

# *Russian Foreign Policy: Actual Problems*

V.V. Moiseev

*Belgorod State Technological University named after V.G. Shukhov, Belgorod, Russia*

**Keywords:** foreign policy, world order, national interests, Western sanctions.

**Abstract:** The main task of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation is to provide external conditions for the sustainable socio-economic development of country. Russia today faces serious problems in foreign policy. They are largely connected with the intensification of the confrontational policies of the West, first of all, of the USA towards Russia. The situation is complicated by the rise of anti-Russian sanctions initiated by the United States of America after the accession of the Crimea to Russia. At the same time, there is a devaluation of the role of international law in solving major intergovernmental problems, decline in the prestige of international institutions that are called upon to regulate international relations and to ensure a stable world order. Analyzing the foreign policy of Russia and its results, the author came to the conclusion that as a result of miscalculations, Russia recently has fewer allies and more opponents. For this reason, our country spends hundreds of billions of dollars to increase its defense. According to President V. Putin, twenty trillion rubles have been allocated for the rearmament of the army and navy. And if Russia managed to be drawn into a new arms race, then diplomats do not fulfill their primary function.

## 1. Introduction

At the beginning of the 20th century, the world was multipolar. As a result of the Second World War and a multitude of local conflicts, a bipolar model emerged with the opposition of two poles - the USSR and the USA. The end of the "cold war" in connection with the collapse of the USSR led to a unipolar system of international relations, with the United States playing the leading role.

The course towards unipolarity was laid down in the US National Strategy 2015, where in the section entitled "Comprehensive Military Strategy" among the "enduring" interests "fixed" rules-based international order provided by the US " [1]. This was preceded, not without the support of big politicians, by the discussion in scientific circles about the present day principles of the Versailles system of international relations, established after the end of the Thirty Years War in Europe and enshrined in the Versailles Treaty of 1948. Opponents of this system directly say that "territorial instincts of territorial states" (Jean-François Richard) [2], "the idea of equal sovereignty of states" (Michael Glennon), that "the main principles of the Westphalian formation, including non-interference in internal affairs, interfere with effective global governance immoral and obsolete" (Henry Kissinger) [3].

Some scholars note that world politics for centuries has been an interstate policy, despite the presence of international non-governmental organizations in the 19th century (for example, the International Telegraph Union, the International Postal Union). However, its active subjects in the

second half of the 20th century are transnational corporations, international private financial institutions, non-governmental public organizations, to which states today transfer the exercise of part of their powers, but only a certain part of them. At the same time, the national state has not been canceled. Moreover, paragraph 2 of Article 2 of Chapter I of the Charter of the United Nations proclaims the principle of non-interference in the internal competence of any state [4]. Main functions, goals and objectives of the Russian foreign policy are specified in defined in the following main documents: 1) the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2) the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation, 3) the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation, 4) the Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation, 5) the Information Security Doctrine of the Russian Federation [5].

The important institutions for the implementation of the Russian foreign policy are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Security Council, a constitutional advisory body that prepares decisions of the President of the Russian Federation on issues of ensuring internal and external security of the state [6].

The president of Russia, in accordance with article 86 of the Basic Law, has the right to direct the Russia's foreign policy. The powers of the Federation Council (Article 106) apply to the ratification and denunciation of international treaties of the Russian Federation; making decisions in the issue of the possibility of using the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation outside the territory of the Russian Federation (Article 102). Government on the basis of Article 114 of the Constitution carries out measures to ensure the defense of the country, the state security, the implementation of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation [7].

The article attempts to analyze how these and other state institutions form and implement the modern foreign policy of the Russian Federation.

## 2. Problem Statement

Russia's foreign policy activity is associated with the strengthening of integration interactions with other countries. The priority areas of such interaction are the states of the post-Soviet space, where China, the European Union, the USA, Turkey and others players compete with Russia. The European Union is actively building up the Eastern Partnership policy towards Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Moldova. Turkey is expanding its presence in Azerbaijan. In just a few years, Central Asian countries have fallen predominantly under Chinese influence. The United States invests heavily in post-Soviet economies, exerting the political influence on them through “color revolutions” and the so-called "soft power".

