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Restoration, reformation, revolution? Scenarios of the world order after the Russian–Ukrainian conflict

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The Russian-Ukrainian conflict will lead to long-term global socio-economic and political consequences in the foreseeable future. Russian and foreign experts are currently exploring a wide range of scenarios for such transformation—from relatively positive to extremely negative. The author formulated three potentially possible options for the current world order transformation, assessing the probability and consequences of the practical implementation each of them.

The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the Russian International Affairs Council.

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Introduction

Although the Russia–Ukraine conflict, which is now unfolding before our very eyes, can be seen as a primarily European crisis of regional dimensions, it will have—indeed does—many global repercussions. Naturally, Ukraine and Russia will bear the most massive costs of the conflict: the World Bank’s latest estimates suggest that Ukraine’s GDP will shrink by 45.1 % in 2022, while Russia’s GDP will shrink by 11.2 %.¹ However, the negative impact on the economy is already here, and it extends far beyond the immediate participants of the conflict. According to the estimates of the International Monetary Fund, the recent developments in Ukraine have turned out to be among the principal factors that slow down the recovery of the world economy from the global crisis sparked by the coronavirus pandemic. The IMF was forced to cut its economic growth forecasts for the current year for 143 countries, which together account for 86 % of the global GDP.²

Economists are adjusting their overall forecasts of economic development globally, cutting their predictions from a growth of 3.6 % to a growth of 2.6 %. Adjustments extend to the coming 2023, with a 0.2 % drop in the previously predicted growth indicators.³ A sharp increase in prices of hydrocarbons, food, and mineral fertilizers, coupled with a restructuring of international transportation and logistical chains as well as emergent glitches in global payment systems, may cost the global economy some USD 1 trillion in 2022, which is about 1 % of the global GDP.

Mounting budget deficits, including those stemming from snowballing defense spending, will further increase sovereign debt in many nations. Global inflation, which has already spiraled in the last two and a half years, will likely swell by another 2–3 % in 2022 (up to 5.7 % for developed economies and up to 8.7 % for developing nations), followed by another 1.5–2 % in 2023.⁴ If the active phase of the Russia–Ukraine confrontation stretches for a few more months, these figures will have to be adjusted upwards again, and the upsurge in inflation—unprecedented for our century—will turn into a chronic stagflation. Some economists in the West posit that a new global recession is likely to happen as early as 2023.⁵ Indeed, the Russia–Ukraine conflict is not the only cause of the global economic slump; yet, its significance as a catalyst of negative macroeconomic trends is more than obvious.

Some of the constitutive segments of the global economy have been hit particularly badly by the crisis, bringing about major glitches in global trade and possibly

¹ Delphine Toutou. World Bank Warns of Bleak Economic Outlook for Ukraine, Russia. *The Moscow Times*, April 11, 2022. URL: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/04/11/world-bank-warns-of-bleak-economic-outlook-for-ukraine-russia-a77298>

² Chris Giles. Ukraine war is "massive setback" for global economic recovery, says IMF chief. *Financial Times*, April 14, 2022. URL: <https://www.ft.com/content/945d68f2-dca6-4198-8475-fa254ad79545>

³ International Monetary Fund: World Economic Outlook, April 2022. URL: <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2022/04/19/world-economic-outlook-april-2022>

⁴ He Weiwen: Danger of Global Famine and Debt. Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China, April 12, 2022. URL: http://en.rdcy.org/indexen/index/news_cont/id/693315.html

⁵ The House View: Prepare for a hard landing. Deutsche Bank Research, April 2022. URL: https://www.dbresearch.com/PROD/RPS_EN-PROD/PROD00000000000522840/Prepare_for_a_hard_landing.PDF

prompting as-of-yet unpredictable socioeconomic and political consequences for entire groups of states located in different regions. For instance, Russia's and Ukraine's combined share in wheat exports exceeds half of total wheat imports for 36 countries.⁶ Since wheat prices are tightly bound to the prices of rice, corn, etc., it is hardly surprising that overall global food prices in March 2022 were one third higher than a year ago.⁷ Russia and Belarus account for some 20 % of global exports of mineral fertilizers, with any glitches in such exports inevitably taking a toll on the agricultural yield in Africa, in the Middle East and even in Latin America.

In early March, global oil prices reached USD 130 per barrel.⁸ In the meantime, any ten-dollar hike in these prices entails, as is claimed by the IMF, a 0.5 % annual drop in economic growth globally.⁹ The situation on the global energy markets has put a question mark over the previously approved plans for a global “energy transition”: growing hydrocarbon prices can prompt large-scale and long-term investment in traditional energy sources—not only oil and gas, but even coal.¹⁰

Apparently, a conflict that broke out in Europe has become a catalyst that exacerbated crises in other regions. This may have influenced Turkey's decision to launch its own special military operation in the north of Iraq, it may have complicated, if indirectly, the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, and it may have stimulated North Korea's leadership to resume missile tests, etc. Possible repercussions of the conflict in Europe are particularly troubling for the regions mired in instability and with Russia's significant military and political presence—such as the Middle East and North Africa¹¹ or highly fragile states of the African continent.¹² There is every reason to believe that we will witness new escalations in the coming months—in both regional and domestic political crises.¹³ The conflict has had a clearly negative impact on multilateral talks on Iran's nuclear program and on Russia–U.S. consultations on strategic offensive weapons. There are now concerns over compliance with the BWC, the Geneva Convention on Prisoners of War, the Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and other international legal instruments on warfare.

⁶ Global Impact of war in Ukraine on food, energy and finance systems. United Nations, Brief #1, April 13, 2022. URL: <https://news.un.org/pages/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/UN-GCRG-Brief-1.pdf>

⁷ United Nations, UN News, April 8, 2022. URL: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1115852>

⁸ Ryan Dezember, Kenny Jimenez. Oil Tops \$130 a Barrel as Russian Attacks Escalate. The Wall Street Journal, March 6, 2022. URL: https://www.wsj.com/articles/oil-buyers-paying-record-premiums-for-prompt-deliveries-11646518865?mod=livecoverage_amp

⁹ International Monetary Fund. The Impact of Higher Oil Prices on the Global Economy, December 8, 2000. URL: https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/oil/2000/?msckid=78a35628ac0c11ec881e7e8987a61fce#III_B

¹⁰ Tsvetelina Kuzmanova. EU Facing the Transition: Disagreement Fueling the Conflict. ISPI, April 4, 2022. URL: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/publicazione/eu-facing-transition-disagreement-fuelling-conflict-34367>

¹¹ The Impact of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine in the Middle East and North Africa. International Crisis Group, April 14, 2022. URL: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/impact-russias-invasion-ukraine-middle-east-and-north-africa>

¹² Heather Ashby, Jude Muth. What Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Means for African Governments. United States Institute of Peace, April 14, 2022. URL: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/04/what-russias-invasion-ukraine-means-african-governments>

¹³ Frida Ghitis. Putin's War on Ukraine Is Spreading Global Shockwaves. World Politics Review, April 7, 2022. URL: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/30454/with-inflation-global-impact-of-ukraine-war-is-spreading>

Expert assessments of longer-term international repercussions of the crisis range from cautiously optimistic to openly apocalyptic. In our opinion, the central issue is this: Could the crisis be regarded as a vexing aberration of history, a regrettable exception to the established rules that underpin a mostly stable world order, an accidental blip on the computer monitor? Or are we witnessing a clear illustration of trends that will increasingly determine the overall course of global development in the foreseeable future? In other words: Will the world bounce back to its more or less normal state once the acute phase of the Russia—Ukraine conflict is over? Or has the international system passed the point of no return, which means our life will never be as was before?

These are the questions debated today in discussions on a likely and desirable future of all the dimensions of the international system, including security, economy and finance, international law, social and humanitarian cross-border interactions, inter-state cooperation in tackling global challenges, etc. Since we are only seeing the initial stage of the crisis provoked by the conflict in Europe, assessments of its next stages wildly diverge.

As optimists see it, while the crisis is having immediate and major destructive imprint on the global energy and food markets as well as on international finance, today's global trade, investment, and finance structure still has a significant stability margin that should prevent the world from slipping into a new recession, chronic food shortages or a frenzied renunciation of the dollar as the principal international reserve currency. Pessimists, on the contrary, believe that the most recent glitches in economic relations are irreversible, with the crisis merely accelerating the current trend for de-globalization and global economic fragmentation.

When it comes to issues of international security, optimists admit that the crisis will have a negative impact on weapons control, nuclear non-proliferation, combating international terrorism, etc. However, they are slow to abandon hope that the international security will not merely survive in its current form, but will, to some extent, emerge more stable after the crisis as humanity should somehow learn the lessons of the current events to establish a system of guarantees that rule out the possibility of such situations re-occurring in the future, both in Europe and elsewhere. Pessimists suspect that weapons control will never be fully restored, WMD proliferation and the spread of international terrorist networks will be given a major impetus, and the conflict in Ukraine will have a protracted negative impact on other regional crises and wars.

There is no consensus on the future of international institutions and international public law. Is Russia's withdrawal from the Council of Europe and the UN Human Rights Council an isolated, even if regrettable, event? Or will we see an accelerated decline of multilateralism in the near future? What could happen to regional and global organizations, the United Nations included? When the crisis is over, will we see more generally accepted rules and norms in the international system? Or will, on the contrary, their number start to irreversibly shrink? Will the international system survive as such? Or will it collapse, bringing about more chaos and unprecedented unpredictability in global politics?

