

REPORTS

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TRANSITION TO A NEW MULTIPOLAR WORLD ORDER: THE BIFURCATION POINT HAS BEEN PASSED

In the post-war decades, on the basis of agreements between the three great powers of the anti-Hitler coalition (USSR, USA and Great Britain) that were reached in Yalta in February 1945, it was possible to ensure relatively stable geopolitical development and avoid of a number of local conflicts (Korea, Vietnam, the Caribbean crisis, Afghanistan) escalation into a new world war, a clash of civilizations. The Cold War ending contributed to the strengthening of this trend.

However, the unilateral concessions made by Gorbachev-Shevardnadze to the West and NATO, the dissolution of the CMEA (Mutual Economic Assistance) and the Warsaw Pact, and then the USSR collapse undermined the foundations of the Yalta Peace and gave rise to the USA and NATO the illusion of the possibility of a unipolar world order formation, while turning Russia into a second-rate regional power. Yeltsin-Kozyrev's foreign policy course to the following in the wake of the USA policy and the neglect of national interests led to a sharp weakening of Russia's foreign policy and its position in the geopolitical world order.

Only when E. M. Primakov become a leader of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and then – of the government of Russia, this deeply erroneous course began to be corrected. In the Putin–Lavrov years, the foreign policy course was subordinated to the tasks of reviving Russia as a strong world power, pursuing an independent foreign policy that meets Russia's national interests and Eurasian civilization reviving. But this independent policy of Russia has come into sharp contradiction with the desire of the USA and its NATO allies to preserve their hegemony and form a unipolar world order while ignoring the UN. These contradictions became especially acute in the mid-2010s as a result of the Ukrainian crisis, the reunification of Crimea with Russia and sanctions imposed by the West on Russia. The foundations of geopolitical stability have been violated, the Cold War specter has revived, American militaristic circles

have entered a new round of the arms race and have made a number of military adventures – in Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan and Syria.

On the other hand, since the end of the 20th century, the world has entered the era of a historical rift, a long and deep global crisis caused by the change of ultra-long-term civilizational cycles – the decline of a two-hundred-year-old industrial civilization and the formation of a humanistically noospheric integral world civilization, by transition from a five-hundred-year-old fourth generation of local civilizations with the West domination to the fifth generation under the East leadership. One of the global crisis manifestations is the sharp aggravation of geopolitical contradictions between ascending civilizations and leading powers led by China and Russia, laying the foundations of an integral civilization and a multipolar world order, and descending civilizations and world powers led by the United States and the European Union, seeking to preserve industrial civilization doomed to retire from the historical scene and establish a unipolar world order with the West hegemony.

Under these conditions, there was an urgent need to form a new world order that takes into account the changed balance of forces, the shift of civilizational activity center to the East as a result of the strengthening of China and India positions, the formation of BRICS and SCO. Measures to establish a new world order are defined in the BRICS and SCO strategic documents. Russia has also taken initiatives to integrate 'integrations' and partnerships within Greater Eurasia to strengthen the foundations of a multipolar world order.² The report below discusses the real progress of this process at the present time.

The 'short century' of the USA unipolar hegemony

The collapse of the USSR and the world system of socialism in the late 1980s led to the weakening of the powers opposed the American dictate in the post-war decades; and gave rise to the USA ruling circles the illusion of the unipolar world establishment and their exclusive right to form a new world order. This was most fully reflected in Zbigniew Brzezinski's book "The Great Chessboard" (М. : Международные отношения, 1998). The USA has never been capable of building an equal partnership with any country, it dreamed of undivided dominance in the world as the only superpower, with complete disregard for the interests of other countries, whether they are opponents or allies. The US demanded unquestioning ideological subordination everywhere. It threatened sanctions and wars for in-submission. The USA began to disregard pointedly international law, adopting an order based on rules it had composed solely in its own interests. To interfere in the internal affairs of other states has become the rule with no

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² See also: *Акаев А. А. О перспективах становления устойчивого многополярного мироустройства на базе партнерства цивилизаций // Глобальный мир: системные сдвиги, вызовы и контуры будущего : XVII Междунар. Лихачевские науч. чтения, 18–20 мая 2017 г. СПб. : СПбГУИ, 2017. С. 30–35.*

exception for the USA. It is logical that this USA behavior caused internal rejection of most countries of the world.

