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Vitaly V. NAUMKIN,
Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences,
Editor-in-chief of the journal
«Russia & World: Scientific Dialogue»

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF FORWORD

Dear readers!

This issue of the magazine is devoted mainly to the problems of intercivilizational and interreligious dialogue. With the participation of the editors of our journal, a series of international scientific discussions were held in February – April 2024. During these discussions, interesting, extraordinary, and sometimes controversial positions were expressed. We believe it is important to introduce our readers to ideas that may become the basis for further research and discussion.

Relations between Russia and the West are interpreted in an article by Czech analyst J.Campbell and Austrian expert G.Gustenau. Considering the complex issues of the Northern Military District in Ukraine, the situation in the South Caucasus, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the authors say that the spread of outbreaks of the third world war cannot be allowed, they speak about overcoming bipolar ideological confrontation, about the values of the future world order, the principles of freedom, justice, information objectivity, respectful attitudes towards other cultures and religions, about the inadmissibility of discrimination on national, racial or religious grounds.

The connection between geopolitical goals and religion is discussed in the article by the Belarusian scientist A.V.Slesarev “The Concept of the Intermarium and the Confessional Issue: Geopolitical Challenges to Belarusian Orthodoxy in XX – early XXI century”. Using the example of the history of Belarusian Orthodoxy, the author shows how religious institutions and representatives of emigration can become instruments for the implementation of geopolitical strategies, in particular the Polish foreign policy doctrine of the Intermarium. The author concludes that an attempt is being made to build a “church Intermarium” and modern interpretations of this doctrine are directly related to the policy of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in relation to the East Slavic territories associated with the Kyiv Metropolis of the 15th–17th centuries. The article contains unique materials about the anti-Soviet activities of the Belarusian emigration, its contradictions and splits.

The topic of interreligious dialogue in the European part of the world is continued in the article by the Serbian scientist A.Prašćević. The author examines the role of the Serbian Orthodox Church in relations with Muslims over

the last century (1920–2020). The article shows mechanisms for resolving contradictions and conflicts, dialogue between Christians and Muslims in difficult periods for Serbia. The author concludes that representatives of the Orthodox Church made a significant contribution to interfaith reconciliation and coexistence, despite the fact that Orthodox Christians were victims of occupation regimes with which the Muslim political elite collaborated. Attempts to provoke a negative reaction from the Serbian Orthodox Church towards Muslims did not bring results, since the Church has always preached that Muslims are brothers to the Orthodox.

The general principles of interreligious dialogue in the post-Soviet space are discussed in an article by Russian scientists R.N.Lunkin and S.V.Melnik. The authors analyze the reasons for the increased interest in religious ethics in international relations and politics. In conditions of crises and conflicts, new types of social inequalities, societies turned to religion for sympathy, compassion and support. Religion has proven to be in demand for the implementation of sustainable development goals, corporate social responsibility, in the field of ecology and in the labor market. Religious diversity correlates with the emerging multipolarity of the world, in which everyone protects their sovereignty, traditions, and culture. The authors of the article examine the advantages and challenges of religion, highlight the features of post-Soviet religious and political identity, and consider the prospects for the development of ethno-confessional relations. The idea of holding a meeting of religious leaders of the Eurasian region is being expressed.

Religion is currently one of the factors in Russia's dialogue even with unfriendly countries. Russian scientist V.V.Voronov comes to this conclusion, considering the profiles of the divergence of communication processes between Latvia and Russia. The author argues that Latvians and Russians are divided not so much by ethnic characteristics or the specifics of culture and traditions, but by issues of political history. A negative attitude towards the Russian state and Russians is characteristic not of the population, but of the political elite of Latvia, whose behavior is determined by the interests of the countries of the Anglo-Saxon world. Divergence (divergence) in the development paths of historically similar societies that have been in the same civilizational space for centuries is characteristic of foreign policy communications, relations towards Russia and Russians, culture, and mass media. Containment of the divergence of communication processes, to a large extent, occurs due to religious and interreligious communications.

Axiological aspects in relations between Russia and the world, problems of transformation of traditional spiritual

and moral values in the current international context are considered in the article of the Russian scientist O.G.Karpovich. Comparing Russian and Western approaches to the value foundations of the world order, the author proves Russia's global leadership in preserving universal, spiritual and moral values. In the context of an aggressive attack by postmodern supporters on religion, family, marriage, and school, Russia's authority is growing as a defender of traditional values typical to the vast majority of the inhabitants of our planet.

The civilizational approach to the study of international relations is presented in several articles by Russian scientists and scientists from Central Asian countries. Theoretical and methodological problems of studies of civilizations are analyzed in the article by the outstanding Russian scientist I.V.Sledzevsky “Conditions and Prospects of the Civilizations Dialogue in the Modern World: Symbiosis of Cultures (based on the History of the Central Asian Countries and their Interaction with Russia)” Considering the possibilities of a dialogue of civilizations in a global, trans-border cultural space, the author considers the communication-network approach and the concept of civilization as a network of broad communications to be promising, removing the attachment of civilizational communities to a territory or state and turning civilizations into open, inclusive, cultural and communication entities. From these positions, intercivilizational dialogue with Russia is viewed as a network of historical and modern interactions, and the Central Asian region is classified as a “civilization of encounters”, taking into account the long and successful symbiosis of different cultures and religions.

Post-Soviet civilizational transit in Central Asia is studied by Russian scientist R.S.Bobokhonov. The author analyzes how new ideological myths were formed on the basis of distorted ideas about history. In his opinion, civilizational transit in the countries of Central Asia takes place under strong state control of historical memory, under the influence of the ideology of state nationalism, which is manifested not only in political doctrines, but also in religious policy and scientific research. The article by R.S.Bobokhonov caused a discussion both in the editorial office of our journal and among reviewers, but it was recommended for publication, since the position of the scientist draws the attention of the scientific community to complex socio-cultural processes in the Central Asian region.

The views of famous Russian and Tajik scientists on intercivilizational dialogue in Central Asia are presented in the article by G.M.Maitdinova, V.I.Sazhin, A.M.Mamadazimov, A.E.Zagrebin. The authors of the article consider the Central Asian region as an intercivilizational hub where Persian and Hellenistic, Babylonian and Chinese, Indian and Mongolian, Arab and Turkic civilizations interacted and competed. The opinion is expressed that at the present stage, a dialogue of civilizations is possible on the basis of an understanding of the historical community of different peoples living in the region, their civilizational identity, based on traditional values. It is noted that the political culture of the Central Asian countries has developed its own democratic principles, which are not always identical to Western ones. Separately, the article discusses the need to rely on objective historical, ethnographic, archaeological data obtained during joint field expeditions of scientists from different countries. Scientists also drew attention to new platforms for intercivilizational dialogue with the participation of not only Russia and the post-Soviet countries of Central Asia, but also with the

participation of Afghanistan, Iran, China, and Pakistan.

We publish the articles on critical international issues: military-political cooperation with China, water shortages in a number of Central Asian countries, the oil crisis.

In the article “Prospects for the Integration of China and the CSTO”, Russian scientists S.V.Uyanaev and A.V.Bredikhin assess the prospects for cooperation in the field of countering the “three evils” and believe that the CSTO countries and China face similar challenges, therefore there is the possibility of situational connection China to the military operations of the CSTO. The authors come to the conclusion that the coordination of actions both of “CSTO + 1” and “CSTO + Shanghai Cooperation Organization” contributes to the prospects for interaction, which determines the possibility of the next stage in the development of the CSTO, including with the participation of Syria and the DPRK.

The article by the Russian scientist, famous expert A.M.Mustafabeyli examines the problem of water use in Central Asia in connection with the construction of the Afghan Kush-Tepa canal. The author talks about the shortage of water resources, the lack of fair access of people to safe water, sanitation services, and the inadequacy of technical and financial measures to create advanced systems for the use and conservation of water reserves. The author believes that these are global problems that cause the greatest damage to the states of the Global South, including Central Asia. The article analyzes the consequences of the construction of Kush-Tepa for the countries of Central Asia, and examines the positions of regional and extra-regional actors. It is noted that Central Asian countries in negotiations with Afghanistan insist on coordinating the mutual interests of the parties; Russia offers its services in solving problems related to the operation of the Kush-Tepa canal, and the United States is providing financial assistance to speed up the construction of the canal.

In the context of current Middle Eastern problems, the article by Russian scientist A.I.Yakovlev “The Oil Crisis of 1973: a Look after Half a Century” is interesting. The author draws attention to the reasons that prompted the Arab oil-exporting countries to use the “oil weapon” (the unresolved Middle East conflict and the Palestinian problem) and to the crisis phenomena in the Western economy. Analyzing the consequences of the oil crisis, the author comes to the conclusion that the negative consequences for the West were short-term. In the long term, the crisis became a catalyst that accelerated structural and technological changes in the Western economy and in the global financial system. For the oil-producing countries of the Arab East, the oil crisis allowed them to increase the level of state income, create opportunities for accelerated socio-economic development, and increase the authority of these countries and OPEC in international relations.

Dear readers, I hope that the articles in this issue will arouse your interest and will be useful in your research. We thank our authors and look forward to new materials and scientific ideas for publication.

Sincerely,
Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences
Vitaly Naumkin

INTERNATIONAL, GLOBAL AND REGIONAL PROCESSES

International relations

The United States and some other Western powers, fearing they lose their global hegemony, have devised a plan to widen the divisions between global South countries make them unable to achieve their common goal.

Jan Campbell

I advocate the search for alternative options for relations between Western Europe and Russia.

Gustav Gustenau

Russia and the West Today: European Experts View

In the modern world, the “collective West” views traditional values through a secular-humanistic approach to civilizational development, which leads to their oblivion along with traditional society and the state.

O.G.Karpovich

The Role of Russia in Upholding Traditional Spiritual and Moral Values in the Context of Modern World Development

Religion is an instrument of national policy, it is an aspiration to create “one’s own institution”, and the securitization of religion leads to the control of religious activity.

R.N.Lunkin

We have developed a classification of interreligious dialogue: “polemical”, “cognitive”, “peacemaking” and “partnership” dialogues.

S.V.Melnik

Interreligious Dialogue: The Actual Meaning, Typology and Features of the Post-Soviet Space

Historical and contemporary international experience in seeking agreements on the division of transboundary water resources demonstrates the complexity of negotiations, which sometimes lead to directly opposite results.

A.M Mustafabeyli

Central Asia: the Problem of Water Use in the Situation of the Construction of the Afghan Kush-Tepa Canal

Central Asia is a region where military facilities of a number of Asian countries that are not members of the CSTO are located.... The result of communication could be the expansion of military-political cooperation with interested countries, up to their entry into the CSTO.



S.V.Uyanaev, A.V.Bredikhin

Prospects for the Integration of China and the CSTO

RUSSIA & WORLD: SCIENTIFIC DIALOGUE

**РОССИЯ
И МИР**
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Russia and the West Today: European Experts View

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Abstract. The article provides assessments of the current state of relations between Russia and the West by European experts. Complex issues such as the Northern Military District in Ukraine, the situation in the South Caucasus, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and their consequences for European countries and the global world order are analyzed. The authors talk about the need to prevent outbreaks of a third world war, to overcome bipolar ideological confrontation, and about the values of the future world order. Justice and morality must become the basis of peace, which will lead to the restoration of trust between peoples and states. The need for dialogue with Russia and the inadmissibility of isolating individual countries from participation in international dialogues are argued. The authors are supporters of the principles of a multipolar world, freedom, justice, information objectivity, respect for other cultures and religions, and speak of the inadmissibility of discrimination on national, racial or religious grounds. The article was prepared based on the materials of the international symposium “United Kingdom – EU – Russia – Greater Middle East: Challenges and Prospects”, held in Bratislava (February 27–28, 2024).

Keywords: world order, international conflicts, West, Russia, SVO, Nagorno-Karabakh, Ukraine, South Caucasus, Western experts

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Introduction

The events of recent years demonstrate the crisis of the global world order, the deepening polarization of the modern world. The reasons for the polarization are the fundamental differences of political elites in their understanding of the rules and values of the future world order. International law is being replaced by the law of individual nationalities or situational rules of the game with illegitimate arbitrators. Against this

background, two world poles have formed - the West and the World Majority (countries of Asia, Eurasia, Africa, Latin America, etc., united in the formats of BRICS, SCO, NAM, etc.). An ideological confrontation has developed between these poles.

On February 27-28, 2024, the international symposium “United Kingdom-EU-Russia-Greater Middle East: Challenges and Prospects” was held in Bratislava. The conference presented the positions of the scientific community, cultural and political elites of Europe, Russia, Austria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Great Britain, Germany, Israel, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and others. The central theme around which the speakers’ reports were built was the role and significance of Russia in the modern world order. The participants focused on Russian-European relations and noted the need for dialogue with Russia. Slovakia expressed its readiness to become a platform for such negotiations. The idea was supported by the majority of the participants, since almost all other platforms had discredited themselves, ceased to be neutral and lost trust. The symposium participants spoke about the need to return rational approaches and values, dialogue and cooperation to politics for the sake of peace and well-being of millions of people. In this article, we publish reviews of the most interesting and scientific speeches of the conference participants.

Materials and Methods

The article is based on the reports of the participants of the international symposium “The United Kingdom-EU-Russia-Greater Middle East: Challenges and Prospects”, opinions expressed in the corridors of the symposium, as well as the materials of the symposium resolution. The reports and research of the symposium participants were based on the methods of statistical analysis, induction and deduction, comparative analysis, case study, political analysis, etc. In preparing the article, we used the methods of analysis, synthesis, generalization, comparative analysis.

Results

A look at contemporary international processes (J. Campbell)

First, I would like to remind everyone that on August 15, 1918, the US State Department officially announced the severance of diplomatic relations with Russia. After that, the Americans landed in Vladivostok and began the invasion of Russia. During their 19-month stay in Russia, the Americans lost 189 soldiers in the Far East. The last American soldier left Siberia on April 1, 1920. The invasion of the Far East was preceded by a conference in December 1917, which was attended by the United States, Great Britain, France and their allies. At the conference, it was decided to define spheres of interest in the territory of the

former Russian Empire. The Western partners planned to divide the largest state among themselves, and representatives of the “White movement” were to help them in this. One of America’s priorities in the occupation of the Far East and Eastern Siberia was to establish control over the Trans-Siberian Railway, the transportation of goods and natural resources.

The American leadership considered it necessary to create a number of independent states on the basis of the Russian Empire. Russia was to be divided into Ukraine, Great Russia (the European part) and Siberia. In August 1918, martial law was declared in the occupied territories and military ships were created. American companies received permission from the Kolchak government to trade in exchange for loans from Citibank and Guaranty Trust and exported goods worth over 950 million rubles in gold during the occupation.

The US Ambassador to Russia, David Francis, insisted on the occupation of the Far East: “I insist on the necessity of taking Vladivostok under our control and turning over Murmansk and Arkhangelsk to Great Britain and France.” Senator Poindexter, in his call for intervention, stated bluntly: “Russia has become a geographical term and will never be anything else. The strength of its unity, organization, and capacity for renewal has vanished forever. The nation no longer exists.” The occupiers wanted to divide the Russian bear, although it was still alive. The bear is alive today. I mention the invasion of the Far East because the powers of 1918 - the US, Great Britain, and France - are now pursuing the same goal as in 1918, simply by putting on a “modern coat” sold under the guise of NATO and using Russia’s western borders: Ukraine, the Carpathians, and the Caucasus. The example of the US and its allies’ invasion of Russia in 1918 shows that the conflict in Ukraine began long before 2014, let alone 2022. The political leadership of the US and UK is one of the reasons for the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Russia was brought to the brink by the US and UK leadership, beyond which it could no longer step. Ukraine started the war in 2014. Russia tried to stop the war in 2022 and has not yet achieved one of the main goals of the special military operation: denazification - a ban on all neo-Nazi movements. Two important questions need to be answered: when will this goal be achieved and why has it not been achieved? The answers are not simple and not optimistic. The goal is still far from being achieved. Why? All leading Western countries support neo-Nazi ideas.

In a recent interview with American historian and journalist Carlson, President Putin clearly, decisively and in detail told the Western world why there was no Ukraine, there is no Ukraine and there will be no Ukraine. How a person perceives and evaluates such a statement is his problem. But one thing is for sure: Putin should never be ignored, as we have known since Putin’s speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2007.¹

Regardless of the outcome of the special operation and based on life experience, I confidently assert that Zelensky will lose everything. In fact, he has already lost everything, including his private life. Knowledge of the history of the management of processes by invisible British elites, with all my respect for them, does not allow me to draw any other conclusion. The planned position of the Manager, who will be based in Kyiv and have permanent unlimited access to the President of Ukraine and all key documents, speaks for

¹ Speech and the following discussion at the Munich Conference on security policy (2007) President of Russia. URL: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034>.

itself. Meanwhile, in our opinion, Zelensky is ideal for Russia. The longer he stays in power and the more he discredits himself, the better. Such a military “genius” who destroyed the Ukrainian army is beneficial to Russia.

Those in the know can easily imagine, thanks to Putin’s answers and the goals of the special military operation, the fate of the territory that is still called Ukraine today, the fate of the Carpathians, Transcarpathia and Lviv, not to mention the fate of Kharkov, Kyiv and Odessa. I will not speculate on the fate of these cities, but I will allow myself to say a few words about my personal observation of the western Ukrainian regions. If you ask the people of Lviv what they would like most and what country they would like to be citizens of, you will find out that they would prefer to be Austrians and would like to join Austria. Why? This was the period when they lived best. The strategic location of Lviv explains why Lviv itself was founded by Russian princes, and then was part of Austria-Hungary, Poland and the USSR, and why it will become the site of peace negotiations.

Today, as before, the road leads from the Carpathians and Transcarpathia to Russia. To invade Russia from the West means to cross the Carpathians. Whoever holds the Carpathians has a base for invading Russia. At the same time, the Carpathians represent Russia’s line of defense against Western invasion.

Therefore, the fate of Western Ukraine, in the event of achieving the three main goals of the special military operation, will be decided based on military topography and military-strategic feasibility for Russia. The mood of local residents and their preferences will play a certain role in this matter. In the event of peace negotiations, and not negotiations between a winner and a loser in the traditional sense, Ukraine will officially cease to exist as an independent state and a co-founder of the UN. Here it is worth returning to the history of the US and allied invasion of the Far East on August 15, 1918 and learning from it.

An assessment of the situation as of February 2024 shows that the tone and discourse of the West on Ukraine have changed by 180 degrees. If a year ago the Western elites were talking about victory over Russia and the overthrow of Putin, now they fear that Russia will overthrow the West. This, of course, does not mean that victory is very close, because Russia is fighting a united West. This should not be forgotten in the context of the previously mentioned invasion of the US and its allies in the Far East in 1918. Russia’s special military operation and the victory itself will reformat the security system in Europe and the Western Hemisphere. A military victory in Ukraine in itself will not necessarily bring such a result. It will arise as a result of the rearrangement of forces on the world stage.

The military conflict may last for quite a long time, and it is difficult to talk about specific dates. However, the conflict will not end there, since the West believes that Russia’s victory in Ukraine will threaten the very existence of NATO and the West. But the West has realized that Russia cannot be destroyed, it has survived and even become stronger. Therefore, sober minds will begin to look for ways to reformat the Western security system itself. It is obvious that Zelensky’s regime has reached a dead end and will disappear. The West no longer needs anything from Zelensky, since he wants to negotiate in order to keep as many Ukrainian territories for himself as possible. Therefore, the West will continue its aggressive policy.

As for the situation in Armenia. I would like to remind you that I have written a number of open and closed analytical studies and commentaries on issues related to the Caucasus in general and Armenia in particular, since I monitored and worked in Armenia immediately after the December 7, 1988 earthquake in Spitak, and then as a senior manager of projects financed by the World Bank. The assessment of the current situation in the context of the symposium topic is expressed as follows:

1) Armenia seeks to maintain its territorial integrity following Azerbaijan's May 2021, November 2021, and September 2022 offensives, as well as the creeping annexation of Azerbaijan, which has been strengthening its position between military offensives. According to official Armenian sources, Azerbaijan has occupied 150 square kilometers of Armenian territory. This does not include the territories that Armenia ceded under military and political duress in 2021, hoping that Azerbaijan would stop its territorial claims. 2) Azerbaijan demands the creation of an extraterritorial corridor through Armenia's Syunik region to connect with its exclave of Nakhchivan. In my opinion, Azerbaijan makes territorial claims to most of Armenia's territory, including its largest water basin, Lake Sevan, the capital Yerevan, and calls Armenia "Western Azerbaijan"².

3) The EU countries' position on the Azerbaijani-Armenian issue has become clearer. The EU and Armenia have decided to start working on expanding bilateral cooperation. Borrell recently stated: "We discussed options for visa liberalization. I took note of Armenia's strong interest in this and called for reforms to be implemented in order to achieve a process on this issue."³.

4) The European Union Mission to Armenia (EUMA) has temporarily reduced Armenia's concerns about new possible military offensives by Azerbaijan and given Armenia time and space to rebuild its defense capabilities. Does Armenia need this and will it be able to use its renewed defense capabilities in the current situation while EUMA reduces Armenia's security dependence on Russia and the CSTO?

Russian troops in Armenia have not prevented Azerbaijan's military offensive against Armenia in 2021-2022. Conservative Armenian experts have tried to explain this situation by Russia's war in Ukraine, as well as by the actions of the Armenian authorities, which "outraged" Russia. Some experts even suggest that Russia sanctioned Azerbaijan's military offensive against Armenia⁴, in order to pursue its geopolitical interests or punish Armenia for trying to reduce its dependence on Russia⁵.

As for liberal circles in Russia, they are convinced that it is in the common interests

² The concept of "Western Azerbaijan" is a concept to justify a new war against Armenia, says Pashinyan | Armenpress armenian news agency. URL: <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1124887.html>.

³ EU-Armenia Partnership Council, 13 February 2024 – Eeas. URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-ministerial-meetings/2024/02/13>.

⁴ – The Insider (2024) Russia pushes Azerbaijan to attack Armenia, but Aliyev fears full-scale war due to western sanctions threat, experts say, The Insider. URL: <https://theinsider.ru/en/news/269956>.

⁵ Ռուսաստանի Ադրբեյջանի ձեռքով ցանկանում է պատժել հայաստանին իր արևմտամետ քաղաքականության համար ադրբեյջանցի փորձագետ, 'Ազատ Եվրոպա/Ազատություն' ռադիոկայան. URL: <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/32825602.html>.

of Russia and Azerbaijan to force Armenia to cede the extraterritorial corridor controlled by the Russian Federal Security Service⁶.

Not only would this tie Azerbaijan to Turkey, but Russia would also use it to circumvent Western economic sanctions. The question arises: why did the EU – and not the OSCE or the UN – decide to station a mission in Armenia? The answer is simple: a UN and OSCE mission in Armenia would be impossible, since Russia has the right to veto such a mission in the UN Security Council; both Russia and Azerbaijan would oppose such a move in the OSCE. Even in the case of the EU, consensus was not guaranteed; moreover, Armenia has suspended diplomatic relations with Hungary until December 2022.

While the Artsakh War of 2020 had no immediate consequences for the EU, it set a precedent for the use of force by a larger country with higher military capabilities against a smaller country with lower military capabilities to resolve disputes.

The Azerbaijani offensive in September 2022 showed how fragile the region's security is. The shelling reached as far as the resort town of Jermuk in Armenia. War crimes were committed. The creation of the EU mission should be seen as an instrument of competition between Russia and the EU (the EU supports US interests) for influence in the region. Some Armenian experts believe that "now is the right time for the EU to use this situation to strengthen its position and weaken Russia's position in Armenia"⁷.

The deployment of EU monitors in an area where Russia has a military presence must be perceived as risky. Provocations or incidents against the EU cannot be ruled out. Russia's warnings about turning Armenia into another arena of geopolitical confrontation between Russia and the West should not be ignored by the EU and NATO, as they were ignored in 2007 and later.

The problem that EUMA has not addressed is that EUMA cannot contribute to the security and stability of Nagorno-Karabakh due to Azerbaijan's categorical opposition to an international presence there. And cooperation between the EU and Russia in this area is currently unrealistic.

It is therefore not surprising that on 11 December 2023 the EU Foreign Affairs Council agreed to strengthen EUMA's monitoring capacity in the Mission's existing area of operations on the Armenian side, increasing the number of staff from 138 to 209⁸. The mission patrols from six forward operating bases located in the cities of Kapan, Goris, Jermuk, Yeghegnadzor, Martuni and Ijevan. This covers the entire international border between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijani President Aliyev called the EU's intention to deploy the mission "a very unpleasant fact"⁹. Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov said that the deployment of a new mission

⁶ The Armenian dilemma after Azerbaijan's September attack on Nagorno-Karabakh (2023) Sceus. URL: <https://sceus.se/en/publications/the-armenian-dilemma-after-azerbajans-september-attack-on-nagorno-karabakh/>.

⁷ Expert Petrosyan. The EU mission in Armenia operates against Russia and Iran. URL: <https://caliber.az/arm/post/234242>.

⁸ EU mission in Armenia to increase its presence on the ground (no date) EEAS. URL: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/euma/eu-mission-armenia-increase-its-presence-ground_en?s=410283.

⁹ Green, A. (2023) Why is the EU deploying a mission in Armenia and what to expect?, EVN Report. URL: <https://evnreport.com/politics/why-is-the-eu-deploying-a-mission-in-armenia-and-what-to-expect/>.

“can only be counterproductive” since it would not receive approval from the Azerbaijani side ¹⁰. He questioned the civilian nature of the mission, warning that the 2,000-strong Russian peacekeeping mission in Nagorno-Karabakh and Russian border guards serving in Armenia “will react to the conduct of EU monitors taking into account the situation on the territory”¹¹. He also suggested that the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization had prepared a plan for a peacekeeping operation on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan, hinting that Armenia preferred an EU mission.

The West is artificially fueling the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Clashes have resumed on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Two weeks ago, on February 12, Baku reported that as a result of another military provocation by the Armenian Armed Forces, a serviceman of the State Border Service of Azerbaijan was wounded. Immediately, despite the refusal of the Armenian side to admit the fact of the shelling, the Azerbaijanis began an action of retaliation. By 2:00 pm on Tuesday, four people were killed and one was wounded on the Armenian side.

These attacks were a consequence of the situation around the Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations on concluding a peace treaty. The parties have not yet managed to achieve progress in the negotiation process. It has reached a dead end.

Therefore, the behavior of Pashinyan and his clique can be characterized as a path to Armenia’s suicide. This is confirmed by the intention to remove from the constitution the preamble to the declaration of independence, which contains the idea of reuniting Armenia with Karabakh, as well as Pashinyan’s latest interview with the Daily Telegraph. In the negotiation process, he shifts responsibility to the Azerbaijani side, but does not offer anything new.

And here begins a chain of events that resembles a multi-move game. The first step is forceful pressure. The Azerbaijanis understand perfectly well that neither Armenia nor its leadership are ready for war. In fact, Azerbaijan is exerting forceful pressure, threatening escalation if a peace treaty is not signed on Baku’s terms.

Escalation could entail big problems for Yerevan; Azerbaijan even allowed Yerevan to be captured. This would mean the elimination of Armenian statehood.

The US and the EU should ask themselves a serious question: how will Russia react, since Armenia is still a member of the CSTO, which means that Russia guarantees the security of Armenia’s current borders recognized by Moscow. What will be the consequences for Armenia, Russia and the EU itself?

Pashinyan ignores CSTO meetings, travels to European capitals and even supports Kyiv. Thus, Yerevan found itself in political isolation at a time when it had effectively severed relations with Moscow and began to rely on the support of France. France is actively sending its instructors to Armenia and is trying to take away Russia’s status as a friendly partner country of Armenia. At the same time, the chances of Russia intervening in the conflict are zero: Russia has its own hot spot, and Yerevan takes an anti-Russian position.

10 Там же
11 Там же

In fact, Pashinyan himself needs peace. Why? In the event of a peaceful resolution of the conflict issues with Azerbaijan, the current Armenian authorities will untie their hands for a geopolitical turn to the West and the implementation of the prime minister’s main task, which he has been implementing since coming to power in 2018: to surrender Karabakh, sever relations with Russia and pave the way for a new attack on Russia.

In the event of a new conflict, for example, around the Zangezur corridor, one of the CSTO members will enter into confrontation with an external adversary and will need support, and there will be no need to speculate on the development of events in the Caucasus and the consequences for the EU and Europe.

I will dwell on some other conflicts and the problem of deceiving society. According to the methodological principles of ACLED, events are divided into three categories: political violence, demonstrations and non-violent, politically significant events. I recommend that you familiarize yourself with the analysis of the ongoing hostilities and their potential consequences, offered by the Swiss newspaper NZZ. Part 1 gives a general overview. The second part looks at the ongoing fighting in Myanmar, Congo and Brazil, and examines whether the violence could spill over into Europe.

When considering the significance of small conflicts to the overall geopolitical situation, the first category is the most important – fighting, bombings/violence and violence against civilians.

In 2007, President Putin warned America that the idea of a unipolar world would destroy not only America itself, but also the global order.¹². No one feels safe and no one can hide behind international law as if it were a stone wall. Such a policy is a catalyst for an arms race. And that is exactly what happened.

Today, anyone with healthy eyes or the right glasses can see how America thinks long-term, acts pragmatically and at the same time destroys itself from within. Anyone who listened to or read the full text of Carlson’s recent interview must admit that Putin did not say a word about expecting a war with the West! He kept repeating that there is a possibility of dialogue. Unfortunately, I do not hear anything like that in the West, where we are increasingly warned about the need to prepare for war with Russia, especially after it defeats Ukraine, spends more and more on military equipment and forgets the word peace. Therefore, it is wrong to deceive the general public and especially the younger generation, the influence on which is important for any government in the world.

The Americans say that today the key is the confrontation between autocracies and democracies. But the reality is more complicated. America and its remaining satellites are trying to consolidate a unipolar world. On the other hand, there is a group of sovereign countries that either openly support the creation of a new, more just order (Russia, China, Iran) or tacitly support this idea (the states of the Global South). They know that a new order is being formed.

Today’s world is focused on the problems in Ukraine and Gaza, while other conflicts receive less attention. However, these hidden wars can also threaten geopolitical stability if

12 Speech and the following discussion at the Munich Conference on security policy (2007) President of Russia. URL: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034>.

the major powers use them for their own purposes. This raises a painful moral issue for our elites.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has shown the world the inability of the United States to continue playing the role of hegemon. The United States and its client Israel can no longer dominate the Middle East. They have proven ineffective even militarily. The Houthis, who are not a state, are able to block one of the key transport arteries, and the Americans can do nothing about it.

The conflict has divided the West and non-Western societies from within into those who are pro-Israeli and those who cannot tolerate the killing of civilians. The non-West has the initiative and advocates a normal settlement of the conflict.

Let me turn to the topic of the Munich Security Conference (MSC). Over the past 60 years, the MSC has continued to introduce new formats and topics for discussion. However, its core and official mission has not changed: to provide a platform for debate and to build peace through dialogue. Six decades after its founding by Ewald von Kleist, the MSC will bring together high-level decision-makers and experts from around the world on 16-18 February 2024 to discuss the most pressing issues of international security. The preparations for the 2024 MSC and the course of the conference met the expectations of the organizers, and perhaps most of the invited guests. It is difficult to assess the actual results of the MSC, but based on life experience, I can assume that strengthening the international order on the current rules will lead to further escalation of tensions. A broad coalition to overcome revisionist tendencies and actions around the world will almost certainly fail. Doubts are raised about decisions in the area of global world order, climate change and many other issues. Europe, the EU and the US are not the three musketeers who will solve all the problems, they have chaos in finances, unresolved debt problems, do not have their own sufficient volumes of natural resources and minerals necessary for further technological development, including green policy. Hence the need to change the values of the elites and the political and economic system, which has not been done within the MSC. Thus, there is a high probability that the West will continue its aggressive policy, but with less and less success. Military actions will continue and even intensify. Destabilization of the world will continue, as will the conflict in Ukraine, but I believe that the situation will develop increasingly in favor of Russia, although Russia has always been a complex society.

The US and some other Western powers, fearing that they will lose their global hegemony, have devised a plan to widen the divisions between the countries of the Global South so that these countries will not be able to achieve their common goal. Therefore, including specifically for this symposium, the Western powers are going to exploit the divisions between India and China to create a struggle between the two large Asian neighbors for dominance in the Global South. This plot must be defeated.

Finally, India and China must treat all countries of the world as equals. Larger and richer countries have a responsibility to help poor and less developed countries in their efforts to meet the aspirations of their people for a dignified and peaceful life.

The idea of a new world order is expressed in China's three strategic initiatives: the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization

Initiative. China does not view the West as an enemy of the Global South. Instead, it seeks to radically reform the prevailing unjust, undemocratic, and violence-promoting structures of global governance. It is not surprising that the "hypochondriacs" of the MSC and EC supported this proposal

In February 2024, one of the Russian scientists A.V. Korotayev, a representative of the theory of nonlinear social evolution and one of the founders of cliodynamics, stated that we live around a singularity point. In his opinion, the evolution of the planet in the form in which it has been since its formation 4 billion years ago cannot continue in this way.

According to the published mathematical model, at the singularity point the curve goes to infinity, which means that some very old trend(s) should be replaced by a completely new one. However, it is not yet clear which one. So it is logical to expect radical changes in 2024. It should be welcomed if Western countries decide to cooperate with India, China, Russia and other developing countries on the principles of equality and equal responsibility. In fact, the 21st century puts all countries before the need to erase the differences between East and West and South and North and unite all the peoples of the world into one harmonious family. This is indeed the main goal of building a common destiny for humanity.

Ukrainian conflict (G. Gustenau)

An analysis of the public discourse on the war in Ukraine in Western Europe shows that there is no strategic approach and that there are political-ideological debates about it. The positions of those disputing Russia and Ukraine are based on "value-based" normative ideas, while at the same time ignoring the objective geostrategic framework conditions. This has happened because of the growing alienation between Europe and Russia over the past 25 years. Both before and during the armed conflict in Ukraine, the actors in the West have largely failed to act strategically.

What do I mean by the ability or inability to act strategically? I will give a few examples.

The first prerequisite for strategic action must be a generally accepted idea of the future global strategic structure: at the expert level, it is obvious that Western liberal ideas have lost their relevance, but Western politicians and the mainstream media still believe that Western values are the basis of the international order. However, without a realistic vision of the emerging international order, it is impossible to define a sustainable role for Europe in it and, consequently, to build relations between Europe and other powers. This also makes it impossible to define clear strategic goals in relations with Russia and Ukraine. This was the case, for example, at the NATO summit in 2008, when the West supported the prospect of NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia and at the same time prevented it.

In the absence of a realistic strategy towards Russia, the West has ignored Russia's strategic interests and underestimated Russia's willingness to fight for these interests. Following the escalation of the war in Ukraine, the West has formulated unrealistic war aims and therefore also shares responsibility for the continuation of the war. As is now becoming clear, the West has no exit strategy in case Ukraine fails to achieve its war aims. The failure to find an exit strategy is also linked to the fact that the West has no idea how to

shape a Eurasian world order that is consistent with the new global strategic realities. This determines the question of whether it is in Western Europe's interests to enter into a long-term confrontation with Russia.

The failure of Western Europe to recognize that it has isolated itself with its position in the Ukrainian conflict is fatal. In these circumstances, narratives have become increasingly contradictory and positions uncompromising. There seems to be no alternative to continuing the armed conflict.

I advocate an approach that explores alternative options for Western Europe's relations with Russia. The widespread belief that the coming decades will be characterized by confrontational relations with Russia is only one option, which is disadvantageous for both Western Europe and Russia.

Alternative approaches can be developed at two levels:

First, these are proposals for options for ending the Special Military Operation with the aim of a ceasefire. This involves assessing the current military strategies of the parties to the conflict and the possibility of ending hostilities as a basis for further negotiations.

Second, and much more important, this is a study of alternative models for shaping relations between Western Europe, Ukraine and Russia in the coming decades. In other words, planning for the post-war period.

Naturally, there is a connection: the sooner the West, Russia and Ukraine develop common ideas about the world order, the sooner a lasting end to the war will be possible.

Of course, the military conflict can drag on for a long time. Eventually, exhaustion on both sides or the inability of one side to achieve a decisive victory will lead to a ceasefire. At present, this is the most likely development, but the consequences for the Eurasian continent will be devastating.

What would alternative approaches look like? Strategic options for creating a new world order must be developed through the joint efforts of experts from all parties involved. At present, there are no such efforts. The following is fundamentally important: such a project must involve experts from Western Europe, Ukraine, Russia and the United States. This is the only way to develop common ideas and strategies.

But what are strategies, not in the usual sense of the word, but "real" strategies? Strategies provide guidance for actions in the future and/or for shaping the future; they influence the future and achieve sustainable effects only there. Such strategies are not empty actions.

If strategies are based on assumptions about the future, we must first know what the future we want to shape or in which we want to achieve our goals might look like. Future scenarios need to be developed to create a common understanding of possible futures, for example, Eurasia in a global context in 2040.

Future scenarios are formed from conceivable constructs, variables, so-called key factors, because who can say how these so-called key factors will behave in ten years and beyond? Here are some questions for open development in this area:

- What are the results of the war in Ukraine and what will the state of Ukraine look like?

- The state and political orientation of the main players USA, EU, Russia, China: how stable are these players within the country and what is their potential and desire to project power?

- Global strategic constellation of states: what model of world order can we expect? Bipolarity, pentarchy, as Herfried Münkler suggests, multipolarity (consisting of more than five elements), or anarchism? What does pentarchy mean for Eurasia, in particular the relations between Western Europe and Russia? Are they based on cooperation or is it a case of coexistence based on minimal rules in the pursuit or renunciation of economic benefits? Do we expect a permanent confrontational division and, if necessary, war? Are liberal Western ideas about world order relevant? What is the significance of the energy transition, especially in Europe?

After creating the scenarios, it is necessary to analyze how these options may develop. Finally, the risks and opportunities that may arise from the implementation of these scenarios for the various players should be analyzed.

- Do the stakeholders have common interests or is there a future scenario that has more advantages than disadvantages for everyone, and which scenarios should be avoided in any case?

- What steps must be taken together to implement the most attractive scenario, and what efforts must be made to avoid a negative development path?

These steps should be taken now, without waiting for the end of the special military operation, since the situation could become even more difficult if decisions on the development of the conflict are left only to the discretion of the American-Ukrainian headquarters in Wiesbaden.

If this is allowed to happen, the following will happen:

- the parties will persist in their irreconcilable narratives and will continue to act without regard for strategy. There will be long-term hostility between the West and Russia;
- the continuation of the armed conflict or, ultimately, a permanent frozen conflict will become inevitable;
- the costs will increase, especially for Western Europe;
- Ukraine will be destroyed.

The demand for a rapid end to the war is currently unrealistic, but the absence of alternative options for the development of the situation is irresponsible. Therefore, it is proposed to create a group of experts from Western Europe, the USA, Ukraine and Russia with the purpose of jointly assessing scenarios and influencing the stakeholders; finding the desired future and developing scenarios for the future of Eurasia in the context of the emerging new world order.

The feasibility of this proposal lies in the following:

- the framework conditions for solving the problem are, of course, bad, but the need to resolve the issue is very urgent;
- the result will be not only a "product" in the sense of a joint analysis of the future and an assessment of strategic options, it is equally important to establish an exchange of opinions between experts from all stakeholders.

Discussion

An analysis of the opinions presented in this article, an analysis of the opinions of other participants in the symposium and discussions, allows us to make a number of general judgments.

The participants consider it important to adhere to the principles of a multipolar world, freedom, justice, information objectivity, respect for other cultures and faiths, and the inadmissibility of discrimination based on national, racial or religious grounds. During the discussions, it was possible to form a consolidated position on the following issues.

In order to prevent outbreaks of a third world war, it is necessary to overcome the bipolar ideological confrontation of political elites in understanding the values of the future world order. Justice and morality should become the basis of peace, which will lead to the restoration of trust between peoples and states. Conscientious, responsible observance of the principles of international law concerning friendly relations and cooperation between states is necessary. It is unacceptable to replace international law with situational rules of the game with illegitimate arbitrators.

It is unacceptable to exclude individual countries from international dialogues. According to the UN principle, states are obliged, regardless of differences in their political, economic and social systems, to cooperate with each other in various areas of international relations with the aim of maintaining peace and security, promoting international economic stability and progress, the welfare of peoples and international cooperation free from discrimination.

In order to ensure regional security, prevent loss of life, restore dialogue and economic ties, NATO and Western countries must suspend arms supplies to Ukraine, accept Russia's proposals, begin peace talks with Russia's participation, and sign a peace treaty.

The participants of the symposium supported the peoples of Palestine and Nagorno-Karabakh, and appealed to international institutions and governments of countries with the demand to act within the legal framework, stop the genocide of peoples, protect the rights and legitimate interests of citizens and ensure conditions for the voluntary return of the people to their permanent place of residence, and treat Christian shrines with care and responsibility.

Of particular importance was the discussion of the role of the expert community in international processes. It was proposed to conduct an open, honest, non-politicized scientifically based expert assessment of the international situation and the situation in the regions of the world. Consolidation of efforts in international humanitarian cooperation, development of public diplomacy and cultural exchanges with the participation of European, Russian, Middle Eastern and other foreign and international scientific and non-governmental organizations is required. The successful historical experience of Bratislava in organizing peace negotiations and concluding peace agreements was noted and it was proposed to return Bratislava's status as a City of Peace, to create conditions for organizing

multilateral dialogues and international symposia in Bratislava with a peacekeeping mission of experts, scientists, government officials and the public.

Conclusion

During an open discussion, the symposium participants discussed current international relations between European countries, Russia, the Middle East and the South Caucasus, analyzed the causes and course of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, the Ukrainian conflict and their possible consequences for the countries of Europe and the global world order.

The materials of the symposium, published in this article, convincingly demonstrate the diversity of points of view on relations between Russia and the West. All participants expressed concern about the inability of international institutions to resolve confrontations, ensure peace and security. A dialogue is needed based on the principles of a multipolar world, freedom, justice, information objectivity, respect for other cultures and faiths, and the inadmissibility of discrimination on national, racial or religious grounds.

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The Role of Russia in Upholding Traditional Spiritual and Moral Values in the Context of Modern World Development

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Abstract. The article shows the transformation of traditional spiritual and moral values in the modern international situation. The author compares Russian and Western approaches and proves Russia's global leadership in preserving universal spiritual and moral values. According to the author, currently the aggressive attack of postmodern supporters on religion, family, marriage, school is clearly manifesting itself, mockery of shrines is taking place, and conflicts are being provoked. Russia, through its centuries-old history, came to the current state national policy, striving to bring to other peoples what enriched them, and not turn them into mankurts who do not remember kinship. Russia's authority on the world stage today is largely based precisely on the fact that it is perceived as a defender of traditional values. For the vast majority of the inhabitants of our planet, the common values are justice, equality, a strong traditional family, responsibility for their country, for its political and cultural heritage.

Keywords: traditional values, spiritual bonds, Russia, world order, the West, globalization, morality, principles

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Introduction

The modern world is at a turning point. It is not only about the decline of the unipolar system, which must be replaced by a more just multipolarity. Values play a major role in the conflict between these models, and this contradiction is not between democracy and authoritarianism, but between the interests of a group of states claiming global dominance and the interests of all the peoples of the world. Previous Western practices are preserved, including through assimilation - attempts to "dissolve" millions of migrants from other cultures and races in a common "melting pot" or within the framework of "multiculturalism" models.

However, it is not only about dissolving the national, cultural, religious identity of “outsiders”, but also about an encroachment on the individuality of the individual, about breaking his cultural and value code through the imposition of postulates under the guise of “universal” and “progressive”.

In his historic address on February 24, 2022, Russian President V.V.Putin gave an uncompromising assessment of the actions of the collective West: “Until recently, attempts have continued... to destroy our traditional values and impose on us their pseudo-values that would corrode us, our people, from within, those attitudes that they are already aggressively imposing in their countries and which directly lead to degradation and degeneration, since they contradict the very nature of man.”

Materials and Methods

In the article, state strategic documents, regulatory legal acts, materials of decisions of authorities of the Russian Federation, the USA, the EU, a number of Balkan countries regarding traditional, spiritual and moral values and the status of the family, as well as the results of sociological surveys of the population were analyzed. The article compares conservative and neoconservative approaches to understanding values. A set of methods was used in the study: analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, extrapolation, comparative analysis.

Results

Spiritual and moral values have been one of the foundations of the development of Russian statehood throughout the history of the country. The problem of the formation, defense and promotion of traditional spiritual and moral values both in domestic policy and in international relations is now one of the most pressing issues.

It can be argued that today a systemic crisis has arisen between traditional civilizational values and the values of the neoliberal globalizing world, which is based on the contradiction between two types of civilizational development - secular-humanistic and religious-traditionalist.

