



PROTECTING PEACE, EARTH, AND FREEDOM OF CHOICE FOR ALL COUNTRIES. NEW IDEAS FOR RUSSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

Report of the HSE University



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The report is based on situation analyses results. Situation analyses was conducted under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, with the support of the Committee on International Affairs of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and the International Public Fund “Russian Peace Foundation,” as well as the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy (CFDP) and *Russia in Global Affairs* journal



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Preface

This report was prepared based on the results of a situation analysis conducted at the end of 2019, a number of preliminary studies, and two subsequent discussions involving a narrow circle of experts. (The situation analysis participants, except for representatives of executive bodies, are listed in the Appendix).

The work on the report went through some rough times. Its version intended for governmental authorities was distributed in February 2020. An open version for the public was intended to come out in March. But the coronavirus epidemic and the information hysteria it triggered made normal discussion impossible. In addition, the profound problems it exposed required many of the conclusions and recommendations made in the report to be refined and some new tasks to be set. At the same time, the overall logic of the report and its underlying message have not changed and, in fact, have become even stronger. So the text fully prepared for printing had to be rewritten or edited to add new pieces, and its presentation postponed. In general, the need for new ideas for Russia's policy, intended both for the country itself and the world, has become even more obvious.

The report continues a series of projects organized by the Faculty of World Economy and International Relations, HSE University, under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, with the participation and support of the International Affairs Committee of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, the *Russia in Global Affairs* magazine, and the International Public Fund "Russian Peace Foundation."

The reports are based on preliminary studies, resulting theses and their discussion by way of situation analysis involving both experts on the issues discussed and in adjacent fields. Participants are selected in such a way as to represent the widest possible range of political views and intellectual schools. We try to attract a variety of specialists, not only those from Moscow. All experts, including representatives of governmental authorities, act in personal capacity and under no circumstances are explicitly quoted.

Abridged versions of the key points made in the report or even their preliminary public versions are sometimes discussed with groups of foreign experts, primarily from China and the United States.

The concept of this report emerged out of reflections on fundamental changes in the world affairs, on Russian policy, previous situation analyses, and debates at the annual CFDP Assembly held in April 2019. In particular, its participants criticized Russian foreign policy for lacking major ideas and for seeking to correct past injustices rather than focusing on the future. Foreign Minister and CFDP member Sergei Lavrov urged his colleagues to come up with alternative constructive ideas. Nothing happened at first, but then a group of CFDP members and other experts decided to analyze the new situation in the military-strategic field and the state of strategic stability. The resulting report contained non-trivial conclusions and evoked a reaction that was truly unprecedented for such publications both in Russia and abroad. (The text of the report is available at: <http://svop.ru/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/REPORT_Eng_1.pdf>).

Some of those ideas and conclusions paved the way for drafting the concept of this report.

Its key point is the need to develop a set of forward-looking ideas — meeting national interests — for the Russian foreign policy strategy. These ideas should obviously reflect the equally urgent need for strategic ideas for domestic development, facilitate the latter and allow Russian politics to regain its forward-looking optimism and drive.

Since such ideas must reflect the needs and realities of the surrounding world now and in the future, the first section of the report contains our (very brief) forecast of the main global development trends.

The second section assesses the results of the Russian foreign and defense policy in recent years and states that many of its achievements have not yet been fully contemplated and formulated for ourselves and the world, even though they do create an objective basis for filling foreign, and partly domestic, policy with new, future-oriented ideological substance and for expanding and deepening the domestic base of the former. In fact, if the benefits of external achievements for domestic policy and everyday life are left unclarified, they may lose public support or even frustrate society.

The third section outlines the main ideas which we think should become the focal point of Russia's foreign policy identity. Initially, there were two such ideas. The third one — protecting the environment at home and globally — was added during the discussion. The need for fundamental steps to strengthen Russia's policy to combat pandemics was just mentioned. This issue is addressed more thoroughly in the cur-

rent version of the report. It also became clear that a number of other topics, primarily culture and humanitarian policy, need correction and promotion as well. Finally, it is clear that a new model of development and international order must be found and proposed to Russia itself and the world. We will be offering our own solutions, including through situation analysis.

The fourth section lists possible new concrete initiatives, or old ones worth revisiting, that could be used for advancing the proposed Russian foreign policy agenda.

We have expanded Section Four by adding a chapter on humanitarian policy and cooperation on countering pandemics. These topics were barely discussed during the situation analysis but were repeatedly mentioned, with humanitarian policy invariably criticized as insufficiently effective. This is why we asked Evgeny Primakov to prepare his set of ideas on this issue. The chapter on desirable international cooperation in combating pandemics and on Russia's role in it was written on the basis of materials kindly provided by Larisa Popovich.

And yet, even we are convinced that this list is far from being unarguable and needs to be corrected and complemented as the world remains highly turbulent and plagued with numerous problems and contradictions. The purpose of the report is to give a new impetus to the Russian foreign policy thought, propose ideas that can reinvigorate Russia's foreign policy, strengthen its international position and internal stability, and prevent the country from sliding back to the stereotypes of recent decades, which proved outdated and even counterproductive.

This will facilitate future-oriented ideas for Russia itself. Without such ideas, great powers are doomed to fade away. This is particularly true of our country which has always been highly ideologized throughout history.

The theses below were prepared and the situation analysis conducted by a scenario team, which included Dmitry Suslov, Deputy Director of the Center for Comprehensive European and International Studies, HSE University; Anastasia Likhacheva, Director of the Center for Comprehensive European and International Studies, HSE University; Igor Makarov, Head of the Department of World Economy, Faculty of World Economy and International Relations, HSE University; Lev Solkshchik, research assistant at the Center for Comprehensive European and International Studies, HSE University; Nikolai Novik, research assistant at the Center for Comprehensive European and International

Studies, HSE University; and Anna Osetrova, junior research assistant at the Center for Comprehensive European and International Studies, HSE University.

