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**RUSSIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS IN RETROSPECT**

Very often relations between Russia and the United States are viewed on the basis of current events analysis. However, present situation in bilateral interaction is determined by factors of general character related to trends in the development of international system after changes in world regulation. Bright declarations and speeches made by the presidents and all kinds of politicians and experts are often very emotional, either omitting certain basic issues of contemporary international development, or ignoring historic experience. Russia and the United States understand differently each other's identity in contemporary world, and construct their policies on the basis of diverse (sometimes contrary) ideas and estimations. It makes it necessary to look at bilateral relations from above – from the level of world regulation. In my paper I shall give my view of the present situation in Russian-American relations and shall try to suggest less emotional and less empirical explanation.

*What is Russia today and how long will it stay "alive?" - American view*

As analysis shows, in American political and academic community at all times after 1985 when perestroika started in the USSR, there remained skepticism and doubts about sincerity of reforms and their success in the form of westernization (democracy and market economy). Doubts, caution and suspicion did not cease and were addressed to the Russian Federation and its reforms. Different waves of Russia's criticism and/or appraisal have been quite clearly seen in the activities and publications of American scholars affiliated at big and small research centers<sup>1</sup>. Voices of pragmatic analysts, concerned not only with American unchallengeable global role but

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<sup>1</sup> Full analysis of the period between 1986-2002 see in the monograph: T. Shakleina. *Rossia i SSHA v Novom Mirovom Poriadke. Discussii v Rossiiskom i Amerikanskom Politiko-Akademicheskikh Soobchestvakh* (Russia and the United States in New World Order. Debates in Russian and American Political and Academic Communities). Moscow, 2002 / [www.obraforum.ru](http://www.obraforum.ru)

also with the problem of global survival without war were not numerous and were not influential.

During the Clinton administration the thesis that Russia was “a country that lost the cold war”, was weak and unable to exert influence on the formation of the new world order, was meant but not so openly and often pronounced, though in practice, it was treated like such a country. During the Bush administration this assumption became decisive for American world regulation and for the American policy toward Russia. After everything became quite clear at the government level, analysts and journalists also started to speak more critically (often arrogantly) about Russia.

There is no need to analyze all publications on Russia’s issues: they contain very similar assumptions and generalizations. That is why we can take 4 comprehensive reports prepared by well known analysts. They are the following: 1) “An Agenda for Renewal. U.S.-Russian Relations” (2000, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace); 2) “What Is to Be Undone? A Russia Policy Agenda for the New Administration” (2001, The Nixon Center); 3) “Russia’s Wrong Direction. What the United States Can and Should Do.” (2006, Report of an Independent Task Force, Council for Foreign Relations); 4) “Alternative Futures for Russia to 2017” (2007, Center for Strategic and International Studies). All four reports are thorough, comprehensive, informative, all of them demonstrate scrupulous approach with a great accent to empiricism. Though they were written by experts from different research centers who have different views on Russia, during different administrations, it is possible to indicate a number of assumptions characteristic for all 4 papers.

Assumption #1.

Russia has not become a truly democratic country, failed to develop democratic institutions and civil society structures. There is less freedom in the country, and authoritarian tradition is becoming stronger. It means that Russia will never be a western-type democracy, so it cannot be a true partner or ally to the U.S.

Assumption #2.

Russia remains the only country that can destroy the United States with its weapons.

Assumption #3.

Russia is becoming very assertive (even aggressive) in its foreign policy. Russia’s behavior is wrong: it prevents its neighbors from developing democracy; opposes American policy in the regions (Commonwealth of Independent States, former Yugoslavia, Iraq) and in the world (“Russia is not a real partner in the war against terrorism”, prevents the U.S. from establishing nuclear proliferation control).

Assumption #4.

Russia is rich in resources, but cannot be considered part of world economic community (WTO) because of its non-democratic political system (uses oil and gas as a “political weapon” against dependent countries).

Assumption #5.

Russia’s government is responsible for growth of anti-Americanism in the country.

Assumption #6.

