

**A. S. Zapesotsky<sup>1</sup>,  
A. V. Yakovenko<sup>2</sup>,  
A. M. Kramarenko<sup>3</sup>**

## **BRICS AS A PROTOTYPE OF THE FUTURE: CULTURAL AND CIVILIZATIONAL DIVERSITY IN ACTION**

Culture represents the main meaning and the main value of existence of individual peoples and small ethnic groups, as well as states<sup>4</sup>.

*Academician D. S. Likhachov*

### **Introduction**

None of serious experts, including Western ones, anymore disputes the thesis that the world is experiencing radical transformation, the starting point of which can be considered the end of the Cold War and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union.

The bygone bipolarity with its ideological confrontation was temporarily replaced in international relations by the so-called unipolar moment that reached its apogee during the presidency of George W. Bush (2001–2009) and then declined, leading to the current geopolitical crisis, primarily a sharp aggravation of relations between the West and Russia.

<sup>1</sup> Rector of St. Petersburg University of Humanities and Social Sciences, Deputy Chairman of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Academician of the Russian Academy of Education, Doctor of Cultural Sciences, Professor, Honoured Scientist of the Russian Federation, Merited Artist of the Russian Federation. Chairman of the Executive Committee of the St. Petersburg Intelligentsia Congress. Author of about 4 thousand research papers and scientific-journalistic works, textbooks on issues of culture, education, mass media, trade unions, social and youth policy, international relations. Member of the editorial boards of the journals "Philosophical Thought", "Issues of Cultural Studies", "Search: Politics. Social Studies. Arts. Sociology. Culture", etc. Honorary Doctor of Universities in the USA, Ireland, Poland, Belarus and Ukraine. Academician of the Academy of Sciences and Arts (Paris), the European Academy of Sciences and Arts (Salzburg). Awarded the Orders of Friendship, Honour, and Aleksandr Nevsky. Recipient of the K. D. Ushinsky Medal, the RAE Gold Medal, and others. Awarded a number of gratitudes of the President of the Russian Federation. Laureate of the prizes of the Government of the Russian Federation (2007) and the Government of St. Petersburg.

<sup>2</sup> Rector of the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation, Doctor of Law, Professor. Since 1976, he has held various diplomatic positions at the Central Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia and abroad. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia (2005–2011), Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Russia to Great Britain (2011–2019). Author of several books on International Space Law, as well as over 200 publications on international relations and foreign policy, science, education, and culture, including: "Geopolitical Turning Point and Russia. What Does the New Foreign Policy Concept Mean?", "2023: Are the New Global Financial Architecture on the Horizon?", "The World Has Entered the Phase of Searching for New Development Balance", "Realities of the New World Order", "25 Trends in Modern International Relations and World Development", "Current Issues of Progressive Development of International Space Law", "Modern Space Projects. International Legal Problems", and others. Member of the Scientific Council under the Security Council of the Russian Federation, the Board of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Full Member of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, member of the RAS Council on Space, Full Member of the International Institute of Space Law (IISL, Paris), International Academy of Astronautics (IAA, Paris). Honorary Professor of the University of Edinburgh (the United Kingdom). Awarded the Order of Aleksandr Nevsky, Order of Honor, Order of Friendship, Order of Honor of the Republic of South Ossetia, Medals of the Order "For Merit to the Motherland" I and II class, Diplomas of the President of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Russian Federation.

The retrospective analysis shows that the current crisis development resulted mainly from two factors. The first one is the arrogant and short-sighted approach of Western elites, primarily American ones, who proclaimed their "victory in the Cold War".

The more rational approach could be "the world without winners", an idea of American origin, which, however, was not realized after the end of World War I, when Germany and Soviet Russia were excluded from the post-war settlement in Europe, with disastrous consequences for the cause of peace on the continent. This idea would have been extremely appropriate at the turn of the 1980s – 1990s, but a truly collective treaty settlement did not happen again, which could not but have negative consequences this time, as well.

Further developments showed that, in their approach to settling the world in new conditions, if not in words, then in fact, the United States and the West as a whole proceeded from their own version of "the end of history", which was understood as continuation of Western dominance in the world affairs and the world development.

In practice, this turned into a banal global empire of the West – Pax Americana, perhaps the last empire in the history of mankind. The empire that eventually stopped taking own existence for granted and switched to active defense when it felt threatened by the rest of the world risen in the wave of globalization, including promising new centres of economic and military power, primarily China and Russia. So, in 2015, China overtook the United States in terms of GDP calculated at purchasing power parity, and in 2024, the World Bank, on the same basis, was forced to recognize the Russian economy as the fifth one in the world

<sup>3</sup> Director of the Institute of Current International Problems of the Diplomatic Academy of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation. Director of the Foreign Policy Planning Department of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2005–2011), Minister-Counselor (ranked as Ambassador) of Russia's Embassy in the UK (2011–2017), Development Director of the Russian Council on International Affairs (2017–2019). Author of publications in the journal "International Life", on the websites of the Russian Council of International Affairs, "Eurasia. Expert", the journal "Expert", including: "Russia and NATO: the Background of the Fatal Decision. What to Do?", "Diplomatic Sketch of the Future Image", "The End of History, or Is It Just a Crisis of Liberalism?", "Apology for the Status Quo, or Bow to the Beast?", "OPEC+ Oil Deal: the New 'Three'?", "President Trump's Decision on Jerusalem: Regional and Global Context", and others. Member of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy. Vice-President of the International Association of Public Diplomacy Experts. Awarded the Order of Honor, the Order of Friendship. Awarded the Gratitude of the President of the Russian Federation.

<sup>4</sup> Лихачев Д. С. Декларация прав культуры : [проект] (= Declaration of rights of culture) / Ин-т русской литературы (Пушкинский Дом) РАН ; Санкт-Петербургский гуманитарный университет профсоюзов. СПб. : СПбГУИ, 1995. С. 2.

and the largest one in Europe. Since the mid-2000s, the policy of containment has been pursued in relation to these two countries, responding to the instincts of Western elites, which by that time had ideologically unified in the context of “unipolarity” and rallied around “American leadership”. All signs pointed to the fact that the West applied to the new centres of power its historical measure – ascending to military power through creating the dominant economic and technological potential, a kind of geopolitical Darwinism.

This protective trend in Western politics points to the second factor of the current situation, namely unwillingness or inability, including psychological, of Western countries’ elites to co-opt into the global monetary, financial and other architecture controlled by them new centres of what increasingly declared itself as the emerging multipolarity of the coming world order. This concerned the Bretton Woods Institutions, the WTO and the OECD. Moreover, since the mid-2010s, it has been about an attempt on the very foundations of the post-war world order with the central role of the United Nations, by undermining International Law as such, based on universal norms common to all, developed collectively by the world community. In Western capitals, they started talking about a kind of “rules-based order” that clearly bypassed the UN Charter and International Law in general, that is, the guardians of those situational “rules” (why not publish the list of them?) were the Western capitals themselves.

Given the general context of global politics, including holding in December 2021 the 1st Summit of democracies, – at that time an online one, – “for renewing democracy at home and confronting autocracies abroad” (the 2nd Summit followed in March 2023), and the thesis of the new ideological confrontation in the world (now along the line “liberal democracies – authoritarian regimes”), it was about two radically opposite approaches applied in world affairs: one was to those who considered themselves to be in the camp of “liberal democracies” under “American leadership” and, of course, recognized it; the other was to everyone else, that is, the non-Western world. In other words, the world was already divided by these approaches into two camps, doomed to ideological and other confrontation on the pattern of the former bipolar confrontation, even if the alleged opponents of the West, say, neither Russia nor China, were going to participate in it at all. Cooptation of Beijing and Moscow into the Western coordinate system on equal terms could have made it inclusive, and then truly open, considering national interests of all states.

