

STRUGGLE FOR VICTORY IN THE YEAR OF THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GREAT VICTORY

This year our country celebrates the 80th anniversary of the Great Victory and expects another victory — in a special military operation in Ukraine.

The history of the Great Patriotic War is well studied, but today there is a need to consider the events of that period from a different angle. For the last decade and a half or so, politicians in Western countries have been trying to put the two regimes — Stalin's and Hitler's — on the same board. Poland was an initiator, where a relevant Sejm decision was adopted in 2007. They went from trying to prove that World War II in 1939 was not only unleashed by Germany but also by the Soviet Union to claiming that they were two identical totalitarian regimes. They recognize that the victory was won by the Soviet Union and the anti-Hitler coalition, which included just the pillars of Western democracy — the United States of America and Great Britain, but this rapprochement was forced, and as a result half of Europe was subordinated to the dictate of the USSR.

S. V. Lavrov, Foreign Minister, once recalled that even during the Cold War, when there was an acute rivalry between the two camps — the socialist camp led by the USSR and the capitalist camp with the hegemony of the United States — no one tried to equate Stalin and Hitler. After the Soviet Union collapsed in the early 1990s, a decade-long “honeymoon” between Russia and the West began. Our leadership believed that integration into the Western world was our main national interest. During this period, no one was interested in rewriting history and revising the treatment of the participants in the Second World War. It all started in 2007, after the Russian President made his famous speech in Munich, in which he stated that Russia intends to return to the ranks of the great powers with its own opinion and position.

The culmination was the 2019 European Parliament resolution that the regimes of Stalin and Hitler (the essence of the same thing) and World War II were nothing

but a struggle between these two tyrannies. But this assertion is a crime against history. It is true that the Soviet Union openly recognized itself as a state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the difference between the two regimes is obvious. The USSR was an international state consisting of 15 republics, and in none of them people were persecuted on the basis of nationality. It is true that now we have to solve problems, the foundations for which were laid then, but internationalism in the USSR was not declared, but quite real. And German Nazism was an ideology of national exceptionalism, of the primacy of the German race and the second-ratedness of all others, so that they, the “inferior,” could be subjected to repression and extermination. At the very least this difference between Stalinism and Hitlerism makes it impossible to equate the two.

Since 2007, all these insinuations have only gained momentum. They escalated in 2008, when Russia supported Abkhazia and South Ossetia; the next stage was 2014, the return of Crimea in the will of the Crimeans; finally, with the start of the special military operation. So that we became a real enemy for the West.

This point of view is being hammered into the heads of all those who are ready to accept it in various ways, but quite intensively and consistently. Today we are going through a tense period when not only our adversaries but also our friends are expecting the end of military operations in Ukraine. China, India, Brazil and other World Majority countries have repeatedly called for some form of ceasefire to be organized and a negotiation process to begin. With the inauguration of new US President Donald Trump, these calls have taken a more concrete form. The previous administration and President Joseph Biden sought to inflict as much damage on Russia as possible and staked the war on every last Ukrainian, while continuing to keep their NATO allies consolidated and forcing them into the conflict. They were helping Ukraine, supplying military equipment there to keep the war going.

But now the situation has changed. The new United States administration is demonstrating peacefulness, a desire to act as a mediator and to achieve a speedy end to hostilities. This begs the question: why did the US change its position and why would it want to do so? (The main reason for the United States administration's desire

to see an end to the confrontation is not Trump's personal sympathy for Putin or Zelensky, nor his special affection for Russia or Ukraine.) His actions are primarily due to the fact that the part of American society that supports the President's efforts and voted for him believes that this war is not a war of the United States, and by getting involved in one way or another, the United States is creating new problems for itself rather than solving the problems it already has.

Meanwhile, the new administration of the United States sees China as its main competitor and adversary. This is evidenced by the increased duties imposed in recent months, the so-called tariff war and a number of other measures. America expects to end the Ukraine story quickly and hopes this will be appreciated by Russia, which will slow down its cooperation with China out of gratitude.