We would like to thank all the participants in the situation analysis for their active and creative contribution to our work. The resulting document differs considerably in both format and ideological content from the points discussed during the situation analysis. This is an updated version of the first report. But it is the publishing editor who is fully responsible for the final text and for all the flaws and blunders that may have occurred in it.

Sergei Karaganov,
Head of the Writing and Scenario Team,
Publishing Editor

I. Executive Summary: Main Ideas

I.1. The Need for New Ideas for Russia and the World

I.1.1. The underlying idea of modern world politics is the struggle for a new world order in place of the crumbling one. Disappearing with the latter are not only the “unipolar moment” and the two-bloc system, but also the five hundred years of the West’s domination, which was deeply rooted in its military superiority obtained in the 16th–17th centuries.

I.1.2. The coronavirus epidemic and the deep economic crisis it triggered (not caused) does not change the basic trends in international relations. Rather, it acts as a powerful catalyst, further exacerbates major contradictions, accelerates the redistribution of power in the world and associated rivalry, and weakens habitual models of relations. There is also a danger that the eagerness and necessary concentration on overcoming the pandemic will distract the international community from addressing much more fundamental problems, and impair Russia’s ability to develop and implement a new, urgently needed foreign policy framework and agenda.

I.1.3. Russia’s foreign policy is very successful. However, amid the unfolding struggle of ideas for the contours of a new world order, Russia needs to strengthen and specify the attractive and forward-looking message to itself and to the world: What is its positive contribution to world development? Why should its citizens and the world be interested in Russia’s active and influential role? If Russia fails to do this, or if Russia’s foreign policy aims to correct old injustices and mistakes (as has often been the case in the recent past), it could face a new slowdown. The injustices of the 1990s–2000s are of no interest to the new players, whereas the West is not ready to repent. Residual Western centrism hinders the movement forward.

I.1.4. All participants agreed that the important problem was an internal shortage of ideas that could make national life meaningful and forward-looking, and explain the need for active foreign policy and stronger defense capabilities. The motif of justice, not only social, but also political, primarily equality in front of the law, featured prominently during the discussion. It was pointed out that ideas for the outside world should resonate with ideas for Russia. However the situation analysis focused primarily on ideas for foreign policy.

I.1.5. The country keeps away from one of the main issues on the current and future international political agenda, namely the struggle for preservation of the environment. The most important items on the future agenda are the growing shortage of drinking water and an inevitable increase in mass migration. This struggle may possibly be put on the domestic agenda as well and help consolidate society. We are still a country and a people that are close to nature. We need an active policy to protect our nature, our land and ourselves from the consequences of environmental changes and pandemics. It seems that mankind has reached a certain limit in its development and needs not only a new foreign policy philosophy but also a new development philosophy.

I.1.6. *Russia's latest foreign and defense policy achievements and victories have not yet been capitalized enough to promote its positive contribution to world affairs and shape its attractive foreign policy identity.*

I.1.6.1. By pursuing a firm policy and creating new weapons that make it impossible for the U.S. and NATO to restore their military superiority in the foreseeable future, *Russia has reduced the threat of aggression against itself, a large-scale war and a new conventional and nuclear arms race.* Such an arms race becomes exorbitantly expensive, if not completely senseless. We have got a window of opportunity for a new policy and domestic development.

I.1.6.2. Having put an end to the West's military superiority, on which its political, economic, and cultural dominance has been based for the last five centuries, having stopped in Syria a series of destabilizing color revolutions, by playing an active role in Asia and the Middle East, and maintaining a balanced partnership with all centers of power in these regions, Russia is strengthening the basis for preserving and strengthening the sovereignty of dozens of states, *thus giving them the freedom to choose a civilizational and cultural path as well as economic and political models of development, and saving them the trouble of making the "either-or" choice.*

I.1.7. However, because of the constantly fomented political confrontation, the deteriorating quality of elites in many countries, their despair due to the inability to cope with avalanching problems, which has become quite obvious during the coronavirus epidemic, the emergence of new destabilizing weapons, the spread of military confrontation to new domains (outer space, cyberspace, artificial intelligence), and unprecedentedly rapid changes in the balance of power in the economy, politics, and ideology (which is accelerating due to the pandemic and the

economic crisis it has triggered), there is an objectively high, and even *growing, threat of an inadvertent military clash between major powers and its further escalation to the nuclear level.* The coronavirus hysteria is, among other things, an attempt to distract attention from this inability and failures. But problems are not solved.

I.1.8. In addition, societies become less resistant to the threat of war — a kind of “strategic parasitism,” that is, a habit of peace, unjustified amid the abovementioned trends. This “parasitism” can reduce public support for defense policy when new efforts may be needed in a few years’ time to modernize the Armed Forces and deterrence policy.

I.1.9. In general, the world has been living in a pre-war situation for several years: the danger of unintended global war due to the escalation of some crisis is very high and keeps growing. Elites in many countries are confused and unable to function. The pandemic can help “release steam” only partially and temporarily. But by spurring a long-brewing global economic crisis, accelerating the redistribution of power in the world, and escalating the fight for leadership and rivalry between the U.S. and China, it could further increase the threat of war.

I.1.10. Considering the above, it would be necessary to gradually promote such new aspects of modern Russia’s foreign policy and of its ideological basis such as *active provision of peace, promotion of the freedom of countries to choose their own models of development, joint environmental protection, and response to new global challenges, including pandemics.* Naturally, they need new substance and, above all, a new language different from that of the Soviet campaigns in the 1960s–1980s, and free from illusions created by the “new political thinking.” As one of the participants noted (and everyone agreed with him), “Russia cannot be regarded as a serious international player, a forward-looking great power unless it has a banner bearing its goal and slogan.”

