improvement of AI. The implicit aspect of digital imperialism will not be easy for political leaders to take into account, and it is unlikely to be integrated into the collective consciousness of the population precisely because of its latent nature.

A special field for future risks is created by the growing practice of malicious use of AI, including in the information and psychological spheres, which requires an adequate assessment and response. As Vladimir Putin stressed in his speech at the conference "Journey into the world of Artificial Intelligence" on November 24, 2023, that "it is necessary to use Russian solutions in the field of creating reliable, transparent and safe artificial intelligence systems for humans, as well as to involve specialists in the humanities in the joint work." The integration of the efforts of technical and humanitarian specialists is a necessary condition for the systematic, rapid and safe development of AI today and to an even greater extent in the near future.



III. SOME SCENARIOS, OPTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EVENTS AND "GRAND STRATEGIES"

1. The internal transformation of the West. USA: three scenarios

The state of the West, of Western society itself, is one of the main unknowns and, perhaps, the key factor that determines the multivariate development of events in global politics, economics and finance in the near and medium term. There is no doubt that the West is undergoing a transformation caused by the end of the cycle of five hundred years of domination and roughly similar to the one that the Soviet Union entered into in the second half of the 80s. In its significance, it is comparable to the previous one, which was associated with two world wars, experiments with fascism/Nazism and the Great Depression of the 30s and led to the introduction of universal suffrage, a radical change in the status of women, the creation of a large middle class, which became the mainstay of Western democracy, and the "socialization" of the economy, which was carried out, not least of all, because of the geopolitical imperative – the need to respond to the "challenge of the Soviet Union." However, obviously, this transformation will be of a deeper nature – one cannot enter the same stream twice.

The current transformation is taking place in qualitatively different conditions: there is no factor of bipolar ideological confrontation restraining/disciplining the elites (so far, the attempt to artificially recreate the appearance of such – along the lines of liberal democracies-autocracies - is not impressive); neoliberal economic policy combined with the globalization of the last 40 years, in fact, meant the rejection by the elites, who, in turn, were subjected to averaging (which emasculated the political process), of the post-war "social contract" in the form of a socially oriented economy; there was a return to capitalism of the pre-1929 model, only in conditions of universal suffrage and social obligations of the state; not only the traditional working class, but also the middle class was being destroyed;

the Western economy gained its "second wind" not on its merits, but due to financialization and simply by default, i.e. an incoming geopolitical factor – the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR which created the illusion of no alternative to Western values and development models (so called "The end of history").

The thesis about the overdue systemic crisis of the West is becoming commonplace in political science circles of the Western countries themselves. So, Peter Trubovitz and Brian Burgun in the just-published book "Geopolitics and Democracy. The Western liberal order from foundation to breaking" recognize that the removal of the disciplining constraints of the Cold War era played a cruel joke with Western elites. As a result, the balance between the goals of domestic and foreign policy was disrupted, the latter began to lose legitimacy due to the devastating consequences of market globalization for Western society itself. In their assessment, "by the time the British voted for Brexit and Donald Trump was elected president, the previously effective cycle between foreign policy and party democracy had turned into a vicious circle." And the National Security Advisor to the President of the United States, Jake Sullivan, in the article for the Foreign Affairs magazine (November-December 2023 issue), trying to justify the policy of the Biden administration, had to admit that the country is unprepared for the new geopolitical situation. In particular, they are talking about such tasks as "inclusive economic growth", restoring "domestic sources of national power" and ensuring the inclusiveness of international institutions. The situation, figuratively speaking, "requires revisiting long held assumptions."

The maturation of the transformational moment in the West was evidenced by the polarization of public sentiment, the growth of the protest electorate (the elites labeled it "populism", which drove the disease inside), the emergence of an excessive core native (white) population with an increase



in immigration from developing countries, which led to the crisis of the policy of "multiculturalism"; the elites' desire to control the "conditions of debate" in society through political correctness, control over traditional media and outright suppression of freedom of speech and, finally, the "culture wars" (especially in the United States), which meant nothing less than antagonisms around national identity, including issues of history, traditional values, primarily family values, and faith. The result was a crisis of neoliberalism and the very liberal idea. Christopher Lasch also drew attention to these processes in his book "The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy" back in late 90-ties.

