

# Russia in the New World Order: Power and Tolerance in Contemporary International Relations

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**T**he events of 11 September 2001 made the problem of tolerance in international relations acute. One is reminded of Samuel Huntington's 1990s forecast of civilizational and religious wars.<sup>1</sup> If that apocalyptic scenario is to be avoided, tolerance has to find a place in international behavior.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century the cultivation of tolerance has become gravely important for the continued existence of humanity on earth. The international community and nongovernmental organizations, primarily UNESCO, put integrating a culture of tolerance into international relations on the agenda long ago. Nevertheless, reliance on force, not tolerance, reigns in the international arena.

I have no illusions about changes in the hierarchy of international relations in the foreseeable future. However, to prevent tolerance from being condemned to a marginal position, we must remember that it is one of the primary factors in international relations, one that we hope will gain in influence. In attaching value to tolerance we should recall the words of the Italian intellectual Umberto Eco: "Intellectual duty is to confirm the impossibility of the war. Even if there is no alternative."<sup>2</sup>

Here I consider the problem of tolerance in international relations mostly from the point of view of political processes, using classical and postmodernist methodological concepts.

## **Awful Heritage**

Perhaps no other century in the history of humanity has such an awful heritage as the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> Europe at the turn of the century was the source of humanistic ideas, enlightenment, equality, and belief in the brotherhood of all people. One hundred years ago Russian journals expressed full confidence that

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the twentieth century would be peaceful. "The development of European civilization—industry, science and technology—made war impossible," said Andrey Synayvsky in his book *The Soviet Civilization*.<sup>4</sup> Yet the twentieth century proved to be tragically different from those forecasts. Europe gave rise to fascist and communist teachings and movements and deliberate use of the most advanced technical tools of mass killing. Gas attacks occurred during the First World War and continued with the use of nuclear weapons during World War II. For practically the entire second half of the century Europe was divided by the iron curtain, and the whole world was in a state of "cold war." And the century culminated in mass "ethnic cleansing" and genocide. And at the beginning of the new millennium, pessimistic forecasts set the tone.

Why do cultures that sanction mass murders, destruction, and humiliation of others exist? Again, Umberto Eco responds: "[j]ust because the set of *others* is stretched to the limits of the tribe and 'barbarians' aren't taken for human beings."<sup>5</sup> That conclusion may be applied equally to groups within and outside of a society.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Post–World War II System**

The "Yalta peace"—that is, the political system created by the Great Powers after the defeat of Nazi Germany—ceased to exist when the Soviet empire disintegrated. The dynamic balance that it had created was supported by a well-developed system of restraints and counterbalances between the two superpowers. NATO and the Warsaw Pact were but military tools of the geopolitical interests of the superpowers, not humanistic organization. There was some space at the perimeter of those spheres of influence for other subjects of the Yalta system, in relations of semidependence or neutrality.

More than once the superpowers' policy of mutual restraint led the world to the brink of a global war. In spite of the difference of their ideological approaches, both blocs claimed to have been acting in defense of the principles declared in the charter and resolutions of the United Nations. We can argue about the sincerity of the superpowers in observing the UN's principles, or about their true ambition to manipulate this international organization. Nevertheless, the Nuremberg trials of war criminals defined the moral and the political foundations of the postwar world order, a clear rupture with the principles of international relations as practiced before World War II. Imperial interest and appeasement gave way to defense of human rights and the inadmissibility of genocide and aggression.

The principles of international conduct codified by the UN were recognized as a binding moral authority in international relations. International procedures of conflict solution and suppression of genocide and other offenses against humanity were developed. In all major international crises of the cold war era, both superpowers referred to similar ideological justifications of their actions. They both claimed to be trying to secure democracy, forestall aggression, and defend peace. For example, the Soviet interventions in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968, as well as the Vietnam War of the United States and the Soviet war in Afghanistan, were all supposedly waged in defense of democracy.

In spite of the claimed difference in ideologies, they were in a similar range of humanist values. Each side, of course, always claimed that the other was not genuinely protective of democracy. And yet both superpowers waged their wars to make the world safe for democracy. The post–World War II international order worked out a system of humanist values that has become common to all mankind and serves as an important deterrent to manifestations of violence and xenophobia in the world.