In a broad sense, traditional values are a certain set of principles and norms that have come from the depths of centuries, forming a certain “correct” form of social behavior and interaction, where, according to E. Kant, “morality determines the will”¹. In jurisprudence, it is believed that one of the sources of law is tradition, which acts as a regulator of social relations. In a narrower sense, traditional values are a set of principles and norms unique to each state and defined through ideology, culture, religion, political regime, etc.

¹ Soloviev E. Yu. Critique of Practical Reason. New Philosophical Encyclopedia / Institute of Philosophy, Russian Academy of Sciences; National Social and Scientific Foundation; 2nd edition, revised and supplemented. Moscow: Mysl, 2010.

Currently, traditional values are generally understood as a matrix that combines human dignity, human rights and freedoms, patriotism, citizenship, service to the fatherland and responsibility for its fate, high moral ideals, a strong family, creative work, the priority of the spiritual over the material, humanism, mercy, justice, collectivism, mutual assistance and mutual respect, historical memory and continuity of generations. This is the definition given in the draft “Fundamentals of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values”².

Historically, the protection of traditional values was viewed by Russia as a tool for promoting and protecting its interests in international relations, including protecting the interests and rights of Orthodox Christians around the world, where after the fall of Byzantium, it was the Muscovite Kingdom, and later the Russian Empire, that positioned itself as the main defender of traditional Christian values. The idea of protecting the Slavic peoples in Europe, Orthodox Christians in the spirit of “brotherly assistance” was reflected in specific historical events.

When considering historical narratives in Russia, we are talking about the natural process of formation of traditional values within the framework of the established cultural and political community, uniting many different peoples of different faiths. The family, along with self-restraint and patriotism, was one of the foundations of the way of life of society, as was the sacrament of marriage as a union of a man and a woman, the spiritual life of the family, expressed in regular visits to religious temples, observance of religious rites, veneration of God, commandments and elders.

It should be noted that in all religious and cultural traditions, family, childbearing, and raising the younger generation were what formed the values and relationships of members of society, regardless of social organization. Throughout Russian history, it was spiritual and moral values that were the solid foundation of the Russian state.

The Soviet political system, which for a certain time excluded religion from the list of traditional values, in the era of the “mature USSR” also formed the values of the “Soviet man”, which were influenced by the ideology of opposition to the Western world in the context of the fight against colonialism, racial segregation and the advantages of the socialist system as a whole, as more progressive. It was based on the same ideas of patriotism, service to the fatherland, justice, equality, collectivism, humanism, etc. The system of traditional Soviet values became one of the instruments of foreign policy ideology.

For the first time in the Russian political discourse at the state level, the category of “traditional values” was heard in 2012 within the framework of V.V.Putin’s programmatic article “Russia – the National Question”, which outlined the values that are “common to all traditional religions of Russia”[4]. Conservative ideas of the Christian (Catholic) West, which are ideologically close to Russian traditional values, are currently tending to be erased from the socio-political discourse, being recognized as marginal and inconsistent with the “progressive” neoliberal agenda.

² Stragedy 24. Available from: <https://strategy24.ru/rf/projects/osnovy-gosudarstvennoy-politiki-po-sokhraneniyu-i-ukrepleniyu-traditsionnykh-rossiyskikh-dukhovnonravstvennykh-tsennostey>.

This allows using traditional values as a soft power tool for the purpose of establishing constructive and mutually beneficial cooperation with conservative, pragmatically minded political forces and politicians of the West, defending the national interests of their countries in the fight against ideological and political globalism, a unipolar world that denies national interests and political sovereignty of the state, which can become an effective mechanism for countering attempts to implement ideas about the international isolation of our country. In the modern world, the so-called “collective West” views traditional values through a secular-humanistic approach to civilizational development, within which they are forgotten along with traditional society and the state.

In order to blur the concept of gender, family and marriage values, programs are being implemented to promote LGBT^{3*} rights and spread the ideas of radical feminism. Under the auspices of the administration of US Presidents B.Obama and later D.Biden, acts were adopted aimed at protecting and promoting the rights and interests of sexual minorities around the world⁴. In Germany, the promotion of the LGBT community^{5*} is also becoming one of the conceptual directions of foreign policy. Citizens, scientists, journalists, artists, religious and public figures and politicians who disagree with this approach are subjected to enormous pressure and discrimination, in some cases reaching the so-called “cancel culture”[2].

On the other side is Russia, which considers traditional values as one of the fundamental markers of civilizational and national identity. Modern Russia is one of the few modern states where the ideas of traditional values are reflected in regulatory legal acts, including the Constitution.

If in the Western world there is a process of erasing traditional values not only from the public consciousness, but also from various documents, then in Russia there is an opposite trend, which is manifested in the example of the adopted amendments to the Constitution of the Russian Federation.

The main law of the country included definitions that enshrine the institution of marriage as a union between a man and a woman, the preservation of the heritage and ideals of ancestors, historically established state unity and faith in God. The adopted amendments to the Constitution reflect the basic values of the traditionalist approach and are based on historically established moral and ethical principles and reflect the basic values of the absolute majority of Russian society. It can be stated that support for the traditional family, spirituality, motherhood, and fatherhood is penetrating deeper into the political discourse of modern Russia.

The Russian legal field has acts prohibiting the propaganda of homosexuality among minors and the dissemination of relevant information, and a number of international

3 * Included in the register of non-profit organizations performing the functions of a foreign agent, 18+

4 Obama Declares Protection of Rights of Sexual Minorities a Priority of US Foreign Policy. Available from:

5 * Included in the register of non-profit organizations performing the functions of a foreign agent, 18+

treaties and conventions regulating the legal status of the LGBT community^{6*} have not been signed or ratified by the Russian Federation. The diversity of documents touching upon the concept of “traditional values” speaks of a conceptual understanding of the need to conduct systemic work, the activities of relevant authorities and civil society institutions aimed at forming appropriate educational, upbringing and cultural policies in the country. Despite the trend we discussed above, a number of actors in the domestic political spectrum, primarily the so-called representatives of the “non-systemic opposition”, persons performing the functions of foreign agents, take an openly pro-Western position formed by external curators, and continue to focus on the need to promote the ideas of spiritual secularization, discrediting traditional religious confessions expressed in the promotion of LGBT values^{7*}, changing the socio-cultural stereotype of behavior, gender diversity, ideas of radical feminism, sex education, legalization of prostitution, popularization of abortions, development of the cult of consumption, positioning this as a certain pattern of progressive European values.

Russia’s defense of traditional values, both in foreign policy and within the country, is positioned by such actors as an archaic rudiment, a throwback to the totalitarian past, and analogies are drawn with the political regimes of a number of Arab states⁸.

Realizing that such ideas do not directly find understanding and support in Russian society, as indicated by various sociological studies (for example: Attitudes of Russians to LGBT^{9*}. ANO “LEVADA-CENTER”^{10**}), agents of Western influence, among whom there are not only politicians, but also individual cultural figures, artists, public figures, video bloggers, use the tools of soft power, promoting such ideas through mass culture, education and pseudoscientific research.

Thus, there is a latent ideological and psychological impact on the minds of Russian youth and the whole society as a whole, consisting in the implantation of historically alien behavioral stereotypes of denial of state patriotism, service to the fatherland, procreation, egoism, immorality and permissiveness. Such activities aimed at replacing moral guidelines in Russian society, primarily among young people, should be considered as one of the main threats to state and public security.

Recognizing these risks in the context of the demographic situation in modern Russia, with its frankly low birth rate, at various venues and round tables, politicians and public figures are demanding a ban on the propaganda of not only homosexuality, but also transsexualism, abortions, the “child-free” movement and other behavior that influences the consciousness of the younger generation and, ultimately, the birth rate.

6 * Included in the register of non-profit organizations performing the functions of a foreign agent, 18+

7 * Included in the register of non-profit organizations performing the functions of a foreign agent, 18+

8 Tsargrad. The Ministry of Culture’s project has stirred up the fifth column. Available from: https://tsargrad.tv/articles/proekt-minkultury-razberedil-pjatuju-kolonnu_486969.

9 * Included in the register of non-profit organizations performing the functions of a foreign agent, 18+

10 ** Included in the register of non-profit organizations performing the functions of a foreign agent, 18+

In this regard, it is necessary to develop mechanisms to counteract the oblivion of traditional spiritual and moral values in Russian society, primarily among young people. A permissive attitude to this problem will inevitably lead to a weakening of the unity of the multinational people of the Russian Federation, to a weakening of Russian statehood.

The unprecedented international pressure to which the Russian Federation is subjected, the ideologies of the special military operation in Ukraine, based on such values as service to the fatherland, patriotism, mutual assistance, justice, have updated the public discourse around the values related to state patriotism. This requires the development of a strategy for promoting spiritual and moral values and guidelines in foreign policy that will contribute to the formation of a new, fair world order, dispute resolution and conflict prevention.

In the modern conditions of the development of international political processes, the religious-traditionalist approach based on traditional spiritual and moral values, which is characteristic of Russia, for Russian society, can become a systemic determinant of modernization and a factor of global competitive advantage in the international arena.

Russia's defense of traditional values in the international arena has become a stumbling block in international relations between Russia and the West. The second half of the 20th century is characterized as the time of the emergence in Western Europe of trends to discredit religion, primarily Christianity, as the basis of the traditional state and traditional family. Theories about overpopulation of the earth and the need to regulate quantitative indicators of the world population are emerging. Ideas of political globalism are also developing, associated with the limitation of national state interests, state sovereignty, the transfer of part of state functions and powers to supranational and non-state bodies in order to make consolidated decisions based on certain "common interests".

In the neoliberal understanding of the concept of "world politics", formulated by the American international scholar J. Rosenau, the main actors, along with states, are numerous non-state entities entering into relations with each other, which are of a completely different nature than interstate relations. At the same time, the interaction of actors is formed independently of states and is beyond the control of their central bodies.¹¹ Reducing the role of state institutions in political governance, economic life, and social relations is one of the basic values of liberalism.

The famous Austrian philosopher and economist Friedrich August von Hayek, examining the functions of the state in his works, put forward theses on the need to transfer a number of such functions to the private sector [6]. Similar ideas were also expressed by the Austrian-American economist, philosopher, and historian L. von Mises, who spoke of the need to reduce the role of state property in favor of private property as the main principle of "organizing human life in society"[3]. R.C.Cornwall, an American libertarian writer, developed the concept of the so-called "third sector", which was based on the possibility of more effective implementation of a number of state functions by non-state structures [5].

¹¹ Rosenau J.N. Governance without Government: Order and Change in World Politics. Available from: http://www.worldpolit.ru/dl/gwg_rus.doc.

As part of the attack on the traditional state in the Western world, an attack on the traditional family began. In 1952, the International Planned Parenthood Federation was formed, which, while declaring seemingly harmless goals of family planning and preparing parents for childbearing, began actively promoting various birth control mechanisms. At the level of state policy, proposals included reducing social benefits and preferences for large families, pregnant women, and young mothers, while in society, ideas of voluntary sterilization, decriminalization and moral justification of abortions, and depathologization of homosexuality were promoted. The latter aspect is especially significant in the context of the attack on traditional values, since it was the exclusion of homosexuality from the list of mental illnesses and pathologies that allowed its propaganda to be developed as a norm. Today, we see the implementation of a similar approach in the "progressive" Western world in the context of the depathologization of zoophilia and the decriminalization of pedophilia.

Traditional European conservatives are openly surrendering their positions to neoliberals, their party ideology is becoming increasingly distant from traditionalism. As Russian researcher M.A.Burda notes: "As an example, we can cite the attitude of conservative parties to the issues of legalizing same-sex marriages, migration policy, the depth of European integration, etc., which is fundamentally no different from the ideas of the liberal wing"[1]

However, not all European political forces follow these ideas. The expansion of traditional values in the United States and the European Union does not find full support in society, which is reflected in the popularization of those political forces that were considered marginal ten years ago.

Taking into account the still existing demand for traditional values in Western society, the empty niche is occupied by European right-wing parties, which are the only fighters defending traditional European Christian values. It is also necessary to take into account the exponentially growing Muslim population of Europe, which has a strong traditionalist base and, in connection with this, is very critical of depopulation propaganda.

Even wider groups of society in Eastern European countries (Hungary, Serbia, Poland, Bulgaria) support politicians who are ready to speak out against the destruction of their people in this "melting pot" of modern global Europe. Thus, Hungary, Bulgaria and Poland refused to ratify the Istanbul Convention, which "teaches gender diversity." In Poland, more than 80 city councils have signed the "Family Charter," declaring themselves LGBT-free zones^{12*}.

Discussion

Thus, the departure from traditional spiritual and moral values undermines the seemingly strong European unity. Traditional values still remain significant for the

¹² * Included in the register of non-profit organizations performing the functions of a foreign agent, 18

Christian states of Southern and Eastern Europe, the Balkans, their support is becoming an element of constructive and mutually beneficial interaction between Russia and the nationally oriented political forces of European states, opposing the secular-humanistic approach of globalism, waging a hybrid war against modern Russia.

This requires the intensification of Russian diplomatic activity, including within the framework of implementing soft power and people's diplomacy. It is obvious that the anti-Russian hysteria fueled in the West complicates the use of formal channels of interaction with political allies in Western countries, but this only actualizes the importance of informal channels.

Conclusion

Modern Russia, having assumed the role of one of the main defenders of traditional values and the traditional family, has great potential for coordinating work among all actors sharing this approach.

Modern globalism is not only against the traditional state, its political and economic independence, but also against the traditional family. It is the family and childbearing that are the basis of sovereign demographic policy, which is one of the key elements of ensuring national security, and therefore, preserving state sovereignty.

Speaking about the formal and legal aspect of the implementation of spiritual and moral values in international relations, it is necessary to take the following steps.

First, conduct a legal analysis of international documents ratified by the Russian Federation for their compliance with the Constitution and denounce individual provisions or documents as a whole if they are aimed at promoting a destructive agenda of reducing the birth rate, terminating pregnancies and promoting non-traditional sexual relations.

Secondly, initiate the development of international documents (agreements, conventions) on the protection of the family and traditional values, including at the level of the CIS, the Eurasian Economic Union and the Union State of Russia and Belarus, as well as BRICS. Thirdly, initiate the discussion and adoption of international documents that protect the life and rights of the child from the moment of conception, as well as protect it from sexual abuse and LGBT propaganda^{13*}.

To improve national legislation:

Firstly, introduce the institution of accreditation (licensing) of the activities of non-profit organizations dealing with issues of demography, migration, intergender relations, to identify and close organizations engaged in destructive activities aimed at countering traditional values.

Secondly, at the legislative level, expand measures of social and credit-financial support for large families, young parents, parents with two children, including in the field of obtaining education on a budgetary basis, additionally protect the legal status of a

¹³ * Banned in the Russian Federation, 18+

pregnant woman and young mother and father in the Labor Code, increase the number of nursery groups in preschool institutions.

Thirdly, introduce into the school curriculum the discipline "Basis of Family Culture and Interaction" based on traditional spiritual and moral values.

As part of the formation of a positive image of a traditional family, a large family and traditional relations, ensure:

Firstly, the availability of appropriate information content in the media, culture, art, commercials of a traditional family - a father, a mother and several children of different sexes.

Secondly, to hold thematic socio-political forums and conferences, the main objective of which will be to form a positive image of modern Russia as a state that actively promotes and protects traditional spiritual and moral values. Such events can become a platform for effective counteraction to the attempts of the "collective West" to isolate Russia, a basis for cooperation with all political forces that share the religious-traditionalist approach, including in unfriendly countries focused on combating modern political globalism. The result of the work of such socio-political discussion platforms can be various kinds of declarations, memoranda, agreements, conventions, any forms of international cooperation capable of influencing the promotion of traditional spiritual and moral values in international relations.

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Contribution of the author

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Interreligious Dialogue: the Actual Meaning, Typology and Features of the Post-Soviet Space

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Abstract. The article presents the authors' thoughts on the reasons for the growing role of the religious factor in modern international relations, and the risks associated with the politicization of religions. It is concluded that religious diversity and at the same time the commonality of basic values directly correlate with the emerging multipolarity of the modern world. It is noted that against the backdrop of the crisis of the Western liberal order and neoliberal ideology, religion and its institutions have become symbols of new fundamentalism, that is, an ideology that calls for a return to the foundations of faith and one's worldview and culture. The growing role of religion as an institution of civil society and the need to make this institution stronger, to integrate it into civil society and into the system of patriotic education are noted. A classification of types of interreligious dialogue (polemical, cognitive, peacemaking, partnership) and levels of interreligious dialogue (high, medium, low) is presented. The specifics of interreligious dialogue in the post-Soviet space and the features of post-Soviet religious and political identity, the new attitude of political authorities to the institutions of faith are determined: the desire to integrate them into the social structure of society and into social policy. A brief description of interreligious dialogue in the USSR and in the post-Soviet period is given. The prospects for the development of ethno-confessional relations in the post-Soviet space are considered. Recommendations are given for the development of interreligious dialogue at the present stage.

Keywords: interreligious dialogue, religious institutions, religious identity, post-Soviet space, values, identity

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Introduction

Religious institutions play a significant role in national and international politics, and heads of state often turn to the leaders of various churches, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist. This is due to the fact that there is an active search for new ethical foundations for the modern world order, the ethics of international relations. They appeal to faith as a powerful source of legitimacy, values, identity, that is, as has always been the case in history, they seek support and justification for their interests, political demands, and tools for getting out of this or that crisis in religion.

Materials and Methods

The article is based on the scientific reports of Russian scientists presented at the session "Interreligious Dialogue for Peace and Cooperation" within the framework of the VIII international scientific and practical conference "Russia and the World: Dialogues – 2024. Forces of Attraction". The organizers of the foreign session in Minsk were the National Research Institute for the Development of Communications (NIIRC, Russia) and the International Public Association "Christian Educational Center named after St. Methodius and Cyril". The authors of the article used the methods of synthesis, comparison, generalization, historical analysis. The issues of interreligious dialogue are considered from the standpoint of systemic and institutional approaches. The materials and research methods are described in more detail in the works of the authors of the article [3-11].

Results

Religion in a Multipolar World: The Power of Faith and Values in the Dialogue of Civilizations (R.N.Lunkin)

The modern demand for religious ethics in international relations and in politics in general is due to objective reasons. In the 2020s, the growing influence of religion contrasted with the period of secularization, which began in the New Age and reached its peak at the end of the 20th century. In the context of socio-political and economic crises, the formation of new social inequality in the world [3], people began to turn to faith again for support, motivation to live and work. Religion has ceased to be perceived only as a source of culture, traditions and discussions about freedom of conscience, as it turned out to be in demand for corporate social responsibility, for the implementation of sustainable development goals in the field of ecology and in the labor market. Religion is also seen as a regulator of the moral paradigm in society [1]. The challenge for religion is that it has also become part of political construction, religiously motivated radicalism and extremism. Against the backdrop of

the crisis of the Western liberal order and the decline of neoliberal ideology [12], which opposes traditional identities, religion and its institutions have become symbols of a new fundamentalism, that is, an ideology that calls for a return to the foundations of faith and one's original worldview and culture. Communities of believers are natural defenders of traditional values, the foundations of society, even despite the fact that within Christianity and other faiths there are various currents and understandings of tradition, both ultra-liberal and ultra-right radical. The confrontation between anti-traditionalism and identism (identists, as supporters of sovereign values and tradition are often called in Europe) has become key to understanding the ideological divisions that have emerged in almost every country in the world since the 2010s. The reaction of traditional forces has shown that the monopoly of the liberal order is impossible. Religious diversity and at the same time the commonality of basic values directly correlates with the emerging multipolarity of the modern world, in which everyone values their sovereignty, tradition, culture, and in fact, each subject perceives itself as a civilization. At the same time, religious institutions, communities, and congregations create an atmosphere of social solidarity around themselves, rather than disunity and/or adaptation to the neoliberal demands of the "new ethics". The acuteness of the situation also lies in the fact that the world is experiencing not just a crisis or crises, but a transition to a new industrial order, digitalization, and the introduction of new technologies with unclear social consequences.

The situation is also acute because the world is experiencing not just a crisis or crises, but a transition to a new industrial order, digitalization and the introduction of new technologies with unclear social consequences.

The advantages of religion are evidenced by the peculiarities of the post-Soviet religious and political identity. First of all, religion is the embodiment of tradition and the custodian of the culture of the entire society, believers and non-believers. At the same time, for the majority of the population, following religious precepts is not a priority. Religion is an instrument and tool of national policy, the desire to create "one's own institution", and the securitization of religion leads to control over religious activity.

The process of socialization of religion is a natural process of turning its institutions into one of the significant elements of the third sector [14], part of civil society, and not a "museum". It is important for the state to make this resource stronger, to really, and not symbolically, to integrate it into a loyal civil society and a system of patriotic education. Religion has become part of political construction in the "liberal" ideological camp, a symbol of the preservation of identity. The goal of neoliberal values is not to destroy but to remake religious identity.

Religious values and identity are the core of global policy to create a multipolar world. The emphasis on interreligious dialogue and promotion of traditional values is made in the Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation¹, where, in particular, the task is contained to neutralize attempts to "impose pseudo-humanistic and other neoliberal

¹ Concepts of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation. Approved by the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin on March 31, 2023. № 229. Available from: <https://www.mid.ru/ru/detail-material-page/1860586/?lang=ru>.

ideological attitudes that lead to the loss of traditional spiritual and moral guidelines and moral principles by humanity..." (IV.18,9). The ideological basis for religious security is laid in the "Fundamentals of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values"². In 2022, the President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko also devoted part of the Address to the Belarusian people and the National Assembly in 2022 to the value-based approach: "Value stability has become the basis for agreement. We need to build a state based on our mental traditions. This is the fairway of state development. As soon as we deviate from it, try on someone else's patterns, we will fall into a bottomless abyss and never get out of there. In today's changeable and artificial world, it turned out that we, with our conservative and traditional thinking, are in a much more stable position. The main pillars of the value foundation are the desire for peace and unity, national and state identity, continuity and balance of cultures, harmony of ethno-confessional relations, respect for the family as a union of a man and a woman."³

Some other examples of the activation of religious policy show the new attitude of the authorities towards religious institutions and the desire to integrate them into the social structure of society and into social policy. For example, in Uzbekistan, the Law on Religion has been in force since 2021⁴, adopted under Sh. Mirziyoyev, softened many rules. Now 50 people are needed to register a religious association, it can be done electronically. This is important for the community, which does not have the right to do anything without registration. To register a community, it is no longer necessary to obtain permission from the mahalla, this permission is given by the khokimiyat at the regional level. The new law still prohibits the distribution and storage of any religious literature that has not passed the examination of the Committee on Religious Affairs. The Committee on Religious Affairs conducts an active religious policy at the local level and organizes meetings in the regions of religious associations, representatives of security forces, khokimats, and justice agencies.

In Kazakhstan, the state actively supports interreligious communication within the framework of meetings of leaders of religious communities (World Leaders Summit), trips to the regions, invitations to temples and mosques for the Day of Spiritual Harmony, summits of representatives of world religions, etc. Each akimat has its own specialists in religious associations in the Departments of Internal Policy, who are also employees of the National Security Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The akimats have permanent clubs of religious leaders, which usually include Muslims, Orthodox, Catholics, Adventists, Pentecostals, Baptists, and followers of Ahmadiyya.

In Armenia, the Armenian Apostolic Church has the greatest influence, and it is with this historical church of the country that the state and politicians build relations. For

² The Principles of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values were Approved by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of November 9, 2022. № 809. Available from: <https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/405579061/>.

³ Lukashenko A.G. Address to the Belarusian People and the National Assembly. January 28, 2022. Available from: <https://president.gov.by/ru/events/aleksandr-lukashenko-28-yanvaryabratitsya-s-ezhagodnym-poslaniem-k-belorusskomu-narodu-i-nacionalnomu-sobraniyu>

⁴ On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations: Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 07/05/2021. № 3PY-699. Available from: <https://lex.uz/docs/5491541>.

society, the Armenian Apostolic Church is the path to salvation, the path to national unity, and love for the Motherland. The activities of the Armenian Inter-Church Charity Round Table of the World Council of Churches are characteristic.⁵ This is assistance to communities in various spheres - social, environmental, spiritual. Representatives of the organization consult with a priest in a village about the needs and problems with roads or drinking water. Infrastructure projects in villages and towns are organized with grants from the Ministry of Social Security (which are given for the development of local territories) of the republic and Western funds (40% at the expense of local forces, 60% at the expense of the Interchurch Round Table), schools, roads are built, water supply is installed. The projects are usually headed by a local priest, and there is a special training program for the clergy and other project partners, within the framework of which focus groups are held, it is discussed how to correctly assess a particular problem and then solve it.

An example of the formation of a solidary society is the activity of Metropolitan Filaret (Vakhrameyev), the Patriarchal Exarch of Belarus for more than three decades. In the service of Metropolitan Filaret, three areas can be distinguished that characterize him as a public and religious figure with strategic thinking and reflect the role that religious figures play in modern society in different countries of the world. Firstly, Metropolitan Filaret was the builder of the national Belarusian church; since 1978, he headed the Minsk and Belarusian Metropolitanate, then the exarchate. During the most difficult period of the restoration of church life, he determined the main trends of its development - the return of what was lost, the construction of churches, the establishment of relations with society. Secondly, with the active participation of Metropolitan Filaret, a strategy for state-confessional relations was created, the church made a real contribution to the development of the Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations⁶, where the role of the Orthodox Church and a number of other confessions as traditional and historically rooted in the republic was noted. In 2003, a "concordat" of the Church and the state was concluded, an agreement on cooperation, which is not present in many post-Soviet states. Thirdly, Metropolitan Filaret considered intercultural and interreligious cooperation, communication links that can only appear in the course of communication between peoples and religious leaders to be significant not only for the church community, but also for the country as a whole. From 1981 to 1989, Metropolitan Filaret headed the Department of External Church Relations of the Russian Orthodox Church, and at the end of the Soviet era, he not only raised the topic of peacekeeping, but also took part in forums uniting a wide range of different religions and confessions both in Russia and in Belarus. Dialogue of cultures and religions plays a major role in the future harmonious development of society and the development of state policy.

⁵ Armenian Inter-Church Charity Round Table of the World Council of Churches. Available from: <https://www.roundtable-act.am/>.

⁶ Law of the Republic of Belarus "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" of December 17, 1992. № 2054-XII (with changes and additions). Available from: https://krichev.gov.by/downloads/social/o_svobode.pdf.

Interreligious dialogue in the post-Soviet space: experience, specifics, development prospects (S.V.Melnik)

What determines and what is the specificity of interreligious dialogue in the countries of the former USSR, and accordingly, what are the prospects for the development of ethno-confessional relations? Firstly, this is the question of the forms of interreligious relations. Interreligious dialogue is a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon. There are different strategies for it [2]. We have developed a classification of interreligious dialogue [9], according to which we propose to distinguish four main types of dialogue: "polemical", "cognitive", "peacekeeping" and "partnership". These types of dialogue can be conditionally correlated with the questions around which relations are built: "who is right?" (disputes about the truth and superiority of religions), "who are you?" (studying the other), "how can we live together peacefully?" (concern for strengthening harmonious relations, conflict resolution) and "what can we do to improve the world?" (joint activities in areas of common interest). In each of the specified types of dialogue, different types can be distinguished. But all existing forms of interreligious dialogue can be attributed to one of the listed types.

In the polemical and cognitive types of dialogue, we are talking about comparing religions as worldview systems. In the peacekeeping and partnership types of dialogue, we are already talking about the interaction of religions as social institutions, about ensuring their harmonious coexistence and joint activities. We see interreligious dialogue either as a comparison of the ideas of different religions (theological, axiological, related to religious experience and spiritual practice, etc. within the framework of a polemical and cognitive dialogue), or as a tool for maintaining peace and harmony between believers, bearers of different religious worldviews (peacekeeping and partnership dialogue). The most common development of interreligious dialogue, in which official representatives of religious organizations participate, is manifested in the peacekeeping and partnership types of dialogue.

Secondly, this is the experience of implementing interreligious dialogue in the USSR. When speaking about interreligious dialogue, it is useful to distinguish three levels at which it can be implemented: "high" (religious leaders [13], official representatives of high-level religious communities), "middle" (scientists, experts) and "grassroots" (ordinary believers, youth, activist initiatives). Atheistic ideology dominated in the Soviet Union. The activities of religious organizations were subject to control, and religious communities were in a state of survival. In this regard, there is no point in talking about any kind of systemic, active interreligious dialogue "at the grassroots" level. The same can be said about the "middle level". If in the West during the 20th century interreligious dialogue developed freely, and various problems associated with it received a multifaceted and profound understanding, then we were on the sidelines of this process. Almost no attention was paid to the study of the problems of dialogue of religions - theological, religious studies, philosophical, cultural studies - in the Soviet Union. The only area in which interreligious dialogue was carried out in the USSR was the level of religious leaders. A number of large, including international, interreligious forums were held in the Soviet Union. The activities of religious communities

were coordinated and controlled by the state, the same applies to interreligious contacts. Interreligious forums were considered part of the Soviet Union's policy of fighting for peace and general disarmament.

The first meeting, which was attended by Christian leaders and representatives of other religions of the USSR, took place on November 27-29, 1951, as part of the Third All-Union Conference of Supporters of Peace. On May 9-12, 1952, the first interreligious conference in the Soviet Union was held in the Holy Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius. The second interreligious conference in the USSR "For Cooperation and Peace Among Nations" was held in the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius on July 1-4, 1969. The event was attended by 175 delegates, including representatives of Muslims from foreign countries - Syria, Morocco, Jordan, Yugoslavia, Guyana and Senegal. The official greeting from the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR A. Kosygin said: "The Soviet government steadily and consistently pursues a policy of peace and friendship among nations, tirelessly strives to prevent the threat of a new world war and highly appreciates any efforts, including those of religious organizations, in achieving this goal." The greeting reflects the position of the state in relation to such interreligious events, which sought to use the "religious factor" to achieve the goals of its foreign and domestic policy. In 1977 and 1982, two major interreligious international forums were held in Moscow, which can be considered the two most notable events in the field of interreligious dialogue in the USSR. From June 6 to 10, 1977, the World Conference "Religious Figures for Lasting Peace, Disarmament and Just Relations between Nations" (1977) was held in Moscow. On May 10-14, 1982, the largest interreligious summit in the history of the USSR took place: the Moscow World Conference "Religious Figures for the Salvation of the Sacred Gift - Life from Nuclear Catastrophe" (1982). The event was attended by 590 delegates from 90 countries. Since the 1970s, the development of interreligious dialogue has been noticeable within the framework of two separate areas - cognitive dialogue (the center is the knowledge of other religions, the Catholic Church paid great attention to dialogue as a study, a way of "mutual enrichment", personal and spiritual growth) and peacemaking dialogue. Interreligious summits in the USSR were entirely related to the second area, there was no talk of any theological understanding of different religions, on the contrary, the participants emphasized that they did not touch upon doctrinal issues during the discussions. The final statement of the 1982 conference stated: "We do not seek to merge our worldviews. Our views of reality remain distinct. We hold uncompromisingly to our various religious beliefs. Despite these differences, we can affirm together much that is dear to us all"⁷. Among the followers of Orthodoxy and other traditional religions, there is a concept of the inviolability of the sacred sphere. rejection of attempts to invade from outside. It should be noted that such conceptual foundations of interreligious dialogue - refusal to discuss dogmatic issues and cooperation in strengthening peace and other social spheres of common interest - are also relevant for the organization of interreligious dialogue at the official level and in modern

⁷ Religious leaders for saving the sacred gift of life from nuclear catastrophe. World conference. Moscow: Moscow Patriarchate, 1983:7.

Russia. An example is the activity of the Interreligious Council of Russia, which unites the heads of the four traditional religions of the Russian Federation - Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. The most notable interreligious international project, which operates on a regular basis, is the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Kazakhstan, which has been held since 2003. At the Congress, only the social agenda is discussed, mainly peacekeeping, as well as the possible positive contribution that religions can make to public welfare (ecology, economic equality, justice, etc.).

Discussion

Based on the experience and specifics of implementing interreligious dialogue, several promising areas for the development of relations can be identified. The dialogue can be 1) "high", 2) "medium", 3) "grassroots". 1. One of the proposals is to hold a meeting of religious leaders of the Eurasian region. This event could contribute to the cultural dimension of Eurasian integration. After the collapse of the USSR, the peoples of the countries that were part of it are moving away from each other, new generations are growing up who know little about the common historical and cultural past and feel less and less community with their neighbors, the Russian language is being forgotten. In this context, a meeting of religious leaders of the Eurasian region, their discussion of common problems, and the broadcast of the meeting in the media would have symbolic significance. An example of good neighborliness and respectful relations, solidarity, unity would undoubtedly be important for believers, which many citizens of the post-Soviet countries are today. Such a meeting of religious leaders, at little cost, could contribute to the integration of the states and peoples of Eurasia on a spiritual and religious basis. 2. At the expert/conceptual level, a pressing task is to develop confessional or interreligious documents. The documents should offer a concept explaining why believers should live in peace and respect each other. Particular attention may be paid to traditional moral and spiritual values (in the context of the "secular-liberal standard" and the "religious-traditionalist value system"). This is a separate and very broad topic that requires attention. I would like to note that while the Roman Catholic Church has more than a dozen documents on interreligious relations, the Russian Orthodox Church does not have a single official document on this issue, which has undoubted social significance. In Russia, theological education and science have been actively developing in recent years, there are many opportunities for research, original ideas and creative approaches.

3. Over the past ten years, interreligious events have been held in Russia at the "grassroots" level among young people: the annual Interreligious International Youth Forum in Dagestan since 2013, the "Dialogue of Religions" project supported by the Moscow Government, which includes chess, football and volleyball tournaments between representatives of different religions. At the same time, there is no specific joint practical work of believers of different religions (youth, women's interreligious organizations, etc.) in the field of helping those in need, ecology, and socially useful initiatives.

Conclusion

The role of different churches and confessions in the post-Soviet space, Africa, Latin America, India, Southeast Asia, and Eurasia shows the potential of religious institutions for positive social capital, that is, solidarity, creation of values, formation of identity and originality. Religion in a social context is, first of all, cohesion around the community and sacred ideals, value motivation (justice, mercy, value of a person), trust at different levels of interaction between citizens and institutions - social consolidation. Religious associations as institutions of civil society are key participants in relations between countries and regions of the world. This was demonstrated during the last world crisis, launched by the Ukrainian conflict. Religion corresponds to the multipolar structure of the modern world, for modern believers, as a rule, there are no borders, therefore there is no problem of interaction between civilizations, there is no ground for discrimination regarding who shares "neoliberal" values and who does not, who fits "Western standards" and who does not, and therefore is "lagging behind", who is a full-fledged civilization and who is not. Although not all religious leaders share such a broad understanding of the equality of civilizations, it is in the religious sphere that the values of solidarity, identity and diversity are formed, the space of which is only narrowing in other spheres of life in modern post-industrial society.

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Central Asia: the Problem of Water Use in the Situation of the Construction of the Afghan Kush-Tepa Canal

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Abstract. The scarcity of water resources, the lack of equitable access of people to clean water and sanitation services, the insufficiency of technical and financial measures to create advanced systems for the use and conservation of water resources are global problems, but they cause the greatest damage to the states of the Global South, including Central Asia. Problems associated with water shortages in this region will worsen if the Kush-Tepa canal, which is being built in Afghanistan, is uncontrolled.

The states of the region are committed to negotiations with the Taliban government in order to agree on cooperation in the field of water use, they are ready to help in the construction of the canal, associated irrigation systems and help in their technical equipment.

The Afghan side, accepting verbally the initiatives of its Central Asian partners, insists on its right to use the canal at its own discretion and to the extent that meets its interests. At the same time, the Taliban authorities, not yet recognized by the international community, are trying not to aggravate relations with their neighbors with whom they carry out trade and economic cooperation. The Central Asian countries are making it clear that interaction with the Afghans can further develop if the parties take into account mutual interests. External actors behave differently. Russia offers its services in solving problems related to the operation of the Kush-Tepa Canal. The Americans are providing financial assistance to speed up the construction of the canal.

Keywords: Kush-Tepa Canal, water scarcity, Taliban government, national selfishness, joint statement, UN Conference

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Introduction

The problem of water scarcity in Central Asia has recently acquired special importance, as evidenced by numerous publications by the authors [1, 2, 4, 5], including in the journal «Russia and the World: Scientific Dialogue»[3].

The appeal to this topic is also explained by the significance of today's difficult relations between Afghanistan and the countries of Central Asia. The security of this region, the positive ties between the States located here, and their sustainable development are of undoubted importance to the entire world community. This is precisely why the world powers – Russia, China, India, and the members of the European Union – are involved in Central Asian and Afghan affairs. At the same time, Washington and Brussels are openly aimed at ousting Russia and China and taking control of the region. In this context, the task of achieving Russia's competitiveness, which depends both on its internal potential and effective interaction with friendly partners - China, India, Iran and others, as well as the Central Asian states themselves, is becoming increasingly important.

Materials and methods of research

The source and empirical base of the study were materials of international negotiations and decisions on the Kush-Tepa canal; statistical materials from Central Asian countries, media materials. The methods of document analysis, case study, and content analysis of media materials were used.

Research results

The problem of water use in Central Asia

In order to correctly understand the extent of possible damage from the uncontrolled operation of the Kush-Tepa canal under construction in Afghanistan, we consider it advisable to focus on the situation with water use in Central Asia. The shortage of water here is associated with the expenditure of most of it on irrigation of two abundantly water-absorbing crops – cotton and rice; excessive increase in air temperature, occurring faster than the average on the planet, which leads to a reduction in the area and volume of glaciers; a rapid increase in the population (at the end of the 80s of the last century, 49 million people lived in Central Asia, now more than 75 million, by 2050 it is projected to overcome the bar of 100 million); deterioration of irrigation infrastructure, the average age of which exceeds 50 years, which

causes significant losses of water resources (up to 25%)¹. The complexity of the situation is also explained by the lack of established interaction between the countries of the region, showing national selfishness, striving to achieve maximum benefits for themselves. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which own the sources of the main rivers of the region – the Amu Darya and Syr Darya («upper countries»), are interested in developing their own hydropower, necessary for domestic consumption. For Tajikistan, hydropower is also an export commodity. The «lower countries», located, respectively, in the lower reaches of the rivers, need maximum amounts of water for growing cotton and rice. The clash of interests of the States of the region has sometimes had serious consequences. More than 230 armed border incidents, including over access to water, have occurred on the Tajik-Kyrgyz border over the course of 12 years. The peace agreement was signed on September 20, 2022. Nevertheless, tensions remain in bilateral relations. However, efforts have recently been made by Central Asian partners to reach mutually acceptable and equal agreements. An important step in this context was the adoption by the Central Asian states at the UN Conference on Water Resources (March 22-24, 2023) of a Joint Statement. In particular, it notes that water resources play a key role in ensuring the sustainable development of Central Asia, and transboundary water cooperation is an important component of the stability and prosperity of the region. This statement indicates the commitment of the Central Asian states to mutual understanding and comprehensive mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of water use and expresses their willingness to work together to implement the commitments made within the framework of the UN conference at all levels². It is noteworthy that the co-chairs of the conference were King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands and President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon³.

Later, at the summit held on September 14, 2023 in Dushanbe (the official name is the Fifth Consultative Meeting of the Heads of Central Asian States), the positions on water problems of the Central Asian countries looked less optimistic and confident. President of Kyrgyzstan S. N. Zhaparov said that water shortage is becoming widespread and requires a change in attitude to water use. The Kyrgyz leader proposed to return to the format of cooperation that existed under the USSR, which provided for the exchange of water for energy, and create a regional center for the introduction of energy-efficient and resource-saving technologies.

The President of Uzbekistan, Sh.M.Merziyoyev, was more categorical in his assessments. According to him, the problem of water scarcity in the region has become «irreversible». Due to the lack of sufficient water reserves and inefficient use of them, the states of the region lose \$2 billion annually, and in the foreseeable future, economic damage may reach 11% of the regional gross product.

¹ Kamorzin I. Squeezed out drop by drop: what will the water shortage in Central Asia lead to. Available from: <https://iz.ru/1537493/igor-karmazin/vydavliaiut-po-kaple-k-chemu-privedet-defitsit-vody-v-tsentralnoi-azii>.

² Joint Statement of the Central Asian States at the UN Water Resources Conference 2023. Available from: <https://sreda.uz/rubriki/voda/sovместное-заявление-государств-центральной-азии-на-конференции-о-водных-ресурсах-2023-года/>.

³ A conference on water resources has opened at the UN headquarters. Available from: <https://kun.uz/ru/news/2023/03/23/v-shtab-kvartire-on-otkrylas-konferentsiya-po-vodnym-resursam>.

The President of Kazakhstan K.J.Tokayev stressed that the interaction of the Central Asian countries should be based on the equal use of water resources and taking into account the interests of the parties. He expressed agreement with his Kyrgyz counterpart on the joint management of transboundary river resources.

President of Tajikistan E. Rahmon noted the importance of developing national, regional and international programs for the conservation of water reserves in the region, the implementation of projects of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, which is dying due to the lack of sufficient inflow of waters of regional rivers.

The Central Asian leaders agreed on the need to prepare, with the participation of international consultants, plans for the development of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya basins, taking into account the emergence of a new Afghan factor – the construction of the Kush-Tepa canal in Afghanistan.

The Uzbek president proposed to his colleagues to form a joint working group to study the influence of the canal on the fullness of the Amu Darya and the inclusion of Afghanistan in the regional dialogue on the joint use of hydro resources. However, the Afghan side has not shown willingness to participate in the negotiation process of this format⁴.

The Kush-Tepa project: main characteristics and interests

The feasibility study of the Kush-Tepa project was prepared back in 2021 by international experts for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the pro-American government of A. Ghani. Implementation began shortly after the Taliban came to power, and in May 2023, the construction of the first section of the 108 km long canal was completed. It is planned to put the 285 km long canal into operation in 2028. The width of the structure is 100 meters, the depth is 8 meters⁵. 6.5 thousand workers and technical personnel are involved in the construction. In the future, a quarter of a million people will be provided with jobs⁶.

The channel's capacity will be 650 cubic meters per second, which will allow irrigation of land in three northern Afghan provinces – Balkh, Jowzjan and Faryab⁷. The Taliban^{8*} have repeatedly stated the special importance of the canal and intend to start operating it as soon as possible, despite the obvious concern of the Central Asian

⁴ Water scarcity is becoming a major problem in Central Asian countries. Available from: <https://news.rambler.ru/politics/51527556-nehvatka-vody-stanovitsya-glavnoy-problemy-stranah-tsentralnoy-azii/>.

⁵ The Koshtepa Canal has just begun to be built, and is it already being destroyed? Available from: <https://asiaplus.tj.info/ru/news/centralasia/20231218/kanal-kosh-tepa-tolko-nachali-stroit-a-on-uzhe-razrushaetsya>.

⁶ Karmazin I. Frenzied drying: the Taliban are finishing off the main river of Central Asia. Available from: <https://iz.ru/1489813/igor-karmazin/beshenaia-sushka-taliby-dobivaiut-glavnuiu-reku-tsentralnoi-azii>.

⁷ Afghanistan is building a huge canal to draw water from the Amu Darya River. This may affect the water availability situation in Central Asia. Available from: <https://www.newscentralasia.net/2023/02/20/afghanistan-stroit-ogromnyy-kanal-dlya-zabora-vody-iz-reki-amudarya-eto-mozhet-povliyat-na-situatsiyu-s-dostupnostyu-vody-v-tsentralnoy-azii/>.

⁸ * Recognized as a terrorist organization and banned in the Russian Federation.

neighbors. The Taliban authorities expect that the canal with its irrigation facilities will provide a significant shift in the development of agriculture, including the production of imported grain crops, which Afghanistan urgently needs. Domestic political goals are being pursued at the same time. The emergence of new vast irrigated areas in the north of the country will improve the economic situation of the oppositional local Tajik-Uzbek population, move Pashtuns from arid areas there, as well as those arriving from Pakistan in connection with Islamabad's decision to gradually deport illegal Afghan refugees⁹. The importance of this task in the calculations of the Taliban is also explained by their desire to block the replenishment of the Afghan National Resistance Front, which continues the armed struggle.

The cost of the project is 684 million dollars. The Taliban Government has stated that it has its own funds, which seems unlikely. According to some reliable sources, the United States provides financial assistance through Qatar. The Americans are certainly interested in introducing into the development of a very complex problem in the region, affecting the Central Asian states. Anyway, in 2021, USAID^{10*} implemented the Smart Waters program, which provides for the installation of meters on all the main rivers of Central Asia to collect information via satellite about the water level in key arteries of the region¹¹.

On January 12, 2023, the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the U.S. House of Representatives held hearings with the participation of U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan T.West, as well as a representative of USAID¹². The topic of the construction of the Kush-Tepa canal was also touched upon. T.West's statement about Washington's lack of intentions to compete with Moscow and Beijing in Afghanistan, in our opinion, does not correspond to reality¹³.