It is possible to predict the following options for the development and outcome of the systemic and structural crisis of Western society, each of which will have serious geopolitical consequences, including for the established post-war architecture of international relations and the system of global governance, which themselves are in a crisis, transitional state. Due to American leadership, the central role of the United States in the global empire of the West in two incarnations – as a nation–state and as an instrument of transnational forces - much, if not everything, will depend on what is happening in the United States:

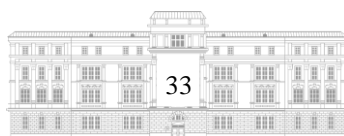
- the stake of the ultra-liberal elites of the United States, led by the top of the Democratic Party, on an ultra-liberal revolution in the country, its export to other Western or controlled countries and then giving it the global scope of a "world revolution": the destruction of the historically established national identity, including its social component, and the creation of a new one in the spirit of the "cancel culture", "critical racial theory" and other products of ultra-liberalism, the substitution of traditional human rights with the thesis of "inclusivity" with an emphasis on the rights of sexual minorities and transgender people, which is designed to disguise the resumption of traditional capitalism as reproducing and reinforcing



inequality. Such "engineering of souls" and "self-creation" (according to John Gray), or "man-godhood" according to Dostoevsky, with attempts to invade freedom of thought, mark the totalitarian mutation/evolution of liberalism in line with Dostoevsky's prophecies in his "Demons" (Shigalev: "Coming out of boundless freedom, I conclude with boundless despotism"; Peter Verkhovensky on "two generations of unheard-of debauchery") and the "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor", which, thus, are of universal importance, including for the fate of liberalism, brought to the absolute with the destruction of the balance of rights and duties, the atomization of society, the destruction of the reproductive family and falling into an Orwellian dystopia (predicted by Dostoevsky).

In the case of such Western-style Bolshevism, based on marginal segments of the population, a real civil war in the United States is possible, the country's isolation in the Western community (in other Western countries, ultra-liberal ideas will be more difficult to "sell") and the wider world community - similar to what Soviet Russia faced in the early years of its existence. The historical West is gradually being destroyed and its constituent parts and individual countries are participating in the self-organization of regional communities. The United States and its associates are engaged in exporting the revolution with corresponding consequences for international stability, peace and security, including the role of the nuclear factor. China's containment strategy is failing, primarily because of the interest of American allies, both in Europe and Asia, in developing trade and economic cooperation with Beijing. China is resolving the Taiwan issue on its own terms, not necessarily by force, but due to the undermining of trust in the United States everywhere in the world and its worsening domestic conflict.

- the core native (white) America/the middle class manages to stop the ultra-liberal project, including at the 2024 elections, without violence or as



a result of civil war. The country is engaged in recreating the foundations of its competitiveness in a new, multipolar, highly competitive environment (roughly Trumpism). At the same time, the former structure of American society and its economy is being recreated, including the role of the real sector (including reindustrialization at the expense of European and other allies). Businesses, including the banking sector, refuse to introduce ultra-liberal "inclusivity" into their corporate culture (as was previously the case with the adoption of the "values" of the LGBT community).

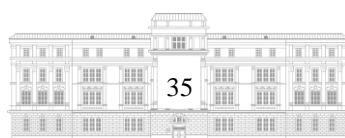
In this case, it is possible to resume pragmatic relations with Russia on a transactional basis; with the Republicans coming to power, the formation of a European defense identity within NATO with reference to the implementation of a ten-year program for the purchase of American weapons; dismantling the European Union to the level of a common market or reformatting its core membership to a currency zone with a common economic policy. The complete scrapping by the US of the global arms control system and strategic stability has put on pause all possible new agreements in this area until a new balance of power is achieved. The United States has lost all the advantages it has gained since the second half of the 80s, starting with the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate and Shorter-Range Missiles.