After the disintegration of the USSR, the Yalta system, which had rested on shared responsibility for the world among the United States, Great Britain, and the USSR, collapsed. The position of Great Britain was minimized as early as the end of the 1940s, and after the disintegration of the USSR the world seemed to have become unipolar.

### **The New World Order of the 1990s**

After the collapse of the Soviet empire the system of international relations did not transition to democracy or order. The decade saw ethnic cleansing, wars, and genocide in Europe and Africa. Classical systems of international relations, in which “economics defined politics,” were marginalized. State sovereignty ceased to be the basis of international relations. For the first time, at least since the creation of the Westphalia system in 1648, sovereign governments ceased being subjects of international relations. Institutions of international law formed over centuries were sapped. International treaties that supported international security and controlled the arms race and the accepted ethical norms of relations between subjects of international relations were annulled. Promises were made and then broken, military alliances strengthened and expanded. Trust in the fundamental institutions of the modern system of international relations is being severely undermined.

New demographic and economic giants, such as China, India, Pakistan—“the Pacific’s tigers”—are not satisfied with their limited world role. More and more countries are aspiring to acquire nuclear weapons. The irritation of many UN members focused on the increasingly frequent application of “limited sovereignty” all over the world. The sole remaining superpower, the United States, took it upon itself to decide what sovereign states were allowed to do. It is dangerous to shield illegal actions with the name of international organizations. The United States entrusted only NATO, which did not have an international mandate, with punitive functions. The interaction of NATO and the UN was not clearly defined. NATO acted without a UN mandate in Serbia, which undermined the legitimacy of NATO actions and the efficacy of the UN.

The concept of the “global sheriff,” acting alone, has appeared in international relations with the evident connivance of some world leaders. The political philosophy of force, not limited by international law or by moral or ethical norms, is gaining strength in international relations. “What is good for the United States is good for the rest of the world” is the guiding principle of American foreign policy. The United States, a country that founded the United Nations, more and more often claims not to be bound by the decisions of the Security Council.

The political elite of the West, having won the cold war, proved not ready to secure world peace. They failed to reform the Yalta system into a new stable system for the world. The protracted break-up of the post–World War II system of international relations has been accompanied by the growth of ethnic conflicts, international terrorism, and use of excessive force in regard to the weak subjects of international relations.

Now that the world's system of international relations is no longer based on the dynamic balance of forces, it has become more fragile, more unreliable, and less predictable. However paradoxical it is, this resulted in more independent actors on the world scene. The likelihood that the unexpected will occur is increasing; in an unstable international system even the most eccentric rogue actors may see their ambitions realized.

Present global problems are generating new forms of modern political challenges. One report notes,

Before our very eyes we may see transition of international relations in the global scale into an absolutely new dimension, the essence of which will become clear with the development of the situation in the world. Cessation of the long confrontation in Europe and collapse of USSR didn't simplify, but most likely complicated the global and, chiefly, European situation, where contractors of absolutely incomparable weighing categories and program directions coexist in a complicated interaction.<sup>7</sup>

Accompanying the processes of globalization are intercivilizational and interreligious challenges. These produce civil, religious, national, ethnic, and racial conflicts. Tolerance in international relations is no longer in vogue.

In his study of internal political processes Ralf Darendorf ascertained a "direct link between the crises of democracy and the crisis of nation states." As Darendorf notes, the existence of formal institutions of democracy, generalized by the idea of a "constitutional state," is already not enough for ascribing a state democratic status.<sup>8</sup> Seemingly secondary indications may become indicators of democracy—for example, the willingness of government authorities to submit to a democratic change of power.

Domestic political dynamics in the United States after 11 September 2001 contain a direct threat to democratic institutions, chiefly to those of the United States itself. With the government keen on the pursuit of a terrorist enemy, some intellectuals expressed their anxiety at the abrupt constriction of the role of democratic institutions in a country claiming to be the world's guarantor of democratic processes.

Both in international relations and in domestic affairs, tolerance is on the way out. Force, revenge, and settling of accounts seem to be gaining ground. This is the reality. A new architecture of international relations—an effective new system adjusted for new realities—is needed.

### **Russian-American Cooperation: The Illusions of "Strategic Partnership"**

The concept of international stability in the theory of international relations is a dynamic balance of forces. Even the most perfect theories will not give answers to the thousands of new questions provoked by the unpredictable dynamics of the

modern international climate. That is why there is no sense in turning Russia's foreign doctrine into a Talmud, in which national interests and ways of realizing them on the international scene are defined in the smallest details. Over the ten years of development of democratic Russia, at least three conceptions of national safety and foreign policy have been advanced. After 11 September one might as well make new concepts.

