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## The Pillars of International Order

In what direction is the world going, at what point of international relations do we find ourselves, why do many of us feel so alarmed?

Confrontation dominates in relations between the major powers, and rivalry intensifies. More and more reckless players promote the idea of confrontation's inevitability. It is important to keep a cool head in these circumstances. Even after all reductions of armaments by Russia and the United States in recent decades, their military power is so great, that it would be utter irresponsible to think that the mankind can survive World War III.

The world community lives and acts in the environment of persistent search for world order concepts, many of which originate as quickly as they wither away. This search is inseparably connected with the change of the balance of power in international affairs, including a broad set of factors. Many of them are often neglected. For example, the role of international law, the role of the United Nations and the UN Charter.

The UN Charter is a small book when you hold it in your hands. But what about its importance? The UN Charter is the child of 8 and 9 May 1945. It is an inalienable part of the Victory Day, defeat of Nazism, of the army, which was considered invincible before invasion in the Soviet Union.

Currently, the world lives in the grip of two forces: international relations are threatened with chaos; the second force is the growing interdependence. Chaos is growing "somewhere", in the Near and Middle East, in North-East Asia, in Africa, but the whole Europe trembles; risks are increasing for Russia as well. The Old World experiences huge pressure because of the inflow of migrants and refugees; terrorist acts against Europeans (and sometimes arranged by Europeans) become more frequent.

Global politics is still done mostly by states. However, the process of some states' disintegration goes on in parallel, sometimes facilitated by outside "well-wishers". Often, when the foreign pressure is aimed at depriving states of sovereignty, their population starts resisting. This phenomenon requires special attention. For example, identifying a number of states as rogue states and outcasts can be a method of such disintegration. Radicalisation of the society is a response to intrusion from the outside; extremist and terrorist organisations come to the fore. The examples of Libya and Syria are obvious. It is possible to destroy a state, but then demolishers do not have any alternative except restoration of the state. Even where there is no efficient and viable state as in cases of Kos-

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ovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Abkhazia or South Ossetia, the major powers prefer to call their de facto protectorates states.

Another example of a nation-state's strong resistance to the policy of its desovereignization is the modern history of the European Union. The idea to delegate a part of sovereignty to supranational structures has its convincing reasons, including the acceptance that in today's world it is a must to unite efforts in order to solve trans-regional and global problems. But after the supranational authorities are in place, they as any bureaucracy start not only reproducing themselves but try to expand their prerogatives. The "uprising" of Euroscepticism in one of the leading EU member – the UK – and the evolving Brexit have become the result of this process. Those who think that Brexit is an accident are wrong. There are no accidents of this scale in history. It is possible to arrange a multi-ethnic melting pot, which is known from the history of empires and some modern countries, but only within federations, quasi-federations and multinational states. It turned out too much for the EU to arrange a melting pot from the existing and in most cases old nation-states.

After the terrorist attacks on 9/11, a harmful slogan "you're either with us, or against us" was coined.<sup>1</sup> Such a stance led to Fronde even among some of the US allies. Recently the EU with all its loyalty to the United States encountered a bully behaviour of Washington, which seeks to apply its national laws extraterritorially to promote American business interests.<sup>2</sup> These are the example, although negative ones, of how nation-states call the tune in global politics. Those, who count on new subjects of international relations as a result of disappearance of nation-states, cannot oppose them effectively. Strong nation-states can be balanced only by other strong nation-states.

Socioeconomic factors are not frequently discussed. But terrorism is impossible to destroy not only because it is often terrorism of individuals or small groups of extremists, which activities is difficult to monitor. The problem is that terrorism is buttressed by modern means of communication, which so often ignite hatred or a sense of injustice.

Where does such fanatical devotion come from, such a burning wish to fight as a member of terrorist organisations? Of course, there are mercenaries, wild geese, professional fighters. But there are many who grew up in poverty, who lost all hope to achieve anything in a civilized way, people in a rage because of injustices of this world, those who revenge deaths of relatives or friends as a result of actions of various international military coalitions. It is impossible to justify terrorists but it is necessary to understand their motives, otherwise there is no hope of defeating them.

New populism, including Euroscepticism, to some extent is a consequence of neoliberal economic theory and practice, including Thatcherism and Reaganomics. Until recently, neoliberalism seemed to propose magic recipes for the problems of economic crisis, inflation and unemployment.<sup>3</sup> Then it turned out that the neoliberal model of globalisation is a dead end and requires replacement. In some aspects, it promoted the development of global markets in the 1980-90s in the interests of big parts of the population in post-industrial countries and in a number of emerging states, including China and India. But by the second half of the 2000s it exhausted its potential, be-

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<sup>1</sup> Literally – "You're either with us, or you're on the side of the terrorists", see, e.g.: <https://iz.ru/news/252080>

<sup>2</sup> <http://tass.ru/ekonomika/4770649>

<sup>3</sup> Roger Bootle. The Death of Inflation: Surviving and Thriving in the Zero Era. Nicholas Brealey Publishing; New Edition, 1997.

came an obstacle for polycentricity, based on new realities of the XXI c. The world financial and economic crisis of 2007 – 2009 and its consequences have become a striking evidence for that.

