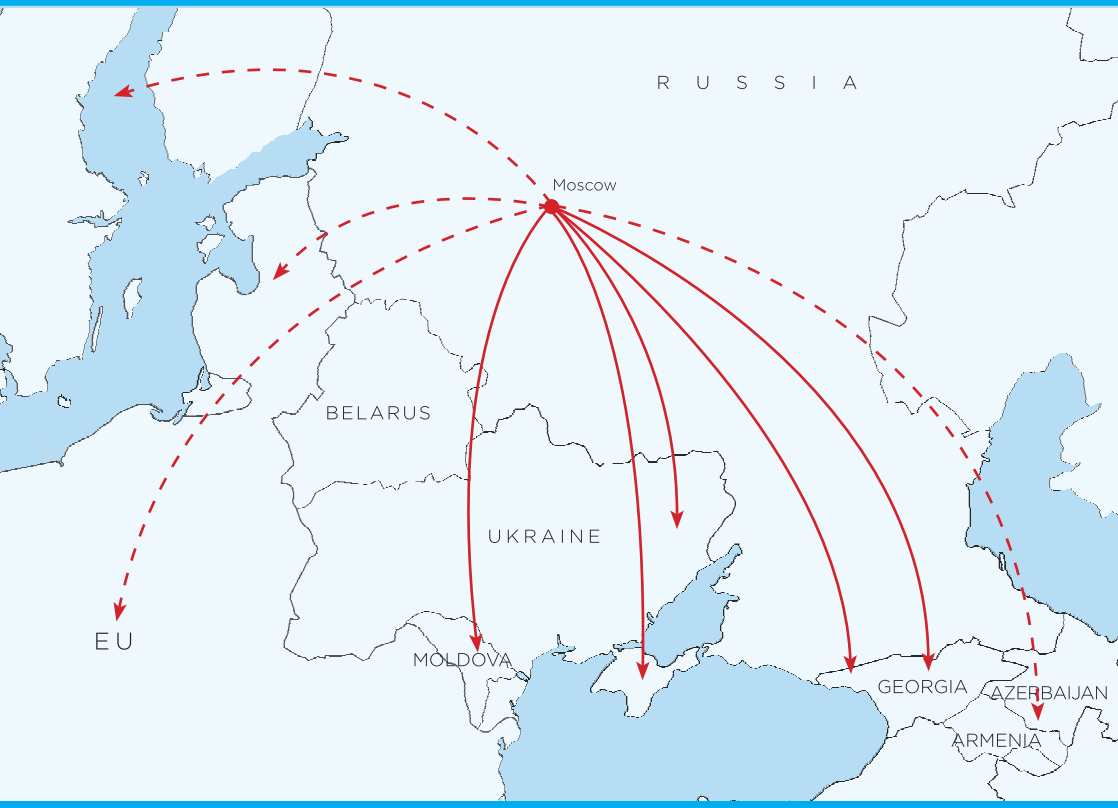
VALERI CHECHELASHVILI | VOLODYMYR OGRYZKO

RUSSIA - The Main Threat to the Global Order:

The Urgent Need for Counteracting and Creation of the Deterrence System



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Russia – The Main Threat to Global Order: The Urgent Need for Counteraction and the Creation of a Deterrence System

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To Study and Change Russia

The well-known expression that "Russia cannot be understood by mental effort" should not, in our opinion, prevent researchers in their attempts to understand what Russia is in reality.

That is the question in which everyone is interested. The answer, however, is not yet encouraging: politically immature, economically behind the times, corrupt, aggressive and unpredictable. Such a Russia is a threat to everyone and no one really needs that. Actually, it is a threat to itself: by continuing its current line of conduct, it can provoke such centrifugal tendencies within the country and a reaction in the international arena that may cast doubt on its future survival.

In fact, everyone would like to see Russia behaving as other civilized countries: that would contribute to the peaceful, prosperous and secure future of the entire planet.

But Russia has chosen a different path. It decided to remain different, unlike those countries where human rights are respected, the well-being of the population is taken care of, corruption is confronted, friendly relations with neighbors, both close and distant, are maintained and providing assistance is a normal practice.

It so happened that for more than six centuries since the birth of Moscovy (the prototype of the Moscow state), it was perceived in the West exactly as it was but no one analyzed carefully enough as to why Russia happened to be such a state. But recently, Russia has overplayed itself, having crossed the "red line" of the democratic community's patience. The Kremlin, for some reason, thought that this patience would be endless and that it would be allowed to do whatever it wants. After a series of illegal actions in the region and beyond, Russia's aggression against Ukraine forced the West to finally conclude that to ignore further realities in Russia's domestic and foreign policy would mean risking its own national interests.

Only when for the first time since the Second World War one European country annexed part of the territory of another and started a "hot" war against it, the political elite and expert community of the West suddenly realized that they knew very little about Russia. Although it is true not only for countries far from Russia but also its closest neighbors.

This all makes this analytical study undertaken by two well-known politicians and diplomats of Georgia and Ukraine even more relevant as they have many years of practical experience in the "Russian dossier" at the level of ambassadors, representatives in international organizations and members of their governments. By the essence of their activities, they took part in numerous bilateral and multilateral negotiations, could see and analyze the practical side of Russian diplomacy and, accordingly, understand its nature much better than scientists working on this issue in their offices.

It is obvious that it is impossible to cover all aspects of the Russian reality in a relatively small research project. Actually, the authors did not intend to cover all aspects of the matter. They outlined just some of the important directions of

Russian foreign policy. Many questions, therefore, remain “behind the scenes” and require a subsequent in-depth analysis. We hope that work in this direction will continue.

What seems important: the authors departed from the usual for practice in today’s political science of describing events. The main advantage offered to the reader’s attention is the analysis, synthesis and practical conclusions which, in our opinion, could be the basis for developing practical containment programs for Russia. This is exactly what is missing in the research of analysts from EU and NATO countries today as well as in the activities of politicians who make important decisions in the fields of security, defense and foreign policy. Including in our countries - Ukraine and Georgia.

We would very much like to see the proposals made in this study be treated by our Western (and not only!) colleagues with maximum attention: they were not taken, as they say in Russia, “from the ceiling,” (out of the blue); these are the results of many years of working experience, stemming from interaction with representatives of Russia at various levels.

Russia needs to be studied. For this it is important to combine the efforts of analysts and analytical centers of the countries of the “old” and “new” Euro-Atlantic. The obvious advantage of the latter is their historical experience as well as, let us say, the mental sense of the Russian threat (due to a forced stay in the state of conquered nations for centuries) which representatives of the Western European analytical school do not have.

Therefore, it is necessary to fully promote active cooperation with the aim to develop, transfer and adopt subsequent decisions by the political leadership of civilized countries. It is necessary to prevent the final transformation of today’s Russia into a pariah of international politics which would certainly lead to its self-destruction; on the contrary, we should gradually promote Russia’s transformation into an active participant and contributor to the process of creating a global world order comfortable for all countries and peoples.

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Introduction

Europe experienced two world wars. Shortly after the end of World War II, it became the main arena of the Cold War which arose because of the opposition of two socio-political systems. The Cold War manifested itself not just in an ideological confrontation but also in the conventional and nuclear weapons arms race. The development of this situation put humanity, and with it Europe, on the brink of survival several times.

By the mid-1970s, the situation began to change and, as a result, reason on both sides of the Iron Curtain prevailed. On August 1, 1975, a historic Final Act was signed in Helsinki that laid the foundations for lasting peace in Europe and beyond.

The Final Act is an amazingly universal and balanced document. Its ten principles provided answers to all of the controversial questions that rose between its member states. The relevance of the document only increased after major geopolitical shifts in Europe caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Russian title of the document – Conclusive Act – more precisely reflects its meaning, logic and its direction into the future, rather than the English title, Final Act. The document brought the era of confrontation on the European continent to an end and defined the framework of international relations in Europe that would lead to well-being and prosperity.

And so it was in the western and partly in central and southern parts of Europe where an unprecedented experiment on building a joint European house was being successfully conducted. Nations, killing each other for centuries, united and created a unique formation. These nations showed an example of how it was possible to build qualitatively new inter-state relations despite the complex shared historical experience and taking advantage of the new conditions.

After the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty by the Prague Protocol of July 1, 1991 and the breakup of the Soviet Union on December 8, 1991 by the Belovezha Accords, Europe got a second wind. It seemed that nothing could hinder its prosperity and well-being.

However, today we are facing the reality of a new Cold War. Why did this happen? Who is to blame for this? And, most importantly, how can we get out of this situation?

This study seeks to analyze these questions. The authors have attempted to analyze both the historical aspects of the formation of modern states in Eastern Europe and the logic of events that took place in the last decades in this region which enabled

them to draw certain conclusions and propose some recommendations.

Europe was able to cope with the Cold War despite being divided by the Iron Curtain which passed right through its heart, Berlin. Now, Europe holds much more resources – geopolitical, institutional and financial – and it has a much stronger influence, authority and reputation in international relations alongside its stronger allies.

All of this provides grounds for optimism. Today, Europe can withstand threats and deal with challenges much more easily than in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Moreover, even today the challenges facing Europe are again generated in the east, in the city which was the main source of danger for Europe after the end of the World War II and still remains today – Moscow.

Part I. Imperia Complex – Russia's Immutable Essence

The thirteenth century ... The ancient Kyiv State – the Kyivan Rus Empire (the precursor of Ukraine) was destroyed by the Mongol-Tatar Horde. The center of the political life of Rus-Ukraine moves from Kyiv to the west – to Volodymyr – in the Volyn Principality, which continues the political and legal heritage of Kyiv. Like the Grand Duchy of Kyiv, it will profess the values of Europe of those times, remaining its integral part.