When analyzing possible consequences that the Russia—Ukraine conflict could have for the entire international architecture, we need to make two important qualifications. First, the conflict itself is yet far from coming to an end, and experts in the West talk and write about this conflict going on, in some shape or form, for many months or even years.¹⁴ Accordingly, international consequences will accumulate over time. Second, the conflict between Moscow and Kiev is unfolding against the backdrop of other equally important crises and upheavals, such as the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, exacerbated tensions in the U.S.-China relations, political regime change in Afghanistan, instability in the Sahel, the ongoing civil war in Yemen, intensified nuclear program in North Korea, etc.

It appears proper to identify three potential scenarios of the future post-crisis transformation of the international system, which will provisionally be termed “restoration”, “reformation” and “revolution”. The likelihood of each scenario is debatable, but each has its own logic and its own set of arguments behind it, its own understanding of the current global trends, and its own notions of medium- and long-term prospects for the international system and the global society as such.

¹⁴ Anthony H. Cordesman, Grace Hwang. The Ukraine War: Preparing for the Longer-Term Outcome. A CSIS Report, April 14, 2022. URL: https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/220414_Cordesman_Longer_Outcome.pdf?v5tLZM1fbuj7HZv945oCEMP2ynQgR_X1

Restoration

The scenario of “restoration” means that the current crisis will be resolved on the terms set by the U.S. and its allies, since any other settlement would have the most grievous and irreversible consequences for the collective West.¹⁵ To gain “victory” over Moscow, the West will have to mobilize all of its political, military, technological, and economic resources, opposing Russia for as long as it might take.¹⁶ The Western strategy under this scenario could include the goal of long-term economic attrition of Moscow, which is based on the premise of accumulating costs of the special military operation in view of the many structural problems that the Russian economy faces.¹⁷ Nonetheless, it is in the West’s interests to gain peace with Moscow on the West’s terms as soon as possible, as a protracted conflict will inevitably jeopardize Western solidarity and frustrate the readiness of some Western nations to sacrifice their current interests in the name of a deferred common victory.¹⁸

Sooner or later, Russia will presumably be forced to return to the status quo before February 24, 2022. The country will withdraw its troops from Ukraine without gaining any unequivocal legal recognition for the new international status of Crimea and Donbass.¹⁹ Neither will Moscow get rigid qualitative or quantitative restrictions to be imposed of Ukraine’s military potential, much as on the nature of Ukraine’s military technical cooperation with its partners from the West. Moscow will equally fail to “denazify” Ukraine by overhauling its current political regime or much less to generally “reset” Ukraine as a state project.

Sanctions on Russia will remain in place for a long time to come. Moreover, both European and U.S. sanctions will reach a new higher level.²⁰ Increased sanctions pressure will, in particular, result in a complete severance of energy cooperation between Russia and the EU, essentially cutting off the main channel of filling up Russia’s treasury, since Moscow will be unable to rapidly change the geography of its energy exports.²¹ The assets of Russia’s Central Bank frozen after the start of the conflict will not be returned to Moscow—instead, they will be spent on Ukraine’s post-conflict restoration, on payments for the Western military aid

¹⁵ James Sherr. *The Fear of Victory*. International Centre for Defence and Security, Estonia, April 21, 2022. URL: <https://icds.ee/en/the-fear-of-victory/>

¹⁶ Denys Davydenko, Margaryta Khvostova, Olga Lymar. *Why advanced weapons can help Ukraine defeat Russia*. European Council on Foreign Relations, April 20, 2022. URL: <https://ecfr.eu/article/why-advanced-weapons-can-help-ukraine-defeat-russia/>

¹⁷ Peter Littger. *The West Will Decide on Putin’s Bankruptcy*. Interview with Jim O’Neill. Spiegel International, March 31, 2022. URL: <https://www.spiegel.de/international/business/economist-jim-o-neill-on-russia-the-west-will-decide-on-putin-s-bankruptcy-a-c03e5016-a6f7-4a92-81cd-4371ba39f627>

¹⁸ Michel Duclos. *Fighting for your Freedom: The West’s Response to the Ukraine war*. Institut Montaigne, April 11, 2022. URL: <https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/experts/michel-duclos>

¹⁹ Dennis Ross, Norm Eisen. *What could stop the war*. CNN, March 3, 2022. URL: <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/03/03/opinions/diplomacy-russia-ukraine-invasion-ross-eisen/index.html>

²⁰ International Working Group on Russian Sanctions. *Action Plan on Strengthening Sanctions against the Russian Federation*. April 19, 2022. URL: <https://fsi.stanford.edu/working-group-sanctions>

²¹ Thijs Van de Graaf. *The EU Has Lots of Options for Targeting Russian Oil. It Should Use Them*. World Politics Review, April 15, 2022. URL: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/30471/for-eu-russia-sanctions-oil-should-come-next>

to Ukraine, and on compensations to European states that took in the principal flows of Ukrainian refugees. Over a relatively short span of time, Ukraine will successfully overcome the economic consequences of the military conflict with Russia. Besides, in the near future, the world will witness a Ukrainian “economic miracle” that will, in turn, accelerate the country’s integration into the economy of the European Union, allowing for Ukraine’s accession to the EU.

For many years, international courts will hold hearings of many charges brought against Russia on war crimes in Ukraine committed during the special operation.²² Russia’s leadership will remain toxic for any international interlocutors for a long time—including those who had been among Moscow’s traditional friends and partners before the conflict.²³

This scenario envisions the West emerging from the conflict more consolidated than it had ever been since the end of the Cold War. Tactical differences between the U.S. and its allies in Europe will not become an insurmountable obstacle in the way of a common policy toward Russia and other issues of crucial importance.²⁴ Once energetic European discussions of “strategic autonomy” from the U.S. will become a thing of the past, and the EU and NATO will work together, consistently coordinating all areas of their activities with particular attention on a number of currently non-aligned EU member states also joining NATO.²⁵ Some experts even believe that should such a scenario materialize, the question of Ukraine’s membership in NATO should not be considered definitively closed.²⁶ There are claims that no other option of ensuring Ukraine’s security, including multilateral guarantees from great powers, will be sufficiently reliable given Moscow’s inevitable revanchist ambitions following the unfavorable end to the conflict.²⁷

Overall, the scenario of “restoration” envisions such concepts as “neutrality” and “non-aligned status” gradually disappearing—countries that had traditionally been neutral (for instance, Switzerland or Austria) will be forced to follow in the common wake of the collective West’s policies and accept U.S. leadership in one way or another,²⁸ while other states (Sweden, Finland) will likely join NATO soon.²⁹ The strategic partnership between the U.S. and its European allies as well

²² How, if at all, might Russia be punished for its war crimes in Ukraine? *The Economist*, April 4, 2022. URL: <https://www.economist.com/international/2022/04/04/how-if-at-all-might-russia-be-punished-for-its-war-crimes-in-ukraine>

²³ Howard W. French. Putin Has Turned Himself Into the World’s Most Toxic Man. *World Politics Review*, March 2, 2022. URL: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/30364/the-ukraine-russia-war-made-putin-the-world-s-most-toxic-man>

²⁴ Charles Grant. Can the West stay united on Ukraine – and what will China do? *Centre for European Reform*, March 30, 2022. URL: <https://www.cer.eu/publications/archive/bulletin-article/2022/can-western-unity-ukraine-hold>

²⁵ Luigi Scazzieri. Russia’s assault on Ukraine and European security. *Centre for European Reform*, March 30, 2022. URL: <https://www.cer.eu/publications/archive/bulletin-article/2022/russias-assault-ukraine-and-european-security>

²⁶ Parag Khanna. Settlement in Ukraine Is Not Appeasement. *The National Interest*, April 7, 2022. URL: <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/settlement-ukraine-not-appeasement-201666>

²⁷ James Sherr. Zelensky’s muddled neutrality plan is not the answer for Ukraine. *Financial Times*, April 3, 2022. URL: <https://www.ft.com/content/499f2277-1a9b-4bf3-9f70-409340d5dc3c>

²⁸ Juan Martín G. Cabañas, Emanuel Pietrobon. 2022 Ukraine: Ukraine in the third world war in pieces. *International Institute for Middle East and Balkan Studies (IFIMES)*, March 28, 2022. URL: <https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/2022-ukraine-ukraine-in-the-third-world-war-in-pieces/5025>

²⁹ Charlie Duxbury. In Sweden and Finland, even the skeptics are coming round to NATO bids. *Politico*, April 8, 2022. URL: <https://www.politico.eu/article/sweden-finland-skeptics-support-nato-bids/>

as that with liberal democracies in East Asia, primarily Japan and South Korea (e. the countries that endorsed economic and other sanctions against Moscow in 2022 with more determination as compared to 2014), will remain in place.³⁰ Therefore, the Collective West will become even more consolidated than it was in the 1950s or in the 1960s.

The unity of Western nations regained during the Ukrainian conflict will prove strategic rather than situational, which means it will subsist after the acute phase of the conflict is over. It will also survive beyond the Biden Administration's first term and will pass the test of the 2024 presidential elections in the U.S. The Russia–Ukraine conflict will help revive the almost-forgotten “spirit of 1989” in the West, reversing the global retreat of liberal democracy that has been taking place for the last few decades.³¹ Having learnt the lesson from its mistakes of the early 21st century, the Collective West will promote the values of liberal democracy and market economy with greater caution, yet with more consistency than three decades ago.