The catalyst for further crystallization of global politics in line with what can be called the new, transitional bipolarity was sharp aggravation of relations between Russia and the West on the basis of the Ukrainian crisis and Russia’s special military operation (SVO) being held for the purpose of demilitarizing and denazifying Ukraine. The hybrid war started by the West, together with total economic war in the form of “sanctions from hell”, de facto triggered the political split in the world community: on the one hand, the West and those who associate themselves with it; on the other hand, the global majority represented by non-Western countries, which make up three quarters of the UN members, including all developing states, as well as the BRICS countries.

In this context, the imperial nature of Western dominance in global politics, economy and finance, which dates

back about five centuries (in case of counting from the era of Great Geographical Discoveries), has clearly manifested itself. Its distinctive feature was suppression of other cultures and civilizations, whether it was colonialism, slave trade or imperial construction, which almost all Western countries were involved in – from the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal and Great Britain to Belgium, Germany (after its unification under the rule of Prussia) and the United States. Intra-Western contradictions, among other things, resulted in starting two world wars, which colonial countries and peoples were involved in. During World War II, the most aggressive countries of the historical West – Germany, Italy and Japan – embarked on the path of creating regional empires, acting with bestial cruelty, generally inherent in the worldview of Western elites, because of which the concept “crimes against humanity” appeared in International Law.<sup>1</sup>

After World War II, which was won by the allies in the Anti-Hitler coalition with the USSR’s decisive role, intra-Western bipolarity, which served as a source of European, colonial and world wars for centuries, was eliminated: the Axis countries formed US-controlled military-political alliances, including bilateral ones, and political configurations such as “the Seven”. The Cold War, in which the historical West took its final shape, despite aggravation of contradictions between the two camps, reflected the Western civilization’s ideological dominance in the world, since various ideological products of Western political thought, such as capitalism and socialism/communism, professed by two groups of countries, each in its own way assumed “the end of history”.

At the same time, in the post-war period, the process of decolonization took place, with the USSR’s active participation (despite the fact that the Russian Revolution resulted in the Awakening of Asia). However, as history has shown, the new independent states fell into neocolonial dependence on the West, which practically continued disposing their natural resources and influenced their socioeconomic policy and in general for social development in various ways, including through transnational corporations (TNCs), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). Western countries’ desire to solve their problems at the expense of others, in fact, to get geopolitical rents as “suppliers of international public goods”, has led to the impasse regarding not only global politics, but also global development. The West, with its selfish interests, turned out to be true to itself.

Meanwhile, outside the West, awareness of cultural and civilizational diversity as the most important feature of the future world order was gradually developing. At first, the counterproductive (and self-destructive) policy of the West, based on the position of strength, which refuted the thesis “empire means peace”, had an effect. This understanding was also growing among some Western elites, primarily because of results of the so-called war on ter-

<sup>1</sup> The subject of the report is not the issues of the specific Western worldview and the options for the West’s, in particular the United States’, alternative, moderate politics in the period after the end of the Cold War. This topic is discussed in other publications, including: Америка против всех. Геополитика, государственность и глобальная роль США: история и современность : колл. моногр. / ред. С. А. Феоктистова. М. : Содружество культур, 2023 ; Яковенко А. В. Геополитический перелом и Россия. О чем говорит новая Внешнеполитическая концепция России : моногр. М. : Дипломатическая академия МИД России, 2023.

ror in the Middle East, North Africa and the Sahel region. The idea of inevitability and irreconcilability of “the conflict of civilizations” appeared.<sup>1</sup> Within the United Nations, the Alliance of Civilizations was created for establishing “the dialogue of civilizations”, which gave the first, albeit very limited results in terms of mitigating the contradictions between the West and the Arab-Islamic world.

But the current crisis, clearly perceived by the parties to it as existential, affecting the foundations of their identity and history, has raised the issue much wider and deeper. It is now obvious that the whole problem of the existing world order and its impending radical transformation rests on the need for ensuring harmony and cooperation between existing cultures and civilizations, for the purpose of resolving global challenges facing humanity *inter alia*. The current Western coordinate system has become a brake on the world development due to the fact that the Western civilization, in its inertial policy of controlling and dictating from the position of strength, repeatedly proves its incompatibility with other cultures and civilizations. It remains in the fading mode predicted by O. Spengler in his “Decline of the Western World”, and shows no signs of the ability to converge or adapt to a qualitatively new state of the world.

A significant event in this context was Russia’s self-determination as “an original state-civilization” given in the new edition of the Foreign Policy Concept dated March 31, 2023.<sup>2</sup> After staying in the 300-year-old paradigm of Eurocentrism, which was entrenched in the public consciousness by all Soviet experience, the Russian leadership declared (about which Spengler, met with hostility by the Soviet government, wrote 100 years ago) the fundamental cultural and civilizational difference between Russia and the entire Russian world from the West. Western elites have always proceeded from this alienation between us. With their policy of rejecting Russia after the end of the Cold War, they only helped us make the long overdue decision. Its direct consequence is the country’s positioning itself on the side of the non-Western world – the World Majority or the Global South (which was also predicted 100 years ago, only by the Eurasians).

At the end of 2000s, the BRICS transcontinental association emerged (the Republic of South Africa joined in 2011) as a forum for pragmatic cooperation of the leading emerging economies of the world.

As in the case of the SCO, which was originally established to resolve border issues between China and the former republics of the Soviet Union, the BRICS further development and its discovery of own true meaning were dictated by evolving the global/geopolitical context. While China directly associated itself with the non-Western world, Russia, for a long time after the end of the Cold War, was guided by the inertia of Euro-/West-centrism inherited from three centuries of history, including the Soviet period, believing that it was the time for inevitable convergence of what was seen as a large European civilization, with Russia’s perception itself its eastern branch. The collapse of this paradigm, which had not only political, but also quite obvious cognitive grounds, qualitatively changed the BRICS positioning, which did not slow down to globally declare it-

self in the manner of a different form and content of the refusal of states of the non-Western world to take part in the sanctions war of the West against Russia, as well as within the framework of the work of the Group of Twenty, where, how this was clearly manifested during the Indian presidency in 2023, part of the association became the pole of the non-Western world opposing the Western “Seven”. In this wave (following the SCO expansion, analogies continue), the BRICS expanded due to membership of a number of G20 member states and leading regional powers. They do not hide their desire to become the architects of the new world order, which should replace the old one, since that has worn out, has become a source of threats to international security and a brake on global development.

For the states of the World Majority, development issues, as well as issues of national identity, significance of which was either denied by Western countries or belittled by their own elites, who, politically and mentally, were in the Western coordinate system, came to the fore.

As for Russian elites, they cherished the three-hundred-year-old hope of “embedding” in Europe / the West, which both the governments of the Russian Empire and the Soviet government paid tribute to. No longer the relative, but the absolute decline of the West, which is experiencing a systemic crisis, opens the way for the world community to qualitatively new approaches to solving its own development problems and countering common challenges and threats to humanity.

Cultural and historical issues as the basis for peoples’ identity and coexistence have gained a key role. From the periphery, they rightfully – and in full accordance with D. S. Likhachov’s ideas and his proposal to consolidate at the international level the right to culture on an equal basis with other human rights, including the right to life,<sup>3</sup> – moved to the centre of state governance, foreign policy and international relations. Nothing has been so timely and mature in our history as Russia’s cultural and civilizational self-determination triggered by hostile Western policies, which have turned into a consequence and at the same time a source of spiritual revival of our country. The SVO in Ukraine has accelerated obtaining historically conditioned sense of existence.