Contacts are being made with the Taliban at various levels and in different formats. In particular, on July 30-31, 2023, the Taliban-American talks were held in Doha, which were declared official by the Taliban government. The Afghan side expressed satisfaction with the results of the dialogue, during which confidence- and security-building measures, the lifting of sanctions and the unfreezing of assets of the Afghan Central Bank, and the provision of humanitarian and other assistance to Kabul were discussed¹⁴. According to information received from Afghan diplomats from some representatives of the Afghan diaspora in Moscow, the topic of financing the Kush Tepa project was raised in the discussions. Summing up the talks, the Americans advised the Taliban representatives to

⁹ Bekniyazov R. Pakistan expels Afghan migrants: security measures or leverage on Kabul? Available from: <https://tass.ru/opinions/19170103>.

¹⁰ * The organization's activities are prohibited in the Russian Federation.

¹¹ Krusenstern. USAID*. Whoever controls the water controls Central Asia. Available from: <https://dzen.ru/a/YDDYGL1ynHHRiW9h>.

* The organization's activities are prohibited in the Russian Federation.

¹² * The organization's activities are prohibited in the Russian Federation.

¹³ The United States does not consider it necessary to compete with Russia and China in Afghanistan. Available from: <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/19712319>.

¹⁴ Putz K. A very quiet meeting in Doha: US officials meet with representatives of the Taliban*. Available from: <https://thediplomat.com/2023/08/a-very-quiet-meeting-in-doha-us-officials-meet-with-taliban-representatives/>.

* Recognized as a terrorist organization and banned in the Russian Federation.

exercise caution while promoting cooperation with Russia, which is «engaged» in a special military operation in Ukraine.

Meetings of special envoys and representatives for Afghanistan of the Central Asian states and the European Union are regularly held. The last one took place on May 25-26, 2023 in Ashgabat without the participation of Russia and China, the main regional powers, even as observers. The position of the European Union has undoubtedly been agreed with the United States. Most of the adopted joint statement relates to human rights issues in Afghanistan, while the key socio-economic issue of the return of assets of the Central Bank of Afghanistan blocked by Washington was not touched upon. But new difficulties with water use in the region, which arose in connection with the construction of the Kush-Tepa canal, were discussed¹⁵.

According to experts, upon completion of construction, the canal will take from 15 to 20% of the total flow of the Amu Darya¹⁶. For Uzbekistan, this would mean a shortage of water resources for irrigation of cotton, which generates about 17% of GDP. It is also important to keep in mind that about 40% of the population of this republic is employed in agriculture. According to the Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan, the annual water consumption in the country averages 51 billion cubic meters, 91% of which is spent on agriculture, mainly for irrigation of cotton fields¹⁷. In this regard, «water diplomacy» is a priority task for Uzbekistan, which is confirmed by the materials of the Ministry of Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan¹⁸.

Turkmenistan faces an equally acute problem, as evidenced by the activities of the State Committee for Water Management of Turkmenistan¹⁹. The Amu Darya River feeds the Karakum Canal, which provides irrigation to 580 thousand hectares of cotton. The change in the river level has also created social difficulties. In particular, in June 2023. Farmers in Lebap province have complained about the lack of water for cotton irrigation, while the government has pledged to supply them with water, fertilizers, seeds and agricultural machinery in exchange for selling a certain amount of the crop at pre-set prices²⁰.

15 The EU–Central Asia meeting on Afghanistan has ended in Ashgabat. Available from: <https://www.newscentralasia.net/2023/05/26/v-ashgabade-zavershilas-vstrecha-eu-tsentrlnaya-aziya-po-afganistanu/>.

16 The Koshtepa Canal has just begun to be built, and is it already being destroyed? Available from: <https://asiaplustj.info/ru/news/centralasia/20231218/kanal-kosh-tepa-tolko-nachali-stroit-a-on-uzhe-razrushaetsya>.

17 The Agency of Statistics under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Available from: <https://stat.uz/ru/>; Mamadshoev M. Water conflicts loom over Central Asia. Available from: <https://cabar.asia/ru/nad-tsentrlnoj-aziej-navisayut-vodnye-konflikty>.

18 “Water diplomacy” in Central Asia. Available from: <https://suvchi.gov.uz/ru/posts/1545735855/2768>; Speech by the Minister of Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.Khamraeva at the special session “Cooperation of Central Asian countries to ensure water security in the context of climate change” within the framework of the 9th World Water Forum (March 24, 2022, 10:45 a.m., Dakar, Senegal). Available from: <https://suvchi.gov.uz/ru/page/2/26>.

19 The State Committee for Water Management of Turkmenistan. Available from: <https://www.turkmenwater.gov.tm>.

20 Mamadshoev M. Water conflicts loom over Central Asia. Available from: <https://cabar.asia/ru/nad-tsentrlnoj-aziej-navisayut-vodnye-konflikty>.

The construction of the hydrogiant is carried out without compliance with technological requirements. As a result, the walls and the bottom of the canal are not reinforced properly, which led to their partial destruction and a 9 km long water spill. Moreover, observations from space show that the disaster zone is increasing, indicating the inability or unwillingness of the Taliban to remedy the situation. This is the opinion of most Russian experts. Uzbeks believe that in this case we are talking about the rise of groundwater. One way or another, the formation of new lakes poses a danger to Tajikistan²¹. Tajikistan is particularly concerned about the growing water problem. According to the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan, since 2000, at the initiative of the President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, the UN General Assembly has adopted 7 resolutions aimed at solving water issues²².

If Uzbekistan, having lost the resources of the Amu Darya, starts bailing out water from the Syr Darya, which feeds Kazakhstan, then Kazakh farmers will be forced to reduce cotton and rice crops, which will lead not only to a shortage of these crops, but also to an increase in unemployment. The Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation of the Republic of Kazakhstan is responsible for solving the problems²³.

The situation in Central Asia will become even more complicated if the Taliban government implements plans to build the Dashtijum hydroelectric complex, which accumulates most of the summer runoff of one of the tributaries of the Amu Darya – the Panj River²⁴.

International experience in negotiations on the division of transboundary water resources

Historical and modern, including international, experience in finding ways to reach agreements on the division of transboundary water resources indicates the complexity of the negotiation process, which led to directly opposite results. An example of Chinese-Kazakh contacts on this topic is indicative. Let's explain: two deep rivers flow from the Chinese province of Xinjiang to Kazakhstan – Ili, which feeds the country's largest lake Balkhash, and Irtysh, which flows through the main industrial region in the north of the Republic of Kazakhstan and further to Siberia. China consumes up to half of the water of each of them, which causes discontent among Kazakhstanis who fear that Balkhash may suffer the fate of the disappearing Aral Sea. Beijing, however, does not respond to numerous requests from Astana to limit the intake of water in the upper reaches. Moreover, he refuses

21 The Koshtepa Canal has just begun to be built, and is it already being destroyed? Available from: <https://asiaplustj.info/ru/news/centralasia/20231218/kanal-kosh-tepa-tolko-nachali-stroit-a-on-uzhe-razrushaetsya>.

22 Global Water Initiatives of the President of the Republic of Tatarstan. Available from: <https://www.mewr.tj/?p=192>.

23 Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Available from: <https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/water/activities/directions?lang=ru>.

24 Central Asian watershed: will the canal being built by the Taliban become a threat to Kazakhstan? Available from: <https://www.caravan.kz/news/centralnoaziatskij-vodorazdel-stanet-li-kanal-kotoryj-stroyat-taliby-ugrozit-dlya-kazakhstana-966799/>.

to sign the UN Convention on Transboundary Waters. The leadership of Kazakhstan has essentially resigned itself to this situation, trying not to irritate China, which is carrying out investment injections in the amount of billions of dollars in Kazakhstan, including within the framework of the «One Belt, One Road» project. Interestingly, Astana has included «One Belt, one Road» in its own state program of infrastructure development «Nurly Zhol» («Bright Path»)²⁵.

The equitable water arrangements between India and Pakistan served as a powerful deterrent in the permanently very tense relations between these countries.

The problem with the distribution of water resources between Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt is well known. More than 80% of the waters of the Nile are formed on the territory of Ethiopia, located in the upper reaches of the river, but this country uses no more than 2% of its water reserves. The downstream Sudan and, to a greater extent, Egypt are the main consumers of the waters of the Nile.

In 1959, an agreement was concluded between Egypt and Sudan, which did not take into account the interests of Ethiopia. In response to the statements of this country about the need to revise the agreement, Egypt and Sudan have always refused²⁶.

The long-standing water dispute between Iran and Afghanistan over the use of the resources of the transboundary Helmand River has escalated again. The border skirmishes that took place on May 27, 2023, resulted in casualties on both sides. The reason for the conflict was that, according to Tehran, the Taliban authorities did not comply with the 1973 agreement, under which Afghanistan pledged to supply 320 million cubic meters of water per year to Iran. Kabul rejected the Iranians' claims, attributing the water supply disruptions to drought and technical difficulties. As a result of the consultations, the Iranian leadership formally agreed with the arguments of the Afghans. However, reconciliation does not mean peace²⁷.

The work with Afghanistan of the Soviet Union, and later Russia, brought different results at different stages. In 1946, the USSR and Afghanistan signed an agreement on the Amu Darya, according to which the Afghan side had the right to use 9 of the 19 cubic kilometers of water of the Panj River. In 1977, negotiations were held on the conclusion of a new agreement, during which the Soviet side insisted on reducing the quota of Afghanistan to 6 cubic kilometers. The Afghans rejected the new scheme. In the future, Moscow sought to maintain Afghanistan's water consumption at the lowest possible level, contributing to the development of irrigated agriculture in the south of the country. In 2002 and 2014, the Afghan authorities, under the patronage of the United States, offered their neighbors to sign a new treaty instead of the 1946 agreement. The initiative then did not meet with support from Central Asian partners²⁸.

²⁵ Trilling D. China defeated Kazakhstan in the water dispute. Available from: <https://inosmi.ru/20221213/kazakhstan-258814414.html>.

²⁶ New water agreements in Central Asia: what Kyrgyzstan should do. Available from: <https://rivers.help/n/1369>.

²⁷ Water Wars: What is happening on the Iran-Afghanistan border? Available from: <https://asiaplustj.info/ru/news/tajikistan/security/20230529/vodnie-voini-cto-proishodit-na-iransko-afganskoi-granitse?ysclid=ItjIvppnm2585862057>.

²⁸ Panfilova V. Tashkent will share technologies with Kabul. Available from: https://www.ng.ru/cis/2023-03-26/5_8689_asia.html.

Starting discussions with the Taliban government on the use of the Amu Darya's water resources, the Central Asian neighbors invited him to join the interstate coordinating water Management commission, which determines water use quotas. The appeal, however, remained unanswered.

Discussion

So, to date, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan does not participate in either international or regional agreements in the field of water resources use and acts at its discretion, guided by the law equal to the rights of neighboring countries. It is not possible to reach an agreement with the Taliban on rational water use, taking into account the interests of neighboring States on an international legal basis, since their Government is still not recognized by the international community. At the same time, agreements with Kabul can be reached on a bi-, trilateral or regional basis, subject to the voluntary informal agreement of the parties.

When considering general approaches, it should be borne in mind that in the context of the allocation of water resources, there are three doctrines:

- the doctrine of territorial sovereignty, according to which States control water sources located on their territory. This doctrine, of course, is addressed by the «upper» countries;
- the doctrine of territorial integration. It says that the countries downstream of the rivers have the right to receive the necessary volume and quality of water and can interfere with the vital activity of the «upper» countries if they ignore the needs of the «lower» ones;
- The doctrine of fair use of water resources is designed to reconcile the contradictions of the parties on the basis of mutual interests. It has the largest number of adherents among experts and the international community and is embodied in a number of legal documents, including the 1997 UN Convention on the Law on the Non-Navigational Use of International Rivers.

Obviously, it is advisable to use the third doctrine in working with Afghanistan.

Based on this message, Uzbekistan is discussing with the Taliban the problem of water resource allocation, coupled with multidimensional trade and economic cooperation. In March 2023, the Uzbek side initiated a visit to Kabul by a delegation headed by the Special Representative of the President of the country on foreign policy issues A.Kamilov. During the talks with Deputy Prime Minister of Afghanistan A.Ghani Baradar, Minister of Foreign Affairs A.Muttaki, Minister of Defense Ya.Mujahid, other members of the government and representatives of economic structures had a detailed exchange of views on the topics of transport, logistics, and energy cooperation, in particular the construction of the Termez–Mazar-I-Sharif–Kabul–Peshawar railway; laying power lines along the Surkhan-Puli-Khumri route; increasing the volume of transportation of various goods, including transit, through the territory of Afghanistan; training of Afghan personnel at the educational center in Termez.

According to the Statistics Agency of Uzbekistan, this republic supplies wheat flour, electricity to the Afghan market, and provides transport for freight rail transportation. Humanitarian aid in the amount of 1.3 thousand tons, consisting of food, medicines, and clothing, has been transferred to the Afghan government. Projects to create trading houses of Uzbekistan in Kabul and Mazar-I-Sharif for the supply of agricultural and industrial products, the organization of growth points for processing Afghan products, including marble, lapis lazuli, other semi-precious and precious stones, are considered promising. An agreement on Uzbek assistance in the restoration of textile factories and fat-and-oil plants is very important²⁹.

In water and energy cooperation, an agreement was reached on some kind of custody of the Kush-Tepa canal, assistance in the technical equipment of construction works, as well as irrigation facilities³⁰.

The Turkmen delegation headed by Foreign Minister R.Meredov paid a working visit to Afghanistan (Herat province, bordering Turkmenistan) in December 2023. Following the example of the Uzbeks, the Turkmen discussed the problem of Kush-Tepe in the background format, focusing on key areas of trade and economic cooperation. During negotiations with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate A.Muttaki, Minister of Mining Industry Sh.Delavar, Minister of Industry and Trade N.Azizi discussed the construction of the Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India (TAPI) gas pipeline on Afghan territory, the Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan (TAP) power transmission line, and the expansion of Afghanistan’s railway infrastructure³¹. Turkmenistan exports electricity, oil, and gas to Afghanistan, and imports marble, dried fruits, and potatoes from that country³².

Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, which also carry out extensive trade and economic cooperation with Afghanistan, have not yet joined the conversation with the Taliban, apparently waiting for the results of contacts between Uzbeks and Turkmen with them.

Conclusions

In general, Afghanistan’s Central Asian neighbors hope that Kabul, when planning its further actions regarding the operation of the Kush Tepa canal, will take into account the importance of partnership with them. In addition, the Taliban authorities, who are already in international legal isolation, will not want to provoke friction in relations with Central Asia.

²⁹ Jumhuriyat. Details of the visit of the Uzbek delegation to Afghanistan. Available from: <https://dzen.ru/b/ZBv8CoLbPRp3xLRM>.

³⁰ Tension is growing in Central Asia over the Kush Tepe canal. Available from: <https://rivers.help/n/1208>.

³¹ The Foreign Ministers of Turkmenistan and Afghanistan discussed the start of TAPI construction in Herat. Available from: <https://www.hronikatm.com/2023/12/meredov-afghanistan-visit-3/>.

³² The trade turnover between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan reached 481 million dollars in 2023. Available from: <https://www.newscentralasia.net/2024/01/15/tovarooborot-mezhdu-afganistanom-i-turkmenistanom-dostig-481-milliona-dollarov-v-2023-godu/>.

At the same time, the Americans, as a result of contacts with Taliban leaders, spread information that the main topics at the talks are allegedly human rights, primarily women, the formation of an inclusive government, the fight against terrorism, inside Afghanistan and beyond. In fact, according to behind-the-scenes information from the staff of the Afghan Embassy and representatives of the Afghan community associated with Kabul, American diplomats pay considerable attention to the so-called problems of regional and international security, emphasizing the undesirability of close trusting relations between Afghanistan and Russia and its Central Asian friends. This kind of pressure on the Afghans intensified after Russian expert circles started talking about the possible recognition of the Taliban government. Attempts to persuade the Central Asian states to more mundane relations with Russia and expand ties with the West are also being made in the course of communication with the Central Asian leadership, including at the highest level.

Russia’s offer of assistance in overcoming disputes over water use went unnoticed. Nevertheless, it is necessary to continuously monitor the development of the situation, especially the actions of the United States and its European allies.

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Prospects for the Integration of China and the CSTO

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Abstract. Modern challenges, packages of European and American sanctions, and a special military operation in Ukraine have contributed to Russia's reorientation to the East, not only in trade, economic and energy terms. The issue of military-political cooperation, in particular, between the countries of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the People's Republic of China has acquired particular relevance. The coherence of their actions both in the direction of "CSTO + 1" and "CSTO + Shanghai Cooperation Organization" contributed to the development of interaction, a new round in the development of the CSTO, although some of its participants declare the possibility of leaving the Treaty (Armenia). But there are also countries that are ready to take a more active part in its work (Syria, North Korea). At the same time, none of the CSTO countries sent their military contingents to support the Russian army in the Northern Military District.

The Central Asian region occupies a special place in the system of relations between the CSTO and China: for example, the peacekeeping operation of the CSTO countries in Kazakhstan in January 2022 attracted the close attention of the Chinese authorities, which once again demonstrated their interest in regional stability. In the context of American pressure on China, its authorities have repeatedly spoken positively about jointly countering such challenges as terrorism, separatism and extremism ("three evils").

The purpose of this work is to assess the prospects for cooperation in the field of countering the "three evils". To achieve this goal, the authors use the comparative analysis method and SWOT assessment. The authors come to the conclusion that since the CSTO countries and China face similar challenges, there is a possibility of situational involvement of China in the military operations of the CSTO. Therefore, a broader consideration of the "linkage" between the CSTO and the SCO is required.

Keywords: Eurasian integration, People's Republic of China, Collective Security Treaty Organization, Russian Federation, Shanghai Cooperation Organization

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Introduction

The foreign policy turn of the Russian Federation to the East has brought to the forefront the issue of forming a new military-political strategy for our country. We are talking about expanding the circle of possible allies and partners. In the context of a special military operation (SMO) [1], the activities of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) are especially important. Of interest are issues related to the approaches that China adheres to in relation to the Organization. Directly or indirectly, official Beijing has repeatedly demonstrated its attention to the CSTO. As, for example, the head of the PRC Xi Jinping noted in a telephone conversation with V.V. Putin on the eve of 2022, the Chinese side is ready to “cooperate with Russia and the CSTO member states in a flexible and varied format in the interests of security and stability in the region”¹.

Materials and Methods

The study uses scientific and analytical works, including those of leading scientists from the Institute of China and Modern Asia of the Russian Academy of Sciences, which allows us to speak about a qualitative and objective approach. The current international legal acts governing the activities of international blocs and organizations, primarily the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, are considered.

The authors carried out a content analysis of Russian and Chinese media in order to clarify and clarify the opinions of politicians and political experts on this issue.

Particular attention is paid to the institutionalism method, which allows us to consider and compare the principles of work of large international supranational actors, such as the SCO and the CSTO.

Results

The SMO, which began in February 2022, changed the international military-political situation, which could not but affect the current and future agenda of the CSTO.

As for the CSTO position on the SMO, none of the participating countries took part in it, with the exception of Belarus, which provided the SMO with territory for the deployment of Russian troops and hospitals. None of the CSTO members recognized the Republic of Crimea, the federal city of Sevastopol, the Donetsk People's Republic, the Lugansk People's Republic, the Zaporizhia and Kherson regions, which became part of the Russian Federation.

¹ Chairman Xi Jinping held a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin via videoconference. 2021-12-15. Available from: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/rus/zxxx/202112/t20211216_10470464.html.

The Armed Forces of the Republic of South Ossetia-Alania, which recognized the DPR and LPR, became part of the army of the Russian Federation². But as a state, the Republic of South Ossetia-Alania did not join the CSTO, while de facto finding itself under the protection of the Russian Federation, a member state of the Organization.

Transnistria and Karabakh, on whose territory Russian peacekeepers are stationed and which are managed with the participation of Russia, acquire a special status. In addition to Russian troops, Armenian military units took part in the military operation on the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Karabakh war of 2020 ended with the introduction of Russian peacekeepers into the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, which caused a negative reaction in Armenia. At least one of the speeches by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan was assessed as the beginning of Armenia's movement to withdraw from the CSTO. This position was due to the “non-interference of the CSTO” in the Armenian-Azerbaijani confrontation of 2022.

There are different assessments regarding the prospects of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the number and composition of its participants. Following the Moscow CSTO summit held on May 16, 2022, Belarusian Defense Minister Viktor Khrenin announced the possible admission of new members: “These will be dozens of states that value peace and stability, and not aggressiveness and changes in the political system of other states”³. Secretary General of the Organization Stanislav Zas, who did not rule out that “the CSTO will grow with partners, observers and members of the Organization”⁴.

The prospect of new participants joining the CSTO is mentioned, in particular, in connection with Syria: “If it is beneficial to everyone – Syria, Russia, and our other CSTO partners – then I do not rule out such a possibility”⁵, – For example, Deputy Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation Andrei Kartapolov stated regarding the possible expansion of the CSTO. Volunteers from Syria took part in the SMO.

Similarly, in the case of participation of the North Korean military contingent in the SMO, which is mentioned as a possible prospect in some media, the possibility of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea joining the CSTO is being considered. At the same time, it is obvious that the Syrian and North Korean stories would change the status of the CSTO as a supranational integration association of post-Soviet states.

One can also find discussions about the return of Azerbaijan to the CSTO, which left its ranks in 1999, although today, in the context of the still unresolved Karabakh conflict, such a prospect is problematic. Belarus, which is a member of the CSTO, is also a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Russian Federation, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan act as observer countries, which neutralizes this circumstance as the impossibility of parallel membership in the CSTO.

² Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Ossetia on the procedure for the entry of individual units of the Armed Forces of the Republic of South Ossetia into the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. Available from: <https://docs.cntd.ru/document/456059687>.

³ Sensation of the Moscow summit: CSTO will expand. Who and when. Tsargrad. Available from: https://tsargrad.tv/articles/sensacija-moskovskogo-sammita-odkb-budet-rasshirjatsja-kto-i-kogda_549214.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The Ministry of Defense did not rule out Syria joining the CSTO. RIA Novosti. Available from: <https://ria.ru/20210820/siriya-1746640366.html>.

The impetus for the expansion of the CSTO could be the expansion of peacekeeping operations by its member states. In June 2022, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev submitted a proposal to the country's parliament "to send a peacekeeping contingent of the Armed Forces numbering 430 servicemen to participate, firstly, in a multidisciplinary integrated mission in the Central African Republic, secondly, in the UN stabilization mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, thirdly, in a multidisciplinary integrated mission to stabilize the situation in Mali, and fourthly, in temporary force missions in Lebanon." Bringing such peacekeeping missions under the CSTO flag could become a serious reason for discussions within the Organization. There is a basis for resolving this issue: in 2018, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Secretariat of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the United Nations. The document concerns only the area of combating terrorism, but it demonstrates the possibility of cooperation between the two organizations in principle, and therefore the possibility of expanding their interaction.⁶

CSTO-China: a new bloc in the Eurasian space?

China recognizes the role of the CSTO as the leading security mechanism in the CIS. There are many examples of this. Back in the summer of 2011, against the backdrop of bloody internal events in Kyrgyzstan and the accusations that were then being made against the Shanghai Cooperation Organization for "inaction," Chinese representatives, not without reason, pointed out that the range of issues of the anti-extremist and anti-terrorist struggle is to a much greater extent the prerogative of the CSTO, and not the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which "is not a military alliance." And it is no coincidence that a decade later, Beijing treated with understanding the participation of the CSTO in the settlement of the events in southern Kazakhstan.

The issue of China's "exit" to a higher level of interaction with the CSTO is, to a large extent, a topic of the prospects for a military-political alliance between China and the Russian Federation.

There are various expert points of view on this matter, and the topic of "alliance" or "not an alliance" continues to be discussed, despite the official position of the parties, according to which their relations "are not an alliance." It is appropriate to pay attention to the peculiarities of the Chinese approach, which reflects the traditional political culture of the Celestial Empire. It is based on the so-called principle of three NOTs, where the emphasis is primarily on the concept of "non-union" (the other two components are "non-confrontation" and "non-direction against third countries").⁷

⁶ Memorandum of Understanding between the Secretariat of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the United Nations represented by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. Available from: https://antiterror.odkb-csto.org/int_organizations/un/memorandum-o-vzaimoponimaniy-mezhdu-sekretariatom-odkb-i-oon-v-litse-ktu-oon/#loaded.

⁷ These principles were again pointed out at the turn of 2022-2023 by the former and current Chinese Foreign Ministers Wang Yi and Qin Gang. Quoted from: With the world in mind, boldly move forward and write a new chapter of great-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. Available from: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/wjzbzh/202212/t20221225_10994826.shtml.

In parallel, in the official political and expert rhetoric, the parties began to resort to the thesis that "not being a military-political alliance, like the alliances that formed during the Cold War, Russian-Chinese relations surpass this form of interstate interaction."⁸

Apparently, relying on such a broad interpretation of the issue, expert studies continue to contain references to the words of Xi Jinping, spoken at a meeting on the occasion of the 95th anniversary of the CPC: "I believe that Russia and China can create an alliance before which NATO will be powerless and this will put an end to the imperialist aspirations of the West."⁹

In connection with such statements, references (albeit mostly speculative) to the creation of a certain "Eastern Entente" began to appear in news agency reports. Much closer to the objective picture is the thesis that both states in their practical interaction in the sphere of defense and security have approached the state of a "deferred military-political alliance." This concept was introduced into political science by experts from the Institute of China and Modern Asia of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Contemporary International Relations (CACIOR) [5].

Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) of the PRC Li Zhanshu spoke out clearly on the issue of cooperation with the CSTO, stating that China is ready to "continue interaction with this Organization in a flexible format, jointly protect regional security and stability," adding that in doing so, the PRC intends to "implement the initiative on global development and security put forward by PRC Chairman Xi Jinping."¹⁰

Strengthening ties with the CSTO is also due to the growing pressure from the American side on Beijing.

According to China's Permanent Representative to the UN Zhang Jun, China "will step up foreign policy contacts and coordination with CSTO member states and will closely cooperate at multilateral venues such as the UN in order to make a positive contribution to maintaining the international order based on international law and preserving the UN's leading coordinating role in international affairs."¹¹

One of the main "nodes" of intersection of military and political interests of the CSTO and China is Central Asia. The peacekeeping operation of the CSTO troops in Kazakhstan in January 2022 demonstrated the interest of the Chinese side in stabilizing

⁸ Joint statement of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation. Available from: <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/ru/hkwONxOFSpUGgXPaRU3xUHRmkRneSXIR.pdf>.

⁹ Xi Jinping: Alliance with Russia will sweep away NATO and change the world order. Available from: <https://vegchel.ru/index.php?newsid=26210>.

¹⁰ In a "flexible format" mode: why Beijing is talking about its readiness to develop cooperation with the CSTO. RT. Available from: <https://russian.rt.com/world/article/990985-kitai-odkb-sotrudnichestvo>.

¹¹ Remarks by Ambassador Zhang Jun at Security Council Debate on Cooperation Between the United Nations and Regional and Subregional Organizations in Maintaining International Peace and Security (CSTO). Available from: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zwjg_665342/zwb_665378/202202/t20220217_10643165.html.

the region. Troops of the member states of the association were deployed on the territory of Kazakhstan in accordance with Articles 2 and 4 of the CSTO Collective Security Treaty. According to the statement of the Chinese Ambassador to Russia Zhang Hanhui: "China is ready to continue to deepen strategic cooperation between China and Russia in Central Asia, firmly support the current regimes of the Central Asian countries, resist external interference, resolutely prevent "color revolutions" and jointly fight the "three forces" (terrorism, extremism and separatism - author's note). "As many influential experts believe, the situation related to the participation of the CSTO in the events in Kazakhstan showed that Russia and China have many common interests and winning impulses for cooperation¹².

Central Asia is a region where military facilities of a number of Asian countries that are not members of the CSTO are located. There is a Chinese military post in Gorno-Badakhshan, Tajikistan. Indian air bases are located in Farkhor and Western Dushanbe. The Organization of Turkic States is actively working to create the "Turan Army" with the Turkic-speaking states of the region. On the one hand, this may be a cause for concern. But, on the other hand, it can be seen as an impetus for establishing communication bridges that would serve the statutory interests of the CSTO, including the prevention of possible new challenges. The result of such communication could potentially be the expansion of military-political cooperation with interested countries, up to their entry into the CSTO.

Integration of the CSTO and SCO: not a merger, but a complementarity

Another way to establish interaction between the CSTO and China could be cooperation between the CSTO and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. The SCO members are the current CSTO members – the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan; Belarus is an SCO observer, for which the procedure for joining the Organization has begun, and Armenia is a dialogue partner.

The relationship between the two associations already has a legal framework, for example, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Secretariats of the SCO and the CSTO (signed on October 5, 2007 in Dushanbe), the "Protocol of Understanding between the CSTO Secretariat and the SCO RATS (signed in June 2011 in Astana) [8:191]. As experts note, "agreed measures of interaction with the EAEU, CIS, CSTO, SCO are being adopted in the interests of ensuring collective security"[7]. This is also noted by authoritative Chinese experts, who emphasize that "through the SCO and CSTO, China and Russia should strengthen cooperation in order to jointly combat common threats and strengthen mutual trust." As one of the leading Chinese experts on Russia, Professor Zhao Huasheng of the Center for Russia and Central Asia at the Institute of International Studies at Fudan

¹² China and Russia Both Benefit From the CSTO Intervention in Kazakhstan. The Diplomat. Available from: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/01/china-and-russia-both-benefit-from-the-csto-intervention-in-kazakhstan/>.

University, noted, "obviously, the SCO and CSTO should be in close partnership relations, and their cooperation is not illogical."¹³.

It is important to take into account that the SCO itself is not a military-political bloc, but promotes the "New Security Concept" within the framework of which results have been achieved in countering the "three evils", in identifying, preventing and suppressing the actions of these "forces" in the territories of SCO member states, in eliminating the causes and conditions for the emergence and spread of these dangerous phenomena, as well as in countering the spread of their ideology and propaganda [2]. Integration along the SCO-CSTO, China-CSTO lines will raise the question of the military-political bloc's position in light of territorial disputes in the South China Sea [9], as well as on the Indian-Chinese border, including the Kashmir issue [7].

In this regard, a number of experts believe that the formation of collective security along the SCO-CSTO line actualizes the task of establishing our own institutional mechanism for Eurasian security through military-economic cooperation and stimulating the ideas of a fair multipolar world order [7].

However, it is unlikely that we can talk about a "merger" of the two organizations. A much more realistic path seems to be one of rapprochement, interaction and mutual complementarity. In addition to Russia and China, other countries can also contribute to such integration of the CSTO and SCO. For example, Iran, which joined the SCO and sent its representatives to the meeting of the CSTO Parliamentary Assembly in 2022. This country is a member of the Non-Aligned Movement and has a free trade agreement with the EAEU. The Russian side has stated the possibility of closer cooperation between the CSTO and India.

As for Afghanistan, its problems are in the focus of both the SCO and the CSTO. This is evidenced by the very fact that a joint summit of the leaders of the SCO and CSTO member states on the Afghan problem was held in September 2021. Speeches at the forum, in particular, the speech of the Chairman of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping, called on Afghanistan's neighbors to "work together to alleviate the situation in the war-torn country and provide humanitarian and anti-pandemic support to its people"¹⁴.

There is potential for cooperation. The problem is that for the past decade and a half since the adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Secretariat of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Secretariat of the Collective Security Treaty Organization in 2007, the implementation of its provisions has been slow and has not been active or targeted. A rare exception is the "Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation and Interaction between the RATS SCO, the CIS ATC and the CSTO Secretariat" adopted in 2018.

However, even in this case, we are dealing with only a declaration of intent that requires practical implementation. It is clear that rapprochement cannot and should not be artificial. But the current situation is changing rapidly. In the context of international

¹³ Wang Chaoqing. International cooperation in the field of security between the SCO and the CSTO. Theory and practice of social development. 2015; 8:123–127.

¹⁴ Nations urged to assist Afghan reconstruction. ChinaDaily. Available from: <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202109/18/WS61451e44a310e0e3a68226de.html>.

transformations that have accelerated sharply since the spring of 2022, which, due to the Ukrainian crisis and the escalation of the situation around Taiwan, have either a real or potential military dimension, the intensification of the SCO's activities on one of its basic goals - ensuring security - is becoming relevant. We see the practical content of such cooperation as precisely the intensification of interaction with the CSTO. The areas of such interaction, including, first of all, "ensuring regional and international security and stability", were clearly spelled out in the bilateral Memorandum of the SCO and the CSTO of 2007.

There is reason to believe that such a vision increasingly clearly defines the position of the SCO "heavyweights" - Russia and China. It is no coincidence that the "Joint Russian-Chinese Statement" signed in Moscow on March 21, 2023, emphasized the "positive contribution of the CSTO to ensuring regional security" and noted the "potential for developing cooperation between the CSTO and China." Such cooperation would be the key and direct impetus for the coordination of the CSTO and the SCO and even for their joint actions. The inclusion of this provision in this systemic Russian-Chinese document serves as an indicator that the coincidence of ideas about an integrated Eurasian security space "from Belarus to Taiwan", which has manifested itself in recent years, is strengthening in relations between Russia and China, which is precisely the area of responsibility of both the SCO and the CSTO. Obviously, NATO's actions contributed to the formation of such an approach. As was clearly demonstrated, for example, by the Madrid summit of the alliance in 2022, NATO's doctrinal sphere of interests is increasingly becoming not only the traditional "North Atlantic", but also East Asia¹⁵. NATO has been paying increased attention to Central Asia (in the context of the situation in Afghanistan) for several years now.

The SCO and CSTO have motives and potential for cooperation. But in order to convert intentions into joint steps in strengthening defense and security, there must be a willingness to move towards practice, with the top priority being the task of further improving the legal framework that would legitimate the directions and forms of cooperation between the CSTO and SCO.

First, attention should be paid to the joint task of coordinated counteraction by the SCO and CSTO to a number of relatively new risks that were generated by the West's activity. We are talking about the command and staff exercises "Regional Cooperation-2022" held in August 2022 on the territory of Tajikistan, a state that is a member of both the SCO and the CSTO. As emphasized on the website of the American embassy in Dushanbe, the exercises with the participation of Central and South Asian countries are annually "organized by the US Central Command" and are held in different countries of the region¹⁶. In addition to the organizers represented by the Pentagon and the hosts, the 2022 exercises also involved military personnel from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Pakistan. The event was succinctly assessed by the Secretary of the Russian Security Council N. Patrushev,

¹⁵ The Stoltenberg Plan is a 21st century war plan by the collective West against Russia and China. Available from: <https://zvezdaweekly.ru/news/202272130-8C3gQ.html>.

¹⁶ Military exercises "Regional Cooperation - 2022" began in Dushanbe. Available from: <https://tj.usembassy.gov/ru/>.

who emphasized that such events "are needed by the Americans, first of all, to study the potential theater of military operations, clarify the coordinates of promising targets and adjust digital maps for high-precision weapons."¹⁷ It is clear that such events directly contradict the interests of consolidation of the CSTO and SCO.

Conclusion

Within the CSTO (in the SCO this is hardly possible today), it is vitally important today to conclude an Agreement that would contain a ban on participation in exercises similar to those mentioned above.

No less urgent are the development and adoption of an Agreement regulating the conduct of military exercises along the SCO-CSTO line, which are currently absent. It is important that this approach is shared by the Chinese expert community, some of whose specialists directly say that real cooperation between the SCO and the CSTO "must begin with joint anti-terrorist military exercises" [3].

It would not be superfluous to have a document regulating the CSTO's position with respect to a country-member of the Organization that is conducting military operations with external forces in order to protect its national interests, and at the same time - oriented towards providing assistance to such a member.

A pressing task is to increase the capabilities of the SCO and the CSTO in the matter of real opposition to growing military threats, including through coordination of the actions of the two organizations. Let us recall that the most authoritative participants of both structures - Russia and China - are declared in the doctrinal documents of the USA and NATO to be an "acute threat" (in the case of the Russian Federation) and a "systemic challenge" (in the case of China).

One of the ways that would contribute, on the one hand, to the growth of the overall potential of the SCO in ensuring regional security, and on the other - would create practical bridges of interaction between the SCO in this area and the CSTO, is an initiative that a number of Russian experts have been advocating for several years now, and which has found understanding among their Chinese colleagues.

The initiative takes into account that the SCO is not a military alliance, but at the same time proceeds from the fact that annual military exercises "Peace Mission" held under the auspices of the SCO have already become a common occurrence. The essence of the proposal is that the command and staff structures created for the period of such exercises would be integrated in a compact form and on a permanent basis into the existing mechanisms of the SCO, for example, into the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure. If necessary (critical aggravation of regional threats), such a "compressed" staff group could be quickly deployed into a full-fledged command and staff mechanism, capable in turn of becoming the basis for the deployment of the corresponding military contingents of the participating

¹⁷ Patrushev warned his SCO colleagues about the dangers of joint exercises with the US. Available from: <https://tass.ru/politika/15536949>.

countries, trained during the same “Peace Mission” exercises [6]. The presence of such a structure in the SCO on an official and legitimate basis would be a step towards the creation of an urgently needed legal basis for coordinating the potential of the SCO and the CSTO, which would justify their joint actions. Then the member states of the two organizations would have the opportunity to take certain steps not only in the usual format of each of the organizations, but also as part of temporary coalition groups to carry out tasks to eliminate the threat that has arisen, including external threats to any of the SCO or CSTO countries.

All of the above, especially in light of the above-mentioned Russian-Chinese statement on cooperation between the CSTO and the PRC, is also related to the possibility of situational connections of the People’s Republic of China to the activities of the CSTO. Moreover, it is precisely this option in the form of the “CSTO + 1” format, which provides for “selective participation of China in terms of ensuring security in the Central Asian region”, that Chinese scientists have been talking about for many years.

Such a scenario would mean that defense cooperation between the Russian Federation and the PRC would reach a new qualitative level and at the same time would reduce the uncertainty of the ongoing discussions regarding the prospects of the Russian-Chinese military alliance.

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CHANGING SOCIETY

Social Structure

Social Institutions and Processes

Political sociology

Latvians and Russians are divided not by ethnic characteristics or specific culture and traditions, but by their political history... The unfriendly and hostile attitude of the Latvian state towards Russia and Russians is initiated mainly not by the residents, but by the ruling political elite, whose behavior is entirely determined by the interests of Western countries.

V.V.Voronov

Profiles of Divergence of Communication Processes between Latvia and Russia

RUSSIA & WORLD: SCIENTIFIC DIALOGUE

**РОССИЯ
И МИР**
НАУЧНЫЙ ДИАЛОГ

Divergence Profiles of Communication Processes between Latvia and Russia

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Abstract. The article, based on scientific literature and a large number of sources: sociological studies, various statistical and analytical materials, regulations, materials from mass media and social networks, provides an analysis of the deepening split in historically similar (according to G.Hofstede's criteria) neighboring societies of Latvia and Russia. 12 groups of communications are considered that determine the content of the information space of Latvia in relation to Russia: foreign policy, economics, attitude towards Russia and Russians, education, science, culture, media, non-profit organizations, youth, religious and interreligious, freedom of movement, interregional communications. The results of the study show that Latvians and Russians are divided not so much by ethnic characteristics or the specifics of culture and traditions, but by their attitude to political history. At the same time, the negativization of the Russian state and Russians is undertaken mainly not by the population, but by the ruling political elite of Latvia, whose behavior is entirely determined by the interests of the countries of the Anglo-Saxon world. At the same time, the currently obvious divergence (divergence) in the development paths of historically similar societies that have been in the same civilizational space for centuries has led to differentiation in the manifestations of communication. Signs of an accelerating divergence in communication processes between Latvia and Russia are manifested in foreign policy communications, attitudes towards Russia and Russians, in culture, in the media and some other areas. Profiles of containing the divergence of communication processes – in religious and interreligious communications, youth, scientific communications, freedom of movement, etc. The results obtained allow us to hope with cautious optimism for the restoration of good-neighborly communication relations between Latvia and Russia in the foreseeable future.

Keywords: communication regime, communication groups, Latvia, hostility, differentiation of processes, Russia

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Introduction

The end of the globalization era is characterized by the growth of conflicts in the economic, political, socio-cultural spheres of modern societies in various macro-regions of the world, which are caused by fundamental differences between the political elites of Western and other civilizations in their understanding of the values of the future world order. The post-Soviet countries have not escaped these processes. The divergence of development paths is most obvious in countries that have chosen not the traditional development model, like Russia, but the Western model, like the Baltic countries [7]. Let us consider the signs of such a divergence and their features using the example of communication processes in Latvia. At the same time, a systemic analysis shows that the unfriendly and even hostile attitude of the Latvian state towards Russia and Russians is initiated mainly not by residents, but by the ruling political elite, whose behavior is entirely determined by the interests of Western countries. The purpose of the article is to analyze the signs of acceleration or restraint of the divergence of communication processes in Latvia in relation to Russia. To this end, the work examines the differentiation of unfriendly communication processes, characteristic features of various communication groups in Latvia (foreign policy, economics, attitudes towards Russia and Russians, education, science, culture, mass media, non-profit organizations, youth, religious and interreligious, freedom of movement, interregional communications), which are examined in more detail in this article.

Materials and Methods

In the work, along with domestic and foreign scientific literature, various empirical sources are widely used: the results of sociological surveys (mass and quota), expert interviews, government documents, speeches by government officials, statistical data, regulatory legal acts, materials from various media and social networks. The following research methods were applied to the specified sources: historical and logical methods for studying the state of knowledge of the problem of the divergence of communication processes in Latvia and Russia; comparative and analytical methods for identifying trends in the field of the communication regime and communication groups in Latvia based on the collected empirical material; inductive – systematization of conclusions on the topic of the study.



Results

1. Foreign policy communications

Interstate relations between Latvia and Russia are confrontational. The “Public Report of the State Security Service for 2022” speaks of “Russia’s confrontation with the civilized part of the world”. Thus, Russia is excluded from world civilization and is characterized both in the past and present as an “imperialist state.” The state system in Russia is characterized as the “Russian regime”¹. It should be noted that in the “Public Report on the Activities of the Security Police in 2013” Russia was also considered a state that poses a threat to Latvia’s national security “through efforts to strengthen its influence in neighboring countries, using both compatriot policies and the so-called soft power and economic instruments”.

The President of Latvia (since July 2023), and before that the Minister of Foreign Affairs (2011-2023) E.Rinkēvičs uses negative connotations in all his references to Russia. He calls on Latvian residents not to visit Russia; he has used such an epithet in relation to the Russian elite as “jackals”²; Russia as an “aggressive state, its citizens have no place in Latvia, Europe, Ukraine”³; advocates closing the Baltic Sea to Russia; characterizes Russia’s actions in the information space in relation to other states as “criminal actions”⁴, etc. Interparliamentary cooperation has been curtailed. On November 17, 2022, the Latvian Saeima decided to “refuse to form groups of deputies in order to facilitate cooperation with the parliaments of Russia and Belarus”⁵.

If we evaluate the problems that affect the territorial integrity of the Latvian and Russian states, we should mention the impossibility of concluding a border treaty between the countries. On January 12, 1992, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Latvia recognized the annexation of the Pytalovo (Abrene) district to Russia in 1944 as “unconstitutional”, based on the fact that when the peace treaty was signed in 1920, this territory remained under Latvian control⁶. Since October 15, 1991, the ethno-political conflict has been unfolding

1 Valsts Drošības Dienests. (2022) Gada Publiskais Pārskats. [National Security Service. (2022) Annual Report] Available from: <https://vdd.gov.lv/uploads/materials/32/lv/vdd-2022-gada-parskats.pdf>.

2 VIDEO> “Kurš šakālis kuram rikli pārgriezīs.” Rinkēvičs par situāciju Krievijā [Which jackal will cut whose throat.” Review on the situation in Russia]. (2023) Available from: <https://www.apollo.lv/7802063/video-kurs-sakalis-kuram-rikli-pargriezis-rinkevics-par-situaciju-krievija>.

3 Rinkēvičs rosina diskutēt par Baltijas jūras slēgšanu, konstatējot Krievijas vainu zemūdens infrastruktūras bojājumos. (2023) [Rinkēvičs encourages a discussion on the closure of the Baltic Sea, establishing Russia’s fault for the damage to the underwater infrastructure] Available from: <https://www.liepajniekiem.lv/zinas/sabiedriba/latvija/rinkevics-rosina-diskutet-par-baltijas-juras-slegsanu-konstatetot-krievijas-vainu-zemudens-infrastru/>.

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5 Saeimā neveidos deputātu grupas sadarbībai ar Krievijas un Baltkrievijas parlamentiem. (2022) [The Saeima will not create groups of deputies for cooperation with the parliaments of Russia and Belarus] Available from: <https://www.saeima.lv/lv/aktualitates/saeimas-zinas/31618-saeima-neveidos-deputatu-grupas-sadarbibai-ar-krievijas-un-baltkrievijas-parlamentiem>.