After the collapse of the Soviet state, the foreign policy of the new, democratic Russia had to be a tool for realizing Russia's democratic choice. When by virtue of inertia or under pressure from the communist opposition the Russian leaders took measures that ran counter to the democratic choice, Russia suffered

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the cruelest defeats on the international scene. Under Andrey Kozyrev, the minister for foreign affairs of the Russian Federation, an attempt was made to bring Russian foreign policy into accord with the ideological principles of the new Russia and its path of liberal-democratic reforms. A strategic partnership with the West was declared a

desired objective. “Strategic—because we share common values,” stressed Kozyrev.<sup>9</sup> However, strategic cooperation remained in words only, and not only because of U.S. policy, as we shall see. The problem from the beginning was that the two sides did not see eye to eye on the fundamentals of the new world order. What is the meaning of multipolarity? Will the system of international relations be based on unipolar or multipolar sets of powers? What will the role of Russia be in the new world order?

From the time of Minister for Foreign Affairs Kozyrev to the present, Russian foreign policy has proceeded from the anticipation of a multipolar system of international relations. This same understanding has been affirmed in the concept of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation, approved in 2001 under President Putin. Its key thesis can be found in most official documents. It is an accepted axiom.

However, the meaning of multipolarity remains vague. Does multipolarity imply the presence of world powers in the international arena as counterweights to the United States? If so, what is the role of Russia? These questions were not answered in the early to mid-1990s.

“Lack of serious criticism of the theory against the background of frequent criticism of practice”<sup>10</sup> has been the main problem, according to D. Tryenin, who notes that “multi-polarity suggests not only a simplified and perverted picture of the world, but also directs the foreign policy of Russia towards the goals that often do not meet Russian national interests.”<sup>11</sup> By that he meant that under the so-called system of multipolarity, Russia was playing a minor role under the

leadership of the United States. Multipolarity in this sense boiled down to American domination.

Despite Kozyrev's repeated references to the fact that Russia doesn't aim at condominium with the United States, he and the Russian political elite, chiefly President Yeltsin, considered a Russian-American "global partnership" to be integral in the building of a new multipolar configuration, in which Russia would be a world power to counterbalance American policy. Yeltsin's and Kozyrev's understanding of the condominium did not imply automatic acceptance of American leadership. They still considered Russia a great power, equaled only by the United States. Condominium implied not only cooperation but also counterweight to U.S. policy, as the dignity of a great power requires.

"At the same time, even now it is quite evident that the world of the [twenty-first] century will be neither 'Pax Americana' nor some other version of a bipolar world. It will be multi-polar," stated Kozyrev.<sup>12</sup> The idea of acting as a counterweight to American stature in the world also meant placating anti-Western communist and nationalist opposition in Russia. Yeltsin failed to do that and failed to achieve any sort of condominium with the United States in world affairs.

In winter 1993–94, the signs of a crisis of "the strategic partnership policy" were distinctly evident. The Russian elite felt increasingly disappointed with the alleged pro-American course of Russian foreign policy. The American administration did not take any steps toward comanagement of the world processes and did not show any willingness to acknowledge a multipolar world. On the contrary, the expansion of NATO to the east produced the impression in Russia that the United States was building a unipolar world.

Criticism of Russian foreign policy and of its main executor, Minister for Foreign Affairs Kozyrev, was pouring in from everywhere. Typical for this period was the publication in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* of an article by the political columnist A. Migranyan entitled, "Foreign Policy of Russia: Disastrous Results." Its key thesis was that the time had come to make a break with both the present foreign policy and its minister.<sup>13</sup> Migranyan's main reproach focused on Kozyrev's failure to prevent NATO from advancing to the east. That made NATO a core part of the European security system. Hence, Russia's participation in the program "Partnership for Peace" served no purpose. He also criticized the Foreign Affairs Ministry support of U.S. penal measures against Iraq. Migranyan criticized Russia's voting in the Security Council to authorize a UN mandate for the use of NATO forces in Bosnia. A purely Western military alliance was deployed in a conflict in a sovereign European state. That set a bad precedent for the future.