Radically transformation in our consciousness has also resulted from the West’s “abolition” of Russian culture, up to the Russian language, being a response in the spirit of Anna Akhmatova’s call to “save the Great Russian Word” during the ordeal of the Great Patriotic War. If then we were faced with the direct aggressive “drive towards the East” by Western civilization, which gave the main role to Nazi Germany obsessed with the problem of “living space”, now we deal with a hybrid war, in which the key role is given to reformatted into anti-Russia Ukraine that creates a threat to us at the level of identity and history *inter alia*.

### **“Conflict of civilizations” as premonition of the conflict**

It is necessary to pay tribute to S. Huntington, who foresaw a lot soon after the end of the Cold War (his work was published in 1996). It was no coincidence that he was appreciat-

<sup>1</sup> *Huntington S. P. The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order. N. Y. : Simon & Schuster, 1996.*

<sup>2</sup> Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 31 марта 2023 года № 229 «Об утверждении Концепции внешней политики Российской Федерации» // Президент России : [сайт]. URL: <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/49090> (accessed: 01.04.2024).

<sup>3</sup> См.: *Лихачев Д. С. Декларация прав культуры : [проект] (= Declaration of rights of culture) / Ин-т русской литературы (Пушкинский Дом) РАН ; Санкт-Петербургский Гуманитарный университет профсоюзов. СПб. : СПбГУП, 1995.*

ed by those who looked at things soberly and understood that the beginning of the end of Western hegemony had come (in February of 2024, J. Borrel stated that “the era of Western domination has come to its end,” although the participants in the Likhachovsky Conference have known this for a long time) and that, without adapting to the qualitatively new geopolitical situation, this end is inevitable, that continuation of “American leadership” must be “earned”, and this is possible only on conditions of transformation into something collective, the assembly of cultures and civilizations, which includes Russia and is different from the Western one. Huntington knew that all previous conflicts, including “the conflict of ideologies” during the Cold War, took place within Western civilization. We can agree with him regarding his classification of civilizations, as well.

In non-Western civilizations, they return to their roots, which he noted in Russia. Huntington’s interpretation of “the Russian issue” is of particular interest. In his understanding, Russia remains the most significant “split country”: while the Soviet government removed “the historical dispute between Westerners and Slavophiles” from the agenda, it is no longer clear what will happen to Russia “wishing to join the West”. Now it is obvious that the first test of the West’s adaptation to changes in the world was failed by the example of Russia, when it was decided to expand NATO towards the East. This was followed by a number of other failures, including interaction with China, India, Brazil and the Arab-Islamic world. Huntington was also right that modernization is not equivalent to westernization.

In most non-Western cultures, Western ideas, such as individualism, liberalism, equality, freedom, free market, separation of church and state, etc., do not resonate. This leads, in fact, to the new bipolarity: “The West against the rest of the world.” Another thing is that it is quite likely to be transitional – till establishment of multipolarity, since civilizations, like states, must be equal, and therefore they have to learn to coexist with each other on this basis.

The failure of the American wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the consequences of intervention in Libya and Syria in terms of the Arab Spring, which looked like America’s self-destruction of its international positioning, prompted the most astute American politicians, mainly those of democratic orientation (fortunately, they were out of business under the Republican Administration), to deal with inter-civilizational issues. Thus, in the autumn of 2005, in his introductory article “The Dilemma of the Last Sovereign” published in the journal “American Interest”, having noted that “for most states, sovereignty borders on legal fiction,” Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote that the United States were not able to ignore what he described as “massive political awakening” everywhere in the world.

Having recognized that terror was the consequence of Western revolutions, primarily the French one with its slogan “Freedom, Equality, Fraternity!”, Brzezinski pointed out the need for America, which alone is not able to solve any significant international problem, to reconsider its foreign policy approaches and show readiness to “form some common understanding of our historical epoch” with other countries and partners. He raised the question of “new global solidarity” that would absorb American sovereignty, as well. That is, it was necessary to “put American sovereignty at the service to the common good,” the only way the United States could strengthen its “international legitimacy”.

Herewith, he warned that otherwise the predictions made by O. Spengler, A. Toynbee (about “suicidal state governance”) and S. Huntington would be “ominously relevant” to the current global challenges for America, and here, perhaps for the first time in American political science discourse, the word “self-defeat” was used.

Following Huntington, he draws attention to the fact that globalization does not create a common civilization, but instead provokes inter-civilizational clashes, and quotes, “What follows is the Western culture’s erosion, while local mores, languages, beliefs and institutions rooted in history re-assert themselves.” And more, “democracy is by its nature a provincializing process, not a cosmopolitanizing one, which results in popular mobilization against elites that have received Western education and are oriented towards the West.” Howbeit, the call that “America must devote its sovereignty to a cause greater than its own security” has not been heeded.

Former Secretary of State M. Albright joined the discussion with the same result. In her book “The Mighty and the Almighty”<sup>1</sup> (2007), she also argued that it was necessary to radically rethink the USA’s approach to its global leadership, and recalled that J. Kennedy considered “not communism, but imperialism as the main test that American foreign policy must pass” (the statement made in 1957).

She noted that the leaders of Al-Qaeda were “concerned with transcendent issues of history, identity and faith,” and recommended, “For us to be heard, the rest of us must be equally deeply concerned about everything.” Further, she talks about the common values of the main world religions, which it is necessary to appeal to, about the need for combatting global poverty, as provided for in the UN Millennium Development Goals, that Americans will not be hurt by humility to be called for by their own history (which is difficult to disagree with). But the entire problem is that the US Administrations, one after another, proceeded from “automatism” of the spread of American hegemony to the rest of the world after the end of the Cold War: this was belatedly recognized by Henry Kissinger in 2014.<sup>2</sup>

M. Albright welcomed the idea of an Alliance of Civilizations suggested by Madrid and Ankara within the UN framework. However, what did it all come down to?

In July 2005, Kofi Annan, then General Secretary of the United Nations, supported the initiative to establish, with the co-sponsorship of the Prime Ministers of Spain and Turkey, Jose Luis Zapatero and Recep Erdogan, the global Alliance of Civilizations. The goals of this initiative were to mobilize collective political will, for bridging the gap and growing distrust between civilizations, cultures and societies, primarily between the West and the Islamic world, as well as for establishing mutual understanding between them.

The author of the idea of creating the Alliance of Civilizations is Spain, which in the Middle Ages demonstrated brilliant examples of interaction between Arab and European cultures. There were tragic moments in the history of the so-called Muslim Spain, but there was also cultural cooperation, positive as nowhere else. Turkey’s reasons are quite obvious. Then it was about showing that a Muslim country is quite compatible with the Western civiliza-

<sup>1</sup> Albright M. *The Mighty and the Almighty. Reflections on America, God, and World Affairs*. N.Y. : Harper Perennial, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Киссинджер Г. *Мировой порядок*. М. : АСТ, 2023.

tion. The High-Level Panel (HLP) consisting of 18 people headed by representatives of Spain and Turkey was formed for governance of the Alliance of Civilizations. Russia was represented in the HLP by the prominent orientalist, Academician V. V. Naumkin.