6 Laganovskis 2015.

around the assessment of the legal status of non-citizens of Latvia⁷, as well as the status of the Russian ethnic minority in Latvia, the content of political, socio-economic, linguistic and cultural rights⁸ and more. In Latvia, the political elite views the issue of the rights of the Russian population as a method that Russia is resorting to in order to “delay Latvia’s integration into international structures”⁹.

The conflictual nature of interstate relations over the decades has meant that since 1991, no Russian president has visited Latvia. In 2006, B.Yeltsin arrived in Latvia for the ceremony of awarding him the Order of Three Stars. At the same time, the former Russian president said that the main obstacles to normal Russian-Latvian relations are the refusal to conclude a border agreement and the “problem of Latvian residents of Russian nationality”¹⁰. However, in 2005, Latvian President V.Vike-Freiberga visited Russia, and in 2010, Latvian President V.Zatlers visited Russia. But some of the Latvian press assessed these visits extremely negatively, as “flirting with Russian imperialism”¹¹.

2. Economic communications

The State Security Service’s “Public Report for 2022” states that Latvian entrepreneurs need to reconsider their ongoing economic ties with the “East”, otherwise this will be associated with “reputational risks” for them, and for Latvia as a whole – it threatens “national economic security”. The report characterizes Russia as an energy supplier as an “unreliable supplier”. Therefore, it is recommended that the entire West reconsider its energy policy¹². However, economic cooperation with Russia, especially in the energy sector, was assessed extremely negatively by the Security Police earlier, for example, in 2013¹³. On August 1, 2022, the “Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the Russian Federation on Economic Cooperation” was suspended. Therefore, it is hardly possible to talk about platforms for public communication in the business sphere for Latvian and Russian entrepreneurs.

After February 24, 2022, Latvia joined the financial and economic sanctions of the European Union against Russia (freezing the bank reserves of the Central Bank of Russia,

7 List of main claims and recommendations of international organizations and NGOs against Latvia regarding the rights of national minorities. (reference information) (2003). Available from: <https://www.mid.ru/ru/maps/lv/1665245/>.

8 Manipulation: state policy of Latvia – linguistic genocide of Russians. (2022) Available from: <https://www.delfi.lt/ru/detektor-lzhi/manipuliacia/manipulyaciya-gosudarstvennaya-politika-latvii-yazykovoy-genocid-russkih-91118139>.

9 Bleiere D. (2023) Boriss Jeļcins. Available from: <https://enciklopedija.lv/skirklis/52937-Boriss-Je%C4%BCcins>.

10 Jeļcinam ... 2006

11 Tālavas Taurētājs. (2023) Kā Latvijas Valsts prezidenti “flirtēja” ar 9. maiju un Krievijas imperiālistu [Talavas Taurejs. (2023) How Latvian Presidents “flirted” with May 9 and Russian imperialism]. Available from: <https://talavastauratajs.com/ka-latvijas-valsts-prezidenti-flirteja-ar-9-maiju-un-krievijas-imperialismu/>.

12 Valsts Drošības Dienests. (2022) Gada Publiskais Pārskats [National Security Service. (2022) Annual Public Report], p. 43, 49, 51. Available from: <https://vdd.gov.lv/uploads/materials/32/lv/vdd-2022-gada-parskats.pdf>.

13 Public review of ...2013.

banning cooperation with most Russian banks, restricting access to EU financial markets, restrictions on deposits, cryptocurrency, etc.; restrictions on the export of dual-use goods, imposing sanctions on dozens of military and industrial enterprises, closing airspace for Russian aircraft, banning the entry of sea vessels flying the Russian flag, banning Russian transport from transporting goods through the territory of Latvia, banning investments in the energy sector of Russia, etc.). However, the available data indicate ongoing economic cooperation between Russian and Latvian businesses. In the first half of 2022, the total trade volume between Russia and Latvia reached 1.4 billion euros, which is 13% more than the trade volume in the first half of 2020. In the first half of 2022, imports from Russia amounted to 897.33 million euros. More than half of the total volume of Russian exports were mineral fuels, mineral oils and their distillation products, bituminous substances, mineral wax, iron and steel, wood and wood products, charcoal. In the first quarter of 2022, the volume of Russian investments in Latvia amounted to 1.8 billion euros, Latvian investments in Russia – 112 million euros¹⁴.

The “Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the Russian Federation on the implementation of customs formalities during the period of withdrawal from the territory of the Republic of Latvia of the Armed Forces and Border Troops of the Russian Federation temporarily located on the territory of the Republic of Latvia” dated 02.06.1993 is still in force; signed on 25.06.2008 “Protocol of the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the Russian Federation on the extension of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the Russian Federation of June 2, 1993 on customs border checkpoints”¹⁵; Law “On the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the Russian Federation on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters” dated 15.10.2003¹⁶.

14 Eiropas Savienības sankcijas pret Krievijas Federāciju. [European Union sanctions against the Russian Federation] (2023) Available from: <https://www.mfa.gov.lv/lv/par-eiropas-savienibas-sankciju-pret-krievijas-federaciju-piemerosanu-latvija>.

15 Latvijas Republikas valdības un Krievijas Federācijas valdības PROTOKOLS par Latvijas Republikas valdības un Krievijas Federācijas valdības 1993.gada 2.jūnija vienošanās par muitas robežas caurlaides punktiem darbības pagarināšanu. [PROTOCOLS of the Latvian Republic and the Russian Federation on customs border checkpoints of 1993. Annual 2. June 2008 to extend the validity of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the Russian Federation of June 2, 1993 on customs border checkpoints.] (2023) Available from: <https://atd.lv/lv/latvijas-republikas-vald%C4%ABbas-un-krievijas-feder%C4%81cijas-vald%C4%ABbas-nol%C4%ABgumi>

16 Latvijas Republikas valdības un Krievijas Federācijas valdības VIENOŠANĀS par Latvijas-Krievijas starpvaldību komisijas izveidošanu ekonomiskās, zinātniski-tehniskās, humanitārās un kultūras sadarbības jomās. [AGREEMENT of the Government of the Republic of Latvia and the Government of the Russian Federation on the establishment of a Latvian-Russian intergovernmental commission in the fields of economic, scientific-technical, humanitarian and cultural cooperation.] (2023) Available from: <https://likumi.lv/ta/lv/starptautiskie-ligumi/id/736>.

3. Relation to Russia, Russian, Russian population

The attitude towards Russia is extremely negative in the official publication of the Republic of Latvia *Latvijas vēstnesis* [Latvian newspaper] and in such major publications as *Latvijas avīze* [Latvian newspaper], *Neatkarīgā rīta avīze* [Independent morning newspaper], *Diena* [Day] as well as in the Internet portals www.delfi.lv, www.apollo.lv, www.tvnet.lv, www.lsm.lv.

For many decades, extremely negative assessments of Russia's foreign and domestic policies have been given at public events by Latvian government officials, politicians and the public. Such events have become especially frequent since 2014. Moreover, the very fact of organizing cultural events, such as the young pop singers' competition *New Wave* [(Bērtule 2014)], was the object of criticism (when it was still possible). Since February 2024, posters condemning its foreign policy and caricatures of V. Putin have been posted opposite the Russian embassy building¹⁷.

In the overwhelming majority of posts in the Latvian-language segment of the Internet, assessments of Russia, the main institutions of state power and, above all, President V. Putin, Russia's domestic and foreign policy, its historical path, economic life, culture, morality, and the Orthodox Church are extremely negative. A stable tendency of racist Russophobia has long been formed in a significant part of Latvian social networks. It always manifests itself when talking about topics that directly or indirectly affect Russia, its institutions, values, and the Russian people. Total dehumanization extends to the entire Russian people, their contribution to European and world civilization and culture is denied. Russians are identified with biologically inferior creatures, and Russophobia in the speeches of politicians, articles by journalists, and on social networks has always remained unappreciated by law enforcement agencies. However, the Russophobic tendency is not total. The level of Russophobia in Latvian social networks is inversely proportional to public information about Russia's successes. There are also posts in Latvian-language social networks that caustically ridicule Latvian Russophobes, for example, *Ukrainas fronte...*¹⁸; *Cūku komikss ...*¹⁹; *Veidemane E.*²⁰; *VIDEO. Laima Vaikule ...*²¹.

17 Foto/Galerijas/Pikets Pret Krievijas Agresiju Ukrainā [Photo/Galleries/Picket Against Russian Aggression In Ukraine]. (2023) Available from: <https://www.leta.lv/photo/album/BEADB21D-82BB-4CFF-8E0B-9C63574EF1EE>.

18 “Ukrainas fronte nav sabrukusi!” Slaidiņš nepiekrīt apgalvojumam, ka Ukraina jau ir zaudējusi karā.[The Ukrainian front has not collapsed!] Slaidins disagrees with the claim that Ukraine has already lost the war] (2023) Available from: <https://www.la.lv/ukrainas-fronte-nav-sabrukusi-slaidins-nepiekrīt-apgalvojumam-ka-ukraina-jau-ir-zaudejusi-kara>.

19 Cūku komikss: Krievijas «miera» uzturētāji. Pig comic: Russia's “peace” keepers.] (2022) Available from: <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/arpus-etera/komiksi/cuku-komikss-krievijas-miera-uzturetaji.a444898/>.

20 Veidemane E. (2022) Tā ir Krievijas tradīcija – iznīcināt brīvus cilvēkus, tautas un valstis [Veidemane E. (2022) It is a Russian tradition – to destroy free people, nations and countries]. Available from: https://m.pietiek.com/raksti/ta_ir_krievijas_tradicija_-_iznicinat_brivus_cilvekus_tautas_un_valstis/komentari.

21 VIDEO. Laima Vaikule sajūsmīna latviešu auditoriju, intervijā krievu žurnālistiem norādot: “Kāda kuram ir darišana, ko mēs Latvijā darām!?” [VIDEO. Laima Vaikule excites the Latvian audience, stating in an interview with Russian journalists: “Who cares what we do in Latvia!?”] (2023) Available from: <https://www.la.lv/video-laima-vaikule-sajusmina-latviesu-auditoriju-intervija-krievu-zurnalisti-noradot-kada-kuram-ir-darisana-ko-mes-latvija-daram>.

It should be noted that Latvian society belongs, according to G. Hofstede's criteria, to the individualistic and "feminine" type of culture (caring for others, law-abidingness, striving for personal success)²² with a dominant mentality of rural (peasant) conservatism. Latvians are mentally closer to the interconnected functioning and development of the local and external economic, socio-cultural communication environment. Belonging to the "feminine" type of culture is common to Latvians and Russians, and this brings them closer together, despite the opposition of external and internal hostile political and nationalist forces [19].

In recent years, there have been virtually no large-scale sociological studies aimed at identifying the attitude of Latvian residents towards the Russian Federation. The situation can be clarified by data from studies such as "The Possibility of Destabilization of Society: Potential Threats to National Security" (2016); "Patriotism among Latvian Youth and Society" (2018); "The Desire of Latvian Society to Defend the State: Facilitating and Limiting Factors" (2020); public opinion research by the sociological company SKDS (2022). These studies claim that "Russia's influence has decreased in Latvia, as the feeling of belonging to Russia, the number of Russian patriots" and the proportion of people oriented towards Russian media have decreased. According to these studies, from 2008 to 2022, the proportion of "patriots of Russia" has decreased from 12% to 4%. At the same time, according to these studies, the proportion of "patriots of Russia" in families where the spoken language is Russian is also low: 19% (in 2018), 12% (in 2022), with a high proportion of "patriots of Latvia" 66% and 67%, respectively.²³

The attitude towards the Russian population is revealed in the "Public Report of the State Security Service for 2022", which speaks of the collective identity of Latvian Russians as sharing the values of the "so-called "Russian world"". Public "organizations of Russian compatriots" are also negatively characterized as a "pro-Kremlin segment" in Latvia. This policy is assessed as a form of Russia's "soft power". Russia's policy of attracting Latvian youth to higher education institutions, which is becoming the object of attention of the Latvian special services, is assessed negatively²⁴. Compared to earlier similar reports, only representatives of Russian public organizations are named as "extremists". Whereas in the "Public Report on the Activities of the Security Police in 2013", in addition to Russian NGOs, their leaders were also named Latvian radical nationalists I. Shishkins and A. Garda²⁵.

Official statistics contain information on interethnic marriages without distinguishing between age groups. The dynamics over the past 50 years are interesting.

²² Hofstede G. 6 dimensions for website.xls. Dimension Data Matrix. Available from: <https://geerthofstede.com/research-and-vsm/dimension-data-matrix/>.

²³ Bērziņa I. (2023) Latvijas sabiedrības un valsts attiecības Krievijas-Ukrainas kara kontekstā. Rīga: Drošības un stratēģiskās pētniecības centrs. P.2-4. [Bērziņa I. (2023) Latvian society and state relations in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Rīga: Center for Security and Strategic Research. P.2-4.] Available from: https://www.naa.mil.lv/sites/naa/files/document/I.Berzina_Latvijas_sabiedriba_%20un_valsts_attiecibas_Krievijas_Ukrainas_Kara_Konteksta.Pdf.

²⁴ Dienests Valsts Drošības. (2022) Gada Publiskais Pārskats [State Security Service. (2022) Annual Public Report]. P. 25-26. Available From: <https://vdd.gov.lv/uploads/Materials/32/Lv/Vdd-2022-Gada-Parskats.Pdf>.

²⁵ Publiskais pārskats. [Public review.] 2013, p. 13. Available from: <https://vdd.gov.lv/noderigi/2013-gada-parskats>.

Thus, in 1970, 11.4% of Latvian women married Russians and 14.2% of Latvians married Russian women, 16.8% of Russian women married Latvians and 17.1% of Russian men married Latvians. These proportions did not change in subsequent Soviet times. In 1990, 11.4% of Latvian women married Russians and 11.8% of Latvians married Russian women, then 15.9% of Russian women married Latvians and 16.0% of Russian men married Latvians. In 2022, these proportions of Russian-Latvian marriages did not change in relation to Latvians, for whom Russians became partners in 10-12% of cases, but Russians doubled the share of Latvian spouses among all marriages: if 10.2% of Latvians married Russians and 11.8% of Latvians married Russian women, then 31.3% of Russian women married Latvians and 28.8% of Russian men married Latvians²⁶. These changes require separate research. Although one of the reasons is the sharp reduction in the number of Russians in the population of Latvia in the post-Soviet period (by 2 times). And as statistics on small ethnic groups (Belarusians, Ukrainians, Poles) show, they are not characterized by a predominant orientation towards marriages exclusively in "their" ethnic environment, but by an orientation towards interethnic marriages. Of course, one of the motives of some Russians is the need to provide their children with a more comfortable entry into the Latvian environment. There are also no such precise data in official statistics as the place of residence of those entering into marriages. Therefore, it is quite possible that some Latvian-Russian marriages were concluded in emigration (to Great Britain, Ireland, etc.), where the effect of the ethnic factor in choosing a partner is not so relevant compared to Latvia. Information occasionally appears in the public space about Russian people recording their ethnicity in their Latvian passports. (The Latvian passport allows for the recording of one's ethnic identity along with citizenship.) Such issues have been raised in the press for several decades. For example, there was a note about the need for an absolutely Russian-speaking Pole who graduated from a Russian-language school in Latvia to record his ethnic identity.²⁷ Articles in the Russian-language segment of the Internet over the past two years have mainly discussed the value of combining several ethnic identities in one person – Russian, Ukrainian, Latvian, rather than renouncing Russian affiliation²⁸. True, Latvian anthropologists believe that "Latvian Russians are experiencing an identity crisis." Although they admit that this assessment is "hypothetical."²⁹

In Latvia, there have been no studies on ethnic discrimination against Russians in the sphere of employment, admission to universities, work, etc. However, sociologists have noted the fact of ethnosocial stratification, which is also evident in economic life, given the obvious underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in socially prestigious spheres of employment,

²⁶ Calculated by: Laulību skaits pēc laulāto tautības – Līgavaiņa tautība, Laika periods un Līgavas tautība. [Number of marriages by nationality of spouses – Groom's nationality, Time period and Bride's nationality] (2023) Available from: https://data.stat.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/OSP_PUB/START_POP_IL_ILN/ILN050/table/tableViewLayout1/.

²⁷ STRENGA 2007. [STRENGTH 2007]

²⁸ Трофимова – Гаике. 2022.

²⁹ "Latvian Russians are experiencing an identity crisis." (2023) Social anthropologist Klavs Sedlenieks on how the war changed society. Available from: <https://rus.delfi.lv/51164891/latvija/55173430/latviyskie-russkie-perezvivayut-krizis-identichnosti-socialnyy-antropolog-klavs-sedlenieks-o-tom-kak-voyna-izmenila-obshchestvo>.

in public administration, in the management of large businesses, in science and culture [5]. The issue of observing the rights and freedoms of the Russian-speaking population has been the subject of heated political debate since the state independence of Latvia in 1991. Political parties, public organizations, mass media, and opinion leaders oriented toward the Latvian part of society categorically deny the very fact of violation of the rights of people belonging to ethnic minorities as such, including the Russian population. Although, for example, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe noted in a 2021 resolution that “the labour market requires a high level of proficiency in the Latvian language, which ... limits the ability of non-native speakers <...> to gain access to civil service positions”³⁰. The U.S. State Department’s 2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Latvia notes, “Nongovernmental organizations representing minority groups stated that discrimination and harassment against members of minority groups, including what they considered hate speech, continued to go unreported to authorities”³¹.

The issue of observing the rights and freedoms of the Russian-speaking population was raised mainly by political parties and public organizations, publicists oriented towards ethnic Russians. This is, first of all, the party “Russian Union of Latvia”. The current version of the program of this party speaks of a state policy of historical revenge directed towards Latvian Russians, about forced assimilation, about “a complete ban on the use of the Russian language in school, about the extensive demolition of monuments dedicated to the liberation of Latvia from Nazism, a ban on Russian TV channels, an extensive campaign of Russophobia in the media”³². The most famous reports on the rights of the Russian-speaking population in Latvia for decades were prepared by Vladimir Buzayev, who claims that there are 84 differences in the human rights of citizens and non-citizens of Latvia [1; 8]. Also well-known in Latvia is the economist and head of the “Non-Citizens’ Congress” Alexander Gaponenko³³. The Social Democratic Party “Harmony”, which had the largest faction in the Saeima in 2011-2022 and was not represented at all in the last Saeima, does not use the narrative about the violation of the rights of the Russian-speaking population in Latvia in its program. At the same time, the party advocates for the full ratification of the “Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the withdrawal of reservations (declarations) made upon ratification of the convention. “Harmony” advocates the use of languages of national minorities in communication with state and municipal institutions in places where national minorities live traditionally or in significant numbers ..., for broader opportunities for the use of foreign languages and languages of national minorities at all levels of the education system by using the positive experience of bilingual education and simultaneously solving

30 Resolution ... 2021

31 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Latvia. Available from: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/latvia/>.

32 Program of the Russian Union of Latvia party in the elections of the 14th Seimas of Latvia. (2022) Available from: <https://rusojuz.lv/programma-partii-russkij-sojuz-latvii-na-vyborah-14-go-sejma-latvii/>.

33 Alexander Gaponenko (2018): The Latvian authorities are trying to shut my mouth. Available from: <https://rg.ru/2018/05/12/aleksandr-gaponenko-vlasti-latvii-pytautsia-zakryt-mne-rot.html>; Александр Гапоненко (2022): “A “special operation” has begun in Latvia to expel those disloyal to Nazism.” Available from: <https://russkiymir.ru/publications/301201/>.

several balanced problems: ensuring effective acquisition of the state language, preserving the ethnic identity of all residents” (Programme of the Social Democratic ... 2011). However, for a long time, in the short version of its program “4 thousand signs” “Harmony” did not even mention the presence of ethnic minorities in Latvia [2]. The party “For Stability”, which is focused on the Russian-speaking population and was able to get into the current Saeima in 2022, in its program advocates the right to receive education in their native language. At the same time, not a single Latvian party provides for the right to education for the Russian population in their native language, and to one degree or another advocates for the complete transfer of all education, including private education, to the Latvian language [3].

Russian is the second most widely spoken language among the Latvian population after Latvian. According to 2017 (there is no more recent information), Russian was the mother tongue for 36% of Latvian residents, including 55.5% of Latgale residents, 53.5% of Riga and surrounding areas residents, 23.8% of Zemgale residents, 19.4% of Kurzeme residents and 9.3% of Vidzeme residents³⁴. According to the Population Census (2011), 37.2% of residents use Russian as their main language in home communication. The highest proportion of residents using Russian as their main language in an informal environment is 60.3% in Latgale and 55.8% in the Riga region. According to the 2011 Population Census, 78.9% of respondents in Daugavpils, 56.8% in Rēzekne, 49.6% in Riga, 43.2% in Jūrmala, 37.9% in Liepāja, 37.5% in Jelgava and 36.3% in Ventspils mainly used Russian at home (2011. nations of the year ...2023). The 2000 Population Census data showed that 43.7% of residents understood Russian as a foreign language.³⁵ However, there is a tendency for the number of Latvians who understand Russian to decrease. If in 1996 84% of residents considered their knowledge of Russian as good, in 2008 this share fell to 69%. The lowest level of knowledge of Russian was in the age group of 15-34 years: 54% understood Russian well, 38% had very weak knowledge, 8% did not understand anything in Russian at all.³⁶ According to the Law on the State Language, the Russian language is not assigned the status of a state language or a language of a national minority. At the same time, the Law guarantees “the right of ethnic minorities to use their native and other languages.” However, these languages are considered “foreign”³⁷.

4 Educational communication

There is currently no educational cooperation between Latvia and Russia. In addition, in 2023, the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science called on the Ministry of the Interior

34 Ārējās migrācijas apsekojuma rezultāti (t.sk. dati par valodām). [Results of the external migration survey (including data on languages)] (2023) Centrālā statistikas pārvalde [Central Statistical Office]. Available from: <https://stat.gov.lv>.

35 2000. gada tautas skaitīšanas rezultāti csb.lv [csb.lv census results.]. (2023) Available from: <https://archive.ph/20120707232130/data.csb.gov.lv/DATABASE/tautassk/ databasetree .asp?lang =16>.

36 Baltic Institute of Social Sciences 2008. gadā veiktā Latvijas iedzīvotāju aptauja [Baltic Institute of Social Sciences 2008 Latvian population survey] (2023) Available from: https://valoda.lv/wp-content/uploads/docs/Petijumi/Sociolingvistika/14_Valoda_2008.pdf.

37 Valsts valodas likums [State Language Law] (2020). Available from: <https://www.vestnesis.lv/ta/id/14740>.

to assess public calls to master Russian curricula remotely³⁸. At the same time, until 2022, educational cooperation between Russia and Latvia was widely represented at the level of local governments, primarily Rezekne and Daugavpils [17], a number of universities and academies of Latvia, including the University of Latvia. Joint university scientific conferences were held and collections of scientific papers were published, for example, “Ethnicity 2021/16”³⁹.

In autumn 2017, the Ministry of Education and Science put forward an initiative to transition almost all education of ethnic minorities to the state language. In early December, the government generally approved the proposal of the Ministry. It is planned to gradually implement the reform in ethnic minority schools by the 2021/2022 academic year. At the same time, bilingual education will remain in pre-school educational institutions, three possible models of bilingual education will be implemented in grades 1–6 of primary school, and 80% of the educational process will be carried out in Latvian in grades 7–9. Secondary school (grades 10–12) will operate only in Latvian [more details: 4]. The table shows the permissible volume of teaching of Russian language and literature in primary and basic schools of Latvia for ethnic minorities, which existed until September 1, 2023, when a complete transition to the state language began. In secondary school (grades 10–12), teaching in Russian has already been excluded. And from September 1, 2023, the total transition of education of ethnic minorities to the state language will be carried out. Pupils from families of ethnic minorities will have the opportunity to master their native language and the history of their native culture only within the framework of optional classes.⁴⁰

Table 1. Number of teaching hours per week allocated to academic subjects in ethnic minority schools in general education schools (standards in force until September 1, 2023).

Subject	class								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Ethnic minority language	4	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3
Literature (teaching in the language of an ethnic minority)	–	–	–	1	2	2	2	2	2

Source: Volkov, 2021 [5]

38 IZM aicinājusi Iekšlietu ministriju izvērtēt publiskos aicinājumus apgūt izglītības programmas talmācībā Krievijā. [The Ministry of the Interior has invited the Ministry of the Interior to evaluate public invitations to learn educational programs through distance learning in Russia] (2023) Available from: <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/21.07.2023-izm-icinajusi-ieklietu-ministriju-izvertet-publiskos-icinajumus-apgut-izglitibas-programmas-talmaciba-krievija.a> 517305/ (21.07.2023).

39 Ethnicity, 2021/16: Ethnicity, Memory and Social Anthropology. Available from: <https://dspace.lu.lv/dspace/handle/7/56996>.

40 Saeima 1. lasījumā apstiprina pāreju uz mācībām tikai latviešu valodā. [In the 1st reading, the Saeima approves the transition to education only in Latvian] (2022) Available from: <https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/saeima-1-lasijuma-apstiprina-pareju-uz-macibam-tikai-latviesu-valoda>.

The possibility of studying in Russian is not available even in private universities since 2021⁴¹. The Law on Education (Article 11.1) provides a mechanism for recognizing higher education diplomas. This Law does not contain a provision on the exclusion of Russian diplomas. Access of graduates of Russian schools (citizens of Russia) to universities in Latvia is regulated by the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Latvia No. 599 “On the entry of citizens of the Russian Federation into the Republic of Latvia” (validity period of the current version from 27.06.2023 to 04.03.2024). According to this document, entry is permitted only to those citizens of Russia, including for the purpose of obtaining education, who have a permit from Latvia, the EU, the states of the European Economic Area, Switzerland; holders of a long-term Schengen visa; family members of citizens and permanent residents of Latvia, the EU, the European Economic Area, Switzerland; family members of diplomats accredited in Latvia⁴².

There are currently many Russian language courses in Latvia, for example, in Riga at the Pygmalion Language Centre (Russian Language Courses 2023), at the Baltic Media® Language Training Centre (Russian Language Courses Online and in Riga 2023), etc. The Language International Internet portal lists the addresses of 14 such courses in Riga. Similar courses are also available in Daugavpils. The Rezekne City Council has allocated 21,000 euros for optional classes in Russian language and literature for children of national minorities. The Ministry of Education and Science condemned this decision. However, the city's mayor A. Bartashevich spoke out against the government's policy of banning the Russian language: “the authorities want our children to forget their native Russian language, losing the opportunity to study it in schools”⁴³.

Data from a large-scale sociological study (2022) show that 59% of Latvian residents receive information daily from the media in Russian, and 85% in Latvian (mostly from the Internet). At the same time, 95% of ethnic minorities receive information in Russian⁴⁴.

5. Scientific communications

After February 24, 2022, cooperation with Russian scientists was curtailed. In the appeal issued by the Latvian Academy of Sciences “Stop Russia's aggression against Ukraine”, the Russian Academy of Sciences is called upon to “objectively assess the Russian

41 Augstskolu likums. [Law on Universities] (2023) Available from: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/37967-augstskolu-likums>; Liegums studijām krievu valodā privātajās augstskolās atbilst Satversmei, angļu valodā – ne. [The ban on studies in Russian in private universities is in line with the Constitution, but not in English] (2023) Available from: <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/liegums-studijam-krievu-valoda-privatajas-augstskolas-atbilst-s>.

42 Par Krievijas Federācijas pilsoņu ieceļošanu Latvijas Republikā. [On the entry of citizens of the Russian Federation into the Republic of Latvia.] (2023) Available from: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/335394-par-krievijas-federacijas-pilsonu-ieceelosanu-latvijas-republika>.

43 The mayor of Rezekne called the demolition of the monument to Soviet soldiers barbaric. Available from: <https://ria.ru/20221109/snov-1830196066.html> <https://ria.ru/20221109/>.

44 Nulle A. (2022) Biezāk izmantotais mediju veids Latvijā – interneta ziņu portāli. [The most frequently used type of media in Latvia is internet news portals] Available from: <https://lvportals.lv/skaidrojumi/339124-biezak-izmantotais-mediju-veids-latvija-interneta-zinu-portali-2022>.

army's invasion of Ukraine"⁴⁵. There is not a single Russian scientific organization in the list of "Partner organizations of the Academy of Sciences of Latvia"⁴⁶. On March 4, 2022, the Academy of Sciences of Latvia supported the decision of the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities to suspend the membership of the Russian Academy of Sciences in this organization.⁴⁷

B some scientific publications in Latvia allow publishing in Russian. For example, the journal of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the University of Latvia, "Orthodoxy in the Baltics"⁴⁸, collections of scientific conference proceedings⁴⁹. At Daugavpils University, the scientific journal Sociālo Zinātņu Vēstnesis /Social Sciences Bulletin publishes articles in any of the three languages if they meet the requirements and profile of the journal⁵⁰.

Interpersonal connections and scientific cooperation between Latvian and Russian scientists have acquired a local character, but have not lost interest in joint research on current scientific problems [20]. Dissertations can only be defended in either Latvian or English. Although the Law does not include a position prohibiting the defense of a dissertation in Russian⁵¹. Latvia has a mechanism for recognizing documents on scientific degrees obtained abroad. The description of the procedure has been developed⁵².

6. Cultural communication

In the spring of 2022, the Seimas Foreign Affairs Committee decided to suspend or denounce agreements with Russia on economic cooperation, culture and cross-border contacts⁵³. Therefore, non-governmental projects of cultural cooperation with Russia, if possible, are only possible as an individual initiative.

45 Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmijas aicinājums apturēt Krievijas agresiju Ukrainā [The call of the Latvian Academy of Sciences to stop Russian aggression in Ukraine.]. (2023) Available from: <https://www.lza.lv/aktualitates/jaunumi/969-latvijas-zinatnu-akademijas-icinajums-apturet-krievijas-agresiju-ukraina>.

46 LZA PARTNERORGANIZĀCIJAS [LZA PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS] (2023) Available from: <https://www.lza.lv/starpt-sakari/lza-partnerorganizacijas>.

47 LZA atbalsta ALLEA lēmumu apturēt Krievijas Zinātņu akadēmijas un Baltkrievijas Zinātņu akadēmijas dalību organizācijā. [LZA supports ALLEA's decision to suspend the membership of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Belarusian Academy of Sciences in the organization.]. (2023) Available from: <https://www.lza.lv/aktualitates/jaunumi/986-lza-atbalsta-allea-lemumu-apturet-krievijas-zinatnu-akademiju-un-baltkrievijas-zinatnu-akademiju-dalibu-organizacija>.

48 Orthodoxy in the Baltics. (2023) Available from: https://dspace.lu.lv/dspace/bitstream/handle/7/50246/Pravoslavie_v_Baltii_%20N9%2818%29_2020_web.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

49 Time of Challenges and Opportunities: Challenges, Solutions, Perspectives. (2023) Available from: https://bsa.edu.lv/docs/science/book/conference_20230513.pdf.

50 Sociālo Zinātņu Vēstnesis. [Journal of Social Sciences.] Available from: https://du.lv/en/social-scienceSociālo_Zinātņu_Vēstnesiss-bulletin-2/.

51 Zinātniskā doktora grāda piešķiršanas (promocijas) kārtība un kritēriji. [The procedure and criteria for awarding a scientific doctorate (promotion).] (2023) Available from: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/124787-zinatniska-doktora-grada-pieskirsanas-promocijas-kartiba-un-kriteriji>.

52 Arvalstis iegūtu izglītības dokumentu akadēmiskā atzīšana Latvijā. [Academic recognition of educational documents obtained abroad in Latvia] (2022) Available from: <https://aic.lv/arvalstu-diplomu-atzisana/arvalstis-iegutu-izglitibas-dokumentu-akademiska-atzisana-latvija> (10.12.2022).

53 Latvijas Republikas un Krievijas Federācijas divpusējās attiecības. [Bilateral relations between the Republic of Latvia and the Russian Federation.]. (2022) Available from: https://www.mfa.gov.lv/lv/latvijas-republikas-un-krievijas-federacijas-divpusejas-attiecibas?utm_source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F.

The preservation of monuments and memorial sites related to the culture and history of Russia is a very acute problem in Latvia. In March 2022, Vice President of the Academy of Sciences of Latvia Ojars Spārītis stated: "The monument in Victory Park is an insult to the Latvian nation enslaved by the Soviet occupation."⁵⁴ In February 2023, the Public Memory Centre and the Riga City Council Monuments Council called for the dismantling of "monuments glorifying totalitarianism" from the centre of Riga, a list which included monuments to M.Keldysh and A.Pushkin⁵⁵. A petition to demolish the Pushkin monument has collected 1,600 signatures. On social media, Pushkin was called a "symbol of Russian imperialism"⁵⁶. In March 2023, the Riga City Council's Monuments Council called for renaming Riga's Pushkin, Turgenev, and Lermontov streets, citing the need to eliminate the consequences of "Russification carried out since the 1860s"⁵⁷. In response to these initiatives, members of the Department of Social and Humanitarian Sciences of the Latvian Academy of Sciences called for issues regarding monuments to be resolved after broad public discussions, and not at all through "campaigning"⁵⁸. At the end of November 2023, the Riga City Council decides to rename the Pushkin Lyceum to the Johann Christoph Brotze Lyceum⁵⁹.

The erasure of famous figures of Russian culture from the history of Latvia was already in Soviet times, when official bodies had a negative attitude towards representatives of Russian émigré culture. Thus, in the essay by S.Cielava in Russian, published as a separate edition in one of the central Soviet publishing houses "Art" in 1979 "Art of Latvia", the period 1920-1940 is entitled "Latvian Art", in which there is not a word about Russian artists of Latvia of this period. And at this time in Latvia the Itinerant artist N.P.Bogdanov-

54 LZA viceprezidents Ojārs Spārītis: Piemineklis Uzvaras parkā ir apvainojums padomju okupācijas paverdzinātajai pamatnācijai. [LZA vice president Ojārs Spārītis: The monument in Victory Park is an insult to the enslaved basic nation of the Soviet occupation.]. (2023) Available from: <https://www.lza.lv/aktualitates/jaunumi/1085-lza-viceprezidents-ojars-sparitis-piemineklis-uzvaras-parka-ir-apvainojums-padomju-okupacijas-paverdzinatajai-pamatnacijai>.

55 Ozola-Balode Z. (2023) (1) Publiskās atmiņas centrs aicina aizvākt totalitārismu slavinošus pieminekļus no Rīgas centra. [The Center of Public Memory calls for the removal of monuments glorifying totalitarianism from the center of Riga.]. Available from: <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/publiskas-atminas-centrs-aicina-aizvakt-totalitarismu-slavinoshus-pieminekhus-no-rigas-centra.a496973/>; Ozola-Balode Z. (2023) (2) Rīgas Pieminekļu padome nolemj pārvietot pieminekli Andrejam Upītim un Annai Saksei. [The Riga Monument Council decides to move the monument to Andrej Upitis and Anna Sakse.]. Available from: <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/rigas-piemineklu-padome-nolemj-parvietot-pieminekli-andrejam-upitim-un-annai-saksei.a499201/>.

56 Antonenko O. A monument to Pushkin was dismantled in Riga. What does hockey have to do with it? Available from: <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-65758434>.

57 Aicina derusifikācijas gaitā likvidēt Puškina ielas nosaukumu. [Calls for the elimination of the name of Pushkin Street in the course of derussification.]. (2023) Available from: <https://vs.lv/raksts/sabiedriba/2023/03/15/aicina-de-rusifikacijas-gaita-likvidet-puskina-ielas-nosaukumu>.

58 LZA Humanitāro un sociālo zinātņu nodaļas viedokļi: par Krievijas impērijas un padomju režīma atstāto pieminekļu demontāžu un par Atmiņas institūcijas dibināšanu. [Opinions of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences: on the dismantling of monuments left by the Russian Empire and the Soviet regime and on the establishment of the Institution of Remembrance.]. (2023) Available from: <https://www.lza.lv/aktualitates/jaunumi/1550-lza-humanitaro-un-socialo-zinatnu-nodalas-viedokli-par-krievijas-imperijas-un-padomju-rezima-atstato-piemineklu-demontazu-un-par-atminas-institucijas-dibinasanu>.

59 The Riga City Council decided to rename the Pushkin Lyceum. (2023) Available from: <https://rus.jauns.lv/article/novosti/585590-rizskaya-duma-prinyala-resenie-pereimenovat-puskinskii-licei>.

Belsky (1968-1945), academician of painting S.A. Vinogradov (1869-1938) were active. This publication also says nothing about German, Jewish and other figures of artistic culture of interwar Latvia [10:32-169]. A similar situation of “cancellation of Russian culture” was also in the encyclopedia “Soviet Latvia”. This publication also designated the period in Latvian artistic culture in 1920-1940 exclusively as “Latvian art” [9]. Therefore, already by 1991, the myth that independent Latvia is a country with total dominance of ethnic Latvian culture was actively functioning in the public consciousness.

However, since the late 1980s, during the period of liberalization in the USSR, figures in Russian culture, science, and journalism in Latvia have been actively engaged in the “return of Russian names” to the public space. In these publications, the significant “Russian presence” in Latvia in history, culture, science, journalism, theater, politics, and economics is shown over many centuries. Support was also received from the Academy of Sciences of Latvia for scientific research and publications on Russian topics. And such publications by numerous researchers have been and are being published to this day in both Russian and Latvian [18]. The website “Russians of Latvia” operates in Russian, Latvian, and English, a kind of encyclopedia of Russian names and Russian life in the past and present of Latvia (editor – Doctor of History Tatyana Feigmane)⁶⁰. The Department of Russian and Slavic Studies at the University of Latvia regularly hosts international scientific conferences and publishes works on Russian literature and culture [14].

Since the end of February, an active de-Russification campaign has been underway in Latvia, the goal of which is to completely eliminate symbols associated with Russia and Russian culture from the country’s public space⁶¹. At the same time, the country’s president, E. Rinkevics, said that he has no disagreements with the “derussification” movement; he himself is closer to the “Latvianization of Latvia”⁶².

One of the most pressing issues is the treatment of historical events related to Russia in school textbooks. The territory of Latvia was included in Russia in the 18th century, was part of the Russian Empire throughout the 19th century, and most of the history of the 20th century for Latvia is the history of its being part of the Russian (18 years) or Soviet state (51 years), and it is no coincidence that the “Russian (Soviet)” theme is one of the most important in covering the history of Latvia in the 20th century. Latvia twice (in 1918 and 1991) gained independence from Russia. Even after 1991, it is impossible to find studies on the history of Latvia that do not consider Russia’s influence. At the same time, history textbooks written by modern Latvian authors are characterized by the opposition of “European civilization”, to which the authors of the texts include both Latvia and Russia (15:4, 38). This dichotomy led some Latvian historians to a primitivism in their understanding of Russia, its institutions, values, historical meanings, which contributed to the penetration of Russophobic ideas into

historical texts, including school textbooks. The 1992 history textbook includes extremely negative assessments of Russia. For example, the material on the Livonian War begins with the statement: “The troops of Ivan the Terrible... burned, plundered and devastated Livonia as best they could”, in approximately the same vein, the annexation of Livonia to Russia as a result of the Northern War is viewed as a manifestation of the insatiable “appetite of the Tsar”. In general, the annexation of Latvia to Russia in the 18th century is assessed negatively – “a window to Europe” meant new suffering and new oppressors.” Here are the assessments of the emperors: Nicholas I – “a ruthless ruler who suppressed the uprising of educated Russian officers in 1825.” Much is said in this textbook about the positive growth of culture and public life of Latvians in the 1850s and 1860s, but the reforms of Alexander II are not mentioned at all. One of the most important reasons for the revolution of 1905–1907 was “the lack of rights of the Latvian people – it is no coincidence that Russia was called the “prison of nations” [11: 71, 111, 115, 131, 140–151, 156].

The most pressing issue for Latvian history textbooks, as well as for historical science in general, is the interpretation of the history of the 20th century, primarily the period of being part of the USSR (1940-1991). In Latvia, the idea of being part of the USSR as a period of “Soviet occupation” is legally formalized, which determines the content of both historical research and history textbooks for elementary, secondary and higher education. Even during the years of being part of the USSR, the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR on July 28, 1989 adopted the “Declaration of Sovereignty of the Latvian State”, which characterizes “the loss of state independence, the inclusion of the Republic of Latvia in the USSR” in 1940 as a result of “Stalin’s criminal foreign policy”⁶³. The Declaration of the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR of May 4, 1990 characterizes the period of being part of the USSR as “the occupation of Latvia and the liquidation of the sovereign authority of the Republic of Latvia.”⁶⁴ On 22 August 1996, the Saeima adopted the “Declaration on the Occupation of Latvia”, the beginning of which is associated with the signing of the Non-Aggression Pact between the USSR and Germany in 1939 and the introduction of the Soviet military contingent into Latvian territory and its subsequent incorporation into the USSR in June-August 1940. According to this document, Russia is still considered a country to which “the Abrene (Pytalovo) region was illegally annexed”. The USSR is characterized as a force that “deliberately carried out genocide against the people of Latvia”. The Declaration expresses regret that Russia “did not recognize the occupation of Latvia by the USSR”⁶⁵. In May 2014, the Saeima adopted amendments to the Criminal Law, which provide for up to 5 years of imprisonment for persons who “deny the fact of the occupation of Latvia by the USSR”⁶⁶.

⁶³ Deklarācija par Latvijas valsts suverenitāti. [Declaration on the sovereignty of the Latvian state.] Available from: https://www.barikadopedija.lv/raksti/Deklarācija_par_Latvijas_valsts_suverenitāti_1989_gada_28._jūlijā.

⁶⁴ 1990.gada 4.maija Latvijas PSR Augstākās padomes “Deklarācija par Latvijas Republikas neatkarības atjaunošanu” [May 4, 1990 “Declaration on the Restoration of the Independence of the Republic of Latvia” of the Supreme Council of the Latvian SSR]. Available from: <https://www.atlants.lv/referats/1990gada-4maijs-latvijas-psr-augstakas-padomes-dek-/492372/>.

⁶⁵ Deklarācija par Latvijas okupāciju [Declaration on the occupation of Latvia] (1996). Available from: <https://www.vestnesis.lv/ta/id/63838>.

⁶⁶ Krimināllikums LR 1998. Available from: <https://www.vestnesis.lv/>.

⁶⁰ Russian Latvia. (2023) Available from: <https://www.russkije.lv/>.

⁶¹ Latvijas novadu un valstspilsētu timeklvietnes ir derusificētas [The websites of Latvian counties and national cities have been de-Russified]. (2023) Available from: <https://www.la.lv/latvijas-novadu-un-valstspilsetu-timeklvietnes-ir-derusificetas>.

⁶² “Latvianization” or “De-Russification”: Rinkevich explained the difference between his approach. (2023) Available from: <https://bb.lv/statja/politika/2023/06/01/latyshizaciya-ili-derusifikaciya-rinkevich-obyasnil-v-chem-otlichie-ego-podhoda>.

These assessments of the Soviet stage of Latvian history are also reproduced in school textbooks. The versions of the same authors of textbooks published in Latvian and Russian even differ in the titles of some important events in Latvian Soviet history. Thus, in the Russian language textbook by Doctor of History Indulis Keniņš “History of Latvia. 20th Century”, one of the chapters on post-war history in Latvia is called “Construction of Socialism in Latvia”, which is included in the section “The Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic within the USSR”⁶⁷. In the Latvian version of this author’s textbook, in the section “The Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic – one of the colonies of the Soviet Empire”, the chapter is called “The construction of socialism in Latvia – colonization and Russification”. This author evaluates Soviet Russia extremely negatively, believing that immediately after October 1917, “the unlimited dictatorship of the Bolsheviks... began, which relied on unprecedented terror” [16:77, 119-129], although modern Latvian historians evaluate the chain of events of 1918 positively, including the Brest Peace, which ultimately led to the independence of Latvia [13:105 – 106]. At the same time, I.Keniņš acknowledges the significant role of Latvians in strengthening Soviet power. The author describes the economic, political and social situation in Soviet Latvia negatively, and says nothing about the development of Latvian culture during this period. The author saw some positive aspects in the activities of those Soviet leaders who created the preconditions for Latvia’s independence. This applies to V.I.Lenin, a supporter of the “right of nations to self-determination”, but, according to I.Keniņš, who moved away from supporting this principle during the preparation of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty; to L.P.Beria, who, after the death of I.V.Stalin, spoke out “against the Russification” of the Union republics; to N.S.Khrushchev, who declared the “crimes of the Stalinist regime” and M.S.Gorbachev as the initiator of “perestroika” and “new thinking”⁶⁸. In some publications, historians assess the attitude towards the process of Sovietization of Latvia after the war as a contradictory phenomenon, which included both “fear of repression” and “fatigue from the horrors of war, hope for a normal life. At the same time, there was a part of the population that “wanted to cooperate” with the Soviet government, to make a career both along party-state lines and in civilian life [13:301-302].