- the crystallization of domestic political processes in the United States and in the West as a whole is being delayed, with geopolitical uncertainty persisting.

In this regard, the processes of the separate existence of the West and the World majority further evolve. The latter is activating all areas of its self-organization, including the creation of alternatives to the Western coordinates across the entire spectrum - monetary, financial, scientific and technological, insurance, transport and logistics, media and information -



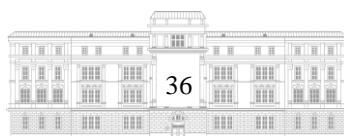
on such platforms as the expanding BRICS and SCO, the African Union and the LAC integration associations.



2. Double containment: the "Thucydides' trap"

The United States, by opposing China, may lose the rest of the world, that is, the global majority. And that would be a real strategic defeat for America. Former British Labour Prime Minister Gordon Brown reminds those in the United States and in the West who appeal to the "Thucydides' trap", which refers to the Peloponnesian War, that Sparta actually inflicted a military defeat on Athens, but its hegemony was "dismantled" by smaller Greek states. The same could happen to America if it does not make its dominance more inclusive and representative. There are no signs of that. For 30 years, the United States has been unable to co-opt any of the leading states of the non-Western world, starting with Russia and China, into its coordinates, choosing instead to contain them. Nothing is changing now, when Washington is busy strengthening and creating military-political blocs opposing Russia and China.

European history shows that the logic of the "Thucydides' trap" has devastating consequences for all participants in such a confrontation. On the eve of the First World War, Berlin was guided by the desire to prevent Russia, which, as a result of the Great Reforms of Alexander II and the Stolypin reforms, developed at an accelerated pace comparable to China's at its "peaceful rise" in the last 40 years, from becoming the dominant economic power on the continent. The alternative was participation - industrial and technological (Germany) and investment (France) - in the economic rise of Russia. As a result, Europe and the world received the tragedy of two world wars, which combined with the interwar period, and this was marked by the growth of aggressive nationalism with predominance of authoritarian regimes, including fascism and Nazism with their crimes, represented a new Thirty Years' War (Henry Kissinger). All actors suffered a national catastrophe, which opened Europe up to the



participation of the United States in its affairs and American expansion on the continent.

In the current circumstances – after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR – the United States and the collective West, under American leadership, made a similar choice, threatening similar consequences. The only difference is that a full-scale world war is impossible due to the nuclear factor - it is being played out in a limited hybrid format in Ukraine. The real tragedy of American foreign policy and the beginning of the physical end of American hegemony was precisely the inability of the United States to involve the non-Western world in sanctions pressure on Russia, which became an all-out economic war.

Having withstood, Russia, as practically the only self-sufficient country in the world in the basic spheres of life, received a powerful incentive and motivation for an industrial and technological breakthrough comparable to that carried out in the much more difficult conditions by the Soviet Union in the first two post-war decades. At the same time, the SMO led to a sharp increase in production in the defense industries with a corresponding increase in employment. For Russia in this regard, the SMO provoked by American policy in Ukraine had the same consequences as the Second World War for the United States' exit from the Great Depression and achieving accelerated economic growth. The West does not have such an advantage this time, and Russia is once again able to use the defense industries for technological breakthroughs.

Restraining factors for Western countries are not only the sanctions boomerang, but also the general crisis state of society. It is possible to predict the destruction of Europe and the European Union as the European pillar of the Western Alliance, which will serve as material for the restoration of the real sector of the US economy. By launching this "reality check", the SMO revealed the real picture of the comparative economic



power of the leading countries of the world: the first step in such a forced reassessment of the situation (it was necessary to explain why, contrary to the forecasts of Western capitals, the Russian economy did not collapse under the weight of sanctions) was made by the World Bank, recalculating the size of GDP according to purchasing power parity/PPP with China taking the first place, Russia and Japan sharing the fourth and fifth places, and none of the Western European states entering the top five.

