

Russian Dilemmas in a Multipolar World

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The notion of multipolarity has shaped Russian foreign policy horizon since mid-90s, when it became clear that Russian integration into Western system as an equal partner was not an option. The idea of a multipolar world promoted by then foreign minister Yevgeni Primakov was reaction to American dominance in international affairs, a way to counterbalance rising U.S. unilateralism, but did not contain any serious strategy. That rhetoric revived 2003, when Russia decided to join France and Germany in their opposition to Iraq war, but the main purpose of Moscow was to achieve a breakthrough in relationship with the European Union, which didn't happen. By the end of this decade emerging multipolarity and relative decline of the U.S. power turned into most frequently discussed international issue worldwide. Russian interest in that configuration started to evolve into real strategy of foreign policy diversification towards new centers of power like China, India, Brazil and Iran.

When Vladimir Putin described the breakup of the Soviet Union several years ago as “the greatest geopolitical catastrophe” of the 20th century, his words triggered a strong reaction in the West and among Russia's neighbors. They sensed that the Russian president's words held not only nostalgia for the now-vanished great power but also hidden imperial ambitions. Indeed, Russia's political class of the late 20th and early 21st century is overcoming its post-imperial syndrome with difficulty. This phenomenon is not unique—many European empires faced the same problem in the 20th century. In Russia's case, the situation is compounded by the fact that the country's disintegration meant the loss of territories that had never been viewed as colonies but had been seen as a natural part of the country's historical and cultural core. For the first time in history, the Russian people have become a divided nation. After the Soviet Union ceased to exist, 25 million ethnic Russians found themselves living outside the Russian Federation, which could not but have an impact on the policies of Moscow and the other newly independent states.¹ At the same time, Putin's words also carried a deeper meaning that few people noticed.

For centuries, the Russian Empire, and later the Soviet Union, served as a supporting frame that structured the expansive Eurasian space from eastern Europe to the Far East and from the Arctic Circle to the central Asian deserts. Yet it was the development of Russian imperial statehood, to which many peoples of the West and the East contributed, that largely shaped the situation on the vast territory. Throughout history, this territory sometimes found itself on the periphery and sometimes at the center of world politics. Its collapse was a momentous event in terms of its impact on the structural stability of the international system, especially in the second half of the 20th century when the Soviet Union was not just an influential regional power, but one of the two pillars on which the entire world order was based. Therefore, its collapse was not just a matter of national self-perception, but also a radical change in the foundation of the world order.

One can debate whether the Soviet Union's breakup was really the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the last century—after all, the First and Second World Wars were cataclysms for mankind. However, the absolute consequences of the collapse of the Eurasian empire are still unknown. They will manifest themselves only when a new status quo is established. Until a new balance of power takes shape among Russia and the other major global powers, it will remain unclear who has gained and who has lost as a result of these events. The most striking aspect of

the Soviet Union's collapse is the sensation in Russia that the current state is but temporary and lacks a clear goal to achieve stability and prosperity.

The experience of the last twenty years has made Russia a principled opponent of the ideology of the liberal "end of history," which had a great influence on Western political views in the last decade of the 20th century. The scenario of the "end of history," à la Fukuyama, assigned the role of loser to Moscow and the sociopolitical model that it embodied. However, Russia did not consider itself defeated because it was Moscow that had made a decisive contribution to the dismantling of the world communist system through the work of Mikhail Gorbachev and, later, Boris Yeltsin. And when Moscow failed to fit into the Washington-dominated world order in the 1990s, there emerged in Russia a desire to restore its former position on the world stage. This desire implied the need to go further—beyond the "end of history," to its return.

But desire to restore its lost status is not the only reason for Russia's opposition to the politics of the "end of history." It is interesting how resolutely post-Soviet Russia has broken away from Marxist views on historical processes. Similar to some modern liberal views, Marxism proceeded from the assumption that there is one final and correct model of social, political, and economic systems. As Timofei Bordachev noted, "The greatest achievement in Russian foreign policy over the past twenty years has been the renunciation of messianism as Russia abandoned attempts to impose its own model of social relations on other countries."² Russia, which has gone through an economic, geopolitical and moral collapse, tends to see world politics in the classical spirit, as an endless rivalry for advantage, influence, resources, markets, and cultural matrices.³

The fact that the 21st century ushered in a state of increased interdependence makes the overall picture multidimensional, but it does not negate the very principle of competition as a key driving force in international affairs. As competition intensifies, the question of how international actors can ensure their own interests and overall stability while experiencing globalization becomes increasingly relevant.