Because of the invasion of the Horde, Kyivan Rus fell into several parts. Its northeastern part – Muscovy – finds itself under almost four centuries of direct control of the Horde, adopting from it and embodying in practice both the Horde's way of life as well as its whole ideology and structure of state administration. Over the vast territory of the once unified Rus, two types of social organisms are formed: European and that of the Horde.

For the first, traditions of self-government remain characteristic in its primordial form (veche, people's votes, elected judges, courts, etc.). And for the second – there is a strict centralization of management and the unconditional suppression of individual rights by the supreme leader with a slavish dependence on him. The Moscow prince recognizes the Horde's khan as his sovereign and visits him to receive the right to reign.

Rus itself also becomes dependent on the khan. But, only in the form of an impost – obligatory payments. This dependence, unlike Muscovy, lasts only a little more than a century. It is very important that the way of life remained the same – European.

In this evolutional but logical manner, on the territory of the once united Kyiv State – Rus, there emerged two absolutely different systems of not only public administration but also world outlook, values and, most importantly – relations to people and their rights.

The formation of the mentality of the inhabitants of Muscovy was also seriously influenced by the geographical factor. If the fertile lands of southern Rus (Kyiv Rus) determined the settled way of life of farmers and, hence, the origin of the practice of individual farming, the situation looked totally different in the northeast. Harsh climatic conditions required two things: the unification of people to survive (it was beyond the power of a single family) and the constant displacement for cultivation of new lands since the used and depleted soil no longer provided a chance for sustenance.

Thus, for long centuries, several postulates were established in the minds of the inhabitants of Muscovy: a) all power belongs to the supreme ruler and it must be strictly obeyed (vertical: master - slave, power is sacral), b) it is possible to survive only by uniting into communities (the most important is the opinion of the collective and not of an individual) and c) it is necessary to conquer other territories in order to survive (aggression is an acceptable and justified form of behavior). The strengthening of such a worldview was facilitated by numerous marriages between Moscow's label princes and the Horde's rulers during its vassalage.

The Golden Horde heritage also had a very specific impact on the economy of Muscovy which later scientists would call the "Asian way of production." In Europe, there was a clear approach to doing business which was defined by K. Marx in the well-known formula "money-commodity-money with profit" while in Muscovy, and then in Russia, "commodities" were of a specific nature. Actually, power became the commodity there since only the proximity to it or, even better, staying in power, allowed one to earn without problems or restrictions. Such a practice resulted in the emergence of total corruption which penetrated the whole system of public relations from the very top to the very bottom. Since those times, Russian society perceives corruption as a norm and lives in full harmony with it.

Therefore, after the collapse of the Horde and the emergence of independent Muscovy on the historical map, it actually continued its political and ideological traditions.

We cannot avoid recalling the religious factor which also influenced the peculiarities of the formation of Moscow's identity. The Orthodox faith brought from Kyiv did not become a factor of enlightenment and education, as it was in Rus, but turned into a dogmatic denial of everything that was not perceived by the Moscow clergy. Hence, the worldview was "cut off" from the rest of the Christian world and the claim to a special "purity of faith" in contrast to the "heretical" West. This, in turn, gave rise to the suspicion of everything foreign, the unwillingness to be actively involved in pan-European processes, autarky and self-isolation. Gradually, everything European turned into everything hostile.

"Moscow is the third Rome and there will not be a fourth one" – this formula of the local monk, Philotheus, became the ideological justification of the "exclusivity" of Muscovy, its "isolation" and a its being a "special civilization."

As a result, in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries, the country of Muscovy was formed and it joined the international arena for which respect for the rights of an individual was nonsense, the surrounding world was a threat and aggression and corruption were the norm.

Since then, Muscovy has changed its name many times (first, it stole the name "Rus" from Kyiv and transformed it into "Russia" and the "Russian Empire," then it became the Soviet Union, now it is the Russian Federation) but it kept its imperial and aggressive traditions unchanged. It is with such a Russia as it is today that the civilized world has to somehow manage to coexist.

Analyzing the relations between Russia and the West retrospectively, it becomes obvious that they can hardly be called stable, smooth or successful. At some points, Russia became the object of these relations, it was attacked and conquered; in other situations, it was an active subject of politics, waged aggressive wars and was part of one or other coalitions itself. But, a total mistrust still remained in whatever role it had in its relations with individual Western countries or the West as a whole.

Basically, if we try to briefly define Russian-Western relations from the moment of their very start-up to now, it could be expressed in the words "crisis of trust." And this crisis has become particularly relevant today. Separate and rather brief historical periods of "warming" and more or less peaceful coexistence only shaded the general tendency of hostility and mistrust. Building bilateral relations and laying the foundations for global order is almost impossible on this basis.

Medieval conquests and the obtaining of nuclear potential in recent times have made Russia an active player which directly influenced the formation of regional and now global security. Today, Russia, being a permanent member of the UN Security Council, takes part in making important decisions by default. However, in practice, it only abuses its veto right, using it not for the benefit of global peace and security but to thwart it. At the same time, since the imperia complex remains the driving force of its foreign policy, Russia easily renounces its international obligations, using the most awkward and absurd excuses for this.

For the chauvinist Russian elite, the collapse of the USSR was very painful and it could not fully put up with this. In order to regain lost control in the post-Soviet space, Russia initiated a series of conflicts there. The purpose was primitively simple: on the one hand, to destabilize the situation in

the countries that declared their plans to become actually independent and, on the other hand, to act as a “guarantor” of settlement which in practice meant “freezing” the conflict and taking the situation under control. This happened in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria. The plan to act in the Crimea and Donbas was very much similar to that. The aggression of Russia against Georgia in 2008 and against Ukraine in 2014 demonstrated to the whole world that Russia does not refrain from the gross violation of international law in its efforts to oppose post-Soviet countries if they decide to build free and democratic states.

Apart from that, the Kremlin also intended to show the West its global opportunities. In 2015, the Syrian adventure began and the main goal was not to help the criminal regime of Assad, on whose conscience were at least 450,000 human victims, but rather self-affirmation as an equal global international player. In its day, Moscow was deeply insulted by the well-known quote of the US President Barack Obama that Russia only represents a regional force (Source: www.bbc.com/ukrainian/politics/2014/03/140325_obama_russia_ukraine).

The Kremlin decided to “show Kuzka’s mother” (to gruel) to the ‘rotten Gayrope’ and the United States by actively intervening in the right of their citizens to elect their own government. Added to this, in particular, was the assistance (as reasonably stated by many experts, for example: www.meduza.io/feature/2015/12/13/phenyan-sozdaet-vodorodnuyu-bombu) to the North Korean regime in the development of nuclear weapons dating to Soviet times, the practicing of killing citizens on the territories of EU and NATO countries including using radiological and chemical weapons which are prohibited by international conventions, a nuclear blackmail of the whole world, threats to unleash a new arms race, etc.. With this all, we received Russia’s de facto claim for the right to shape the destinies of entire nations and regions.

But this is its – Russia’s – vision of the “propriety” of modern international politics. The civilized world should draw a completely different conclusion: in fact, Russia repeatedly committed crimes of aggression and was never punished.

Such a situation breaks the foundations of the safety of the modern world and it makes both the UN and the OSCE ineffective in their efforts to preserve the rule of peaceful inter-state conduct that has been established in the world and the North Atlantic.

Therefore, one can hardly agree with those politicians who claim that the main threat today is ISIS or terrorists. These are local threats. The global threat is Russia. And it will establish itself in this role permanently if it is not stopped.

The key to solving this task is the position of the West. A positive point is that it is becoming more and more obvious today that Russia is threatening the very principles of Western civilization and it is seeking to split the EU and weaken NATO as much as possible. In some countries of these unions, as well as in the organizations themselves, the development of a strategy to counteract the Kremlin's aggressive policy has started. The political leadership of the West is becoming convinced that Russia does not want to return to civilized norms of behavior. Against this background, the formula that the West offers today as the leading one in relations with Moscow looks very strange: "deterrence and dialogue."

Its first part can be absolutely agreed as we understand that deterrence must be overarching for its effectiveness although reasonable doubts exist in the second part. The Kremlin regards dialogue under the current conditions as a weakness on the part of the West and its inability to make serious decisions. Numerous "concerns" expressed in Western capitals were perceived in Moscow with relief because they meant a lack of the West's political will to justly punish Russia in practice for the crimes it committed.

The sanctions that have been placed on Russia cannot be considered as an effective tool of influence. They are not painful enough for its economic interests. And if we add to this Moscow's orchestrated chorus about the corrupt fifth column, howling in virtually every Western country about the need for lifting the sanctions, we get a de facto invitation for Russia to move on.

However, if the dialogue is recognized as one of the tools for the Kremlin's non-violent return to civilized behavior, it should be clearly structured and limited in time. You cannot endlessly negotiate with a criminal who takes hostages. At some point, an ultimatum is issued to him or an operation is carried out to neutralize him.

Even just such an approach becoming public can have a sobering effect on the ruling regime in the Kremlin. It should be understood that billions of dollars stolen, exported and hidden by it in Western banks, will never allow Moscow to take extreme measures in a confrontation with the West.

Today, not only a detailed deterrence model with clearly defined steps should be developed including their sequence, provision and timeframes, etc., but a model for the future transformation of Russia also needs to be created.

This is necessary for a simple reason: only deterring Russia will be very costly for the civilized world. Aggressive, totalitarian, corrupt and unpredictable Russia, with its challenging actions on the international stage, will remain a serious destabilizing factor of global politics. Preserving this situation, the West will be forced to live in a state of "constant foreign political stress."

Therefore, a more promising formula for Western policy towards Russia would be a somewhat modified version of Russia's "deterrence and transformation" as compared to the present one. This approach will produce at least two positive results in the long run: it will not allow Russia to become a permanent threat to the civilized world and it will not lead it to inevitable disintegration. The latter can become more than a reality if we draw some parallels between today's Russia and the Soviet Union.