There are obvious attempts to limit the sphere of influence of the Eurasian Union (EAEU). The European Union has set a goal to form a special, “neighboring region” on its eastern borders, in fact, economically integrated with the EU periphery. It should be noted that the new independent states try to pursue a multi-vector policy in order to be less dependent on Russia, and in some cases to be able to manipulate it for their own interests.

Thus, the EAEU is going through a difficult period .

The Ukrainian direction of the Russian foreign policy remains extremely relevant. Ukraine, not coping with its internal problems and focusing on the West, launched an unprecedented confrontation with Russia. This policy is encouraged by the United States and Western European countries, the EU. The territory of Ukraine has geopolitical value for them and, judging by the nature and focus of the Ukrainian foreign policy, regardless of their formal membership in NATO, Ukraine may expand the American military presence on its territory. As it is known, military maneuvers are constantly being held at the Yavorovsky training ground, in which several thousand NATO troops are involved, half of them are Americans.

For Russia, the process of solving the crisis and normalizing relations with Ukraine is a priority task. We are known to be bound by the long-time fraternal bonds, the history of which is lost in centuries. We have a common border, the length of which is 2250 km. Unfortunately, one should agree with the experts that Russia has not yet developed a comprehensive concept of settling relations with Ukraine [8].

The effectiveness of efforts in foreign policy is largely determined by the competent situational and long-term forecasting. Firstly, it makes it possible to identify the leading trends in the development of foreign policy problems and the threats and challenges arising from them. Secondly, the situational forecast allows foreseeing the unfolding of new situations in order to form an adequate policy. Thirdly, such forecasting makes it possible to assess the resources of the foreign policy influence of all the actors involved.

This is very important in the Arctic region, where the interests of the Arctic countries and the new players - non-Arctic states - intersect. For example, the UK has an unfluctuating, persistent interest in security issues in the Arctic. India, Singapore, Switzerland have created their own polar institutions. Switzerland launched its circular Arctic expedition to study extreme climatic conditions, changes of the ice and possibilities to strengthen it. The European Union is implementing the concept of the "New North" and the initiative called "Arctic Window". China proposes the creation of the Arctic belt of the Northern Silk Road. South Korea in 2012 adopted a program to expand its presence in the Arctic. It is even ready to provide support to the indigenous peoples, although it would be nice to consult first with the country where these peoples live. Japan uses cooperation in the Arctic to solve the problems of the northern territories. More than 20 scientific conferences are held annually concerning the Arctic.

In other words, there is a serious struggle for influence in the Arctic region. Some states propose to consider it the common heritage of mankind and insist on the status of internationalization similar to the Antarctic, lobbying the transfer of the Russian northern sea route under international control.

This is no coincidence. Indeed, in the Arctic, according to some data, the untold riches are concentrated (30% of world reserves of natural gas, 13% of oil, a third of world reserves of fresh water, not to mention minerals). The geopolitical rivalry in the region is indicated by the deployed US military satellite grouping, the military presence and NATO exercises, and Norway's attempts to change the status of the Spitsbergen archipelago as a demilitarized zone.

And we are already starting to give adequate answers, because the Arctic sector accounts for 42% of the Arctic territory. We have prepared a State Commission for the Development of the Arctic, formed a portfolio of projects (there are more than 150). These are geological exploration, energy, ecology, transport infrastructure, the opening of new ports, the creation of new-generation icebreakers capable of opening the entire northern sea route, border security, etc. We also provide military security on our territory in the Arctic.

But we need a full-fledged regulatory legal framework governing the presence of subjects of international relations in the region. It is necessary to improve measures to strengthen regional security, to protect the border, and to block initiatives of revising the status of the northern sea route. The concerted coordination of actions of federal executive authorities is required (at the moment, about 20 ministries and departments deal with the problems of the Arctic, but there is no competent authority). It would be necessary to increase the influence of state authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation located in the Arctic zone, to increase control over the expenditure of state funds for the development of the Arctic (which is 5 trillion rubles until 2030).