First, unilateral actions by an important player have a particularly strong impact on the entire system, exacerbating global imbalances and often backfiring on the initiator. For example, criteria on the use of force started to blur in the 1990s when the concept of humanitarian intervention was first introduced. That led to a very questionable—from a legal point of view—war against Yugoslavia in 1999, and similarly, a unilateral move by the United States against Iraq in 2003. Since these wars, confidence in international law has been seriously shaken, leading many countries to conclude that they can only rely on their own capacities and that those capacities should in turn be strengthened.

Another example of unilateral action can be taken from the U.S. administration's unilateral withdrawal from the ABM Treaty in 2001. The ABM Treaty, signed in 1972, limited the superpowers' capabilities to defend themselves from retaliatory strikes, which is a principle of mutual nuclear deterrence and helped secure strategic stability. Mutually asserted destruction between Russia and the United States seems absurd in the 21st century, but the way in which Washington abandoned that principle—by simply informing Moscow about its decision without pursuing discussions on possible complications—brought about general strategic confusion and mistrust. Now any attempt to deal with arms control is hampered by the unsettled ideas around missile defense. Furthermore, the Bush administration decided to deploy a new missile defense site close to Russian borders in Poland and the Czech Republic shortly after U.S. withdrawal from the treaty. This move not only further alienated Moscow, but also aggravated transatlantic tensions with European allies who were not consulted.

Second, the number of important actors in international relations is increasing. The relaxation of the “bloc discipline” of the Cold War years has markedly increased the level of pluralism—the international influence of newly independent states has increased, and non-state actors have made themselves heard as well. Is it really possible to build a stable international system under these conditions?

When the Cold War was nearing its end, the theory of a “new world order” was very popular. It was first raised by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1988 and subsequently by U.S. President George H.W. Bush.⁴ However, after the Soviet Union’s breakup and until the beginning of the new century, it seemed that discussions about the world order had lost their meaning because the new world order had already taken shape. The United States, the leader of the West in the era of confrontation, had seized the position of global leader. It should be noted that America had never held such a position before and was not prepared to perform such a function. In fact, for the United States, its historic triumph came as a surprise. Until the very last years of the Soviet Union, few people in the world had believed that Soviet power would vanish so quickly.⁵

Although the American leadership had not quite expected the rapid collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States now seemed to be faced with no alternative to global leadership. In this “new world order” the United States, as the mightiest and most influential state, assumed responsibility for global governance. Doubts about the effectiveness of this model began to emerge rather quickly, as the September 11, 2001 attacks showed how diverse and unusual threats to the global leader may be. The United States responded to the attacks with a campaign to promote democracy in the Middle East. This campaign, which culminated in the invasion of Iraq, demonstrated the limitations of U.S. capabilities to control the course of events through force. Nations began to ponder whether effective global governance is possible in conditions where unilateral leadership has failed, while modern principles of collective leadership have not yet become clear.

Today, it is commonplace to criticize the main international institutions, including the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). All were established in a different era and need to be reformed or even replaced. The current state of these institutions, however, is not the cause, but a consequence of the main problem: the lack of understanding of the structural elements of international relations.

For three centuries, nation-states served as the principle units that made up the international system. Today, nation-states still exist, but the conditions of the global economy and the global information environment are such that the impact of external factors on domestic affairs has increased dramatically. In the 1990s, belief in the possibilities of globalization was so strong that scholars even spoke of a possible erasure of national borders. The European Union (EU), a unique association of states that voluntarily limited their sovereignty in the name of common progress, began to be viewed as a prototype of the future world order. In practical politics, such views on the developmental trajectory materialized in the concept of “humanitarian intervention” and the actual negation of sovereignty in cases when actions by a sovereign state were at variance with supranational humanitarian norms.