At the same time, the second version of developments should be analyzed. The staggeringly rapid collapse of the USSR demonstrated the complete unpreparedness of the West and its reactive, rather than proactive, position. Moreover, just before this collapse, the leaders of the United States and Great Britain urged, in particular, Ukraine not to leave the USSR and remain friends with Moscow. This demonstrated a complete lack of understanding of the essence of the events that took place in the USSR and the absence of any adequate forecast of their development.

The West should not repeat this mistake today.

Part II. The West's Naivety Concerning Russia

In the 1990s, there was a strong feeling that the world had left the Cold War era for good after the collapse of the Soviet Union. "The Empire of Evil," the apt and succinct expression of the US President Ronald Reagan, ceased to exist. The Russian Federation and other countries that appeared on the political map of the world showed their desire to become part of the world community, hold a worthy place in the system of international relations and contribute to confidence building, safety and stability.

Special hopes were laid on Russia. The new generation of politicians, which came to power together with President Boris Yeltsin, who was considered a democrat and supporter of liberal reforms, spoke a language that was understandable for the rest of the world and properly positioned the country. However, with all of the other former neighbors in the empire, young "Russian democrats" spoke in a different political language but this was not a concern for anyone in the big world. The voice of other countries that left the Soviet Union was too weak and did not fit into the main agenda of international relations. The civilized world enthusiastically integrated the new Russia into all formats of international cooperation, beginning with the UN Security Council and ending with the G-7, which turned into the G-8 (we note that granting Russia the right to take a permanent seat on the UN Security Council without any conditions was a serious mistake of the political leadership of the new countries that emerged after the collapse of the USSR). Conflicts around the perimeter of Russia, inherited from the Soviet Union, continued to smolder and even flared up in some places. Even then, behind these processes, one could see the Kremlin's smart strategy.

During negotiations with Russia, particularly in early and middle 1990s, serious pressure could be felt from its side, sometimes turning into clear impudence. For instance, after the loss of Abkhazia in September 1993, the Georgian delegation, headed by President Eduard Shevardnadze, visited Moscow. The main goal was to understand why the ceasefire agreement, signed with the mediation and guarantees of Russia, turned into a comfortable opportunity for the separatists to squeeze out the Georgian army from Sokhumi with the help of the same guarantor. Of course, the members of the Georgian delegation understood that this was a new reality which would require painful compromises from Georgia's side. But even against this background, the rudeness of Russian diplomats was simply unsettling.

President Shevardnadze was isolated from the delegation. After a while, the First Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Boris Nikolayevich Pastukhov, came to the Georgian delegation's office and announced that Georgia was to join the CIS and sign the Collective Security Treaty (which later turned into an organization of the same name) and there was an order to write a relevant address and statement to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia ... After a number of not very diplomatic expressions addressed to him and the entire Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation, Mr. Pastukhov retreated and returned with a bottle of brandy and some glasses ... However, nobody touched the brandy or wrote any paper. But this did not matter – Georgia was still forced into the CIS and the Collective Security Treaty. The delegation met Shevardnadze only at the airport when getting aboard the plane ...

We believe that diplomats from other countries can also recall similar situations. However, all of these dramatic events remained beyond the sight of the major players in the international arena. In those times, this was not regarded as something important: in the relationship with the civilized world, the strongest nuclear state, as it seemed to them, was fully returning to the system of the norms and the principles of international law, fitting into the standards of conduct of a responsible state. The global threat was drifting away, a new era was coming up, a bright future was coming and "minor troubles" along the perimeter of Russia could be left without attention. In the meantime, in some of Russia's neighboring countries, these "minor troubles" translated into thousands of killed and wounded and tens of thousands of refugees ...

The culmination of Russia's return to the civilized world can be considered in the speech of President Boris Yeltsin to the US Congress on June 17, 1992: "It is indeed a great honor for me to address the Congress of the great land of freedom as the first ever, in over 1,000 years of the history of Russia (which historically is not true: the Moscow State [Muscovy] takes count of its independent existence from the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries - *AN*), popularly elected president, as a citizen of a great country which has made its choice in favor of liberty and democracy. The idol of communism, which spread social strife, animosity and unparalleled brutality everywhere and threatened humanity, has collapsed and I am here to assure you that it is never to rise again. The experience of the past decade has taught us that communism has no human face. Freedom and communism are incompatible. We realize that our great responsibility is for the success of our changes, not

only toward the people of Russia but also toward the citizens of America and of the entire world. Today, the freedom of America is being upheld in Russia. Should the reforms fail, it will cost hundreds of billions to upset that failure" (Source: www.youtube.com/watch?v=oiZL8xtuNeM).

In less than two months after this speech – the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia moved into the active phase and military clashes began. On September 3, 1992, with the mediation of President Yeltsin, a treaty was signed between the conflicting parties which directly confirmed the principle of the territorial integrity of Georgia. But only two months later, Georgia lost Gagra and Leselidze and Abkhazian illegal armed formations, supplied with Russian equipment and weapons and with the support of "Russian volunteers," military instructors and units, took control of the Abkhazian section of the Russian-Georgian border.

On July 27, 1993 after lengthy battles, the Agreement on a Temporary Ceasefire was signed in Sochi according to which Russia acted as a guarantor. The agreement involved the mutual disarmament of the parties. It turned out that Russia was disarming one party and arming the other. Two months later on September 27, 1993, Sokhumi came under the control of Abkhazian troops. Georgian troops were forced to leave Abkhazia and with them more than 250,000 refugees. Such were Russia's "security guarantees."

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the main responsibility for the development of the processes in the post-Soviet space fell on Russia. It is the largest of the newly formed states in terms of population and resources. The Russian Federation became the only nuclear power in the region after Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan handed over all of their nuclear weapons to Russia which had been inherited from the Soviet Union. The world community entrusted it a seat of permanent member of the UN Security Council, hoping that this state would take advantage of this mandate to establish peace, stability and prosperity in the post-Soviet space.

Alas, these hopes were not meant to come true. On the contrary, Russia uses new opportunities to provoke conflicts along its perimeter while the international community entrusted Russia with a decisive role in the process of settling its instigated conflicts in neighboring countries. The Russian Foreign Policy Concept of November 30, 2016, as with all similar previous documents, emphasizes that "Russia actively supports the political and diplomatic settlement of conflicts in the post-Soviet space" (Paragraph 58. Source: www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2542248). As a result, Europe received two

full-scale wars unleashed by Russia with its neighbors and frozen conflicts in Transniester and Nagorno-Karabakh. As a result of Russia's policy, even the slightest positive shifts towards settling the conflicts are nowhere to be seen. It is not because Russia cannot cope with this. The reason is different – Russia simply sets other goals for itself in the negotiation process.

The strengthening of democracy and economic prosperity in its neighboring countries is regarded by Russia as a challenge. Russia does not seek to assert its influence through the process of settling conflicts but by manipulating them. As a result, Russia occupied Abkhazia and South Ossetia but lost Georgia; it annexed the Crimea and supported the proxy separatist regimes in the east of Ukraine but lost Ukraine. The result: it is difficult to find at least a couple from among the many states bordering the Russian Federation with which Russia would be developing sincere, friendly relations. In some cases, the appearance of successful friendly relations contains hidden challenges which are much more serious than the war with Georgia or Ukraine. Generally speaking, such a policy not only destroys the authority and reputation of Russia as a permanent member of the UN Security Council but also damages the reputation of the UN itself.

With the seeming chaos of the 1990s, Russia very clearly and thoughtfully implemented policies for organizing the space for which Moscow invented another diminishing term – "near abroad." The core idea of this policy was an attempt to force the countries belonging to this space to agree to the status of limited sovereignty. Diplomats, who participated in negotiations in the format of the CIS, will confirm that the characteristic feature of the position of Russian diplomacy has always been a dual interpretation of the norms and the principles of international law. Unconvincing terms, such as "near abroad" and "far abroad," represent an attempt to package such a philosophy in relations with neighbors. The logic of history has already rejected this approach. Similarly, Russia will not be able to infinitely exploit a dual interpretation of the norms and the principles of international law.

The multilateral negotiations on the status of borders in the format of the CIS in 1995 could serve as an example. The delegation of the Russian Federation tried to convince other participants of the talks that the external borders of CIS countries or, in other words, the borders of CIS countries with third countries, fully fall under regulation in compliance with the norms and the principles of international law but the borders between CIS countries is a different story. Here, as the Russian delegation tried to explain its position, there is no need for all of the complex regulations since we must not hinder

communications between the different peoples. Ukrainian (it is important to note that Ukraine was not a CIS member country since it did not ratify its charter but took part in some CIS meetings in its special position) and Georgian delegations defended the position according to which the internationally recognized borders of a state along its perimeter have the same legal status which does not prevent establishing any boundary regime on the borders which is convenient for specific neighboring countries – one might cross them with an internal document if there is a political will for that.

The discussion lasted for a whole working day and other delegations were mostly listening attentively. As a result, the formulations proposed by the Ukrainian and Georgian sides were included into the final protocol. It was interesting that before signing the protocol, the Ukrainian side claimed that it was not granted the authority to sign. The Russian side immediately offered to edit the agreed wording to which the Georgian side responded that it would only sign the agreed text. Finally, the document was signed with wording deemed acceptable for the Ukrainian and Georgian delegations with the Ukrainian delegation receiving an additional negotiating resource. This is a good example of coherent policy which could be useful for Ukrainian and Georgian diplomats even today.

This, as compared to other negotiations, may not be very important (as if there could be unimportant things in diplomacy), but it is a characteristic episode of the behavior of the Russian diplomacy of President Yeltsin's times. After the election of Vladimir Putin as the Russian President, this trend began to grow stronger, bolstered by billions generated from the oil and gas trade. Putin, as he normally does, concisely and clearly determined the Russian foreign policy agenda in the post-Soviet space to avoid inconsistences and declared that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the biggest geopolitical tragedy of the twentieth century. In the entire subsequent period, we see Russia trying to reverse the history of wars, conflicts and embargoes, regardless of the victims among its own population or the populations of neighboring countries.