It is important to note that today Russia is a reliable rear guard for China, because China has conflicts or tensions along all its borders, except for the Russian one: problematic relations with India over Tibet, difficult communication with Vietnam (in 1979, there was an armed conflict between China and Vietnam with a large number of casualties), intense competition with Japan, including over the islands in Pacific Ocean, and the problem of Taiwan, which China considers its territory, while the United States develops cooperation with Taiwan as a sovereign state. Taiwan's economy has become an indispensable part of the Western world's economy — a near-monopoly supplier of microchips. All of this is forcing the Trump administration to heed those analysts who warn that continued mindless support for the fight against Russia is literally forcing it into a rapprochement with China, and that is a frightening prospect for thinking people in the United States political establishment.

Henry Kissinger, who served as U.S. Secretary of State in the mid-1970s, once made great efforts to what was then called the easing of international tensions - the establishment of US relations with the Soviet Union and, at the same time, with China, with which the USSR was at enmity. In its foreign policy, the United States sought to make its relations with the Soviet Union and China individually better than relations between the two countries, and the United States could manipulate Soviet-

Chinese relations to prevent them from “warming.” And America has been able to do this for quite some time — largely due to US support, China has been able to pull off its economic miracle.

Today, the balance of power is completely different. China's economy has taken off to such an extent that the PRC is outperforming the US on all indicators, and the gap is set to grow. At the last meeting of the Scientific and Expert Security Council of the Russian Federation, F. G. Voitovsky, Director of the Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences, showed the Institute's forecast of the ratio of the shares of different countries in the global economy for the coming years. If current trends continue, the share of the US and other G7 countries will decline rapidly, while the share of China, India and a number of other countries will increase. The BRICS states have established a New Development Bank, and the idea of creating a new reserve currency is being discussed. And the United States was faced with a choice: either to continue “strangling” Russia (but this is fraught with big problems for the United States itself because of Russia's rapprochement with China and India and the emergence of a World Majority), or to try to pull us to its side.

The main reason that makes Trump become more active on the “eastern front” (in particular, initiating negotiations on cessation of hostilities) is the US national interest, as the current administration understands it: it is necessary to prevent further cooperation between Russia and China and shift Russia's attention to the prospects of cooperation with the United States.

There is another region in the world that is extremely important for Trump — the Middle East. The problems of this region are more significant for the United States than the Ukrainian events. Israel, which continues its military operation in Gaza, is becoming more active in the Middle East. (This war would have had no other prospect than Israel's failure if it had not succeeded in eliminating the Palestinian presence on its territory.) But this is only possible if they can be resettled from Gaza, so Trump came up with the idea of moving them to other countries. This

would reverse all past decisions, including the UN recommendation for a two-state Jewish and Palestinian state. Today, it seems that Israel is putting its own plans into action, moreover, pushing the US to intervene and launch a preemptive strike against Iran. Russia is not at all smiling at this conflict — on January 17, 2025, our country signed and then ratified the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty with Iran.

The US is trying to get Russia, at least in the Middle East, to understand their plans so that our country does not oppose and cause them problems. That is why it is not General K. Kellogg, whom Trump appointed as the US special envoy to Ukraine, but S. Witkoff, who was appointed by Trump as the US special envoy to the Middle East, who is in charge of the settlement of the “Ukrainian issue.” Witkoff, while negotiating with Russia on Ukraine, would like, as a mediator in the Middle East, for Russia to coordinate with the US on its behavior in the region and maintain a predictable stance. A few weeks ago, intending to strike at the Houthis in Yemen who are attacking ships in the Red Sea, the Americans notified us. Under Biden, one could hardly imagine his administration warning Russia about the decisions it had made, and here they have defiantly shown us respect, hoping it will be appreciated.

All of this taken together, including the international situation and the situation on the battlefield in Ukraine, leads me to assume that the hostilities are likely to end in the short term. (My prediction: it will happen within six months (if not less), even despite difficult circumstances, tensions, and possible escalation on the diplomatic and military fronts.)

The question arises: what do we get as a result and can it be considered a victory? At the beginning of the special military operation, the Russian President named its goals as denazification, demilitarization, refusal to grant Ukraine NATO membership and recognition of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, which some time after the start of the SMO became part of the Russian Federation. During the operation in the fall of 2022, Russia took over the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia Region in addition to the LPR and DPR.