I.2. What Is to Be Done

I.2.1. This policy should be directed both inwards and outwards. *Russia should position itself as the main provider of peace, defender of the freedom to choose ways of development (sovereignty), preventer of hegemonism, guarantor of a “new non-aligned” movement, and a protector of the environment.* A tentative slogan could sound like this: “A strong Russia for peace, freedom of choice for all, and preservation of the planet,” i.e. preserva-

tion of the “world” in its traditional Russian sense, as a community of peoples, societies, nature, homeland, and planet. Russia’s mission is to save Earth from a nuclear and environmental catastrophe. This is not an urge to do the whole mankind a great favor at Russia’s own expense, but a policy that effectively meets the interests of the country and its people. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that this mission cannot be accomplished unilaterally. This is why it is necessary to promote maximum cooperation among all countries in order to strengthen peace and protect the environment. Another version of the proposed policy slogan is “*Let’s save Earth together.*”

I.2.2. The proposed policy and its ideological framework may include four main dimensions:

I.2.2.1. The first one is the reduction of the military threat by easing political confrontation, cutting military activity, and forging dialogue between military and political leaders. It seems that this work is supposed to be launched at the summits during celebrations marking the 75th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War and the Second World War, BRICS and SCO summits in Russia in summer 2020, and a possible meeting of the leaders of the UN Security Council permanent member states.

It is necessary to strengthen the mechanisms of deconfliction and to develop rules of conduct in “grey zones,” where the threat of inadvertent military collision is the highest, especially in the cyber sphere. One step further, when the Americans get ready, a new round of arms limitation negotiations can be proposed in order to block the most destabilizing aspects of the arms race: cyber weapons, space-based weapons, medium-range missiles, low-yield nuclear weapons on strategic carriers, precision non-nuclear weapons, etc. (Needless to say, there must be no hurry, and extreme caution must be exercised in order to avoid falling into the trap of traditional “arms control” paradigms).

It is advisable to propose a multilateral dialogue among all nuclear powers with a view to strengthening strategic stability and developing new rules of the game in the military-strategic field for the future, which would minimize the possibility of accidental and unauthorized use of nuclear weapons due to fatal mistake or misjudgment. It would also be prudent to urge all nuclear powers to reject the use of military force against each other in any form as risking to provoke nuclear escalation and to cause catastrophic consequences for the planet and the whole mankind.

Such a statement could be adopted at a meeting of the leaders of the UN Security Council permanent members.

Perhaps it could also be possible to reiterate (albeit somewhat idealistically) support for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction, and certainly commitment to nonproliferation (although it may already be too late).

I.2.2.2. The second dimension reaffirms deterrence as the main way to prevent the use of force between nuclear powers in the foreseeable future as the international system is rapidly restructuring itself and new rules of international co-existence are being elaborated (or traditional ones restored). When Russia de facto gave up the policy of active deterring the West in the 1990s and 2000s, the latter immediately committed a series of aggressive acts against Yugoslavia, Iraq, and Libya. A possible slogan for such a policy could be “Russian strength for the prevention of war, for peace” in contrast to the American “peace through strength.”

It is necessary to further improve Russia’s nuclear and non-nuclear deterrent capabilities, without getting involved in an arms race, and to produce the most advanced strategic systems, but without building them up beyond measure. It would also be desirable to extend the New START Treaty until 2026 in order to preserve the current mechanisms of ensuring predictability and to have time for developing a new understanding and architecture for maintaining strategic stability.

I.2.2.3. The third dimension is the development of a national and international program of struggling against environmental pollution (as well as against carbon dioxide emissions). It should include, above all, measures to stop using disposable plastic products, limit harmful emissions and energy losses, and launch a massive (but very inexpensive) campaign to restore and reforest areas affected by fires and overexploitation. This program should also cover territories around big cities, thus engaging large numbers of people in environmental protection efforts.

It is necessary to promote, both inside and outside the country, Russia’s image as a “green country,” emphasizing the riches and diversity of its nature as a value, not only as a resource of economic development. The Arctic should become the world’s main platform for scientific cooperation, a natural laboratory for studying the nature of climate change.

There is also an obvious need to provide information support for Russian readiness to increase the supply of organic food and water-intensive

goods, thus bringing tens of millions of hectares of idle land into use. For example, during its BRICS presidency, Russia could propose increasing its grain supplies to Africa using Chinese-built infrastructure.

I.2.2.4. The fourth dimension is the protection of political, cultural, and civilizational diversity, sovereignty of countries, the freedom to choose their own way of development. By acting as an independent global center of power, pursuing active policies in key regions of the world, and maintaining balanced partnerships with regional players, Russia will oppose attempts to impose unification and political, cultural or economic hegemony, or put countries in a position where they would have to make the hard “either-or” choice. It is advisable to position Russia as the leader of a “new non-aligned” movement, bringing together countries that do not want to side with those seeking global or regional hegemony, and that want to develop independently. Naturally, Russia should also support the existing non-aligned movement. This work is so far insufficient in Russia’s foreign policy rhetoric and practice.

I.2.3. It would be appropriate to propose, together with China and other BRICS countries, broader international cooperation in combating pandemics, including assistance to the least protected countries with weak health systems. The coronavirus epidemic has shown that the existing system is inadequate. Possible initiatives may include broadening scientific and technical cooperation in the production of vaccines; coordinating the positions of BRICS and SCO countries in the WHO and promoting increased funding and broader competences for the organization; sharing best practices to strengthen national health systems; coordinating BRICS, SCO and G20 countries’ policies to assist countries with less developed healthcare systems.

I.2.4. Another possibility is to position Russia as an exporter of confidence and security through the supply of air defense systems and the protection of digital infrastructure.

I.2.5. It is worth demonstrating once again the readiness to act jointly in post-crisis situations after industrial and increasingly frequent natural disasters and pandemics (especially in the most vulnerable countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America), and deepen such cooperation within the BRICS and/or SCO framework. China’s and Russia’s offer of humanitarian aid to some European countries and the U.S. opens up opportunities for cooperation with them in this field.

I.2.6. It is necessary to enhance Russia's humanitarian policy, which is still falling short of its potential, and to engage civil society organizations into its implementation. The Federal Agency for the CIS Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo) should adopt new practices and do more than just organizing solely cultural events. Its funding needs to be increased in order to turn it into a key institution of bilateral non-military and non-macroeconomic assistance to other countries, and into a humanitarian policy coordinating center.