We are watching growth of nationalism and nationalist extremism.

Assumption 7. Conclusion.

The United States has very little influence (if any) on Russia and Russian society, and all efforts to change Russian society failed. The United States should interact with Russia on the agenda-minimum (contradict and oppose Russia when necessary).

There are variations, milder and tougher evaluations and suggestions, but general observations and considerations are practically the same, repeated from one analytical paper to another. Opinions, opposite to official or close to official estimations and views, do exist; they are realistic and demonstrate concerns about global and American future. However, they have failed to become domineering in strategic planning, aimed to stabilize course of Russian-American relations.

Generally Russia was viewed like “a patient on a surgery table”: everybody expected it to die (in our case – stop being traditional Russian state), but it survived. A group of smart doctors watched it deciding what to do with it – cut something out, implant something, or to do something else. But the patient was rather quick to jump from the table and with growing speed headed away in “the wrong direction”.

Russia’s reaction to American view of its status and policy was predictably negative, and by the end of Putin – Bush era we had “chill peace”: American politicians promised “to kick Russia out of Group 8”, Russia was not accepted to WTO, military arms race was growing, Russian-American competition was intensifying, CIS territory looked like arena of revolutions, Russia turned inward and looked offended (if not angry).

*Russia’s answer: “We shall go on”*

Western view of the reasons and results of the cold war, the thesis about Russia’s defeated status after the end of the cold war implied certain “behavior” for Russia without too much independence in its actions, to say nothing of any kind of its revival and pretensions to

regional and world regulation. This approach to Russia has become the main source of disagreement: Russia and the United States (together with old and new members of transatlantic community) estimated the results of the cold war differently, and none of them showed any desire to give up. Not so many people in the U.S. and Russia speak openly on the subject for different reasons, but the time has come when we cannot beat about the bush any more. Constantly repeated list of the same criticisms and demands is becoming counterproductive.

The majority of Russian elite and population do not even consider “the defeat option”. Only very small part of Russian liberals accepted the idea, however part of this group accepted it in theory but did not go so far as to change the historic paradigm of Russia’s world and regional influence. “The architects” of the Commonwealth of Independent States as a substitute of the Soviet Union (like G. Burbulis, S. Shakhrai, and B. Yeltsin) spoke of new Russia as a successor of the superpower and its policy, which was world regulating by nature. Even A. Kozyrev who at the beginning did not support a great power idea had to change his views officially and speak correspondingly. Rejection of any idea of defeat in the cold war was fixed in the Conception of the Russian Foreign Policy (2000), and manifested itself in the policy that followed<sup>2</sup>. The fact that only minority of Russian population was affected by the ideas of defeat, decline, withdrawal etc. was noted in American reports mentioned above, and American efforts to change the political situation in Russia to the contrary, turned out to be unsuccessful.

Despite constant criticism Russia continued to show great interest and desire in cooperation with the United States and European Union. It declared that economic progress of the country is impossible without this cooperation. However, process of incorporation of post-Soviet countries into world economic institutions was greatly politicized: weak (often economically failed countries) were accepted, but rich in resources and labor force Russia was rejected on political grounds. This was the most vivid demonstration of this “defeat” approach. Moreover Russia was blamed for all the problems in post-Soviet countries. The fact that is actually supported their poor economies was ignored.

After years of waiting that the United States and Europe will stop pushing Russia into the position of a defeated country accepting suggested terms and behaving according to Western standards, Russia stopped being politically correct and clearly stated its plans for the future, and its view of the American policy and Russian-American relations. Publications by Russian scholars and political leaders, speeches made at different occasions by President V. Putin (especially his speech in Munich) marked the end of patient and benevolent posture. Russia pointed out that it will try to strengthen its world regulation position, and will play an active and offensive role in the construction of new world order and safeguarding Russian interests.

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<sup>2</sup> Russian Foreign Policy in Transition, Ed. by A. Melville and T. Shackleina. Budapest-New York, 2004. P. 89-104.

Russia made the following assumptions concerning the United States and present world situation.