The USA desire for world domination was accompanied by a new subordinate world formation, using aggressively and everywhere the hybrid warfare tools – informational and ideological, proxy wars and color revolutions. Washington's foreign policy took on the character of neocolonial expansion and the desire to create zones of so-called 'controlled chaos', of course, by the USA, in key regions of the world. These include Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria and, finally, Ukraine and even wherever there is at least some resistance to the USA interests. America and NATO, unable to overcome the independent policy and the right of veto of Russia and China in the Security Council, began to make aggressive actions bypassing the UN. This was shown in the heavy bombing of Yugoslavia, the large-scale war in Iraq, the destruction of statehood in Libya, and the incitement of civil war in Syria. Of course, all this upset the world geopolitical equilibrium and the possibility to solve major international problems by diplomatic means that are based on the interests of different countries. The likelihood of a local conflict involving the great powers escalating into a global clash has become real.

Thus, for a quarter of a century, after the USA and its allies abandoned the principles of the Yalta Peace Treaty, the world political tension has been mounting, and geopolitical conflicts and threats of clashes not only between individual states, but also entire civilizations have been growing. This trend has become especially obvious with the proxy war unleashed by the Americans and their European allies against Russia in Ukraine and the ongoing USA provocations around Taiwan directed against the PRC. As a result of the USA aggressive policy aimed at dominating the unipolar world order, a new unprecedented round of the arms race has unfolded. Waves of terrorism and local military conflicts caused by the USA aggressive actions destroy the system of military and political stability that has developed in the world, which is aggravated by the US unilateral withdrawal from the most important international agreements on limiting the arms race and preventing possible armed conflicts. All this required a transition to a new model of a global multipolar world order, appropriate to the conditions and the balance of forces in the 21st century and allowing to weak the threats of the Cold War reanimation and the emergence of the Third World War – a suicidal clash of civilizations.

The Russian initiative to form a multipolar world order has earned decisive approval

The first of the world leaders to proclaim the need for a transition to a multipolar world order was the President of the Russian Federation V. V. Putin in his famous Munich speech in 2007. The main thesis of V. V. Putin's speech at the Munich Security Conference became: "the unipolar model is not only unacceptable but also impossible in today's world." It should be noted that it was with Munich 2007 that the true revival of Russia as a great power began. Setting to the transition to a multipolar world order was confirmed by Vladimir Putin in his speech at the anniversary session of the UN General Assembly in 2015. This position was strongly approved by Chinese President Xi Jinping and was clearly expressed in the joint statements of

the Russian Federation and the PRC dated June 25, 2016 and June 5, 2019. Thus, Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin condemned the unipolar geopolitical order led by the USA and earned approval of their vision of a just multipolar world among most developing countries.

The historic visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to Russia on March 20–22, 2023, his first official foreign visit after his triumphant election to this high position for the third time, further strengthened strategic mutual trust and mutually beneficial equal cooperation between Beijing and Moscow. Xi Jinping, immediately after landing at the Moscow airport, said that he was ready to stand guard together with Russia over "the world order based on international law", while the USA and its allies advocate "an order based on rules". Moreover, these rules are rewritten by them each time in accordance with the emerging situation and with exceptional benefit for themselves. On March 21, 2023, Russia and China signed a joint Statement on deepening the relations of comprehensive partnership and strategic interaction of states entering a new era. A number of prominent experts rightly called this document the "Manifesto of the new world order". Xi Jinping also said that "Sino-Russian ties have gone far beyond bilateral relations and are important for the modern world order and the fate of mankind." It is important to emphasize that the partnership between Russia and China is not aimed at third countries, but is aimed at creating a fair world order.

The current visit of Xi Jinping to Moscow has become a symbol of strengthening peace and friendship, good neighborliness and cooperation between China and Russia. Meetings and negotiations of V. V. Putin and Xi Jinping launched an accelerated creating a world order. The concept of multipolarity and building a polycentric world order has already become the leitmotif of the policy of Russia, China, India and Brazil, as well as a number of other large countries, despite strong opposition from the USA and its allies. In the world, already today, there is a natural process of an emerging multipolar world, which is especially evident in the BRICS example. Russia and China play the role of guarantors of its non-regression. The BRICS countries strive to pursue a self-determined international policy, independent of the USA, to build equal and fair relations with all countries without interference in their internal affairs. The BRICS is becoming an increasingly popular organization. If all willing countries would be accepted, then the BRICS may turn into an association of 15–20 countries already in 2023. Algeria, Argentina, Egypt, Iran, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey have already applied to join the organization. Some countries do so resisting the USA dictates, ignoring American trusteeship. This means that the process of transition to a multipolar world has already become a reality.