I.3. How Is It to Be Done

I.3.1. We propose promoting these ideas and launching related foreign policy initiatives in the context of celebrations marking the 75th anniversary of the end of the Great Patriotic War and the Second World War, BRICS and SCO summits, and a possible meeting of the leaders of the UN Security Council permanent member states in New York.

I.3.2. The new policy of protecting peace, the freedom of choice for all, and the environment should be implemented gradually and cover a period of 10–15 years, that is, for the expected duration of fierce struggle for restructuring the international system, for developing new rules (restoring previous ones), and establishing new balances. It is possible that an inevitable negative reaction by a large part of the West can actually help make the campaign more popular in non-Western countries.

I.3.3. A new language that does not resemble the terminology of the past Cold War is very important. Tentatively, it could be “securing peace, peace-saving, protection of Earth,” or “joint peace-creation,” or “saving Earth and the world is a common cause” instead of “the struggle for peace.” Efforts to prevent an arms race should be undertaken not only in order to reduce the threat of war, but also in order to invest the funds thus saved in environmental protection and reduction of social inequality. Instead of strengthening strategic stability, Russia should propose strengthening multilateral strategic stability. Words must grab attention.

I.3.4. The primary target of this policy is Russian society, and societies and the ruling circles in the non-West: SCO, BRICS, ASEAN, and Arab countries, as well as Japan, South Korea, and Turkey. China is a potentially important ally, a country that sustained the biggest human losses in World War II after the Soviet Union.

The West should be considered an audience, let alone partner, only on a secondary or even tertiary basis. In fact, Western elites, gripped by a massive anti-Russian information campaign, barely hear Russia's reasoning at all. Although there is a visible fear of war in Europe and it seems to be more and more willing to cooperate, especially Southern and Central European countries. The obvious inability and unwillingness of the EU and NATO to deal with the real challenges of European security, migration, and pandemic will only reinforce this trend.

Engaging Western countries and their political forces in the implementation of the new policy could be possible after creation of a "coalition for peace and Earth." In the meantime, it is worth showing the U.S. that it cannot regain strategic superiority (it also makes sense to propose all sorts of dialogues, even though they can hardly achieve any results in the coming years, except for improving the atmosphere). In Europe, there is no need to intimidate Europeans any more (they have already seen our strength). Instead, it is necessary to encourage them to build confidence and reduce their armed forces, weapon stockpiles, and military expenditures. It is important to keep on showing, that European NATO members (without the U.S.) already spend much more on military needs than Russia does. By conducting dialogues with Europeans Russia should try to develop common approaches to security challenges in the years to come. But these challenges are not springing up along the East-West axis, where NATO is persistently trying to bring them back.

I.3.5. The proposed correction of Russia's foreign policy and its ideological content is absolutely inexpensive and even economically lucrative. We propose using military-economic and political investments which so far remain largely "uncapitalized." The only relatively costly component is environmental protection and pandemic control. But they, too, can, first, bring economic benefits, and, second, are by and large unavoidable. And it would be better to lead this process from the very beginning than respond to external or internal pressure.

1. The Future State of the World. The Need for a New Agenda

1.1. The prevailing view in the international and Russian analytical foreign policy community that world politics, economy, and spiritual sphere have plunged into a state of total unpredictability and confusion is only partly true. It reflects not only the growing tendency towards chaos, but also the inability to see global development trends by using the old intellectual and conceptual framework. The majority of people in the West, which was the intellectual trendsetter for decades or maybe even centuries, simply do not want to accept the new realities, which in most cases indicate the long-term weakening of the West's geopolitical, economic, and ideological positions.

1.2. A truly unpredictable factor is the level of intellect and the public mood, when generation Z, or “snowflakes,” reach maturity, with its super-connectivity, dependence on the IT environment, and inability to tell real events from virtual ones, and for this reason heavily prone to drastic fashion and mood swings. Almost massive coronavirus hysteria is the latest example of psychological dependence on information. A major factor reducing the predictability of global development is further advance of information technologies, especially artificial intelligence (AI). But if humanity does not lose (which is more than likely) its basic values — the desire to live and do so in society, have a family, promote patriotism, and feel attachment to native culture — AI will not become dominant or its influence will be limited.

1.2.1. Whereas most of the other critical trends are quite predictable (despite possible accidents and the character and actions of leaders, whose influence grows paradoxically during rapid and monumental changes). The coronavirus epidemic does not eliminate, but, on the contrary, strengthens these trends and acts as a catalyst. Both negative (increasing great power rivalry, leadership struggle) and potentially positive (increasing demand for joint fight against global challenges) processes are accelerating at the same time.

1.3. The fastest and the most dramatic redistribution of power ever between the old leaders (mostly in the West) and new leaders (mostly in Asia) will continue. The coronavirus epidemic, the economic crisis it has

triggered, and the information warfare only boost this process. A possible exception to the downward trend is the U.S., which will remain a superpower for at least several more decades. But the U.S., too, is losing the ability to dictate its will to other countries and determine the development of the world economy and politics as a whole. The U.S. has already become the most dangerous actor among major international players for many years to come. It is turning from a winning status quo power into a “revisionist,” if not revanchist, one. Besides, it will remain deeply divided in the near future.

1.4. The fundamental cause of this shift is the end the West’s almost five-hundred-year-long military superiority, which was the basis of its political, economic, ideological, and cultural domination in the world. Amid the immensely increased mutual interdependence, the world is going back to the traditional multipolarity.

1.5. Most of the international regulation institutions are becoming weaker or being purposefully destroyed. The speed of change and the fierceness of competition prod global and regional powers into acting without rules. This is one of the main reasons, but not the only one, why the importance of military force keeps growing in international relations.

1.6. Digitalization, growing inequality, climate change, and mass migrations — the main economic tendencies of the emerging world — are fraught with mounting social tensions inside countries and stiffening competition between them. Mankind does not yet have intellectual or institutional instruments to deal with these challenges. As the current coronavirus epidemic vividly shows, potential solutions are sought more and more often at the national or regional level, although the challenges are truly global in nature.

