

**ON SOME NEW CHALLENGES AND THREATS IN THE GLOBAL WORLD
AT THE CURRENT STAGE**

The world today and the process we witness are becoming more and more turbulent. The foundations, principles and orders, which recently seemed unshakeable, crash, fail or are questioned. The system of international relations under globalization's pressure is also being transformed. The contours of polycentric, multipolar world order are becoming more distinct.

Globalization enveloped trade, production, financial, information and other flows and helped strengthening of the new economic power and influence centers that today are becoming active participants of international agenda's drawing up. At the same time, it seems that globalization itself as the process of liberal capital's expansion has reached its natural limits. It's not accidental that today we're speaking more about its downside, its costs when referring to the Western countries. There are more and more signs of the liberal socioeconomic model's weakening and discrediting, the one that aspired to the universal character, and what is more, globalization is often nonaccepted or rejected exactly by the communities that were its "driver" in the past.

The crisis of large sections' of the population trust to cosmopolitan elites, the growth of public scepticism in relation to highly ideology-driven foreign policy directions and precepts, requirement to return to nationally-oriented political and economic agenda are becoming more and more evident in the leading Western countries. The essence of gradual weakening phenomenon is seen in that, and possibly decline of the "historical West" as well, that positioned itself as a "nucleus" of the system of international relations that formed after disintegration of bipolarity.

And what is more, ideological "gaps" are becoming more and more evident in

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the Western block itself. Growth of factors, negatively influencing global strategic stability, worries more and more of late. This is, first of all, brought about by striving of certain states and military-political unions for determinant military and military-technical predominance, which could allow them to use force freely and without obstruction when promoting their interests on the international scene. Uncontrolled military capacity-building, including development of “global strike” means and “global force projection” more and more evidently contradict the ideals of universal and total disarmament under efficient international control.

Today’s global and regional challenges and threats, first of all terrorism, continue their rapid and dangerous evolution, setting unprecedented tasks for individual states and the whole world community, sometimes the said tasks are incommensurable in their novelty, complexity and force with any analogues five or even ten years ago.

The “genesis” of such development of events is absolutely evident for us: notwithstanding warnings by Russia, in their time, a number of Western countries and regional players engaged in “geopolitical engineering” in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, making provisions for purposeful and systemic intervention into internal affairs of independent states, destabilization and overthrow of “undesirable” regimes. This led to destruction of traditional mechanisms of state government and providing security in the region, to going beyond all bounds and uncontrolled radicalization of “Moslem Street” and as a result raging military activities of terrorist and extreme structures.

The MENA region is still in systemic multi-level crisis. Unstopping bloody terrorist acts with the assassination of Russia’s ambassador to Turkey A.G. Karlov among them, explosions in the result of which dozens and hundreds of people die in Iraq and Syria, similar attacks in Turkey and Egypt, Pakistan, attacks by suicide bombers in European cities are an illustrative certification of the urgency of terrorist threat worldwide as well.

We’re making efforts as a part of Syrian crisis settlement to stop bloodshed, in parallel going on combating terrorist groups, providing humanitarian aid for the

population, activating political process as it is set forth by Resolution 2254 of the United Nations Security Council, implementation of which supposes readiness to operate jointly, on an equal and extensive basis, giving up pretensions to leadership.

We look upon international meetings in Astana dedicated to Syria in January-March, 2017 as an important, qualitatively new stage in the process of conflict settlement in Syria, as representatives of the Syrian armed opposition controlling the state of affairs “on land” took part in such events for the first time, political and diplomatic settlement with no alternative under the UN aegis was recognized as imperative and participants were committed to maintaining cessation of hostilities. Besides, coordination mechanism to control its maintaining was set up and started working. Thanks to meetings in Astana, it became possible to revive the “Geneva process” conducted by the United Nations’ special envoy to Syria Staffan de Mistura.

We call all members of international community to unite efforts in combating international terrorism in the face of the ISIS and Jabhat Al-Nusra, representing a direct threat to the world and security not only in Syria and the Middle East but in other parts of the globe as well. Today, it’s necessary to put aside politicized approaches and geopolitical calculations and in every possible way assist returning of stability and security to Syria and region as a whole. In future difficult tasks of restoring Syrian infrastructure destroyed in the years of conflict and as a result of economic sanctions unilaterally imposed on Syria by a number of states must be solved, as well as its social revival and political development.