The report submitted to the UN General Secretary in November 2006 assessed the situation, given the emergence and growth of religious extremism, and contained a large number of constructive proposals that, if implemented, could significantly ease tensions and contribute to establishing the inter-civilizational dialogue.<sup>1</sup> However, both the initiative to create a global Alliance of Civilizations and the HLP Report triggered the predictable critical response in a number of states, and in the United States too, which forgot that they slept in the bed they had made, including promotion of “jihad” in Afghanistan (Parenthetically, let’s note that then the Saudi authorities set a course for the export of Wahhabi passionarity, for muffling it within their own country).

And here the Western elites were let down by their arrogance. As the American sociologist I. Wallerstein noted at the Likhachovsky Conference in 2009, “fruitful dialogue can only be based on equality of its parties.” At that time the West acted pragmatically, if not cynically, striving for involving the world community in solving its own problem, without establishing inter-civilizational relations, but with just stopping the rise of radical, political Islam. The situation was only aggravated by both the growth of Islamophobia in the West and the turn of the Western elites towards ultra-liberalism, which increased the gap between the values of the two civilizations.

### Is the West against the rest?

Anyway, the West has not been able to make its hegemony inclusive, open to all other civilizations, because it required recognizing their equality. It should be noted that Washington “stumbled” over Russia and China, switching to a policy of “containing” them by analogy with the strategy of the Cold War. Accordingly, this left room neither for inclusivity, nor even for the line of “constructive engagement”, which generally gave the West good results in the era of bipolarity.

At the expert level, the USA made attempts to offer fundamental alternatives to the understanding of national security, which had developed resulting from the geopolitical and ideological imperatives of the Cold War.

A set of ideas for a new international positioning of the United States was developed in the spirit of demands of the time, which, however, was later compromised in the elites’ eyes by Trump’s “isolationism” (the label “trumpism” appeared) and his unproven “relations with Moscow”. Thus, this opportunity window was quickly closed due to the Ukrainian crisis provoked by the United States and the internal confrontation related to Trump’s victory in the 2016 elections.

Everything pointed to the fact that the West, at least its elites, could not get out of the circle of their inherent political and psychological constraints, whether instincts or prejudices, in their vision of the world and the place of the West in it.

What happened was easy to predict, called by the president B. Clinton called “self-fulfilling prophecy” at the alliance summit in January of 1994.<sup>2</sup> Indirectly, this could be found at Huntington’s works.

At the time, in respect to the next anniversary of F. Nietzsche, Francis Fukuyama wrote that Western philosophy has not overcome “its denial of equality of human dignity”<sup>3</sup>; this statement is directly related to the cultural and civilizational incompatibility of Western elites with non-Western ones. Later, in the trend of aggravating relations between Russia and the West, on the pages of “Foreign Affairs” (May-June 2022), he wrote about a kind of “national liberalism”, and about the need for liberalism to be rooted in every country. But what about the current crisis of liberalism in where it originated from – in the Western society itself? And isn’t this the source for the very interventionism and the very unification of the West in relation to the rest of the world, for its arising naturally, without being imposed from the outside? Isn’t this “liberalism” not only a kind of “coercion to democracy”, but also an analogue of Nazism?

Even now, in connection with the Ukrainian crisis, Western capitals have remembered the sovereignty of “democratic Ukraine”, principally denying this right for all countries that are not qualified as democratic by them.

### The Ukrainian crisis: the catalyst for Russia’s awakening

Unwilling to do so and allowing the principle of “undesirable consequences” to work, the United States triggered the crisis with the radical reformatting of Ukraine that was teetering on the brink of a failed state, and thereby helped this country finally find the clear sense of its independent existence in line with the negative component of its historical heritage.

Ukraine could not boast of democracy and lack of corruption, which might have tempted the Russian electorate and thus contributed to the similar Westernization of Russia. Therefore, the choice was made in favor of creating a threat to Russia at the level of identity and history, a challenge that would undermine the narrative of Victory over Nazi Germany as the moral and spiritual foundation of modern Russia.

It was natural that in the era of the awakening of civilizational consciousness everywhere in the world, the historical West set out to solve the problem of historical Russia in the field of culture and history. Meanwhile, as development of the situation showed, conditions were created for retroactive rehabilitation of Nazism as a specific product of the Western civilization. The blow was dealt to the idea of the Russian World, which in the West, as Huntington defined, meant Slavicism and Orthodoxy. It was easy to assume that Russia could not help but respond to this existential challenge, burdened by the prospect of Ukraine to join NATO and creation of a quite obvious military and political threat on the Russian border, as well as Kiev’s refusal, supported by the West, to implement the Minsk Agreements, which were in line with generally recognized norms for settling internal civil conflicts, accepted by Europe, as

<sup>1</sup> Группа высокого уровня по вопросу о слаженности в системе ООН // ООН : [офич. сайт]. URL: <https://www.un.org/ru/events/pastevents/panel.shtml> (accessed: 04.01.2024).

<sup>2</sup> Киссинджер Г. Дипломатия. М. : АСТ, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Fukuyama F. Nietzsche: A Philosophy in Context // The New York Times. 2010. May 7. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/09/books/review/Fukuyama-t.html?ysclid=m0m7k2ri6a671905665> (accessed: 04/01/2024).

well. Notwithstanding the Western concept of “human security”, which gave priority to human rights and minority rights over the rights of states, including their sovereignty and territorial integrity, Kiev, after the February 2014 coup d’etat, took a course towards a unitary and ethnocentric state, appealing to aggressive nationalism to have been compromised by collaboration with Nazi Germany.

Along with pressure on the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church as part of the Russian Orthodox Church, the policy of forced Ukrainization was pursued in the country where most of its population either was represented by ethnic Russians who found themselves in Ukraine, constructed within the current borders by the Soviet government and its ideological imperatives, or spoke Russian and was bilingual. Thus, the issue of language became fundamental for the future of Ukraine that could not continue existing within the Soviet borders without systematic and legalized violence against the background of destruction of the foundations of the Soviet cohabitation with its tolerance and inclusiveness.

Ukrainization and suppression of the Russian language were accompanied by rewriting the historical narrative (with creation of primitive national mythology by the official propaganda, based on rural culture, and with a clear racist bias by analogy with Nazism) and rejecting the entire body of the richest Russian culture in favor of the Ukrainian one, not comparable to it in development, as well as spiritual values created during that historical period, first of all, in literature, including the genius of Nikolai Gogol. Accompanied by aggressive anti-Russian propaganda, which referred to the sad experience of Europe during the interwar period, and merged with the West’s campaign for “abolishing” the Russian culture, there was depletion and simplification of the Ukrainian culture in the broadest sense, quite in the spirit of what happened under the Nazi regime in Germany.

#### **The world majority and the reform of the world order system**

The prospect of forming a new international order that would not be based on the West’s dominance depends not only on the outcome of the current aggravation in relations between the West and Russia, but also on the collective position of the states of Asia, Africa and Latin America – the World Majority, or the Global South. The combined potential of these regions has significantly increased. For the first time in history, they have the opportunity for acting as full-fledged centres of global politics, seriously influencing formation of the international agenda, including issues of security.

The ongoing changes in the balance of forces on the world stage in favor of the World Majority (and Russia positions itself as part of it, along with China) confirm the validity of the Russian concept of multipolarity as the movement towards destruction of the West’s economic, power and technological hegemony that has turned into a way of existence for it. In this regard, the World Majority states’ interests in the search for a new, more just international order are generally in tune with Russia’s ones. They also mean the failure of the West’s attempts to achieve Russia’s international isolation, the opportunity for preserving and strengthening ties between the world’s leading develop-

ing economies, as well as creating new partnerships in conditions of acute conflict with the West.