Moreover, under this scenario, the Ukrainian crisis will help include the principal part of the non-Western world into a U.S.-led Western coalition, which would bring the international system back to the “unipolar moment” of the turn of the centuries, if modified to better fit the geopolitical and geo-economic conditions, which have changed over the quarter of a century.³² China will be forced to reluctantly, yet rather consistently, play by the rules of the renewed “Washington consensus”.³³ The lessons of the Ukrainian crisis will inform Beijing's utmost restraint and caution, both in its readiness to support Moscow and when it comes to the Taiwan issue and the territorial disputes in the South China Sea.³⁴ Some experts believe that China is now demonstrating a high degree of such readiness to “play by the rules” even now, refraining from providing the Russian leadership with the assistance it had apparently hoped for at the start of the conflict.³⁵

Under the scenario of “restoration”, India will ultimately consolidate its holding as the principal promoter of the liberal democracy in the global South, and it will gradually roll back its military-technical and any other cooperation with Russia. Even such traditionally anti-Western actors as Iran, Syria and Venezuela will be co-opted into the renewed “unipolar world”³⁶—not only will they be forced to

³⁰ François Godement. How Europe Should Respond to Global Reservations on Sanctions. Institut Montaigne, April 19, 2022. URL: <https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/blog/how-europe-should-respond-global-reservations-sanctions>

³¹ Francis Fukuyama. Preparing for Defeat. American Purpose, March 10, 2022. URL: <https://www.americanpurpose.com/blog/fukuyama/preparing-for-defeat/>

³² MK Bhadrakumar. Return of Pax Americana: Ukraine crisis is about US strategy to reimpose Western dominance on Asia. The Tribune, April 18, 2022. URL: <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/return-of-pax-americana-387166>

³³ Sven Biscop, Bart Dessein, Jasper Roctus. Putin Is Creating the Multipolar World He (Thought He) Wanted. Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations, Brussels, Security Policy Brief № 156, March 2022. URL: <https://www.egmontinstitute.be/content/uploads/2022/03/spb156-sven.pdf?type=pdf>

³⁴ Odd Arne Westad. The Next Sino-Russian Split? Beijing Will Ultimately Come to Regret Its Support of Moscow. Foreign Affairs, April 5, 2022. URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/east-asia/2022-04-05/next-sino-russian-split>

³⁵ Laura He. 4 ways China is quietly making life harder for Russia. CNN Business, March 18, 2022. URL: <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/03/17/business/china-russia-sanctions-friction-intl-hnk/index.html>

³⁶ Ed O'Keefe, Fin Gomez. Biden administration team in Venezuela as U.S. seeks to break country from Russian influence. CBS News, March 6, 2022. URL: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/venezuela-russia-ukraine-biden-team-nicolas-maduro/>

distance themselves from Russia, but they will also have to modify the most provocative elements of their domestic and foreign policies as they fit themselves into the general direction of global development toward a renewed consensus of the liberal democratic values.

The universal international organizations will retain their current standing in global politics, although Russia's participation in most of them will inevitably have a negative impact on their effectiveness. Moscow will be excluded from some international bodies; in others, its membership will be frozen. Many international issues will be handled by flexible *ad hoc* coalitions mostly led by the U.S. and its partners.

With U.S. leadership retained, formats of multilateral cooperation that offer maximum flexibility will be used to handle not only political but also economic tasks. In particular, such formats should make it possible to minimize the consequences of the Ukrainian crisis for such important sectors of the global economy as hydrocarbons, food and mineral fertilizers.³⁷ Russian suppliers will be successfully replaced in these sectors, which will make it possible to proceed with the “energy transition” strategy that the international community previously agreed on. Besides, cutting Russian hydrocarbons off from the global energy balance should accelerate the world's transition to renewable energy sources rather than slow it down.

The existing norms of international law, both public and private, will not undergo any radical changes, nor will they become a thing of the past. They will be supplemented by the rules-based order, one that entails selective application of specific universal norms—depending on the perceived political interests of the U.S. and its allies. The West, primarily the European Union, will remain the main source of international legal norms and regulative practices as well as the main model of their enforcement. Other actors of global politics will be forced to adapt to the leading role of the U.S. and the West in a rules-based order.

Consolidating the global West and selectively co-opting the Global South will make it possible to hope for a reinvigorated globalization. Its new spiral will already start in the second half of the 2020s to continue for the foreseeable future. This spiral will naturally be significantly different from the globalization of the early 21st century as it will transpire primarily within the boundaries of the economic, technological, and financial “core” of today's world. Countries on the global periphery will be locked in a fierce competition over the chance to advance closer toward the “core” in the global economic and technological chains. This competition will prevent the global South from consolidating and from putting combined pressure on the Collective West.

In the scenario of “restoration”, international terrorism, alongside a revanchist Russia, will once again become one of the principal threats to international security and stability of the restored “unipolar” world order—owing, among other

³⁷ The Ukraine war and threats to food and energy security. Chatham House Research Paper, April 13, 2022.
URL: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/04/ukraine-war-and-threats-food-and-energy-security/05-responding-direct-and-cascading-risks>

things, to the increased cross-border migration flows from Ukraine, the Middle East, Afghanistan, and the countries of North and tropical Africa. Subsistence of various “failed states” cannot be ruled out, and they will remain the hotbeds of political and religious extremism and the breeding ground of international terrorist networks. However, the level of anti-terrorist international cooperation headed by the U.S. will generally be on the rise.

In this scenario, Russia finds itself almost entirely isolated from the rest of the world (a “large North Korea”), although some limited pockets of cooperation between Moscow and the West (for instance, strategic weapons control) may remain. A long-term isolation will extend not only to the relations between states but also to the cooperation between civil society institutions³⁸ or even to cultural and religious interactions.³⁹ Besides, Russia will be forced to limit its military presence in such places as South Ossetia or Nagorno-Karabakh, also having to recalibrate the relations with its international partners—for instance, with Syria.⁴⁰

Western experts believe that Russia’s capabilities for projecting its military power abroad and the possibilities of exporting Russia’s weapons will be significantly limited once the conflict in Ukraine is over. At the same time, Russia will irreversibly have lost its former standing on the global energy markets.⁴¹ Moscow’s capabilities of extending major economic support to the Donetsk People’s Republic and the Lugansk People’s Republic and similar entities within the former Soviet Union will be extremely limited as well, which will predetermine these territories’ gradual drift away from Russia. The leading non-Western states (China, India, Iran) will cautiously continue to seek for ways of expanding their interactions with Russia but they will not be challenging U.S. leadership in the open. Russia’s full-fledged re-integration into the international political and economic systems will only start during the next Russian political cycle, and only provided this cycle entails Russia’s complete return to its domestic policies and foreign priorities of the Yeltsin era.

Long-term stability of the world order under “restoration” (if it can, indeed, be established) is highly dubious. Given the changing balance of global power and the accumulation of internal problems in the West, this structure will inevitably prove fragile to be transformed this way or another. Most likely, attempts to implement the “restoration” model will, sooner or later, result in a reformation of the global political and economic system.

³⁸ Carla Norrlöf. A New Iron Curtain Splits Russia from the West. *World Politics Review*, April 19, 2021.
URL: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/30481/a-new-iron-curtain-redefines-russia-nato-relations>

³⁹ Michael Schaffer. Inside the Campaign Against Putin’s Pope. *Politico*, April 15, 2022.
URL: <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2022/04/15/targeting-putins-holy-man-00025279>

⁴⁰ Ruth Deyermond. Russia’s dire military performance puts Putin at risk. *Prospect*, March 17, 2022.
URL: <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/world/russias-dire-military-performance-puts-putin-at-risk>

⁴¹ Candace Rondeaux. Russia May Never Recover Its Status as an Energy Giant. *World Politics Review*, March 18, 2022.
URL: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/30408/for-russia-gas-and-oil-boycotts-will-do-long-term-damage>

Reformation

The scenario of “reformation” is based on the premise that Moscow and Kiev, much as Russia and the West, may arrive at a political compromise within a foreseeable period of time.⁴² A political compromise is based on the U.S. leadership understanding that Ukraine does not come within the sphere of vital U.S. interests, while Washington’s principal strategic adversary is Beijing rather than Moscow.⁴³ Proponents of this scenario also proceed from the assumption that the West, primarily the U.S., is partly responsible for the events currently unfolding in Ukraine.⁴⁴ Besides, with all due respect and empathy for Ukraine’s society, today’s Ukraine is hard to imagine as a paragon of liberal democracy and a state with the rule of law.⁴⁵ Consequently, it is not entirely correct to interpret the Russia–Ukraine crisis as part of the global Manichean confrontation between the powers of Western democracy and Oriental authoritarianism.

Proponents of this scenario admit that protracting the conflict may give the West some tactical advantages, but strategically, it is fraught with many unpleasant consequences: a total destruction of Ukraine’s social and economic infrastructure, the country’s further political radicalization, increasing risks of horizontal and vertical escalation, including to the nuclear level, as well as Western unity gradually eroding and the danger of global economy slipping into a new cyclical crisis.⁴⁶ Additionally, one should not underestimate the determination of Russia’s leadership to bring the special military operation in Ukraine to victory in spite of all Western attempts to thwart such an outcome.⁴⁷

The initiative in political settlement must apparently come from the U.S. leadership first and foremost.⁴⁸ In this scenario, Kiev and Western nations recognize the new status of Crimea and Donbass at least *de facto* if not *de jure* (with the possibility of holding a future referendum, with international watchdogs present, on the ultimate status of the disputed territories⁴⁹), while Ukraine confirms that

⁴² James M. Acton. How to prevent nuclear war: Give Putin a way out. The Washington Post, March 1, 2022.

URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/03/01/putin-russia-nuclear-alert/>

⁴³ Charles A. Kupchan. Putin’s War in Ukraine Is a Watershed. Time for America to Get Real. The New York Times, April 11, 2022. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/11/opinion/ukraine-war-realist-strategy.html>

⁴⁴ Doug Bandow. We Poked the Bear. The American Conservative, March 17, 2022.

URL: <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/we-poked-the-bear/>

⁴⁵ Ted Galen Carpenter. Whitewashing Ukraine’s Corruption: the country is not a symbol of freedom and liberal democracy. The American Conservative, April 6, 2022.

URL: <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/whitewashing-ukraines-corruption/>

⁴⁶ Anatol Lieven, Sarang Shidore, Marcus Stanley. Avoiding the Dangers of a Protracted Conflict in Ukraine Quincy Brief N 23, Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, March 25, 2022.

URL: <https://quincyinst.org/report/avoiding-the-dangers-of-a-protracted-conflict-in-ukraine/>

⁴⁷ Charles Creitz. Col. Macgregor: Biden wrongly conveying state of Ukraine, warns how western half could become “firing range”. Fox News, April 21, 2022.

URL: <https://www.foxnews.com/media/macgregor-tucker-ukraine-russia-war-biden-billions-weapons-aid>

⁴⁸ Nick Dowling. The conditions are ripe for talking peace. Biden should seize the moment. CNN, March 20, 2022.

URL: <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/03/20/opinions/ukraine-biden-peace-deal-dowling/index.html>

⁴⁹ Thomas Graham, Rajan Menon. How to Make Peace With Putin: The West Must Move Quickly to End the War in Ukraine. Foreign Affairs, March 21, 2022. URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2022-03-21/how-make-peace-putin>

it abandons its attempts to accede to NATO in exchange for being given legally-binding multilateral security guarantees.⁵⁰ Ukraine's society accepts the idea of neutrality since neutrality does not preclude it from fostering political cooperation with the West, while allowing Kiev to play a more active and independent role in European and global affairs.⁵¹ Although the prospect of Ukraine's accelerated accession to the EU appears unrealistic, this scenario allows for a whole series of steps that would qualitatively change Kiev–Brussels relations with a view to Ukraine's EU membership in the medium-term outlook.⁵² Ukraine and the EU might also establish relations with a special status, like the EU's relations with Norway.⁵³

This scenario entails mutually acceptable arrangements on the parameters of Ukraine's military potential and on the system of military confidence measures along the Russia–Ukraine border. The U.S. and the EU partially lift their anti-Russian sanctions,⁵⁴ and Russia and the West agree on concomitant, if joint, action on the post-conflict reconstruction of the Donbass and Ukraine. International investigation of war crimes launched after the end of the conflict is not unequivocally anti-Russian; there are no charges against Russia's top political leadership.

This scenario suggests that the Ukrainian crisis may trigger major adjustments within the international system—such adjustments have long been overdue, but they have previously been delayed or even sabotaged by the political and economic elites of the U.S. and the Collective West for some reason or another. The scenario of “reformation” also involves Western consolidation, but, unlike the “restoration”, this consolidation is largely situational, which means it will not go far beyond responding to the Ukrainian crisis. Grave differences between Washington and European capitals over many other important issues in international affairs will not only subsist but will inevitably mount. Therefore, even if a return to some semblance of the “unipolar world” takes place, it will be very short-lived. Western unity will begin to erode in the second half of the Biden Administration's first term.

Having gone through the shock of the Ukrainian crisis, nations of the Global South, much as China, won't ultimately succumb to the West coaxing them into forming a single unified anti-Russian front.⁵⁵ Their unwillingness to impose harsh economic sanctions against Moscow signals the divergent assessments of the

⁵⁰ Anatol Lieven. How to get to a place of peace for Ukraine. Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, March 3, 2022. URL: <https://responsibletatecraft.org/2022/03/03/how-to-get-to-a-place-of-peace-for-ukraine/>

⁵¹ Anatol Lieven. The Meaning of Ukraine's Coming Neutrality. Foreign Policy, April 4, 2022. URL: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/04/04/ukraine-neutrality-nato-west-europe-russia-peace-ceasefire/>

⁵² Iagyziszlav Makszimov. EU promises to “seriously” look into Ukraine's membership appeal. Euractiv, March 1, 2022. URL: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/europe-s-east/news/eu-promises-to-seriously-look-into-ukraines-membership-appeal/>

⁵³ Dov S. Zakheim. What will it take to end Russia's war in Ukraine? Creative diplomacy. The Hill, March 11, 2022. URL: <https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/597648-what-will-it-take-to-end-russias-war-in-ukraine-creative-diplomacy/>

⁵⁴ Zuzana Hudáková, Thomas Biersteker, Erica Moret. Sanctions Relaxation and Conflict Resolution: Lessons from Past Sanctions Regimes. The Carter Center, October 2021. URL: https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/conflict_resolution/sanctions-relaxation-10-2021.pdf

⁵⁵ John C. Hulsman. Putin's mistakes birth a new world order. *Aspenia Online*, April 15, 2022. URL: <https://aspensiaonline.it/putins-mistakes-birth-a-new-world-order/>

nature and possible outcomes of the unfolding conflict.⁵⁶ Moreover, against the backdrop of the ongoing military-political crisis in Europe, these states will increasingly insist on reforming the entire global political and economic system, making the world order more inclusive and democratic. These demands will be increasingly difficult to ignore amid ongoing and accelerating changes in the global balance of power.

The confrontation between the West and Russia will not conclude with achieving a compromise on Ukraine. The U.S. and Europe will see Moscow as the main challenge to global security. Therefore, the crisis should prompt the U.S. to make additional concessions to China and the Global South in order to secure some loyalty from non-Western actors in global politics and economy in Washington's contest with Moscow.

The Russia—Ukraine conflict, having demonstrated Washington's limited capabilities in extending direct military assistance to Kiev, will not bring Beijing to a restrained course in matters pertaining to Taiwan. The current crisis will also not accelerate India's drift toward the US and the West in general; on the contrary, this crisis may prompt Indian elites to implement a more independent and a less West-related foreign policy.⁵⁷ Beijing's foreign and military policies will make Washington increasingly annoyed as it perceives China's actions as destructive and irresponsible.⁵⁸ The U.S., however, will be forced to account for the changing balance of power, making concessions to China. It is quite likely that strategic priorities of the U.S. and its partners among the conservative monarchies of the Gulf will continue to diverge (especially if Washington continues to strive for a political détente in its relations with Tehran).

The U.S.—and the West on a broader level—will have to adapt to the new geopolitical situation overcoming their instinct to use the Russia—Ukraine conflict as a pretext for reverting to the ideological confrontation between democracy and authoritarianism.⁵⁹ In historical terms, reviving the “spirit of 1989” will prove short-lived, attempts to place liberal ideology at the core of U.S. foreign policy will prove counter-productive, and both will have to be abandoned. This development could provoke new splits within the American society, which will resultatively be an obstacle in the way of a consistent and internally monolithic U.S. foreign policy.

Even though most countries of the Global South have condemned Russia's actions in Ukraine, many of them share the idea that the West is actively using double standards in its confrontation with Russia, backgrounding many large-scale conflicts in developing countries (for instance, the Yemen conflict) and

⁵⁶ Adam Taylor. How isolated is Russia, really? The Washington Post, April 8, 2022.

URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/04/08/how-isolated-is-russia-ukraine-invasion/>

⁵⁷ Martin Jacques. India's distancing from US over Ukraine crisis has deeper implications. Global Times, April 11, 2022.

URL: <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202204/1259005.shtml>

⁵⁸ Dov S. Zakheim. Beijing is hardly a responsible stakeholder. The Hill, March 25, 2022.

URL: <https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/599513-beijing-is-hardly-a-responsible-stakeholder/>

⁵⁹ Samuel Moyn. How to stop a new Cold War. Prospect, April 7, 2022.

URL: <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/essays/how-to-stop-a-new-cold-war>

glossing over the many interventions that the West conducted in the last decades incurring many civilian casualties (Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan).⁶⁰ Such notions undermine the stability of the global anti-Russian coalition and require adjustments in Western approaches to both regional conflicts and a broader range of issues in international security and development.⁶¹

Western leaders inevitably recognizing the need for forced compromises and concessions toward the non-West entails existing a gradual transformation of international organizations and regimes, the United Nations among them (including possible expansion of the UN Security Council and attempts to restrict the veto power exercised by the permanent members of the UN Security Council⁶²). The scenario of “reformation” envisions the IBRD and the IMF undergoing major institutional changes and transforming from mostly Western bodies into truly universal organizations. This scenario envisages the U.S. abandoning its idea of a rigid opposition between “democratic” and “authoritarian” regimes. The new dividing line will be drawn between “responsible” and “irresponsible” actors, and the main declared goal of the West’s foreign policy will be expanding the ranks of the former and shrinking the ranks of the latter.