Migranyan rated as inconsistent Russia's policy in regard to Belarus. "Either we unite our two states, or demand for radical reforms from the Byelorussians, before seriously speaking of integration."<sup>14</sup> Moreover, according to Migranyan, Russia should not have ignored the intention of the coalition "Russia," which had won the elections in the Crimea, to unite the peninsula with Russia and to enforce the cooperation of the new president of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma.

Migranyan was especially concerned that the West was not going to acknowledge Russia's special role in the territory of the former USSR. The "policy of the

USA and their partners . . . in the direction of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Ukraine is evidently directed at forming geo-political diversity on the territory of the former Soviet Union and at preventing Russia's leadership in the CIS."<sup>15</sup>

Thus, Migranyan concludes,

[T]he three year America-centrist policy of the new democratic Russia resulted in complete failure in all directions: Russia's reward for destroying the totalitarian Soviet empire was refusal of admission to the family of the civilized peoples as a partner, respected and equal in her rights. Instead it suffered abrupt weakening and isolation. . . .

Two conclusions are to be drawn from the above. First: proceeding with the chosen policy is destructive for Russia. A crucial re-evaluation of its role, as well as priorities of its foreign policy is needed. Second: our partners should take into consideration that the threat of isolation will influence greatly the internal political process in Russia and will enable the coming to power of the anti-western, extremist nationalist forces, which will be able to use Russia's isolation for the purpose of creating authoritarian mobilizational regimes to handle socio-economic problems inside the country. If events unfold in this fashion, the isolated Russia with a mobilizational regime will become like a compressed spring, a serious and permanent threat for the international community.<sup>16</sup>

Migranyan's opinion reflected that of many representatives of the political and intellectual elite, who felt that Russia should get a kind of bonus for ceasing to threaten the rest of the world. They felt that Russia was entitled to a reward for withdrawal from the empire. "A golden rain" of investments from the West was to come down on Russia, and the post-Soviet space was to be recognized automatically as the new Russian sphere of influence. Otherwise, Migranyan underlined, "this spring may become loose," and "the West would repeat the mistake committed in relation to Germany after World War I."<sup>17</sup>

In other words, Russia would commit a public suicide, and the rest of the world would feel the consequences. This type of behavior was summarized well by British prime minister Harold Macmillan, who characterized the main principle of the British policy of nuclear arming as "Step aside or else I'll shoot myself."

### **The Atlantic Turnaround**

The majority of the Russian elite and of the public at large had a hazy idea of the international behavior and domestic functioning of a democratic society and free market. "Democracy" is not put up for sale at the world auction but is understood by the Western world as a natural inner process, by its very development providing dividends to the society that has chosen the democratic path of development. In the free world one proves his validity and doesn't beg for concessions. Western democracies have respect for the strong and show pity only to the deeply troubled, while flatly demanding a denial of sovereignty from them. In other words, the Western powers expected from Russia a certain degree of self-denial as natural and proper in compensation for its imperial past. Regardless of Russia's foreign policy or government, the West does not intend to assign the post-Soviet geopolitical space to Russia *a priori*.

As a senior officer of the foreign secret service, Yu. Kobaladze, wrote in his preface to a book by Zbigniew Brzezinski, “Nobody has ever told us plainer, more strictly and more frankly about America as ‘the only superpower’ and nobody has revealed so clearly how it intends to enforce its exclusive status.”<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, Kobaladze writes, “Analyzing the ‘trumpy’ foreign policy, which fed the illusions of ‘the mature partnership’ of Russia and America (that is of jointly managing the world), Brzezinski, frankly and with straightforwardness of a soldier, states that America has never intended to share power with Russia.”<sup>19</sup> In other words, by the late 1990s, the majority of the Russian political elite came to the conclusion that the United States was in the process of establishing a unilateral domination.

In 2000, Yevgeny Primakov’s successor as minister for foreign affairs, Igor Ivanov, admitted that “the radical turn from confrontation to the rapprochement with the Western countries didn’t justify itself. . . . The exaggerated expectations left a mark on the first version of Russia’s Concept of the foreign policy, passed in 1993.”<sup>20</sup>

Which expectations proved to be unreal according to Igor Ivanov? There were at least three: Russia’s “integration into Euro-Atlantic structures”; “the immediate establishment of ‘the strategic partnership’”; and even “allied relations with the West.”<sup>21</sup> The West, according to Ivanov, was merely not ready for equitable cooperation with Russia.