The very idea of promoting principles of a qualitatively new, more just world order reflecting the cultural and civilizational diversity of the modern world has long been present in the politics of the World Majority states. Historically, the Non-Aligned Movement has been the large-scale expression of the desire to reformat the world system. It was originally formed by the countries that now make up the World Majority, for the purpose of creating a broad international platform uniting states on the principle of non-participation in military-political blocs. This made it possible to form a kind of union of non-aligned countries within the UN (the Group of 77 within 134 states), promoting political projects that are alternative to Western worldview postulates. Another example is the idea of a New International Economic Order (NIEO), actively supported by countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Under the powerful collective pressure of the former colonial and dependent countries that make up the majority in the UN, the UN General Assembly has adopted the Declaration for the Establishment of a New International Economic Order. Elimination of inequality in the global economy and bridging the gap between developed and developing countries were proclaimed as the main strategic task.

Actually torpedoed by the West the plans to restructure international relations in accordance with interests of countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America indicated the limited resource for countering Western domination. Finally, these projects lost their initial political inertia and did not produce the expected results. The state of Russia after the collapse of the USSR, our illusions about “embedding” in the West, together with the state’s general weakening, did not allow providing duly assistance to countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The process of neoliberal globalization, started by the West at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s and determined for three decades the main vector of world development, contributed to changing the balance of forces in the world in favor of the collective Global South. For some countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, globalization has become a powerful factor of both internal structural transformations (although often contradictory ones) and the restart of the system of foreign economic relations that developed in the postcolonial period. The states of East and Southeast Asia, headed by China, which successfully adapted the pattern of Western globalization to requirements of its own socio-political and economic development reflecting peculiarities of its cultural and civilizational identity rooted in its history, developed most dynamically. The gravity centre of the world economy and trade has moved to Asia within a relatively short time.

China’s accelerated and long-term economic growth, which has no historical analogues, forces us to rethink key neoliberal and macroeconomic dogmas of the West, especially against the background of sluggish dynamics in the United States, the European Union and Japan. Hence the new surge that the sentiment in favor of reformatting the system of international relations on an alternative basis receive in the World Majority countries. Relying on its enormous potential, the World Majority could become the driver of the process of forming the more stable, secure and just world. The historical mission, which the col-

lective West ultimately has failed to cope with, passes to the World Majority.

Herewith, at the current stage, the World Majority countries have no collective sufficiently holistic and original political platform, for forming their joint vision of the new international system and ways of transition to it. The task of transition to the new type of world order based on multipolarity is explicitly formulated or actually recognized only by a limited number of leading countries of the World Majority.

The concept of multipolarity is present in the conceptual developments of most countries, even without direct relation to the topic of the future world order. It is almost universally recognized that the topic of global governance, i. e. the choice of international platforms, which international cooperation should be built on, is of key importance. It is stated that the current global governance system needs to be reformed or adjusted. The main focus is on the need for reforming the UN, with the emphasis on ensuring the representative nature of the Security Council, the Bretton Woods Institutions (IMF and WB), as well as WHO and WTO. Their inefficiency and insufficient representation of developing countries in them are criticized, which does not allow ensuring equal interests of all members of the international community.

Views on international security issues are reduced to confirming commitment to relevant basic principles of the UN Charter, support for international legal norms designed to prevent military conflicts and crises. These norms contain respect for national sovereignty, inviolability of borders, non-interference in internal affairs, inadmissibility of aggression or threats to peace, peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts, and related peacemaking. Maintaining the arms control system is welcome. As a rule, the need for international cooperation, for the purpose of preventing conflicts and crises, terrorism and extremism, is stated, as well.

The vision of the prospects for the structure of the world economy, international trade and the financial system mainly reproduces echoes of previous ideas discussed at the UN in the context of the NIEO, although adjusted for the current level of technology development. There is no doubt that the prospect of further economic globalization is fundamentally important. However, it is recognized that it should be based on different principles, contributing, first of all, to creating the open world economy, the fair, honest, non-discriminatory economic environment, and should also stimulate bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation.

Almost everywhere, the question of the need for industrialized countries to increase funding for the Global South through international development assistance programs is raised, while the call for full national control over natural resources is of great importance. Within the demands for reforming the Bretton Woods institutions, the theme of unreasonableness of the role of the US dollar as the main reserve currency, unprofitability of the existing system of international payments and monetary and financial transfers for developing countries is being promoted.

Regardless of their foreign policy orientation, the World Majority countries declare their fundamental unacceptability of unilateral restrictive measures in world trade. The issue of ensuring technological progress in the World Majority countries is also sharply outlined, with formulation

of the requirement for equal, free and mutually beneficial exchange of technological achievements along the North – South line. The theme of proper implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals is at the forefront of international economic and social development, as well. In this regard, the emphasis placed by some states on the task of achieving the goals of the international climate agenda is rather indicative.

The approaches of the elites of a significant part of the World Majority countries to the prospects of the new world order are also characterized by the fact that they are viewed through the prism of directly or indirectly expressed ambitions to increase their own collective or national weight in world affairs. The recently increased peacemaking activity on the part of the World Majority, including initiatives on normalizing relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, as well as a peace plan for the Ukrainian crisis, are in line with implementing these ambitions. The intention to play a constructive role in protecting peace in global and regional formats, to take an active part in developing rules in the field of global security, to increase international cooperation in the field of security, and to directly participate in peacemaking activities through the UN is also emphasized in every possible way. The World Majority countries' approaches to the vision of the new world order also differ in their covering the problem of effectiveness of international law. Almost all the conceptual materials of the World Majority countries state the need for complying with generally recognized legal norms, primarily those enshrined in the UN Charter.

Traditional values act as one of the main means used by the countries to counteract the value standards imposed by the West, for strengthening national identity in international relations.

India's position is largely indicative, which, in particular, was reflected in the Delhi Declaration following the meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State (July 2023), which states, "The world is experiencing unprecedented transformational changes and is entering the new era of rapid technological development, which requires increasing effectiveness of global institutions. These fundamental processes are accompanied by strengthening multipolarity."

India sees the increasing role and influence of the Global South countries as an important criterion for developing a new system of international relations, ensuring their involvement in the processes of forming rules of international interaction, as well as access to critical resources, including financial and technological ones. Moreover, India attaches particular importance to the need for strengthening representation of developing countries in key international structures, and insists, *inter alia*, on inclusion of the African Union as an equal participant in the Group of Twenty. The Indian Prime Minister's statements about the criterion of "morality" in conducting the strategic policy and "the growing understanding of the need for abandoning the GDP-focused view of the world in favor of a human-oriented view" are very indicative.

Thus, the conceptual views emerging in the World Majority countries regarding the reform of the existing system of world order and interstate relations have an obvious ideological bias towards denying claims of the United States, the "English sphere", the world and the West as

a whole to maintain their dominance in world politics and economy. This process of conceptually rethinking the picture of the modern world is based on the objective change in the global balance of powers in favor of the World Majority in a number of basic parameters. It is not just consonant, but coincides in its essence with the foreign policy approaches of the Russian Federation and meets its interests.

In this regard, Russia's strategic turn towards developing cooperation with the World Majority countries strengthens the basis for the joint and conceptually meaningful movement towards formation of a more equitable world order based on interstate equality, stability, mutually beneficial cooperation and international law. This simultaneously opens up opportunities for Russia to counter the line of the collective West that seeks for preserving the World Majority within the framework of neocolonial dependence.