The United States' hybrid wars against Russia and China

The USA has recently been aggressively disposed towards the rest of the world, due to the process of the inevitable loss of the sole global leader status. It is not surprising that the USA first of all took up arms against Russia and China, which dared to challenge the USA adventurist dominance in the world. The USA is particularly annoyed by the all-round strengthening of friendship and cooperation between Russia

and China, expressed during Xi Jinping's visit to Moscow in March 2023. Therefore, the Americans and their European allies exert unprecedented pressure on Russia and China. First of all, the USA, breaking its earlier promise, achieved the expansion of NATO to the East right up to Russia borders. Then, due to the full support of the nationalist forces in Ukraine, they managed to make a coup in 2014, which led to a civil war and turned Ukraine into a springboard for USA and NATO aggression against Russia.

The well-known the Minsk Agreements on the settlement of the situation in Ukraine, according to the European leaders themselves, were adopted by the West only to gain enough time to rearm the Ukrainian army with modern NATO weapons. Which they managed to do in full. Thus, the proxy war in Ukraine, imposed on Russia by the collective West, is aimed at weakening Russia to 'knock out' Russia from the list of the great powers. Moreover, the USA and its satellites declare openly the need to destroy Russia through the war in Ukraine.

With that the USA declared a cold war on China, starting with a trade and technological wars. The USA does not want to cede its leadership in the global economy to China, including the role of the dollar as the main reserve currency and currency for mutual settlements in international trade. As usual, the USA achieves all this by imposing sanctions and restrictions on trade with China. The USA makes incredible efforts to restrain the technological development of China, which has already become a world leader in a number of key technologies of the future. Therefore, the United States has recently declared a 'chip' war against China and Russia, imposing a ban on nanochips export that are most in demand in many critical technologies. The USA has also concluded an agreement with the Netherlands and Japan to restrict the export of unique equipment for the production of such nanochips. The USA forces actively the European Union to curtail trade with China and confront in geopolitics, against the EU very beneficial interests. Finally, the USA systematically pursues a policy of containing China in the Indo-Pacific region, using a network of allies that they want to draw into confrontation with China at any cost to weaken China's influence in this region. It is obvious that the USA will need significant assistance from Australia, Great Britain and Japan, the anti-Chinese alliance AUKUS members, in the event of a direct conflict with the PRC. It is quite natural that the American policy of containing and restricting China in all areas caused China's course of confrontation with the USA. American leaders stubbornly and purposefully undertook to confront with China and achieved their goal.

In this regard, it is extremely important for both countries to strength comprehensively relations between Russia and China. China's political support in the Ukrainian proxy war between Russia and the collective West is extremely important for the Russian leadership, as it is a positive signal for many developing countries. On the other hand, the more Russia depletes the reserves of NATO weapons in Ukraine, the easier it will be for China to resist the USA and its satellites' provocations in Taiwan and the Indo-Pacific region. In the event of a war with the USA over Taiwan, China will have reliable sustainment support from Russia with energy and food resources. And such scenario may happen, since the USA prepares actively the Indo-Pacific theater for an armed conflict in the near future. There-

fore, it is no coincidence that the recent statement by Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang that "the more unstable our world is, the greater the need for sustainable development of Russian-Chinese relations." It is obvious that he refers to the effectiveness of the joint counteraction of China and Russia to the collective West destabilizing actions. Therefore, it is extremely important that Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping agreed to strengthen Russian-Chinese cooperation within the framework of multilateral structures, including the SCO, BRICS, and the Big Twenty, and to build up constructive force in shaping a multipolar world and improving the system of global governance.