World regulation and establishment of the new world order are not the privilege of the United States and NATO members. It should be a collective action of all major world powers.

Institutions of the old world order should not be destroyed as they successfully safeguarded world security during the cold war (UN, OSCE), and coexist and cooperate with new emerged or emerging structures<sup>3</sup>.

Ideology is back to international relations, its role is growing, and as in the 20th century, it starts to play a negative role. It is true not only of terrorist groups and so called “failed states”, but also of the American policy resembling a crusade<sup>4</sup>.

We are watching escalation of arms race, growth on military component in conflict resolution. At the end of the cold war the United States and the Soviet Union managed to stop militarization of international relations, stressed importance of non-military approach to safeguarding regional and international security<sup>5</sup>.

Russia does not agree with the United States and European countries on the issue of national sovereignty. It rejects approach when the right to enjoy national independence is differently formulated for different cases, while the United States takes the privilege to have an absolute right for safeguarding their national sovereignty.

The United States and EU are using double standards in evaluating policies of different countries, and Russia is put into the least favorable position, when estimations of its so called “behavior” are often prejudiced.

Russia does not accept the view according to which all Russian actions in any of post-Soviet countries are imperial, aggressive, blackmailing. Russia views so called “post-Soviet space” as the region where it has a lot of vital interests (economic, political, security, humanitarian, cultural). Together with other players, Russia will compete with other countries,

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<sup>3</sup> Shakleina T. Status Quo Kak Oppozitsiya Miroporiadku (Status Quo As an Opposition to World Order) // *Mezhdunarodniye Processi (International Trends)*. Vol. 4. № 1 (January/April 2006). P. 104-110.

<sup>4</sup> The idea of a new crusade has been point-blank mentioned many times by American analysts, and indirectly was expressed in a number of documents of the Bush administration. See, for instance: McFaul M. The Liberty Doctrine // *Policy Review*. № 112 (April/May 2002). P. 1-24.

Kosolapov N. Ideologiya i Mezhdunarodniye Otnosheniya na Rubezhe Tisyacheletii (Ideology and International Relations on the Verge of a New Century). In: *Issues on Theory and Political Analysis of International Relations*. M., 2002. P. 223-240 / [www.obraforum.ru](http://www.obraforum.ru)

<sup>5</sup> Analysis of Soviet and American debates on the issue see in the monograph: Shakleina T. *Rossia i SSHA v Novom Mirovom Poriadke. Discussii v Rossiiskom i Amerikanskom Politiko-Akademicheskikh Soobchestvakh (Russia and the United States in New World Order. Debates in Russian and American Political and Academic Communities)*. Moscow, 2002. P. 21-49, 152-164 / [www.obraforum.ru](http://www.obraforum.ru)

including the United States, in all spheres to get better terms of advancing its interests and safeguarding its security.

Russia accepts criticism and acknowledges imperfection and shortcomings of its domestic policy but considers that it does not prevent Russia from being viewed as an active and positively sincere actor in world politics. It is quite suitable (“good enough”) for the solution of many acute world problems.

As I see it, the main problem in Russian-American relations lies in the difference of political cultures, basic views on world order and roles of Russia and the United States in its construction and regulation. Practically the same set of differences exists between the U.S. and China (they are even stronger), however their relations do not take the form of constant clearing up or quarrel-like dialogue. However, there are some other factors that prevent better understanding and contribute to negative context of the bilateral dialogue.

#### *Situation in Russian-American dialogue*

Though academic studies generally do not play a crucial role in decision making, their role should not be underestimated. It is especially true of the United States as the end of the cold war did not dramatically change think tanks’ landscape, while in Russia system of academic institutions was being in the process of permanent decline. Though Russian studies in the U.S. shrunk, traditional analysis was conducted by old and new research structures. In Russia academic studies did not get finance and were not requested by the government, old structures continued research with tendency to decline, new structures were professionally weak, financed from foreign sources and were not fully trusted. The situation started to improve after 2000 nevertheless this problem of providing Russian foreign policy with adequate analysis has not been solved yet.