At best the role of a younger partner was assigned to Russia. Any manifestation of independence and intention to assert its positions was treated as a recurrence of the Soviet “imperial” policy. The policy of the United States and NATO of advancement towards the borders of Russia ignored Russia’s national interests so obviously, that therein was the most serious signal of sobering up.<sup>22</sup>

In view of the above, as Ivanov supposes, “the period of the ‘westernized tendency’ in the foreign policy of Russia was of a brief and perfunctory character.”<sup>23</sup> According to Kozhokin, the liberal-democratic tendency in foreign policy was in conflict with Russia’s national interests.<sup>24</sup>

What did Yevgeny Primakov’s appointment as the minister for foreign affairs really mean? Was it a change of the paradigm of Russian foreign policy? Was it a change of the goals or of the means to achieve them? It seems that the change of the chief executor of foreign policy did not mean a change of the paradigm of foreign policy. It was to help Russia achieve the unrealizable status of a world power and to create a new multipolar configuration of the system of international relations.

Development of the non-Western directions in the foreign policy of Russia can be seen as an asset in the diplomacy of Yevgeny Primakov. This turn to the South and East reflected Russian national interests. However, Primakov as foreign minister and then as head of the government failed to achieve his main objectives—to create a multipolar international system and increase the international standing of Russia. On the contrary, Russia suffered a number of new and still more humiliating defeats.

On 23 March 1999, a Russian airplane heading to Washington for an official visit “looped over the Atlantic Ocean” and returned to Moscow in protest against



the U.S. decision to begin bombing Yugoslavia.<sup>25</sup> Primakov's "loop over the Atlantic" had no impact on NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia, but it increased the political isolation of Russia and worsened its international standing. As Igor Ivanov explains in his 2000 book, the obvious failure of foreign policy under Yeltsin has not been subjected to a critical re-examination by the ruling elite.<sup>26</sup> Kozhokin found an original explanation for this:

The ideological plan of creating multi-polarity contained both . . . a realistic analysis and utopian visions. Idealism has always been inherent in the Russian political culture, but it didn't help to mobilize people for practical tasks. However, excessive utopianism could result in very dangerous forms of confrontation, which would call into question the preservation of Russia as a holistic state.<sup>27</sup>

Kozhokin is well informed about the political culture of the ruling elite. His assessment implies that the principle of Russian roulette was adopted as the basis for Russian diplomacy. In other words, Yeltsin's foreign policy was deemed to be unpredictable, unrealistic, excessively confrontational, and without any real means to sustain it, which in the end achieved neither a condominium with the United States nor multipolarity in world affairs.

### **In Search of Oneself**

In the 1990s, Russian society experienced the humiliation of postimperial syndrome, whose basic feature is a condition of delayed mass mobilization. People's frustration, injured pride, and new identity flowed toward a mass breakthrough, but in what direction? Would it have a creative or subversive effect? Russian policymakers faced a very difficult task. Their policy choices had to be, at least to some extent, in accord with the basic disposition of society. Disillusionment with the West, so prevalent in the late 1990s, found its expression in a whole array of autarchic and nationalist teachings. For example, one of the state-patriotic ideologues, Alexei Podberezkin, suggested that Russia needed a "self-sufficient national economics." Russia had to become "a completely independent entity, which contributes and competes with economics of developed countries."<sup>28</sup> No country in the world, even one more developed than present-day Russia, would be able to handle such a task. Russian autarchic nationalists showed a complete lack of touch with reality.

Another nationalist writer, Alexander Dugin, brought to the forefront "Russian national interest," which he sees in the imperial grandeur that Russia must regain due to the geopolitical potential of the Russian people. "The Russians are the people of the Empire," asserts Dugin. This implies that the Russian national interest lies in continuation of the empire-building process.<sup>29</sup>

Clearly, the imperial dreams of Dugin and the autarchic tasks of Podberezkin, even though they may have been pleasant to hear for some constituencies, were in fact damaging to Russian national interests. In the program document of Vladimir Putin, "Russia at the Turn of Times," the task of primary importance was defined as modernization aimed at forming a postindustrial society. Defining modernization as a strategic aim provokes no objection from the majority of politicians and scientists, regardless of their values: liberal, nationalist, or statist.