Recently, challenges and threats of “chemical terrorism” have been coming forward and becoming more and more perceptible. The striving of international terrorist organizations for purchasing technologies and components required for creating chemical weapons is stable and often it already becomes a system. It is largely related to the fact that terrorist acts when war gases and toxic agents with a big damaging ability are used, are associated with increased psychological and

demoralizing effect and have a wide public and political response. Unfortunately, we have to say that ISIS militants are already using not just toxic chemicals but also true war gases in the Middle East. There are many cases of their use registered in Syria and Iraq.

There is a danger that these incidents will be repeated. Unfortunately, the USA give grounds for that, when reacting to the ISIS militants' provocation or may be even coordinating their actions with them, attacked the Syrian government forces on April 7, using the chemical weapons incident in Syria's Idlib province on April 4 as a pretext. Washington resorted to force demonstration, undisguised aggression against the country combating international terrorism, completely distorting what happened in Idlib and accusing Syrian authorities in the incident. The American side cannot fail to understand that Syrian government forces did not use chemical weapons there. Damascus simply does not have them which was many times confirmed by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The USA demonstrate such a thoughtless approach not for the first time, and that only aggravates the problems in the world and creates a threat for international security.

The state of affairs in Iraq together with Syria stays tense and is characterized by the ongoing violent struggle against the ISIS. Armed operations, in particular with the aim of liberation of important centers of Ramadi and Al-Fallujah and now Mosul as well, provoked serious deterioration of the humanitarian situation – the number of internally displaced persons is already exceeding 300,000 people. On the whole, according to UN forecasts, their number may come up to 1 mln people, with 700,000 acutely requiring humanitarian aid.

We support international community's efforts in settlement of severe domestic political crises in Libya and Yemen. We proceed from the requirement of a wide-range national dialogue taking into account interests of all leading political forces with the purpose of stabilizing situation in these states and prevention of spreading of centers of terrorism.

What's going on confirms the necessity to consolidate efforts of the

world community to form an extensive anti-terrorist front, to which the President of Russia Vladimir V. Putin called already at the opening of the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly in September, 2015. Our offer to adopt a UN Security Council's resolution on fighting the ideology of terrorism is in line with this initiative. We presented its draft to be examined by the Security Council in October, 2016. The document is aimed at mobilization of the world community to fight the spreading of the ideology of terrorism, in particular via making mandatory the provisions of the UN Security Council's resolution 1624 (2005), calling upon all states to criminalize any forms of incitement to terrorist actions, including by way of recruitment and propaganda with the active use of information and communication technologies.

Besides combating terrorism itself, it's also required to adopt effective measures to politically settle numerous conflicts, restore stability and set peaceful life going in many places that still remain "trouble spots".

The high conflict potential is still witnessed on lines of conflicts of a number of confessions in certain regions of the world. We have to ascertain that insistent striving of some representatives of the world community for using the ethnic and confessional factor as a tool for geopolitical influence led to conflicts' on religious grounds not only failing to disappear but, on the contrary, began obtaining tendency to expansion.

It was especially evident in the misery of Christians in distress in the Middle East and Northern Africa. This problem was in particular analysed on March 7, 2017 in Geneva at the high-level conference "Mutual Respect and Peaceful Coexistence as a Condition of Interreligious Peace and Stability: Supporting Christians and Other Communities" held as a side event of the 34th session of the UN Human Rights Council. The attention of the participants of that event was also focused on the Ukraine where the seeds of religious strife also produce their sorrowful results and where numerous cases of discrimination and persecution of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under the Moscow Patriarchate were registered.

The fairly stable at first sight West turned out to be in aggressive secularization epidemic, and traditional Christian values such as the institutions of marriage and the family, the right of parents to bring their own children up normally already require protection, as, on the whole, the principles of people's interrelations in the society which have been worked out by the main world confessions over the centuries.