One could also watch generational and professional “gap” in academic studies (especially in Russia) when number of good specialists on Russia in the U.S. and on the United States in Russia became much fewer. The quality of knowledge of younger specialists is much lower as they often do not travel to countries of their studies; write on many issues relying very much on internet resources and not on fundamental systematic knowledge. Lack of professionalism (bad knowledge of history, political culture, language, etc.) sometimes works against fruitful academic dialogue. Another negative result is misunderstanding and/or misperceptions of each other’s motives, plans and actions<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Foreign policy research in Russia and the United States has been analyzed in a collaborative project accomplished within IREX program “Russian-American Experts Forum” by Professors B. Parrott (SAIS, the Johns Hopkins University) and T. Shakleina (MGIMO – U, Russian Foreign Ministry) in 2006. Their final paper “Foreign Policy

One of characteristic features of many analytical papers, views expressed and estimations presented are ideological and rather emotional character. In the United States and Russia we often recognize the language of the cold war period. We interact mostly in the way of criticism as if talking parallel, often give tribute to political correctness (though sometimes it is something different), and as a result our debates lack frankness and openness preventing to rise to the level of pragmatic and reasonable change of opinions.

Almost 20 years have passed since that time when American and Soviet specialists in international relations realized the importance of formulating new approach to global problems solution (especially in security sphere) and world regulation. I think that it is a mistake to explain bilateral dialogue at the end of the 1980s only by “Soviet weakness”. There was a challenge for both superpowers. G. Allison, Co-Director of the Soviet-American project “Windows of Opportunity”, mentioned: “The participants of this joint study conclude that the United States and the Soviet Union now face significant windows of opportunity. A combination of realism about nuclear risks, shared interest in defusing dangers posed by the uncontrollable, urgent domestic priorities in each country, and increasingly important new threats such as terrorism and proliferation are shifting the balance of shared and competing interests. Together with changes in the leadership of both governments, these factors give both nations a chance to move beyond the cold war over the next decades to a relationship of peaceful competition”<sup>7</sup>.

We can admit that the threats mentioned 20 years ago are now even greater. Not only Russia but also the United States have domestic problems that require a lot of efforts and resources. Terrorism and proliferation are practically out of real control, and without mutual efforts we shall never come to any settlement of the problem. One may say that Soviet approach was dictated by its political and economic decline; however it was not the only reason. As Academician G. Arbatov, Director of the Institute of the U.S. and Canadian Studies, wrote, foreign policy thinking started to change already in the 1970s. The main reason for that was emergence of a vital common interest between the U.S. and the USSR: the interest in avoiding the global war<sup>8</sup>. So, Soviet and American leading specialists in international relations acknowledged that the threat of confrontation was more important than ideological differences. After the heat of ideological battle at the beginning of the 1980s there came realization to change dramatically bilateral interaction. A prominent Soviet scholar H. Trofimenko, who participated in American-Russian project, wrote, that “Reagan administration was more ideological and

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Studies: Role and Impact on Decision Making in the U.S. and Russia” was presented at the IREX conference in Moscow in December 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Windows of Opportunity. From Cold War to Peaceful Competition in U.S.-Soviet Relations. Ed. by G. Allison and W. Ury with B. Allyn. Cambridge (Mass.), 1989. P. 311.

<sup>8</sup> Allison G. Primitive Rules of Prudence. Foundations of Peaceful Competition / Windows of Opportunities. P. 11.

confrontational in its anti-Soviet rhetoric than any U.S. government since World War II”, and danger and hopelessness of further anti-Soviet crusade gave rise to new concepts of global problems solution and of bilateral relations as well (new political thinking)<sup>9</sup>.

