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RUSSIA'S SPECIAL MILITARY OPERATION IN UKRAINE AS A CATALYST FOR SHAPING THE NEW WORLD ORDER

Imperfections of the contemporary world order, the need to adapt it to changing conditions, as well as the current processes of its transformation, are being discussed by political scientists and have been in the epicenter of real world politics for decades. The world order as a category and the main factor in the development of political, economic and social interaction between countries participating in the international relations is one of those phenomena whose scientific understanding constantly fails to keep pace with its real development.

The term “world order” was introduced into scientific and political discourse relatively recently. “The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics” by Hedley Bull, then Professor of International Relations at the Australian National University in Canberra, was published in 1977. In his study he uses the term for the first time and tries to analyze international development trends from this perspective.

As for the world order as a political reality and the basis for development of a system of international relations, this concept emerges in its modern sense and begins to function and define the world architecture at the time when the European continent begins to form nations in the framework of the state system.

Old world orders

In political science they distinguish several forms or stages in the development of the world order. While not claiming that my analysis is complete, I will outline the main stages of its metamorphosis. The first stage – Westphalian – emerges as a result of the Peace of Westphalia treaty in 1648, after which states gradually became the main elements of the international system. At the same time, due to the prevailing trends in world development until the first half of the twentieth century, the term “world” was essentially limited to the boundaries of Europe, which at that time played a major role and determined the nature and characteristics of development in other parts of the world as well.

The Westphalian period was succeeded by the Vienna period, which began with the signing of the Peace of Vienna after the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. It was characterized by the rise of a number of great European powers which gained more weight and influence than the rest of the countries. This system comprised not only

states but also unions of states. There is another definition of this stage: “the European concert system.” It was the period when such concepts as *great powers* and *multilateral diplomacy* emerged. This world order is considered to be the first example of implementation of the principle of collective security.

The results of World War I were cemented by the Versailles–Washington system of international relations. Its structure was formed by the Versailles Peace Treaty of 1919, as well as the agreements concluded as a result of the Washington Conference in 1921–1922. At this stage, the world order had transcended European boundaries, but had not yet become a universal system. Institutionally, a polycentric world was fixed, in which the adoption and implementation of major decisions were based on the agreements between the great powers, taking into account the interests of the others. The League of Nations was created.

The next stage started after the end of World War II. The principles elaborated at the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences were laid at the basis of the new world order. A new system of institutions ensuring international communication, stability and economic interaction was created. The Bretton Woods conference led to the formation of the monetary and financial system, which was transformed in the second half of the 1970s after the Jamaica conference. At this point, the term “world order” takes on its modern meaning.

The United States, which suffered the least damage in the war and received the greatest political and economic dividends as its result, emerged as the mightiest world power. Having suffered enormous material, human and structural losses, the Soviet Union, which bore the burden of the war on its shoulders and defeated fascism on the continent with the support of the anti-Hitler coalition, received a well-deserved position of the victorious country and one of the world’s political superpowers.

This structure predetermined the bipolar configuration of the postwar international system, which assumed the form of two rival camps of states. At a certain stage, with the growth of unifying tendencies, there was a rise in importance and influence of European countries which distinguished themselves as an independent center of power during this period. However, at a later time these trends were suppressed by the Americans, and Europe, with its own consent, was actually relegated through the mechanisms of NATO to the level of a collective satellite of the United States and the Regional Wing of the created NATO bloc. For almost half a century, until the collapse of the Soviet Union, this system was characterized by a fairly high stability and defined the rules and nature of international peace.

The period that followed, which is considered to have begun after the end of the Cold War in 1991 and lasted almost without changes until 2000, had a monocentric configuration, characterized by the unconditional dominant role of the United States, a sharp increase in international instability, remaking of interstate borders and a large number of open armed conflicts with an increasing confrontational potential.

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After 2000, the world community entered the modern period of its existence. This stage is characterized by high instability, a growing trend towards a radical break in the balance of political and economic influence between a number of states, consolidation of the position of many actor countries in the political arena, especially the resurgent Russia, China, India, some other states; withdrawal of some previously influential international political structures from the political scene and emergence of new ones. The gradually emerging need to make significant adjustments to the architecture and principles of international political and economic relations, including the foreign exchange and financial system, was becoming increasingly evident.

The processes of preparing for a new transformation of the world order could theoretically be stretched over a very long time period in the conditions of relative stability. However, the situation developing before our eyes has led to a sharp exacerbation of contradictions in international political and economic affairs and intensified trends toward global metamorphosis. In the meantime, history of the world development shows that the transition from one stage of development of the world order to another has never taken place in an evolutionary way, but invariably became the result of a regional or global crisis. It looks like this time it will be no exception.

The Russian leadership's proposals to take into account the objective and vital interests of our country meeting a harsh and uncompromising reaction from Washington and the overwhelming majority of NATO member states, a number of other American satellites; the inevitable conduct of a special military operation in Ukraine, where Russia met with indirect but quite apparent and powerful opposition from the collective West; the economic and information war of annihilation declared against Russia – all of this signified the end of the possibility of evolutionary adaptation of the world order to modern realities, and has transferred these processes into an acute form of a crisis, more compressed in time.