Because of that we were very optimistic about the meeting of His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill and Pope Francis in Cuba a little bit more than a year ago. We count on the practical realization of the provisions of their Joint Declaration (Havana Declaration) and its helping to preserve our common historical and cultural space, albeit in different theological interpretations.

The accumulated by our country unique and centuries-long experience in maintaining and development of inter-ethnic and inter-confession dialogue could undoubtedly help overcome appearance of new separating lines according to inter-civilization and inter-confession characteristics.

Numerous conflicts in the Middle East and Africa instigated a large-scale migration crisis. Figures for 2016 again confirm that this problem is still far from its solution. Thus, last year, the number of migrants from Asia and Africa to Europe amounted to more than 363,000 people. Besides, 2016 broke records in the number of dead migrants – about 7.5 thousand people died. The migrant flow to Europe already led to the growing terrorist threat, increase of xenophobia and outright inter-ethnic discord in some European countries.

In view of their urgency, migration issues are becoming more and more discussed and important on the international agenda. These issues are regularly focused on at the UN venues.

The high-level Plenary Meeting of the UN General Assembly on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants took place in September, 2016 within the framework of enhancing international efforts in taking complex measures in the migration sphere. As a result of the said meeting, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants was adopted and called to improve the state of affairs with

receipt of refugees and migrants on borders and in hosting countries by way of joining efforts of the whole world community.

To achieve this goal, the UN member states agreed to work on preparation of two serious international legal documents over 2017: Global Agreement on Migration which is already under discussion at the main UN venue in New York as well as Global Agreement on Refugees, with the leading role in the development of it played by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva. These documents will help to work out a collective solution of difficult and urgent refugee and migrant issues all over the world.

In the opinion of many international experts, such measures are in demand. It's especially evident in case of the population of the European continent which had to deal with the flow of a relatively small – 1 mln people against nearly 510 mln people living in the European Union – number of forced migrants, for which the EU member states were not ready either logistically, or morally, or psychologically, or politically.

One of the consequences of such inability was serious change in the attitude of the local population to the arriving refugees and migrants. At the same time, in case of the right migration policy building, considerable migrant masses may be integrated in the society advantageously for the hosting state. Our own experience taught us that as working migrants create from 6% to 8% of the Russian Federation's GDP. It's also important to work with the residents of the hosting states, not disregarding measures directed to prevention of discrimination and demonstrations of intolerance to migrants.

Our best practices in this sphere may serve a valuable example of efficient migrant policy building even in “extreme” situations when there is a mass inflow of people in case of emergency. It's well-known that more than 1 mln residents of the South-Eastern Ukraine arrived in Russia. More than 400,000 Ukrainians are registered as those having a refugee status or getting temporary refuge. Special attention is paid to living conditions and social protection of forced migrants, their integration into the Russian society. There was a lot of work done to provide the

legal grounds and resource base for their distribution in different regions of the Russian Federation. The emphasis was on providing an opportunity for these people to live not in temporary accommodation facilities but in settlements among Russian residents, finding and offering them suitable jobs. Separate attention was paid to children, their vaccination, placement in kindergartens.

Crisis phenomena development risks are not reducing in world economy either, and its restoration has not become sustainable yet. The economy dynamics is extremely unstable (according to the UN report of January, 2017, world GDP growth in 2016 amounted to 2.2% only). There are still structural imbalances and sovereign debt accumulation. The new global economy challenges include escalation of geopolitical tension, large-scale migration crisis, origination of crisis phenomena signs in the banking sector of the Euro zone as well as volatility of world prices for power and raw materials resources.

The UK decision to exit the EU as well as D. Trump's winning the Presidential elections in the USA and announced by him new administration's approaches to economic policy add considerable uncertainty to global economic prospects. Risks connected with the world economy's transfer to the new technological mode as well as formation of more strict ecological standards in it in the context of the Paris Agreement (climate agreement) entering into force on November 4, 2016, require special attention.

Today, we are witnessing the change of paradigm of the established economic relations. Global regulation mechanisms do not manage to balance the interests of the parties. Political advantages often override understandable economic calculations. Financial, trade and investment tools are more and more often used by certain states to put political pressure, the evidence of which are Western sanctions against Russia. We are sure that unilateral sanctions are a dead-end and a counter-productive way, and that by the way was demonstrated and confirmed in the course of big international economic forums that took place in 2016 in St. Petersburg and Vladivostok.