As a result, we face a situation where the system of European safety is threatened by total destruction. A permanent member of the UN Security Council implements its own foreign policy agenda with complete disregard for the norms and the principles of international law – the UN Charter, in the first place, and the Helsinki Accords, not to mention dozens of bilateral and regional documents.

Russia has put itself in a position where many players – both major and minor – think about how to avoid its destructive influence rather than how to develop cooperation with it. The success of the Kremlin usually carries problems and adversity to its surrounding countries and peoples. On the other hand, Moscow regards the successes of its neighbors as a challenge for its own interests. It should also be borne in mind that Russia can direct the great weight of its running-short resources to foreign policy adventures since the propaganda nature of the regime has shaped and is encouraging the minimalistic needs of Russian society. Therefore, even with a well-coordinated, consolidated policy of restraining Russia, it will not bring results overnight.

Russia has become a factor of world politics and it has its own agenda that does not fit into the game rules according to which the civilized world lives. Despite numerous obvious manifestations of such an approach, the degree of consolidation of the countries' positions is far from perfect.

In relation to Russia, many countries remain enchained by certain illusions. The most persistent of them is the idea that it is possible to solve their problems with the Kremlin individually within a bilateral format. This policy bears the following meaning: it is better to agree with Russia in a separate format, sacrifice the interests of partners – large or small, and guarantee themselves security, cost-effective deals, etc. When analyzing such an approach, it is immediately evident that such countries ignore the principles of solidarity, the reliance on a single system of values and consistency in the implementation of their own principles of cooperation, not to mention the commonly recognized norms and principles of international law.

Supposedly, with the existing examples and the matrices of hypocrisy and lies demonstrated by Russia, there should be no talks about the implementation of mega-projects like North Stream or North Stream-2 with it. It is clear that this increases Russia's resources and if it has once attempted to influence the course of elections in the United States, Germany, France or Italy, interfered with the referendum on Brexit in the UK and the independence of Catalonia in Spain, then there are no guarantees that Russia will not use a newly emerged resource to weaken its «partners.»

Anyone who is convinced that this is indeed the way Russia behaves should explain this and prove it to everyone else. Today, this function primarily lies with Georgia and Ukraine. They could be joined by Moldova and Azerbaijan who have also learned the value of Russia's promises and

its so-called mediation efforts. This was implied by the founding fathers of GUAM – an organization whose name is derived from the initial letters of the abovementioned countries.

Regrettably, even in this most homogeneous organization, solidarity struggles along in the region despite the apparent identity of challenges and the simultaneity of threats. To resolve their own problems with Russia, individual countries have preferred bilateral channels of collective efforts at different stages of the organization's development. That has never led any of the GUAM countries to even the smallest of successes. And it is unlikely to do so in the future. But not everyone understands that. So, we need to find arguments and clarify the state of affairs.

The efforts to resolve problems with Russia in a bilateral format performed by its immediate neighbors seem particularly naive. Russia even ignores the agreements reached with world leaders and permanent member states of the UN Security Council. Universal multilateral instruments, such as the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act or the statutes of regional organizations, do not represent any value for Moscow, not to mention the agreements with immediate neighbors which cause the Kremlin's hardly concealed irritation only because they exist. The need to negotiate with the former satellites is in itself perceived by Moscow as a challenge. Even in relations with the EURASEC and CSTO allies, such an attitude often breaks out, to say nothing about the countries that prefer to have an independent foreign policy. The mere mention of the European Union and NATO definitely makes Russian politicians irrational.

Succession is also not respected by Russian politicians – with Putin, the legal frameworks built with such difficulties with President Yeltsin have been destroyed. All the more, there are no guarantees that the backroom agreements reached with Russia will work; the Kremlin can always present its own interpretation of events and documents and no one can oppose it. The most effective weapon against Russia is openness and possibly broader international guarantees. However, this is not a panacea either. The Ukrainian-Russian Treaty of 1997 was not secured neither by ratification in the State Duma of Russia nor registration with the UN. In any case, behind-the-scenes undercover agreements with Russia are doomed; nobody can manipulate them better than the Kremlin.

The second illusion is connected with the understanding that there are allegedly more serious problems than a well-coordinated solidary position

concerning Russia's confrontation. At different stages, this attitude was characteristic for completely different countries – from Ukraine, Georgia and Azerbaijan to Germany, France and the United States. Today, there is no more important task in international relations than a collective confrontation and deterrence concerning Russia. One cannot argue that the policy of consolidated opposition and deterrence against Russia has not been strengthening recently. However, the motivation for the behavior of some countries, including the most authoritative and respected, is still not clear.

In this context, the text of the Final Communiqué of the G-7 Foreign Ministers of April 23, 2018 in Toronto with the decision of Germany on the North Stream-2 is not well aligned.

Paragraph 19 of this document reads:

«We are committed to protecting and promoting the rules-based international system. This stands against the background of a pattern of irresponsible and destabilizing Russian behavior, including interference in countries' democratic systems. We call on Russia to cease this behavior which is highly detrimental to prospects for constructive cooperation. We urge Russia to live up to its international obligations as well as its responsibilities as a permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC), to uphold international peace and security. Notwithstanding, we will continue to engage with Russia on addressing regional crises and global challenges. We will continue to bolster our capabilities to address hybrid threats, including in the areas of cybersecurity, strategic communications and counter-intelligence. We welcome national action taken to constrain Russian hostile-intelligence activity and to enhance our collective security. We will remain closely focused on this issue and its implications in anticipation of our Leaders' Summit» (Source: www.g7.gc.ca/en/g7-presidency/themes/building-peaceful-secure-world/g7-ministerial-meeting/g7-foreign-ministers-joint-communique/).

The contradiction of the first and second parts of this paragraph is striking. It is difficult to combine "Russia's irresponsible and destabilizing behavior" with the desire to continue cooperation with it on topics of "regional crises and global challenges."

This dual philosophy also showed up during Chancellor Angela Merkel's visit to Russia on May 18, 2018, less than a month after the signing of the Final Communiqué of the G-7 Foreign Ministers. During the visit,

the implementation of the North Stream-2 was discussed in detail. The Chancellor's attempt to voice the need to guarantee the transit of Russian gas through Ukraine's gas transportation system looked like a face-saving effort. There is no need to say that after the activation of the North Stream-2 gas pipeline, Gazprom will pump gas through the gas transportation system of Ukraine according to the residual principle. Apart from that, Gazprom will receive an additional powerful negotiating resource to pressure Ukraine.

Even if this topic were discussed in Toronto, it was not reflected in the documents of the meeting nor in the Final Communiqué of the G-7 Summit on June 8-9, 2018 in Charlevoix, Québec, Canada.

Paragraph 17 of the above document reads:

"We urge Russia to cease its in destabilizing behavior, in undermining democratic systems and in its support of the Syrian regime. We condemn the attack using a military grade nerve agent in Salisbury, United Kingdom. We share and agree with the United Kingdom's assessment that it is highly likely that the Russian Federation was responsible for the attack, and that there is no plausible alternative explanation. We urge Russia to live up to its international obligations, as well as its responsibilities as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, to uphold international peace and security. Notwithstanding, we will continue to engage with Russia on addressing regional crises and global challenges, where it is in our interests» (Source: www.reuters.com/article/us-g7-summit-communique-text/the-charlevoix-g7-summit-communique-idUSKCN1J5107).

Again, there are attempts to combine calls to "cease its destabilizing behavior," and "live up to its international obligations" with the intention of "continuing to engage with Russia on addressing regional crises and global challenges."

There are also other confirmations in the form of opinions of some major players that there are more important matters than a united front to fight against Russia's aggression. In addition to the above example of the North Stream-2, one can recall the position of the president of the United States who regarded the Iranian dossier on abandoning the production of nuclear weapons as a more important topic than strengthening the solidarity of partners facing threats from Russia. Unfortunately, such decisions increase Russia's resources and expand the field of its maneuver. In this case, this includes its influence on Iran.

A separate analysis is deserved by China's position with respect to Russia which prefers not to intervene and wait until the "strategic partner" falls into its own traps. Russia and China can be tactical allies in certain issues for a certain time but strategically they are adversaries and not interested in strengthening each other but, on the contrary – in weakening the other. In this confrontation, all the advantages are on the side of China which adheres to the universally recognized norms and principles of international law in its international relations while demonstrating impressive competitiveness in the era of globalization, taking all possible advantages from it. At the same time, Russia acts like an elephant in a china shop in the international arena, demonstrating its complete uncompetitiveness to the global world with nothing to show to the outside except oil and gas and, in this sense, depending more on foreign markets than those markets depend on it. This dependence is strengthened by technical and technological progress developing at a rapid pace. Russia cannot avoid a crisis of payments when electric cars flood the streets of New York and Tokyo. Alternative energy sources, shale oil and gas will add problems for Russia. Avoiding difficulties is possible only through complex efforts to radically restructure the economy. But the formal appeals of the Russian president in his annual addresses to the Federal Assembly are just appeals and nothing more ...

We are witnessing the formation of a new model of relations with Russia. It would be a simplification to compare it with the West-USSR model for many objective reasons. Russia does not have the Warsaw Pact but only the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Customs Union created over the ruins of the USSR and without its serious components (Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, etc.). And also, the leadership of the Russian Federation is brought to the test more and more within the organizations it established. There are many public examples to prove this; first of all, in the performance of the Belarusian President, A. Lukashenko, and now also the cautious President of Kazakhstan, N. Nazarbayev. At the same time, natural resources do not play such a serious role today as they did in the economy of the 1980s and their significance in the future will be consistently reduced. The reason for this is technical and technological progress which cannot be stopped. It is this, and not the US or the EU, that is the main challenge for Russia as its economy has become addicted to the "mineral wealth needle" and demonstrates irresponsiveness to innovations.