It is worth dwelling on the information about Russian writers and poets in school literature textbooks. In the literature textbook in Latvian for the 12th grade, which very briefly introduces works of world prose and poetry, there is a small excerpt from the novel by M.A.Bulgakov “The Master and Margarita” and several poems by A.A.Akhmatova. The literature textbook in Latvian for the 11th grade, reflecting trends in world literature of the 17th – first third of the 20th century, talks about the poetry of A.A.Blok in the section “Romanticism” and publishes a small excerpt from the novel by F.M.Dostoevsky “Crime and Punishment” [12:69-71, 88-93]. There is a series of literature textbooks within the textbooks oriented towards the programs of national minorities and prepared in Russian. Their author is Oksana Leonidovna Filina, a professor at the Baltic International Academy (Riga). Some

⁶⁷ Kenins I. History of Latvia: Textbook. for grades 8-9: [Trans. from Latvian] Riga: Zvaigzne, 1990:218 – 224

⁶⁸ Kenins I. History of Latvia: Textbook. for grades 8-: [Trans. from Latvian] Riga: Zvaigzne, 1990. C. 59-68, 220, 221, 237.

of these textbooks introduce students primarily to Russian literature (including the Soviet period). For example, a 224-page textbook for grade 4 includes excerpts from works by more than fifty Russian writers, one Latvian poet, one Italian writer, and an excerpt from a text by an Austrian scientist. A 488-page textbook for grade 8 contains excerpts from works by 20 classics of world literature, beginning with Antiquity, including 12 representatives of Russian literature. These textbooks were approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia. Information about Russian scientists in school textbooks is scant. The flyleaf of chemistry textbooks for grades 8, 10, and 12 contains the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements, but without the name of its author, D.I.Mendeleev.

There are currently no cultural contacts with Russia. However, pianist M.V.Pletnev performed piano concertos by S.V.Rachmaninov in Jurmala in August 2023. The troupe of the Latvian National Opera and Ballet Theatre announced a performance of P.I.Tchaikovsky’s ballet Swan Lake in November 2023⁶⁹. Official statistics do not provide any information on the number of books by Russian writers and poets published in Latvia in recent years. At the same time, there is data on the number of books in Russian and their circulation published in Latvia in 2022 (data for 2023 has not yet been published). These are 107 books with a circulation of 41.5 thousand copies (in 2021 there were 115 books with a total circulation of 53.5 thousand, and in 1992 – 358 and 9065.0 thousand, respectively). The share of books published in Russian among all books published in Latvia in 2022 was 5%, and their circulation was approximately 2%⁷⁰.

7. Media communication

The State Security Service’s Public Report for 2022 states that more than 130 Russian sources on the Internet have been closed, including the VKontakte and Odnoklassniki platforms, and access to Russian materials on YouTube has been restricted⁷¹. While access to such publications as Rossiyskaya Gazeta, Komsomolskaya Pravda, Izvestia, Vedomosti, Kommersant, etc. is closed, Sovetskaya Rossiya, Zavtra, km.ru and other left-leaning newspapers and Internet portals on YouTube (Krasnoe Radio, Aurora, etc.) are accessible without problems. Information about Russian media outlets admitted by the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to work in this country is classified⁷². Therefore, it is difficult to accurately determine their share among foreign media outlets. With a high

⁶⁹ Pēteris Čaikovskis [Peter Tchaikovsky] 2023. Available from: <https://prezi.com/i/wcauchzpib3r/peteris-caikovskis/>.

⁷⁰ Statistiskā datubāze. Grāmatas un periodiskie izdevumi. [Statistical database. Books and periodicals.] (2023) Available from: https://data.stat.gov.lv/pweb/lv/OSP_PUB/START_IZG__BI__BIG/?tablelist=true.

⁷¹ Valsts Drošības Dienests. (2022) Gada Publiskais Pārskats. [National Security Service. (2022) Annual Report.] P. 16-41. Available from: <https://vdd.gov.lv/uploads/materials/32/lv/vdd-2022-gada-parskats.pdf>.

⁷² Spalvēns R. (2023) Ārlietu ministrija kļūdījās, ielaižot Latvijā Krievijas medijus, uzsver Šnore. [The Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a mistake by allowing Russian media into Latvia, Šnore emphasizes] Available from: <https://www.delfi.lv/193/politics/55162954/arlietu-ministrija-kludijas-ielaizot-latvija-krievijas-medijus-uzsver-snore>.

degree of probability, Dozhd, Meduza, and Novaya Gazeta are among those admitted.⁷³. At the same time, suspicions are increasingly being voiced among Latvian politicians that representatives of these media outlets are also “great-power Russian imperialists,” and the presence of “independent Russian media in Latvia... brings risks” (assessment made by the State Security Service)⁷⁴.

8. NGO communications

There are no joint projects between Latvian and Russian NGOs. In 2006, the society “Russian World of Latvia” was registered in Latvia⁷⁵. However, in Latvian-language journalism, the phenomenon of the “Russian World” itself is assessed exclusively negatively⁷⁶. The Report of the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo) for 2022 only talks about improving the qualifications of teachers teaching in Russian in 2022.⁷⁷ At the same time, in the State Security Service Report for 2020, the activities of Rossotrudnichestvo are considered as “Russian propaganda” hostile to Latvia⁷⁸. There is no information on the home page of the A.S. Pushkin Institute of Russian Language about the projects implemented in Latvia. It is stated that in 2014-2015, methodological seminars for improving the qualifications of teachers were organized in Latvia⁷⁹. The home page of the A. M. Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Foundation also has no information about projects in Latvia. At the same time, the Foundation’s activities became the object of extremely harsh criticism by the Constitutional Protection Bureau of Latvia back in 2012⁸⁰.

⁷³ “Grūtāk kļuvis atspoguļot pašas sabiedrības viedokli.” Vairāki Krievijas neatkarīgie mediji savu darbību turpina Latvijā. [“It has become more difficult to reflect the public’s own opinion.” Several Russian independent media continue their activities in Latvia.] (2022) Available from: <https://www.apollo.lv/7536323/grutak-kluviss-atspogulot-pasas-sabiedrības-viedokli-vairaki-krievijas-neatkarīgie-mediji-savu-darību-turpina-latvija>.

⁷⁴ Apalups K. (2022) VDD: Krievijas neatkarīgo mediju darbs Latvijā rada informatīvās telpas un izlūkošanas riskus. [VDD: The work of Russia’s independent media in Latvia creates information space and intelligence risks.] Available from: <https://www.pardrosibu.lv/2022/07/31/vdd-krievijas-neatkarīgo-mediju-darbs-latvija-rada-informatīvas-telpas-un-izlūkošanas-riskus/>; Ne visi, kas ir pret Putinu, ir Latvijas draugi. [Not everyone who is against Putin is a friend of Latvia] (2023) Available from: <https://jauns.lv/raksts/zinas/541788-ne-vedi-kas-ir-pret-putinu-ir-latvijas-draugi-uzskata-deputats-snore>.

⁷⁵ Latvijas krievu pasaule. [Latvian Russian world.] (2023) Available from: <https://company.lursoft.lv/latvijas-krievu-pasaule/40008104478>.

⁷⁶ Niklass 2022. Available from: <https://bobe.me/index.php/news/niklass-says-goodbye-to-his-old-self-in-song-and-music-video-for-leti-un-naivi>.

⁷⁷ Rossotrudnichestvo 2022. C. 6. Available from: <https://rs.gov.ru/app/uploads/2023/04/otchet-o-realizacii-publichnoj-deklaracii-czelej-i-zadach-v-2022-g>.

⁷⁸ Krievijas propagandas izplatīšanai latvija tiek verveti arvien vairak jauniešu [More and more young people are being recruited in Latvia to spread Russian propaganda] Available from: <https://www.sargs.lv/lv/latvija/2021-03-26/krievijas-propagandas-izplatīšanai-latvija-tiek-verveti-arvien-vairak-jauniešu>.

⁷⁹ Russian Center. (2023). Available from: <https://www.pushkin.institute/projects/ruscentr>.

⁸⁰ Satversmes aizsardzības birojs [Office for the Protection of the Constitution] (SAB) 2013. Available from: <https://www.sab.gov.lv/?a=s&id=178pgoffset=1&jid=70>.

9. Youth communications

At present, we can only talk about individual contacts between Latvian youth studying or working in Russia, and, accordingly, Russian youth in Latvia. For example, more than a hundred young people from Latvia are sent to Russian universities every year under quotas alone. However, such interest of Latvians in Russian education is negatively assessed by Latvian special services.

10. Religious and interreligious communications

Relations between the Latvian Self-Governing Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church have become extremely complicated since 2022. “The Holy Synod condemned the actions of Metropolitan Alexander of Riga aimed at destroying church unity, and stated that until the Bishops’ Council and then the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church consider the appeal of the Council of the Latvian Orthodox Church of October 20, 2022, the provisions of Chapter XII of the Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church shall apply to the said Church”⁸¹. On September 5, 2022, the then President of Latvia E. Levits spoke about the need for amendments to the Law on the Latvian Orthodox Church, providing for its complete independence from the Moscow Patriarchate and effectively declaring its autocephalous status⁸². The Saeima of Latvia approved this bill⁸³. On September 9, 2022, the Synod of the Latvian Orthodox Church confirmed the decision of the Saeima to determine the autocephalous status. On October 20, at the Council of the Latvian Orthodox Church, 160 of its 161 participants voted for autocephaly. In 2023, the severance of ties with the Russian Orthodox Church continued.

11. Freedom of movement

Latvia accepts visa applications only from certain categories of citizens of the Russian Federation:

- 1) family members of citizens of Latvia (spouses, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, as well as dependents);
- 2) family members of citizens of the European Union, the European Economic Area or the Swiss Confederation (in accordance with Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 675 of 30 August 2011 “Procedure for the entry and stay of citizens of the Union and their family members” in the Republic of Latvia”);
- 3) persons who have received the right to reside in Latvia;

⁸¹ Latvian self-governing Orthodox Church. (2023) Available from: <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/79088.html>.

⁸² President Levits initiated the dissolution of the ties of the Latvian Orthodox Church with the Moscow Patriarchate. (2022) Available from: <https://web.archive.org/web/20220905102517/>.

⁸³ ATZINUMS 2022. Available from: <https://titania.saeima.lv/LIVS13/saeimalivs13.Nsf/0/3F4996C05DE704B5C22588B40048AB76?OpenDocument>.

4) persons whose entry is related to humanitarian considerations (in the event of a serious illness of a close person or participation in a funeral, when there is a threat to the safety, health or life of a person or a member of his family)⁸⁴.

There is no possibility of dual citizenship (of Latvia and Russia). There have been changes for Russian citizens to obtain a residence permit. The issuance of both initial and repeat temporary residence permits is no longer possible. The amendments do not affect the process of issuing temporary residence permits – the registration of permits continues.

Initial and repeat residence permits can be requested:

- in connection with family reunification (spouses, minor children, persons under guardianship and trusteeship, parents of Latvian citizens and non-citizens of Latvia who have reached retirement age, guardians or trustees, adult children of Latvian citizens);
- applicants for the EU Blue Card and specialists, managers and interns transferred to the company;
- researchers and students (including researchers and students for nine months – after completing a research project or a master's or doctoral study program);
- persons who have received temporary protection or alternative status in Latvia; persons who have been granted permanent resident status of the European Union in Latvia or such status has been granted in another Member State of the European Union;
- any person, regardless of the reason for the temporary residence permit issued to them (start-up, any temporary residence permit related to employment or commercial activity, investment, etc.), who has worked in Latvia during the last three months prior to submitting an application for a temporary residence permit and for whom income tax has been paid, as well as if the person continues to exercise the right to employment granted to them⁸⁵.

According to the amendments to the Immigration Law submitted to the Saeima on 22 September 2022, the permanent residence permit issued to Russian citizens will expire on 1 September 2023. In order to live in Latvia, they must apply for the status of a permanent resident of the EU. To obtain this status, Russian citizens must submit to the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs a copy of their identity document, as well as a certificate of knowledge of the national language at level A2 and availability of financial means.⁸⁶ On August 22, 2023, the Cabinet of Ministers of Latvia instructed the Ministry of Internal Affairs to prepare amendments to the Immigration Law, which provide Russian citizens

⁸⁴ Krievijas Federācijas pilsoņu iecelšana Latvijā. [Entry of citizens of the Russian Federation into Latvia.] (2023) Available from: <https://www2.mfa.gov.lv/moscow/konsulara-informacija/krievijas-federācijas-pilsonu-iecēšana-latvija>.

⁸⁵ Izmaiņas uzturēšanās atļauju saņemšanas kārtībā Krievijas un Baltkrievijas pilsoņiem. [Changes to the procedure for obtaining residence permits for citizens of Russia and Belarus.] (2022) Available from: <https://www.pmlp.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/izmaiņas-uztēšanas-atļauju-saņemšanas-kartiba-krievijas-un-baltkrievijas-pilsoniem> (26.9.2022).

⁸⁶ Jurkāns I. (2023) PMLP informē, kas sagaida tos Krievijas pilsoņus, kuri nebūs darījuši neko sava uzturēšanās statusa sakārtošanai [PMLP informs what awaits those Russian citizens who have not done anything to correct their residence status.]. Available from: <https://zinas.tv3.lv/900-sekundes/pmlp-informe-kas-sagaida-tos-krievijas-pilsonus-kuri-nebus-darijusi-neko-sava-uztēšanas-statusa-sakartosanai/>.

living in Latvia with another two years to pass the Latvian language test in order to legally reside in Latvia.⁸⁷.

12. Interregional communications.

Currently, interregional cross-border and/or transborder cooperation projects have been curtailed. Meetings aimed at developing dialogue and cooperation between officials, civil servants, scientists, cultural, scientific, educational figures, etc. have been suspended.

There is not a single Russian city among Riga's 25 sister cities. Daugavpils' sister cities in Russia are Narofominsk, Moscow City Central Administrative Region, St. Petersburg, Pskov⁸⁸. The largest Latvian cities do not have Russian sister cities: Liepāja⁸⁹, near Jelgava⁹⁰, near Rezekne, near Jūrmala, near Ventspils⁹¹.

Conclusion

An analysis of the state and development of the main communication groups in Latvian society allows us to state with restrained pessimism that in the coming years we should hardly expect positive socio-economic, socio-cultural and especially political communication ties between Latvia and Russia as a neighboring country. Latvians and Russians are divided not so much by ethnic characteristics or specific culture and traditions (Russian is the second language of communication after Latvian, it is native to 36% of the country's residents), but by political history, in which Russia is presented as an aggressive state that poses a threat to Latvia's national security. The unfriendly and even hostile attitude of the Latvian state towards Russia and Russians is initiated, mainly, not by residents, but by the ruling political elite, whose behavior is entirely determined by the interests of Western countries. In a NATO member state that has no real sovereignty, there cannot be any other direction of foreign policy communication. At the same time, the results of the study of twelve different groups of interpersonal communications show that in such communication groups as science, youth, freedom of movement, religious and interreligious communications and in some other groups there are positive processes in relation to Russia and Russians, which allows us to hope

⁸⁷ Mikuda S. (2023) Krievijas Federācijas pilsoņu uzturēšanās Latvijā pēc 2. Septembra [Residence of citizens of the Russian Federation in Latvia after September 2]. Available from: <https://lvportals.lv/e-konsultācijas/30248-krievijas-federācijas-pilsonu-uztēšanas-latvija-pec-2-septembra-2023>.

⁸⁸ Sadraudzības pilsētas. [Commonwealth Cities] (2022) Available from: <https://www.daugavpils.lv/pilseta/par-daugavpili/sadraudzibas-2022.pilsetas>.

⁸⁹ Sadraudzības pilsētas. [Commonwealth Cities] Available from: <https://www.liepaja.lv/sadraudzibas-pilsetas/>.

⁹⁰ Sadraudzības pilsētas. [Commonwealth Cities] 2023. Available from: <https://www.jelgava.lv/pilseta/par-jelgavu/sadraudzibas-pilsetas/>.

⁹¹ Sadraudzības pilsētas. 2023 [Commonwealth Cities. 2023]. Available from: <https://www.ventspils.lv/par-ventspili/sadraudzibas-pilsetas/>.

with cautious optimism for the restoration of good-neighbourly relations between Latvia and Russia in the foreseeable future.

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HISTORICAL RETROSPECTIVE AND MODERNITY

History of International Relations
and Foreign Policy

RUSSIA & WORLD. SCIENTIFIC DIALOGUE

**РОССИЯ
И МИР**
НАУЧНЫЙ ДИАЛОГ

...Being a systemic condition for the development of network civilizations, the very connection of cultures of different origin and character into a communications network does not determine the prospects for preserving these networks as a factor in overcoming local – ethnic and national-state interests and values.

I.V.Sledzevsky

Conditions and Prospects of the Dialogue of Civilizations in the Modern World: Symbiosis of Cultures (the Experience of the History of the Central Asian Countries and their Interaction with Russia)

There are cases of mythologization and subjectivization in the works of scientists now, which affects the development of science, state memory policy and ideology. The scientific community needs to work together to resist this.

G.M.Maitdinova, V.I.Sazhin, A.M.Mamadazimov, A.E.Zagrebina

Intercivilizational Dialogue in Central Asia: Views of Russian and Tajik Scientists

Over the years of independence of the Central Asian republics, independence from authoritarian or democratic regimes, under the influence of rich resources and the Soviet legacy, political institutions, ideologies and principles of governance have been formed that determine the actions of government structures.

R.S.Bobokhonov

Post-Soviet Civilizational Transit in Central Asia

The primates and clergy of the [Serbian Orthodox] Church made a significant contribution to interfaith reconciliation and coexistence, although Orthodox Christians were victims of occupation regimes with which the Muslim political elite collaborated.

A.Prascevic

The Role of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Relations with Muslims from 1920 to 2020

Attempts to implement geopolitical projects based on the idea of "Intermarium" are closely linked to the policy of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in relation to the East Slavic territories that are part of the historical Kyiv Metropolitanate.

A.V.Slesarev

The Concept of the Intermarium and the Confessional Issue: Geopolitical Challenges to Belarusian Orthodoxy in XX – early XXI century

...The consequences of the crisis are not limited to the use of the "oil weapon" by Arab countries and the transformation of OPEC countries into real actors in the global economy and world politics. The named processes laid the foundation for a global energy transition, a technological revolution and the emergence of the beginnings of a post-industrial world.

A.I.Yakovlev

The 1973 Oil Crisis: a Look after half a Century

Conditions and Prospects of the Civilizations Dialogue in the Modern World: Symbiosis of Cultures

(based on the History of the Central Asian Countries and their Interaction with Russia)

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the possibilities of dialogue of civilizations in a global, trans-border cultural space. The concept of civilization as a network of broad communications is new and promising, which removes the attachment of civilizational communities to a territory or state and turns civilizations into open, inclusive, cultural and communication entities. In the context of the extensive and unique historical experience of intercivilizational ties and relations, the Central Asian region can be classified as one of the most successful and longest-lasting “civilizations of encounters.” The communicative significance of this experience as a long and successful symbiosis of different cultures and religions and the role of dialogue with Russia in this heritage, in its preservation and revival are considered. Dialogue with Russia is a network of historical and modern relations and interactions between our countries. The article was prepared on the basis of a report made by the author at the Dushanbe session “Civilizational dialogue between Russia and the countries of Central Asia” of the VIII international conference “Russia and the world: dialogues - 2024. Forces of attraction.”

Keywords: dialogue of civilizations, cultural communications, symbiosis of cultures, civilization of Central Asia, cultural and civilizational interaction between Russia and Central Asian countries

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Introduction

Modern globalization not only strengthens world intercultural ties, but also exacerbates on a large scale the contradictions, tensions and conflicts in the world system of intercultural, intercivilizational interactions. A new and problematic character to these interactions is given, on the one hand, by the rapid network convergence within the framework of the global culture of the cultures of the West, East and Africa, and on the other hand, by the desire of cultures of different - ethnic, national, civilizational levels to preserve their identity, their cultural heritage and traditions in the new conditions of a world without borders. The purpose of this article is to analyze the possibilities of a dialogue of civilizations in the conditions of the development of a global, transboundary cultural space from the point of view of the concept of civilization as a network of broad interactions and communications.

Materials and Methods

The main, most widespread scientific and theoretical approaches and concepts of civilization (Huntington, Yakovenko, Mishuchkov, Ionov, etc. [3, 5, 7, 8]) were subjected to scientific comprehension and critical analysis. The high epistemological potential of the communicative-network approach is noted, in which civilization is considered as an open system of internal and external stable communications, information exchange. The research methods were the dialectical method, the method of analysis, synthesis, generalization, the concrete historical method, and a comparative analysis of the historical experience of symbiosis of different cultures.

Results

The apologetics of the unstoppable spread of Western civilization was noticeably undermined by the concept of growing conflicts between the civilizations of the West and the East and their impending clash by the American political scientist S. Huntington. Since the end of the 20th century, the concept of the “dialogue of civilizations” has become an alternative to this destructive vision of the world’s future. It has transferred the understanding of dialogue as an oral or written exchange of thoughts between people to the vast space of cultural and civilizational connections and relationships between countries, peoples, and states. The positive international significance of the concept has been recognized: the need for dialogue for each civilization and for humanity as a whole [8: 96]. However, the framework for the correct scientific use of the concept remains debatable. The dialogue of

civilizations is understood both as an intersubjective form of intercivilizational interactions and relations – the exchange of information, values, products between public institutions and social formations of different civilizations, and as interpersonal communication of bearers of different civilizational identities, influencing the development of the subjectivity of the participants in the civilizational dialogue, and as an internal dialogue of a bicultural personality – a bearer of not one, but several civilizational identities [5:219]. It is noted that “the desire for dialogue in itself and even the proclamation of certain dialogical principles do not yet ensure the effectiveness or the very presence of dialogue, which requires a subtle balance of theoretical knowledge and practical skills, in particular, a specific combination of macrohistorical and microhistorical approaches” [3:25].

But despite all the differences in the interpretation of the concept of civilizational dialogue, its content is connected with the fact that civilizational communities (systems) exist separately or in isolation from each other with their own special ideological principles, spiritual and moral values and ideals. The criteria of integrity and unity of civilizations prevail over the criteria of their interconnection, communicative relations, oriented not towards building institutions, structures, systems, but towards a stable exchange of information and the creation of networks of intersubjective relations. This image also has its own normative and value standard: a model of a culturally homogeneous society, typical for Western society of the Modern era, in which what exists as a cultural and political unity of a plurality of individual citizens, not cultures, becomes understandable, correct and meaningful, and has the quality of an indisputable beginning and moral and legal absoluteness for all citizens. Meanwhile, the realities of modern globalization, undermining or erasing from public consciousness the deep connection between place and community - “the local without borders” (in a multitude of local identifications), “the global without place” (in many places at once), blur the basic principle of the theory of civilization: civilization as a spatio-temporal continuum of culture and history of the “big society”. Against the background of constant trans-border interactions of people, expanding thanks to the development of the global communications and information infrastructure, it is increasingly difficult to imagine civilization exclusively as the embodiment of a single spiritual principle, a common worldview, tied to a certain territory or vast state. Today it is already difficult not to notice that the civilizational formations that formed in the past, for example, the medieval European, Byzantine, Islamic civilizations, were never isolated to such an extent that they could be considered independent of each other. In this context, the concept of civilization as a network of broad, supra-local connections and relations, which overcome space and are preserved for a long time even in the event of the disintegration and disappearance of the ideological and symbolic core of the civilizational system, first formulated in the works of French historians of the Annales school and some American researchers (R. Maxwell, D. Wilkinson), acquires a new and promising meaning - cognitive and scientific-practical - acquires [2:108-109].

The communicative-network approach to the nature of civilizations embedded in this concept - civilization as not only a special and fundamentally unified system of socio-cultural regulation, but also an open system of internal and external sustainable

communications, information exchange, expands the meaning and significance of the concept of dialogue of civilizations. These are no longer simple acts, processes of successful communication of representatives of individual original cultural-civilizational worlds, but a more or less stable and long-term system of intercultural communications.

But the communicative profile of civilization-networks expresses only the general principle and potential of organizing, consolidating civilizational dialogue. In order for dialogue to acquire the meaning of a special and extended in time and space mechanism for drawing together huge and diverse conglomerates of the population into a stable system of intercultural connections and relations, mixing and mutual cultural adaptation of the participants in the dialogue are necessary. At least a minimal but constant presence of this condition is expressed by the term “symbiosis of cultures” – the interaction of cultures, socio-cultural formations, that are heterogeneous in their origin and characteristics, as a result of which native and borrowed elements of cultures interact without losing their autonomy and independence in the general network of intercultural connections and relationships.

The civilizational potential of a long-term symbiosis of different cultures is demonstrated by the history of the Mediterranean. The influence of various cultures was absorbed by almost all the ancient civilizations of this region: Sumerian, Egyptian, Phoenician. Undoubtedly, the Roman Empire gave civilizational integrity to the development of the ancient cultures of the region. However, even after its collapse, a stable and significant network of interaction between the countries and peoples of the Mediterranean basin was preserved, creating an organic civilizational fusion of Greco-Roman and Eastern traditions, Asian and European mutual influences - a special Mediterranean civilization [4:281-292]. The tradition of symbiosis of Mediterranean cultures was continued in the Middle Ages by Byzantium in the east of Europe and Muslim Spain (al-Andalus) in the south and west of the European continent.

Experience of “symbiosis” of cultures in Central Asia

Understanding the development of civilization, the civilizational community of different cultures and peoples as a stable and long-term network of cultural and historical connections and relations is also relevant for the comparative historical study of the countries of Central Asia, explaining the prospects for their development as a regional socio-cultural system that goes far beyond the division of the region's territory by nationality. The significant cultural heterogeneity of the population of Central Asia determines significant differences in the classification of the levels and foundations of its civilizational unity. In some interpretations, Central Asia is considered as an integral and unified regional civilization - “Turkic-Iranian”, “Turanian”, etc., in others - the status of individual civilizations is assigned to the main ethnic, nation-forming communities of the region: Uzbek, Turkmen, Tajik. But Central Asia can also be presented as a characteristic, exemplary example of a network-type civilization with enormous historical experience, living and developing traditions of symbiosis of world civilizations [6]. Situated between the cultural areas of Western and Eastern Asia, the countries of Central Asia have for many

centuries actively adopted the best achievements of the cultures of these regions, including forms of religion, aesthetic universals, and architectural examples. The civilizational uniqueness of the region cannot be imagined without the spatial-network axis of regional cultural-historical interactions – the Great Silk Road, which passed through the territory of Central Asia, connecting China and Europe and playing an important role as an integrator and transformer of the cultures of the East and West. The deep historical foundations are also obvious – the roots of the symbiosis of the cultures of the peoples of Central Asia: a strong connection under the control of centralized political and military power of the cultures of nomads and sedentary farmers.

Being a systemic condition for the development of network civilizations, the connection of cultures of different origin and character in a communications network does not determine the prospects for preserving these networks as a factor in overcoming local-ethnic and national-state interests and values. In the logic of their own development, networks can expand and contract, change the degree of their intensity, changing the nature and integrative potential of cultural symbiosis. European and world history are full of examples of such a connection of heterogeneous cultures, when the result was not the expansion of intercultural exchange, but the breakdown and limitation of intercultural interactions. For example, one cannot deny the important contribution to the development of Western European civilization from the end of the 8th to the end of the 11th century by the inhabitants of Scandinavia - the Vikings, who created a wide network of maritime cross-border connections thanks to the successes of their sea expeditions. Here we have the transformation of England into part of Europe, and the promotion of the acceleration of the political consolidation of medieval European states, and the long-term flourishing of Scandinavian culture. However, it is impossible to speak of the existence or formation of a special Scandinavian (Norman) civilization. The Vikings opposed Christianity and its transborder cultural and civilizational influence, while for the European public of that time, in particular for European chroniclers, the dialogue with the Normans did not have much significance due to the persistent perception of them as fierce and bloodthirsty warriors.

Discussion

For the broad and successful development of civilizational dialogue in the macrohistorical perspective, including the preservation and expansion of network civilizations, it is necessary not only to have intensive intercultural exchange, but also to transform the interaction and mutual influence of different cultures into a sustainable socio-cultural and cultural-legal order, including the rejection of cultural and legal discrimination against individual socio-cultural and cultural-linguistic groups; awareness of the common human history and destiny of peoples and countries linked by long-term and sustainable historical ties and relations; consolidation of the human-centered symbiosis of cultures in public policy and international relations [1]. The history of the peoples and countries of Central Asia contains a vast and unique experience of such an organic and

human-dimensional cultural symbiosis. Great historical prospects for its development were opened by the symbiosis of religions rooted in the cultural heritage of the region, affirming the ideas and values of the highest spiritual-moral and metaphysical order: Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Judaism. Cultural symbiosis acquired new foundations during the Soviet period. Russification of the Soviet republics of Central Asia - the rapid spread of the Russian language did not cause hostility or discontent on the part of the majority of the indigenous population of Central Asia and in the mass consciousness of the peoples of the region was associated with a high level of education and culture, the opportunity to occupy a higher position in society without rejecting traditional values and norms of behavior [9]. Mastering the Russian language did not mean losing one's own cultural identity. The Sovietization of the region, which included the violent suppression of traditionalist Islamic movements, forced collectivization of agriculture, and blind obedience to the Center, did not, on the whole, affect the stability and tolerance of interethnic relations. A balance was established between centuries-old tradition and Soviet modernization reforms. The collapse of the Soviet Union did not cause oppression of Russian-speaking groups and did not lead to significant changes in the ethnic structure of the population.

Conclusion

Today, maintaining and developing the dialogue between the Central Asian countries and Russia not only in the field of politics and economics, but also in the humanitarian sphere: science, art, cultural tourism, and protection of intellectual property, is of strategic importance for the successful integration of the region. Humanitarian cooperation with the CIS countries has been and remains one of the priorities of the international and regional policy of the Russian Federation, as well as ensuring the stability and security of the post-Soviet information and communication space, which is addressed in the concept of the national security strategy of the Russian Federation for 2021. One cannot fail to take into account the serious challenges to the development of a stable partnership between Russia and the post-Soviet countries of Central Asia. At the global – geopolitical and geocultural level, these challenges are caused by the intensifying competition between the leading world players for influence in the post-Soviet space and on the Eurasian continent as a whole. The historical experience of Russia's interaction with the countries of Central Asia and its extensive ties and relations with the states of the region allow Russia to successfully compete for a leading position in the region. However, taking into account the prospect of increasing competition in the region of the leading world powers and their associations: Russia, China, the United States, the European Union, it is necessary to recognize that maintaining Russia's leading position will hardly be possible without emphasizing the cultural and civilizational advantages of cooperation between the Central Asian countries and Russia. This is a common culture of international and interpersonal communication, a “civilization of meetings” that brings together and unites our peoples and states in difficult times of the breakdown of the world order.

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Intercivilizational Dialogue in Central Asia: Views of Russian and Tajik Scientists

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Abstract. The article provides an analysis of the features of the dialogue of civilizations in Central Asia. The region is considered as an intercivilizational hub where Persian, Hellenistic, Babylonian, Chinese, Indian, Mongolian, Arab, and Turkic civilizations interacted and competed. As a result, a special type of culture arose that influences peoples, their national psychology, religion, and linguistic characteristics. Historically, the region was a contact zone of settled agricultural and nomadic civilizations. The impetus for the development of the region was given by its transit potential, in particular the Great Silk Road. The authors believe that at the present stage, dialogue is possible based on an understanding of the historical community of different peoples living in the region, and one's own civilizational identity, which is based on traditional values. The political culture of the Central Asian countries has developed its own democratic principles, which are not always identical to Western ones. At the present stage, new dialogue platforms are emerging where active intercivilizational dialogue is conducted. Along with the dialogue are Afghanistan, Iran, China, Pakistan.

Keywords: dialogue of civilizations, conflict of civilizations, Central Asia, Tajikistan, Iran, Persian civilization, Turkic civilization, Russian civilization, ethnographic studies

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Introduction

In the conditions of the formation of a polycentric world, the role of the civilization factor is increasing. Deideologization of international relations has focused attention on the problems of intercivilizational interaction. In Asian countries, there is a notion that in a changing world, it is necessary to form world politics taking into account the plurality of intercivilizational relations, the equality of values of all civilizations, that the democratic values of local civilizations of Asia give a specific feature to modern interstate relations and integration processes. It should be noted that in modern Russian science, the topic of civilizations is studied more actively than in Tajikistan, and is more often understood at the level of fundamental knowledge. For example, new theoretical and methodological approaches are being developed, new trends and patterns in the development of civilizations are being identified [4, 5, 9-12, 15-17, 20, 22, 23, 26, 27, 29, 30, 32], special formats of civilizational relations are being studied [6, 7, 33], and the essence and significance of Russia as a state-civilization is being understood [14, 24].

The problems of inter-civilizational dialogue in Central Asia and directly in Tajikistan are being studied [13, 18, 19, 28, 31].

In Tajik science, studies of local civilizations and issues of civilizational identity are more common [1-3].

There are few studies that claim to understand the modern theory of civilization, but they exist [12]. The purpose of this article is to introduce the scientific community to the views of some scientists from Tajikistan and Russia on the issue of the history and development of intercivilizational dialogue in Central Asia.

Materials and Methods

The article is based on scientific reports of Russian and Tajik scientists presented at the foreign session "Civilizational Dialogue of Russia and Central Asian Countries" at the VIII International Scientific and Practical Conference "Russia and the World: Dialogues – 2024. Forces of Attraction". The organizers of the foreign session were the National Research Institute for the Communications Development (NIIRC, Russia) and the Sector of Russian Studies of the Institute for the Study of Problems of Asian and European Countries of the National Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan. The authors of the article used methods of historical analysis, extrapolation, comparison, generalization.

Results

Civilization factor in international relations in Central Eurasia in the context of the formation of a new world order (G. Maitdinova)

The Central Asian region is an important intercivilizational hub where the Hellenistic, Islamic, Confucian, Orthodox Christian, and Hindu-Buddhist civilizations interacted. The civilizational dialogue along the Great Silk Road has always given impetus to the development of countries and relations. It was the dialogue of civilizations that laid the foundation for the modern appearance of civilization in Central Asia. The region is also a contact zone between sedentary agricultural and nomadic civilizations. The new Central Asian states, which are linked by ethnic, civilizational, and other ties, are searching for new mechanisms for realizing their national interests. The post-Soviet states of Central Asia arose on an ethnic basis with clearly expressed cultural characteristics and mentality of the peoples, so this reality is reflected in foreign policy. The problems of preserving historical memory, traditional culture, and moral values played an important role in determining national interests and shaping the domestic and foreign policies of the new Central Asian states. Since gaining sovereignty, the new states have realized that the historical community of various peoples living in the region for many centuries, their culture, language, religion, traditions, ethnic ties in the context of globalization in Central Asian society can serve as an integration basis for them. There is an awareness that it is necessary to preserve their own civilizational identity, which should be based on stable traditional values. Foreign political values brought in are rejected in a traditional society if they are not compatible with local ones, and this must be taken into account in international relations. In Asia, democratic principles existed in political culture, which are not always identical to Western ones.

In the 1990s, the new Central Asian states established international cooperation, first of all, taking into account the civilizational proximity of development and historical ties. In July 2006, in Dushanbe, the presidents of Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Iran (countries that bear the Aryan heritage) decided to form an Iranian alliance to strengthen their development potential through joint efforts. Tajikistan's relations with Iranian-speaking states that are close in cultural and geographical space harmoniously fit into the concept of its multi-vector foreign policy. At the same time, Iran's geopolitical potential played a significant role for Tajikistan and Afghanistan in forming the initiative to create an Iranian alliance (Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran), based on a civilizational community. At present, cooperation between Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, Turkey with the participation of neutral Turkmenistan within the framework of the Organization of Turkic States is being strengthened on a civilizational basis. An example of positive inter-civilizational interaction is the cooperation within the SCO of 26 states with different civilizational affiliations: Orthodox-Christian, Islamic, Confucian-Buddhist, Hindu-Buddhist.

New dialogue platforms have emerged in Central Asia, where active inter-civilizational dialogue is being conducted: the format for coordinating the actions of external actors

(C5+1); political, economic, and humanitarian format for discussing regional problems (Astana format), and the security format (the “Quartet” – “Afghanistan-Tajikistan-China-Pakistan”, “Dushanbe Four” – Tajikistan, Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan). The integration models proposed by external players and the national strategies of the states in the region include active civilizational co-development of new actors together with Afghanistan and other neighboring countries. New opportunities for closer civilizational interaction are opening up for the new states of Central Asia in the implementation of communication projects in the southern direction, opening up for them the Afghan-Pakistani, Afghan-Iranian-South Asian, Caspian-Iranian-South Asian corridors, which can become corridors not only for economic and humanitarian development, but also for inter-civilizational dialogue.

In modern international relations of Central Asia, it is becoming important to understand how the civilizational heritage influences foreign and domestic policy: historical roots, traditions of political culture, traditional ideas about spatial policy, traditional worldview, values of spiritual culture, etc.

The new Central Asian states emerged on an ethnic basis with clearly expressed cultural characteristics and mentality of the peoples, therefore this situation is reflected in foreign policy. Unfortunately, since the early 1990s, information about the culture of neighboring countries in the information field has sharply decreased. Although as a result of using the “concept of attractiveness of cultures” it is possible to achieve trust, interest in one’s country, mutual understanding, and this can influence political and humanitarian processes in the international arena not only in Central Asia, but also at the global level. At present, the strengthening of the influence of cultural diplomacy, the emphasis on the policy of cultural attractiveness of their countries is noticeable in the global and regional policies of the Central Asian states.

In connection with the role of civilizational characteristics in the foreign policy of the Central Asian states, in our opinion, attention should be paid to the following:

- in the Eurasian space it is necessary to lay and strengthen the foundations of a new civilization, offering co-development of local civilizations;
- in the context of accelerating globalization it is necessary to strive to preserve civilizational diversity in the Eurasian space;
- the new Doctrine of co-development should exclude the ideas of antagonism, confrontational perception of the world in the paradigm of “Islamic civilization – Christian civilization”, considering them the main restraining factor of progress;
- in the new ideology of development the dominant factor should be universal civilizational values, ideas of equality, mutual understanding, trust;
- in the emerging new world order, the unifying platform of the new Doctrine of Development of Central Eurasia should incorporate the values of the local civilizations existing in the region (with the specificity of sedentary agricultural and nomadic civilizations) – Islamic, Orthodox Christian, Hindu-Buddhist.

On August 6, 2021, in the city of Turkmenbashi, the Joint Statement adopted following the Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia focused on the

development of intercultural dialogue in the interests of the peoples living in the region. The Joint Statement emphasized the need to preserve and promote cultural diversity and interethnic tolerance, and strengthen cooperation. In order to give a systemic and regular character to intercultural interaction, the heads of state agreed to create the Central Asian Cultural Dialogue Forum as a single platform for cultural and humanitarian exchange called “Central Asia: One Past and One Future”. The joint document once again emphasized the importance at the present stage of studying the historical heritage of the peoples of the region, which provides a clear historical experience of communication between states and peoples, the experience of integration, the experience of political culture and tolerance in the space of not only Central Asia, but also in Eurasia as a whole can give a positive impetus to the development of modern international cooperation. The international legal basis for cooperation between Asian states should be aimed at preventively countering the spread of interethnic conflicts and creating a platform for stable development.

In Central Asia, global processes take place at the regional level with their own local specifics. In modern conditions, great responsibility for the stability and development of Central Asia lies with the extra-regional members of the SCO, given that the centers of power – Russia, China, India, which are separate interacting civilizations that are the core of the SCO economic potential – are already making their adjustments to the polycentric world. Three states are the main ones in the modern geopolitical dynamics of the world. In the current international relations, cultural differences in the SCO space can become a dominant factor in development, and at the same time, integration processes will promote intercultural dialogue and the development of common values in the 21st century. The tools of “soft” diplomacy not only remain relevant, but should also become increasingly important in the foreign policy of the SCO states. The importance of the “concept of cultural attractiveness” in the foreign policy of the Central Asian states will increase, and cultural diplomacy will play an increasingly important role in the international arena.

Speaking at the Russian-Tajik (Slavic) University on June 6, 2023, Russian Foreign Minister S.V. Lavrov emphasized: “Russia builds interstate relations exclusively on the principles of the UN Charter, honesty, equality, respect for the cultural and civilizational diversity of the modern world, the right of peoples to decide their own destiny”¹. This thesis reflects the positions of both Tajikistan and all Central Asian states.

At present, the above-mentioned models of inter-civilizational dialogue (Islamic, Christian, Confucian, Hindu-Buddhist civilizations) reflect the modern principles of democracy in the international relations of Eurasia, where the main principle is the principle of equality and respect for civilizational differences. Inter-civilizational dialogue, taking into account the peculiarities of the development of democracy in Central Eurasia, allows realizing the positive potential of partnership relations, cultural diplomacy, interfaith cooperation as opposed to the policy of international confrontation of states and the world community as a whole.

¹ Speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation S.V. Lavrov at the Russian-Tajik (Slavic) University, Dushanbe, June 6, 2023. Available from: https://www.mid.ru/ru/press_service/minister_speeches/1879998/.

Iran and the Central Asian civilization system today (V.I.Sazhin)

Central Asia is a unique area where many civilization systems have historically interacted and clashed. Persian and Hellenistic, Babylonian and Chinese, Indian and Mongolian, Arab and Turkic civilizations have been creating cities, states, alliances for thousands of years, which arose, developed and died. They created a phenomenal cultural layer, which still has a huge influence on peoples, their national psychology, religion, and linguistic features. The most important factor ensuring the development, prosperity, and diversity of the region was the Great Silk Road, laid through Central Asia almost two and a half thousand years ago, connecting China and Europe. It not only connected these two distant points of the planet, these two distant civilizations, but also integrated many, many peoples into this global process.

Europeans and Chinese, Turks and Arabs, Persians and Mongols, Jews and Indians were not limited to simply transporting and delivering goods from point A (China) to point B (Europe) and back. They involved masses of people living along the Silk Road in the process of trade, economic, cultural, and language exchange, usually at a great distance from this transport artery. A vast area was formed – a symbiosis of Central Asian countries, peoples permanently residing there, as well as foreign migrants and merchants. Thanks to this, Central Asia became a place of coexistence of world religions: Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism. By the way, Central Asia is the birthplace of Zoroastrianism.

The process of cultural, religious, economic and even political integration also affected neighboring countries – Persia, Afghanistan, Turkey, India, China, Russia. The influence of these states on Central Asia has always been significant. Moreover, Great Britain should be added to the list of these countries, which for centuries sought its imperial interests in this region. We cannot forget the USA, which after the collapse of the USSR increased its activity in the Central Asian area.

And what is the Central Asian area in the geographical sense?

According to UNESCO, the region includes Mongolia, Western China, Punjab, northern India and northern Pakistan, northeastern Iran, Afghanistan, areas of Asian Russia south of the taiga zone and five former Soviet republics of Central Asia. However, in the modern political and geographical understanding, Central Asia is Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. However, in the future we will adhere to this interpretation.

Currently, Central Asia is in constant motion. And the direction of this movement depends on the impact of many factors, including, among other things, the results of the struggle of prospects, projects, plans, scenarios, proposals presented by countries interested in deepening and expanding their ties (and, of course, influence) with the countries of Central Asia. The attractiveness of Central Asia for external actors is due to the rich natural resources, significant agricultural, industrial and human potential of the region. There are large deposits of hydrocarbons (Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan), copper (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan), uranium (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan), rare earth and precious metals (gold and silver in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan). But

not only that. Central Asia has a strategically important political and geographical position, which has already been proven by the functioning of the Great Silk Road. In the modern world, the role and importance of the Central Asian area has not diminished at all, but on the contrary has increased, also in the military and political sense.

Countries that historically and now politically and economically influence the Central Asian region include the United States, the European Union, China, Turkey, Russia, Iran and, let's not forget, Saudi Arabia. It should be noted that over the 30 years since the collapse of the USSR, the degree of influence of these entities on Central Asia has changed.

As for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, its activity in the region is explained by the general line of the policy of Prince Mohammed bin Salman, aimed at turning the Kingdom into a world superpower, a global center of Islam, finance, tourism, etc. Riyadh could not leave Sunni Central Asia aside from its ideological and financial aspirations.

For China, Central Asia is of great importance in ensuring internal and external security. The global Chinese project "One Belt – One Road" assumes, among other things, the recreation of the Great Silk Road under the auspices of the PRC. The most important aspect for Beijing is energy. According to experts, China has invested more than \$40 billion in Central Asia. In addition, China is interested in uranium, construction, metallurgy, chemical and light industry, agriculture.²

The main thing for China now is to prevent the growth of US influence in the region. Cooperation with Russia has been established within the SCO, common universities and educational programs have been created. The SCO really functions and has sufficient authority to resolve important issues for the region in practice.³

In recent years, the US has been active in the Central Asian republics. In 2015, Washington formed the so-called "C5+1" format, uniting five Central Asian countries and the US.⁴ The goal of strengthening America's position in the region is to displace Russia, China and lobby for alternative routes to the Chinese "One Belt – One Road" project. The seriousness of US intentions in Central Asia is evidenced by the first ever summit of the leaders of Central Asian countries and the United States in the "C5 + 1" format, which was held in September 2023 in New York.