Each year in Europe on 8 and 9 May we celebrate Victory Alas, only experts remember two other dates: June 26, 1945 – when the Charter of the United Nations was signed, and October 24 – when the Charter came into force (the United Nations Day since 1947). That was the start of the new world order with the UN and modern international law at its core. With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that the war was fought for liberation of our country and others from Nazism as well as for new rules of global governance based on the force of law, embodied in the UN Charter.

It was extremely difficult to establish the UN. There were no military victims in this political and diplomatic battle. But this victory of the common sense and wisdom of the winners, undoubtedly, saved the world, first of all Europe from new tragedies. Andrey Gromyko, the head of the USSR delegation in Dumbarton Oaks and later in San Francisco after Vyacheslav Molotov left for Moscow (Molotov headed the Soviet delegation from April 25 to May 8), did a lot for that.

The post-war history raises an important issue of sovereignty and independence. There can be no independent foreign policy without sovereignty. Servility in foreign policy leads to promotion of interests of other states. Often it is difficult to discern between states who pretend to conduct independent foreign policy and those who do this in practice. In most cases those, who give up their sovereignty for the sake of “solidarity”, sooner or later regret this decision.

Sovereignty does not mean isolationism; on the contrary, the most active foreign policy and interaction with the widest circle of international players are required. But politicians and diplomats should have a clear understanding where their country’s national interests end and the interests of the others start. Such a behaviour usually is a prerogative of major powers that do not need to offshore the provision of their security to “big brother” or “big sisters”.

The pillars of international order based on law are the principles upheld by the United Nations. Almost everything is open to change and improvement, but the principles obtained through sufferings of the mankind in World War II and in its epicentre – the Eastern front in Europe – are untouchable. If one starts diluting these principles, putting them into doubt in order to assuage the unease of losing former greatness, if one starts using the UN to settle geopolitical scores with other members of the Security Council, the international security system becomes a hostage to irresponsible behaviour. Such a behaviour has been demonstrated in the recent quarter of the century at the rates unseen before. That was notwithstanding a sincere, though naïve desire of Russia in the 1990s to join the West, and then in spite of its efforts in the beginning of the last decade to establish mutually advantageous partnership with the United States and its allies.

The world politics balances between the rule of law and the rule of force. Fragile relation of military force and force of compromise and diplomacy characterises the state of international affairs. We should acknowledge that diplomacy and soft power are currently on the defensive. Relations of the East and the West quickly deteriorate and no serious positive shifts are expected to happen in the near future.

China is much more the East than Russia. Today, the confrontation of Washington and Beijing is not as strong as with Moscow. But in the long-run the American military strategy is directed at confrontation with the Middle Kingdom. Ideologically the main opponent for the United States is

communist China, the state with the one-party system and one fifth of the world GDP. As to Russia, it switched to a neoliberal market economy long time ago and its economy is much smaller. The defence budget of China (more than US\$ 150 billion in 2017) exceeds the Russia's one several times and that gap will only increase.

The inability of major powers to restore political trust in their relations seems inexcusable "luxury" against the backdrop of global problems. The state of affairs is not hopeless (let us remember the Lavrov – Kerry diplomatic channel as well as attempts of S. Lavrov and R. Tillerson to find common ground). However, many times their agreements, especially related to Syria, were torpedoed by other American departments. Moreover, the previous US administration in the end of its term did everything possible to send the Russian-American relations to a nosedive, unscrupulously using any methods available as, for example, the mass expulsion of Russian diplomats from USA several days before the new 2017 year.

Skripal case has opened a new chapter of anti-Russian hysteria in the West. Accusations of Moscow has reached the unprecedented scale of absurdity unseen in the Cold War years. The UK and the US – the most "advanced" countries in this regard – are trying to drag as many states as possible into the whirlpool of confrontation appealing to Euro-Atlantic solidarity. As if solidarity means blind pursue of political mystifications.

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Often one can hear: "Why do you, Russians, blame the West for everything?" This argument is wide off the mark. Western politicians are not blamed in Russia for everything. Many of them are blamed because one should not act on the international arena like a bull in a china shop. It is unacceptable to accuse Russia almost of everything what goes wrong in this world and without evidence. It is irresponsible to turn another big power into a punching bag because of the domestic political war in the US or because T. May in the UK is fighting for her political survival. Russia acknowledges the status of other major powers and considers them important stakeholders in solving global problems. If Western partners think that Russia is wrong in something, this is not a reason for its demonization. This is a reason for the enhanced dialogue.

Russia does not behave in this way. Moscow understands both the potential of the country and its limitations. Russia acts much more carefully and prudently on the international scene unlike those who are so eager to promote a new cold war.

What should we prevent and what to achieve in the current poisonous environment? World War III should be prevented, and a stable and multilateral global governance should be installed. Is it possible to reach these existential goals in the circumstances when the idea of a new cold war is promulgated? The question is rhetorical.

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