### **BRICS is an urgent need**

The first BRIC meeting took place on September 20, 2006, on the sidelines of the 61st session of the UN General Assembly in New York. It was participated by the foreign ministers of Russia, Brazil, China and the Minister of Defense of India, who agreed to develop multifaceted cooperation of the four countries. On May 16, 2008, the first full-scale meeting of the BRIC countries' foreign ministers took place in Yekaterinburg. Following its results, the joint communique reflecting the countries' common positions on topical issues of global development was adopted. The fundamentally important step in developing the association was taken on July 9, 2008, when, on Russia's initiative, the separate meeting of the leaders of Brazil, Russia, India and China was held on the sidelines of the "Group of Eight" summit in Toyako (Japan).

The first BRIC summit was held on June 16, 2009 in Yekaterinburg. The final Joint Statement declared the desire to develop the "consistent, active, pragmatic, open and transparent dialogue and cooperation" not only for achieve "the common interests of developing countries and the states with emerging markets, but also for building the harmonious world, which lasting peace and common prosperity would be ensured in."

After accession of the Republic of South Africa (the first summit with South Africa's participation was held on April 14, 2011, in Sanya, China), the abbreviation "BRICS" was established as the name of the association.

Over time, BRICS has evolved into a multidisciplinary strategic partnership based on three key pillars: politics and security, economics and finance, culture and humanitarian ties. Relations between partners are built on the basis of equality and mutual respect, as well as on the principles of openness, pragmatism, solidarity, and non-targeting against anyone. Today, BRICS accounts for 45% of the global population and more than a third of global GDP. The BRICS states are influential members of the UN, as well as of regional associations (CIS, CSTO, EAEU, SCO, APEC, LAS, GCC, OIC, Southern Common Market, African Union, SADC, etc.). The expanded BRICS is significantly represented in such instruments as "Group of Twenty", WTO, Non-Aligned Movement, "Group 77". The countries take turns chairing BRICS, fulfilling these duties during the calendar year; then rotation takes place. All decisions are made by consensus. About 200 meetings are held annual-

ly, of which 20 are at the ministerial level. Cooperation develops between parliaments, city administrations, businesses, academic and scientific societies, civil society, including women's and youth organizations. For the purpose of coordinating the association's current work, the institution of national sherpas/sous-sherpas operates. Since January 1, 2024, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Ethiopia have become BRICS members.

One of priorities in the BRICS activities is promoting formation of the democratic multipolar world, strengthening global security and stability. Now the "Ten" has consistently advocated compliance with the principles of International Law with the UN's central role, rejecting unilateral coercive measures. The important result of the BRICS countries' interaction was launching the New Development Bank (NDB) with its headquarters in Shanghai, and the BRICS Pool of Conditional Foreign Exchange Reserves with total funds in the amount of 200 billion US dollars. By the end of 2023, the NDB had approved over 90 projects totaling 32.3 billion US dollars. Responding to the BRICS countries' needs in a timely manner during the crisis, the Bank launched in March 2020 the assistance program on combating the COVID-19 pandemic and overcoming its socioeconomic consequences in its total amount of 10 billion US dollars. In 2018, the NBR African Regional Centre was opened in South Africa, then similar structures were established in Brazil, Russia and India.

In 2023, functions of the BRICS chairman were carried out by South Africa acting under the motto "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for joint accelerated growth, sustainable development and inclusive multilateralism."

The 15th Summit held in Johannesburg, in August of 2023, was an important milestone in development of BRICS. The meeting laid foundations for future discussions on financial and economic issues, including increasing settlements in national currencies. The final declaration contains the instruction for the BRICS countries' Ministries of Finance and their Central Banks to study this subject and submit the report by the next summit. It was decided to expand the association's membership to 10 members. Developing modalities for the new category "partner states" has begun (over 30 countries have expressed their intention to interact with BRICS in one form or another).

Extended meetings in the "outreach" / "BRICS plus" format, held both within the framework of the association's summit (with participation of over 60 invited countries) and within meetings of High Representatives in charge of security issues and foreign ministers, were of great importance in terms of formation of stable BRICS relations with the Global South states.

Among the key achievements of cooperation on the South African agenda are the approval of the master agreement on cooperation of the BRICS countries in the field of micro, small- and medium-sized enterprises, establishment of the association's Youth Council, the Working Group on Sports, expansion of the Network University, starting the joint work in the field of nuclear medicine through organizing a specialized working group.

On January 01, 2024, functions of the BRICS chairman were transferred to Russia (the Summit will be held in October in Kazan). Its motto is "Strengthening multilateralism for equitable global development and security."

Priorities of the Russian chairmanship involve increasing foreign policy coordination in the BRICS format, including that at key international platforms. Due attention is being paid to developing the potential for counter-terrorism cooperation based on the BRICS 2020 Anti-Terrorism Strategy. Russia aims at developing practical cooperation in the combat against drug trafficking and corruption, in accordance with the BRICS initiative on eliminating “safe havens”, institutionalizing the emerging BRICS Council on Countering Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, and searching for common responses to challenges and threats in the information space. The priority issue is further implementation of the Cooperation Agreement in the field of satellite constellation for the BRICS countries’ remote sensing of the Earth.

Within the framework of the economic and financial bloc, a lot of work is being done on comprehensive implementation of the BRICS Economic Partnership Strategy until 2025. Initiatives on topical issues, such as security of global logistics chains, e-commerce, artificial intelligence, startup organization, climate in terms of sustainable development, and further development of the dialogue of the BRICS countries’ tax, customs, and antimonopoly authorities.

An important work area is enhancing the BRICS countries’ significance in the international monetary and financial system, developing interbank cooperation, and promoting transformation of the international settlement system. Priorities of the Russian chairmanship include increasing settlements in national currencies, strengthening correspondent banking networks, for ensuring international transactions. The instrument of the BRICS Pool of Conditional Foreign Exchange Reserves continues to develop.

Special emphasis is placed on deepening the dialogue on issues of equitable development, ensuring food and energy security, and developing the Energy Research Platform.

Main areas of cooperating in the humanitarian field are increasing interaction in science and innovation, in particular, implementation of the Action Plan for Innovative Cooperation for 2021–2024, using the potential of the BRICS Network of Centres for Technology Transfer, as well as increasing cooperation of science parks and business incubators. Within the initiative “The iBRICS Innovation Network”, priority attention is paid to expanding contacts between academic and scientific centres, research and higher education institutions of the ten countries, strengthening the potential of the BRICS Network University, issues of mutual recognition of academic qualifications, and improving the work of the international university rating systems. The Forum of Young Scientists and the Competition of Young Innovators from the BRICS countries are planned.

In the field of healthcare, Russian initiatives on launching the Comprehensive system of early warning the risks of mass infectious diseases, the Medical Association and the medical journal continue to be promoted. Special attention is paid to the functioning of the Working Group on Nuclear Medicine.

Practical actions on further intensifying the dialogue in the field of culture, youth exchanges, and sports are being taken. The official calendar of the Russian Federation’s BRICS chairmanship includes traditional events, including the BRICS cultural and film festivals, Academic and Civic Forums. The Youth Forum and the Youth Camp, as well

as the Forum of Young Diplomats are scheduled. Within the framework of sports cooperation, in June, the BRICS Games were organized, with their program to include 29 sports, both traditional competitions and new physical disciplines.

Special attention is paid to development of interparliamentary cooperation within the framework of the BRICS Parliamentary Forum, as well as meetings of the chairpersons of the committees on international affairs of the parliaments of the association’s countries.

An important component of humanitarian interaction is cooperation of cities and municipalities. The well-established International Municipal Forum of the BRICS+ countries, as well as the traditional Forum of Twin Cities and Municipalities, are provided in this area.