1.6.1. This gap necessitates tighter requirements to national elites. Leadership and even personalization of politics and diplomacy are regaining significance in international relations although at a completely different level of global problems and global interdependence.

1.7. The global economic project created by the United States after World War II is falling apart. Globalization has been partly reversed. The world economy is being fragmented, regionalized and, above all, po-

liticized. And all this is happening despite a slightly shrinking but still unprecedentedly high level of economic interdependence. In these circumstances, economic interdependence is increasingly turning from a predominantly positive factor into a factor of vulnerability. The coronavirus pandemic has heightened this perception and accelerated further weakening of global governance.

1.8. Instead of “world government” or hegemony under the rule of the United States (the West), there is a powerful trend towards renationalization of world politics and partly the economy, towards the revival of the role and influence of nation-states and their elites. The coronavirus pandemic has accelerated this process dramatically. It has clearly shown that there is no alternative to states as actors of international relations, whose legitimacy and survival depends on the ability to provide public goods primarily to their own people, and has strengthened the factor of state sovereignty. Because of globalization, global threats like pandemics, and the information revolution, states cannot fully control the situation in their territories even though they are increasingly trying to make independent domestic and foreign policy decisions. Their striving for sovereignty and political and cultural independence is one of the main global trends.

1.9. The democratization of international relations will continue. People in medium-sized and even small countries claim a political role of their own, urging their elites to act more independently. This is facilitated by the “political awakening” of people due to the rapid advance of information and communication technologies, and the growing inability of traditional world leaders to provide an attractive example to follow. Not only do many medium-sized countries and major regional players refuse to follow in the footsteps of great powers, but their participation becomes vitally important for resolving key international conflicts and problems (the Middle East is clear proof) and ensuring effective global governance. At the same time, faced with global confrontation, medium-sized countries and regional centers of power do not want to get trapped in a situation where they will have to make a choice “either-or,” to which Washington is pushing them. There is an objective demand for a “new non-aligned” movement.

1.10. Two geo-economic and geopolitical centers — “China plus” and “U.S. plus” — are emerging, but this process is uneven.

1.10.1. In geopolitical terms, the U.S. is pushing the world towards new bloc polarization, thus seeking to restore its dynamism and leadership, impose confrontation, and weaken those who disagree with its hegemony. U.S. actions during the coronavirus pandemic (inability to cope with its spread in its own territory and selfishness with regard to allies), a striking contrast to China's successes both at home and in helping others, and the new economic crisis are reducing the U.S.'s political influence and attraction, thus powering the struggle for leadership and provoking Washington to adopt an even more confrontational stance towards Beijing and apply even more pressure on Western allies. The epidemic has become nearly a central element of the U.S. information war against China, an instrument of political pressure.

1.10.2. Beijing, for its part, is offering the Belt and Road Initiative and launching an information and political offensive against the background of its own success in combating the coronavirus pandemic. Before the epidemic, although pursuing increasingly confident and globally oriented policies, China had never made any claims to leadership. Now this political and psychological restraint seems to have been eased, and Beijing has openly said that it is setting an example for the rest of the world to follow.

1.10.3. Europe of the European Union has apparently missed the opportunity to become (jointly with Russia) the third pillar of the new world order and will be getting down, while slowly disintegrating. Although it is unlikely to crumble completely, its fundamental restructuring seems inevitable. The coronavirus epidemic has once again highlighted the dominant role of its member states, especially major ones, and has made supranational institutions even weaker. The euro zone is likely to undergo serious changes. The center and the south of the European subcontinent will most probably gravitate towards the Eastern pole; the west and the north, towards the American one.

1.10.4. Russia still has a lot of room for maneuver. From the geopolitical point of view, it will most likely remain an independent center and will continue to pursue an independent domestic, foreign, and defense policy. Economically and technologically, it will in time gravitate towards the Eastern pole, while retaining the ability to make independent political and military decisions. Russia, with Beijing's support, is proposing a Greater Eurasia partnership. But it remains to be seen when it can become reality.

1.11. The international environment will continue to be re-ideologized. With internationalist communism and ultranationalism (fascism) gone, religions weakening, especially in the Western world, and global liberal democracy increasingly declining, an ideological vacuum is emerging. A struggle for filling it is beginning. It is partly filled with left-wing and right-wing nationalism, social discontent, and green radicalism. Russia is trying to fill this vacuum with patriotism and conservatism; China is offering a somewhat vague concept of “community of common destiny.” Against this background, the West is waging a desperate rearguard political and information war against its geopolitical and geo-economic competitors, trying to discredit them by using the remaining information advantages. Those countries, societies and civilizations that can offer viable ideologies to fill this vacuum will gain a powerful advantage in the struggle for leading positions in the future world order.

The struggle for control in the sphere of ideas is growing increasingly fierce in front of our eyes. The key reason for the onslaught of anti-Russian sentiment in the United States and the West as a whole is that they are trying to use the “image of the enemy” in order to regain control of social media that are snatching this control out of the hands of traditional elites.

1.12. Although Russia has strengthened its capacity for effective strategic deterrence, the threat of major international conflicts and their escalation into global war is growing and likely to increase further in the foreseeable future. The reasons for this are as follows:

1.12.1. Growing international competition at both global and regional levels; the coronavirus epidemic and the ensuing economic crisis make it more dynamic and fill it with a new agenda.

1.12.2. Moral and intellectual degradation of elites in many countries due to information and political processes. (The worst are chosen more and more often, responsible elites are disappearing, those who take their place are increasingly dependent on the IT environment and have a shrinking planning horizon).

1.12.3. A situation where traditional elites are losing support due to the information revolution, environmental changes, mounting social inequality, protests, growing migration, and decline of traditional institutions of governance, breeds confusion and the desire to “simplify the

situation,” including through war. The coronavirus hysteria, especially in the West, which distracts attention from unsolved problems and failures, seems to serve as a substitute for “a little victorious war” that allows to sideline and suppress discontent.