The illusion that state sovereignty could be overcome, however, and that nations could exist according to common rules based on supranational structures, began to fade very soon. The European integration experience cannot be extrapolated to other parts of the world in the foreseeable future. Even in the EU itself, limitations on the renunciation of sovereignty revealed themselves very clearly after another attempt at federalization in the EU failed. The humanitarian ideal also proved to be problematic. First, the difficult experience of humanitarian interventions

in Somalia, Haiti, and Yugoslavia did not inspire optimism and their results were far from desirable. Second, the universal legitimacy of such actions were difficult to determine and can sometimes serve as a pretext for the division, rather than unification, of the international community.

Globalization significantly altered the global landscape and weakened the capabilities of states but it has not created any new structural units that could serve as a foundation for building some other well-ordered system. Popular ideas about a network structure of the world as an alternative to the vertical system (hegemony) or horizontal system (balance of power) are very interesting as intellectual exercises, but they are much less useful for understanding how to structure the global environment.⁶ Advocates of the network theory hold that networks help formulate some self-regulating system, a sort of political equivalent of the free market controlled by an invisible hand. But even if we assume that this is really so, then the world must prepare for a series of upheavals; recent and prior experience has shown that the market trends toward cyclical crises, and wars must be their political analogue.

The restructuring of the global environment is the main task of the 21st century. The fundamental question facing researchers is what will become the structural unit of the new system, replacing the nation-state, which no longer serves this function. They may find help in the concept of a multipolar world, which spread at the end of last century thanks to theorists in Paris, Moscow, and Beijing. Under current global conditions, however, this concept has had different meanings at different times.

The classical understanding of multipolarity is inseparably linked with the idea of the need for a balance of power. The revival of this concept in the mid-1990s was the reaction of the rest of the world, especially major powers, to Washington's attempts to consolidate American hegemony. Today, this understanding is changing as the international environment itself has changed. The balance of power is a very complex phenomenon, since the definition of power has become less fixed. Power may be hard, soft, or economic, and states have it in different proportions. While lacking in one form of power, a state may possess other types of power. As a result, the balance of power becomes complex and nonlinear—if it is achievable at all. In addition, the globalizing economy dictates the ever-increasing interdependence of countries, which further distorts the principles of a possible balance of power.

Multipolarity may now be understood as a way of structuring the global international system where the basic constituent parts are no longer individual states but instead conglomerations of economic interests, united around the most powerful centers of attraction and economic growth.

Former Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt wrote of the emergence of political and economic entities:

...Potentially made up of many states and peoples, united by common structures and modern institutions, often nourished by diverse traditions and values and rooted in old and new civilizations... What matters is the political stability and economic growth that they can create at a regional level, not for one or another of them to rule the whole world. In a nutshell, this is not about nostalgia for a return to the European empires of old but rather the birth of new types of political organizations, established by open and free societies, competing with each other at a global level, building bridges rather than walls, but each retaining its regional roots and customs.⁷

Verhofstadt's analysis, it could be argued, amounts to a description of how regional poles will constitute a new type of structure for the world system. The EU and China are the most

pronounced poles of this kind; attempts to form such conglomerations have also been made in Latin America (through various regional integration projects), Africa, and the Gulf area. Potentially, Russia may become such a center, although everything depends on its own ability to develop and become a focus of economic growth. From the point of view of global stability, Russia's development as a pole may be considered a necessity.

Interaction between such poles will not be conflict-free, as competition for resources and markets persists but the degree of interdependence among states is so great that it can reduce the negative effect of this competition. In any case, it is easier to agree on principles of interaction among large communities than among a huge number of different state and non-state actors.

The only country that does not fit into such a system is the United States. Unlike other actual or potential centers of gravity, America will not content itself with the role of a regional player because it has an exceptionally globalized position and is not likely to give up its leadership ambitions. Moreover, American politicians of all views are unanimous that the United States sees itself as the primary world leader, although there are heated debates about how to maintain this leadership. In any case, America views multipolarity as an encroachment on its unique status, preferring to speak about multilateral approaches, which imply the mobilization of the international community's efforts under the banner of American leadership.