China and Russia shape jointly a new world order

So, the world geopolitical structure transforms from an unstable unipolar to a stable multipolar world order in conditions of high instability and numerous risks. But, as mathematicians put it, the bifurcation point has already been passed and it was the beginning of a proactive Russian proxy war in the Ukrainian proxy war imposed on Russia by the USA and NATO. Now, Russia and China face an equally important task – to accelerate this process and make it sustainable and irreversible. The West has no way to stop this trend, since most of the countries of the developing world approve Russia and China, but, of course, first of all, approve their own sovereignty, which the USA has never considered. More and more countries today are already daring to resist the USA dictate, trying to get out of American trusteeship. In this regard, China's reconciliation of two long-standing warring rivals in the Middle East – Iran and Saudi Arabia – is indicative, which has already led to a regime of silence in Yemen, as well as a reduction in conflict in Lebanon and Iraq. Russia, in turn, makes successful efforts to normalize relations between Syria and Turkey, as well as Syria and Saudi Arabia. All this has led to a defusing of tensions in the Persian Gulf region. The times of the 1990s, when the USA established itself as the hegemon in the Middle East, clashing the peoples of the region in a bloody war, are irrevocably a thing of the past.

China and Russia are consistently creating a 'collective security architecture' for the Persian Gulf region and the entire Middle East. The situation in the region is rapidly changing for the better. There is already a clear transition from confrontation to the establishment of good-neighborly relations, to cooperation in various fields and, most importantly, to consideration of mutual interests. The fact that Saudi Arabia pursues independent policy in reducing oil production in April 2023, which led to a significant increase in oil prices, indicates that the world is no longer unipolar, it is transforming into a multipolar one. On the other hand, in gratitude to Russia for its selfless assistance, most Arab countries emphasized taking into account Russian interests in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, refusing to accept the aggressive demand of the West to impose sanctions against Russia. Moreover, despite the urgent appeals of the USA, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iraq and Algeria advocated firm and consistent compliance with the previously concluded agreements OPEC+ with Russia to stabilize oil prices. They also did not support the West's decision to impose a price ceiling on Russian energy resources. Arab countries began to act more independently, building alternative alliances with new world leaders – India, China and Russia. Thus, the Middle

East and the Persian Gulf region are becoming the forge of a new independent regional world order and one of the poles of a multipolar world.

BRICS and SCO as centers of a new multipolar world crystallization

From the very beginning, BRICS and SCO (The Shanghai Cooperation Organization) were considered by the organizers as centers of a new global and regional multipolar world order crystallization. These are truly new organizations of a new time and a new world. Every member of the organization, regardless of their own political weight and military power, gets the right to express themselves and defend their position. The relations of states within the organization are exclusively democratic and uniform. The practice to pass annually the presidency baton is a very effective tool in this matter. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization was established in 2001 by six States – China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. By now, the SCO has become the largest regional organization, in which many countries of Greater Eurasia desire to participate in one way or another. The key for the SCO is, on the one hand, ensuring security and stability, and, on the other, socio-economic and humanitarian development. The SCO economic component was strengthened in 2013 by the Chinese megaproject “One Belt, One Road”, aimed at reviving the Great Silk Road on the basis of modern high-speed trade and transport infrastructure and digital communications.¹

Let's take a closer look at the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), which is the foundation of a multipolar world order formation. The peculiarity of the BRICS countries cluster is that it is formed from countries belonging to five different civilizations that have different geopolitical positions in the world, but also united by the presence of extremely important common characteristics: they are all large dynamically states with large populations, interacting with the USA and other developed countries as independent entities world economy and politics. The close attention to the BRICS countries is explained by the sharp increase in their political role and economic weight in the modern world. In addition, they have a huge civilizational and cultural impact on neighboring countries and regions. Gradually, the BRICS countries are turning from an informal international forum into an association of countries that are beginning to act together to strengthen their positions in the modern world, and most importantly, to have a positive impact on the expanding processes of globalization and the formation of a new multipolar world. In this regard, it should be noted that the initiative of the President of the Russian Federation V. V. Putin in 2006 on the creation of the BRIC countries political club has become one of the most important geopolitical events of the beginning of the 21st century. BRICS+ now has every chance to become the locomotive of world development in the second quarter of the 21st century.²

¹ See: *Акаев А. А. ШОС — Великий шелковый путь современности // Геополитика и безопасность. 2016. № 3–4 (35–36). С. 37–48.*

² See also: *Комплексное моделирование и прогнозирование развития стран БРИКС в контексте мировой динамики / В. А. Садовничий, А. А. Акаев, А. В. Коротав, С. Ю. Малков ; Научный совет по Программе фундаментальных исследований Президиума РАН «Экономика и социология науки и образования». М., 2014.*