Russia needs to strengthen bilateral and regional cooperation, be active in the Arctic Council, and assist in giving it the status of a full-fledged international organization. And the permanent situational and strategic forecast will help find the necessary interaction mechanisms, taking into

account the approaches to international cooperation in the region specified in the Foreign Policy Concept.

The weighted valuation approaches require the entire set of national interests of Russia, embodied in foreign policy activities that implement the foreign policy function of the Basic Law.

Thus, the dynamically changing world, its challenges and threats (new forms of terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, transnational criminal networks, drug business, armed conflicts (real and potential), etc.) require the development of effective political and legal tools for the global cooperation to avoid problems of the constitutional security of the state.

Also the increased attention from the political leadership of Russia is required, by the US attempts to impose a so-called American model of democracy on a number of sovereign states of the world. Its essence means to establish, in a country that has fallen into the zone of American interests, a regime acceptable to the American administration. To implement these imperial plans, the US leadership has used not only political, military, but also economic leverage. Today, the US economy makes up a quarter of the global gross product and makes it possible to economically ensure the promotion of the "American democracy" model in the world.

The practice of Washington is widely known to use the US and its allies in military-political blocs to promote the American model of democracy. The uncovered US military aggression against Yugoslavia, a sovereign European state, can be considered a kind of guideline of this strategy in the spring of 1999, after which the US openly ceased to reckon with the norms of international law. After the bombing of the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on March 24, 1999, by NATO aircraft and rocket attacks on objects on the Montenegrin coast of the Adriatic Sea, the American media reported that NATO was "fighting for democracy in the Balkans" [9]. The damage, caused to industrial, transport and civilian facilities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as a result of almost three-month bombardments, according to various estimates, is estimated at between 60 and 100 billion dollars. The death toll of military and civilians has not yet been precisely determined. It varies that from 1200 to 2500 people, including 800 children, were killed [10].

On March 20, 2003, the United States, together with the United Kingdom, without the sanction of the UN Security Council, launched a military campaign against Iraq, under the pretext that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction (which, by the way, was not found), as well as a hypothetical link between Saddam Hussein's regime and Al-Qaeda, fabricated by Washington itself. As additional justifications Washington named the "violations of democracy" and repression by the Iraqi authorities against their citizens. During the Iraq war, about 4,500 American servicemen were killed and more than 32,000 were injured, and up to 1.5 million civilians were injured. At present, Iraq remains the main source of instability in the Middle East.

2011, Libya; as a result of the "soft power" campaign organized by the White House to internationally condemn the Gaddafi regime, in March 2011 five American bombers dropped bombs on almost a hundred targets in Libya. In October 2011, the rebels (allegedly with the help of the Americans) tracked down the Libyan dictator, captured him and shot him without trial and investigation, after having tortured him [10].

To support democratic movements in other countries and promote the idea of liberal democracy in the image and likeness of the United States, American politicians created a number of political tools: the US Agency for International Development (USAID), Peace Corps, Union for Progress, Radio Free Europe, "National Democracy Fund", etc.

US politicians have come up with a political tool called "American democracy," and apply it where they can smell oil or other natural resources that can be profit by changing the political regime in a particular country through controlled social chaos or other modern political technologies [11]. This conclusion is convincingly confirmed by the "color" revolutions: 2003 - the "rose revolution" in Georgia, 2004 - the "orange revolution" in Ukraine, 2005 - the "tulip

revolution" in Kyrgyzstan, 2014 - Euromaidan and the coup d' état in Ukraine, as well as the current events in Venezuela.