Restraining China's development also has no prospects – both due to the dispersal of technological power that occurred within the framework of globalization, and due to the natural growth of its military power on a healthy economic basis (by analogy with the United States in the first three quarters of the twentieth century). Moreover, the effective participation of the EU, especially Germany, in deterring China is extremely problematic: having withdrawn from the Russian market due to geopolitical coercion by the United States, America's European (as well as Asian) allies cannot afford to break off trade and economic relations with China, which they have invested in for decades. The break demanded by Washington turned out to be too sharp. As a matter of fact, back in 2016, the United Kingdom relied on China's investment in its development, and then Prime Minister D.Cameron declared the coming "golden age" in relations with Beijing. In any case, China will have time, as part of the "double circulation" strategy, to build down its dependence on exports, refocus the economy mainly on domestic consumption and consolidate its external economic positions through the implementation of the "One Belt, One Road" project, thus guaranteeing them from the hostile policy of the United States.



3. Geopolitical reality: Bipolarity 2.0?

Thus, it can be assumed that the United States has lost 30 years in order to make its system truly inclusive, and now everyone is forced to deal with global cataclysms caused by this short-sighted strategic choice of the hegemon, which was prompted by intellectual inertia and hubris, the inability of the elites to break with dogma and correctly assess the radically changed global situation. As a result, we have a transitional model of global development with an "asynchronous distribution of power parameters" (Valdai Club). Indeed, the situation is unprecedented and there are no simple schemes and scenarios for its evolution. At the same time, it is characterized by a new "development race". According to John Gray, part of it will be the race of the "new Leviathans" in the person of post-liberal America and China, which Beijing is "programmed to win" for a number of reasons: first of all, its ability to make difficult long-term strategic decisions and the advantages of state capitalism with the key role of the state in relation to state capitalism, where the state is owned by corporate interests. Therefore, there are no real grounds for the thesis about the possibility of a "post-Westphalian, technopolar" world order, where IT giants will set the tone, as Ian Bremmer suggests. Such an attempt cannot be ruled out if corporate America and the elites, at least that part of them, which is represented by the IT business, displaying biopolitical instincts and predicting (Bill Gates) the next, more deadly Marburg pandemic, comparable to Ebola, really consider their country as expendable for ultra-liberal "deconstruction", which the rest of the world must go through and which will camouflage their dominance in a world that they assume is in a state of "transhumanism".

In parallel, the confrontation between the West and the World Majority with its G7 vs BRICS core is escalating in the G20. The United States is unsuccessfully moving towards strategies for enlarging the West, first by



bringing in India and South Korea, as well as "engaging" Russia in order to ensure its "strategic autonomy" from China. These efforts fail as both too little and too late due to the crystallization (and alienation) of alternative forums and self-organization schemes of the non-Western world launched by the West itself. Hubris, intellectual bankruptcy and the inherent inability of the West to make its system truly inclusive have taken their toll on the West. For this, the West must be organically reborn, that is, if not of its own free will, then it must be made to transform itself, which we are witnessing at the moment.

The impact of external factors on the West is increasing, primarily in terms of reducing the possibilities of collecting geopolitical rents as its mode of existence. Something similar in its consequences to the defeat in a world war (or what is called "losing the peace") is happening. In Western countries, including the United States, the present generation of elites, formed by the "unipolar moment", with their expectations, prejudices, instincts and hubris is to be replaced. The political basis is being laid down for a real "change of track" domestically and in foreign policy: here a "race of realism" is possible with laggards falling into a deeper development crisis, at the same time they find themselves "sagging" geopolitically, being on the sidelines of ongoing changes under conditions of limited resources of all kinds in the world.