Among many other problems, there is one other which can be singled out, one which is not discussed to any extent. This is the existing inadequate

system of managing a huge state from one center. It is impossible to send instructions from one point to regions stretched through eleven time zones. This is especially true for the national republics, ignoring the elementary principles of federalism. The system is inefficient and it undermines the country's capabilities to compete. Along with other reasons, these two factors – low competitiveness and an ineffective system of management and decision-making and not the hidden agenda of external enemies – first destroyed the Russian Empire and then the Soviet Union. The rake is awaiting.

The leadership of the Russian Federation should understand that without structural reforms, demonopolization and a diversification of the economy, adaptation to the conditions of technical and technological revolution and the formation of a strong middle class, the threat of a state crisis will become more than tangible. However, the essence of the problem lies in the fundamental contradiction between the philosophy of power and development opportunities. When reforming the country's economy, ensuring transparency in decision-making and the consistent implementation of the principles of demonopolization and competition along with economic progress and the formation of a class of independent economic agents, public demand for the democratization of the political system will inevitably intensify.

To keep all of the power in one group of people for decades will become impossible. An economically independent voter will vote freely and it will be necessary to compete without guarantees for success. Therefore, today's power in Russia has no broad field for maneuver. Moreover, we should not get involved in all sorts of foreign policy adventures, opposing ourselves almost to the whole world. Always opposing everyone is not possible for anybody today, even for the most developed states to which Russia definitely does not belong.

Russia's position in the global economy continues to weaken. Currently, with a GDP of USD 1.46 trillion it is in the twelfth position between South Korea and Australia and its GDP growth rate is only three out of the first seventeen world economies (Japan: GDP USD 4.88 trillion, Great Britain: GDP USD 2.56 trillion and Italy: GDP USD 1.92 trillion Source: www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDP_RPCH@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD).

In the coming years, sanctions will not be lifted from the Kremlin; rather, they will be tightened, and so Russia will drop even lower in the global economic

ranking in the foreseeable future. This is especially true if various types of foreign policy adventures continue absorbing its already limited resources, creating additional problems for the ruble. This already happened in 2014 when the ruble dropped by 300% and the Russian Federation dropped from the tenth (USD 1.860 trillion) to the sixteenth (USD 1.235 trillion) position in the world in one year in terms of its gross domestic product volume, both of these occurrences also influenced by the war in eastern Ukraine (Sources: www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDP_RPCH@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEOWORLD and www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(nominal)).

The third illusion is that Russia should not be regarded as a personal threat for individual states but as a complex challenge to the system of international relations that developed after World War II.

Constructive relations with Russia are only possible through ignoring one's own values and interests; in relation to Russia's neighbors, this requires at least an agreement on the limitation of sovereignty, at best like the Warsaw Pact member countries. Today's reality is that Russia wants to be a global power while at the same time ensuring for itself a monopoly influence on its neighbors along the perimeter of its borders.

To a certain extent, the Kremlin is achieving its goal. Russia has held and keeps holding key positions in the process of settling conflicts and negotiating the most important topics of international relations in the region and beyond (Karabakh, Transniester, Syria, Iran, North Korea). Russia is even allowed to play an important role in the negotiations regarding the states whose territorial integrity it has grossly violated (Georgia and Ukraine). Negotiations are being held with the Russian government despite the policy of sanctions and contracts are concluded, including with far-reaching consequences such as, in particular, North Stream-1 and 2.

Such a policy extends Russia's maneuvering capabilities and strengthens its stability which has recently been greatly shaken. As a result of the successive implementation of a number of foreign policy adventures, Russia faced large and numerous challenges, resources were exhausted and allies practically disappeared.

Under these conditions, cooperation with Russia must be conditioned by its refusal of destructive actions in international relations, proportionally to the progress achieved in each specific direction. Thus, for Moscow, steps of motivation must be defined for returning to the system of international

cooperation based on international legal obligations. Otherwise, Russia will not cease to pursue a policy based on confronting Western values and generating threats around the world; first of all, for the states in its immediate vicinity.

With diametrically different systems of value coordinates, no common interests can exist between states.

The Kremlin regards the United States, the European Union, NATO, democracy in general and Western civilization as a threat. With the current political system, the Kremlin perceives, and correctly so, that Russia has lost its competitiveness. Protection of human rights, social standards, business development opportunities, an independent judiciary, functional democracy, the possibility of changing power through elections – in all of these parameters, the Russian Federation is hopelessly behind the West as a whole as well as the former satellites – member states of the Warsaw Pact and the Baltic countries and, for some indicators, behind Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

Therefore, the Kremlin regards the West as a source of its own threats. The West is indeed a threat for the group of people who have monopolized power in the country over the past two decades. The value system of the West is indeed a challenge to the totalitarian style of Kremlin management but not to the Russian people.

Inside the country, instilling the idea of the West as a threat for the Kremlin is necessary in order to strengthen the sense of the lack of alternatives in the existing elite and conserve its own power. The Kremlin has so far succeeded in the following: for eighteen years now, Putin and his team have been at the helm in Russia and at least a six-year term of the fourth presidency is ahead. However, making forecasts for Russia, especially for several years ahead, is a thankless occupation.

From the West, there should be no alternative to the course of support for Russia's neighbors in their striving to become stable democracies while at the same time understanding that the Kremlin will do everything it can to prevent their success. There is no reason to be afraid of criticizing the allies – the main criterion should be a commitment to a common system of values rather than declaring support for American or European interests in the region.

Part III. Preventing a New Russian Aggression

If we try to conduct a retrospective analysis of Russia's foreign policy actions, we may conclude that it generally operates schematically. It depends on the strength of the opponent: it either attacks, if the opponent is weak, or it tries to intimidate or blackmail the opponent, if it is stronger. A characteristic feature of the first option is the brutal suppression of any resistance and the ruthless destruction of innocent victims, among others. In the second case, rabid propaganda, deception, bribery, the creation of fifth columns within the enemy's milieu and attempts of its ideological decomposition, etc., are used.

There are many such examples: from the attack and total destruction of Veliky Novgorod by Moscow, the conquest and pillage of the Kazan Kingdom in the fifteenth century, the "developments" and, in fact, cruel conquest of Siberia and much more. It is worth recalling the beginning of its history as an aggressor before the wars in the twentieth (even after the adoption of the UN Charter) and even the twenty-first centuries: in particular, the annexation of northern territories of Japan, the Berlin blockade, wars in Korea and China, the interventions in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968), the war in Afghanistan (1980), internal wars in the USSR (Lithuania, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Transnistria), wars in Chechnya of the already "independent" Russia and also against Georgia (2008), Ukraine (2014) and Syria (2015). In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries alone, Russia fought six (!) wars against Ukraine, the last of which continues to this day.

If we add to this the practice of political, diplomatic and economic pressure on many countries as well as direct military and nuclear blackmail since the times of the Caribbean crisis, the Cold War and up to the present day, we will have a full picture of the aggressive nature of Russia under whatever name it has been acting. The apogee of intimidation of the West by Russia was Putin's phrase: "Why should we want a world without Russia?" (March 2018). Obviously, such "messages" are also addressed to the domestic audience. Russians are very fond of their "greatness:" 46% of Russians believe that Russia's imperial greatness is more important than economic growth and welfare (Source: www.gordonua.com/news/society/smi-46-rossiyan-schitayut-imperskoe-velichie-rossii-vazhnee-rosta-ekonomiki-84311.html).

However, according to the Kremlin, the main consumer of such a "message" should be the West and Russia's immediate neighbors: they should fully comprehend the seriousness of such statements. Unfortunately, Russian

blackmail is working. The liberal governments of the West and the nearest neighbors which have chosen a democratic vector of development are reasonably apprehensive of such a policy, understanding that such an unpredictable participant of international relations with nuclear weapons, like Russia, can bring much grief to the surrounding world.

One of the defining factors of Russian expansionism and aggressiveness is, in our opinion, authoritarianism, traditional for Moscow's political history. We already noted above – it was borrowed from the Horde and used as a basis for building the political structure of the Moscow society. With every new century, it only strengthened and refined, in certain periods reaching inhuman forms of cruelty and devouring millions of innocent victims. It objectively turned into a classic totalitarianism which remains to this day.

Unlike Western democracies, where decision-making takes relatively longer because it is preceded by a period of expert and public discussions, everything happens lightning fast in Russia since decisions are individually made by the prince, tsar, emperor, secretary-general, president or whatever else they call him. It is important that the decisions are implemented immediately because a delay or an improper execution of these decisions is punished mercilessly. The modern Kremlin regime perfectly understands this advantage over the West and uses it very skillfully.

An important distinctive feature of Russian totalitarianism is its all-embracing corruption which turns the whole country into a conglomerate of mafia and power. Its particular danger is that after the conquest of the internal space (which has long come), it goes beyond the country and attacks the liberal West. A kind of expansion of corruption begins and its internationalization takes place. To our great regret, today we can say that not only 'small fish' from the expert or journalistic environment got trapped in the 'net' of this corruption system but 'bigger fish' as well – whole political movements, famous politicians, deputies, businessmen, international authorities, etc.

This is precisely one of Russia's goals regarding the West: corrupting its individual but influential representatives, Moscow contributes to the strengthening of centrifugal tendencies, the growth of Euroscepticism and the intensification of contradictions between individual countries and regions. It would hardly be a mistake to say that the split in the EU and the maximum possible weakening of NATO are among the priorities of Russia's foreign policy. And this is simple to understand: it is much easier to influence a single country that is inferior to Russia economically and/or militarily than

to confront the united West. That is why Ukraine and Georgia are striving to become members of the European Union and NATO.