If we talk about the situation on the front, on August 6, 2024, the invasion of the AFU into the Kursk region took place, which ended on April 26, 2025. Kursk

region was liberated, but it took 263 days. Without the liberation of the Kursk region, negotiations with Ukraine were impossible; before that, there were “shooting” negotiations, and only with the Americans, but not with the Ukrainians.

If we talk about prospects, can we expect that in the near future we will achieve decisive success at an accelerated pace and Russian troops will enter Kyiv and Odessa? There are people in our country who are sure that without this, victory will be incomplete.

My personal point of view is that Ukraine as a state will not cease to exist, at least in the near future. I have no information about the plans of the General Staff, but it is obvious that we will not enter Kiev or Odessa in the remaining time. Most likely, the front line, even taking into account the fact that it is constantly moving, will not change much, although our troops are advancing not only in the Kursk region.

Although the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions have become part of the Russian Federation, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia are not under the control of the Russian armed forces. Will it be possible in the remaining time to put them under control again, like Kherson, or to conquer them, like Zaporizhzhia? We will likely have to be satisfied with today's results on the ground.

There is a struggle around this too. We will try to achieve legal recognition of all that we have conquered and incorporated into Russia. But there is no certainty of this. The Americans have divided this prospect into two parts: getting Ukraine to recognize Crimea as part of Russia and everything else. But what Russia controls, we will not give to anyone, including Trump. The lands that we have reclaimed or managed to incorporate into Russia and the Russian Constitution will remain under our control, but without legal recognition by Ukraine itself and its Western allies.

This will be reminiscent of the status of the Baltic republics within the Soviet Union. After all, the West did not publicly recognize the incorporation of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia in the 1940s into the USSR even after the war, despite the overall victory over Germany. Western countries agreed that the Baltics were in fact part of the USSR, but did not recognize this from a legal point of view.

Of course, we'd like something different — full-blown recognition. But I have my doubts that we will be able to achieve this, because Ukraine has enough opportunities to avoid it, including procedural ones: it would require a vote in the Verkhovna Rada, which is as hateful to Russia as President Zelensky.

No one will take from Russia what we have managed to reclaim, but no one will give us what we have not managed to liberate — Odessa or Kiev. Again, the question arises: can this be considered a victory? Yes, under certain conditions. First, the US has already agreed — and Ukraine is unlikely to counter this — that Ukraine will not join NATO. This is the purpose of the SMO that our President has been talking about.

Ukraine today is not a member of NATO, nor is it a subject of world politics — it is an object manipulated by NATO. Not being a member of the Alliance, Ukraine does whatever NATO member states, primarily the US and other Western allies, see fit. They are arming it, their soldiers are there as volunteers. The idea of stationing a peacekeeping contingent in Ukraine is now being discussed. In other words, the goal of the SMO — Ukraine's non-admission to NATO — has been achieved, but it will still have to be forced into neutrality.

If we talk about the other goal — demilitarization, this is quite difficult to achieve in a situation where the remaining territory of Ukraine is not physically controlled.

The third goal is denazification. The indignation of Russians in the year of the 80th anniversary of the Victory Day at what is happening in Ukraine and their attitude to the events of 80 years ago is understandable. Today there is a dictatorship there that has repressed all political opponents, not only those who sympathize with Russia, but in general anyone who is a problem for Zelensky. When Russia made the demand for denazification, it was about changing the Kiev regime. A change of this regime is possible. But who will it be replaced by?

Currently, Zelensky is delaying peace talks, deliberately creating problems, and making statements that he will never recognize Crimea as Russian territory, i.e. he goes against the opinion of his American master. He does this because he wants to

delay the inevitable consequences of the ceasefire and cessation of hostilities — the lifting of martial law in Ukraine and the holding of presidential elections (Zelensky's presidential term expired on May 20, 2024).

Russia has explained to everyone, including the United States, that it cannot believe in agreements with Ukraine that are signed by unknown persons from a legal point of view.