More and more the World Majority countries are determined to join BRICS as an effective instrument for developing equal and fair multipolarity and promoting the Global South’s interests in joint fruitful development and the search for collective solutions to the most pressing problems of our time. In response to this request, in accordance with the decision of the Johannesburg Summit, another key area for the Russian chairmanship’s efforts to be applied to is finalizing modalities of the category “partner states” and forming the list of candidates for it, which are going to be approved at the leaders’ meeting this year.

### **The World Order according to BRICS**

Upon development of BRICS and growth of the World Majority countries’ self-awareness, it becomes clear that multipolarity will be associated with expressing the cultural and civilizational diversity of the world. Actually, all the problems of world politics and world development to be led to the impasse by Western domination can be reduced to the Western civilization’s incompatibility with other cultures and civilizations. The whole history – not just our time! – shows that the West can do business with others only through suppression and dictate, violence and control, on its own terms and from the position of strength, which fundamentally contradicts basic principles of the UN Charter, International Law in general, which, by the way, has developed not without participation of Western countries themselves, given their own tragic experience, including the religious wars in Europe and the two world wars.

Today, the West is in a qualitatively different phase of its evolution. Therefore, it is not surprising that Western capitals claim to be guardians of some mythical “rule-based order”, which in fact nullifies the entire historically established international legal order with the central role of the United Nations and replaces it with the West’s arbitrariness.

De facto, today, the new transitional bipolarity “The West / the World Majority” has been emerging. In his book “Leadership”<sup>1</sup>, which can be considered as his political testament, Henry Kissinger bitterly pointed out: Washington’s foreign policy crisis originates from the circumstances that its innovation with multipolarity in the time of R. Nixon, when it was first played out by him the “triangular” format of the USA – USSR – PRC (with recognition of China and taking over by the latter its rightful place in the UN Secu-

<sup>1</sup> Kissinger H. Leadership. Six Studies in World Strategy. UK : Penguin Books, 2022.

riety Council), did not become a “reliable school of diplomacy” for the United States, which would require changes not only in the scale of the strategy, but also at the level of mentality. Thus, the very idea of multipolarity was not an artificial invention of Russian diplomacy, aimed at defending its foreign policy independence, but reflected the essence of what was happening in the world, which was seen in Moscow and did not want to see in the West, where they preferred to live in the old way.

There comes the stage of regionalization of global politics within the framework and in accordance with geopolitical imperatives of this bipolarity. The latter finds its expression in the confrontation between the Western “Seven” and the expanding BRICS format. It is not difficult to foresee how the experiment with anarcho-capitalism in Argentina and the West’s attempt to win Buenos Aires over to its side will end. It is still unknown what will happen to the United States and the West as a whole. Will they care about hegemony? After all, they will be forced to act in conditions of reduced opportunities for solving their own problems at someone else’s expense, which they have been accustomed to for centuries.

The West’s self-isolation from the rest of the world has been exacerbated by Israel’s operation in the Gaza Strip, which has now become a real disaster of the US foreign policy. The new bipolarity has undergone further crystallization. The split of the international community will serve as a decisive factor in the UN’s further evolution bringing the Organization in line with the spirit of the times. Over recent decades, the West has abused its influence at the UN, continued seeking the necessary decisions for itself, not hesitating to exert pressure, and when it failed in the Security Council, they did this at the General Assembly, in other bodies of the Organization. The West also abused Russia’s goodwill: suffice it to recall the Security Council’s Resolutions on Libya and on Freedom of Navigation in the Red Sea.

The agenda includes the reform of the Security Council, with expansion of its membership for the purpose of making it truly representative not only geographically, but above all culturally and civilizational. Now the West is overrepresented in the category of permanent members: three out of five seats, while Russia and China have the other two. If we take the “Seven”, then we get three seats for seven its participants. Russia and China are not about only BRICS, but also about the Global Majority, that is, three quarters of the UN members.

Many believe that it is advisable to reduce the Western countries’ representation in the Council, especially because of their recognition the United States’ leadership. The United States may well represent the entire Western civilization and those who associate themselves with it. Representing their civilizations, India and Brazil have the right to permanent membership in the Council. There is a question of representing Africa and the Arab-Islamic world, which must decide for themselves who will perform it. In these conditions, the candidacies of Germany and Japan will be absolutely impassable: besides the fact that they are Western countries, these states are also not completely sovereign, being under the United States’ occupation. If the European Union persists after the current geopolitical crisis, the EU may take France’s seat. In any case, it is unacceptable that five Anglo-Saxon countries have two permanent seats in

the Security Council, being represented by the United States and Great Britain, which are also linked by “special relations”.

It is still difficult to predict how the UN will transform itself. First, it is necessary to overcome the geopolitical crisis, and then, following its results, it will be possible to judge the new balance of powers in the world. It is no coincidence that many politicians and researchers believe (and the Western elites themselves are of the same opinion) that the Ukrainian conflict, which the West provides strategic depth to, including supplying modern weapons and ammunition, will be equivalent in its consequences to a world war.

The West itself devalues the UN, firstly, by refusing to negotiate with Russia; secondly, by introducing the thesis of “a rules-based order” that denies the world order with the UN’s central role. The fact that the Minsk 2015 Agreements were approved by the UN Security Council, but later the Western capitals declared that they had not intended to implement them at all and demand that from Kiev, is also relevant to this issue. Their real goal was to gain time for rearmament of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, that is, their preparation for the “final solution” of the Donbass issue. It is appropriate to recall that Germany’s remilitarization (this was called “pacification”) also began with its Nazification in the context of preparing aggression against the USSR. Such criteria as belonging to the Anti-Hitler Coalition and the status of a nuclear power under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as factors for permanent membership in the Security Council are likely to be no longer of the same importance. Most probably, economic, cultural and civilizational factors, as well as the authority based on the ability to play a positive role in the common affairs of mankind, will be paramount.

It may happen that it will be difficult to come to an agreement with the West if it continues claiming dominance. In this case, new formats, primarily BRICS, will become even more important. The global problems require collective efforts to solve them. The option of recreating the UN on a new basis – without the West and with its headquarters in one of the World Majority countries – is not improbable, as well. If the new world organization is inclusive, it will not be difficult for Western countries to join it on a common basis. In this case, the current UN could exist in parallel in a fading mode, which anyway it is forced by the West’s aggressive policy. And its specialized agencies would eventually come under the umbrella of the new UN, as was the case with the International Labour Organization and the International Telecommunication Union, inherited by the UN from the League of Nations.

BRICS gains features of the leading format of self-organization of the World Majority. Its key functions include, inter alia, combatting against neocolonial dependence, i. e. unequal terms of trade, the West’s control over the global monetary, financial and other global architecture. This requires alternative platforms and capacities. The West does not hide that its policy of containment is primarily aimed at inhibiting its competitors’ development. Backwardness of the World Majority is a key condition for maintaining the Western hegemony. Therefore, the West relies on advanced technological development. Although it is already a lot to simply develop trade and economic relations and other practical cooperation among non-Western countries,

based on mutual consideration of interests (this was already the case in the Soviet Union's policy in relation of new independent states during their formation).

Equally important is the fact that the SVO in Ukraine demonstrates the West's limited military resources, its sharply reduced ability to carry out the policy of forceful pressure worldwide. In the World Majority countries, this has deterred many in terms of opposing the West's running the show, including that through TNCs, in the territory of these states, and the disposal of their natural resources.

The question of Russia's historical mission arises again. The mission of affirming human freedom in its true, Christian understanding – as the freedom of all countries and peoples. The revolution of 1917, like the Chinese Revolution of 1949, only created the conditions for liberating the world from the Western oppression. This mission itself is being implemented now.