1.12.4. The development of nuclear, high precision non-nuclear, hypersonic and space-based weapons, cyber weapons, military robots, drones, etc. produces their increasingly destabilizing “mix.”

1.12.5. Arms limitation regimes and channels of interaction between the military-political leadership of major countries are falling apart; mistrust and strategic uncertainty are increasing; political hostility is growing.

1.12.6. Weapons of mass destruction and some other systems, which particularly destabilize the military and political situation, keep spreading. More and more militarily powerful players are emerging. This does not help amplify the effect of mutual multilateral deterrence so far, but on the contrary, like the abovementioned factors, weakens strategic stability and increases the risk of outbreak of armed conflicts and their unintended escalation to the global level.

1.12.7. The fear of war has been pushed into the background. “Strategic parasitism” — the belief that the relative peace that has held for seventy-five years will continue — has prevailed. But this feeling is deceptive. A large part of Russian society and elites feel the same way. In the long run, this can weaken public support for defense programs.

1.13. Climate change, pollution, and increasing water shortages in Asia and Africa make new waves of mass migration inevitable.

1.14. Mankind is probably approaching its “growth limits.” In any case, pollution of the environment and climate change will continue to be a priority for most countries and regions. The green agenda is becoming one of the prevailing international issues. It is unifying almost by definition. Russia has so far been largely inactive in this respect even though the pressure of environmental issues inside and outside the country will inevitably increase, and its people are still close to nature (Suffice it to mention the world’s unique experience of “dacha” (country house) ownership by millions of Russians).

Russia can (and should) become one of the leaders in promoting a new philosophy of development aimed at protecting and saving people

and the environment. The country has significant resources, especially in the field of nature conservation, which can be shared and developed in order not only to improve life at home, but also help the rest of the world.

1.15. There is even a more significant challenge. Modern capitalism, based on constantly growing consumption, is increasingly at odds with the needs of societies and the planet itself as borne out quite vividly by the universal unpreparedness for the coronavirus pandemic. Mankind is facing the need to find a new model of development. There is an opportunity to become actively involved in the development and promotion of this model (in addition to conservatism, patriotism, and concepts and slogans we propose).

2. Russia's Foreign Policy Achievements. What Russia Is Doing for Itself and the World but Is Not Formulating

2.1. Thanks to partial economic recovery, military strengthening, skillful and determined foreign and defense policy, and pure luck — the weakening of self-proclaimed opponents — Russia is among the top three nations in the world. This also became possible due to the fact that most of society and elites have united against external pressure and felt proud of the country's foreign policy victories. However, the economy is still stagnating and the demographic situation is unfavorable. At this point, Russia's opponents and potential allies believe that the country will become weaker in the long term.

2.2. Support for military operations abroad is already dwindling, as many sociological surveys show and as most participants in the situation analysis agreed. The ability of a proactive and assertive foreign policy to secure public support for the authorities is declining, even though this policy is successful and effective. One of the reasons for this is that the authorities are not explaining to people that Russian military operations abroad are not only necessary for security considerations but for the most part are not costly and bring not only political but also economic gains. Another reason is the growing feeling that preoccupation with external affairs distracts attention from internal problems which are much more important for most people.

2.3. The current state of the world, future global development trends, and the state of Russian society require Russia's foreign and domestic policies to have an exciting, unifying and spirit-lifting core of ideas, on the basis of which it could build a forward-looking strategy, attractive for itself and the world.

2.4. Russia has certain foreign policy achievements that can and should send a message to the present-day and future world, and to its own society, become the basis for its "mission" and reflect its positive contribution to world affairs. But, scientifically speaking, they have not been conceptualized and verbalized yet, that is, they have not been translated into the language of proposals and slogans.

2.5. **At the global level**, Russia is already acting as an important provider of security, the freedom of countries to choose development models, and sovereignty.

2.5.1. By successfully modernizing its Armed Forces, including strategic nuclear forces, carrying out a balanced defense policy, maintaining strategic deterrence and avoiding being drawn into a new arms race, Russia has restored the balance of power on the global scale and has cut the ground from under the West's five-hundred-year-long political, economic, and cultural dominance which rested largely upon its military superiority. It has put an end to the "unipolar moment" when the West committed aggression and took destabilizing steps, remaining unpunished (Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya, NATO's expansion, and support for or instigation of color revolutions which plunged entire regions into chaos and suffering).

2.5.2. This makes international relations more democratic and creates conditions for the diversity of cultures and the freedom of countries to choose their own models of development, as well as for the rise of previously sidelined civilizations. Many countries have obtained the opportunity to use their competitive advantages in economic competition. The ability of the West to syphon off the gross world product and receive "the military rent" by relying on military superiority and its dominance in the world system has decreased.

2.5.3. Russia is strengthening strategic deterrence both in its own relations with the United States and in China's relations with the United States by creating hypersonic weapons, modernizing strategic nuclear forces as a whole, and assisting China in building its own Early Warning System. By so doing Russia precludes possible U.S. illusions that it can become invincible by building a missile defense system or deliver a disarming strike against China, let alone Russia.

2.5.4. The creation of hypersonic and some other weapons and systems makes it less necessary for Russia to get involved in a strategic arms race, both nuclear and non-nuclear. As a result, Russia is strengthening deterrence and is the only great power whose defense budget is not growing today. The absence of reasons for Russia to build up its strategic nuclear arsenal underscores its role as a responsible nuclear power honoring its NPT obligations. In addition, since Russia has ruined the United States' hope for regaining military superiority in the foreseeable

future, an arms race becomes increasingly costly and senseless for the United States.

2.5.5. The strategic partnership between Russia and China strengthens strategic stability and reduces the risk of conflict between great powers. Neither Russia nor China is in a position where they have to “wage a war on two fronts,” which makes their foreign policy less impulsive and more responsible, and turns their relations into a key factor that strengthens international stability and peace.