We refer to the publication of 1989, and remember conclusions and recommendations of very prominent American and Russian scholars because present situation in the world and in Russian-American relations is very similar to the one of 1979-1985. Instability at the global level and in the regional subsystems was growing. American-Soviet dialogue had the form of ultimatums. I do not fully accept the assumption that the USSR suggested a new conception of international and bilateral relations because it was declining and was incapable of global regulation. My assumption is that domestic problems were acute but not domineering for changes in foreign policy thinking. For leading Soviet and American scholars it was clear that nuclear and all other weapons could not solve global and regional problems, as their substance and scale were growing and changed tremendously. It was also clear that arms control was becoming less and less controllable, and demanded new approaches from the superpowers. Aggravation of negative tendencies in world development should be viewed separately from the dissolution of the USSR: disappearance of the superpower did not improve general international situation though for some countries it changed for the better, and their posture in regional (Central and East Europe) and world (China, India) politics transformed or grew. This partial change at nation-state level and disappearance of Communist ideology were mistakenly taken for the greatest achievement of Western policy after 1945. However, the greatest achievement should be seen in peaceful ending of the cold war and peaceful solution of security problems at the superpower level that opened a lot of new options for future development of the world.

Unfortunately, all the achievements of bilateral efforts were forgotten, and in 20 years we have arrived to the same point in international development and bilateral relations only at a different level: we have the same problems but of a more dangerous nature. We have come to a crucial point when it is necessary to revise contemporary international situation and role of the U.S. and other great powers (old and new). Diplomatic experience of the period of a bipolar world order deserves more accurate analysis.

This is topical not only for the United States but for Russia as well.

*I think that if we manage to restore bilateral dialogue we could avoid any kind of crisis, and make the world feel at ease, because many countries in the world are still looking at the “U.S. + Russia factor», making this or that conclusion determining their policies. Many states will be discouraged to play any “cards” against Russia or the United States. Bilateral*

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<sup>9</sup> Trofimenko H. The Emergence of Mutual Security. Its Objective Basis / Windows of Opportunity. P. 178-179.



*rapprochement can only make the world more stable and predictable though it will not eliminate all bilateral disagreements and international problems.*

*What is to be done: Russia's reaction*

2008 is the year of changes in political leadership of the United States and Russia. Scholars in both countries suggest various hypotheses concerning possible development of bilateral relations. American scholars refer to President Putin's speech in Munich in 2007, his Address to the Federal Assembly and final press-conference in 2008; Russian analysts quote passages from all mentioned above reports, D. Rumsfeld's speech in Vilnius, etc. These documents are important for the analysis, because they show how deep we are in this "national (state-focused) approach", how strongly we are tied to cold war stereotypes (Americans stronger than Russians), how neglectful we are of general trends in world development. I think that Russia is closer to more objective estimation of its role in the world than the United States who have demonstrated adherence to the idea of unchallengeable American hegemony/leadership with forceful regulation, unwillingness to acknowledge the complexity of the world and inconsistency of military global regulation.

I think that Russia should be given equal rights with other great powers to define its future and policy. Constant reference to Ivan the Terrible does not always work, or helps to understand and predict Russian policy. Russian Federation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a state where a lot has been changing though not with the speed and contents as required by the West. However Russia is closer to the West as never before.

My assumptions are the following:

- only realization by the United States and European powers of the dramatic nature (one may say "critical") of the world development and acute nature of global and regional problems (especially, in security sphere) can change American and Western attitude to Russia;
- only making the task to envisage survival for our countries and the world the greatest foreign policy and international cooperation priority can change the quality and contents of American-Russian relations;
- only granting Russia the right to have and determine its "identity" as different from other "identities" (American, Chinese, Indian, European, etc.) can have a positive impact on bilateral interaction<sup>10</sup>.

It is necessary to acknowledge that critical view of the United States (so called anti-Americanism) is not the product of propaganda (it is necessary to remember that propaganda

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<sup>10</sup> The report on the issue of Russia's identity was presented by T. Shakleina at the 47<sup>th</sup> ISA Annual Convention in San Diego (March 2006) - "Russia between East and West".

mechanisms were completely destroyed after the dissolution of the USSR, and have not been restored yet), but a natural result of global information interaction. Russian people (especially young people, the majority of whom are well educated), get access to world news and often formulate their own opinions. Many of them do not approve military approach to conflict management, ignorance of national sovereignty and interference into internal affairs, dealing with Russia like with a “defeated country”.