4. Military strategies and the "Battle of the Leviathans"

Reacting to the West's blitzkrieg strategy in Ukraine, Russia imposed its own on the adversary – a protracted conflict for which neither the United States nor the West as a whole were ready. Calculations of inflicting "defeat in the battlefield" or "strategic defeat" on Russia turned out to be a chimera, which, nevertheless, thwarted attempts at a negotiated settlement of the conflict caused by the de facto bringing NATO infrastructure close to the Russian borders even in the absence of formal membership of Ukraine in the alliance. The adventure in Ukraine, designed to avoid a "war on two fronts," in fact created exactly such a situation for the United States. Russia and China have become closer in the face of a common threat from the United States. Moreover, the prospect is quite real that, bogged down in Ukraine and demonstrating its unpreparedness for a direct conflict with Russia, the United States will lose to China in the Taiwan Straits by default: their willingness to side with Taiwan in the event of use of force by Beijing (the PLA should be ready for this in 2027) will be perceived by the Chinese side as a bluff.

Such a development, which is quite real in the medium term, will devalue American bloc-building in the Asia-Pacific region, including in view of the Americans themselves predicting China reaching the American level in terms of the size of its nuclear deterrence: then the American strategy of containing China's development will lose its sense and the question will be how to engage Beijing in comprehensive strategic cooperation, which the Americans could have done from the very beginning. Here it is impossible to ignore the remark of W. Churchill, who said that the Americans will always make the right decision, but first they will have tried everything else. Then we will have to answer the question of whether the American elites will have time for this in an era when all processes are accelerating, and whether the domestic, post-liberal state of American society will allow this.



In this regard, it is worth noting that modern capitalism no longer promises a "bright future" in which one could believe. Its legitimacy was based entirely on the myth of endless economic growth. And in conditions where there is a "long-term loss of lifestyle" by significant segments of the core Native America, the phenomenon noticed by Nikolai Berdyaev comes into force - mass movements are often a reaction to the arrogance of radical elites (J. Gray). Hence, the epidemic of fentanyl and other drugs within what experts define as "neo-feudalism." Gray predicts that the United States, if it does not start a war to regain its lost hegemony, will continue to be in a state of drift - as a combination of "fundamentalist sects, woke cults and techno-futurist oligarchs." The forecast for the EU: "it can become an avatar of the Holy Roman Empire, a faded kaleidoscope of bustling principalities and powers."



5. The post-Ukrainian future of Europe: post-liberalism and populism

In the foreseeable future, Europe will be able to replace Russian energy resources from other sources, including shale oil and gas from the United States, while the Shale Revolution continues there, although it goes through difficult times and may be heading towards decline. Only a few European states have the desire to carry out an integrated and balanced development of their military potential and, accordingly, their military-industrial complex, which is unlikely to become a real source of economic growth even in the medium term. These include countries such as France, the United Kingdom and Turkey. At the same time, perhaps only France has both ambition and real opportunities to carry out a comprehensive development of its defense potential relying on its own strengths.

The resource accumulated during the post-war period for the preservation of the welfare state in Europe will be close to exhaustion in the medium term, including under the pressure of the migration factor. There will be a polarization of sentiment within European society.

In the near future, the strategic rapprochement between the European Union and NATO and the expansion of the EU's involvement in security, defense and the development of the military-industrial complex will continue. This trend will be accompanied by a further decline in European autonomy in defense and security issues from NATO and the United States. Within the European Union, there is an increase in contradictions between the countries of Eastern Europe, which are oriented towards the United States and aggressive towards Russia on the one hand, and the more moderate countries of Western Europe on the other hand. Poland is the leader of the former in terms of its total potential, although the Baltic countries are striving to gain a disproportionate weight to their real potential. Austria can take its position along with Hungary and Slovakia. In the second group, France and Germany are undoubtedly of the greatest



importance, relations between which may become more balanced due to the damage that will be inflicted on German industry in connection with the current crisis in relations between Russia and the West. Moreover, France can act in the spirit of the Gaullist tradition – from positions more independent of "American leadership". In any case, the state of the European Union, as well as NATO (this interdependence of the two structures will hit the EU like a boomerang), will be determined by the outcome of the SMO and its geopolitical consequences for the West.