Yet a variety of meanings is enclosed in the concept of a modern society. Crucial to Russia's development today is choosing the means and methods of modernization. The alternatives are limited: mobilization of internal resources, use of external resources, or combining both. Relying on internal resources only smacks of autarchy. That way has already been exhausted. Relying on external resources only is unrealistic. Nothing remains but a combination of the two.

One of the most important tasks of internal development is to overcome Russia's backwardness, to increase the level of culture, including technological advancement. Probably one of the main reasons that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltics left the Soviet coalition was their civilizational incompatibility with Russia.

Russian society paid a crippling price for communist social engineering, but it should accept its own historical guilt. Rather than look for external culprits Russia should comprehend its own failure as a natural outcome of its insufficient maturity, unwillingness to learn from others, arrogance, dependence, and lack of

culture. Today there is a great temptation to avoid discussion of this subject, referring instead to the historical peculiarity of Russia, its uniqueness, and its special destiny. There is a great temptation to look for another "enemy." Today the primary task of internal development consists in the Russian people's adopting the bourgeois work ethic (called the Protestant work ethic by Max Weber).

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### **Grim September 2001: Toward a New Paradigm of Foreign Policy**

To what extent can Russian foreign policy and Russia's relation with the outside world provide favorable conditions for the modernization of Russia and assure it an adequate place in the world arena? As Russia enters the twenty-first century, after the collapse of her empire, influence, and economy, the alignment of forces at the world stage leaves Russia without many choices. All of them can be aligned in the spectrum from bad to worse.

Nevertheless, fate gave Russia a chance to occupy a niche in the world community and to concentrate on settling domestic political problems. For the first time since the days of the anti-Nazi coalition, the United States and Russia both identified a common enemy and regarded it possible and desirable to unite in a struggle against world terrorism. With a cautious optimism in the actions of the Russian leadership and diplomacy it is possible to distinguish indications of a new paradigm of foreign policy, proceeding from the real and not "utopian" idea of the world situation and of Russia.

The terrorist attack on the United States has made evident what has been brewing under the surface for quite some time, namely, that several new major threats

to world security have emerged, stemming from ethnic conflicts, cultural intolerance, the weakening of the nation-state, and the polarization of nations into rich and poor.

### **New Challenges: Ethnic and Religious Wars**

Neither the all-powerful NATO nor the weakened Russia has been able to prevent ethnic separatism and genocide. One can conclude that military means offer no solution to problems of ongoing ethnic and religious conflicts in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caucasus, and the Balkans.

In a recent speech, National Security Adviser Condoleeza Rice suggested that American values were universal in nature. Let us suppose, for a moment, that this statement is true. That would probably imply that the principle of interethnic relations should be based on multiculturalism, defined as a multiplicity of cultures, equal and valued in their diversity, without any domination or imposition of values, behaviors, and lifestyles on others. Implementation of this principle is impossible without awarding equal status to all ethnic groups. This would suggest non-segregation of communities into privileged ethnic groups and underprivileged ones. It would also imply that there is no right to ethnic revenge.

To look at the map of Europe makes obvious that the whole of Europe, especially Central and Eastern Europe up to the Urals, is pregnant with potential ethnic conflicts. There is not a single European state whose borders would coincide with the boundaries of the ethnic groups resident there. In the twentieth century alone, Europe went through at least three national-territorial reconfigurations: the Versailles peace, fascist alteration, and the Yalta settlement.

The territorial alterations in the Balkans, which began in the 1990s, may serve as encouragement to other ethnic groups to lay claim to a reward for their loyalty to the West. The above-mentioned speech by Rice hints at the desirability of strengthening American universal values: the triumphal procession, undoubtedly, becomes easier when the international balance of forces develops in favor of those who believe in these values.

Those who have not caught the "Eastern express" will look for support in the "Western express." In other words, those who have not aligned themselves with explicitly un-Western, Islamic values will hurry to latch onto the supposedly universal American values. As a result, the division of the world by ideology, as in the times of the cold war, will simply be replaced by the division of the world based on ethnic and political considerations.