Russia chose the troubled Venezuela as its ally in Latin America. Let us consider a bit of history. Until 2009, the relations between Russia and Venezuela were completely normal and civilized, and developed on a mutually beneficial basis. It was the relationship between a seller of weapons to countries of "non-American" orientation and a new country rich in oil and petrodollars. The former President Hugo Chavez came to Russia, made large orders, paid in dollars - and it was beneficial for all and quite understandable from the point of view of national interests. But starting in 2009, Venezuela began to buy Russian weapons not for cash, but on credit, taking advantage of the fact that the Russian Federation often lends to its weapons buyers. By 2019, according to official data, the public debt of Caracas to Moscow exceeded \$ 3 billion. It was restructured, and the first payments were postponed to the first half of the 2020s, since Venezuela now has no money to pay. Moreover, given the situation that we see in the Venezuelan economy, Venezuela will not soon begin to repay this loan. And this risk, by the way, had arisen long before the United States began helping with the organization of the coup d' état [12].

Despite the fact that President Nicolas Maduro proved to be rather an inept and inefficient manager who brought the country to abject poverty and even famine, Russia did not withdraw its assets from the troubled country, because friendship with it promised our country billions in profits. In pursuit of profit, a consortium of 5 Russian oil companies, including the state-owned corporation Rosneft, has already invested \$ 17 billion in the declining economy of Venezuela. Instead of investing in the socio-economic development of Siberia, the raising Rosneft continues to help the troubled Venezuela, while Russian media provide information support to Maduro. Russian capitalists decided to extract oil in Venezuela. But oil in this country is heavy, and in order to process it, you need to build a separate plant, an upgrader, the price of which is several billion dollars. In addition, in order to add light fractions to the heavy Venezuelan oil and only after that to transport it through the pipeline, it is necessary to buy American oil. Our oil bosses didn't do the timely technological expertise and with great delay paid money to foreign oilfield services companies.

Meanwhile, some political processes took place in Venezuela, to which the greedy and short-sighted Russian capitalists paid little attention: Nicolas Maduro gradually lost control over the problematic country in which hyperinflation was developing. If in 2016 it exceeded 500% per year, then according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the rate of inflation in Venezuela at the beginning of 2019 would reach 1,000,000% of inflation [13]. This indicates that the situation in Venezuela is similar to that in Germany in 1923 or in Zimbabwe in the late 2000s. It is characterized by a fall in GDP, hyperinflation and the further deterioration in the standard of living of the population, which together cause widespread dissatisfaction of citizens with the ruling regime. The catalyst for the growth of hyperinflation in the country was the US economic sanctions imposed in January 2019 against the Venezuelan Oil Company.

Thus, Venezuela is in a deep economic and social crisis. Under the increasing US political and economic pressure, the elected President Nicolas Maduro has found it increasingly difficult to retain power in the country. Maduro's friends are getting fewer and fewer. Already there are reports that the current president formally supports China to negotiate with the opposition [12].

And if the US has noticeable successes in applying political and economic pressure on Venezuela, the sanctions against Russia do not achieve the effect for which they were intended. Of course, anti-Russian sanctions to a certain extent slow down the economic development of the country, but they are not able to influence the change of political regime in the Russian Federation. But the US administration headed by President D. Trump cannot solve this problem by armed attack because of the common sense. Russia is not Libya and not Iraq, and V. Putin is not Saddam Hussein.

Thanks to the energetic actions of the third president, the Russian Federation has a powerful nuclear missile weapon capable of delivering a crushing retaliatory strike against any aggressor. Nor will the military-strategic parity change the US withdrawal from the treaty on medium and shorter-range missiles, or even attempts to deploy such weapons along the borders of our country. President V. Putin has warned supporters of such pressure, delivering another message to the Federal Assembly on February 20, 2019: "Russia will have to create and deploy weapons that can be used not only in respect of those territories from which we will emanate a direct threat but also in respect of the territories where decision-making centers are located on the use of rocket complexes threatening us" [14].

In conditions when foreign policy does not have significant success, Russia relies on increasing defense capability and strengthening the army and navy. "Russia has only two allies: its army and fleet" - this expression belongs to the Russian Emperor Alexander III (1845-1894). These he expressed his foreign policy credo [15].