Iran is one of the largest and most influential countries in the Near and Middle East – it is connected by many threads with the entire region – historical, cultural and traditional, trade and economic, political and partly religious threads. Iran's influence, of varying intensity, on key regional processes in the Middle East, Central Asia and even the whole world (Iran's nuclear program) is undeniable.

² Saya Tauekelova. China may squeeze Russia out of the Central Asian market. Voice of the people. 10.11.2022. Available from: <https://golos-naroda.kz/12745-kitai-mozhet-potesnit-rossiiu-narynke-tsentralnoi-azii-1668063386/>.

³ Pan Dapeng. The Role of the SCO in China's Foreign Policy Strategy. Russian International Affairs Council. 10/01/2020. Available from: <https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/rol-shos-vo-vneshnepoliticheskoy-strategii-kitaya/>.

⁴ U.S. Department of State. Fact Sheet. 27.02.2023. C5+1 Diplomatic Platform. Available from: <https://www.state.gov/c51-diplomatic-platform/>.

In the Central Asian subregion, Iran's influence is especially pronounced. After the collapse of the USSR in December 1991, Iran recognized all the former Soviet republics of Central Asia within a month or two and established diplomatic relations with them. Tehran warmly welcomed the entry of the Central Asian states into the Organization of the Islamic Conference, since their membership in the organization led to the strengthening of the role of non-Arab members, which objectively strengthens Iran's position in making important decisions.

However, Iran's official rapprochement with the Central Asian states could not ensure the religious influence of the Islamic Republic on the peoples of Central Asia.

Tehran understood perfectly well that the fundamental principle of Iran's foreign policy, laid down in its doctrine [21] – the export of the Islamic revolution according to the Iranian model – would not work effectively in the conditions of Central Asia. The overwhelming majority of the population of the Central Asian republics, unlike Iran, traditionally profess Sunni Islam. Moreover, during the 70 years of Soviet power in these republics, secularization trends (as throughout the USSR) were effective. Iranian specialists in the field of exporting the Islamic revolution to Central Asia have no base.

It should also not be forgotten that after the Central Asian countries gained independence, this region became an arena of active activity for Turkey, especially after R. T. Erdogan came to power in 2003 (as Prime Minister), 2014 (as President). He began to purposefully pursue the idea of pan-Turkism, creating in 2009 an alliance of Turkic-speaking states, which is now called the Organization of Turkic States. It includes: Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and, as observer members, Hungary and Northern Cyprus. This is a powerful ideological, political, and economic basis for Ankara to implement its expansionist policy in Central Asia.⁵ If the Zangezur Corridor issue in the South Caucasus is resolved, Turkey's influence on Central Asia will increase significantly. It will have a direct route through Azerbaijan and the Caspian Sea to Central Asia.

Tehran is concerned about Turkish policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Iran's ability to fight for its interests in the region and exert influence is significantly reduced. Perhaps the two Central Asian countries most accessible to Iranian influence are Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad once called Iran and Tajikistan "parts of one great whole". And Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei calls these two countries brothers. However, over the past 30 years, there have been ups and downs in relations between Dushanbe and Tehran.

I will not dwell on the analysis of these relations in detail, but I would like to note that Iran, using the mental closeness of the two peoples, using "soft power", tried to create a pro-Iranian layer in Tajikistan based on the ideas of the world Islamic revolution and Iranian "Aryanism". But the leadership of Tajikistan saw through this maneuver of Tehran and did not allow the spread of an ideology alien to Tajikistan. Tajik-Iranian relations were concentrated on trade and economic aspects. At the same time, areas of cooperation in

⁵ Renata Alimova. The Tenth Summit of the Organization of Turkic States: Still No Progress. Strategic Culture Foundation. 11/17/2023. Available from: <https://www.fondsk.ru/news/2023/11/17/desyatyy-sammit-organizacii-tyurkskikh-gosudarstv-voz-i-nyne-tam.html>.

the field of security, the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking, in the military and military-technical sphere were not rejected.

Let me remind you that in May 2022, the opening ceremony of the plant for the production of Iranian military drones Ababil-2 was held in Tajikistan. Soon, during the first visit of Tajik President Emomali Rahmon to Tehran in almost a decade, Iran and Tajikistan adopted a program of trade and economic cooperation until 2030.

A year and a half later, during the visit of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi to Dushanbe, 18 documents were signed affecting such areas as transport, science and culture, sports, and information technology. As for Turkmenistan, Iranian-Turkmen cooperation is based on the territorial proximity of the two countries and a common 1,148-kilometer border. Turkmenistan is Iran's gateway to Central Asia, and Iran is an outlet for almost all Central Asian countries through Turkmenistan to the waters of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. The railway line Sarakhs-Mashhad (and then further to the Persian Gulf) is of great importance for both Iran and the countries of Central Asia.

The basis for expanding the volume of bilateral trade relations was four road and railway border crossing points, the opening of another border control station, and the facilitation of issuing visas to businessmen of the two countries.

Politically, Tehran's goal is to keep Ashgabat from getting too close to Ankara. Iran has made concessions to Turkmenistan by agreeing to pay off a previously unrecognized debt for Turkmen gas supplies, resume gas supplies from Turkmenistan via the Korpeje-Kurt-Kui pipeline, and increase the volume of swap gas supplies under a trilateral agreement with Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. In November 2021, Iran, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan restored the agreement on natural gas supplies, and Iran annually transfers between 1.5 and 3.5 billion cubic meters of gas from Turkmenistan to Azerbaijan.⁶ At the same time, Iran refuses to ratify the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea until the seabed is delimited with Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, retaining the ability to block the construction of the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline.

These are the countries preferred by Tehran. But Iran, of course, is actively developing its trade and economic cooperation with other Central Asian states. Moreover, it is guided by their economic potential, which is most significant in the region for Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Hydrocarbon and transport sectors also prevail here. Due to lack of time, we will limit ourselves to stating that the first place in Iran's trade turnover in 2022 was occupied by Kazakhstan (\$528 million), Turkmenistan (475), Uzbekistan (416), Tajikistan (238) and Kyrgyzstan (80).⁷

However, it should be noted that despite its limited military-political and economic resources, Iran has two strong trump cards to strengthen its influence in Central Asia:

⁶ Energy Policy. 10.03.2023. Turkmenistan, Iran and Azerbaijan Increase Swaps to Increase Gas Supplies to the EU. Available from: <https://energypolicy.ru/turkmeniya-iran-i-azerbajdzhan-narashhivayut-svoipy-dlya-uvelicheniya-postavok-gaza-v-es/novosti/2023/21/10/>.

⁷ Evgeny Troitsky. Iran's Policy to Strengthen Influence in Central Asia. Center for Eurasian Studies, Tomsk State University. 08/22/2023. Available from: <https://eurasian-studies.tsu.ru/analitika/publikacii/evgenii-troitckii-politika-irana-po-ukrepleniiu-vliianiia-v-tcentral-noi-azii/>; Evgeny Troitsky. Iran's Policy to Strengthen Influence in Central Asia. Center for Eurasian Studies, Tomsk State University. 08/22/2023 Available from: <http://www.infoshos.ru/ru/?idn=35815>.

convenient and shortest access to the Indian Ocean for Central Asian countries, and a powerful cultural influence on the peoples of the region. Iranian diplomacy is trying to use both of these trump cards.

The revival of Tehran's policy towards Central Asian countries occurred after Ebrahim Raisi came to power in Iran in 2021, guided by the instructions of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei. Ali Khamenei said: "One of our priorities today in foreign policy is to prefer the East to the West, neighbors to distant countries and peoples, and countries that share our views and positions to others" [34]. Iran's activities in the SCO and BRICS, which Iran recently joined, correspond to this slogan. Of course, the Iranian leader, speaking about the East, meant China, India and Russia. But still, the general line of Iran's foreign policy affected Central Asia in two aspects. We have already spoken about the first: the real expansion of ties with the countries of Central Asia. The second aspect is the fight against the influence of the USA and its allies, including in the Central Asian region.

It can be concluded that Tehran has managed to create a basis for developing relations with the Central Asian states. Iran, having built a balanced system of relations with the Central Asian states, was able to occupy its niche and become an important partner of the Central Asian countries.

Still, the main direction of Iran's foreign policy is the Middle East, the permanent and sometimes bloody struggle with Israel, competition with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Turkey for primacy and supremacy in the Middle East region.

At the same time, Central Asia has been and remains a point of concentration of interests of many countries. Central Asia today is sometimes a "soft", sometimes a "hard" confrontation of several civilizational systems – one of which is the Persian civilization.

Russia and Central Asia Civilizational Dialogue: A Primordialist Approach (A.M.Mamadazimov)

To develop a dialogue, it is important to understand the origins of civilizations. Let us analyze a number of important points.

1) The Sintashta-Sarazm dichotomy: the area of formation of the early ethnic group of eastern Iranians (ancestors of the Tajiks). The history of the discovery of Arkaim and the Sintashta group of archaeological sites in the 1960s was a major event not only in Soviet, but also in world archaeology. In the 1960s, one of the largest archaeological expeditions in the USSR, led by archaeologist V.F.Gening, co-author of the famous work on archaeology: "Sintashta: Archaeological Monuments of the Aryan Tribes of the Ural-Kazakh Steppes", worked in the Southern Urals, in the Chelyabinsk region. The reason for the work was the construction of a dam on the steppe river Sintashta. The river was made famous by a complex of monuments combining a fortified settlement and a burial ground of the Bronze Age. The necropolis is especially famous for the discovery of parts of wooden chariots, which claim to be the most ancient in the archaeology of Northern Eurasia, and cheekpieces (parts of horse harness). An important archaeological discovery was that the Trans-Ural steppes unexpectedly turned out to be closely connected with very distant territories, since similar

carts and parts of horse harness are known from the Balkans and Western Asia to Altai, including Central Asia.

Most researchers attribute the Sintashta population to the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family. As further interdisciplinary research using comparative historical linguistics (glottochronology) showed, the Slavic languages, which originate from another branch of the Proto-Indo-European language, have no direct relation to the Sintashta population. The texts of the Indian Rigveda and the Iranian Avesta are also used in the study.

According to the latest research in the field of radiocarbon dating, the time of existence of Sintashta antiquities is determined between the 21st and 18th centuries BC. Most researchers agree that they appeared as a result of the migration of Indo-Iranian cattle-breeding tribes from the steppe and forest-steppe of Eastern Europe to the Southern Trans-Urals.

"Sintashta people" had developed metallurgical production, a high level of skill in processing wood, bone and technology of complex stone processing for the production of a number of products, they knew weaving and leather dressing. Among the most striking features of the culture is the high level of military affairs, manifested in the architecture of settlements and burial inventory. The latter often includes weapons, occasionally chariots and horse harnesses. Formed at the turn of the 3rd-2nd millennia BC, it proved its viability and existed without major transformations until the emergence of nomadism in the early Iron Age (Scythian-Saka world). Many researchers consider the historical peoples of the early Iron Age – the Scythians and Sarmatians – to be direct descendants of the Iranian-speaking Sintashta people.

Some scientists hypothesize that the Sintashta population were Aryans who invaded the Hindu Kush and created the Vedic civilization of India, but the supposed migration of the descendants of Sintashta – the Andronovo cultural and historical community is reliably traced by archaeologists only to Central Asia.

In 1976, a local resident of a town near Penjikent in Tajikistan brought several finds to the local history museum. Subsequently, based on the results of two pits, the Tajik archaeologist Abdullah Isakov discovered the settlement of Sarazm, a monument of the ancient agricultural culture of the region. In May 1977, at the All-Union Conference of Archaeologists in Penjikent, Abdullah Isakov made the first report. The conference participants, experts in primitive culture V.M.Masson, N.N.Negmatov, A.A.Askerov, E.E.Kuzmina, Yu.A.Zadneprovsky highly appreciated the finds of Sarazm, and this discovery was recognized as a sensation not only in Tajikistan, but also in the entire Soviet archeology.

The word "Sarazm", according to the largest expert on the Sogdian language V.A.Livshits, means "sari zamin", i.e. "the beginning of the earth". This is a monument of the Bronze Age – the largest in Central Asia, which arose in the 35th century BC and existed until about the 19th century BC, after which it was abandoned by residents.

In other words, one of the most ancient peoples not only in Central Asia, but also in the whole world, the Tajiks had two areas of primary formation:

- Sintashta in the southern Russian steppes;
- Sarazm – in the “heart of the Central Asian region” – which is the Zeravshan Valley.

“The Father of History” Herodotus also describes in detail the area of distribution of the most ancient Aryan tribes – known as the Scythian-Saka world, scattered from the banks of the Danube in the west to the Altai Mountains in the east.

2) Altai – the area of the formation of the ancient Turkic world and the “Sogdian-Turkic symbiosis”. By the middle of the 6th century, Chinese rulers from the kingdom of Toba Wei closely followed the cardinal transformations outside the Great Wall of China, where the powerful Turkic Khaganate began to form. According to an ancient Turkic legend, recorded in detail by Chinese palace chronicles, the children of a she-wolf create a new tribe, Ashina, on the southern slopes of the Altai, which, growing stronger and recruiting representatives of other diverse tribes, create a powerful tribal union. Here, the Sogdians come to the fore, who had been developing the vast oases of the Tarim Basin (modern Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China) for a millennium. They gave them the names “Ashina” and “Turkuyt”, as well as the “Sogdian-Turkic symbiosis”, which has not been fully studied by modern science, which later transformed it into “Tajik-Turkic synthesis”. One of the many historical and cultural evidence of the presence of the Sogdians in the Tarim Basin is a unique irrigation structure – kyarizes – underground canals that are still functioning today. No other province in China has similar irrigation structures.

The highest point of this “Sogdian-Turkic synthesis” is the long-range silk diplomacy, when the Turkic Khaganate, which spread from the Crimea to the Korean Peninsula, sent a diplomatic mission to the capital of the Byzantine Empire – Constantinople, headed by the Sogdian merchant Maniakh. Itinerary, i.e. the route of this diplomatic mission ran from Altai through the Kazakh and southern Russian steppes to the Caucasus and through it to the ports of the Black Sea and by sea to the capital of the powerful empire.

3) Formation of the “Tajik-Turkic-Slavic” intercivilization triangle. Subsequently, numerous Turkic tribes in waves invaded not only the agricultural oases of Varorud (the Central Asian interfluvium), but also moved west. The Polovtsians, Kipchaks, Tatars, Bashkirs and many others took part in the formation of state formations on the territory of modern multinational Russia. Islam came to Russia, where the main role in its consolidation was played by one of the descendants of Genghis Khan – the Khan of the Golden Horde Berke (1209-1266), who taught the Koran and accepted Islam from the Khujand clergy. Undoubtedly, for many centuries the connection between Russian cities and the cities of Central Asia was maintained thanks to the functioning of the Great Silk Road.

The creation of a powerful land Russian empire, which reached the shores of the Pacific Ocean in the east, could not but lead to the intensification of diverse interpenetrations and interactions between Russians and the peoples of Central Asia. The apogee of these relations is the conquest of the region by the Russian Empire. Living together as part of the Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union, where positive moments alternate with negative aspects, is still the cause of heated discussions between supporters and opponents of this topic.

As discussed above, the civilizational dialogue between Russia and Central Asia has more than three thousand years of history and relatively peaceful coexistence. The initial

migration movement of the ancient Aryans from the southern Russian steppes to the oasis regions of Central Asia and further to the Indian subcontinent in ancient times was later replaced by the Great Migration of Peoples from the deep Asian expanses through Central Asia to Russia and further to the West in the early Middle Ages, in the modern era all these territories became part of vast state formations, the culmination of which was the Soviet Union. All these transformations over three millennia, undoubtedly left an indelible imprint on the relationships in the intercivilizational triangle of the “Eastern Iranian-Turkic-Slavic world”.

Russian ethnographic studies of Tajiks in the 20th – early 21st centuries (A.E.Zagrebina)

In judgments about intercivilizational dialogue, it is important to rely on objective, fundamental scientific research, therefore ethnographic research is being updated. There is data obtained in field projects jointly with Tajik colleagues. It is advisable to rely on this data in judgments and conclusions. For example, in 2023, employees of the Center for Anthroecology of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences conducted field research in several regions of Tajikistan. Colleagues from the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan, Khujand State University, Bashkir State Agrarian University and Moscow State Linguistic University took part in the expedition. In the same year, under the project of the Russian Science Foundation “Relics of Astronomical Traditions in the Culture of Ancient Farmers of Central Asia Based on Ethnographic Data”, an expedition of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology to the Asht and Isfara districts of the Sughd region of Tajikistan took place⁸.

It should be noted that the cultural and civilizational features of the Tajik people were studied by Russian pre-revolutionary researchers. They collected valuable material on the ethnic history, economic activity, material and spiritual culture of the Tajiks in the late 19th – early 20th centuries. However, a deep scientific study of the ethnic culture of the Tajiks began after the establishment of Soviet power in the region. Important goals were not only the study of culture and life, but also the training of professional ethnographers from among the representatives of the peoples of Central Asia, including Tajiks.

Ethnographic study of the territory of Tajikistan in the 1920s developed with the support of government bodies; a number of expeditions were formed, which included scientists from scientific and educational institutions of Moscow, Petrograd and Tashkent. In 1921, the Scientific Commission for the Survey of the Indigenous Population of Turkestan was created in Tashkent under the Council of People's Commissars of the Turkestan ASSR. In the mid-1920s. The Central Asian Ethnological Expedition of the USSR Academy of Sciences began operating under the leadership of Academician V.V. Bartold.

⁸ Expedition trip to Tajikistan. Available from: <https://iea-ras.ru/?p=6378>; <https://iea-ras.ru/?p=11284>

In 1932, the Scientific Base of the USSR Academy of Sciences was founded in Tajikistan under the leadership of Academician S.F. Oldenburg and the Tajik Complex Expedition was organized. Its tasks included studying the people's way of life and work, the role of Tajik women in the life of society, and issues of socialist reorganization of the traditional way of life.

In November 1940, with the transformation of the Tajik Base into the Tajik branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences, the scientific life of Tajikistan reached a new level. The Institute of History, Language, Literature and Folklore of the Tajik branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences began its work, one of the tasks of which was to carry out ethnographic research. In 1943, despite the difficulties of wartime, the institute organized an expedition to study the population of the upper reaches of the Panj River.

After the end of the war, ethnographic work in Tajikistan acquired a greater scope. In 1945, a collection of "Materials on the history of the Tajiks and Tajikistan" was published. In 1948, ethnographers began work on a continuous ethnographic survey of the territory of the republic. The task was to conduct a comprehensive ethnographic survey in the shortest possible time according to a single program, which would make it possible to analyze the accumulated material and show the origins of Tajik culture, its connection with the present.

In 1951, the Institute of History, Language, Literature and Folklore was renamed the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the Tajik SSR, in whose structure an ethnography sector was created, which became the center of ethnographic science and training of specialists. Ethnographic study of the population of Tajikistan in the 1950s and 1960s achieved significant success thanks to the enthusiasm and painstaking work of scientists who came to the republic from various scientific centers of the USSR.

The development of ethnographic science in Tajikistan in the 1970s reached a qualitatively new level. New works by young Tajik scientists were published, the life, customs, rituals and beliefs of the people were recorded more accurately and fully. New pressing issues were raised, among which the key place was occupied by the problems of the ethnogenesis of the Tajik people. A milestone was the fundamental monograph by B.G.Gafurov, edited by Academician B.A.Litvinsky, "Tajiks: the most ancient, ancient and medieval history", published in 1972, which summarized data from history, archeology, ethnography, linguistics and geography. The work provides a broad panorama of ethnic processes in the region.

The ethnic groups that became part of the Tajik people and the historical paths of their development are shown. In the 1980s, ethnographic science in Tajikistan developed in several directions. One of them is the study of the ethnic composition of the Central Asian region, where intensive ethnic processes have been going on for centuries, forming a single historical and cultural community.

Ethnographic study of Tajiks in Tajikistan and beyond has become a defining direction in the research of the staff of the ethnography department of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the Tajik SSR, as well as in

scientific departments of a number of universities in the republic, scientists from Moscow and St. Petersburg.

An event in the scientific life of Tajikistan was the opening of the Museum of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the Tajik SSR in 1980 in Dushanbe. In 1981, the ethnography sector of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the Tajik SSR prepared a collection of articles in memory of the Soviet ethnographer N.N.Ershov "History and Ethnography of the Peoples of Central Asia". In 1985, together with Moscow and Leningrad specialists, a collection of "Ethnography of Tajikistan" was prepared. In 1989, the collection "Ethnography in Tajikistan" was published.

During the Soviet era, significant achievements were made in the field of ethnographic study of Tajikistan. Publications published over these years show that Tajik ethnographers and scientists from Moscow and Leningrad have done a great deal of work to study the traditions and innovations in the culture of the Tajik people. In the 1990s, due to the collapse of the USSR and other destructive processes, the development of ethnographic research in Tajikistan slowed down. But ethnographers continued to work, including on the analysis of archival materials and the preparation of scientific papers. Thus, the book "Civil Movements in Tajikistan" was published [8].

In the 2000s, there was a noticeable revival of research and publication activity. Through the efforts of a group of authors, with the assistance of UNESCO, the Atlas of Artistic Crafts and Trades was published. The albums Folk Art of the Pamirs and Folk Art of Tajikistan were created. But perhaps the most significant contribution to the history of ethnography was the fundamental volume Tajiks [25], published in the academic series Peoples and Cultures and the fruit of the collective creativity of ethnographers of the Republic of Tajikistan and employees of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Conclusion

The Central Asian region has been and remains a place of interaction and, at the same time, competition of civilizations. It is advisable to consider the dialogue of civilizations from the standpoint of co-development of local civilizations, which over time can lead to the formation of a new civilization.

One of the risks of the civilizational dialogue may be the confrontational paradigm of "Islamic civilization – Christian civilization". The dialogue should be based on universal civilizational values, ideas of equality, mutual respect, mutual understanding, trust.

Scientific understanding of civilizational identity should be based on objective scientific data obtained in the course of international field research by archaeologists and ethnographers, archival research conducted, in particular, by institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan. Unfortunately, there are cases of mythologization and subjectivization among a number of scientists, influencing further scientific developments, state memory policy and ideology. The

scientific community should work together to counter this by expressing public positions of authoritative scientists during joint scientific discussions, round tables, conferences, and by publishing joint research and reviews of it.

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Post-Soviet Civilizational Transit in Central Asia

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Abstract. The relationship between politics and history is becoming complex and tense in the former Soviet republics of Central Asia. The history of the countries and peoples of the region becomes the subject of an intense ideological struggle, during which Soviet historiography is partially, and sometimes completely, rejected, and new ideological myths are created that have no real historical basis. Not only historiography is being rethought, but also its context – historical memory, the historical culture of the new states of Central Asia. On the one hand, the ruling elites seek to place the historical memory of the Central Asian peoples under strict state control, affirming the ideology of state nationalism and referring to it not only political doctrines, but also traditions, religion, philosophy, social and human sciences. The rejection of society from cultural memory is typical for Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. On the other hand, historical memory becomes an ideological tool of intra-elite political struggle and society (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan). This is the essence of the post-Soviet civilizational transit in Central Asia.

Keywords: Central Asia, civilizational transit, Soviet civilization, Soviet people, cultural and historical community, Soviet heritage, Soviet industry, Soviet agriculture, Soviet science, Soviet education, Soviet infrastructure projects, transit direction

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Introduction

The concept of civilizational transit is a complex constellation of meanings and meanings of the dynamics of civilizations, due to the transitivity of the models of historical knowledge themselves and related concepts/theories of civilizations. Civilizational transit is a long transitional stage of civilizational development that arises in the conditions of discord and disintegration of society or the world community, the absence of a higher formative and guiding principle of its unity, passing through the choice of new higher parameters (higher order) of being and a new path to the future and receiving completion as

a result of the institutional and normative-value design of these parameters in as a special mechanism of social integration.

This article examines a number of aspects of civilizational transit in the context of Central Asian countries.

Materials and methods

The collapse of the Soviet Union actualized the long-standing historical problem of integration and stabilization of societies in the vast geocultural space of Eurasia, ideological and institutional support for solving this problem. The political and cultural elites of the new states can no longer rely entirely on the cultural and historical heritage of the USSR, the Soviet historical narratives that served as the basis of Soviet identity. Historical politics is becoming an important ideological and fundamentally problematic factor in the reconstruction of national-political and cultural-civilizational forms of identity – the purposeful activity of national political elites, their political and administrative structures and public organizations cooperating with the state to form and preserve certain ideas about the past within the country and in the foreign policy arena. [4]

At the new crisis stage of the development of national statehood, the ideological and contextual turn in the research of the history of Central Asia goes beyond the disciplinary framework of historiography and methodology of historical science. It is no longer possible to raise and solve the issues of the formation of full-fledged modern national states in the region, without taking into account the intertwining of old and new traditions and innovations in the new and modern history of the region. And this transfers the actual scientific, conceptual and theoretical views on the history of the region into the field of historical consciousness – the active ideological and value reproduction of historical reality in various mental, cultural and historiosophical patterns, models of history. With the incomplete, unstable, crisis state in which the processes of national state-building in the post-Soviet countries of Central Asia are today, the issue of relations, dynamics of development and mutual adaptation of two worldviews, historiosophical paradigms, and ideological doctrines of historical consciousness is of paramount scientific and cognitive importance. On the one hand, orientation towards the introduction and sustainable development of modern innovations in politics, economics and culture (doctrine, paradigm of modernity), on the other, commitment to the preservation and reproduction of tradition, preservation of old cultural forms and values, return to the laws of Islam (doctrine, paradigm of traditionalism).

In a cognitive context, both models of historical consciousness tend towards a universalist vision and understanding of history, are ideological versions of universal history, which connects them with various subject fields of universal history: from the history of social thought to the history of culture and education, religion and the church. The scientific basis of views on the correlation of views and ideas of traditionalism and modernism is the multivariance of the processes of historical development of regions,

countries, and peoples of the world when highlighting the realities of this development in concrete historical, comparative, interdisciplinary and theoretical aspects. The scientific problematization of these views in the context of global history is facilitated by the departure of historical thought from Eurocentric, basically one-line modernization theories. [8; 7, p. 269]

Studies of the changes in Central Asian societies in modern and contemporary times cannot ignore the ideas inherent in these societies and their different groups about their past and present. The problem of identifying the phenomena of the past and present in the modern history of the region has been and remains very acute in the field of scientific discourse: in what concepts to describe and characterize the transitional state of Central Asian societies – traditional / non-traditional, modernized / unmodernized, Soviet / non-Soviet, colonized / uncolonized, how to correlate these concepts with the facts and evidence of field research. [1, p. 4]

The processes of legalization and revival of Islam give a special and growing tension to historical politics in the region. After many years of Soviet imprisonment and repression, Islam was released and immediately joined the political struggle. The most active representatives of this religion began to create Islamic political parties and organizations of various kinds: from moderate to radical. Islam was the first to be «released» in Tajikistan, then in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, then in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. The pace of politicization and radicalization of Islam in Tajikistan was the highest in post-Soviet Central Asia and subsequently led Tajik society to civil war (1992-1997). It is also important that the intensification of Islamic fundamentalism and radicalism in Central Asia occurs in close connection with the establishment and preservation in historical memory of patterns of traditional behavior and thinking. Discourses about the true historical «Kazakhness» or «Uzbekness», «Tajikness» or «Turkmenness» are becoming important tools for managing public consciousness and behavior.

In the context of the close intertwining of history and politics in the processes of reconstruction of cultural and historical memory, the historical heritage of the post-Soviet states of Central Asia, the question of the role of historical science, its individual branches and directions as a space of professional and disciplinary knowledge in recreating the past of the countries and peoples of the region is being actualized. Since the beginning of the study of the history of the region – since its accession in 1867 in most of Central Asia to Russia, regional historical studies have begun to acquire the features of a comprehensive interdisciplinary direction, combining such elements of disciplinary knowledge as historical geography, source studies, archaeology, ethnology, history of religion, etc. As a branch of scientific knowledge, this direction was based on a huge factual material that still retains great historical value (the works of outstanding Russian orientalists V.V.Bartold, Yu.N.Roerich, etc.) At the same time, before the collapse of the USSR, the history of the region was viewed mainly from an ethnographic perspective: First, the reconstruction of the ethnic map of Central Asia, then the accumulation of information about the material and spiritual life of the peoples living there. [3, p. 74] At the same time, the dominant theoretical guideline for both Soviet and Western researchers was the modernist belief that the ethno-political

space of the region should be national, i.e. to correspond to the boundaries of the settlement of the dominant ethnic communities – nations, since only within the framework of the «national state is some kind of economic and social development possible»¹. The formation of sovereign national states in the late twentieth and early twentieth centuries on the territory of the former Soviet Central Asia further strengthened this vision of the history of the region, however, through the prism of the views, ideas and values of secular nationalism: national revival and national unity as an ideological way of consolidating society.[6]

Results

The modern cultural, political and ideological context of studying the new and modern history of post-Soviet Central Asia has acquired even wider and in many ways crucial importance since the end of the twentieth century, when the challenges and threats to the very project of national revival of the former Soviet republics of the region - smoothing internal socio-cultural and ethno-national contradictions according to the model of modernist, secular statehood were clearly identified. The growing poverty of large masses of the population, trends in socio-economic demodernization associated with such crisis factors as deurbanization (a decrease in the share of the urban population), the degradation of modern systems of technical infrastructure, social security, education and medicine created in Soviet times, the departure to Russia of a large number of migrant workers, including highly qualified specialists, educated, the secular intelligentsia, the growth of clan power structures and inter-clan conflicts against this background, The problems of the crisis state of secular statehood in the region and the possibilities and prospects of overcoming it were actualized. [5; 2, pp. 124-136] The problem of the crisis of secular national statehood, its factors and prospects was especially acute and evident in the events of the civil war in Tajikistan, during which the political confrontation between groups of the former Soviet elite and new nationalist and radical Islamic groups turned into a fierce confrontation between ethnic clans.

The Soviet prehistory of Civilizational transit in Central Asia

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Central Asia was an underdeveloped region, the main occupation of the population of which was agriculture on irrigated lands and nomadic cattle breeding. Therefore, the main task in the newly formed Soviet republics was the development of agriculture, which required an increase in acreage through the construction of new irrigation facilities. One of the most ambitious projects in this area was the Great Ferghana Canal, built in 1939-1940 by the method of «people's construction» (khashar). The commissioning of the canal helped to raise yields in Uzbekistan 2.2 times. In

¹ Sergey Abashin on Soviet and post-Soviet Central Asia. Interview. Available from: <https://www.caa-network.org/>.

Kyrgyzstan, during the years of Soviet rule, a large hydroelectric power plant was built on the Naryn – Toktogulsky River, and the Ortotokoy reservoir was created on the Chu River².

Another grandiose agricultural project implemented under Soviet rule in Central Asia is the development of virgin and fallow lands of Kazakhstan in the 50s of the last century. Then, in two years, the acreage was increased three times. New towns with appropriate infrastructure were built on virgin land. Simultaneously with irrigation, the task of creating a transport infrastructure was also being solved. Projects for the construction of a railway connecting the lands of Turkestan with Siberia were developed back in tsarist Russia. The construction of the Turksib (Turkestan-Siberian Railway) began in December 1926, and the first train passed through it on April 25, 1930³.

Other road transport projects have also been implemented in Central Asia, for example, the construction of the Dushanbe-Khorog–Osh high-altitude highway. The problem of access to high-altitude villages, which previously could only be reached by mountain trails, was solved. The highway connected the then capital of Kazakhstan, Almaty, with the capital of neighboring Uzbekistan, Tashkent. The Bishkek (Frunze)–Osh major highway was also built in Kyrgyzstan. And this is not to mention the network of smaller regional roads, airports and river ports.

One of the key tasks of the Soviet era was the electrification of the territory of Central Asia. During the years of Soviet power, entire cascades of hydroelectric power plants were built in the region: Toktogul and Kurpsay in Kyrgyzstan, Varzob, Perepadnaya, Central, Head HPP on the Vrazob River, Nurek HPP on the Vakhsh River in Tajikistan, a cascade of power plants on the Chirik River, Charvak hydropower node in Uzbekistan.

The USSR authorities paid great attention to the creation of industry. This was partly done for ideological reasons in order to cultivate the local proletariat, but nevertheless, the industrial foundations of the current Central Asian countries were laid during the Soviet era. Aktobe, Karaganda Metallurgical plants, Balkhash, Chimkentky mining and metallurgical plants in Kazakhstan, Uzbek metallurgical plant in Bekabad, the largest electric lamp plant in the USSR in the Kyrgyz Maili Say, «Tashselmash», «Uzbekselmash», «Chirikselmash», Tashkent Aircraft Factory and dozens more industrial enterprises were built in the region during the years of Soviet government⁴.

It should be noted that both the transport infrastructure and the power plants that still supply towns and villages, industrial enterprises, irrigation canals, remained at the disposal of the newly emerged republics after the collapse of the USSR. Kazakhstan, among other things, could even get nuclear warheads, but it voluntarily gave them up, unlike the nuclear industry, which was also established in this republic during the Soviet period. And so far, Kazakhstan continues to extract uranium for power plants and sell it abroad. Thus,

² The Soviet hashar: Who and how built the Great Ferghana Canal. Asia Plus. Available from: <https://asiaplustj.info/ru/news/tajikistan/society/20230801/sovetskim-hasharom-kto-i-kak-stroil-bolshoi-ferganskii-kanal>.

³ How the USSR developed Central Asia. Russian Eurasia. Available from: <https://rusevr.asia/kak-sssr-razvival-centralnuyu-aziyu/>.

⁴ Overview of the industry of Uzbekistan. MANUFACTURERS.RU. Available from: <https://manufacturers.ru/article/obzor-promyshlennosti-uzbekistana>.

it can be stated that in the era of developed socialism, the current Central Asian countries made a great leap in their development and gained significant industrial and economic potential.

There were other industrial projects developed during the Soviet era. A good example is the Rogun HPP in Tajikistan. It was designed back in 1976, but became relevant only in the XXI century. The development of the Kumtor gold deposit in Kyrgyzstan was also fully designed in Soviet times. Only its launch took place after the collapse of the USSR.

The post-Soviet civilizational transit in Central Asia is accompanied by the struggle for the Soviet heritage in the region. The legacy of Soviet civilization, especially in the field of system-forming infrastructure, forms the foundation of the economies of the Central Asian republics in the post-Soviet period. The Soviet legacy consists of infrastructure projects, large industrial systems, linguistic space, cultural community, as well as a set of problems left over from the Soviet era, but in many ways aggravated due to the formation of new state borders and differences in economic models of development of already independent countries.

The municipal infrastructure in modern conditions is rapidly deteriorating, which leads to large-scale man-made accidents. The situation regarding irrigation remains no less difficult. The constant struggle for access to water has long attracted the attention of the world community. The shaky foundation inherited from a previous era reminds us of the need for reforms or depreciation. Only after this foundation has become a thing of the past will it be possible to stop speaking the political language inherited from the Soviet Union. There is no doubt that this time is near, but so far the legacy still has a direct impact on many ties within the region.

In the post-Soviet period, the foundation of a new regional order is actively being formed. New economic spheres, such as information technology or communications, exist outside the infrastructure received from the USSR. But attempts to update it are still being made today, including with the active participation of the World Bank.

The media industry is a network of Soviet industrial enterprises created or designed by the efforts of an entire country with plans to include them in the system of all-Union economic relations. Many of these projects have now become monuments of a bygone era. Some have already been implemented within the framework of independent states, form a significant part of their GDP, but carry numerous socio-political challenges.

Plans for rent from the export of natural resources as the basis of national welfare are a common feature for the economies of most Central Asian states of the post-Soviet period. Although the need to attract foreign investors forces them to seek a balance between resource nationalism and the interests of transnational business. This paradox leads to problems.

An example is the Kumtor gold deposit mentioned above in Kyrgyzstan. It was discovered in 1978, and only a decade later there was a justification for the expediency of mining gold here. But the development of Kumtor has already begun in independent Kyrgyzstan, with the support of foreign investors. Undoubtedly, without their participation, the development of such a large high-altitude field in the early 1990s would have been

impossible. Nevertheless, the issue of nationalization of the enterprise did not lose its relevance and remained in the center of universal attention throughout almost the entire post-Soviet period.

The Kumtor field is geopolitically significant both for Central Asia and on a larger scale. It's not just about the direct connection between production volumes and gold quotations on world exchanges. The main foreign investor in Kumtor for many years has been the influential Centerra Gold corporation in Asia – at various times it carried out projects in a huge area from Turkey to Mongolia. In Kumtor, the company controlled almost 70 percent of profits, being one of the key beneficiaries. Everything changed in 2022, when the development companies became fully owned by Kyrgyzstan. Centerra Gold is gone, but this does not mean that foreign investors are lost. The field is still promising, and the steadily growing interest of the PRC and the Russian Federation in the economy of Kyrgyzstan in modern conditions brings local enterprises to a completely new level of relations.

The situation in the metallurgical industry of Uzbekistan, which claims to be a regional leader, is no less indicative. The enterprises founded after the Second World War have now been modernized and provide the country with the status of a leader. Uzbekistan ranks seventh in the world in terms of gold production alone, and fifth in terms of uranium. The uranium deposit in the Uchkuduk area, developed by the Navoi Plant, is closely linked to the markets of the USA, China, India and France. Throughout the entire post-Soviet period, the state has consistently had a high share of ownership in the extractive industry (compared to other countries in the region).

The aforementioned Rogun HPP in Tajikistan and the development of gas fields in Turkmenistan illustrate the same processes. Yes, the construction of the gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to China, which runs through Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, is a positive example of post-Soviet cooperation. But this project also has its roots in the era of economic ties between the Central Asian republics of the USSR.

To be objective, the period of independence also became an era for a number of industrial projects that, due to a number of circumstances, simply could not be implemented in the USSR. Moving away from the cumbersome Soviet planning system opened up new opportunities for independent states to develop industrial facilities of a different type – with the participation of foreign investors, but based again on Soviet geological and technical developments.

Thus, during the period of post-Soviet civilizational transit, the modern geo-economic situation in Central Asia turned into a complex of three interdependent factors: Soviet heritage, foreign investment and resource nationalism. The last mentioned factor is not just a tribute to populism, rather it is part of the legacy of the Soviet era with a corresponding idea of the fairness of the distribution of natural resources. The struggle of the Governments of the Central Asian States for national control over natural resources deposits should lead to consolidation of efforts at the level of the entire region. An attempt to act as a «united front» can provide favorable economic conditions. But since the collapse of the USSR, these countries have been constantly clashing, and external actors have intervened in the emerging political contradictions: Moscow, Ankara, Tehran, Beijing and Washington.

On the issue of resource nationalism

The 21st century is characterized by the global rise of resource nationalism, and the republics of Central Asia are no exception. But the idea that only the people of that state can be the monopoly beneficiary of all natural resources on the territory of one state also has Soviet roots. The so-called “natural rent”, or payments to all citizens of the state from the profits of the extractive sector, is undoubtedly a more modern phenomenon. Interestingly, the concept of resource nationalism originates in the constitutions of the Union republics of the USSR, which enshrined the thesis that natural resources belong to the state. Article 11 of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz SSR stated: «The land, its subsoil, waters and forests are the exclusive property of the state» (while the first article declares the nature of the state itself to be socialist and nationwide). Similar formulations can also be found in the eleventh articles of the constitutions of the Uzbek SSR, Kazakh SSR, Turkmen SSR, Tajik SSR.

At the present stage, the term «nationalized» means «transferred to state ownership». Article 14 of the Constitution of modern Turkmenistan states: “Land and subsoil, waters, flora and fauna, as well as other natural resources are the national wealth of Turkmenistan, are protected by the state and are subject to rational use.” This idea does not exclude the granting of concessions to foreign investors, but ownership remains with the state. Similar provisions can be found in almost all the constitutions of the post-Soviet states of Central Asia, all of them, in fact, refer to article 11 of the basic laws of the Union republics.

In fact, Soviet law and propaganda laid the foundations for ideas about what kind of distribution of natural resources is fair. Speaking about the Soviet path dependence, we primarily focus on this experience. Populist rhetoric about national wealth with reference to the experience of Middle Eastern states is nothing more than a reception of Soviet law, reinterpreted on the basis of the experience of Arab oil-producing countries. In this context, an interesting relationship is being formed between national identity and the bowels of the earth on which this nation exists. The epithets “national wealth” and «foundation of the future» are categories of political and historical optimism characteristic of Central Asia, and they are closely related to the rhetoric of resource nationalism.

Resource nationalism is a measurable phenomenon. In particular, Verisk Maplecroft forms ratings of countries on the risk of developing resource nationalism. Kazakhstan and Tajikistan have traditionally low indices in them. And this allows global players to influence the economic situation, and from the point of view of neighboring Central Asian countries, to «interfere in the internal affairs of the state». For example, in 2022. The World Bank recommended that Tajikistan reduce public costs for the construction of the Rogun HPP and increase private financing, citing the accumulation of public debt and the danger of problems with its payments. For example, the specifics of the privatization of the oil and gas industry in Kazakhstan have led to the fact that the government has been unable to pursue a consistent policy that defends national interests to foreign investors, promotes the full utilization of domestic refineries and ensures the collection of taxes from oil companies in full.

The post-Soviet civilizational transit to new economic realities was based on a very specific resource base and industrial base. At the first stage, it was important to

rethink this baggage as not Soviet, but national, however, this was done based on the Soviet language of national policy. As a result, by the beginning of the 21st century, rapidly spreading resource nationalism had acquired hybrid features of, on the one hand, peripheral capitalism, and, on the other, completely Soviet attitudes about the fair distribution of social benefits. Although it should be noted that peripheral capitalism is almost universally combined with the popularity of leftist ideas, which have their own traditions in Central Asia.

That is why we are talking about resource nationalism in this region as a kind of path dependence originating from the late Soviet era. In addition, the struggle for the Soviet legacy is ideologically linked to two polar ideological attitudes. One of them, in particular in Tajikistan, is focused on cooperation with global financial institutions in the development of mega-industrial projects of the Soviet era. Another ideology (in a mild form – in Kyrgyzstan) insists on the exclusive right of the people of the country to property or preferences from the resource industry.

Discussion

In the modern rhetoric of political leaders, Central Asia is gradually moving out of the range of formulaic assessments familiar to the post-Soviet space. But this process is quite long, and it is not based on overcoming great-power thinking. It is located in the plane of economic ties, national interests and transnational ambitions. All variables are directly related to what we call the struggle for the Soviet legacy: competition for the redistribution of spheres of influence, for access to resources, for the possibility of exporting them in certain directions and for scenarios of political integration. And there is also a struggle to comprehend the common past, which is actively used as a tool of competition for access to the same deposits of natural resources.

A way out of this situation is possible provided integration within the EAEU or in the EAEU+ format. This will allow the Central Asian countries to gain a stable and strong regional position, which will directly affect relations with foreign investors and the coordination of supply and demand in the markets. It takes time to realize this objective necessity. Now only resource nationalism acts as a more or less popular program to counter the predatory exploitation of resource deposits and infrastructure for their export by multinational companies.

Over the years of independent existence of the republics of Central Asia, regardless of the degree of authoritarianism or democracy of the regimes, under the influence of rich resources, as well as the Soviet legacy, political institutions, ideologies and appropriate approaches to governance have been formed, which are projected into the system of power structures. A striking example is Kyrgyzstan, where the open political struggle of parties is reflected in political programs and election rhetoric, and the formation of governments based on the party principle, the creation of appropriate parliamentary factions clearly show the weight and importance of certain committees, ministries and departments.

The struggle for the Soviet legacy continues, as the industrial base and infrastructure created within the framework of Soviet civilization will arouse the interest of world powers and multinational corporations for a long time to come. That is why there are references to the common past, and to the main point of no return – the collapse of the USSR. The emergence of qualitatively new relations is possible in the case of either a final redistribution of spheres of influence, or the emergence of economies of a completely different type, not based on the export of natural resources.

Conclusion

All of the above is not a problem exclusively for Central Asian countries. In many ways, this directly affects the very reflection of Russia as the legal successor of the USSR and the Soviet heritage as a whole. Theoretically, it is possible to raise the question not only about the attitude to the Soviet heritage in the domestic Russian discourse, but also about the projection of today's Russian Federation on the same heritage already in the newly independent states that were part of the USSR. This is especially important in the new geopolitical picture of the world, the active phase of which began at the end of winter 2022.

Gold, fresh water, uranium, gas – all these are in demand so much that the level of competition for them will only grow in the future. The geographical proximity of major consumers, China and India, will also affect the nature of the competition. In essence, the struggle for the Soviet legacy is a confrontation over the contours of the new geo-economy of Asia.