How can that new polarization be avoided? The solution has long since been enshrined in the founding documents of the United Nations, namely, that the sovereignty of states and the self-determination of whole peoples, not ethnic groups, form the basis for democratic claims in the current system of international relations. According to the United Nations, "a people" is defined as the entire population resident in a self-determining territory. Unlike peoples, national minorities are not subject to international laws of self-determination. The UN explicitly entrusts the state with the obligation to guard their sociocultural identity and assure nondiscrimination of persons belonging to those priorities.<sup>30</sup>

In the Balkans, in the post-Soviet space, the title nationality created intolerable conditions for ethnic minorities, hounded them out of the controlled territory, and aspired to make the area monoethnic. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, 25 million Russians found themselves outside Russia. In 1989 the percentage of Russians in the populations of the eastern regions of Ukraine amounted to over 60 percent; in Eastern Kazakhstan and North Kazakhstan, 65.9 percent; in Riga (Latvia), 47.8 percent; in Tallin, Narva, and Tartu (Estonia), over 50 percent; in Vilnius and Klaypeda (Lithuania), 32–36 percent; in Kishinev (Moldavia), 31 percent.<sup>31</sup> In addition, other ethnic minorities were living in these areas.

The conflict potential in the region of the Caucasus has been explained by a number of factors: competition of Islam and Christianity; rivalry of Sunnis and Shiites within Islam; uneven balance of the four ethnic groups—Dagestan, Vainkh, Turkic, and Abkhaz-Adygei—comprising over fifty competing nationalities, not speaking of tribal clans.<sup>32</sup> In Chechnya alone there are more than 170 competing clans.<sup>33</sup> No country in the world and no region is safe against an extemporaneous explosion of “ethnic bombs.” As the events in the Balkans, Afghanistan, the Near East, Caucasus, Iberia, and the British Isles have shown, modern civilization does not have at its disposal any effective military means to stop interethnic conflicts.

### **Lessons Learned and Policy Implications**

I agree with the opinion of the director of the Stockholm International Institute for the Study of World Problems, A. Rotfeld, who believes that “there is no organizing principle of global security by now.”<sup>34</sup> The United Nations needs reform in response to the appearance of a new architecture of the world after the destruction of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the USSR. The United States as the only remaining superpower has been conducting an explicitly imperial world policy, regarding problems of world and regional security as dependent on the spread of “the American universal system of values.”

In the Balkans the international authority of NATO, as the organization charged with the maintenance of peace and security, has decreased, as it became clear that NATO–UN cooperation in the Balkans would not be replicated elsewhere. The experience of the international community in the Balkans has made it important to introduce the concept of limited sovereignty into the practice of international relations.

It is imperative to reconsider a time-honored principle of international relations—the right of nations to self-determination. An armed struggle for national self-determination conducted by a national minority group should not automatically be considered ethically justified by the world community. Not all those who fight to separate from an existing state are freedom fighters. The world community, in its support for human rights, should pay more attention to the rights of individuals and ethnic groups striving for cultural, religious, and linguistic autonomy. At the same time we should assist in reducing cultural isolation by enlarging the global culture and information exchange.

Timely resolution of ethnic and religious conflicts is the most effective way of

preventing the appearance of “ethnic bombs.” However, prevention of conflicts will be much more effective if international organizations, world citizens, and international courts have the same standard for all, rather than inflicting selective punishment of selected culprits. For example, in the courts dealing with the civil war in the Balkans it is hardly fair to regard only the Serbs as international criminals.

The world community should not trust the declarations and claims of political leaders. For many political leaders ethnic conflicts are the most effective tool of managing political and social processes both in their own countries and in the international arena. One may venture an assumption that in the unipolar system of international relations, the risk that self-confident politicians will make dangerous decisions has increased. In this situation, nongovernmental organizations, world religious leaders, civic leaders, and independent mass media—those called “the lords of the mind”—will see their influence over political processes increase. At the time of the triumphal procession of globalization, the idea that we need “to learn to live together” acquires new meaning.

The attacks in New York and Washington, D.C., on 11 September confirmed the validity of the view of some scientists who in the mid-1990s suggested that the crisis of political ideologies and political parties and systems brought to the forefront a principally new political dichotomy: extremism versus nonextremism. Thus researchers and politicians must look anew to the correlation between force and tolerance in modern international relations.

#### NOTES

1. Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).
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3. More details can be found in V. I. Mikhailenko, “Korotkij vek—dlinnaia epoka,” *Izvestiya Uralskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* (2001): 19.
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