Some compromise will be achieved on the role of the U.S. dollar as the world’s principal reserve currency. None of the principal actors on the global currency markets is interested in an immediate abandonment of the dollar, but most financial experts agree that the Ukrainian crisis and the U.S. sanctions imposed on backbone Russian banks will accelerate the shrinking of the dollar’s role in global finances.⁶³ It is possible that the share of the U.S. currency in global currency reserves, which total some 12 trillion in dollar terms, will be less than half by the end of the current decade (today, the dollar accounts for 59 % of global currency reserves, which is 12 % less than in 1999 when the euro entered the markets).

The scenario of “reformation” envisions the EU gaining, mostly through joint efforts of Germany and France, more significant military potential in the nearest future⁶⁴ and achieving greater strategic autonomy from the U.S.⁶⁵ Brussels will demonstrate its newly-acquired political will by approving the mechanism of Ukraine’s accelerated integration into the European Union and by making arrangements for the EU to play the leading role in Ukraine’s post-conflict

⁶⁰ Vijay Prashad. Ukraine: A conflict soaked in contradictions. *Asia Times*, March 3, 2022. URL: <https://asiatimes.com/2022/03/ukraine-a-conflict-soaked-in-contradictions/>

⁶¹ James M. Dorsey. Applying double standards in Ukraine is a risky business. *The Turbulent World of Middle East Soccer*, April 10, 2022. URL: <https://jamesmdorsey.substack.com/p/applying-double-standards-in-ukraine>

⁶² Jennifer Peltz. War in Ukraine spurs bid to take a closer look at UN vetoes. *AP News*, April 21, 2022. URL: <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-united-nations-general-assembly-business-europe-states-3e1560d3b38bc0110d65fe388a6ea4ad>

⁶³ Robin Wigglesworth, Polina Ivanova, Colby Smith. Financial warfare: will there be a backlash against the dollar? *Financial Times*, April 7, 2022. URL: <https://www.ft.com/content/220db8f2-2980-410f-aab8-f471369ac3cf>

⁶⁴ Dylan Macchiarini Crosson. The European Peace Facility. Centre for European Policy Studies, March 7, 2022. URL: <https://www.ceps.eu/the-european-peace-facility/>

⁶⁵ Franziska Brantner. The true value of European sovereignty, ECFR, March 25, 2022. URL: <https://ecfr.eu/article/the-true-value-of-european-sovereignty/>

rebuilding.⁶⁶ Ukraine will become the EU's new unification project that allows the "European project" to get a new lease on life, reviving the confidence in European universalism that is all but gone now.⁶⁷ One could even suppose that resolving the Ukrainian crisis will prove a catalyst for a more active and energetic expansion of the EU in other areas as well—for instance, in Western Balkans,⁶⁸—and will also result in the EU increasing its role in many regional crises (Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Ethiopia, Mali).

Washington will be forced to cut a compromise trade deal with Beijing (China will enhance its control over Taiwan through non-military means and will steadily move toward reunification). Reducing tariffs on Chinese goods imported by the U.S. will help decrease inflation in the U.S., possibly limiting the depths of another cyclical recession.⁶⁹ The U.S.-China balance of power will gradually change in favor of the latter—over the next five-seven years, China will become the world's largest economy. However, China's leadership will strive to preserve the principal outlines of the current international system, avoiding higher geopolitical risks.⁷⁰

The technological race between Washington and Beijing will continue and even accelerate. However, "reformation" envisages the U.S.-China and U.S.-Russia competition not as an ideological confrontation like it was during the Cold War—rather, it should acquire the shape of a relatively stable balance of power.⁷¹ The prospects of Russia-China relations will primarily be determined by the success or failure of Russia's leadership in efforts to enable a profound structural rebuilding of the country's economy. The U.S. will apparently fail in its attempts to involve India in some bilateral or multilateral military and political alliance; the Russia-Ukraine conflict manifested the differences between the U.S. and India on important international matters, including Russia and Ukraine, and these differences will subsist in the future.⁷² One cannot rule out a détente between Beijing and New Delhi, although such a détente will not eliminate contradictions between the two states, and therefore, there will be no geopolitical and economic consolidation of the Eurasian continent in the foreseeable future.

The West will also have to seek some compromise with Iran to transform it from a global spoiler into a responsible participant in the new system of politics in the Middle East and worldwide. Some experts believe that Iran's foreign policy could

⁶⁶ Michael Emerson, Steven Blockmans, Veronika Movchan, Artem Remizov. Opinion on Ukraine's application for membership of the European Union. CEPS Policy Insights, No 2022-16 / April 2022.
URL: <file:///C:/Users/Professional/Downloads/PI2022-16-Ukraines-EU-membership.pdf>

⁶⁷ Susi Dennison. The War in Ukraine Has Put EU Enlargement Back in the Spotlight. World Politics Review, April 5, 2022.
URL: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/30448/for-the-eu-ukraine-membership-is-a-non-starter>

⁶⁸ Ukraine 2022: A Test for the EU and NATO. International Institute for Middle East and Balkan Studies, Ljubljana, Slovenia, March 7, 2022. URL: <https://mailchi.mp/fe142be3d946/analysis-ukraine-2022-a-test-for-the-eu-and-nato>

⁶⁹ Zhong Nan, Liu Zhihua. Tariff cut on Chinese imports expected to ease high US inflation. China Daily, April 25, 2022.
URL: <http://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202204/25/WS6265f197a310fd2b29e5907d.html>

⁷⁰ Wang Wen. Bleak predictions of China stem from poor understanding. Global Times, April 18, 2022.
URL: <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202204/1259593.shtml>

⁷¹ Charles A. Kupchan. Putin's War in Ukraine Is a Watershed. Time for America to Get Real. The New York Times, April 11, 2022. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/11/opinion/ukraine-war-realist-strategy.html>

⁷² Kanwal Sibal. India-US 2+2 Dialogue takes differences over Ukraine in its stride. India Narrative, April 22, 2022.
URL: <https://www.indianarrative.com/opinion-news/india-us-dialogue-takes-differences-over-ukraine-in-its-stride-166058.html>

be re-channeled from the western direction (the Middle East) into the northern direction, where, following the Ukrainian crisis, Russia's presence and influence will inevitably decrease.⁷³ At the same time, any compromises with Iran will burden the West with problems with Arab states of the Persian Gulf that will make efforts to maintain the regional balance of power and to independently contain Tehran's regional activities.

The international community—possibly, within G20—will establish mechanisms and procedures for ensuring significant increase in resources coming from the rich states of the Global North to the poor states of the Global South. Priority tasks for the poor states will be getting a deferment on servicing their foreign debts, writing off some of those debts, the International Monetary Fund giving the global South additional special drawing rights (SDR) quotas of at least USD 100 bn., and giving the countries of the Global South at least USD 1 trillion in new public and private loans.⁷⁴

Under the scenario of “reformation”, a return to globalization will be slower than under “restoration”, entailing greater restrictions since the new cycle of globalization will require coordinating the stances of a large number of actors with diverse interests and different notions of a desired world order. Even the notion of “globalization” as such will become subject to heated debates and information wars. It is possible that global economy will travel down the path of regionalization as an alternative to full-fledged globalization. Nonetheless, trends of globalization will continue, and under the “reformation” scenario, globalization will ultimately be more inclusive and universal than under the “restoration” scenario.

Under “reformation”, international terrorism will likely be less of a problem than in the previous scenario, since some demands of the Global South will be met to some degree, which could mitigate acute socioeconomic problems in the unstable regions of the Global South, reducing the number of “failed states.” Nonetheless, the South's migration pressure on the North will remain and will possibly turn out to be stronger than under the scenario of “restoration”, since—with the international system reformed—countries of the North will find it harder to substantiate keeping in place the severe restrictions imposed on receiving refugees and labor migrants. Accordingly, problems with migrants' adaptation and integration will mount primarily in European countries.

Under “reformation”, Russia's long-term isolation is not only impossible—it does not agree with the West's strategic interests.⁷⁵ Under this scenario, Russia will remain partially isolated for a while, but will gradually be “forgiven” to return

⁷³ James M. Dorsey. Iran capitalizes on Central Asian vacuum created by the Ukraine war. *The Turbulent World of Middle East Soccer*, April 16, 2022. URL: <https://jamesmdorsey.substack.com/p/iran-capitalises-on-central-asian>

⁷⁴ David McNair. How the IMF and World Bank Can Support African Economies Hit Hard by Russia's Invasion of Ukraine. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, April 19, 2022. URL: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/04/19/how-imf-and-world-bank-can-support-african-economies-hit-hard-by-russia-s-invasion-of-ukraine-pub-86931>

⁷⁵ Ivan Kravets. To isolate Russia is not in the west's power or interest. *Financial Times*, April 23, 2022. URL: <https://www.ft.com/content/5e357d9e-6717-4091-a7db-fe43b9dbdab1>

to most international organizations and regimes.⁷⁶ Once the acute phase of the Russia–Ukraine conflict concludes, responsible politicians in the West will proceed from the premise that changing the political regime in Moscow cannot be considered a realistic objective for the West in the foreseeable future, moreover, it does not necessarily align with Western interests.⁷⁷ Besides, the strategy of causing maximum possible damage to Russia’s economy and creating maximum possible economic problems for Russia’s population is already generating and will generate criticisms and doubts concerning its validity.⁷⁸ It certainly does not mean that most sanctions imposed after February 24, 2022 will be lifted, but activities in this area will gradually ebb, while the practice of introducing various exemptions to the sanctions regimes will be expanded.