The roles of BRICS and G7 in global development

BRICS is increasingly becoming a geopolitical alternative to the G7 group of developed countries led by the USA. Having an undeniable advantage over the G7 in terms of population and labor resources, in natural resource potential, BRICS has become a world leader in terms of economic growth, investments in its production capital, as well as in the production of many types of high-tech products. It is significant that in 2022 the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) based on PPP (Purchasing Power Parity) of the BRICS countries overtook the GDP of the G7 countries. The share of GDP of the BRICS countries reached 31.5% of world GDP, and the share of GDP of the G7 countries dropped to 30.7%. Moreover, it is predicted that in the current decade there will be a further expansion of this trend. As for the leaders, today China accounts for 18.9% of the world economy, the United States – less than 15.4%, and India – 7.5%. It is important that the economic potential of the BRICS countries has been growing in recent years largely due to an increase in trade turnover and mutual investments between the members of the organization. BRICS has created its own development bank. A positive step to improve the efficiency of economic cooperation between the BRICS countries will be the introduction of a single settlement currency, the idea of which has been hatched for a long time. Moreover, the share of national currencies in settlements between the BRICS countries is already actively growing. In particular, China and India in recent years have received priority access to cheap energy resources of Russia exclusively in national currencies. Thus, the BRICS countries form a multipolar world in both geopolitical and financial dimensions.

The role of the BRICS as a global consolidating center is also growing, resisting the attempts of the USA and the G7 by force and aggression to preserve the global dominance of the West and exclusively its system of civilizational values. The BRICS task is to construct the main supporting pillars of a new just world order. The main thing is to create a world order in which countries will interact on an equal basis and when there should be no sanctions. It is extremely important that the BRICS countries lay the foundations of an integral economic and socio-cultural system based on dialogue and partnership between states and civilizations, which is replacing the now obsolete capitalist system. This will be an example for the new BRICS members. Already this year, at the BRICS summit in South Africa (2023), it is planned to resolve the issue of joining the organization of seven more states: Algeria, Argentina, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. As we can see, the BRICS will soon be replenished with representatives of the sixth – Muslim civilization. For the West, all this will become a nightmare, because from now on it is the BRICS+ that will have more weight in the G20, where the main problems of the world economy and sustainable development are being solved.

What else is required for the process of transition to a multipolar world to become irreversible

In order for the process of transition to a multipolar world order to become stable and irreversible, the author believes that the following three conditions are necessary.

First, Russia needs a convincing victory in the proxy war in Ukraine against the collective West aggression led by the USA and NATO. Now there is a lot of talk about the summer offensive of the Ukrainian army, equipped with hundreds of modern German Leopard-2 and British Challenger-3 tanks, as well as other types of NATO model offensive weapons. 80 years ago, in the Kursk Bulge area, Soviet light but maneuverable T-34 tanks defeated a thousandth armada of the vaunted heavy German tanks Tigers and Panthers. We hope that this summer the same fate will surely befall the Leopards and other NATO tanks, because the Russian T-90M Proryv (Breakthrough) tanks are recognized by experts in many countries as the best of their kind. Yes, and Russian tankers showed unattainable skills for others during the 'tank biathlons'.

Secondly, it is extremely important that China and India peacefully resolve border disputes in southern Tibet. Here, too, the US intervention complicates the possibility of a compromise solution to this long-standing dispute between the two countries, which are key members of both BRICS and SCO. But China and India today have strong, wise and responsible leaders – Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who are able to find a mutually acceptable solution both in the interests of their countries and in the interests of the well-being of all man-

kind. Given that the BRICS is based on three great powers – India, China and Russia, and Russia has established a strategic partnership with both India and China, the establishment of the same trusting relationship between China and India will further enhance the authority and attractiveness of the BRICS and its strength as a center of crystallization of the future sustainable multipolar world.

Thirdly, it is also important that the European Union takes its own position independent of the United States, and EU as one of the powerful poles of the new world order is being formed without USA participation. A number of European leaders are well aware that following blindly in the wake of USA policy leads the European Union to economic and political collapse. In particular, French President Emmanuel Macron, after his official visit to China, stated very cautiously that Europe has every chance to become a “third superpower” – along with the United States and China – unless “It finds itself involved in conflicts that are not a priority for it, which will prevent it from developing its strategic autonomy.” By the conflict that is not a priority for Europe, E. Macron meant the confrontation between China and the United States around Taiwan. However, today it is unlikely that other key leaders of the European Union begin to see clearly in a similar way. In the meantime, Europe obediently follows the USA aggression. But times have changed.