Regrettably, it should be admitted that the West has for decades not seen or wanted to see this threat. Moreover, even after Russia's direct aggression against Georgia in 2008, it not only retains its policy towards Moscow but quickly "forgot" about its crimes, returning to the traditional "business as usual" policy. Moscow regarded such an approach as an invitation to continue the conquests and committed another crime of aggression in 2014 against Ukraine.

For the first time in the post-war Europe, the UN Security Council member country, violating the UN Charter, other numerous multilateral and bilateral international legal obligations, annexed part of the territory of the neighboring state. Thus, the Kremlin created a real threat of scrapping the entire system of international relations developed after World War II.

Under these conditions, the collective West needs to recognize a number of objective facts that have been repeatedly confirmed by history. Of course, this is not a complete list.

First: Russia is the greatest threat for today's world because it has set itself the goal of breaking the existing system of international security and bringing the world back to the nineteenth century with its ranges of influence and the right of the strong to establish orders they like.

Second: Islamic terrorism is a much more local and regional phenomenon; destroying its centers, it is possible to significantly reduce the threat of attacks from radical extremists in the countries of the West.

Third: Naive is the assumption that Russia is interested in fighting and suppressing Islamic terrorism. If terrorism damages the West, it is beneficial to Russia itself and that is why it will do its best to promote its existence. Proceeding from this, Russia's "involvement" in the fight against terrorism, which is constantly being discussed in the West, looks absolutely inadequate.

Fourth: Russia cannot be trusted. It fulfills its international obligations only to the extent and until the moment when it is profitable for it. The latest aggression against Ukraine once again demonstrated that international law is not binding for Russia.

Fifth: Russia in any case denies its involvement in the crimes it has organized, even with obvious evidence, and shamelessly lies. Lying was and remains one of the most important components of Russia's foreign policy. And the

degree of cynicism of Russian ideological attitudes and philosophy has left Soviet standards far behind.

Proceeding from this, it would be logical to make some very practical conclusions. At the very least, it would be expedient in the shortest possible time to form and bring to a state of constant readiness the mechanisms of rapid response to possible new aggressive actions of Russia. Such mechanisms would have to be formed within the framework of NATO and the EU and be ready to actively counteract Russia's aggression within hours or a few days. Structures that will be ready for active action within 30 days, in fact, may simply be needless: in such a period of time, Russia can quite easily seize the Baltic countries and invade Finland or Poland.

But much more effective would be to use a number of preventive measures that would make Russia's further aggression impossible. They should include complex actions of political, military-political, diplomatic, economic, financial, scientific-technological, informational and of any other necessary nature that would, in general, severely limit Russia's ability to pursue an aggressive policy or make the price for another military or any other adventure unacceptably expensive.

It should be noted with regret that what has been said above today is nothing more than theoretical reflection because Russia's aggression against Ukraine has shown the total unpreparedness of the West, not only for the practical fulfillment of its obligations; in particular, for the Budapest Memorandum, but also for the protection of its own civilizational principles and values. It also showed the moral and psychological unpreparedness of the West to repel Russian aggression: Moscow succeeded in ideologically weakening and, in some cases, even disconnecting its once uniform value space. The information warfare, conducted by the Kremlin against the West using the democratic procedures of the West itself, proved to be a very successful operation for the Kremlin. However, for decades, the West has not bothered to take any measures to prevent the unlimited dissemination of Kremlin propaganda in its countries. The situation begins to change only now and only in some countries.

The total misunderstanding of the essence of the Kremlin's policy was also evident in Russia's actual invitation to take direct part in the Syrian conflict which can be described as one of the most serious foreign policy failures of the West in the last decade. As a result, the bloody regime of Assad not only remained in power but also strengthened its positions in the tactical sense; neither it nor Russia was punished for the use of chemical weapons;

moreover, Russia has strengthened its position in the Middle East, having created two military bases in Syria.

Huge reputational damage to the West was inflicted by Russia through its foray into the “holy of holies” of any democratic society – elections. Perhaps this was one of the last straws that broke the camel’s back vis-à-vis Western elites and actually forced them to begin rethinking their attitude towards Russia.

The issue of safety of the West in the context of the Russian threat is of key importance today. In fact, not only is the safety of the West and its partners on the chopping block, but the future of global security as well. The West needs to realize the degree of danger and develop effective tools to protect its interests. In this regard, the dialogue with the aggressor country should, in fact, resemble surrender negotiations with the recognition by the aggressor country of its crimes, the obligation to compensate for the damage done to the victim countries and the obligation to immediately restore the pre-war status quo. Negotiations for the sake of negotiations and meetings for the sake of meetings only stimulate the aggressor to continue its expansionist policy.

The West should take a proactive position towards Russia which would include, in particular, working with various segments of Russian civil society, individual media, liberal groups of the Russian intelligentsia, medium and small businesses, individual representatives of the ruling elite and big business, law enforcement agencies, etc.

These activities should be clearly structured and systemic and should ensure the coordination of all involved structures, the need for regular analysis of the situation and making necessary adjustments in the process of its implementation. Only in this case is it possible to count on its effectiveness.

At the same time, the political will of the West to implement a “new policy” regarding Russia remains fundamental. It should not copy any approaches of the past – they simply will not work. The “new Russian policy” is first and foremost the ability of Western leaders to look ahead and see a perspective, even if at some point this might have certain tactical costs for their countries. Only having a clear strategy of relations with Russia and really working on its implementation will they have all the chances to protect their strategic national interests and regain the desired security for themselves and the world.

Part IV. Policy of Confrontation and Deterrence of Russia towards Restoring the Status Quo in International Relations

All of Russia's actions are subordinated to a single goal – to return to the world arena as a global player. As a natural part of this process, Russia sees ensuring its exclusive influence in neighboring countries.

Under the conditions when Russia is actively operating practically all over the world in order to strengthen its influence, its neighbors cannot feel safe. This applies to all of Russia's neighbors, regardless of the size of their territory, population, level of economic development or foreign policy orientation. As the experience of Russian-Belarusian relations shows, even after the creation of the Union State, the Kremlin does not abandon the policy of pressure and coercion towards Minsk. It is necessary to pay tribute to the president of Belarus who very skillfully parries attacks from the East.

Naturally, with regard to more obstinate neighbors, Moscow uses all the available spectrum of influence – right up to war and annexation. And the main targets here are Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova as a result of their clear formulation of the main foreign policy priorities for entering the European Union and the consistent implementation of relevant foreign policy actions. In particular, Ukraine and Georgia, which unlike the constitutionally neutral Moldova, openly declare their ultimate goal – to enter not only the European Union but also NATO.

Therefore, despite the variety of Russia's tactical equivocations and tricks, the strategy and its ultimate intentions towards neighboring countries remain as unchanged as the melody of the Soviet and now the Russian anthem – unite and lead.

One of the main goals of the Russian Federation has been dominance in the surrounding space for which all means are good from fueling conflict with the supply of weapons for money or for free to well-thought-out tactics for the implementation of the principle of "divide and rule."

Alongside with this, a completely different tactic was used in relations with global players until a certain moment: Russia was represented as a responsible player in the international arena which behaves in accordance with the generally recognized norms and principles of international law. These aspirations of Russia were very important for the West. Few thought about the fact that it is unnatural to build foreign policy simultaneously in different systems of values and principles of cooperation according to

the principle: one system is for the neighbors and the other is for the "big world."

Some probably saw it and some even evaluated it properly but the leading players on the international scene hoped that the main issue was to involve Russia in the "big civilized game according to established rules" and then it would gradually start broadcasting proper messages in the space adjacent to it as well. The result of this attitude was the invitation of Russia to the G-7 in 1997. Russia retained its place in the format in 2008 even after the aggression against Georgia and the occupation of 20% of its territory. Despite all attempts to fully integrate Russia into the system of decision-making by the leading powers, it could not deliver on their hopes. Exactly the opposite happened – as a result of connivance and the policy of "smoothing the corners," Russia decided to enter the global dimension with the principles of the implementation of foreign policy tested on its neighbors. The situation changed radically.

Without due resistance after the unleashing of Europe's first war in the twenty-first century in August 2008, Russia first annexed the Crimea and started a war in the east of Ukraine which was followed by an escalation of muscle flexing in various directions, starting from cyberwar (elections in the US, France, Germany, Brexit, Catalonia) to adventurism in Syria and political assassinations both in Russia and abroad, including the use of radiological and chemical weapons prohibited by international conventions.

The damaging nature of the assessments of Russia's conduct was fully manifested in the lightning annexation of the Crimea in March 2014. The false bottom of Russia's foreign policy was revealed, exposing its essence to the entire world community. It became clear that the operation to seize the Crimea had been prepared for a long time and the Kremlin was only waiting for a suitable moment for its implementation. The organization of the "green men," the well-fitting military uniform without insignias, a well-thought-out and structured communication policy with respect to both the local population and the media, the betrayal of a number of senior Ukrainian officials and military men as a result of prolonged agency work; finally, the lightening attack of the Supreme Council of the Crimea in the style of a Hollywood political blockbuster – all of this suggests that Russia, unlike the European Union and the United States, learned lessons from the 2008 war with Georgia. In 2014, Russian invasion forces in Ukraine were significantly ahead of those of the Russian army fighting in Georgia in 2008 in terms of preparedness and organization.

What Russia's neighbors have been experiencing for the past decades has also become clear to those who had illusions about Russia's intentions and priorities in the international arena. Illusions against Russia have disappeared with the annexation of the Crimea. Here, two important points must be additionally noted.

First: Russia not only violated its obligations towards Ukraine, ignoring the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, signed in Kyiv on March 31, 1997, but also the Budapest Memorandum – the Memorandum of Security Assurances in connection with Ukraine's accession to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty signed on December 5, 1994 by the president of Ukraine with the leading nuclear states, including the president of Russia.