We are sure that one of the most important conditions for quick and

sustainable restoration of world economy is continuation of efforts in coordination of macroeconomic policy by all the leading countries from the economic point of view on the basis of openness and reciprocity. We confirm our unflinching determination to continue cooperation with the purpose of comprehensive advancement of the global economic management system, providing economic and financial stability, support of sustainable, dynamic and inclusive growth, first of all, using such many-sided formats as the UN and G20.

Humanitarian cooperation can serve as good help in formation of mutually advantageous and equal relations between nations and states. At the same time, one of its component parts connected with human rights issues, is still used by some states not so much for establishing partnership and mutual understanding, as for emphasizing differences, their dominance over the others and foisting their standards and rules on them.

We come across attempts of some states or groups of states to use this topic as an ideological tool of their foreign policy more and more often, this tool is intended for settling political scores or promoting arguable concepts which split the ranks of the world community. The goal of such actions is evident. In the environment when global competition is becoming keener and influence of big developing states is increasing, Western countries are actively looking for additional tools to increase their own competitiveness, spread their standards and approaches under the guise of universal ones and as a consequence preserve their domineering in the world.

Such a state of affairs cannot fail to arouse concern. We have always been proceeding from the fact that equal and constructive cooperation based on maximally extensive agreement and respect of the principle of sovereign equality of states should be the core element in human rights protection. It's important to respect cultural, civilization, religious and historical special features of countries' development. That's the only way to provide uniting efforts of the world community in encouragement and protection of human rights.

The investment of civil society institutions in counter-measures against today's

challenges and threats is fairly in demand in the global world, including in support of efforts undertaken by state structures in prevention and suppressing the spreading of the ideology of terrorism, extremism, religious radicalism, combating illegal drug turnover, organized crime, corruption.

We are interested in enhancing the role of Russian non-governmental organizations in operation of respective international mechanisms. Promotion by domestic NGOs of their own agenda, accommodating the interests of Russia and its civil society, at dialogue venues will undoubtedly help people from other countries to form adequate ideas of our country and its course in world affairs, free from close-mindedness formed by world propaganda media resources.

In a number of cases some manifestations of information policy carried out by big global, predominantly Western “mass media” deserve to take a place of one of the “latest” challenges and threats to the today’s world order. Western mass media dual approaches are fairly evident in coverage of urgent world events. We remember their hysteria in connection with disproportional use of force by Russian and Syrian forces in Aleppo. And the contrast with their reaction to the tragedy of the Iraqi people in Mosul, which has become evident in March, 2017 when the same mass media actually “turned a blind eye” to much bigger troubles suffered by residents of this city. I think, it would be right for non-governmental organizations of various countries, civil society as a whole to look more closely at this problem, including from the perspective of the owners of contemporary Western mass media, their interests and interest not only in the media space but also in other sectors of the economy.

Movement in the direction of polycentric world order is an objective reality of the current stage in international relations. The issue of its arrangement is becoming urgent. Will it be a hypothetical “war of all against all” as Thomas Hobbes wrote already in the 17th century, in which “new” and “old” power centers competing for leadership will fight each other? Or will the constructive way win and behavioural standards assisting harmonious coexistence and progress, be coordinated? We are certainly for the second course.

We think that transfer of natural competition of states, non-state actors in world politics into the civilized course could answer the interests of the world community. In this environment, promoted by Russia fair principles of international communication acquire special significance – equality and mutual taking interests into account, unconditioned observance of the international law, collective search of answers to today's challenges and threats, noninterference in internal affairs of the others, respect for cultural and civilization special features and differences. These principles are attractive and clear for the overwhelming majority of the countries of the world, they carry a considerable potential for uniting.

We're interested in the renewed international architecture to be just and sustainable, based on extensive cooperation of states and integration associations and providing opportunities for further global development. We are ready to establish open, honest cooperation with everyone disposed to cooperation. Only such an approach can provide improving the situation in the world.