Meanwhile, as scholars at the University of California, Berkeley, point out,

While connectivity for the globe as a whole has increased in the last twenty years, it is increasing at a much faster rate among countries outside the Western bloc. The World Without the West is becoming preferentially and densely interconnected. This creates the foundation for the development of a new, parallel international system, with its own distinctive set of rules, institutions, ways of doing things—and currencies of power.⁸

At the time of the economic crisis, experts have noted an upsurge in Chinese

trade with South-East Asia and the 'newly-rising economies' of Brazil, Africa and India. Although Chinese trade with these places has historically been limited, it has grown so fast in the past five years that a robust performance in 2010 may be enough to offset any moderate weakness in China's trade with the [United States].⁹

The United States, however, often takes the initiative for multilateral cooperation even during crises that are not viewed as a threat directed against the United States. U.S. researchers analyzing the international situation at the beginning of the 21st century write about the need to integrate the growing world powers, above all China, into the existing system of American-led hegemony, providing these powers with possibilities for further development without challenging U.S. leadership of this system. Proponents of this approach to integration believe it would give partner countries (including India, Brazil, China, and Russia) certain rights to influence the formulation of the rules of the game and, at the same time, would bind them into maintaining its stability.¹⁰

China's behavior, however, does not conform with this logic. Beijing does not demand any rights to influence the existing system, nor does it want to assume any obligations. China skillfully uses the existing world mechanisms to achieve its own goals of ensuring access to sources of raw materials and markets for its goods, thereby creating the most favorable conditions for self-development. China's foreign policy exhibits no global ambitions or messianic ideological plans, limiting itself to self-cultivation. At the same time, China does influence the global system, not because of any quota promised to it because of its status as a responsible stakeholder but through

the continued growth of its economic capabilities.¹¹ Such an approach puzzles many observers, as China demands relatively little for itself, contrary to the behavior of most fast-growing powers; it refuses, however, to submit to demands or proposals of other states’.

Looking at the problem of world order from the perspective of countries who are capable of playing the role of a regional pole—thus reducing the United States’ monopoly of power—the conclusion would be the opposite. The problem is not how to integrate rising powers into the existing system but rather how to integrate the founder and leader of the outgoing system, the United States, into the emerging multipolar system. In an ideal situation, the United States could play a very positive role by serving as an umbrella for a complex and unstable multipolar model, rectifying imbalances and helping to resolve conflicts between various elements of the system. In practice, the performance of this function leads to the demand for special rights and privileges and recognition of the leading role of the United States, which contradicts the very idea of a multipolar order.¹²

But if the recognition of American leadership by all other states is unlikely, everything will depend on the behavior of the United States: whether it will try to establish its position by force, or instead demonstrate its readiness to become the first among equals. After all, periods of isolationism in U.S. history have generally been longer than periods of transcontinental and global domination.

This is how the international system is seen by Moscow, where the idea of multipolarity has been discussed since the mid-1990s. How does such a view of the world affect Russia’s foreign policy?

Russia’s foreign policy can be roughly divided into two unequal periods. The first one, from the Soviet Union’s break-up to around 2007, was characterized by a desire to integrate into the existing international institutions and receive a worthy place at the tables where decisions are made. In the 1990s, especially in the first half of the decade, Moscow was ready to assume a subordinate status. Later, however, it began to demand an equal say at the table. Nevertheless, Russia’s goals remained unchanged both under Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin. Throughout those years, Russia’s priorities included: inclusion into the Council of Europe, the Group of Seven, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); the reformation of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) with a view of making it more effective under the new conditions; and the establishment of institutional, and increasingly closer, ties with the European Union. “President Vladimir Putin made a decisive breakthrough toward Russia’s integration into the global economy and politics. The view prevailed in Russia then that the country could adapt to the new global rules without hurting its national interests and even that it could implement them more fully.”¹³ Even the issue of NATO membership for Russia was discussed with western politicians, although it seems not to have been taken seriously.

The second period began with Putin’s Munich speech in February 2007, which was largely an expression of the Kremlin’s profound disillusionment with the results of its previous policy. Since then, Moscow’s public pronouncements have not focused on integration as a goal; instead, Russia has enhanced its own capabilities and increased its strength. This change stemmed from the conviction that western countries, especially the United States, were not interested in recognizing Russia as an equal partner, and that any steps by Moscow to meet the West halfway would be used to gain unilateral advantages. The subordinate integration of post-communist central and eastern European countries into the western community was unacceptable to Russia because objectively it remained a great power and felt a continued responsibility for maintaining strategic stability in Eurasia.