In addition to “natural” (objective) formation of critical views in both countries, there are subjective factors stimulating negativism. A well-known Russian specialist in international relations, Professor A. Bogaturov gave the following explanation to the growth of criticism in both countries: “Anti-American articles in Russia perform the same function as anti-Russian articles in the U.S. Their number and level of criticism are correlated with domestic political situation, first of all, electoral demands. “Managed anti-Americanism” in Russia is a cousin of “managed Russophobia” in the U.S., with the only difference that American campaign is more refine, diverse and more subtly regulated”<sup>11</sup>.

It is time to start a true bilateral discussion without emotions and “crusade ideology”, with due respect to history and positive experience.

It is time to bring Russian-American dialogue to a higher level when Russia will be viewed as a real participant in world regulation. It is time to stop putting bad marks to Russia.

It is time to look back and estimate what the United States have done, and what are the results. True estimation (and not wishful thinking view) will give us picture of post-cold war regulation different from what we often hear or read in American analytical papers.

After 15 years of searching and thinking Russia produced a conception that combines global, regional and national aspects of its foreign policy. The third conception (though not presented as a special document like two previous conceptions of foreign policy of the Russian Federation in 1992 and 2000<sup>12</sup>) did not change dramatically the Conception of 2000, but added some basic postulates. New ideas were presented by President Putin, but we may say that they were the result of constant intellectual work of Russian scholars and politicians.

One of the main points of debates in the 1990s was whether Russia is a global or regional power. In 2006 I wrote that Russia recognizes that in contemporary world many problems become global and can be solved only by collective approach. From this point of view Russia, though not a superpower and without aspirations to exert global influence (like it was during

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<sup>11</sup> Bogaturiv A. Three Generations of Foreign Policy Doctrines // International Trends. Vol. 5. № 1 (January/April 2007). P. 54-69 / [www.intertrends.ru](http://www.intertrends.ru)

<sup>12</sup> Russian Foreign Policy in Transition. Concepts and Realities. Ed. By A. Melville and T. Shackleina. Budapest-New York, 2005. P. 27-64, 89-128.

cold war when the USSR pursued policy of global influence and interference), will have global component in its international strategy as a participant in creation of new world order (institutions, norms) together with other actors. All other leading world powers also can strengthen global component in their policy in perspective (for instance, China, EU as a collective center of world power).

Russia's geostrategic position – center of Eurasia – defines its “new globalism” as well. Security and economic problems in relations between Russia, CIS countries and other Asian countries are not only of continental but also of global character: many of Eurasian states are in the oil and terrorist networks, are territories where interests of many countries meet and often contradict (the United States is one of them). Russia cannot ignore territories to the South and to the East, as most of them are already unstable or might be unstable in the future, require constant attention and involvement in the regional situation to envisage stability on Russian borders. Growing threat of terrorism, drug and arms trafficking, WMD proliferation is making Asian vector of Russian foreign policy very important and challenging. To accuse Russia of “imperial interference” into life and policy of Eurasian countries is not justified<sup>13</sup>.

The same idea was expressed at the federal level. On June 27, 2006 President Putin addressed Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives at the meeting in the Foreign Ministry. He declared that “Russia must take the responsibility for global and social-economic development according to its status and potential”<sup>14</sup>. As Russian analysts concluded, President's speech could be considered as “the first global doctrine of the Russian Federation”<sup>15</sup>. The idea of a combination of global and national in Russia's foreign policy doctrine was repeated in the “Review of Russian Foreign Policy” published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on March 28, 2007<sup>16</sup>.

Analysts point out five main points of the new doctrine:

Russia is against any kind of confrontation, and will not participate in any kind of “Holy alliances”. Russia is for civilizational dialogues without any ideology.

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<sup>13</sup> Shakleina T. Russia between East and West. Paper presented at the 47<sup>th</sup> ISA Annual Convention in San Diego (2006).