Russia will return to the “international mainstream”, mostly by integrating into Asian (Eurasian) multilateral regimes. This will become a natural given that the Kremlin will, with increasing consistency, associate Russia with non-liberal Asian political regimes.⁷⁹ Nonetheless, long-term costs of the conflict with Ukraine will limit Moscow’s international influence for a long time; Russia’s claims to the role of a “third pole” in global politics (along with the U.S. and China) will have to be postponed. Russia’s dependence on China will increase despite the West all too likely to counteract this trend.

The “reformation” scenario may apparently turn out more stable and sustainable than “restoring” the old world order. Much, however, rests with the path world order reforms will travel in the areas of trade, economy, currency, finance, military, politics, etc. One cannot rule out acute crises stemming from reforms being inconsistent and discrete (for instance, a crisis is possible should the 2024 presidential elections bring back Donald Trump or install a politician who shares Trump’s views of the world and of America’s role therein). If even such crises are successfully avoided, the U.S. will have to deal with a coalition of Eurasian states including China, Russia, Central Asian states, and possibly nations of Southeast Asia, and such a coalition will exceed America in its material resources.⁸⁰ This situation will require from Washington the skill of playing the role of a “minority stakeholder” in many multilateral projects, a skill that American diplomacy still has to learn.

A “reformation”-based system may evolve toward a new rigid or soft bipolarity or a more complex blurred multipolarity (polycentrism) with the gradually increasing role of non-state participants in global politics. It is possible that the system

⁷⁶ Stewart M. Patrick. Expelling Russia from Multilateral Forums Is Tempting but Unwise. *World Politics Review*, March 28, 2022.

URL: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/30430/despite-ukraine-invasion-russia-shouldn-t-be-booted-from-g-20>

⁷⁷ Timothy Frye. Why Regime Change in Russia Might Not Be a Good Idea. *Politico*, April 12, 2022.

URL: <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2022/04/12/regime-change-russia-putin-00023953>

⁷⁸ Joy Gordon. Russia, Ukraine, and the Demise of Smart Sanctions. *Ethics & International Affairs*, March 21, 2022.

URL: <https://www.ethicsandinternationalaffairs.org/2022/russia-ukraine-and-the-demise-of-smart-sanctions/>

⁷⁹ Parag Khanna. Russia Joins the Asian Club. *Foreign Policy*, March 29, 2022.

URL: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/29/russia-india-china-ukraine-war-putin-asia/>

⁸⁰ Douglas Macgregor. Biden’s Folly In Ukraine. *The American Conservative*, April 5, 2022

URL: <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/bidens-folly-in-ukraine/>

will be periodically adjusted pursuant to the outcomes to local or larger regional conflicts with direct or indirect involvement of leading actors. In any case, a system that emerges in the course of reformation appears to be overall more stable and more inclusive than the system described in the scenario of “restoration”.

Revolution

The scenario of “revolution” is based on the premise that no arrangements on stopping the conflict in Ukraine are achieved: neither between Moscow and Kiev, nor between Russia and the West.⁸¹ Russia’s military will not withdraw from the territories they hold in Donbass or in other Ukrainian regions. Repeated attempts will be made to create new “people’s republics” beyond the Donetsk People’s Republic and the Lugansk People’s Republic. At some point, the sides’ military activities will give way to an unstable and regularly breached armistice.⁸² The West’s military aid to Ukraine will continue in ever greater amounts in order to prevent Moscow from achieving, under any circumstances, a decisive military victory and concluding a peace agreement on Russia’s terms,⁸³ while Western sanctions against Russia will be ramped up and prolonged, including persistent attempts to prevent the establishment of mechanisms and procedures that allow for bypassing these restrictions.⁸⁴ The matters of post-conflict rebuilding of Donbass and Ukraine will be deferred until some indefinite point in the future while the costs of the conflict for Russia will inevitably increase over time putting a question mark over preserving socioeconomic and political stability in the country.⁸⁵

One inevitable outcome of these developments will be the conflict becoming progressively internationalized involving new participants on both sides. Clearly, the West is particularly concerned with Moscow potentially using Middle Eastern volunteers and mercenaries with military experience of fighting in Syria.⁸⁶ But it has to be taken into account that militants could come from those same countries or from their neighbors to fight on Ukraine’s side.⁸⁷ Consequently, Ukraine will eventually become a hotbed of a chronic military conflict between the East and the West with the sides periodically testing each other’s military capabilities.

On the other hand, experts say that, instead of “denazifying” Ukraine as Moscow understands this objective, the current conflict will inevitably result in giving greater political influence to radical nationalist groups that have already played a major role in opposing the Russian troops. Cutting right-wing radicals from

⁸¹ Richard Haass. What Does the West Want in Ukraine? Defining Success—Before It’s Too Late. *Foreign Affairs*, April 22, 2022. URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/2022-04-22/what-does-west-want-ukraine>

⁸² Tom Pickering. A Russia-Ukraine exit strategy. *Responsible Statecraft*, March 2, 2022. URL: <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/03/02/a-russia-ukraine-exit-strategy/>

⁸³ Gustav Gressel. Ukraine: Time for the West to prepare for the long war. *European Council on Foreign Relations*, April 19, 2022. URL: <https://ecfr.eu/article/ukraine-time-for-the-west-to-prepare-for-the-long-war/>

⁸⁴ Liana Fix, Michael Kimmage. What If the War in Ukraine Doesn’t End? The Global Consequences of a Long Conflict. *Foreign Affairs*, April 20, 2022. URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/2022-04-20/what-if-war-ukraine-doesnt-end>

⁸⁵ Ruth Deyermond. Russia’s war has already failed. *Prospect*, March 10, 2022. URL: <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/world/russias-war-has-already-failed>

⁸⁶ Eric Schmitt, Julian E. Barnes, Helene Cooper. Russia Is Recruiting Mercenaries and Syrians to Ukraine, Western Officials Say. *The New York Times*, April 6, 2022. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/06/us/politics/russia-military-ukraine-war.html>

⁸⁷ Levent Kemal, Ragıp Soylu. Russia—Ukraine war: How invasion is attracting mercenaries—not just foreign volunteers. *Middle East Eye*, March 3, 2022. URL: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/russia-ukraine-war-mercenaries-helping-kyiv-fight>

Ukraine's political field will be very difficult, if possible at all, for any political leadership in Kiev. In this case, "post-war" Ukraine could become the leading international center of right-wing radicalism that visibly affects political forces throughout the continent.⁸⁸

Amid the continuing conflict that the European public is gradually "getting used" to, Brussels will be progressively less ready to offer Kiev some exclusive mechanism for accessing to the European Union. Practical matters connected with launching such a mechanism will repeatedly be postponed, Ukraine will not even receive an official status of a candidate to accession.⁸⁹ Consequently, Ukrainian public will become inevitably disappointed in the prospects of European integration, which could also be conducive to increased popularity of radical nationalism.

If a shaky balance between the sides does emerge in the Ukrainian conflict, the balance in global politics will be inevitably breached. If preserving the *status quo* in Ukraine can be seen as the West's victory, then in a broader international context, this victory will inevitably prove pyrrhic.⁹⁰ Compared to two other scenarios, the revolution scenario envisions a far more radical and far more chaotic transformation of the international system already in the nearest years. A revolution in global politics essentially means a total collapse of the current global order, including its economic, financial, military, strategic, and geopolitical dimensions.⁹¹ The depths and possible consequences of such a collapse are hard to predict, but the world will evidently have to go through a long period of instability, crises, arms race, and many military conflicts of varying scales and lengths.

In this situation, the Western unity will not be preserved for long; very soon after the active phase of the Russia—Ukraine conflict concludes, trans-Atlantic contradictions will once again come into the foreground. U.S. strategy in this conflict will be increasingly perceived not as a guarantee of ultimate success, but as a path toward inevitable defeat and as testimony to the weakness and strategic ineptitude of the current U.S. leadership.⁹² The Biden Administration's inability to end this conflict on terms that would be acceptable for the West, the Russia–Ukraine confrontation transforming into the permanent backdrop of European politics will inevitably generate doubts as to the reliability of American guarantees extended to the U.S. partners and allies in various regions from the Middle East to Northeast Asia. These doubts will, in turn, stimulate individual states to "re-militarize" their foreign policy at an accelerated pace.⁹³

⁸⁸ Isaac Kfir. Will Ukraine Become the Syria of the Extreme Right? European Eye on Radicalization. March 4, 2022.
URL: <https://eeradicalization.com/will-ukraine-become-the-syria-of-the-extreme-right/>

⁸⁹ Alexandra Brzozowski. EU leaders unlikely to agree on Ukraine's candidate status. Euroactiv, March 10, 2022.
URL: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/enlargement/news/eu-leaders-unlikely-to-agree-on-ukraines-candidate-status/>

⁹⁰ Anatol Lieven. The horrible dangers of pushing a US proxy war in Ukraine. Responsible Statecraft, April 27, 2022.
URL: <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/04/27/the-horrible-dangers-in-pushing-a-us-proxy-war-in-ukraine/>

⁹¹ Egon von Greyerz. There is Going to Be a New World Disorder. Gold Switzerland, April 5, 2022.
URL: <https://goldswitzerland.com/there-is-going-to-be-a-new-world-disorder/>

⁹² Peter Van Buren. We've Had Enough of Zero-Sum Democracy. The American Conservative, March 7, 2022.
URL: <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/weve-had-enough-of-zero-sum-democracy/>

⁹³ Hideshi Futori. After Ukraine—Enacting a realistic Japanese diplomatic security policy. Pacific Forum International, PacNet # 20, April 19, 2022.
URL: <https://mailchi.mp/pacforum/pacnet-20-after-ukraine-enacting-a-realistic-japanese-diplomatic-security-policy-1173167>

The revolution scenario envisages a high likelihood of the U.S.–China contradictions exacerbating in East and Southeast Asia with the U.S. European allies in some way becoming embroiled therein.⁹⁴ Contrary to the hopes and expectations of the proponents of the restoration scenario, the U.S. and NATO's response to the European events will not serve as a deterrent for Beijing's plans to reintegrate Taiwan through use of military force; on the contrary, America's demonstrated unwillingness to directly engage in the Russia—Ukraine conflict could provoke Beijing to undertake more decisive actions concerning Taiwan.⁹⁵ Although it is hard to predict Beijing's specific actions today, it is possible to suppose that any change to Taiwan's current status will become a no less powerful catalyst for centrifugal trends in today's world than the conflict in Ukraine.