2.6. **At the regional level**, Russia’s active and balanced foreign policy, supported by its regained military strength, also contributes to the strengthening of peace, security, the freedom of countries to choose development models, and sovereignty of states. Moscow often acts as an important balancer which saves countries the trouble of having to side with a certain candidate for hegemony, thus allowing them to remain independent and sovereign.

2.6.1. **In Europe**

2.6.1.1. So far, the expansion of NATO and other Western alliances into post-Soviet states has been stopped. The 2008 conflict in Georgia and the current conflict in Ukraine are a lesser evil compared to a big war in Europe that would have been extremely likely if the alliance had continued to move into territories that are critical for Russia’s security. Russia’s strong response to halt the West’s expansion was a painful but undoubtedly necessary step which laid the foundation for balanced and good-neighborly relations in Europe in the future and even between Russia and Ukraine.

Having seen Moscow’s firmness and strength, and the weakening of institutions on which they have always relied, some European countries are already trying to find new ways to mend relations with Russia despite their dependence on the United States.

The dialogue with Ukraine is also getting back to life. The conflict could have been avoided if the Ukrainian elite had not fallen for illusions and had resisted attempts to use their country and its people as “cannon fodder” in geopolitical rivalry, and if Russia had started to pursue a tougher and better thought-out policy sooner.

2.6.1.2. The strengthening of Russia’s conventional deterrence capabilities has averted the possibility of its defeat in a non-nuclear war, if it ever begins, and reduced the risk of nuclear weapons use.

2.6.1.3. By continuing its “pivot to the East,” Russia has significantly changed the balance of power on the European subcontinent in its own favor. Instead of the failed idea of building a “common European home” and then “Greater Europe” with the EU as its center, there is now a chance to create a system of cooperation, development and security, more stable and less dependent on external players — the Greater Eurasian Partnership. Efforts to create it have put an end to Russia's subordinate political and psychological position with regard to the West and Europe and have become one of the factors that are prompting strategically minded elites in EU countries to seek ways to restore relations with Russia. EU countries are beginning to realize that they are in a strategic impasse and it can be overcome only through the restoration of partnership with Russia, certainly not on the terms of the 1990s–2000s, but on the basis of neighborhood and equal cooperation and new rules to be developed jointly.

2.6.2. In Central Eurasia

2.6.2.1. A strategic partnership has been built with China, there is no open geopolitical rivalry between the two neighboring great powers, and the positions of both have become stronger.

2.6.2.2. This partnership strengthens the sovereignty and security of Central Asian countries. They do not have to choose between Russia and China; they can develop cooperation with both of them and combine integration within the EAEU with interaction as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative. This was greatly facilitated by Russia's proposal to “intertwine” (or develop in a coordinated way) Eurasian economic integration with the Belt and Road Initiative.

2.6.2.3. Russia and China are working together to strengthen security in Central Asia and Afghanistan within the SCO framework.

2.6.2.4. The ability of external powers to undermine stability, impose color revolutions, and pursue a “divide and rule” policy is diminishing. The rivalry for the region with key powers in the Near and Middle East is losing its intensity.

2.6.2.5. Russia's operation in Syria has impaired the ability of the “terrorist international” to carry out subversive campaigns. Thousands of terrorists recruited in Russia and neighboring countries have been destroyed.

2.6.3. In the Post-Soviet Space

2.6.3.1. By supporting and strengthening the EAEU and the CSTO, Russia bolsters the security and sovereignty of the member states with-

out limiting their freedom to choose their own development models and pursue a multi-vector foreign policy. These institutions are guarantors of peace both in relations between the participating states and with other centers of power such as China, the EU, Turkey, and Iran.

2.6.3.2. Membership in the CSTO and the EAEU where decisions are made by consensus is an example not only of equal cooperation between countries with different political and economic weights and political systems, but also of bolstering of sovereignty of medium-sized and small countries. This membership qualitatively strengthens their positions in relations with major external players: Belarus, with Poland and the EU; Armenia, with Turkey and Iran; Central Asian countries, with China. Everyone benefits from integration, but smaller EAEU members even more so.

2.6.3.3. Russia's actions with regard to Ukraine since 2014 have also been consistent with the logic of contributing to peace. Firstly, by supporting the choice of people in Crimea and providing assistance to Donbass, Russia prevented a big war in Europe, which would have been provoked by attempts to draw Ukraine into NATO. Large-scale violence and fighting in Crimea, which would certainly have started if it had not been reincorporated into Russia, would have led to a full-scale war between Russia and Ukraine. Secondly, Russia did not "invade" Ukraine, but supported those who opposed the coup, the rise of Ukrainian nationalism and neo-fascism, and the policy of forced Ukrainization. Thirdly, Russia does not obstruct Ukraine's development by European model and within the framework of European identity, if this reflects the real preferences of the Ukrainian people.

2.6.4. In Asia and the Asia Pacific Region

2.6.4.1. Russia has helped maintain the military balance between China and India, and ensured the participation of both countries (and Pakistan) in the SCO. In the long run, both factors will help improve relations between them and overcome conflicts in Asia.

2.6.4.2. Russia is reducing the risk of polarization in the Asia Pacific region and its division into two opposing blocs (American and tentatively Chinese) by playing a more active role in Asia-Pacific politics in general, building balanced partnerships with all key centers of power in Asia, above all, India, as well as with South Korea, Japan, ASEAN countries, and Pakistan, while at the same time strengthening strategic partnership with China.

2.6.4.3. This not only reduces the risk of conflict in the Asia Pacific region but also strengthens the sovereignty and security of medium-sized and smaller countries in the region. They do not have to make a “choice” between the U.S. and China, and can remain independent.

2.6.5. In the Middle East

2.6.5.1. In Syria, Russia has stopped the policy of violent regime change in the Middle East, thus giving its countries a chance to choose their own models of development and decide how to combine secular practices with religious ones, and authoritarianism with democracy in public administration and social life.

2.6.5.2. Russia has helped prevent a series of successive statehood collapses in the Middle East. The chaos that swept the region after the Western coalition's invasion of Iraq is gradually subsiding.