New world order

At the moment it is obvious that the development course of the new configuration of the world order will be determined by a combination of factors. On the one hand, it will depend on the results of the special operation in Ukraine, our ability to resist massive attempts of the West to isolate Russia on the world stage without regard to any rules and frameworks of international law, to contain its development and destroy it through the use of economic and financial "weapons." On the other hand, it will depend on the ability of the U.S.-headed coalition to mitigate the objectively inevitable negative political, economic and social consequences of their declared total war against Russia.

Any assumptions are a risky and unrewarding task; and yet, as it seems, today we have a sufficient degree of confidence to make the first, so far preliminary, forecasts about the possible outcomes of the current stage of the developing crisis.

The course and nature of the special military operation conducted by the Russian Armed Forces in Ukraine testify to its generally good design and planning, the confidence of the Russian political and military leadership in the successful completion and achievement of the set tasks and goals.

Although, as we have mentioned earlier, the clash of Russian armed forces in a special military operation in Ukraine with the United States and NATO is formally indirect, this statement is only partially true. For a long time, the AFU have been prepared, equipped, trained, armed, and infrastructure for an offensive operation has been created with active assistance and involvement of significant efforts and finance of the collective West. These efforts, previously camouflaged, became overt at some point. The number of "mercenaries" from the countries of the explicit and implicit anti-Russian coalition accounted for tens of thousands.

At the same time, given the current level of Russia's military-technical capabilities, the West (NATO and the European Union) is not yet ready for active action. At this stage, attempts of the United States and the countries of the anti-Russian coalition to ensure a complete and global political and economic blockade of Russia have so far yielded limited results. Despite Washington's forceful and aggressive steps in this direction, these attempts in many cases provoke the opposite reaction. It can be assumed that this trend will only intensify, especially against the background of the expected success of Russian forces.

Russia's forced requirement for unfriendly countries to transfer funds for gas in rubles to Russia's accounts has entailed the developments that are quite symptomatic. The sharply negative initial reaction to this proposal at the level of the EU governing bodies "harmoniously combines" with the formula developed by the EU Commission, according to which the purchase of gas from Russia is possible "without violating the sanctions regime." A number of European countries have already agreed to pay for gas in rubles, and some others are looking into this proposal. The inevitable negative consequences of stopping gas supplies for the economies of the countries with the most radical positions will eventually force their leadership to develop a more sensible approach to this problem.

Russia's position is already supported by a whole set of decisions taken by the country's leadership regarding the use of gas in the event of a refusal by European countries; a whole range of future options has been outlined. This includes actively expanding the use of gas on the domestic market and redirecting export flows to eastern destinations. But the declared course for the systematic development of advanced processing of hydrocarbon raw materials offers particularly great prospects. This does not only expand opportunities to improve the structure of Russian exports, but, most importantly, provides a powerful impetus to the development of advanced sectors of national industry, bringing Russia into the ranks of influential economic and technological world powers.

What will happen?

The collective West will obviously focus on expanding the anti-Russian coalition with new members, reducing the possibility for Russia to rely on the assistance, support, or neutrality of the most politically and economically significant countries of today's world. In this context, very symptomatic and illustrative results were obtained at the consultations held on April 19, 2022 in the form of videoconference with the leaders of the United States, Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Canada, Romania and Poland, with participation of the President of the European Council Charles Michel and President of the European Commission Ursula

von der Leyen. Participants in the consultations clearly formulated the main task: to prevent the success of the Russian special military operation in Ukraine. In addition, they essentially agreed on the action plan for its implementation, which includes, among other things, providing Kiev with financial aid, sending weapons, including heavy ones, and other military means into the conflict zone, and stepping up efforts to isolate Russia in the world. The meeting of NATO defense ministers and allies (representatives of more than 40 countries) held at the American Ramstein base in Germany on April 26 upon initiative of the U.S. should be considered in the same context.

However, the course and logic of events show that the anti-Russian coalition is unlikely to achieve its goals. Efforts to expand the membership of the coalition will apparently remain unsuccessful. Moreover, Washington's current policy of rigid pressure and "arm-twisting" will not yield the desired result, but will continue to force the leaders of influential states, including China, India, Brazil, and the United Arab Emirates, to openly demonstrate their rejection of unceremonious pressure and blackmail. For our country, this development will facilitate the implementation of the policy of preserving these countries as situational partners, if not allies, who understand the goals of Russian policy.

In the long-term confrontation, the emphasis will obviously be shifted to the economy, foreign economic relations, and finance. However, at the present stage, due to the factors outlined above, it is no longer possible for the collective West to achieve the failure and capitulation of Russia. Here our country's position will be strengthened by its abundant raw materials, energy and food supplies, and fresh water resources (whose critical importance will be increasing rapidly), which are sufficient not only to meet domestic needs, but also to maintain a strong export potential, the importance of which will only grow against the background of globally increasing shortages.