But there was also a more general reason for Russia's reversal: since the early 2000s, the decline of the former institutional design of the international system and the inability to create a new one became increasingly obvious.

“One could see more and more clearly that not a single country by itself or a political bloc can aspire to absolutely dominate or efficiently govern the international system. This conclusion unavoidably stimulates other members of the international system—irrespective of their internal structure or political orientation—to beef up their relative strength and to employ all possible instruments and resources. In other words, a growth of general anarchy makes countries more aggressive and competitive.”¹⁴

After Dmitry Medvedev replaced Putin as the president of Russia, the renunciation of the desire to integrate into the global system became even more definite, despite some softening of rhetoric regarding relations with the West. For example, Medvedev's idea for a European security treaty, proposed shortly after he took the presidency, differs fundamentally from previously discussed formats. This is not an integration initiative; rather, it is a proposal to sign a traditional multilateral pact on security principles. The transformation of Russia's approach to WTO membership is even more indicative. The WTO is now a lesser priority for Moscow as there has recently emerged a new element in accession negotiations. The problem is not whether Russia would benefit from joining the WTO, which has been discussed for years, but whether the organization itself has any prospects for the future. A source at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Secretariat quoted Medvedev at the November 2009 APEC summit stating that it was no problem for Russia to liberalize trade. Now that the Doha Round negotiations have stalled, however, Moscow will rethink once more whether it should join the WTO.¹⁵

The most characteristic demonstration of the new approach was the June 2009 decision to halt negotiations on joining the WTO and to focus instead on a joint bid through a customs union with Kazakhstan and Belarus. The decision caused mixed reactions in Russia and the rest of the world. In addition, the final format of the proposed integration was never made clear. The political meaning of such a step was clear from the very beginning. It was an attempt to take practical steps to create a pole of its own, which could compete with neighboring poles: a Europe of concentric circles and China, each of which actively spreads its influence to the post-Soviet space.

Although Russia has not acquired a new identity on the world stage since the break up of the Soviet Union, it is obvious that Moscow no longer seeks a global role in the way the USSR did before and as the United States is pursuing now. Moscow is now convinced that the future world order will be based on competitive interactions of principal centers of power and not on any one power's domination. With this belief in future power structures, Russia has limited its immediate interests to Eurasia. Russia would like to use its assets in remote parts of the world, such as Latin America and Africa, to strengthen its positions in the Eurasian space. For example, it appears that Moscow's interest in cooperation with non-conformist states of Latin America—Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Ecuador—grew markedly as the United States increased its presence in the post-Soviet space. One expert has described the present state of Russian-U.S. relations as “traveling in different boats.” “On the whole, the new quality of Russian-U.S. relations is another essential element of the multipolar picture of the world. A confrontational model stems from the bipolar past. Partnerships and alliances are elements of either ‘friendly bipolarity,’ which never materialized, or of a unipolar world under U.S. leadership, which also failed to produce results.”¹⁶

The paradox of the relationship between Russia and the United States is that both parties see each other as a declining power. America does not believe in the future of Russia, a country with

a diminishing population, a degrading infrastructure, and a lopsided economy which is sandwiched between economic growth centers. Vice President Joe Biden openly said as much last year.¹⁷ Russia's claim to the role of an independent pole is not taken seriously, especially amid the growth of "real" giants like China.

Russia, for its part, is discovering ever-new signs that the era of U.S. domination is waning. A multipolar world, which for a long time seemed to be an abstract slogan of America's competitors in Paris, Beijing, or Moscow has, in the 21st century, begun to turn into reality. Former U.S. President George W. Bush's trigger-happy policy catalyzed the process but did not cause it. Other centers and groups of influence are rising and Russia is pondering what should take priority in addressing international problems: relations with the United States or with its opponents? These views that Russia and the United States hold of each other do not so much reflect the present situation as they define the vector of expectations; the policies enacted on their basis may turn out to be similar.

The United States has an instrumental approach to Russia. It was not accidental that President Obama visited Moscow early in his term in office. He believed that if he played up to Russia's self-esteem and compensated for the previous neglect and lack of respect, he would achieve progress in matters that are of importance to the United States—namely Iran, Afghanistan and non-proliferation.