The violation of the Budapest Memorandum caused a real shock in European capitals and Washington. By doing so, Russia demonstrated that the stage of double standards in its foreign policy has been completed and, henceforth, the whole world will have to reckon with the fact that Russia acts in accordance with its interests without regard to such "little things" as rules and principles of international law, in general, or signed and ratified documents, in particular. And this happens not only in the space adjacent to Russia but also in the "big world."

Second: The "policy of appeasement" of the aggressor finally collapsed. The Georgian government was criticized for resisting the aggressor which, as they tried to present, "provoked" Russia into active military actions. In the Crimea, the armed forces of Ukraine did not fire a single shot. The Ukrainian government was strongly advised of this by its partner states. As a result, Russia went further than in Georgia: it did not recognize the so-called "independence of the Crimea" but merely annexed it. The betrayal of the local leadership was prepared and motivated but its attempts to touch upon "independence," even as a transition period, were nipped in the bud. As a result, a new reality emerged in international relations which can be characterized as a global crisis of confidence.

The whole world was finally convinced of the axiom that for Russia it means nothing to break its commitments and that could happen with both neighboring countries – former satellites, which was still tolerated until a certain point in the "big diplomatic game," and colleagues – permanent members of the UN Security Council. This was the last straw that broke the camel's back. This situation put world diplomacy face to face with the task

of preparing and implementing a foreign policy agenda of a fundamentally different order.

Diplomacy is the art of achieving consensus through compromise. If this is not a compromise with both negotiating parties, there is no diplomacy but an ultimatum. In the case if a compromise is reached, it is fixed by the signing of a relevant document which is subsequently ratified in parliament and becomes an integral part of the legislative field of the signatory state. There is a reasonable expectation of the commitment of the parties to fulfill their obligations. And so it works in the system of international relations. Unfortunately, however, this is not always the case. Especially with Russia.

Now, it is already clear to all actors of international relations, both near Russia and far from it, that it is necessary to create guarantees, tools and mechanisms for pressure to implement the agreements reached when negotiating with Russia. Otherwise, if at some point Russia considers it gainless to implement the agreements reached, it will not hesitate to cross them out and, if necessary, it will run them over with a tank.

Such a disappointing reality dictates the need to develop mechanisms for influencing and forcing Russia to fulfill its obligations. It is good that the awareness of this reality comes to the world of global politics.

In recent years, the policy towards Russia has been increasingly consolidated and illusions are being curtailed. This has already led Russia to a new situation when it has more problems and challenges both on the domestic front and in the international arena and when its resources are becoming scarcer. Accordingly, the field for maneuvering in the international arena is narrowing. Unfortunately, this process has not yet developed and is still zigzagging – as a consequence of the inconsistent policies of some states.

Once again, the well-known truth is confirmed that no state, even the most powerful, can afford to always oppose everyone. Everyone needs partners and allies. Russia has none and this is clearly visible even by the reaction of the EURASEC member countries to the events around Russia. It should also be taken into account that Russia does not belong to the number of advanced economies of the world as we mentioned in the second section. With the very dubious prospects of improving the situation, we must bear in mind the archaic structure of its economy that leans upon raw material industries, the lack of openness to technical and technological progress and the consolidated policy of sanctions imposed on Russia in response to aggression against neighboring countries, interference in the internal affairs of states and terrorist acts abroad ...

Nevertheless, there are certain politicians and political movements that, mildly speaking, sympathize with Russia. These forces – individual politicians and entire parties in the West who support the Kremlin from opportunistic considerations – do not represent a value for analysis. There is nothing to understand, the motives for behavior are clear, God and history will judge them. In this sense, the most telling story is connected with the former Chancellor of Germany, Gerhard Schroeder, who, after the end of his political career, first promoted the North Stream-1, then became the president of the board of directors for the implementation of the North Stream-2 project and as a result, obviously for his great services to Russia, was elected chairman of the board of directors of Rosneft. The former chancellor diligently works for his bread. North Stream-1 is already operating and North Stream-2 is being actively lobbied by the current chancellor of Germany, again with Mr. Schroeder. It is interesting that Angela Merkel condemned the election of Mr. Schroeder as chairman of the board of directors of Rosneft which, however, does not prevent her from listening to his advice. At least, this is how it looks from the outside.

Here, attention is drawn to the following part of this ambiguous issue. It is hard to believe that the offer from the Kremlin to take a well-paid position arrived to Mr. Schroeder after he lost in the elections. Everything happened too quickly and if we assume that negotiations on entering the Russian business were conducted with the acting chancellor, then we are dealing with a clear conflict of interests and is worth of at least a serious parliamentary investigation and corresponding hearings. In any case, the authority and reputation of such a politician would be seriously damaged.

But nothing of this kind happened and it would not be worth worrying about if not for the following circumstances: Gerhard Schroeder not only has not been condemned but also continues to exert an active influence on decision-making by the German government. As a result – we have the promotion of Russia's interests in the European market, while completely ignoring the fact that Gazprom is probably the most powerful political weapon of the Kremlin, which we have witnessed more than once over the past three decades.

There are many reasons why one should not conduct business with Russia in this way.

The first is that it is short-sighted to economically strengthen Moscow, which considers Western civilization to be the main threat, and strengthen the

degree of one's own dependence on an unreliable and unstable opponent. The Kremlin will invest the Berlin money in its own foreign policy agenda in strengthening Russia's military potential, in general, and in deploying missiles in the Kaliningrad region, in particular. As a result, Russia's threat to Europe will only grow.

The second – the dependence of Europe on Russian gas already reaches critical values. If necessary, Russia will use this weapon with no hesitation. Georgia and Ukraine have already experienced this and so why would Germany be an exception?

The third – there is no logic that a state that violates the norms and the principles of international law, on the one hand, should be punished with sanctions and, on the other hand, can sign multi-billion contracts, thereby encouraging its further aggressive actions. The here-and-now economic benefit does not compensate for the expected losses.

The fourth – the strongest side of sanctions is its consolidated nature. Such actions by Germany – the axis of the European Union – drive a serious wedge into the unity of the group of states on which depends the process of compelling Russia to return to the established rules of the game on the international scene.

The fifth – additional funds consolidate the Kremlin's abilities to further tighten the domestic regime and intensify anti-Western propaganda and expand its resources and potential.

Indulging Putin weakens national security, destroys the system of values and principles of cooperation and leaves Russia's neighbors, who demonstrate their European aspirations, alone.

The Kremlin does not worry about economic well-being and human rights neither in Russia nor outside of Russia, for the so-called "Russian-speaking population" (the Kremlin's latest ideological know-how, although in reality it is a rough copy of the Nazi practice to justify its interference in the affairs of independent countries – *AN*). But problems of the so-called "Russian-speaking population" are fully exploited for the Kremlin's own political purposes. A vivid example of this attitude is the so-called "passportization" of the population of conflict regions of Georgia – Abkhazia and Samachablo/South Ossetia. Russian passports are much easier to obtain here than in Russia itself, for example, for labor migrants.

An example of political hypocrisy in Russia was the introduction of a visa regime with Georgia. No one argues that the implementation of such an act

is a sovereign affair of Russia but exceptions were made for Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as was explained, because of their contiguous location. This visa provocation was covered with a fig leaf of a visa free regime for the residents of the Stepantsminda region, adjacent to the Russian-Georgian border in the Dariali Gorge.

It would be interesting to extend this experience to some regions of the Russian Federation. For example, the European Union could introduce a visa-free regime for Russian citizens registered in the Kaliningrad region. It would also be interesting to look at the reaction of Russia in the event that the government of Germany offers the residents of the Kaliningrad region the ability to obtain German passports.

In general, the idea of the Europeanization of the Kaliningrad region deserves special attention.

The Kaliningrad region is ideally suited to promote European values, traditions, standards and criteria of behavior in Russia. Historically, geographically and partly mentally, this is Europe, the population is less than one million people (in Kaliningrad, it is less than half a million; in the second and third largest cities, Sovetsk and Chernyakhovsk - 40,000 inhabitants) and the area is just over 15,000 square kilometers. The distance to Moscow is 1,249 km, to Berlin – 627 km to Warsaw – 384 km and to Vilnius – 359 km. The place is an ideal incubator for European moods in Russia.

In the Kaliningrad region, 90% of the population have passports, 30% – have Schengen visas and every fourth resident has received a local border traffic card allowing visits to the border regions of Poland without a visa. Passports to the residents of Kaliningrad are issued free of charge and the state duty is not raised for it.

Today, this territory is viewed by Russia as an advanced military base which is filled with all kinds of weapons, including Iskander mobile missile systems. The European Union could develop a special program to turn the Kaliningrad region into a European region – a bearer of corresponding values and standards of culture as a European oasis in Russia.

This would facilitate the achievement of several goals:

a) to show what Russia could offer its citizens if it wishes to integrate with the European Union using this small region as an example;

b) to strengthen the anti-war mood, obstruct militarization of the region and, accordingly, strengthen the European security system;

c) to complicate the Kremlin's anti-European and anti-NATO propaganda based on the inadequate idea of conquering and subordinating Russia to the West.

Russia's war with Georgia and Ukraine, the conflict with Moldova and its involvement in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan should be regarded in the context of the development of the overall situation in Europe. This is the most painful, but only a part of the problem that Europe is facing. The situation was complicated here to an extreme extent after the end of World War II because of Russia's actions.

Two wars in Europe in the twenty-first century were sparked by Russia: in 2008 – with Georgia and in 2014 – with Ukraine. The United States and the European Union should not only support Georgia and Ukraine but also other countries that had the misfortune of being Russia's neighbors. For all of us, this is a matter of life and death.

But the main task is to preserve the principles of the post-war arrangement in Europe which were registered in Helsinki on August 1, 1975 after lengthy and difficult negotiations.