Last but not least, the problem of the Aral Sea, inherited by Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan from the Soviet Union, is an important example. By and large, this is a whole range of environmental and political issues that need to be addressed in the long term. Many of them have a direct impact on the nature of interstate relations: the future of not only individual countries, but also the entire region as a whole depends on how they are resolved (or not resolved).

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The Role of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Relations with Muslims from 1920 to 2020

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Abstract. Relations between Orthodox and Muslims in the Western Balkans often become a world-class topic due to the interest of international factors actively involved in this process. The Serbian Orthodox Church is a key factor in the development of interfaith dialogue, to which it has made a significant contribution through its primates, bishops and priests. Her role came to the fore in the post-war years, when, despite great sacrifices among Orthodox believers, she called for interfaith peace and coexistence, thereby contributing to the stability of the Western Balkans. In historical retrospect, the article examines the relations of peoples and representatives of different religions in one common state in political circumstances. The facts presented in the article allow us to draw conclusions about the level of interfaith dialogue and the contribution of representatives of various faiths to interfaith reconciliation. The article is an experience of a comprehensive scientific study of interreligious relations between Orthodox and Muslims in Serbia: when writing it, the researcher turned to various sources: Christian and Muslim religious and apologetic literature, history, sociology, journalism, etc., aiming at an impartial presentation of the most accurate and diverse information on this topic.

Keywords: Serbian Orthodox Church, Islamic communities, Europe, Western Balkans, Orthodox Christians, Muslims, interfaith coexistence, dialogue and conflicts

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Introduction

Relations between Orthodox Christians and Muslims in the Western Balkans have been burdened by difficult historical experiences for centuries, and the “stumbling block” to further development of their relations is the reinterpretation of historical facts. Often, conflicts and crimes on religious and national grounds are chosen to build a historical narrative, while examples of solidarity and goodwill remain in the “shadows”.

Every crime deserves condemnation, every victim deserves a dignified memory, and every humane act deserves to be celebrated [7:18-23]. The Serbian Orthodox Church has been a factor of reconciliation and rapprochement, despite the difficult external and internal influences.

Materials and Methods

Information about the relations between the Orthodox and Muslims before the first half of the 20th century can be found only in general historical works, personal notes, letters, folk songs and chronicles of the Orthodox and Muslim clergy. Of all the historians and chroniclers who lived from the 14th to the 20th centuries and wrote about the relations between the Orthodox and Muslims, the works of the following authors deserve special attention: Archimandrite Seraphim (Ristic), Archimandrite Nichifor (Ducic), Jovan N. Tomic, Jovan hadzi Vasiljevic, Dr. Evto Dedijer, Jovan Cviic, Konstantin Jireček, Vladimir Ćorović, Bey Esad. They give us reliable and objective information about the current historical situation in both the conquered and liberated Serbian lands, because they themselves were direct witnesses to individual events described. However, the issues of interreligious relations are not sufficiently covered in the works.

The relationship between Orthodox and Muslims in Serbia has been dealt with to a greater extent by Christian rather than Muslim authors. Consequently, the main information on this topic is available in Serbian and Russian.

More attention to interreligious relations in the territory of the former Yugoslav republics began to be paid by Orthodox theologians, political scientists, journalists, politicians and lawyers only after the 1980s. Among the sources of this period, the works of Rajk Veselinović, Djoki Slijepčević, Bishop Afanasije (Jevtić), Milorad Ekmečić, Mirođub Jevtić, Dmitrije Bogdanović, Dušan Bataković, Radoslav Gaćinović, Milan Mijalkovsky, Borislav Pelević, etc. stand out.¹

A great contribution to the study of relations between the Orthodox and Muslims

¹ Veselinović L. R. History of the Serbian Orthodox Church with National History, Vol.II (1766-1941). Belgrade, 1966; Ekmečić M. War goals of Serbia 1914 Belgrade, 1973; Atanasije (Jevtić), hieromonk. From Kosovo to Jadovno. Belgrade, 1984; Atanasije (Jevtić), hieromonk. The suffering of Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija from 1941 to 1990. Priština, 1990; Bogdanović Dimitrije. A book about Kosovo. Belgrade, 1990; Bataković T. Dušan. Kosovo and Metohija. Priština-Gornji Milanovac, 1991; Atanasije (Jevtić), Bishop. The Serbian Church in the Second World War, (from the archives of SV. The Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church). Belgrade, 1992.; Tanaskovic Darko. In dialogue with Islam. Belgrade, 1992. And Peace of Mind. Shiites and Islam. Prnjavor, 1995; Bataković T. Dušan. Kosovo and Metohija in Serbian-Albanian relations. Belgrade-Valjevo-Srbij, 1998; Mijalkovski Milan, Ph. D. crimes and delusions of Albanian separatists. Belgrade, 1999; Jevtić Mirođub. Jihad as a war. Belgrade, 2001; Jevtić Mirođub. Religion and politics. Belgrade, 2002; Slijepčević đ, Ph. D. history of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Book II. Belgrade, 2002; Gaćinović Radoslav, Ph. D. violence in Yugoslavia. Belgrade, 2002; Gaćinović Radoslav, PhD. kidnapping of Kosovo and Metohija. Belgrade, 2004; Pelević Borislav. Through the history of Kosovo and Metohija from VI to XXI century. Belgrade, 2005.

was made by Bishop Afanasije (Jevtic), who, having access to the archives of the Serbian Orthodox Church, published in his works every document testifying to interreligious life in Serbia throughout the 20th and 21st centuries.²

Results

After the end of World War I, one large multinational state was created in the Western Balkans – the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which existed under this name from 1918 to 1921, and later renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1921 to 1941. Its citizens were Orthodox, Catholics, Muslims, Jews, Protestants and others.

The Serbian Orthodox Church, governed by the Holy Council of Bishops and headed by Serbian Patriarchs Dimitrije (Pavlovic) from 1920 to 1930, Varnava (Rosic) from 1930 to 1937 and Gavril (Dožić) from 1938 to 1950, supported the idea of establishing brotherhood, unity and equality of all peoples and representatives of different religions in one common state. The evangelical mission of the Orthodox clergy, which involves preaching love, peace and coexistence among all peoples, coincided with the state policy of establishing equality among all its peoples, regardless of ethnicity and religion. Many challenges and problems arose along this path, which remained without adequate political solutions, but the Serbian Orthodox Church was never a destructive factor [4:23-181].

The primates, bishops and priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church called on Orthodox Christians to live in mutual love with followers of other faiths in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which was the only country in Europe where Sharia was applied at the state level from 1919 to 1941, although Muslims constituted slightly more than ten percent of the population. The greatest danger to interfaith coexistence was posed by extremist elements among Catholics and Muslims, inspired by separatist clerical-nationalist interests. During the Second World War, under the guise of religious and national interests, they mercilessly exterminated their neighbors, including defenseless old people, women and children. The largest number of victims in this war were Orthodox Serbs, who were subjected to ethnic cleansing in many regions where they had lived for centuries together with Muslims, especially in Kosovo and Metohija and Bosnia and Herzegovina [7].

After the end of World War II, power in Yugoslavia passed to the communists, who resumed work on “brotherhood and unity” in the context of a secular social order. The Serbian Orthodox Church supported the state, although it was dissatisfied with the laws that determined its institutional status and position in the state, and the attitude of state authorities towards the Orthodox clergy and believers.

Upon his return from captivity, Serbian Patriarch Gavril found himself in an extremely difficult situation, but did not stray from the path of interfaith coexistence. He was replaced by Serbian Patriarch Vikentije (Prodanov) (1950 to 1958), who earned official

² Atanasije (Jevtić), hieromonk. The suffering of Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija from 1941 to 1990. Prishtina, 1990; Atanasije (Jevtić), Bishop. The Serbian Church in the Second World War, (from the archives of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church).

support from the Islamic Religious Community of Yugoslavia for his interfaith activities; the communist government was also satisfied with his activities [4: 181-195].

Serbian Patriarch German (Djoric), who was the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church from 1958 to 1990, continued to promote institutional interfaith cooperation with Muslims, maintaining official and personal friendly contacts with the three heads of the Islamic religious community in Yugoslavia: Reis-ul-Ulema Hadži Sulejman Efendi Kemur (1957–1975), Reis-ul-Ulema Naim Efendi Hadžiabdić (1975–1987) and Reis-ul-Ulema Hadži Hafiz Hussein Efendi Muić (1987–1989). His correspondence shows that he respected all Muslims and their religious holidays. He saw the Muslims of Yugoslavia as his brothers, with whom he always wanted to be on good terms. In this context, the interfaith activities of many bishops and priests of the Serbian Orthodox Church during his time were carried out [2].

The turning points in Christian-Muslim relations in the Balkans in the late 20th and early 21st centuries occurred when Serbian Patriarch Pavle (Stojčević) was on the patriarchal throne of the Serbian Orthodox Church from 1990 to 2009. He had no opportunity to work on developing interfaith dialogue in theological terms due to the state of war and political turbulence. He was not afraid to talk about the theological differences between Christianity and Islam and, despite the difficulties, used every opportunity to talk with Muslim religious figures, promoting dialogue to preserve interfaith coexistence [1].

During his patriarchal service, representatives of Orthodox Christians and Muslims met and discussed political issues with the aim of preserving interfaith coexistence in peace and mutual respect. They met many times to discuss the difficulties they blamed on each other, when one side felt the other had not made efforts to prevent crimes. Their conversations were useful in that they could “face to face” their pain over the suffering of believers, and work together to solve this or that problem [3].

The Serbian Orthodox Church, led by Serbian Patriarch Irinej (Gavrilovic) (2010 to 2020) and diocesan bishops, continued to work on developing interfaith dialogue for reconciliation in regions affected by civil wars (1991-1995 and 1999), strengthening coexistence in regions where Orthodox Christians and Muslims already live peacefully [4].

During the time of Patriarch Irinej, the bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church also made considerable efforts to develop peaceful and harmonious interfaith coexistence, and their contribution to dialogue with Muslims was significant [6].

Metropolitan Nikolaj of Dabro-Bosnia (1928-2015), leading the Sarajevo-based metropolitanate during the breakup of Yugoslavia and the civil war in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995), lost a large number of Orthodox believers, but remained committed to interfaith dialogue and reconciliation. He worked in this direction even in old age [6:20-32].

Metropolitan Porfirije of Zagreb-Ljubljana (current Patriarch of Serbia) was focused on interreligious dialogue with the Catholics who make up the majority of the inhabitants of the Zagreb-Ljubljana Metropolitanate, but he also worked on dialogue with Muslims in both the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Serbia. He achieved great success through openness and honesty in discussions with representatives of other churches and religious

communities. He also participated in numerous regional interfaith conferences [6:34-46].

Metropolitan Chrysostom of Dabro-Bosnia, first as Bishop of Zvornica-Tuzla and then as Metropolitan of Dabro-Bosnia, held regular meetings with representatives of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, encouraged interfaith coexistence, resolved open issues in Christian-Muslim relations [6:51-82].

Bishop Irinej of Bačka achieved a high level of communication with Muslims at the regional and international level. He did not have a significant percentage of Muslims among the population of his diocese, but his attitude towards them as a minority was full of respect and understanding. He was a frequent participant in interfaith meetings, and his views on Islam and Muslims are known in the media space of the Republic of Serbia and the Western Balkans. His contribution to the dialogue with Muslims can be seen in: development of interfaith projects of general significance, participation in interfaith meetings and conferences, press releases on interfaith initiatives and events at the regional and international level, statements about Islam and Muslims in magazines and newspapers, etc. [6:99-160].

Bishop Photius of Zvornica and Tuzla, in his archpastoral work in the diocese, where Muslims live together with Orthodox Christians, emphasized the importance of interfaith coexistence in meetings with representatives of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Muslim political figures. In his public speeches, he spoke about the importance of interfaith reconciliation, emphasizing that even in the history of Christian-Muslim relations in the Diocese entrusted to him there are striking examples left by people who, in the most difficult moments, showed themselves to be good neighbors, regardless of the conditions of war and despite differences in religion and nation [6:167-174].

Bishop Atanasije of Mileševa, who was previously Bishop of Bihać-Petrovac, worked to maintain good interfaith relations in both the Muslim-majority and Orthodox Christian-majority diocese. He demonstrated a commitment to the essence of interfaith dialogue as he sought the path of peace between Muslims and Orthodox, emphasizing that peace is complete only if it comes from within and is confirmed by actions [6:177-201].

Bishop Gregory initiated interfaith dialogue in his diocese at all levels and in all social circles; scientific meetings, cultural events, media appearances, sports competitions, etc. Bishop Gregory expanded the scope of understanding and application of interfaith dialogue, which as a process has become a benchmark in the social and political development of all nations. Interfaith dialogue became a popular social phenomenon, not just a tool for promoting interfaith coexistence. Many of his clergy followed him in this, so that the fruits of his work can be seen on many levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina [6:206-276].

Bishop Teodosije of Raška and Prizren initiated a process of interfaith reconciliation in a predominantly Muslim environment, despite hundreds of thousands of Orthodox Christians expelled over the past fifty years and many destroyed churches and monasteries. In his sermons and statements, he often spoke about the Christian-evangelical principle of love for all. After frequent attacks by Albanian Muslims on Orthodox Christians and their shrines, he emphasized repentance and the normalization of broken interreligious relations in this Serbian province [6:287-299].

Bishop Serge of Bihać and Petrovac contributed to the development of dialogue with Muslims through his sermons and public speeches, in which he called for peace and love in an environment where Muslims had become a majority compared to Orthodox Christians after the terrible crimes and ethnic cleansing during the Second World War. He was guided by the Gospel story of the “good Samaritan”. His archpastoral mission was to create a new environment in Christian-Muslim relations, in which there is equal remembrance of the victims of the conflict and opportunities for building a common future in harmonious coexistence [6:300-305].

Bishop Dimitrije of Zahum and Herzegovina took a step forward by paying tribute to the innocent victims of the Orthodox and Muslims together with the representatives of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A new stage in interfaith relations began when the Diocese and the Muftiate began to help each other in various needs. He publicly declared his readiness to fight for interfaith coexistence by all available and legal means, showing the society that he does not avoid discussing even the most sensitive topics in interfaith relations [6:306-331].

Bishop Vasilije of Zvornica and Tuzla led the Diocese during the period of communist “supervision” of interfaith relations, then during the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the post-war period, when he faced many open issues in interfaith relations. He distinguished himself with his valuable work in the Interreligious Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In his public speeches he stated that there is no alternative to interfaith dialogue and that we must work in this direction at all levels of social, religious, cultural and political life, and that success is determined by joint, mutual efforts and work [6:335-353].

Conclusion

After the First and Second World Wars, as well as after the civil wars in the former Yugoslavia, the Serbian Orthodox Church actively participated in interfaith dialogue with Islamic communities and Muslims at all levels. The Primates and clergy of the Church made a significant contribution to interfaith reconciliation and coexistence, despite the fact that Orthodox Christians were victims of occupation regimes with which the Muslim political elite collaborated. Attempts to provoke a negative reaction of the Serbian Orthodox Church in relations with Muslims never bore fruit, since the Church always preached that Muslims are brothers to the Orthodox.

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The Concept of the Intermarium and the Confessional Issue: Geopolitical Challenges to Belarusian Orthodoxy in XX – early XXI century

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Abstract. The article discusses the problems of merging geopolitics and religion. Using the example of Belarusian Orthodoxy, the author shows how religious institutions can become instruments for the implementation of geopolitical strategies, in particular the Polish foreign policy doctrine of the Intermarium. The influence of this doctrine on the position of the Orthodox Church in the Baltic-Black Sea region, including on the territory of Belarus, is analyzed. The author examines the specific historical conditions of the periodic actualization of Polish geopolitical projects in relation to Belarus. Using some examples, he shows the technologies of the United States working with the Belarusian anti-Soviet emigration and the technologies of using religious institutions to implement geopolitical strategies. It is concluded that modern interpretations of the Intermarium doctrine are directly related to the policy of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in relation to the East Slavic territories associated with the Kiev Metropolis of the XV–XVII centuries. The assessment of the activities of the primate of the Orthodox Church in Poland on the Ukrainian-Belarusian lands in the first half of the 1940s is new for domestic and foreign historiography as an attempt to build a “church Intermarium”. The article contains unique materials about the anti-Soviet activities of the Belarusian emigration, its contradictions and splits. The findings actualize the issue of developing mechanisms to counteract manipulative influence against the Orthodox Church, carried out in order to achieve political benefits. Based on the results of the consideration of the problem, a recommendation is proposed regarding the need for planned systematic work to strengthen church immunity against external manipulative influence, fraught with disruption of social and confessional balance in the Republic of Belarus.

Keywords: Belarusian Orthodoxy, Polish geopolitics, the concept of “Intermarium”, the Baltic-Black Sea Union, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Belarusian Central Rada, the Warsaw Metropolia

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Introduction

The rapid rise of geopolitical tensions raises new challenges and legitimate questions about the prospects for the development of Belarusian Orthodoxy. At the same time, reflections on the pressing challenges of our time will be superficial without reference to their historical background.

Following the First World War, the revival of Polish statehood was accompanied by the development of the Intermarium foreign policy doctrine. The authorship of this doctrine belonged to the ideologues of the Polish Socialist Party and personally to the future First Prime Minister of Poland Józef Piłsudski (1867-1935). The Intermarium project envisaged a nominal revival of the Commonwealth in the form of a political union (confederation) of Poland with independent, anti-Russian and anti-communist Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Romania, Finland in the space between the Baltic and Black Seas. The theoretical development of this project was preceded by the concept of prometheism, declared by J. Piłsudski as early as 1904. It presupposed the Poland's acquisition of leadership in weakening the Russian Empire by supporting the national liberation movements of non-Russian peoples¹. Despite its unrealisation, in the inter-war period the idea of creating the Intermarium as a sanitary cordon», separating Western Europe from the USSR, was widely spread and enjoyed great attention in European political circles.

The comprehension of the internal political and geopolitical aspects of the Intermarium doctrine is widely reflected in Russian and foreign historiography. However, the question of the influence of this doctrine on the position of the Orthodox Church in the Baltic-Black Sea region, including the territory of Belarus, remained outside the scope of research.

Materials and methods

The materials by the Belarusian Central Rada (BCR), the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and J. Piłsudski related to records, official regulations, statements, appeals, resolutions, interviews, correspondence, news and information bulletins, memories were used in the consideration of historical issues. Some aspects of the historical context were covered on the basis of research by Russian and Ukrainian experts. The consideration of the current state of the Baltic-Black Sea project involved the appeal to the publications of the official Internet resources of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Belarusian Exarchate, the University of Marie Curie-Skłodowska in Lublin, GLOBSEC Policy Institute, TASS and "TIME" magazine.

The study was prepared on the basis of the dialectical principles of objectivity, comprehensiveness, specificity and historicism. Conclusions and judgments were formed

¹ Piłsudski Józef. Collective Writings. Warsaw: Jozef Pilsudski Institute, 1937. Vol. 2. pp. 249–258 [In Polish]

through the use of general scientific methods of cognition, such as synthesis and analysis, deduction and induction, abstraction and generalization. Application of such special scientific methods of research as historical-genetic, historical-comparative and historical-systematic contributed to the disclosure of the claimed topic.

Results

After the entry of Western Belarus and Ukraine into the Second Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1921, there were about 4 million Orthodox Christians on its territory. Spiritual care about them was carried out by the Warsaw Metropolia of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). In the context of the construction of the Polish national State, the presence of Russian ecclesiastical jurisdiction was regarded by the Government of the Republic of Poland as undesirable. For this reason, the Polish Ministry of Religious Confessions and National Education initiated the issue of declaring Polish autocephaly with the Patriarchate of Constantinople. In 1924, the Polish Ambassador to Turkey, R. Knoll, established an agreement with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, headed by Patriarch Gregory VII, on granting autocephalous status to the Metropolia of Warsaw [12:71]. It is noteworthy that consideration of the issue of autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Poland was carried out by Constantinople by raising a question about the canonicity of the transition of the Kiev Metropolis to the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate in 1686. At the same time, geographically, the Kiev Metropolis in the second half of the 17th century included the territory of modern Belarus, Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania.

Held on November 3, 1924, meeting of the Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople adopted a conclusion on the annulment of the re-subordination of the Kiev Metropolis to the Moscow Patriarch in 1686.² On the basis of this decision, on November 13, 1924, the Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate approved Tomos about autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in Poland, which was considered as a "fragment" of the historical Kiev Metropolis³. The events predetermined Fener's further activities in the Eastern Slavic region and created conditions for the development of Belarusian, Ukrainian and Baltic church separatism. The historical Kiev Metropolis, declared separated from the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church, was territorially within the space of Piłsudski's Intermarium doctrine. Belarus, Ukraine and Lithuania were excluded by Constantinople from the sphere of Russian ecclesiastical influence. At the same time, there were no recognized autocephalous churches in those regions, which created the conditions for elevation of the figure of the Head of the Orthodox Church in Poland over the territory of Intermarium and was an additional factor in strengthening the position of Poland as a regional leader in Eastern Europe. An important component of this process was the formation of a new Orthodox identity, characterized by the lack of perception of the Russian Orthodox Church as a Cyriarchal Church.

² Autocephalous Church of Poland. Church. 03.01.1925. Σ. 5–6 [In Greek]

³ Patriarch and Synodal-Canon Tomos. Herald of the Orthodox Metropolis in Poland. 1925; 8:1-2. [In Russian]

In the second half of 1930s the Intermarium doctrine gained new relevance due to the activism of the Polish diplomacy led by Yu.Bek, seeking to protect Poland from threats from the major continental powers. At that time, the concept of the Intermarium was supposed to include Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia in the Baltic-Black Sea Union [2:190]. However, the outbreak of World War II changed those plans. The bringing of Western Belarus and Ukraine to the USSR resulted in the return of Orthodox parishes to the Russian Orthodox Church. The situation changed after the beginning of the German invasion, when the Metropolitan of Warsaw Dionysius (Valedinsky) on the basis of Tomos of 1924 made an attempt to extend his jurisdiction to the Ukrainian-Belarusian territories. Despite the disappearance of the Polish state in 1939, he positioned himself as the undisputed leader of church life throughout the Eastern Slavic region. In other words, the Metropolitan of Warsaw had the ambition to implement the idea of Intermarium in the ecclesiastical space.

Having met the prohibition on activities within the Reich Commissariat "Ukraine", Metropolitan Dionysius on December 24, 1941 established the Temporary Administration of Orthodox Church in Poland on the Ukrainian lands and appointed the Archbishop of Lutsk and Kovel Polycarp (Sikorsky) the head of it. Since that time, the formation of the Ukrainian church structure, which does not recognize the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church and is subordinate to Metropolitan of Warsaw, began. In February 1942, under pressure from the occupation authorities, the Ukrainian administration adopted the name "Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church"⁴. [3:205] However, this act was a formal bureaucratic act, not accompanied by the proclamation of autocephaly. That is, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church of the German occupation continued to be a structural subdivision of the Polish Church, being forced to distance itself from direct interaction with it. This situation was resolved by the decree of the Bishops' Council of Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church of April 8, 1944, which conferred the title of Patriarch of Kiev and All Ukraine on Dionysius (Valedinsky) [3:275]. This symbolic action actually completed the process of building the "Orthodox Intermarium" led by the Metropolitan of Warsaw. However, due to the opposition of the Ministry of the Eastern Territories of the Third Reich, the head of the Polish Church was soon deprived of the assimilated powers [3:275-276]. The Nazi authorities relied on deepening divisions in Orthodoxy on the national basis.

Similarly, Metropolitan Dionysius made an attempt to assert his own influence on the territory of the general district "Belarus". In September 1941, he formed the Belarusian Church Council under the Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church in Poland. Not being allowed to lead the Belarusian church life by the local occupation authority, Metropolitan Dionysius sent his representative Hieromonk Vladimir (Finkovsky) [5:114-116]. The latter failed to fulfill his mission and was expelled from Belarus in the beginning of 1942. The autonomous Belarusian Orthodox Church, which emerged during the occupation years, was headed by

⁴ Resolution of Holy Council of Bishops of St. Orthodox Autocephalous Church on liberated Ukrainian lands//Martyrology of Ukrainian Churches: in 4 vols. V. 1: Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Documents, materials, Christian self-publishing of Ukraine. Toronto-Baltimore, 1987:686-687 [In Ukrainian]

the Exarch of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Panteleimon (Rozhnovsky), who did not support the ambitions of Dionysius (Valedinsky) [see more details: 6:40-50].

Liberated from German occupation, Poland found itself in the sphere of Soviet influence, which led to the abolition of Constantinople autocephaly. This had long deprived Polish geopolitical planning in both political and ecclesiastical life. The geopolitical concepts developed in the post-war decades by the emigrant Governments of individual countries had no chance of being implemented by virtue of the Yalta-Potsdam system of power-sharing in the European continent. However, the Intermarium doctrine found new interpretation in Polish emigration circles. In particular, Polish political thinkers Ye.Gedroitz and Yu.Merosevsky proposed the idea of "ULB" (Ukraine-Lithuania-Belarus), which was reduced to the creation of a buffer zone of the Baltic-Black Sea Union in eastern Poland. The realization of the project was seen in the rejection of imperial claims by the Poles, reconciliation between the peoples of the region and recognition of their rights to build nation states [11:17].

After the start of the "Cold War" a new geopolitical configuration was formed, in which the local Orthodox Churches were actively involved. Given the high potential for religious influence on the worldview and political behavior of the religious population, US President Truman chose religion as an important means of combating the expansion of communist influence in the world. That is why in 1948 the U.S. Foreign Ministry acted as an organizer of the removal of the Patriarch of Constantinople Maximus (Vasportsis) and the appointment of Patriarch Athenagoras (Spyrou) the new head of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The latter was placed at the disposal of the highest political elites of the United States and personally President Truman. The US Ambassador to Turkey E.Wilson was directly involved in the change of the patriarch [4:221-229]. After this, the Ecumenical Patriarchate was deeply integrated into the foreign policy of the United States, which was also relevant to the Belarusian confessional issue.

In the post-war geopolitical realities, the center of attraction for the supporters of the Belarusian autocephaly was no longer the Metropolitan of Warsaw, but the Patriarch of Constantinople. The project of organization of the autocephalous Belarusian Orthodox Church, which is recognized by the world Orthodoxy, was launched in 1948 by the functionaries of the Belarusian Central Rada (Belarusian proxy representation established in 1943 by the German occupation authorities). On the basis of Tomos's provisions on the autocephaly of Orthodox Church in Poland, they recognized the Patriarchate of Constantinople as the Cyriarchal Church of the Belarusian people. Having initiated the formation of a foreign Belarusian metropolis in the Greek jurisdiction, the leaders of the BCR counted on the subsequent granting of canonical independence⁵ to it. The first Belarusian parish of Constantinople's subordination was opened by the Belarusian Central

⁵ Coverage of the Belarusian Central Rada. New York, January 30, 1954. Belarusian word. July 2, 1954; the Belarusian Orthodox Church Committee in America. Church Light. 1951; 4-5; Interview with the president of the Belarusian Central Council, Prof. R.Ostrovsky. The latest news. 1948; 2:5-7; Presidium of the Plenum of the Belarusian Central Rada. An appeal to the Patriarch of Constantinople. September 14, 1953. Gordienko A. The Belarusian Central Rada (BCR): creation, activity, decline. 1943-1995. soc., 2016:398-399 [In Belarusian].

Rada in the US in 1950⁶. The very next year, Exarch of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in North and South America Archbishop Michael (Constantinidis) supported the BCR's strategy for the development of the Belarusian church structure⁷. In 1950-1990's the Belarusian Orthodox Church Committee in America, the Church Council of the Belarusian Orthodox Church in North America, the Belarusian Orthodox Church Council in North America have consistently coordinated the formation of the Belarusian Metropolia of the Patriarchate of Constantinople⁸. In 1971, the Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate decided to grant the Belarusian diaspora the right to elect a bishop to head the Belarusian eparchial structure⁹. However, the search for candidates for the episcopal service was not successful, which caused the unrealisation of the plans of the Belarusian Central Rada [see more details.: 8; 10]. At the same time, the BCR succeeded in forming 10 Belarusian parishes of the Greek ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the USA, Great Britain, Canada and Australia [7:208-219].

Special attention to the church project of the Belarusian Central Rada by the American political authorities was manifested in the fact that the administrators (deans) of the Belarusian parishes were regularly invited to the US Congress on the occasion of anniversaries of the declaration of independence of the Belarusian People's Republic (25 March 1918). At that time, Belarusian clerics visited the House of Representatives and before parliamentary hearings on the Belarusian issue they prayed for the independence of Belarus. Visits to the Congress were accompanied by meetings of the clergy with leaders of American political parties and individual congressmen. Such visits happened in 1964, 1965, 1967, 1968, 1970, 1971, 1973, 1977, 1978 and 1979. Throughout 1950s – late 1980s the Belarusian clergy of the Patriarchate of Constantinople demonstrated active involvement in a number of anti-Soviet projects and individual events, which ensured its support to the American administration. However, the representatives of this branch of Belarusian emigration were not able to transfer their activities to the territory of Belarus [see more details: 9:17-24].

The fall of the communist system in the early 1990s resulted in the development of tendencies to establish a unipolar world order with unconditional geopolitical leadership of the US. However, the strengthening of the position of the Russian Federation in the international arena in the 2000s led to the revival of the Intermarium doctrine as a regional alliance of the Baltic-Black Sea countries that are under the direct influence of the United States. As early as in 2011, American political analyst J. Friedman predicted the strengthening

⁶ The Belarusian Orthodox Church Committee in America. Church Light. 1951; 1:4-5 [In Belarusian]

⁷ Chairman of the Belarusian Orthodox Committee in America at an audience with His Eminence Archbishop Michael. Church Light. 1952; 2:11 [In Belarusian]

⁸ Belarusian Orthodox Church Committee in America: 4-5; resolution of the Congress of Orthodox Belarusians: clergy and believers from America and Canada since August 31, 1958 in South River, New Jersey, USA. Church Light. 1958; 9:5; Church Congress. Belarusian Thought. 1969-1970; 12-13:36; Church Congress. Church Light. 1970; 19:30. [In Belarusian]

⁹ I.K. archpriest. M.Lapitsky. Belorusskaya mysl. 1976; 20:18-21 [In Belarusian]; Byelorussian Council of Orthodox Churches in North America. Church Light. 1981; 31:34; Letter to Rev. Father Nikolaj Lapitzki, Whiteruthenian Greek-Orthodox Church of St. Euphrosynia, South River, New Jersey, from Very Rev. George J. Bacopulos, Chancellor of Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America. June 18, 1971. Rutgers University Libraries. Zaprudnik J. Collection. Box 2. Lapitski Mikalaj, 1907-1976. Papers. Folder 40; Chicago (Church affairs): 9.

of Poland's role in the Intermarium project [13:17, 82]. After a short time, these predictions began to be translated into political reality. Thus, the Polish electoral campaign of 2015 was accompanied by the inclusion of statements on the creation of the Intermarium in the electoral rhetoric of the winning President A. Duda and the Parliamentary Party "Law and Justice". Based on the reconciliation concept of ULB, these political forces are building the concept of Intermarium based on the current geopolitical status of Poland as a member of the European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance. In this regard, the leading role of the United States is taken into account¹⁰, which opens up new prospects for the actions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the implementation of the geopolitical initiative.

The "Three Seas Initiative" and the "Lublin Triangle" have been notable manifestations of Poland's focus on strengthening influence in Eastern and Central Europe in the last decade. The project "The Three Seas Initiative" ("Trimoria") launched in 2015 is actually a new reading of the Intermarium doctrine, envisaging the formation of a confederal state in the central and eastern European region. The goal of its formation was to jointly restrain the influence of Germany in the west and Russia in the east with a moderating role for Poland¹¹. It is noteworthy that this initiative was supported by the United States, which viewed Poland as the coordinator of their own foreign policy in Europe after the weakening of the United Kingdom in the wake of the Brexit. The second summit of the Three Seas Initiative, held in 2017 in Warsaw, was personally attended by U.S. President Trump. In his address he outlined the goal of the project as "revival of economic relations between the United States and the former communist countries of both Central and Eastern Europe"¹².

Another manifestation of the idea of the Baltic-Black Sea Alliance was the signing of a declaration on the creation of a new format of cooperation between the three countries - the so-called "Lublin Triangle" by the Foreign Ministers of Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine on July, 28 2020 in Lublin. The goal of its formation was to strengthen the interaction of the participating countries in the political, economic, military-technical, scientific and cultural spheres. At the same time, the Polish and Lithuanian sides declared their support for Ukraine in the sphere of its European and Atlantic aspirations¹³.

¹⁰ Dostál V. New 'Intermarium': What Poland wants from Visegrad? GLOBSEC Policy Institute, June 5, 2016. Available from: <https://web.archive.org/web/20160728001243/http://www.cepolicy.org/publications/new-intermarium-what-poland-wants-visegrad/>; Sojusz państw od Bałtyku po Morze Czarne? Duda chce odnowić międzywojenną ideę miedzymorza. GLOBSEC Policy Institute, 5 sierpnia 2015. Available from: https://web.archive.org/translate.google.com/web/20161217164322/http://forsal.pl/artykuly/886941,sojusz-panstw-od-baltyku-po-morze-czarne-duda-chce-odnowic-miedzywojenna-idee-miedzymorza.html?_x_tr_sl=en&_x_tr_tl=ru&_x_tr_hl=ru&_x_tr_pto=wapp

¹¹ Three Seas Initiative. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland. Available from: <https://www.gov.pl/web/diplomacy/three-seas-initiative>

¹² Farber M. Read Donald Trump's Remarks at the Three Seas Initiative Summit in Poland. July 6, 2017. TIME. Available from: <http://time.com/4846780/read-donald-trump-speech-warsaw-poland-transcript/>

¹³ Meeting of foreign ministers of Poland, Lithuania and Ukraine. 28.07.2020. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Available from: <https://www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja/Spotkanie-ministrow-spraw-zagranicznych-polski-litwy-i-ukrainy>; Joint Declaration of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Lithuania and Ukraine on the establishment of the Lublin Triangle, Lublin, 28 VII 2020. Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. Available from: <https://phavi.umcs.pl/at/attachments/2021/0803/114847-wspolna-deklaracja-pl-lt-ua-wersja-pl-1.pdf> [In Polish]

It is quite obvious that the intensification of anti-Russian rhetoric typical for a number of European countries contributes to the growth of public support for those political forces which articulate the idea of a Baltic-Black Sea military-political alliance. It is highly likely that efforts to build such an alliance will only increase. In this connection, it is important to note that by its geographical position Belarus divides the space of the imaginary Intermarium into the northern Baltic and southern Black Sea sectors. That is why the theoretical projects of construction of Intermarium include the solution of "Belarusian issue" as its integral part. First of all, we are talking about changing the geopolitical orientation of the republic. The implementation of this project is closely connected with the radical change of the confessional status quo of the Belarusian religious field, the withdrawal of church structures from the Russian Orthodox Church and subsequent entry into the sphere of influence of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. It is necessary to emphasize here that Fener created the necessary ideological prerequisites for this in 1924, declaring the non-recognition of the Russian Orthodox Church's right to spread its influence within the historical Kiev metropolis. The 1971 Synodal Decision of the Patriarchate of Constantinople on the need to open a Belarusian eparchy in the diaspora, although never implemented, was never revoked.

As for the actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople aimed at withdrawing the territories of the historical Kiev Metropolis from the sphere of influence of the Russian Orthodox Church, they did not continue in the XXI century. In 2018, the Ecumenical Patriarchate implemented a project to create an autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine, which presupposed the unification and legalization of non-canonical entities (Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and Kyiv Patriarchate)¹⁴. However, Fener's actions in the Intermarium space were not limited to this only. On February, 17 2023, the General Secretariat of the Patriarchate of Constantinople announced the reinstatement of five clergy of the Archdiocese of Lithuania of the Russian Orthodox Church previously deprived of priesthood¹⁵. On March, 20 Patriarch Bartholomew arrived in Lithuania, where he signed an agreement with the Lithuanian government and declared his intention to create the Lithuanian Exarchate¹⁶. As a direct consequence of these acts, on April 6, 2023, two clerics of the Belarusian Orthodox Church who had left for the territory of Lithuania

14 Announcement of the Holy and Sacred Synod (11th Oct. 2018). The Ecumenical Patriarchate. Available from: <https://web.archive.org/web/20181014010432/http://www.ec-patr.org/docdisplay.php?lang=gr&id=2577&tla=g>; Communiqué concerning the new Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Ukraine. Ecumenical Patriarchate Permanent delegation to the World Council of Churches. Available from: <https://www.ecupatria.org/2018/12/19/communique-concerning-the-new-orthodox-autocephalous-church-of-ukraine/>

15 Announcement on the appeal of clerics from Lithuania. Ecumenical Patriarchate. Available from: <https://ec-patr.org/%E1%BC%80%CE%BD%CE%B1%CE%BA%CE%BF%CE%B9%CE%BD%CF%89%CE%B8%CE%AD%CE%BD-%CF%80%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%AF-%CF%84%E1%BF%86%CF%82-%E1%BC%90%CE%BA%CE%BA%CE%BB%CE%AE%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%85-%CF%80%CF%81%CE%BF%CF%83%CF%86/>. [In Greek]

16 The Ecumenical Patriarchate in Lithuania. LIGHT FANARIOU. Available from: <https://fosfanariou.gr/index.php/2023/03/21/to-ecun-patriarxeio-stin-lithouania/>

and had no canonical leave from the priesthood¹⁷ were accepted into the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The registration of the Lithuanian Exarchate by the Ministry of Justice of Lithuania took place on February 7, 2024¹⁸. Thus, it can now be stated that the Patriarchate of Constantinople demonstrated willingness and determination to intervene in the Belarusian confessional situation by creating and controlling an alternative model of "Belarusian Orthodoxy".

Conclusion

To summarize, it can be concluded that Belarusian Orthodox Christianity is facing challenges stemming from the processes taking place at the level of international relations. Attempts to implement geopolitical projects based on the idea of Intermarium are closely related to the policy of the Patriarchate of Constantinople with regard to the Eastern Slavic territories within the space of the historical Kiev Metropolis. The inclusion of a religious issue in the projects implementing Western geopolitical concepts requires an awareness of the seriousness of the problem and the development of a response strategy. Otherwise, Belarusian Orthodox Church risks being manipulated by external forces focused on political objectives. It seems that systematic work to strengthen ecclesiastical immunity with regard to external manipulative influence can not only ensure the balance of the confessional field of the Republic of Belarus, but also become a significant factor in strengthening social stability.

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17 Alexander Kuchta, cleric of the Minsk diocese deprived of the priesthood. April 10, 2023. Official portal of the Belarusian Orthodox Church. Available from: <http://church.by/news/zapreshen-v-sluzhenii-klirik-minskoj-eparhii-ierej-aleksandr-kuhta>; Decree 13 of 10.04.2023 «On the withdrawal of Archpriest George Roy from temporary assignment and deprivation of the priesthood for one year». Grodno diocese. Belarusian Orthodox Church. Available from: <https://orthos.org/dokumenty/%D1%83%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%B7-13-%D0%BE%D1%82-10042023>. (in Russian)

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The 1973 Oil Crisis: a Look after half a Century

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Abstract. The article examines the prerequisites and consequences of the global oil crisis of 1973. It analyzes not only the political reasons that prompted the Arab oil exporting countries to use the "oil weapon" (the unresolved Middle East conflict and the Palestinian problem), but also the crisis phenomena in the Western economy. Not only Arab countries, but also powerful oil companies, backed by Western countries, especially the United States, were interested in change. For the West, the oil crisis caused difficulties and problems in the short term, but in the long term it turned out to be a catalyst that accelerated structural and technological changes in the Western economy and in the global financial system. The oil crisis allowed the oil-producing countries of the Arab East to sharply increase the level of state income, which opened up opportunities for accelerated socio-economic development, and also increased the authority of these countries and OPEC in international relations.

Keywords: oil, oil crisis, "oil weapons", oil monopolies, USA, Saudi Arabia, dollar, petrodollars

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Introduction

The consequences of the oil embargo that broke out in 1973 were of epochal significance. What was perceived by contemporaries as a confrontation between Arab oil-producing countries and Western oil monopolies, behind which stood the leading states of the Western world, initially had more complex and in many ways contradictory goals on both sides. In the decades since then, not only have documents and evidence surfaced about the details of the preparation of the coup in the world oil industry, but changes have also occurred in the world economy as a whole, the instigator and accelerator of which was the oil crisis of 1973.¹

¹ An interesting assessment of the significance of the oil crisis is contained in the article: Makarov I., Chupilkin M. Oil Pearl Harbo. Oil crisis of 1973. *Russia in global politics*. 2021;1.

These events are not only of historical interest. The process of forming a new world order in our time, signifying the end of 500 years of Western domination in the world system, could have begun several decades ago. The change in the nature of relations of oil-producing countries not simply with the Western oil monopolies, but with the West as the main subject of the world order within the framework of these events determined that these events became the last and decisive ones in the twentieth century before the global rebalancing of relations between the Western Center and the non-Western Periphery in the world system in the first decades of the twenty-first century.

Before that, there were the defeats of France at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the nationalization of the Anglo-French Suez Canal by Egypt in 1956, the creation of OPEC by the Eastern countries in 1960, the withdrawal of Great Britain “to the east of Suez” in 1971, the defeat of the USA in Vietnam in 1975. All this represented the West’s retreats – albeit minor and local – from its usual position as the hegemon of the world system. At that time, the USSR sought to present itself as an alternative center of power – in the military-political and socio-economic spheres, but this tendency soon faded away. In those circumstances, it became possible for non-Western oil-producing countries to use the “oil weapon”.

The oil crisis of 1973 was partly man-made, and partly objectively arose during the disclosure of the model of market economy – industrial mass production – that prevailed in the world. Therefore, the consequences of the crisis are not limited to the experience of the Arab countries using the “oil weapon” and the transformation of OPEC countries into real subjects of the world economy and world politics. The above processes marked the beginning of the global energy transition, the technological revolution and the emergence of the beginnings of the post-industrial world.

The 1973 oil crisis will not be repeated. It was local in time and resources used, and its analogues in the early 1980s or in 2004 and 2018 no longer had the stunning effect of novelty and scale. The situation in the global energy sector has changed irreversibly, as has the position of the participants in the 1973 oil crisis.

But its experience showed the possibility of the emergence of this type of structural global economic or world political crises in the future, with a gradually maturing combination of causes and a random pretext, with active subjects and interested observers. This was the beginning of the formation of a new world order. And the experience of that crisis helps to clarify the possible sources and consequences of the processes taking place before our eyes.

It is important to emphasize that oil became the cause and immediate trigger for the global crisis due to its nature – at that time it was a vital source of energy, and Western oil monopolies were among the most powerful in the world at that time. Two circumstances are no less important: the American dollar, the main world currency, was used to calculate oil transactions, and control over the world oil market was seen at that time as one of the foundations of American hegemony in the world.

As a result, the divergent interests of the United States and Arab oil-producing countries suddenly came together. The “oil – money – power” link was created.

Everything was tied into one “oil knot”, but not spontaneously. A combination of objective prerequisites for solving the financial problems of both Arab countries and the United States was formed. A subjective political factor was also formed: the readiness of both Arab countries and the United States to take decisive military action.

The term “oil crisis” used here means abrupt and large-scale changes in the world oil market in the volumes of oil production and export, in determining oil prices and consumer access to the desired volumes of oil and oil products. Part of the oil crisis is the oil embargo – a state ban on the supply of oil and oil products.

This article examines the prerequisites for the “oil crisis” of 1973, the search for its resolution in the West and the East, and its main consequences for the countries of the West and the East.

Materials and Methods

There is a vast literature on the events associated with the 1973 oil crisis, which has established several approaches to explaining the causes of the crisis: a predominantly political origin, where the initiative was given to the Arabs, and a predominantly economic one, where the crisis was explained by the reduction of available natural resources (oil and gas), as well as a combination of both of these origins to varying degrees. Such ideas about the named processes were expressed in their studies by E.M.Primakov, B.Rachkov, K.Tugendhat and A.Hamilton, D.Chevalier, D.Ergin, J.McFarland, O.Skorokhodova and other energy specialists [3, 4, 9, 11, 13, 16, 22].

This study analyzed historical facts and statistical data, methods of historical and static analysis.

Results

Positions of the parties to the conflict

The conflict between oil-producing countries and Western countries was caused by economic and political reasons.

The needs of socio-economic development, and accelerated development to overcome the gap in living standards, prompted the authorities to seek to increase revenues. The idea of nationalizing the oil industry, which seemed bold and revolutionary in the 1950s, when the oil ministers of Venezuela and Saudi Arabia started talking about it, seemed achievable two decades later.

The “freezing” of the Middle East conflict in the context of the high ideological content of the Middle East in those years and the influence of the ideology of Arab nationalism prompted the Arab authorities to find a lever of pressure on the West to change its attitude to the regional settlement of the Middle East conflict and the

recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people. It was necessary to get out of the negotiating impasse that had arisen. The “oil weapon” in the Arab world had been mentioned before, in 1956 and 1967, but for various reasons it had proved impossible. Now the Arab countries had become stronger economically and socio-politically and relied on support, and some even on direct aid, from the USSR.