This may have been more effective several years ago, when the Kremlin was demoralized by western neglect and considerations of prestige were among the main factors of its policy. In the mid 2000s, however, Washington cared little for what Moscow thought. Today, however, encouraging words alone will not be enough to win over the Kremlin. Russia is not as concerned with being recognized by the United States as it is with avoiding the possibility of damaging relations with other international actors. Why should Russia meet the United States halfway on Iran, now that Iranian influence in the Middle East has been consistently growing while U.S. influence in that region has been decreasing? How actively should Russia help the American-led operation in Afghanistan if the United States and NATO will soon leave the country anyway, leaving Moscow to face the challenges in the region? There are no definite answers to these questions, so Russia is trying to maneuver. This maneuvering annoys America yet it cannot give up all interaction with Russia because it does not have a wide range of partners from which to choose. China declines to enter into any binding relations while Europe is not very useful in areas far from the Euro-Atlantic region. As Zbigniew Brzezinski stated of the U.S.-European relationship: "Genuine strategic cooperation on a global scale is not possible with a partner that not only has no defined and authoritative political leadership but also lacks an internal consensus regarding its world role."¹⁸

In this sense, discussions that the West should help Russia overcome the trauma of the break up of the Soviet Union and compensate for neglecting it in the 1990s and 2000s are most likely belated, as is recent talk about China's integration into the Western system through the extension of its right to influence the rules of the game.¹⁹ Indeed, for fifteen years Moscow dreamed of being recognized as an equal member of the existing concert of major players on the international stage. If, three or four years ago, the West had offered to correct the injustices done to Russia in the 1990s, Russia's elite would have gladly jumped at the prospect. Today, however, it is becoming increasingly clear that the former orchestral score is no longer relevant, while no one yet knows what the new composition of performers will look like. It is only clear that it will be different, so Russia should wait and be ready for any scenario.

The "reset" of Russian-U.S. relations, proposed by President Barack Obama, has stalled because discussions between the two countries ignore the main subject—namely, the correlation between

their interests in the Eurasian space. Russia, as a regional power, views this territory as a zone of its legitimate and immediate interests. The United States, as a global power, views the same territory from the perspective of strengthening its position as the world leader. This asymmetry is indicative of the inefficiency of the interactions between the two countries. In Russia, for example, some people argue that Moscow should not support Washington in its conflict with Iran, because American power in the Middle East, has been waning. Furthermore, these critics contend that Russia should not spoil its relations with Tehran, which is becoming an increasingly influential player in the region. This is not least due to the fact that the United States destroyed the main counterweight to Iran, Saddam Hussein's Iraq, and thus damaged regional stability.

The presidency of George W. Bush has shown what America has the potential to become. As the pendulum of U.S. politics tends to swing back and forth, there is no guarantee that President Obama, with his attempts to rebuild U.S. foreign policy according to new principles, will not eventually be replaced by some new neoconservative politician. In other words, international actors should proceed from the assumption that not only may the U.S. role not be positive, but that it may also be negative for the world system's stability in proportion to the degree of America's influence on the global environment. While Russia does not challenge the United States as the world leader, it does reject the principle of global hegemony. Stability in a multipolar world can be achieved through collective "leadership amongst the world's leading states—in addition to international institutions, most importantly, the United Nations," which "offer ways for solving the governability problem in the contemporary world."²⁰

In the coming years, the main challenge for Russia will involve taking the place it claims for itself in a multipolar system. Given its objective parameters—demographic trends, the type of economy, and the level of infrastructure development—Russia will have to make titanic efforts to create a pole of its own. The most discussed dilemma today is whether to be an independent center of power or a subordinate partner of one of the more powerful poles such as Europe or China. China is a more likely option for many countries since the prospects of the EU as a system-forming element of the future world order are in doubt.

As different groups in Russia assess the near-term development of the international system, they are now much less eager than before to commit to positions on Russia's place in the world and its long-term geopolitical prospects. The future arrangement of poles in a multipolar world is unclear and any attempt to base strategy on an assessment of the future character of the international system may very soon prove to be a miscalculation. The major objective which still preoccupies Russian minds is how to restore the country's ability to be an independent center of influence. Finally, a more subtle objective, which is less visible in public discussions but does exist in the background, is to avoid joining the wrong side of the ongoing competition between states in the international system.