If all the participants in the Helsinki Accords fulfilled their obligations, not only Europe but the entire space from Vancouver to Vladivostok would be free from conflicts. This is because the Helsinki principles provide answers to all of the questions including the complementarity of the principles of territorial integrity and the right of peoples to self-determination.

The answer can be read in the eighth principle of the Helsinki Final Act: "VIII. The participating States will respect the equal rights of peoples and their right to self-determination, acting at all times in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with the relevant norms of international law, including those relating to territorial integrity of States" (Source: www.osce.org/en/mc/39505?download=true).

Thus, there is no contradiction between the principles of the inviolability of borders and the territorial integrity of states, on the one hand, and the principle of self-determination of peoples, on the other. In this sense, the structure, logic and spirit of the Helsinki Final Act give an exhaustive interpretation.

For a number of understandable reasons, the Soviet Union insisted on this version during the long and exhausting negotiations. Russia, as the "successor" of the Soviet Union (some lawyers use this term referring to the

principle of the continuity of the state as a subject of the international law) has many advantages, including the seat of a permanent member of the UN Security Council. However, it also inherited problems that could come to the surface if Russia keeps on consistently destroying the pan-European security system.

Europe must protect Georgia and Ukraine because no erosion of the Helsinki principles should be allowed. This will lead to unpredictable consequences in Europe, including in the space that is called the Russian Federation.

By signing the Helsinki Final Act, the Soviet Union guaranteed its own territorial integrity at that point as well as that of its allies. If not for the agreements of Belovezhskaya Pushcha, concluded on December 8, 1991 by the President of the RSFSR, Boris Yeltsin, (ratified by the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR on December 12), L. Kravchuk (the Supreme Council of Ukraine on December 10) and the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Belarus, S. Shushkevich, (ratified by the Supreme Council of Belarus on December 10), the disintegration of the Soviet Union would be illegitimate. By destroying the Helsinki principles, Russia activates a time bomb not only for a common European system but also for its own security.

All of this should be explained to Russia and not so much and not only to the Kremlin but also to the Russian public.

Thus, Georgia and Ukraine are only a part of the overall picture of the confrontation between the West and Russia due to Russia's ignoring the universally recognized norms and principles of international law. This is a particular manifestation of the general problem of the Kremlin's destruction of the system of pan-European security. And Russia has demonstrated that it is ready to go as far as it is allowed to.

Therefore, a policy of sanctions against Russia, based on a well-coordinated and consolidated position of possibly a large number of countries, has no alternative. This is true at least until the Kremlin starts implementing real steps to de-escalate tension on all the problematic issues of international relations that have arisen with its direct participation.

Findings

Aggressiveness and Russia's imperia complex are the result of its historical development and mental tradition of the local population affected by the peculiarities of its geographical position and long centuries of political dependence on the Mongolian Golden Horde. Russia inherited the Horde's rules and values. In the case of other empires that have long been in the past, the key was the understanding by their ruling elites of the futility of this path of development. The Russian elite has not only refused to abandon it, but it also strives to continue to follow this path to this day.

Russia exploits the idea of its own "civilizational distinctiveness" and positions itself as one of the main poles of the "multipolar world." In this status, it believes it is natural to have an unconditional right to influence the surrounding space, primarily its neighboring countries.

Based on the Kremlin's vision, the norms and the principles of international law represent an instrument for ensuring its own interests in the international arena and not a set of rules for a state's conduct. Russia is ready to go as far as the emerging situation in particular circumstances will allow.

When Russia feels its power, it does not consider it necessary to look back at international, multilateral or bilateral, commitments binding it. In this case, the Kremlin implements its policy quickly, rigidly and without hesitation, taking the advantage of an authoritarian state: all resources are at the disposal of one center, no agreement is required with anyone and all state institutions work in the «what would you like?» mode.

The extreme manifestation of this Russian philosophy was the unleashing of two wars in Europe in the twenty-first century: in 2008, with Georgia, and in 2014 with Ukraine. Both cases showed that the Kremlin approved the corresponding plans in advance. Probably, such approved plans exist for other countries as well. Whether or not they will be implemented depends on the degree of solidarity of the international community and its efforts to confront and restrain Russia. There is no doubt that, having established hegemony in the surrounding space, Russia will rush forth further.

If Russia faces a well-organized resistance and a coordinated and consistent position in the international arena, it begins to return to the mainstream of the international law and refers to its norms and principles in order to consolidate the achieved success. Moreover, the options of sacrificing secondary issues for the sake of the achievement of the main goal may also be considered.

Thus, as a result of international pressure, Russia can agree to an option for the solution of the situation in the east of Ukraine but it will get its teeth into the Crimea. Russia will compromise nothing vis-à-vis Georgia for two main reasons: first – Georgia's issues are not being considered so actively on the international agenda today as evidenced by the results of the last G-7 Summit in Charlevoix, Canada on June 8-9 this year; second – 300 km of the Abkhazian section of the Black Sea coast of Georgia is regarded by Russia as the means for strengthening its influence, including military, in the larger Black Sea region, and South Ossetia is a military base in the heart of the South Caucasus which allows putting pressure on the whole region, and not only Georgia.

Russia poses an immediate threat not only to neighboring countries but the whole system of international relations as well. The Kremlin has repeatedly demonstrated by its concrete actions that it only accepts its own version of the rules of conduct in the adjoining space. But lately, Moscow has been extrapolating the methods that were well worked-out here without regard for the principle of geographical proximity and interfering in the internal affairs of other states around the world. This is apparently a new and also well-developed trend in Moscow's policy. It should receive an appropriate assessment and conclusions should also necessarily be drawn. Meanwhile, Russia is ahead.

As a consequence: it is necessary to shift relations with the Kremlin from the practice of reactive actions to the development and implementation of a preventive program for confrontation and deterrence. Consolidated sanctions have no alternative. It is necessary to limit Russia's resources for carrying out an adventurist foreign policy. In the case of Moscow's attempts to maintain the status quo or escalate the Kremlin's behavior, the sanctions mode should be toughened.

The philosophy of power in Russia can only change if the available resources are limited. In the event of additional opportunities against the background of maintaining the economic equilibrium within the country, surplus resources will necessarily be directed towards the implementation of adventurist foreign policy projects.

Those wanting to become a political ally or economic partner of Russia today should know that:

a) it is impossible to achieve results through the implementation of half-measures in relation to Russia because it has a sufficiently strong margin of safety which should not be underestimated;

b) the social structure and methods of public administration in Russia cannot be harmonized with the civilized world. Russia will obey the generally accepted rules of the game if it simply does not have any other choice. Otherwise, the Kremlin will always impose the game with its own rules, despite the agreements, signed documents and other «little things.» Today, this line of Moscow's behavior is experienced by its closest allies – members of EURASEC and the CSTO.

Conclusion

Russia in its present state represents a threat to the post-war security system. The greatest danger it poses to its neighbors is that it involves a whole palette of methods - from occupation and annexation to the limitation of sovereignty and subordination. However, this is only a part of the overall picture of Russia's opposition to Europe and the United States.

This confrontation is manifested not only in the plane of linear relationship but also with regard to common problems where the West and Russia are trying to coordinate positions – IGIL, Iran, North Korea, Syria, cybersecurity, etc. Countries negotiating with Russia are repeatedly convinced that the Kremlin is guided by its own agenda in all transactions and at the expense of the agreed position. Therefore, agreements are conditional for Moscow until there comes a point when, in its opinion, the agreements come into conflict with its interests. And then it starts ignoring them partially or completely. This is already proven by the US, Germany, Great Britain, France and other major countries and not just Russia's immediate neighbors. Thus, Moscow is doing everything to form a broad international coalition to counter its own policy.

However, Russia also has an advantage in competition with the West. Western democracy is built upon strong institutions where they play a decisive role and not on individuals but a system of checks and balances. A judge in Hawaii can overrule the decision of the US president and this will not seem to be a sensation for anyone. And no one will be trying to destroy this judge, either literally or figuratively. It is also important that Western countries consider it necessary and useful to hear each other's opinions and work out a coordinated policy and follow it. This is a time-consuming task, but democracy does not work otherwise.

In Russia, everything is simpler – do as Putin decides. The Kremlin asks for the advice of those who skillfully discern his wishes. Among several odious "allies," the serious consideration of issues is not welcome. However, the situation is more complicated here, especially of late. Recently, there have been more and more inconsistencies and it is becoming increasingly difficult for the Kremlin to manage the processes. However, this does not prevent it from making decisions without regard for the opinion of even the closest "partners."

Therefore, Moscow has certain advantages in the dynamics but only at a short distance. In the long run, however, it is always doomed to lose because

its goals are flawed and the methods for achieving them are criminal. With such an attitude, it is difficult to keep friends and avoid making enemies.

The strategy for Russia should be focused on the all-round limitation of its resources in all the directions or otherwise it will be impossible to pursue an effective deterrent position. First of all, this concerns financial resources. Despite the fact that Russia owns a significant part of the world's mineral resources, mainly oil and gas, international markets do not suffer from fatal dependence.

New technologies open up previously unrealized opportunities; in particular, for the extraction of shale oil and gas. On the other hand, without those Western technologies to which Russia does not have access due to sanctions, it is increasingly difficult for it to develop new deposits and it is necessary to go further east and north into the permafrost. It is also necessary to limit the Kremlin's negotiating resource, depriving it of the last of its so-called "allies." In these and all other issues, consolidation of the world community for countering Russia's inadequate actions in the international arena is crucial.

Russia is a permanent member of the UN Security Council and it has a decisive voice in all serious international organizations. In such a format of international relations, it will be practically impossible to achieve stability and security guarantees. Consequently, the efforts of the international community should be aimed at: a) squeezing Russia's resources, b) limiting the field for its maneuver and c) limiting its influence on decision-making in international cooperation formats, including the UN Security Council.