The European Union will cease to be the "Fourth (economic) Reich" of Germany, which can have far-reaching positive and negative consequences for the future of the European Union. It cannot be ruled out that it will be dismantled to a common market and currency area in the medium term, including because Berlin will lack financial and other resources to maintain the European integration project at the achieved level.

There is an ideological crisis in the EU as to where to go next. The rejection of the federalist track of the development of European integration at the failure of referendums on the adoption of the European Constitution in France and the Netherlands in the mid-2000s, over the past twenty years, there has been no search for real alternatives. The lack of effective channels of communication between elites and the population in the context of the crisis of democratic institutions and the lack of accountability of European institutions to voters increase public skepticism about the prospects of the European integration project.

By 2030, a model of "cohabitation" of a multi-speed Europe with its core and periphery may be formed. The increased degree of decentralization and fragmentation of the EU will allow combining various socio-economic, political and migration models while preserving the main achievements of the European integration project. This "soft" option for the development of processes in a united Europe seems unlikely due to drastic changes in the



geopolitical situation and the overdue transformation of European society itself. This essentially business as usual is unlikely to persist in the medium term, starting with the American elections of 2024 and a series of subsequent elections in the leading EU countries.

The collapse of German-Russian relations and the policy of "changing eras" in Germany are apparently irreversible. Germany's main challenges, in addition to political, psychological and worldview, will lie in the field of industry, energy and technology. Berlin's strategic task is to rebuild the economy and public administration in the changed conditions, to find tools and sources to increase the rather modest projected GDP growth rates.

Similar processes caused by the need to come face to face with their own history will occur in other European countries in connection with the collapse of Atlanticism, the resource of which depended entirely on the state of the United States. Though historical narratives and those points of the historical past to which the current and new generations of ruling elites will appeal, will differ. So, with regard to France, given the Anglo-Saxons' attempts at the end of World War II to put it under their control, using the "reformed" Vichy functionaries, which de Gaulle did not allow, will have consequences. Obviously, these attempts have resumed in the last 30 years. The problem of populism, that is, anti-systemic forces and protest sentiment, will increase in the "old Europe" in the near future. It can be assumed that this political dynamics is now being held back by an external factor, namely the disciplining pull by Washington on its allies: now, in the face of the "Russian threat," it is not the time to "rock the boat." This is evidenced, in particular, by the noticeable shift towards the center of the government of J. Meloni in Italy, and clearly contrary to her election ledges, which drives the disease deeper and increases the costs of the inevitable transformation. The latter is due to the inability of the elites to solve the most acute problems of domestic development in the current coordinates –



institutional, legal and party-political. After the completion of the SMO and a comprehensive settlement in Europe following the results of the Ukrainian conflict, we can expect more freedom for creative internal solutions in the leading EU countries. And here Italy can still play the role of the "laboratory of Europe". At least, the protest electorate there is growing and strengthening after the elections of September 2022.

It might be about direct democracy and the introduction of a strong presidential government, of course, with consequences for the future of the European project. De Gaulle's rise to power in the wake of the Algerian crisis in 1958 can serve as a model. The only question is whether there will be figures of this caliber in the averaging policy drift in all directions, who will be ready to decisively "break with the past." However, it was the Anglo-Saxons who were the first to embark upon this path, if we keep in mind Brexit and the arrival of Trump in the White House. After all, they are the masters of the global empire of the West and it is up to them to decide how to dispose of its fate. Actually, this is already happening in the context of the Biden administration's Ukrainian adventure, when the costs of collective Western policy are exorbitantly borne by the EU countries.

The post-war borders of Poland, and therefore Germany, but also Lithuania, and all the Baltic countries, as well as Finland, may also "sag" without their reconfirmation in new historical and geopolitical conditions, which may be an incentive for these countries to participate in the European peace conference designed to sum up the Cold War, since such a settlement did not take place, although the Western capitals do not cease to refer to it, and draw conclusions from the change in the balance of power in the region post-SMO.

