

WHY THE WORLD IS BECOMING LESS AND LESS PREDICTABLE FOR US

Currently, the world has come up close to global economic changes. Expectations of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0) based on rapid development of information technologies and use of artificial intelligence, make both private companies and states as a whole look for new approaches for achieving economic growth and prosperity. At the same time, we're watching obsolescence of traditional forms of cooperation, blurring of the bloc world order as well as reduction of the Anglo-Saxon dominance in the established geopolitical order. Emerging economies are actively growing and more and more often claim the rights to take part in forming the "rules of the game", bringing about a relative decline of the historical West and its erosion.

The trends for strengthening regional cooperation, compensating for manageability at the global level, are seen clearer and clearer with the failures of the globalization process as the background. One can even say that the main burden in the radically transforming international system falls on the regional governance level. The Euro-Atlantic region, no matter how regrettable it can be, is in a double crisis – global and regional as, on the one hand, some strictly regional institutions such as NATO claimed and go on claiming to play the global role, or the West just goes on controlling the key structures of global governance (G7, the Bretton Woods system), and on the other hand, the current European security architecture transferred from the Cold War period, fails to adapt to the requirements of the times, first of all in providing its openness and inclusiveness.

And what is more, we're dealing with the non-linear and moving medium in international relations. The environment here changes quickly, nullifying yesterday's and even today's realities. Many things are virtualized, they go on existing formally though have no real impact on what is going on. The world is at a point when short-term changes in some national and regional directions coincide with global shifts, being the manifestations of these essential changes.

New approaches introduced by D. Trump to the United States foreign policy play a significant role. Their foreign policy lost its former “democratizing” charge in favor of pragmatism coming up to cynicism. Washington tries to do business without basing on multilateral institutions and international law, forcing its “rules” on all partners, be it within the framework of “transactional diplomacy” or by sanction pressure not camouflaged in any way.

The public sentiments that brought D. Trump to the White House are gaining strength in Europe as well. Brexit is a vivid example of them. And continental Europe is so engrossed in its internal problems (crisis of trust in elites, European Union’s/European zone’s prospects becoming vague all of a sudden) that it no longer serves as a beacon for the global development, noticeably “losing weight” on the international arena and nearly turning into a “sick man” of the world.

Thus, the foundations of international relations that seemed unshakeable are eroded. Agreements become to be viewed not as an orientation point for behavior but as an object for various kinds of manipulations for justifying one’s own illegal behavior. Appeals of the collective West to some “behavioral rules” presented as international norms, that have already become a habit, look alarming and disturbing. The consequence of that is termination or disintegration of many agreements such as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran’s Nuclear Program, Treaty on the Elimination of Medium- and Short-Range Missiles as well as drastic violations of the UN Charter – interventions in Iraq, Libya, Western coalition’s blows at Syria. Such “legal nihilism” and ignoring the central role of the United Nations, demonstration of disinterest in collective and not bloc development of new international legal standards, lead to destabilization of the whole global system established in the after-war period of the international law and order.

One of the key elements of such disorganization of international life is Western countries striving to act from a position of strength (power politics) even in the environment when the Western monopoly on force projection has been undermined. A vivid example of this inertia at the mentality and practical policy

level is growth of NATO military expenditures that have already come up to US\$ 1 trillion per year. Comprehension of their former dominance loss in world affairs makes the United States and their allies nervous and as a result increases the risk of ill-considered, sudden steps on their part with consequences that are difficult to foresee.

The UN Security Council stays a kind of “stability beacon” with this background. It still plays the key role in the system of international relations, allows to efficiently oppose harmful initiatives of some countries. It’s evident that after a series of failures in foreign policy, D. Trump’s administration is beginning to think about the necessity to act sanctioned by the UN Security Council. As the Venezuelan crisis shows, this tool allows responsible players not to take the matters to irreparable consequences.

Another example is the state of affairs around the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Consecutive decrease of the United States’ unpredictability, degradation of their ability to come to agreements make Pyongyang demand additional guarantees during talks with Washington. No one trusts oral promises any more, consequently, carefully worked out, strictly obligatory agreements will be required, and they can be only worked out in case of a multilateral format, with participation of all interested parties and should be approved by the UN Security Council.

This shows that the established international institutions are still in demand. The impact of power politics in the medium-term perspective will decrease – both because of low efficiency and extreme expenses, and, most important, counter-productiveness for the interests of the initiators of the strong-arm scenarios. Besides other factors, we should name the loss of control over the international information and media space by the Anglo-Saxon world – as a result of the Internet development. Information technologies lead to the state of affairs when the West can no longer dictate the whole world a profitable for it treatment of some or the other events and reject the right to alternative points of view, qualifying them as “fake news” or “post-truth”.

The West tries to protect itself from these information challenges. We're already seeing the first signs of that. For example, it is suggested in the so-called White Paper, recently issued by the British government, to introduce social networks' regulation by the state. Using plausible excuses (fighting terrorism and extremism, protection of the people from possible infringements on the Internet and notorious "outside interference" into intra-political processes), the state in essence intends to get not only access to personal information of users but also a powerful pool to use social networks in the interests of elites.

These trends are viewed in the financial sector as well. On the one hand, we're witnessing the growing authority of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, BRICS New Development Bank and other entities together with the IMF and the World Bank. The West's irritation by such a development of events leads to sanction policy's aggravation, fitful attempts to strengthen the dollar's monopoly, to tie "disobedient" countries closer to it. In their turn, the growing antagonism of the third world countries and undermined trust in dollar tools will be the consequences of that. The loss of trust in international stabilization mechanisms will entail the states' aspiration to return golden reserves to their motherlands. Besides, new payment systems are created today, currencies are diversified and there are already talks about the dollar replacement in the oil trade.

Attempts to suppress economic rivals by political means are especially disturbing. In that sense, the example of the West's pressure on the Chinese company Huawei is fairly demonstrative. Washington, incapable to honestly compete with the growing Asian economy in the information technologies and artificial intelligence sector, revives the far from civilized ways of doing business like the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls at the time of the Cold War. However, these measures more and more often lead to the result directly opposite to the desired, assisting even bigger isolation of countries, their relying on their own strengths, and that as a result leads to their independent development and origination of breakthrough technologies outside the West.

Thus, all players will have to take into account the growing risks and unpredictability of the former world leaders' behavior in the short-term and medium-term perspectives. Non-Western states will have, on the one hand, to take into account the new American course of action, on the other hand, look for "safety nets", new forms of collective work in the community of like-minded people. Companies all over the world will take into account increased political risks, look for such ways of doing business that will protect them from Western elites' arbitrariness and lawlessness.

At the same time, it seems that a nonacceptance "critical mass" in respect of current "cowboy" approaches by a number of Western states, will be accumulated in the world in the next ten years. New players and alternative institutions in the security and economic sectors will come up and strengthen. This will create the environment for restoration of the global balance and gradual return to civilized forms of settlement of disagreements and international behavior as a whole.