On the other hand, this scenario involves clearer centrifugal trends within the European Union: between the northern and southern members, between the “old” and “new” Europe, between large and small states, between proponents of greater integration and “Euroskeptics,” etc. The U.S. will also, to an extent, remain a split society, which will inevitably stand in the way of conducting a consistent long-term foreign political strategy.

The Global South will also fail at forming a united coalition, and consequently, its bargaining positions in its relations with the global North will not qualitatively improve. China's global influence will be overall increasing, yet Beijing will not assume greater responsibility for ensuring global public goods. Consequently, the continuing relative decline of the U.S. international influence will not result in some other power or a group of states filling in the expanding vacuum. Rather, ambitious regional states and non-state actors in global politics will be likelier to make use of this vacuum.

The current decline of international organizations, both universal and regional, will pick up an even greater pace.⁹⁶ The world will become not merely fragmented, but atomized. In this world, universal organizations and multilateral regimes will face a long-term effectiveness drop, regional crises will multiply, severe competition between the West and the East, the North and South, and within individual groups of states will bring the world to multiple conflicts with some of them taking the form of armed confrontations.⁹⁷ A military conflict over Taiwan between the U.S. and China would have particularly large-scale negative consequences for the entire international relations system; these consequences would exceed the destructive results of the Russia—Ukraine clash.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Franz-Stefan Gady, Oskar Glaese. What Could European Militaries Contribute to the Defense of Taiwan? *The Diplomat*, April 1, 2022. URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/04/what-could-european-militaries-contribute-to-the-defense-of-taiwan/>

⁹⁵ Hal Brands. Putin's struggles in Ukraine may embolden Xi on Taiwan. *American Enterprise Institute*, April 21, 2022. URL: <https://www.aei.org/op-eds/putins-struggles-in-ukraine-may-embolden-xi-on-taiwan/>

⁹⁶ Patrick Wintour. António Guterres urged to take lead in securing peace in Ukraine or risk future of UN. *The Guardian*, April 19, 2022. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/19/antonio-guterres-urged-to-take-lead-in-securing-peace-in-ukraine-or-risk-future-of-un>

⁹⁷ Ivan Krastev. We Are All Living in Vladimir Putin's World Now. *The New York Times*, February 27, 2022. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/27/opinion/putin-russia-ukraine-europe.html>

⁹⁸ Kevin Rudd. A U.S.–China War Would Dwarf the Destruction in Ukraine. Both Sides Must Act Now to Avoid It. *Time*, April 4, 2022. URL: <https://time.com/6164184/how-us-china-avoid-war/>

Among the many lessons of the Russia–Ukraine conflict, experts single out the capability of middle-sized states to, unexpectedly for many, successfully oppose the military pressure of great powers. At the start of Russia’s special military operation, predictions were made that the Ukrainian army would last for a few days at most, and the operation itself would conclude with taking Kiev and other large Ukrainian states. However, Ukraine’s military demonstrated its ability for stout resistance. This experience suggests that the traditional military hierarchy of today’s world that has been inherited from the 20th century will erode further.⁹⁹

If this is the case, then political hierarchies will in some way or other be threatened, too. Particularly active here will be not small, but medium-sized countries capable of having decisive influence on political dynamics in “their” regions. In some cases, middle-sized states will protect the status quo (Germany, Japan), in other cases, they will promote a revisionist agenda undermining the status quo (Turkey, Iran). Overall, however, their activity will reduce the governability of global politics and economy instead of increasing it.¹⁰⁰ One of the first examples of this trend is exacerbating differences between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia that got in the way of promptly ensuring additional volumes of Saudi oil coming to the global markets to stabilize market prices.¹⁰¹

With time, universal international law norms will essentially become inoperable in the new revolution. Only individual islands of these norms will remain (for instance, within individual integration groups such as the European Union or ASEAN), but these islands will compete using “hard power” instruments. Accordingly, an intense arms race will continue, and it will be primarily qualitative; it is impossible to rule out the possibility of more states getting nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.¹⁰² The likelihood of nuclear proliferation will become particularly high should the world perceive the outcome of the military operation as Moscow’s unquestionable victory and Kiev’s unequivocal defeat. Having one’s own nuclear weapons in such a situation will be seen as the only certain national security guarantee. The crisis, for instance, will certainly bolster the North Korean leadership’s intent to continue its efforts in the nuclear and missile areas.¹⁰³

Globalization as a comprehensive social development phenomenon will have to be abandoned for a long time. Such globalization dimensions as international trade, foreign direct investment, international travel will at best stagnate, or at

⁹⁹ Alexander Clarkson. We Assumed Small States Were Pushovers. Ukraine Proved Us Wrong. *World Politics Review*, April 13, 2022.

URL: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/30466/after-russia-invasion-ukraine-shows-that-small-states-can-fight-back>

¹⁰⁰ Arta Moeini, Christopher Mott, Zachary Paikin, David Polansky. Middle Powers in the Multipolar World. White Paper. The Institute for Peace & Diplomacy, March 2022.

URL: <https://peacediplomacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Middle-Powers-in-the-Multipolar-World.pdf>

¹⁰¹ Laura Kelly, Rachel Frazin. US–Saudi tensions complicate push for more oil. *The Hill*, March 20, 2022.

URL: <https://thehill.com/policy/international/598828-us-saudi-tensions-complicate-push-for-more-oil/>

¹⁰² Toby Dalton. Nuclear Nonproliferation After the Russia–Ukraine War. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, April 8, 2022. URL: <https://gija.georgetown.edu/2022/04/08/nuclear-nonproliferation-after-the-russia-ukraine-war/>

¹⁰³ Jounggho Park. The Ukrainian Crisis and Russia–U.S. Conflict: Background and Policy Implications for the Korean Peninsula. *Korea Institute for International Economic Policy*, April 12, 2022.

URL: https://www.kiep.go.kr/gallery.es?mid=a20308000000&bid=0008&list_no=10032&act=view

worst decline. But informational globalization based on transitioning to fifth-generation information and communication networks will continue, thereby creating additional tensions between growing social expectations and shrinking means of meeting them through geographical mobility. In some cases, these tensions may translate into chain reactions of political regime changes like the “Arab spring” of ten years ago.

Search will continue for ways to bolster national sovereignty and to minimize national states’ dependence on external factors in their security and development. We will see the creation of new international payment systems, accelerated movement away from the dollar as the principal reserve currency,¹⁰⁴ creation of national technological platforms, various efforts to implement import substitution, etc. Not only the West’s traditional geopolitical adversaries (China) will travel down this road, but also those developing states that are commonly seen as supporters of liberal political models and as the West’s potential allies (India).¹⁰⁵

The revolution scenario also envisions the Russia–Ukraine conflict having a destructive influence on the attempts to efficiently implement the global energy transition program. National plans to cut carbon emissions could be revised, and traditional energy sources will receive additional powerful financial and geopolitical stimuli.¹⁰⁶ This situation will inevitably accelerate the increase in global temperature with attendant planet-wide repercussions.

International terrorism, along with large-scale migrations, will become the permanent backdrop of life both in the North and in the South. Some experts believe that Ukraine has already become a training camp for militarized extremist groups from all over Europe, and in this sense, the conflict in Ukraine may serve as a catalyst for a rise in right-wing terrorist organizations in Europe, as Afghanistan did for the rise of Islamist terrorist networks in the Middle East.¹⁰⁷ Principal differences on what is to be considered terrorism and how it is to be counteracted will remain. These differences will stand in the way of establishing stable international anti-terrorist coalitions and also coalitions on other international security issues.