NOTES

1 Igor Zevelev, "Russia's Future: Nation or Civilization?" *Russia in Global Affairs*, no. 4 (October-December 2009), <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/29/1317.html>.

2 Timofei Bordachev, "Without Ideology or Order," *Russia in Global Affairs*, no. 4 (October-December 2009), <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/29/1312.html>.

3 If we analyze the international sections of President Vladimir Putin's annual addresses to the Federal Assembly from 2000 to 2008, we will see that "competition" was the word that he most frequently used. Depending on the state of Russia's political and economic system at a given time, he spoke about competition as a threat or as an opportunity. Foreign Minister Sergey

Lavrov has often spoken about a competition of development models as a mandatory condition for world progress.

4 See his speech at UN General Assembly at <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/12/08/world/the-gorbachev-visit-excerpts-from-speech-to-un-on-major-soviet-military-cuts.html?pagewanted=1>. First mention of the “new world order” is attributed to Delhi Declaration, adapted by Michail Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi in November 1986.

5 Debates over why the Soviet Union’s breakup was not foretold by experts in the United States continued throughout the 1990s. See, for example, Nicholas Eberstadt, “Where did the CIA go wrong?” *National Review*, 10 June 2991, http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1282/is_n10_v43/ai_10847979; and “History of the Cold War: the CIA Estimates of Soviet Economic Strength,” from John Howard Wilhelm, “The Failure of the American Sovietological Economics Profession,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 55, no. 1, <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/7069-15.cfm>.

6 Anne-Marie Slaughter, “America’s Edge. Power in the Networked Century,” *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 1 (January/February 2009), 94-113.

7 Guy Verhofstadt, “The Financial Crisis: Three Ways Out for Europe,” (November 2008), 7, http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/bst/de/media/xcms_bst_dms_26640_26641_2.pdf.

8 Naazneen Barma, Ely Ratner, and Steven Weber, “A World Without the West,” *National Interest*, no. 90 (July/August 2007), 23-30.

9 James Kynge, “Global Insight: China-US Ties Face Challenge,” *Financial Times*, 8 January 2010.

10 The most characteristic views on China’s integration are represented in articles published in *Foreign Affairs* in 2008. C. Fred Bergsten proposed establishing a Group of Two (G2) as a kind of American-Chinese condominium for governing the world (“A Partnership of Equals,” July/August 2008). Zbigniew Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger followed up on this idea in 2009, while G. John Ikenberry believes that China is well aware of the benefits that its peaceful integration into the American-centric system offers (“The Rise of China and the Future of the West,” January/February 2008).

11 Robert Zoellick, “Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?,” 21 September 2005, http://www.disam.dsca.mil/pubs/Vol%2028_2/Zoellick.pdf.

12 Charles Kupchan and Adam Mount, “The Autonomy Rule,” *Democracy: A Journal of Ideas*, Spring 2009. The authors proceed from the fact that in the new world system the United States should abandon narrow ideological interpretations of democracy and liberalism and take account of cultural peculiarities of various nations in order to retain its leadership and delegate responsibility to other powers. In other words, it should rethink its criteria of interaction, but the criteria themselves, as well as the goals of interaction, will be determined by the United States.

13 Ivan Safranchuk, “Traveling in Different Boats,” *Russia in Global Affairs*, no. 4 (October-December 2008).

14 Timofei Bordachev and Fyodor Lukyanov, “A Time to Cast Stones,” *Russia in Global Affairs*, no. 2 (April-June 2008), <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/23/1196.html>.

15 Aliya Samigullina “WTO Tired of Waiting,” *Gazeta* (14 November 2009), http://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2009/11/14_a_3287082.shtml

16 Ivan Safranchuk, “Traveling in Different Boats,” *Russia in Global Affairs*, no. 4 (October – December 2008).

17 Peter Spiegel, “Biden Says Weakened Russia Will Bend to U.S.,” *Wall Street Journal*, 25 July 2009, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124848246032580581.html>.

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