London's military and political weight should not be exaggerated. The country is in a difficult socio-economic situation, including the immigration factor, and rather simulates belonging to the leading powers of the world,



which is possible just against the background of the current tension in relations between Russia and the West. With its decline, the United Kingdom, whose establishment delayed, as long as it could, "the reality check" of its post-imperial existence, one should expect a physical "deflation" of the British factor of European (including Northern European), global and other politics. At the same time, one should not discount the influence of the City of London and some other instruments of British influence.



6. The post-Soviet space: the "spoiler" tactics of the West

The post-Soviet space will experience a policy of peculiar "spoiling" by Western capitals. While completely unable to solve problems and contribute to the settlement of conflicts in these countries, the West will seek to disrupt Russia's relevant efforts or undermine confidence in them, as well as in integration processes with Russian participation. Vivid examples are provided by Western policy towards Armenia and the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh. On the other hand, there is a real ability of Moscow to act effectively in this field, as demonstrated by the CSTO mission in January 2022 to prevent the destabilization of Kazakhstan.



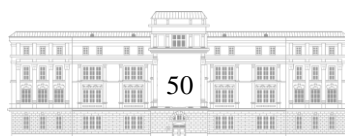
7. Asia-Pacific region: the sun rises in the East

Attempts by the United States and the West as a whole to extend geopolitical rivalry to the most promising global region – the Asia-Pacific region – will test the strength of the existing ties and institutions of cooperation there, including integration ones. At the same time, they can be expected to withstand this test and the region will remain an important pillar of global stability while maintaining its role as a key driver of global economic growth. Attempts to create a system of containment of China here are already seriously failing, especially since their success will depend entirely on the ability of the United States to maintain confidence in its power projection resources in this region. The US will meet with difficulties in carrying out such a policy both as regards the European Union, which cannot afford to break off relations of economic interdependence with China, all the more so to use it as a weapon (which the United States continues to call for, albeit in a more muffled way), and with American allies in the region – Japan, South Korea and Australia (the first two also cannot put their relations of economic interdependence with Beijing at risk, and given the example of Australia, which rushed to make a choice between its own economic interests and political loyalty to America, are in a position to judge the consequences of such an imprudent course in the wake of Washington's policy). It may well happen that China will maintain its position in the region, and the formats of security cooperation that have developed under the auspices of the United States, such as QUAD and AUKUS, will turn out to be stillborn due to drastic changes in Washington's potential and intentions to promote them to the level comparable to the initial period of the Cold War.

It will be influenced not only by the geopolitical defeat of the United States in Ukraine, but also by the imperative of involvement in regional politics in the Middle East. The most important consequences will result from the



demonstration of the inability to conduct military operations using conventional weapons on the scale that a presumed military operation by Beijing in the Taiwan Straits will require (if the overall undermining of confidence in Washington's policy in the world does not provoke the reunification of the island with China by peaceful means). As in other regions of the world, the time factor will play a key role in the evolution of geopolitical events: at least so far, Washington's inability to restore its general-purpose military potential in a short time is widely recognized at the expert level (in the last 30 years, as it turned out, the industrial base of the relevant sectors of the American military-industrial complex has largely been lost).



8. The future world order: moving forward to the historical norm through the thorns of dystopias?

The conclusions and forecasts of the Valdai Club deserve attention, such as the development of a trend of erosion of any hierarchical structures in the system of international relations with the parallel reassertion of sovereignty by the states in response to Western unification policy by way of putting emphasis on their identity. As for the latter, Russia is no exception: in the Concept of Russia's Foreign Policy dated March 31, 2023, for the first time at the level of a state strategic planning document, the country is defined as an "original state-civilization". Western political scientists and politicians (including M. Albright) began writing about the importance of issues of history, identity and faith back in the mid-noughties - at the height of the failed presidency of George W. Bush-junior. At the same time, awareness began to rise of the need to expand the West, including through the integration of Russia and Turkey, two Eurasian states, in order to make it "more vital" in the context of a "global political awakening" (Zb.Brzezinski).