Trump realizes that he needs to update the facade of Ukraine and hold elections there. In turn, Zelensky realizes that he can be replaced by his friends in the West. He is not sure of his rating in Ukraine. Since Zelensky is worried about himself, he invents various excuses to make the elections as late as possible. It would be better for him to do it in 2026, with the expectation that by then Trump's domestic problems in the US will have accumulated and a campaign for partial re-election of the Senate and Congress will have begun. The incumbent president may lose control over the houses of Congress. In such a situation, he will have no time for intrigues in Ukraine, Zelensky, etc.

Ukraine is trying to avoid elections in every possible way, which is supported by the Rada deputies: they have just extended martial law until November 2025. According to Ukrainian law, elections cannot be held under martial law. If Zelensky goes to the polls, he will try to make sure that the presidential election is paired with the parliamentary election in the expectation that his opponents will not have time to create an organized political force and perform successfully in the parliamentary elections. Ukraine is a parliamentary-presidential republic, where the share of the Verkhovna Rada in decision-making is higher than, for example, the share of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in relation to the prerogatives of the President and the Government. Despite all the circumstances, even if the presidential election is held under outside influence, it is unlikely to bring a pro-Russian candidate to power in Ukraine - there is no such candidate there at the moment.

Nevertheless, my feeling is that everything points to the prospect of an end to hostilities. Russian President V. V. Putin has already announced a second ceasefire — for the period of the 80th anniversary of the Victory Day (the first one was

announced on Easter). We are doing this, among other things, to impress not only the Russians and Ukrainians, but also the mediators, because today the countries are competing for the US position. The fight is between Russia and those who support us in the United States, wanting to reach agreements in the Middle East and China, on the one hand, and those who, like Europe, are fighting Trump and using Zelensky as a battering ram, supporting Ukraine, on the other.

The big question now is whether Trump is able to put in place Zelensky, who is obstructive in his desire to reach a peace settlement and end the war. Countries like the UK and France are working against Trump's plan in this sense. The elites of these countries have become “embedded” in the war during the SMO and are afraid that the US will switch to other topics — China and so on. They are opponents of Trump, but they can't state it publicly, so they are trying to maneuver.

When the US president announced tariffs on imports against more than 180 nations, 75 countries, according to Trump's own information, immediately agreed to negotiate, causing him to take a step back and partially lift the duties. But China retaliated with a blow for blow in the tariff war, and Europe began to negotiate with China. That is, the European Union, faced with Trump's position, has betrayed the ideals of Euro-Atlanticism and has begun to negotiate behind Trump's back with his main political and economic adversary, China. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez recently visited China, and the European Union, represented by Ursula von der Leyen, has begun talks with China. The Americans, seeing this, began to make claims to the EU to avoid its economic engagement with China. All this suggests that a complex reformatting of alliances is underway.

I am sure we will be seriously tested by the world. What Russia has achieved is foreseeable, and we are unlikely to add anything to it. We need to hold positions and legitimize them if possible. It is necessary to find the strength and opportunities in peaceful conditions to fight for our goals in Ukraine, for the rights of Russians, the Russian Orthodox Church, against turning Ukraine into a constant source of threats and revanchism.

It would seem that Russia has no public options today because everyone in Ukraine is set up to fight us. But if we make it pragmatic, if we learn to work with sentiments, I am sure that just as Ukraine was turned from non-Russia to anti-Russia after 2014 before our eyes, in time everything can be reversed. This also implies a change in one's attitude: at the border control at Sheremetyevo airport, one should not turn Ukrainian citizens back, but, on the contrary, drag them to one's side. We need to ensure that in Ukraine, if not now, then after a while, those who will be concerned with rebuilding the country, not with building a bastion against Russia, come to power.

But all this will require a new effort of all forces. A difficult world will come, which will alternate with provocations, but we will have to change military means and use peaceful means in the struggle for Ukraine.

I believe that we can achieve to take Ukraine out of the game as a country that educates its population in the spirit of hatred of Russia. It's hard enough, but if we make progress along the way, it will be our victory in the year of the Great Victory and beyond.