The prerequisites and conditions of the oil embargo that arose in the Middle East are not the immediate causes of the ensuing global crisis. They created opportunities for the emergence of a pretext for an oil embargo and a change in pricing on the oil market. The causes of the crisis were deeper processes, both in the world economy and in the relationships between oil-producing countries and oil-consuming countries. This is a systemic crisis of the industrial society of mass consumption in the West, complicated by the problems of the US financial system, and the need of Arab countries to implement an industrial development model in the process of modernization in order to overcome a deep socio-political crisis, which required large financial resources. In both cases, these deep crises were resolved through agreements and compromises between the two parties.

The situation in the world oil industry

Already in the early 1960s, the situation on the world oil market had changed noticeably compared to the previous decade, both in terms of oil importing and oil exporting countries, Western companies, and oil-producing countries. Oil consumption grew rapidly, increasing 15-fold in Western European countries, from 0.97 million barrels per day in 1949 to 14.1 million barrels in 1972, and 100-fold in Japan, from 0.032 million barrels to 4.4 million [4:569].

The USSR entered the world market, ready to supply large volumes of oil at lower prices than Western companies after the start of production at fields in Western Siberia; oil and oil product exports increased 4-fold, from 30 million tons in 1960 to 130 million tons in 1975². The USA, the world’s largest oil producer until 1974, was increasing production in the country: in 1963 – 8.6 million barrels per day, in 1973 – 10.9 million barrels.

In March 1959, the USA introduced mandatory quotas on oil imports. Europe tried to become independent in oil matters: the head of the Italian company ENI E. Mattei sought to provide Italy with its own oil supplies from Iran and the USSR, so as not to depend on “Anglo-Saxon companies”. New production companies appeared in the Middle East: in 1946 there were 9, in 1956 – 19, in 1971 – 81 [4:558]. By the end of the 1960s, colossal oil fields were discovered in Libya, and the rate of growth of its production was equal to the level of Saudi Arabia: 16.7% and 16.3%. The Shah’s Iran competed with the Saudi kingdom, lagging behind in production, but also increasing it by an average of 14.9% per year [12:468].

² The Great Soviet Encyclopedia. Volume 24-I:254.

“From the beginning of the fifties to the end of the sixties,” wrote D. Yergin, “the world oil market was determined by unusually rapid growth, a gigantic tide, which, like a powerful and frightening stream, carried everyone in industry with it with irresistible force. Consumption grew at a rate that simply could not be imagined at the beginning of the post-war era. However, although the growth of consumption was high, the availability of supplies outpaced it” [4:524]. The authorities of the countries of the region handed out more and more concessions and demanded that Western operating companies increase the level of production in order to increase state revenues necessary for modernization.

This led to the fact that the amount of oil produced exceeded the volume of demand in the oil markets. Western countries were sure that high dependence on Arab oil was not a problem, since the buyer dictates the terms in this market. However, oil companies, whose profitability was declining, began to increase discounts on oil offered on world markets. A gap arose between the market price and the official price that was fixed in the contracts of Arab countries and Western operating companies; it was almost impossible to reduce it.

The producing countries received not the agreed 50% of profit, but 60% or even 70%, and the income of Western oil monopolies was reduced. The circumstances led first to British Petroleum in 1959 to lower prices by 10% (by 18 cents per barrel), and in August 1960 to Standard Oil of New Jersey to announce a 7% (by 14 cents per barrel) reduction in the price of Middle East oil. The unilateral price reduction outraged the Arab oil producing countries. In response, on the initiative of the Saudi oil minister Abdullah Tariki, OPEC was created in September 1960.

The OPEC countries thought that they had created their own international cartel (regulating the distribution of sales markets and the price level), equal to British Petroleum and others. But this was an illusion. A claim to independence does not mean real independence. At that time, the founding countries only recognized the enormous potential of OPEC, but were not yet able to use it. They were opposed by the powerful oil cartel “Seven Sisters” that emerged in the 1930s.

In 1972, the world’s 20 largest oil companies included 7 oil monopolies, including 5 American “oil elephants”. For example, in 1972, the “Seven Sisters” accounted for about 60% of oil production in capitalist countries, 85-90% of oil exports from developing countries, and control over 90% of oil-bearing provinces [18:22]. British Petroleum and Frances de Petroleum were partly owned by the state, and American companies had strong levers of influence on the American administration. These companies were acquiring the power of financial institutions. The predominant form of their expansion was the export of capital. Their power as opponents of OPEC was seen as indestructible.

But the leaders of ARAMCO, Gulf Oil, British Petroleum and other Western companies themselves were already feeling anxious about the future of their concessions. This anxiety was intensified by the fact that in the United States, American oil companies operating in the country were pushing for the adoption of restrictions

on imported oil by the state. Both the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations were forced to impose restrictions on oil imports from the Middle East in the 1960s, while at the same time trying to keep the region within their sphere of influence.

The special role of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia, due to natural causes, became the leader of OPEC, which was supported by the amount of oil reserves of the kingdom, the bold and proactive policy of the Minister of Oil Abdullah Tariqi. Having studied the experience of relations between Mexico and Venezuela, neighboring Iran with Western oil companies, taking into account the experience of nationalization of the Suez Canal, Tariqi came to the idea of the need to nationalize ARAMCO. His slogan “Arab oil – to the Arabs!” met with wide support in the region. However, the final decision on oil issues in the kingdom was made by King Faisal. He could not help but recognize the firmness and independence in defending Saudi interests, which Tariqi demonstrated as the Minister of Oil and a member of the ARAMCO board. But the king remembered well the sad experience of Mossadegh in nationalizing Iranian oil, and was not going to “cut the goose that laid the golden eggs in the state treasury.” At the same time, the transfer of this “chicken” to the full ownership of the state, that is, the Al Saud family, seemed attractive. Not only time was needed, but also, first of all, agreements with the United States, on which the kingdom largely depended. In 1962, Faisal removed Tariqi from his post as minister, replacing him with the more obedient Ahmed Zaki Yamani. The reason was Tariqi’s conflict with one of the members of the royal family, but Faisal knew that ARAMCO would gladly accept the news of the departure of the “red” minister, whose radical rhetoric frightened Western oil companies.

Geological exploration showed that the kingdom contained a quarter of the world’s oil reserves. In 1963, ARAMCO produced only 10% of the available industrial reserves. The oil deposits remained favorable for production (a large area of productive strata located at a shallow depth and high gas pressure) and the high quality of Arabian oil (low sulfur content). The company’s exploration and drilling costs remained among the lowest in the world. The reserves of the largest fields in 1969 were: the world’s largest Ghawar field – 10.8 billion tons, the world’s largest offshore oil field es-Safaniya – 2.1 billion tons, Abqaiq – 1.1 billion tons. In the 1960s, the company launched 6 new large fields. In total, in 1970, the company had 427 productive wells with an average flow rate of about 1,000 tons of oil per day per well; 66 wells were plugged, since they either did not flow or produced grades of oil that had low demand on the world market [8:115, 118, 119]. The Saudis were on the board of ARAMCO and could influence the company’s policy, especially given the direct relationship between King Faisal and the company’s managers, but ARAMCO remained in the full sense of the word a “state within a state”: the Saudi authorities had no right to interfere in affairs on the company’s concession territory, the company had its own security.

Table 1. Direct contributions from oil companies to the Government of Saudi Arabia (\$ million)
ARAMCO Getty Oil JSC

1960	312,8	18,4	2,5
1965	618,4	23,8	20,4
1970	1088,4	17,2	40,3
1971	1866,4	20,6	44,2
1972	2677,9	28,0	68,7

Source: [4: 134]

On the Approach to Crisis

It is difficult to say unequivocally what exactly upset the balance on the world oil market in 1970-71. Subjective and objective circumstances coincided. According to M.M. Kovalevsky, “To speak of a factor, that is, of a central fact that carries all the others along with it, is the same as speaking of those drops of river water that by their movement mainly determine its flow. In reality, we are dealing not with factors, but with facts, each of which is somehow connected with the mass of the others or is determined by and determines them” [cit. from: 12:522]. Half a century later, the connection of a mass of different “facts” and their general cumulative impact on affairs in the region in the early 1970s is visible.

Syria unexpectedly began to hinder the restoration of the damaged TAPLINE pipeline. The new Syrian authorities after the military coup of November 13, 1970 (according to the official ideology of the “corrective movement”) needed to increase financial revenues to expand their social support, one of the sources of which were payments from the TAPLINE oil pipelines from Arabia and the IPC from Iraq. The revolutionary regime of Muammar Gaddafi suggested that Occidental Petroleum reduce oil production, the revenues from which could not be used rationally in a country with a small population and a weak economy. The Algerian authorities put forward new demands on Western oil companies. Attempts by Western companies to compensate for the resulting oil deficit with supplies from the Persian Gulf turned out to be impossible due to a shortage of large-tonnage tankers.

As a result, Western European countries were faced with the threat of a daily shortage of 50,000 barrels of oil (equivalent to 25 million tons per year). Meanwhile, demand for oil products in the winter of 1970-71 was much higher than in previous years: in Western Europe it grew by 13.3%, in Japan – by 20% [16:53, 59]. The shortage of oil volumes and tonnage for its transportation contributed to the rise in oil prices. And it turned out that the main oil importers, including the United States, were willing to pay a very high price for the oil they needed so much. Thus, the “buyers’ market” turned into a “sellers’ market”.

In December 1970, at the 21st Conference of OPEC Ministers in Caracas (Venezuela), a resolution was adopted that became a common platform for oil-producing countries for upcoming negotiations with oil monopolies.

The reaction of the West was indicative. First, meetings of oil company management with government members were held in Washington, where they

managed to obtain the consent of the federal authorities for joint actions of the “oil elephants”, which formally contradicted antitrust legislation. Then, the monopolies of Great Britain, France and the Netherlands received support, which allowed the former “seven sisters” to feel the direct support of the state. And on January 15, 1971, 15 of the largest oil companies in the West presented OPEC with their memorandum, in which they agreed to revise reference prices for oil in all countries (taking into account inflation) on the condition of refusing to increase tax rates and from mandatory reinvestment of profits [16:73].

Special envoy of the US President D.Irwin visited those OPEC countries whose support could be counted on to explain the West’s position. The fundamental unity of the producing countries was undermined by the fact that the North African countries were closer to consumer markets, and short-distance transportation entailed different freight rates, which was reflected in prices. On February 16, 1971, the Tehran Agreement was signed, according to which the minimum tax rate was set at 55%, uniform reference prices were introduced with their annual increase to compensate for inflation, and the price of 1 barrel of oil rose by 33 cents, and all discounts for oil companies were cancelled. On April 2, 1971, an agreement was signed in Tripoli, which was more advantageous for the producing countries in some points [16:73-75].

But the success was short-lived. In August 1971, US President R.Nixon announced the transition to a new economic policy to combat recession and stagflation, to prevent a decline in industrial production and suppress inflation. On August 15, 1971, R.Nixon decided to suspend the conversion of dollars into gold, essentially devaluing the dollar.

The anti-crisis measures of the American administration had an impact in the Middle East. The abolition of the gold standard of the dollar immediately brought down the only just increased incomes of oil producing countries, since reference prices were tied to the dollar. The Arabs again felt their impotence in the face of the West.

In September 1971, at the XXV OPEC Conference in Beirut, a common position was expressed: to return to negotiations with oil companies on the issue of compensating for losses from the weakened dollar. It was reached in the Geneva Agreement of January 20, 1972.

More important in the long term was the second resolution (No. 139) of the Geneva Agreement, which affirmed the right of OPEC member countries to seek effective (direct) participation in oil concessions. This proclamation of the principle of participation was the first step toward the transfer of the Arab oil industry to state ownership, an alternative to the revolutionary nationalization of Western property.

Yamani first spoke about participation in a lecture at the American University of Beirut in 1968. At the time, this caused a sharply negative reaction from ARAMCO leaders. But by 1972, a wave of nationalization of Western oil companies had taken place in Libya, Algeria, Venezuela, Indonesia, Iraq, and Syria. Faisal, who stood behind Yamani, was not playing a “blitz” game, but a long-term one. He did not need oil production and refining capacities without specialists and workers, without the ability to sell products on foreign markets. He was interested in a stable flow of funds to implement plans to modernize the

country, and he saw the transfer of the oil sector to state ownership as part of these changes. And ARAMCO leaders agreed to the principle of participation in mid-1972.

In the long term, this meant preserving the positions of ARAMCO companies in the kingdom, albeit on different terms. It was obvious that the kingdom’s growing income would be spent on importing necessary goods from Western countries, especially from the United States. In this way, the United States would improve its balance of payments, compensating for its losses in the form of oil payments and reducing the mass of “floating capital” that was dangerous for the Western financial market. Thus, following the oil “field of interaction”, a second “field” of financial interaction emerged between the United States and Saudi Arabia, which also formed the basis of the “special relations” of the two countries. In the same 1972, similar agreements on participation were concluded with Kuwait, Qatar and Abu Dhabi. Their actual status in the world system increased.

Changes in the Western camp

The question arises: did the powerful oil and industrial corporations and financial centers of the West, led by the United States, really submit so helplessly to the wave of Arab nationalism? Why did they make concessions? Why didn’t they use the tried and tested “gunboat diplomacy” of force? There can be no clear answer here. Changes were also taking place in the lives of Western countries.

Decades later, William F. Engdahl drew attention to such important phenomena of that time as the crisis of the American dollar and the relative weakening of the United States.

Since the 1950s, the economies of the West have been rapidly developing, but gradually, in the course of the countries of Western Europe, they began to outpace the United States in terms of growth rates, and their share of world exports exceeded that of the United States. The EEC, created in 1957, developed in 1959 as a powerful economic union based on the rapidly gaining strength economies of France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. The Eurodollar market emerged and grew rapidly.

Successes in the economy were reflected in politics, the close ties between the President of France Charles de Gaulle and the Chancellor of the FRG K.Adenauer were strengthened. Despite the replacement of K.Adenauer by the “Atlanticist” L.Erhard, after the signing of the agreement in 1963 on regular consultations between the two countries, military cooperation, etc., the relations between France and the FRG developed into the formation of a world center competing with the USA. Charles de Gaulle had previously said directly in a letter to President D.Eichsenhower: “... I cannot agree with the integration of France into NATO” [17:132]. In 1966, France left the NATO military organization and liquidated American military bases on its territory. In the same year, Charles de Gaulle visited the USSR, which was followed by an expansion of cooperation between the two countries.

And then there was more. In 1967, France withdrew from the American-initiated “Common Gold Fund” of leading Western countries, created in 1961 to stabilize the financial system of Western economies, and, in fact, to maintain the world (lowered) price of gold

at \$35 per ounce, to which the dollar was pegged. But the dollar was getting cheaper, and following the devaluation of the pound sterling in November 1967 by 14%, it was the dollar's turn. Market prices for gold began to rise. The influx of investment into the more profitable European market increased.

In 1967, the US gold reserves decreased by \$1 billion. In March 1968, the US requested a two-week break in the London gold market. At the same time, South Africa refused to sell its mined gold for pounds or dollars at the official price of \$35 per ounce (this gave rise to the Western boycott of South Africa). In April 1968, Charles de Gaulle challenged the United States by demanding that French dollar reserves be exchanged for gold. And France ultimately received 66.5 tons of gold. In their monograph "The Energy Crisis in the Capitalist World" (1975), Soviet authors already then drew attention to the brewing currency crisis, which was taking the form of a "dollar crisis," which "was losing its former ability to perform the function of world money" [18:375]. In the early 1970s, concerns arose that the world economy could collapse. The hegemony of the United States in the Western world system was shaken by a severe currency crisis. Washington sought to stop and reverse this process.

What do the Arab oil-producing countries have to do with all this? Without the passive and partly active participation of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf oil monarchies, the United States could hardly have maintained its hegemony. On February 18, 1970, US President R.Nixon said in his first report on foreign policy: "Our objective is first and foremost to strengthen our interests in the long run by a sound foreign policy. The more that policy is based on a realistic assessment of our interests and those of others, the more effective can our role in the world be. We are not committed to the world because we have obligations; we have obligations precisely because we are committed to the world. Rather, our interests should shape our obligations than vice versa" [5:700]. Such Realpolitik included, among other things, taking into account the interests of others, that is, the interests of Saudi Arabia and the oil-producing countries. It is easy to draw such conclusions now, but at that time this new understanding of the emerging balance of power in the world and the need to take into account the interests of the backward "periphery" of the world economy was established with difficulty. The hesitation of R.Nixon himself during the October War and the oil crisis of 1973 testify to this. The changes in the nature of the West's relations with its "periphery" did not change the essence of the unequal relations in the "center – periphery" system.

In May 1973, a group of members of the Bilderberg Club gathered in Sweden at the secluded island resort of Saltsjöbaden, owned by the Wallenberg family of Swedish bankers. There were 84 of them, including D.Rockefeller from Chase Manhattan, Lord Greenhill from British Petroleum, J.Ball from Lehman Brothers, H.Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski. The speaker W.Levy, after describing the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, concluded that military action and an oil embargo were inevitable, followed by a rise in prices and a fivefold, more than 400%, increase in the income of OPEC countries. According to W.Engdahl, using the minutes of the meeting, the purpose of this secret meeting "was not to prevent the expected shock increase in oil prices, but, on the contrary, to plan the management of the

expected influx of oil dollars in the process" – "the secondary processing of petrodollars", in the words of H.Kissinger. "The price of these oil imports will increase many times over, with complex consequences for the balance of payments of consumer countries," H.Kissinger reasoned. "Serious problems will arise in connection with the unprecedented amount of foreign currency accumulated by such countries as Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi... A complete change in the political, economic and power relations between the international oil companies of oil-producing and importing countries and the national oil companies of producing and exporting countries is taking place." At the same time, he pointed out that, firstly, the energy crisis will cause a shortage of resources in developing countries, and secondly, the possibility of "misuse and inadequate management of the financial resources of oil-producing countries, which could completely disorganize and undermine the world monetary system" [17:160, 161].

The assembled bankers, industrialists and politicians apparently agreed with the prospect of a world oil embargo and a surge in world oil prices. Since the world oil market had long been dominated by American oil companies, and since 1945 world oil trade had been conducted in dollars, the coming shock meant, firstly, a precipitous increase in demand for dollars needed to pay for oil, and secondly, what Henry Kissinger called "secondary processing of petrodollars", the transfer of oil revenues from oil-exporting countries to the Western financial system, but primarily to the USA. Possible problems for Western European countries and especially for Eastern countries were not taken into account. It may be recalled that a decade and a half before the October War, at the height of the Suez Crisis in November 1956, the USA had already used "financial weapons" against an ally: the acting US Secretary of State Harry Hoover Jr. convinced President Dwight Eisenhower to instruct the US Federal Reserve to "dump the pound sterling on world currency markets at a deep discount" by threatening Britain with a major devaluation of its currency to force them to leave Suez [10:17].

Changes in the Arab camp

In the same May 1973, at a special meeting of the Economic Council, the Kingdom's position on the oil embargo was criticized.

In May 1973, King Faisal in Cairo, during a conversation with A.Sadat, listened to the Egyptian president's reproaches for "insufficient assistance to the pan-Arab cause."

Faisal's position as the Custodian of the Two Holy Places of Islam and at the same time "the best friend of the United States in the Middle East" turned out to be difficult. He was faced with a choice between loyalty to the pan-Arab cause and friendship with the West. Faisal chose the former, but did not betray the latter.

At the end of May 1973, a closed meeting between Faisal and the leaders of ARAMCO took place in the vicinity of Geneva. The King emphasized that he was in favor of expanding ties with the United States, and that Saudi Arabia, respecting the interests of the West, was producing much more oil than was necessary to meet its financial needs. But Saudi Arabia, he said, was now in danger of becoming isolated in the Arab

world because of the US government's reluctance to help it. He, Faisal, would not allow that: "You could lose everything."³ Faisal's words were followed by public statements by ministers Omar Saqqaf and Ahmed Zaki Yamani about Saudi Arabia's possible use of oil as a political weapon. In May 1973, ARAMCO's leadership held talks with the kingdom's top officials, Emir Nawaf bin Abdul Aziz, Ahmed Zaki Yamani, Omar Saqqaf, Rashid Pharaoh and Kamal Adham.

During the meetings, the Saudi side emphasized that the kingdom was currently the only defender of American interests in the region, which, according to them, were being undermined by "Zionism together with the communists." If the Americans were truly friends of the Arabs, they "must do something to change the position of the U.S. government" [19:100]. The chronicle of events in May 1973 is important because it shows the process of transition of bilateral relations to a new basis. The leaders of the Western oil monopolies understood Faisal's real attempts to avoid or mitigate the oil crisis. But it was obviously a pragmatic decision of the Western side to go along with the crisis, the burden of which would fall mainly on developing countries and to a lesser extent on Western European countries, and the final outcome of which would be beneficial to the United States in financial and geopolitical terms.

The main stages of the oil crisis

On August 23, 1973, A. Sadat made a secret visit to Jeddah, during which Faisal promised that Saudi Arabia would use the "oil weapon" if necessary and increase financial aid to Egypt.

The declaration of the Arab countries' intention to use the "oil weapon" only resulted in a warning from the US President on September 6, 1973, about the inadmissibility of further increases in reference prices for oil and the nationalization of the property of foreign companies under the threat of depriving these countries of Western markets for oil and oil products.

ARAMCO began preparing for the inevitable. On September 13, 1973, the heads of four ARAMCO companies received a memorandum analyzing the options for a possible oil embargo.

On October 6, 1973, the fourth Arab-Israeli war began.

On October 17, at a meeting of OPEC countries in Kuwait, it was decided to reduce production by 5% at once and to reduce it by another 5% monthly until a final settlement of relations with Israel based on UN General Assembly Resolution No. 242. At the same time, the Gulf countries decided to abandon the Tehran agreements and unilaterally introduce new price levels based on "market prices", starting with an increase in reference prices by 70-100% depending on the quality of the oil (sulfur content). On October 19, having learned of President R.Nixon's order to provide Israel with military aid in the amount of \$2.2 billion, King Faisal decided to stop all oil supplies to the United

³ Vasiliev A.M. King Faisal: personality, era, faith; Russian academician Sciences, Institute of Africa. Moscow: Vostochnaya lit., 2010:396-403.

States and reduce oil production in the country by 10%, following the decision of the OPEC meeting in Kuwait on October 17⁴.

American author E.Wald, describing the events of those days, stated that "there was no conflict within ARAMCO: The Americans and Saudis were on the same side of the barricades. ARAMCO owned everything: wells, pipelines, oil refining facilities, ships – and it controlled all logistics. Saudi Arabia owned only 25% of the shares" [14:178].

In the USA, there were queues at gas stations. Panic arose in Europe. "Attempts to achieve agreements on division between consumers through the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development or the Organization for European Economic Development failed due to consumers' fears that any joint action on their part would only cause even more extreme measures on the part of the Arabs," wrote English authors K.Tugendhet and A.Hamilton [13:279]. Some countries took measures to limit demand for petroleum products on the domestic market, introducing rationing or banning the use of motor vehicles on Sundays. Oil prices began to spiral upward in Western European oil markets. Producer countries held auctions to sell individual lots of oil, with astonishing results: the prices offered were several times higher than OPEC's reference prices.

Politically, Europe could do little, but it "turned to face the Palestinians." Opportunities opened up for European-Arab dialogue. Immediately after the embargo was imposed, the Japanese government sent Deputy Prime Minister T.Miki and Minister of Trade and Industry T.Komoto to Saudi Arabia for talks on economic cooperation [19:113].

According to O.Skorokhodova, "the double salvo of the 'oil attack' – the imposition of the embargo and the fourfold increase in the price of 'black gold' – plunged the world economy into a crisis unprecedented since the Great Depression, the overcoming of which, in fact, continued throughout the decade" [11:50].

Developing countries had a particularly hard time. According to the UN, in 1972 all developing countries, except for OPEC countries, spent \$6 billion on fuel imports, and since 1974 they had to pay \$30 billion a year for about the same amount, which corresponded to their entire income from agricultural exports [see 13:25]. Grinin and Korotayev wrote about the severity of the 1974-1975 crisis: "This was primarily a global crisis caused by rising fuel prices, but at the same time, the overheating of the economy was caused by internal factors; in many ways, the crisis phenomena were aggravated by currency problems (in fact, the currency and economic crises merged), fears of rising inflation, the pumping of money into the economy... In fact, at the dawn of the 70s, the low level of oil and gas prices, which developed as a result of previous developments, also contributed to the acceleration and overheating of the world economy" [2:173-174].

The oil embargo and the 70% increase in oil prices were caused not only by political reasons, but also by rapid inflation and the devaluation of the dollar. However, OPEC's actions were superimposed on the overheating of the Western economy, rising wages in European countries, the budget and trade deficit in the United States, growing mistrust of the American dollar and the unreliability of the dollar, which sharply increased the volume

⁴ Vasiliev A.M. King Faisal: personality, era, faith; Russian academician Sciences, Institute of Africa. Moscow: Vostochnaya lit., 2010:417-426.

of money in the world [2:173-174]. In the United States and Western European countries, the decline in industrial production and the growth of unemployment intensified, combined with high inflation. By the beginning of December 1973, producing countries began to soften their position on reducing oil supplies. The embargo was lifted for several countries. In March 1974, at a meeting in Kuwait, the oil ministers of Syria and Libya spoke in favor of continuing the embargo. But Faisal was able to push through the end of the embargo for Europe, and in April 1974 – for the United States as well [22:149].

The ARAMCO leaders solved their own problems, using the current situation. At the hearings in the US Senate in January-February 1974, the ARAMCO leaders admitted that after the increase in reference prices, the company's profits increased by 350% compared to 1969. In total, the income of the monopolies participating in the oil cartel increased from \$70 billion in 1972 to \$192 billion in 1976 [13:17].

In December 1973, at the OPEC conference in Tehran, the OPEC commission proposed setting the price at \$23 per barrel, Saudi Arabia at \$8, and the Shah unexpectedly demanded a price of \$11.65. A quarter of a century later, Yamani, at the request of King Faisal, asked the Shah why Iran had demanded such a price increase. To this, Mohammed Reza replied: "To answer your question, I suggest you go to Washington and ask Henry Kissinger" [17:180]. The Americans simply "left the stage behind the scenes." By January 1974, the 400% increase in oil prices had become a fait accompli, which left many developing countries, as oil importers, facing a huge budget deficit. The IMF was ready to provide loans.

The main consequences of the oil crisis

Not only the Arab plans for changes in the regional system of international relations in the Middle East were implemented in this way, but also the May decision of the Bilderberg Club on closer integration of the leading Arab oil exporters of the Gulf countries into the world capitalist economy.

In February 1975, a bilateral secret agreement developed by the US Treasury and the Saudi Monetary Agency, which performs the functions of the central bank, was officially approved, according to the terms of which Saudi excess revenues from oil sales were to be "largely invested in paying off the deficit" in the US government budget. It is significant that the banker D.Mulford from a London bank was appointed as an investment adviser to the Saudi Monetary Agency [17:166].

In June 1974, President R.Nixon visited Saudi Arabia and stated that the American-Saudi friendship "is now developing into an active partnership." Later, G.Kissinger explained the thesis on partnership as follows: "We are natural partners, not adversaries. Consumer countries must have reliable access to supplies of oil at reasonable prices. In order to invest their new wealth acquired thanks to oil, oil-producing countries must become active participants in the global financial and economic system; in order to turn their new wealth into goods, they must become major importers of our products. We are ready to cooperate with the countries of the Near and Middle East, linking our economies and their economies on equal terms" [see: 17:111].

The oil embargo served as an accelerator of technological change (increased efficiency of hydrocarbon use, transition to alternative and renewable energy sources) for Western countries, for Japan, which felt its dependence on external supplies of energy raw materials especially acutely.

What was perceived as the weakness of the West, its retreat in the face of the threat of oil-producing countries of the Arab East to stop supplies, was in fact a multi-move geopolitical game, had hidden meanings that were revealed later.

For the oil industry, the retreat of the West in the person of global oil monopolies meant the transformation of these monopolies, a change in relations and structure, the transformation of monopolies from absolute managers into obedient operators, as well as the transformation of the oil companies themselves into financial and industrial conglomerates. Thus, the result of the events of 1973 was not only a change in relations between oil producers and consumers, but also an internal transformation of TNCs.

Both sides benefited from the conflict. After all, oil will remain a commodity of constant and stable demand on the world market for the next ten to fifteen years, despite all its price fluctuations.

Table 2. The volume of oil reserves in the leading oil producing countries in 2023 (billion barr.)

Canada – 168.1	Saudi Arabia – 297.5
Russia – 107.8	Iran – 157.8
USA – 68.8	Iraq – 145
Venezuela – 303.8	Kuwait – 101.5 Libya – 48.4

Source: *Oil Reserves by Country*. *World Population Review* 2023. [Available from]: <https://countrycassette.com/list-of-countries-by-oil-production-2023/>

Less attention is paid to the impact of the oil crisis on the strengthening of the role of the state in the economy and public life of the oil monarchies, and partly in Western countries.

After all, in the 1970s, during modernization and industrialization in Arab society, disorientation and nostalgia for the past arose, which was disappearing before our eyes. The result was a tendency toward "dirigisme" of the state in the economy and statism in public life, strengthening of centralized control, strengthening of the state, which seemed to contradict the Western model of a market economy taken as a normative model during modernization. It seemed that the very logic of industrialization required decentralization of economic power, which affected not only the oil sector, but also the planning and regulation of the entire national economy.

But the basis of a strong state in Arabia was the tribal (communal) principle, and this prevented the implementation of the Western model of a modern, democratic and cosmopolitan society in the sphere of cultural and religious life. The state, or rather the

ruling family, regained the role of the only or main source of resources thanks to increased oil revenues. The distribution of oil revenues became the most important factor in political and social life, not just economic. This consolidated the communal-tribal principles of social and political organization of society. Thus, the product of the scientific and technological revolution and progress – the oil weapon – turned into a socio-political rollback, but “back to the future”, which is no longer built on the Western model, although on market principles.

Saudi Aramco’s initial public offering in November 2019 shows a new trend – increased attention to privatization, which affected even this supercompany, the backbone of the public sector. True, only 1.5% of the shares were put up for sale at an initial price of \$8.5. But they were bought up (mainly by members of the ruling family, large entrepreneurs, funds from Kuwait and the UAE) at a price of \$9.4, thanks to which \$25.6 billion was received. The market capitalization of Saudi Aramco from the initial level of \$1.7 trillion reached \$1.88 trillion [4:296]. These days, talk about the “dissolution of the state” and the performance of its functions by global TNCs and public associations has almost disappeared. Such prophecies of K.Schwab have not yet come true. On the contrary, in the third decade of the 21st century in the West the increasing role of the state is becoming obvious, first of all – in economic life as a regulator of economic processes, in public life as its active participant. Indicative is K.Schwab’s silence about the subject of the Technological (Fourth Industrial) Revolution and its beneficiary [15]. The experience of the oil crisis of 1973 clearly showed that the process of change in the world economy can be cleverly used by groups of the world elite to obtain benefits for themselves, which, of course, does not exclude the receipt of benefits by other persons.

Discussion

In this part of the article, we will assess the impact of the oil crisis. The crisis brought expected and unexpected consequences for all its participants, some of which turned out to be long-term and global. As I.Makarov and M.Chupichkin rightly noted, “the oil shock became not so much the root cause as the catalyst for change” [7:38].

The Arabs were able to become real masters of their oil when Western companies transformed from owners into operators. Dependence on the West remained, but its nature changed. Forecasts about the transformation of the world oil market into a “sellers’ market” dictating their terms to consumers did not come true. Western monopolies still own oil production technologies, the world’s main refining and petrochemical capacities, the tanker fleet and the distribution network. The need to include Arab countries in the complex network of the oil market has significantly complicated their relations with the West, giving them the character of an unequal, but partnership. The obvious success of the Arab countries was their acquisition of a new, independent place in world politics. It is no longer possible to ignore not only OPEC, as later OPEC+, but also the political course of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, Iraq and Algeria. The faith of the Eastern countries in the omnipotence of the West has been finally undermined.

The rapid process of wealth redistribution itself was indicative after the sharp increase in oil revenues in the Arab countries, which opened up new opportunities for them. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE immediately responded to the IMF’s call to increase their contributions. The OAPEC countries created the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, modeled on the IBRD, a special fund to provide interest-free loans for 20 years to Arab countries that suffered from rising oil prices (Mauritania, the YAR, the PDRY, Somalia, Sudan, Morocco, Lebanon, Jordan). Already in the second half of the 1970s, on the initiative of the Gulf oil monarchies, various Arab banks and financial funds emerged to help implement agricultural and industrial projects in Asian and African countries, the largest of which was the Islamic Development Bank with a capital of \$2 billion [18:352]. This is how the “oil diplomacy” of the Arabs was formed. And this success overshadowed the failure to achieve the main goal of the oil embargo – the resolution of the Middle East crisis and the Palestinian problem. Instead of a regional settlement, separate agreements with Israel, Egypt, and then Jordan came. The consequences of the oil crisis increased the economic and political differentiation of the Arab countries. Petrodollars allowed the oil monarchies of the Persian Gulf, Iraq, Algeria and Libya to begin large-scale socio-economic transformations, and a period of rapid development began in these countries. In countries deprived of large oil reserves, this turned out to be impossible. The relative unity and recognized hierarchy of the Middle Eastern system of international relations, led by Egypt, were replaced by processes of regionalization and fragmentation of the Arab world, the results of which are obvious today.

The so-called “oil curse” of oil-producing countries has become widely used to support the opinion that their development is at a dead end. But is this true? For countries with large populations and low levels of national economic development, oil production and oil exports have indeed become the basis for development and have not provided an opportunity for economic restructuring. For the oil monarchies of the Gulf, with small populations and capital-excessive development, the oil sector has become the basis for the development of processing industries, and the income from it has allowed for the development of infrastructure and the “tertiary sector”. But in both cases, oil income was not a “curse” but a “safety cushion”, guaranteeing revenues to the state budget. Iran’s experience in recent decades clearly demonstrates this. For Western countries and the United States, the 1970s became, in the words of N.Zulkifil and D.Hakim, “decades of pessimism”, “reminiscent of the years of the Great Depression” [27:137]. The era of prosperity, two decades of continuous economic growth and social prosperity in the West, had ended. But the problems and difficulties of the “consumer society” were on the surface. Structural changes in the Western economy and financial system began. The Bretton Woods system was replaced by the Jamaican currency system; in 1976, the IMF officially abolished the gold standard, and floating exchange rates became the new norm. In 1974, the International Energy Agency (IEA) was created to coordinate energy policy. The familiar model of industrial economy of mass production and mass consumption, based on cheap energy, was being replaced by a different model.

The technological restructuring of the Western economy that began after the events of 1973, starting with energy conservation policies and ending with the development of alternative fuels to hydrocarbons, purposefully and steadily led to a relative reduction in oil and gas consumption, although they remain essential energy sources in the first decades of the 21st century (along with coal). There was the sharply increase in natural gas consumption in the United States and Western Europe that began in the late 1960s. For example, in Germany, the share of gas in total consumption increased from 16 to 54% from 1960 to 1970. The increase in prices for imported oil stimulated the high-cost gasification of coal and the extraction of shale oil in the United States [18:13, 30]. The “age of power” of the Arab oil countries turned out to be short.

The energy transition process may accelerate or slow down, but its irreversibility is undeniable. In the first decades of the 21st century, demand for Arab oil fell sharply due to the economic and financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic; excess oil supply led to a drop in oil prices. The development of oil refining and petrochemicals is becoming an urgent need for oil-exporting countries [see 6:29-31]. In Kuwait, the UAE and Saudi Arabia, far-sighted rulers already intensified their attention to the problem of diversifying their economies in the late 1970s (unlike the leaders of the USSR; in those years, the country was “hooked on the oil needle,” as Western journalists put it). The goal of diversification was consistently set in each five-year plan, and although its implementation was slow, the share of oil in the country’s GDP was declining. In 2016, Emir Mohammed bin Salman spoke about the kingdom’s most important problem – its dependence on oil exports: “We cannot allow our country to be vulnerable to the volatility of commodity prices or the situation on foreign markets,” since Saudi Arabia is “morbidly dependent on oil.” Meanwhile, the Emir pointed out, “King Abdul Aziz and the people who served him founded the kingdom without dependence on oil, they ruled this state without oil and lived in this state without oil” [cit. in: 4:282].

One thing has remained unchanged for the kingdom: its dependence on the United States thanks to oil and petrodollars. Of course, there have been many political conflicts between the countries over the past two decades (for example, the events of September 11, 2001., the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi) and economic conflicts (the transformation of the United States into a competitor to Saudi Arabia thanks to shale oil). But the two countries have strong relations in the financial and military-technical spheres. Hundreds of billions of Saudi petrodollars are invested in the US financial system and various real estate objects, in the industrial sphere. For example, the largest oil refinery in the US belongs to Saudi Aramco, Saudi companies own other enterprises. Almost all weapons systems and military infrastructure in the kingdom are from the US. And this cannot be changed overnight. The experience of the 1973 oil crisis demonstrated the high degree of flexibility of Saudi policy in relations with the West in order to achieve its goals and maintain its comfortable position in the world system.

After the oil crisis, the West lost its complacent confidence that there would always be large volumes of oil flowing from the Middle East. As E.M.Primakov noted, “the era of cheap oil is over” [18:165].

A new trend should be noted – “the globalization of energy demand” (Yergin). As the economy and people’s incomes grow, so does the demand for energy. The obviousness and importance of energy security in the broad sense became apparent in the fall of 1973.

Nowadays, when global structural changes are changing the foundations of material production and consumption, an idea is proposed that requires raw materials and energy. However, K.Schwab’s forecasts about the dominance of “breakthrough technologies” and the “transformation of the physical world” [15:18, 90] seem to be an exaggeration. In our material world, which includes not only North America and Western Europe, but also Asia, Africa, Latin America, with rapidly growing needs of huge masses of people, we cannot do without modern agriculture, factories and plants, transport and housing and communal services, and all this requires providing increasing and stable volumes of energy resources, which in the medium term can only be provided by oil and gas.

Conclusion

The experience of the 1973 oil crisis comes to mind when comparing the chronicle of current events in the world with the events of half a century ago.

Today, there is a full-scale global crisis. Its main cause is the strengthening of the non-West, which means the end of 500 years of Western domination. A real alternative to Western, American domination has emerged.

Of course, no one wants to give up their advantageous position as “king of the mountain”. The result of the crisis is a change in the world economy and world politics. The parties in the confrontation use both military force and economic pressure, on the one hand, and economic and political actions, on the other. At the same time, both sides are ready to make concessions; no one wants the crisis to become radical.

Thus, in the 1970s, the United States did not dare to use military force against the Arab countries, although Henry Kissinger admitted the possibility of dividing Saudi Arabia into four parts, and the American 82nd division was practicing an operation to land troops on the sandy coast. They were held back by the danger of a collapse of the world market. We see a similar situation now.

True, the former “oil – money – power” link has long since disintegrated into its individual components. In the conditions of a changing world order, Arab countries that possess oil and money, or only oil, have come out from under the American “umbrella” and are ready for equal cooperation. In today’s problem-ridden global world, everyone is doomed to cooperation. The BRICS countries offer the values of equal coexistence to replace the competitive-conflict mentality, and respect for civilizational values to replace ideological extremism. The countries of the East, and of course the Arab countries, are interested in a solution to existing problems that is beneficial to them and the establishment of a world order that is convenient for them. Hence the combination in their policy of visible radicalism

and secret agreements with active world players, for example, on the issue of using dollars as a means of payment for oil. It can be said that the oil crisis of 1973 served as one of the rehearsals for the global transformation of the world system.

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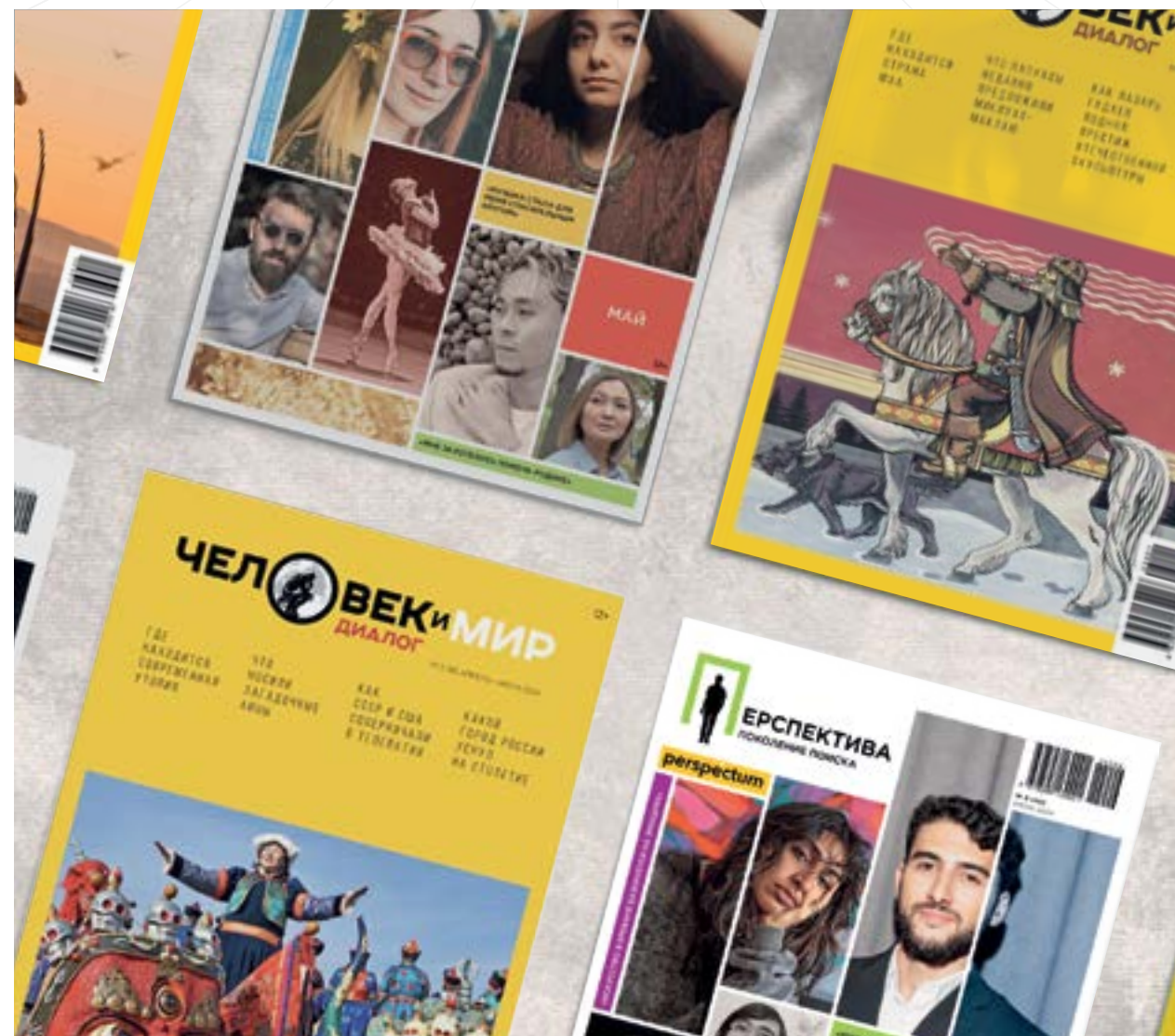
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"Amazons of the Russian avant-garde" - this is how, following the poet B. Lifshitz, today we call the artists N. Goncharova, A. Exter, L. Popova, O. Rozanova, V. Stepanova and N. Udaltsova, whose work became an important part of 20th century art and a source of inspiration for the design of this issue.

The cover design is based on the works of O. V. Rozanova.

Olga Vladimirovna Rozanova (1886, Melenki, Vladimir province - 1918, Moscow) - Russian painter, graphic artist, poet, author of articles on art. From 1905 she studied in Moscow at the Bolshakov School, attended the K. Yuon and I. Dudin School, from 1911 - the St. Petersburg Zvantseva school, where Bakst, Dobuzhinsky, Petrov-Vodkin taught. Having joined the «Youth Union» of artists, she took part in all the society's exhibitions. Along with Malevich's paintings, the «Portrait of A.V. Rozanova», published in the «Ogonyok» magazine (1913, No. 1), caused a furor among her colleagues. At that time, she met D. Burliuk, V. Khlebnikov, V. Mayakovsky, A. Kruchenykh and other representatives of avant-garde art. She revealed herself in different styles - Fauvism, Futurism, Suprematism. In 1917, she joined K. Malevich's «Supremus» society, and was elected secretary both of the society and the editorial board of the magazine of the same name. Among the followers of Suprematism, Malevich especially valued Rozanova.