The United States, however, continues to act as a classic status quo power, promoting the thesis of a certain "rules-based order" bypassing the established post-war international legal order based on clear-cut international law, which makes the existing hierarchy even more rigid. This is precisely the reason for the current confrontations, which allow us to talk about a new version of the Cold War. Its outcome is possible not in the format of a "deal" (or a "grand bargain", as defined in American political science: in modern conditions, such a settlement behind the backs of one's own electorate and the world community is simply unrealistic) or a "peace congress" of winners, but "through the natural process of interaction between states and finding options of the international system acceptable to all states", that is, without winners and losers – the ideal of a "peace



without winners", which could not happen in the First World War due to the prejudices of the elites, the mutual demonization and the imperative to place responsibility for this slaughter, unleashed by presumably civilized Europe, on the defeated party.

The dispersal of force/power factors, including resource and technological ones, in a wider range of leading states will also work for a political and diplomatic settlement. Despite the fact that the idea of multipolarity refers to hierarchical models of world order, which according to authoritative experts in the field of international relations (Hans Morgenthau, Raymond Aron, etc.) represent a stable and historical norm, but in the current conditions it is also asynchronous. From this one can conclude that the very American thesis about "revisionist powers" encroaching on the global hegemony of the United States is anti-historical and makes a rule of what is an aberration, were it a bipolar confrontation or a "unipolar moment". The regionalization of global politics and its reconstruction from below will reflect a multilevel balance of forces and interests, which will serve as a guarantee against the dictates of a global "concert of powers". The democratization of international relations will be facilitated by the impossibility of conducting secret diplomacy in modern conditions and the need for real involvement of all States in the search for solutions to global problems represented by new challenges and threats that are cross-border in their nature. Principles such as indivisibility of security and peaceful coexistence, equality of various value systems and development models that are products of various cultures and civilizations and rooted in their history, will work in the same direction.

Gray believes that the state should be turned into a means of peaceful coexistence within society and outside. "The belief that one form of government is suitable for all is a kind of tyranny." And if there is an evolutionary process at work in history, then there is no reason to believe

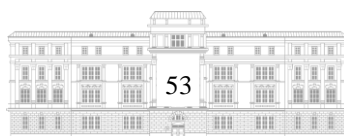


that it gives advantage to the West. Those regimes that adapt better than others to the "arbitrary course of history" will prevail. Not the most productive ones, but those that make the best use of the opportunities provided by chance – they will be the most vital.

With regard to the topic of History/the end of history, including theses on the "new Middle Ages" and "neo-feudalism", Jean Baudrillard's judgments (in his essay "Necrospective" in the collection "Transparency of Evil", 1990) are quite illuminating on the phenomenon of rewriting the history of the entire twentieth century in the West after the end of the Cold War: "revision of the whole History, ...perhaps in the secret hope of starting everything from scratch in the new millennium." It sounds relevant in the light of the struggle of Western elites with history, including as a source of national identity. In conclusion, Baudrillard suggests that History "will eventually move away from its final meaning in the opposite direction." A.I. Fursov (in the book "Our "Bosch Time") writes about the onset of the apocalyptic "Bosch time", which in the late Middle Ages and early Modern Times led to the genesis of capitalism, with "the finale mirroring the genesis."

Post-capitalism may have all the hallmarks of a concentration camp predicted by postmodernists – most likely, a "cyber-medical" one. Opposition to such a prospect can serve as one of the motivations for self-organization and unity of the World majority, as well as the basis for its "bonding" with the part of the Western electorate which is rooted in their own countries, history and traditional values. And if the world has approached the idea of post-capitalist design, then this cannot but open up space for historical creativity of Russia and other leading non-Western countries.

Moscow, January 2024



The report was prepared by the staff of the Institute of Current International Problems of the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. The head of the author's team is Rector of the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, member of the Collegium of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Doctor of Law, Professor, member of the Scientific Council at the Security Council of the Russian Federation, full member of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan A.V. Yakovenko.

The report was recommended by the Academic Council of the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia for use in the educational process for bachelors, undergraduates and graduate students of the Academy.

© Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2024