<sup>14</sup> President Putin. Speech at the meeting with Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives of the Russian Federation. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. June 27, 2006 / [www.kremlin.ru/text/appears/2006/06/107802/html](http://www.kremlin.ru/text/appears/2006/06/107802/html)

<sup>15</sup> Bogaturov A. Three Generations of Foreign Policy Doctrines // International Trends. Vol. 5. № 1 (January/April 2007). P. 54-69 / [www.intertrends.ru](http://www.intertrends.ru)

<sup>16</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Review of Foreign Policy. 28 March, 2007 / [www.mid.ru/brp\\_4nsf/sps/3647dA97748A106BC32572AB002AC4DD](http://www.mid.ru/brp_4nsf/sps/3647dA97748A106BC32572AB002AC4DD)

Russia will conduct policy of diversification that will allow using most favorable methods, mechanisms, trends, actors, campaigns, markets, etc. to achieve success and economic profit for the country.

Russia acknowledges importance of globalization, taking into account its positive and negative dimensions. In Russian view globalization accelerates tendencies toward a multipolar order.

Russia admits that nature and sources of threats to Russia's security changed since 1990s, when the main threat was of internal character (stability of the federation and economics). In the 2000s threats are of external character caused by growth of conflicts, proliferation, uncontrolled arms race, interference into internal affairs of countries, imposition of political systems and culture, ignorance of international norms, etc.

Russia will be more active in formulating global agenda and in its implementation. It states that it can be achieved only by collective leadership of leading world powers (multilateral diplomacy).

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Almost twenty years ago American and Soviet scholars and politicians opened "windows of opportunity" suggesting to reconsider bilateral and international relations, to make them less militarized, more predictable, less confrontational, more receptive to each other's interests and concerns. One of the participants – Professor Seweryn Bialer from the Columbia University said: "If these developments (in the USSR – T.Sh.) are matched by half as much new thinking in the United States, they could significantly improve superpower relations and reduce the risk of war"<sup>17</sup>. One of the main problems in bilateral relations was lack of sincere attitude to understand and to believe each other, to realize how dangerous it was to neglect global trends many of which were contrary to interests of both countries. As it was mentioned by the Soviet participant H. Trofimenko, President R. Reagan promised to share with the USSR the results of American defense research at some point in the future, but it was not sincere. As one of the American experts confirmed, "if it doesn't work we will share it; if it works we'll keep it for ourselves"<sup>18</sup>.

The situation has come back - Russia and the United States are looking at each other with distrust. Should we repeat the past? I do not think so. As S. Bialer wrote, "the concept of absolute security contains its own contradiction: "It demands measures and policies that other

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<sup>17</sup> Bialer S. Where Should We Go from Here. An American View / Windows of Opportunity. P. 268.

<sup>18</sup> Trofimenko H. The Emergence of Mutual Security. Its Objective Basis / Windows of Opportunity. P. 174.

states will find threatening to their own interests, prompting them to adopt countermeasures that ultimately diminish Soviet stability”. He was talking about the USSR (though it was not the Soviet Union who started the nuclear arms race, to say nothing about space defense experiments). At present it is the United States that is seeking for absolute security, and we are already watching contradictions and countermeasures taken by different actors. Is the international system stabilizing? Do we feel safer? These are the questions that are of our concern.

A well-known specialist on Russia L. Aron wrote in his recent book: “In the United States, Russia is “lost” at least every four years, as the contenders for the White House seek to burnish their foreign policy credentials by raking the incumbent over the coals for the many ruts, bumps, and detours on Russia’s road to liberal democracy. Some of the alleged failures stem from errors of fact. Most are real, but, distorted by hyperbole and the absence of a larger context in which Russia’s progress could be compared to that of other transitional states and economies, they provide less than stellar guidance for U.S. policymakers...”<sup>19</sup>

It is time to open wide new “windows of opportunity”, and to start a new realistic dialogue without suspicion and prejudice. This is a big challenge for both countries, and for the new leadership in Russia and the United States.

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<sup>19</sup> Aron L. Russia’s Revolution. Essays 1989-2006. Washington, D.C., 2007. P.175.