The “revolution” scenario envisions the West imposing rigid limitations on refugees and displaced persons from the countries of the global South. Already today, western society demonstrates radically different attitudes to refugees from Ukraine on the one hand and from the Middle East, Africa and Afghanistan on the

¹⁰⁴Harry Robertson. Goldman Sachs warns the dollar is at risk of losing its dominance, and could end up a lesser player like the UK pound. Markets Insider, April 1, 2022. URL: <https://markets.businessinsider.com/news/currencies/dollar-dominance-reserve-currency-risk-uk-pound-russia-sanctions-debt-2022-4>

¹⁰⁵Hindol Sengupta. How the Ukraine war has strengthened India’s digital sovereignty ambition. Aspenia Online, April 3, 2022. URL: <https://aspensiaonline.it/how-the-ukraine-war-has-strengthened-indias-digital-sovereignty-ambition/>

¹⁰⁶Joseph Dellatte. Russia-Ukraine: Short-Term Energy Security Doctrines, Long-Term Climate Damage? Institut Montaigne, April 4, 2022. URL: <https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/blog/russia-ukraine-short-term-energy-security-doctrines-long-term-climate-damage>

¹⁰⁷Yassine El Guendouzi. From Afghanistan to Ukraine: A New Future for Foreign Fighters in Europe? European Eye on Radicalization, April 15, 2022. URL: <https://eerradicalization.com/from-afghanistan-to-ukraine-a-new-future-for-foreign-fighters-in-europe/>

other,¹⁰⁸ which testifies to persistent latent racism in the West.¹⁰⁹ Even as regards Ukrainian refugees, in many states of the European Union the attitude to “real Ukrainians” differs significantly from the attitude to those residents and citizens of Ukraine who initially arrived there from the states of the global South.¹¹⁰

There are no grounds to believe that a hospitable welcome most European states accorded to refugees and migrants from Ukraine will in some manner or other be extended to non-European migration flows. On the contrary, those countries that received large numbers of Ukrainian refugees will gain additional arguments in favor of imposing harsher limitations on refugees and migrants from the Middle East, South Asia, and North Africa as these European states believe their involvement in solving global migration problems to have already been more than sufficient.¹¹¹ The question remains open as to how successful the West will be in cutting off the international flows of illegal migrants.

The collapse of the current international system will create major hotbeds of chronic instability in the Middle East, in North Africa, in South Asia, and in other regions.¹¹² There may be multi-million intra-regional flows of refugees and displaced persons who cannot move to the West and who will become the breeding grounds for political extremism and terrorism.

Russia’s foreign policy will look for ways to minimize risks and challenges in the coming surrounding chaos. The Russia–Ukraine conflict will inevitably be backgrounded amid new armed hostilities that may turn out to be even more large-scale and bloody. A broad anti-Russian coalition will be impossible to maintain for a long period of time amid overall collapse of the current world order, and Russia’s behavior will no longer be seen as a regrettable deviation from commonly accepted rules and norms, since those rules and norms will be progressively less valid.

Given, however, that Russia’s principal attention will still be focused on Ukraine, Moscow will hardly be able to take advantage of the potential opportunities of bolstering its standing in the world’s unstable regions. On the contrary, Russia’s activities are predicted to drop, for instance, in the Middle East and in North Africa.¹¹³ Additionally, a long and costly (in all senses) conflict with Ukraine and the West could ultimately have a negative effect on Russia’s domestic political

¹⁰⁸Frida Ghitis. Europe’s Refugee Programs Are Enforcing a Double Standard. *World Politics Review*, April 21, 2022.
URL: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/30484/eu-ukraine-refugee-programs-are-enforcing-a-double-standard>

¹⁰⁹Gary Younge. The war in Ukraine has exposed the west’s refugee hypocrisy. *Prospect*, April 7, 2022.
URL: <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/the-war-in-ukraine-has-exposed-the-wests-refugee-hypocrisy>

¹¹⁰Divya Balan. Ukrainian refugees: EU rhetoric or paradigm shift. *Gateway House*, April 12, 2022.
URL: <https://www.gatewayhouse.in/ukrainian-refugees-eu-rhetoric-or-paradigm-shift/>

¹¹¹Frida Ghitis. Europe’s Refugee Programs Are Enforcing a Double Standard. *World Politics Review*, April 21, 2022.
URL: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/30484/eu-ukraine-refugee-programs-are-enforcing-a-double-standard>

¹¹²Erica Gaston. The War in Ukraine Will Make It Harder to Manage the World’s Other Crises. *World Politics Review*, March 7, 2022.
URL: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/30378/the-ukraine-russia-war-will-complicate-the-world-s-other-crises>

¹¹³The Impact of Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine in the Middle East and North Africa. *International Crisis Group Commentary*, April 14, 2022.
URL: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/impact-russias-invasion-ukraine-middle-east-and-north-africa>

stability, which will also have many negative repercussions for the stability of the international system.¹¹⁴

A chaotic system emerging during the revolution scenario is unstable as a matter of principle, since it leaves no opportunities for stable socioeconomic development of either individual states or humanity as a whole. The pressure common problems exert on the system's participants will mount, technological progress will open up new opportunities for cross-border cooperation and create new constraints for states' sovereignty in the territories they formally control.

A revolution in international relations will ultimately end in a new world order that will bring humanity to a new level of global governance. However, this transition may cost several bloody wars, acute economic and financial crises, and other upheavals. One could also suppose that transitioning to a new world order through a collapse of the current international system and a post-collapse period of chaos will not complete even within medium-term outlook; instead, it will stretch over several decades.

Out of three blueprints of the would-be international system after the Ukrainian conflict, as was outlined above, the scenario of "restoration" remains the most dangerous and potentially costly for Russia. Not only does it deprive Moscow of any dividends from the special military operation, but it also dooms the country to a long-term international isolation, an irrevocable loss of a large chunk of its gold and currency reserves, an irreversible loss of Russia's most important markets of hydrocarbons, weapons, and other Russian exports, persistent and stable anti-Russian sentiments in many countries, and an inevitable sharp drop in Russia's status in the hierarchies of the future global politics. The scenario of "restoration" allows for no options, where many of Russia's losses in the West are promptly and adequately compensated in other geographical areas of Russia's foreign policy.

However, it appears highly unlikely that this scenario will fully materialize. The West lacks the material resources and political will to crushingly defeat Moscow in Ukraine and impose its peaceful settlement variant. Russia's stakes in the conflict are higher than those of the West, and Russia's readiness for escalation is greater than that of its Western adversaries. Besides, many influential forces in the international community (from China and India to many states of the Middle East and Africa) are not interested in the West triumphing and in Russia suffering a strategic defeat—therefore, plans to form a stable global anti-Russian front do not appear to be entirely well-founded.

The scenario of "revolution" may appear more acceptable and even profitable for Russia. Amid a general decline and subsequent collapse of the entire international system, the Russia—Ukraine conflict will be seen as a mere episode of a greater historical drama, which will be overshadowed sooner or later by other no less dramatic events that inevitably attend a deconstruction of the old world order. Nonetheless, "revolution", which some Russian analysts pin great hopes

¹¹⁴Thomas L. Friedman. Putin Has No Good Way Out, and That Really Scares Me. The New York Times, March 8, 2022.
URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/08/opinion/putin-ukraine-russia-war.html>

on, hardly accords with long-term national interests. Given Russia’s significant economic and technological lag behind its principal adversaries, a “free-for-all” can result in overexertion and a forced transition to the “minor league” of global politics. In many respects, in a world where chaos and lawlessness rule Russia may be more vulnerable than its adversaries.

Still, the scenario of “revolution” as such cannot determine a future world order for any considerable time, since it does not contain convincing algorithms for resolving urgent problems in global development. Rather, it will be an intermediary stage in the global overhaul, since a collapse is inevitably followed by some sort of “reassembly” of surviving fragments of the old world order and by “filling it in” with new elements. Therefore, neither “restoration” nor “revolution” are full-fledged alternatives to “reformation”—only a reformed world order stands a chance of a successful operation in the long run.

The scenario of “reformation” may be arrived at either directly on the heels of the current crisis (or, rather, current crises, plural, as there is not only the Russia—Ukraine conflict but also the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, the U.S.-China confrontation, exacerbating statehood problems in the Middle East, snowballing archaic elements in the international currency and financial system, the emergent resource shortages, and many other problems), or indirectly, passing through the stages of restoration or revolution. In the former case, both the costs of the transitional period and its duration can be minimized; in the latter case, transitional period may stretch for years and even for decades, and its costs will inevitably be greater.

In any case, Russia will face a relatively lengthy period when the country has to reduce its activism in foreign policy, even in areas that used to be its priorities. It is consequently all the more important to use those opportunities that are still in place, and to insistently seek new algorithms for entering the future world order. Apparently, these algorithms are mostly connected with participating in large multilateral development projects implemented in the dynamic and rapidly changing Eurasian space. Russia will have to significantly revise the set of foreign policy tools it has been employing to project its influence in the last few decades as well as to be ready for its new foreign policy investment bringing in returns only in the long term.

At the same time, Moscow will increasingly have to perform the role it is not used to in Eurasia, that of a “minority stakeholder” achieving its objectives within coalitions with stronger partners. Mastering this role and performing it with maximum usefulness will require not only building professional competences in the newly emerging areas of international cooperation, but revising the notions of today’s world and of Russia’s role in this world that are deeply-rooted among Russian elites. Russia will have to account for the fact that the international community will perceive with major skepticism any large-scale political initiatives coming from Moscow in the nearest future. Overcoming this skepticism will require precise goal-setting, much time, and purposeful and consistent efforts.

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He graduated from Moscow State Institute for International Relations and obtained a post-graduate degree of PhD in History from the Institute for U.S. and Canada Studies under the Academy of Sciences. His previous positions include those in the Institute, including as Director of U.S. Foreign Policy Branch and Deputy Director of the Institute for U.S. and Canada Studies. He taught International Relations in European and U.S. universities. He headed a number of Russian public organizations and foundations in the fields of tertiary education, social sciences and social development.

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Note

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