Russian President Vladimir Putin, as they, Emperor Alexander III, relies more on the armed forces than on his foreign policy, which in recent years has often suffered defeat. The reason is that with Russia, which has a weak economy (1.8% of the world economy), large players in the international arena (for example, the United States and the European Union) are often not considered and do not consult.. Therefore, V. Putin has staked on strengthening his allies - the army, navy and security forces inside the country. Huge sums from the federal budget are allocated for their financing to the detriment of the economy and the social sphere.

At the initiative of President V. Putin in 2007, a state program for the production of modern weapons was developed and approved. In terms of funding, it became a record in post-Soviet Russia. In January 2018, this program was extended for another 10 years.

During this time, 20 trillion rubles will be spent on the production and purchase of weapons. And taking into account the rearmament of the FSB, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Rosguards and the Foreign Intelligence Service, this amount will increase to 22 trillion rubles by 2027. And the state does not plan to reduce defense spending, Putin said [16].

On average, for the year, the federal budget will spend 2.2 trillion rubles to re-equip all law enforcement agencies of Russia - three times more than education (663 billion rubles in 2018), and almost 5 times more than health care (460 billion rubles) . Due to this bias in financing, the standard of living of Russians decreases every year. Even according to official data in Russia, the number of destitute citizens today exceeds 20 million people. In fact, they are even more: by 11 thousand rubles (less than \$ 170) per month, which the Russian state has established in the form of a "subsistence minimum" at such prices and taxes as in Russia, it is not possible to live.

### **3. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to research the problems that Russia faces in carrying out foreign policy activities, which is especially important in the context of the Western sanctions.

### **4. Research Questions and Research Methods**

In this study the following issues are addressed:

1. The author consider the problems of the implementation of the Russian foreign policy in conditions of interference by the United States.
2. The author also have studied the issues related to the export of the American model of democracy.
3. A special place in the study is given to the difficulties of the implementation of Russia's foreign policy activities in the context of Western sanctions.

The methodological basis of the publication consists of the following methods: the structural and functional method, the construction of a political and social model, the scenario approach and the scenario projection method, the method of analysis of political texts.

## 5. Findings and Conclusion

The conflict with Western countries in the international arena after the accession of Crimea to Russia and the events in the south-east of Ukraine is becoming increasingly serious. Therefore, the international policy of Russia today is greatly affected by the confrontation with the United States and the strained relations with the EU states. The Western sanctions imposed in response to Moscow's actions against Ukraine exacerbated the already difficult international situation, forcing Russia to respond in foreign policy.

The main function and the main goal of Russia's foreign policy, according to the author, is to ensure national security and create conditions for the country's socio-economic development.

At the moment, the Russian Federation faces difficult foreign policy tasks: to withstand sanctions pressure from the United States and its allies, to reduce political isolation, to adapt the economy to sanctions and to confront the West in the information space.

One of the main activities here is to increase the productivity of relations with China, a growing world power with a powerful economy, considerably more powerful than the economy of our country, which has not joined the anti-Russian sanctions. However, the Russian-Chinese friendship has its limitations. China does not want to spoil business relations with the United States, and Russia is trying not to become dependent on an economically stronger partner. In addition, the interests and strategy of the two countries do not always coincide. Thus, the main priorities in this direction are to strengthen ties with China and to preserve the friendly nature of bilateral relations with Beijing.

Of all the major issues of foreign policy, defense and security, President V.V. Putin is in charge. He has been the national leader of Russia since 2000 and one of the most experienced political leaders in the world. Putin has the complete authority, based on the unprecedented and constant popularity among the ordinary Russians. The foreign policy aimed at returning Russia to the status of a great power is one of the most important reasons for his popularity.

And the achievement of ambitious goals and the implementation of strategic objectives in socio-economic development, defined in his decree of May 7, 2018, will strengthen the position of the Russian Federation and its president in the international arena, despite the anti-Russian sanctions.

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