The U.S. position in the world, due to a series of failures in foreign policy, most obviously in the Russian and Chinese directions by that time, will be steadily weakening. This trend will be exacerbated by growing instability inside the country – in the economy, social and domestic policy, as well as in serious foreign economic problems and contradictions, reduction of the US share and weight in international economic affairs in general. However, given its remaining potential, as well as its considerable inertia, the U.S. will remain one of the world's poles (but no longer the only one) for a very long period. The boundaries of this period cannot be traced thus far.

It is somewhat more difficult to discuss the prospects and place of a united Europe from today's perspective. Certainly, the aggravation of problems – with energy, raw materials, possibly food supply – will seriously undermine the regime of the "measured European idyll." A series of growing social contradictions will be equally destructive, including those caused by ambiguous migration policies and their consequence – the increasing conflict potential of cultural, inter-religion and civilizational confrontation, first within several countries and then on a regional scale.

In case of failure of American policy, the inevitable decline of Washington's influence in the world, the growth of contradictions within the EU, the new aggravation of the struggle for European leadership – all this could reverse the

centripetal trend that is based today on Europeans' recognition of the unconditional leadership of the United States, the almost voluntary cession of sovereignty to Washington and the unifying effect of NATO membership.

At the same time, it cannot be ruled out that the possibility of growing friction with the United States, the divergence of interests and positions on a number of vital issues may push the countries of the Community to return to the idea of a strong united Europe with a common foreign and security policy and claims to position the region as an independent center of power. However, such a scenario would be theoretically possible only if powers oriented in this direction come to rule in a number of leading European countries and, most importantly, if a generation of new authoritative and independent, nationally oriented political leaders emerges. This is difficult to predict, at least today.

The growing democratic and economic giants, China and India, are also likely to take up their positions as independent world centers of the first order. Purposeful efforts by the leadership of these states to actively build up their military and technical strength will only enforce and substantiate their claims to global economic leadership, as well as their prominent role in international security and peacekeeping in the new world architecture.

Turkey will probably succeed in joining the ranks of the second echelon leaders. Already today, under the leadership of President Erdogan, it is consistently pursuing a policy of building a "new Great Ottoman Empire" and is trying hard to extend its influence on neighboring countries in Asia, North Africa and the Middle East, as well as several states in the post-Soviet area.

Such countries as Brazil, Indonesia, Pakistan and a number of others with the necessary potential have a fairly good chance of significantly raising their stakes and playing a more significant role in world affairs in the future. They will benefit from the multipolar structure of the emerging world. A lot in the future of these countries will depend on the arrival of sophisticated and visionary leaders, the ability to choose an independent course, reliable allies and partners.

The positions of a number of other states, including the Arabian region, will be determined by their ability to maintain their long-term position as global financial centers and stable suppliers of strategic energy resources and raw materials.

Today we are witnessing the situation where the mechanisms once developed to support the world's economic processes and interrelations between states have largely lost their universal character and effectiveness, and are sometimes simply discredited, reduced by the United States and its allies to the level of utilitarian means of achieving their goals. Such mechanisms for the system of the world economy, supporting foreign economic and trade relations, must be developed and newly agreed upon. They will be based on a balance of power and guarantees to exclude the possibility of unilateral action on the part of Western countries.

The new world foreign exchange and financial system, which is likely to become complex, multi-component and integral in its structure, should also occupy a special place in this new order. The last two sets of critical problems I have touched upon are certainly among the priorities that require separate and careful consideration.

Russia's place in the world

In conclusion, I would like to address the most important question for all of us: the place of Russia in the emerging global system. Despite the well-known difficulties and problems experienced by our country during its modern history, Russia was in the best possible state when it entered the phase of the acute global crisis imposed on it from the outside. The country's leadership managed to overcome the period of internal instability. Although the process of shaping the political system is not yet complete, it is functioning steadily, and effective mechanisms for maintaining social stability have been developed and put in place. The country has significantly strengthened economically and financially. Economic, scientific, technological and structural development programs have been designed and are being implemented, albeit not without problems. For the first time in known history, Russia is a world leader in the military-technical sphere.

All this creates a favorable basis for overcoming the unprecedented pressure exerted on our country, which could be more accurately described as an undeclared hybrid war of annihilation, to withstand and continue the transition

to progressive development and ensuring sovereign interests in all segments of the political and socio-economic domains.

We have every reason to be confident that, as a result of the current crisis, Russia will be able to secure for itself the role of one of the main poles of the emerging new system of the world order. The political dividends that our country will gain will not only make it possible to push back the foci of external threats from our borders, significantly strengthen our position in the former Soviet Union territory and in international organizations, but also to create the basis for building a mutually beneficial system of relations that fully meets our national interests with the majority of countries and global centers of power in a wide range of areas of the international agenda. At the same time, Russia's ability to maintain and strengthen its position in the new world order can be reliably ensured in the long term only if it maintains a certain level of political and military-technical stability, which is a visible and convincing factor of economic and technological power. All this will form the basis of the goals and objectives of Russia's development programs in the long term.