### **The image of the emerging world<sup>1</sup>**

The current comprehensive crisis of the world order is caused by differences in expectations of “the new world order” of the West and the non-Western world after the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact Organization. While the world was expecting a new stage of international relations on the de-ideologized basis of the “Westphalian” principles of the UN Charter, the West headed by Washington chose the policy of domination, assuming the “automatic” extension of its domination to the rest of the world as a natural consequence of its “victory in the Cold War”.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was not dissolved, and in Europe, a region-wide, inclusive system of collective security was not created in accordance with the meaning of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, which the continent had not known for a century and a half. There happened no post-war settlement, as it was previously after any “big war” in Europe.

Referring in his “Leadership” to the experience of Nixon's “transformational diplomacy”, Kissinger wrote about “the agreed framework of legality as the most solid basis of peace”, and on this foundation – about “global equilibrium / balance of powers”. Today, through its thesis of a certain “rules-based order” to have been introduced, the United States actually deny and destroy the post-war world order based on collectively agreed, universal, i. e. binding on every one, international legal instruments, primarily the UN Charter.

It is one step from the denial of International Law to the denial of law in general, including the basis of Anglo-Saxon market capitalism – the right to inviolability of private property. And the United States with its allies are taking this step by freezing Russia's sovereign assets and thereby undermining one of the fundamental foundations of their constitutional order, which indicates the systemic crisis in the Western society. This is another dimension of the current global transformation, which refers to the West's previous crisis, which was resolved in the events of 1914–1945.

<sup>1</sup> This section uses the conclusions of the report: Картина нарождающегося мира: базовые черты и тенденции // Дипломатическая академия МИД России : [сайт]. 2024. Янв. URL: <https://www.dipacademy.ru/documents/7763/Doklad-Kartina-narozhdayushegosya-mira.pdf?ysclid=m0tyddcz0686948036> (accessed: 04.01.2024).

The liberal idea is evolving towards totalitarianism, an attempt on the freedom of speech and the freedom of thought. Russia consistently defends international legality, whether it attempts to prevent World War I by convening the Hague Peace Conferences in 1899 and 1907, or efforts to create the Eastern Pact in the second half of the 1930s for the purpose of guaranteeing the borders of Germany's eastern neighbours, which could prevent new aggression and World War II.

Aleksandr Gorchakov wrote in his famous (“Russia is not angry. Russia is concentrating”) circular dispatch dated September 02, 1856, “We have spoken out in all the cases when we considered it necessary to speak out in support of the law”.<sup>2</sup>

Created in the post-war period, with the UN-centric and universal international legal instruments, the international legal order has actually suspended its operation because of the systemic confrontation between the West and Russia. This primarily applies to maintaining peace and security. The main multilateral treaties and agreements aimed at preventing nuclear tests, maintaining nuclear parity, limiting weapons and dangerous military activities have ceased to be in force as the result of the United States' unilateral withdrawal from them or suspension of their operation.

Herewith, from the World Majority countries, primarily developing ones, there is a growing demand for inclusiveness of the existing global governance architecture. It is obvious that these countries strive for implementing their cultural and historical identity in foreign policy. These trends have already been recognized by the officials of the Administration of J. Biden.

As for the ideological basis of international life, restoring the significance of the factors of societies' and states' attractiveness on the balanced and truly competitive basis seems inevitable. The unifying trend of the Western politics and its consequence, interventionism, will be eliminated.

The Valdai Club's conclusions and forecasts,<sup>3</sup> such as development of the erosion of hierarchical structures in the system of international relations, with parallel sovereignization of the states responding to Western unification by emphasizing their identity and uniqueness, deserve attention. The United States, however, continues acting as a classic status quo power, which is the reason for the current confrontations that allow talking about a new version of the Cold War.

Its outcome is possible not in the format of “a big deal”, as defined in American political science, or winners' “peaceful congress”, but “in course of natural process of interaction between states and finding options for an international structure acceptable to all states”, i. e. without winners and losers, the ideal of “the world without winners”, which was implemented in World War I due to the elites' prejudices, mutual demonization of the parties and the bad tradition of imposing responsibility for the massacre on the defeated. The dispersal of force/power factors, including resource and technological ones, across a wider range of leading states will also work for the political and diplomatic settlement.

<sup>2</sup> Лопатников В. А. Горчаков: Время и служение. М. : Молодая гвардия, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Аттестат зрелости, или Порядок, какого еще не было. Фантазия о будущем без иерархии : ежегод. доклад Валдайского клуба. 2023. Окт. // Валдай. Международный дискуссионный клуб : [сайт]. URL: <https://ru.valdaiclub.com/a/reports/attestat-zrelosti-2023/?ysclid=m0ty7a198z872461180> (accessed: 04.01.2024).

According to authoritative experts in international relations (G. Morgenthau, R. Aron, etc.), the idea of multipolarity is a historical normality. It can be concluded that the very American thesis about “revisionist powers” encroaching on the United States’ global hegemony is anti-historical and makes a rule of what is not normal. Regionalization of global politics and its reconstruction “from below” will reflect the multilevel balance of forces and interests, which will serve as a guarantee against the dictates of the global “concert of powers”.

Democratization of international relations will be facilitated by impossibility of conducting secret diplomacy in modern conditions and the need for real involvement of all states in the search for solutions to new global challenges that are cross-border ones in their nature. It will also be contributed to by principles, such as indivisibility of security and peaceful coexistence, which presuppose equality of various cultures and civilizations, their development models rooted in history.

The British philosopher John Gray believes that the state should be turned into a means of peaceful coexistence within the society and outside it, “The belief that one form of governance is suitable for every one is a kind of tyranny.” And if there is an evolutionary process in history, there is no reason for believing that it gives the advantage to the West. The regimes that adapt better than others to “the arbitrary course of history” will prevail. Not the most productive, but those that make the best use of the opportunities provided by chance: they will be the most viable, according to Gray.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the theme of history / “the end of history”, including theses on “the new Middle Ages” and “neofeudalism”, Jean Baudrillard’s judgments published in 1990 in the collection of works “Transparency of Evil”<sup>2</sup> about the phenomenon of rewriting the history of the entire 20th century in the West after the end of the Cold War, about “revising the whole History... perhaps in the secret hope of starting everything from scratch in the new millennium” are of certain interest. It sounds relevant in the light of the Western elites’ struggle with history, considering it, inter alia, as a source of national identity. Baudrillard suggests that History “will eventually move away from its final meaning in the opposite direction.” A. I. Fursov<sup>3</sup> writes about the onset of the apocalyptic “Bosch time”, which in the late Middle Ages and the early Modern Age led to emergence of capitalism, though “the finale mirrors the genesis.”

Post-capitalism may have all the hallmarks of “the concentration camp” predicted by postmodernists. Opposition to such a prospect can serve as one of motivations for self-organization and solidarity of the World Majority, as well as the basis for its “linkage” with a part of the Western electorate rooted in their countries, history and traditional values. And if the world has come up with the idea of post-capitalist design, this cannot but open up space for historical creativity of Russia and other leading non-Western countries cooperating within the framework of BRICS, the UN, the Group of Twenty and other promising formats.

<sup>1</sup> Gray J. *The New Leviathans: Thoughts After Liberalism*. L.: Allen Lane, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Бодрийяр Ж. Прозрачность зла. М.: Добросвет: Изд-во «КДУ», 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Фурсов А. И. Наше «время Босха». М.: Наше Завтра, 2023.