2.6.5.3. By preventing terrorists' success in Syria and by convincing the countries of the region to accept this reality, Russia has reduced (at least for now) the likelihood of an even greater conflict escalation between Iran and Saudi Arabia, as well as between Iran and Turkey. The Astana format involving Russia, Turkey, and Iran is helping improve relations between Ankara and Tehran.

2.6.5.4. As a balancer and an extra-regional center of power alternative to the United States, Russia promotes independent and multi-vector foreign policies of Middle Eastern countries. Examples are Turkey, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia.

2.6.5.5. At the same time, in the Syria crisis and in the Middle East as a whole Russia has been strictly following its own national interests: destroying terrorists, preventing destabilization of neighboring regions, and training of modern armed forces. Russia's ability to influence the oil market in its own interests has increased. Its military successes in Syria have opened up new markets for Russian weapons.

3. Russia: New Ideas for Itself and for the World

3.1. Having achieved much, in the second half of the 2010s Russia faced the need to formulate new strategic, attractive and forward-looking ideas for its foreign policy, ideas that would simultaneously solidify Russia's international position, show what it gives the world as a great power, make internal Russian existence meaningful, and provide public support for active foreign policy and the strengthening of defense capability.

The main message produced by the discussion and supported by the overwhelming majority of the participants was that unless Russia has forward-looking ideas and an attractive picture of the world it wants to build together with others (and lead this process) and offers them to its own society and the world, it will not be able to capitalize (and therefore will partly lose) its impressive foreign and defense policy advantages. Foreign policy and military force should be backed and supplemented with a moral and ideological component.

The existence of such ideas is one of the constitutive features of a great power. Russia obviously cannot be a different, "normal country," as many wanted in the 1990s. If it abandons great powerness, it will simply collapse.

3.2. One of the examples of defeat due to the withering away of big ideas is the Soviet Union, where the unifying communist ideology declined and degenerated in the 1970s–1980s. A current example is Europe of the European Union. It has abandoned the national ideas of great powers, which has turned them into medium-sized states (only France is trying to cling to its former status), proclaimed European peace as its goal and has achieved it (though mainly with the help of the USSR/Russia and the United States and their nuclear weapons), and is now sliding down, slowly but surely. The EU had a chance to realize a new big idea — a space of security and cooperation from Lisbon to Vladivostok, combining Europe's technology and finance with Russia's resources, human capital, and strategic power. But the European Union rejected this project.

However, some big ideas proved unrealistic and led the countries and elites that had put them forth to catastrophe. One such idea was Europe united by force under Napoleon, then Kaiser, then Hitler. The Soviet

Union had the Communist International. The West's idea of recent decades is liberal democracy, but it, too, is declining, even though it is trying to fight back.

3.3. In the first quarter of a century after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia and its elite had certain goals to pursue, albeit of secondary importance: "to be like Europe," "rise from knees," regain the status of great power, and restore internal stability. Some were dismissed as false and unrealistic, others were achieved. Several years ago, Vladimir Putin came up with the bright and forward-looking idea of building the Great Eurasian Partnership as a region of cooperation and development, free of zero-sum game, first and foremost through Russia's pivot to the East, its partnership with China, coordinated development of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, and the SCO, but also open to the EU states and ASEAN members. However, this initiative is clearly not enough to build Russia's new foreign policy identity, fill its foreign policy with new ideas in the new conditions. Especially since some experts claim that this idea is not developing dynamically enough itself. The "pivot to the East" risks turning from a potentially powerful idea for national development into an economic and technocratic project, which could result in its complete halt.

3.4. Russia is still gripped tightly by defensive Western centrism, seeking to throw fair criticism at the West wherever and whenever possible. Although Russia should not give up its principled stance with regard to the West's policy which is often irresponsible, in the new circumstances, where the major question is how the new international order would look like, this criticism should be only part — and not the biggest one — of Russia's foreign policy agenda. The emphasis should be on what a strong Russia gives the world as a great responsible power, and what a fairer and more peaceful world order should be like.

3.4.1. Some of the recent moves indicate that Russia is drifting away from its previous Western-centered foreign policy paradigm, breaking free from it politically and psychologically. One of them is the above-mentioned Greater Eurasian Partnership and a new rendition of the concept of multilateral collective security for the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. The logic of Russia's actions in Syria and the Middle East as a whole is another evidence. Putin's speech at the Valdai Conference

in October 2019 was the first major speech by a Russian leader that was dedicated to relations with the non-West and did not criticize the West at all. But these initiatives are of a one-time nature so far and lack a common foundation — a unifying idea visualizing a strong Russia’s distinctive and positive contribution and role in the world, its “mission.”

3.5. The need for new bright strategic and future-oriented positive ideas for Russia’s foreign policy and for its attractive foreign policy identity is due to two main reasons.

3.5.1. The first reason is a new stage of global development, characterized by intensified ideological competition, the struggle for a new, polycentric world order, increased threat of war between great powers, and the desire of many countries to act independently. Russia needs to position itself in a world where U.S.-driven confrontation with China appears to be turning into the main axis of international relations.

3.5.2. The second reason is that the lack of new ideas can lead to a decline in public support for active foreign and firm defense policy, to internal stagnation, dissatisfaction of part of the elites and population, to even greater fermentation of the liberal swath, as well as to the strengthening of the positions of geopolitical opponents and their willing or unwilling domestic allies at the Russian ideological field. Renovation and clear statement of Russia’s foreign policy identity will help explain to Russian society how it can benefit from the country’s position as a great power, its active, independent, and low-cost foreign and defense policy, and show the outside world how a strong Russia can contribute to global development.

3.6. Like the national idea in general, such ideas should excite, help mold public conscience, make national life more meaningful, and unite the elite and society as much as possible. But at the same time they must conform to the basic values of society in a broad sense, and not run counter to its interests. Recent Russian history provides an example of such contradictions. Part of the Russian elite in the 1980s–1990s not only wanted to “join Europe,” but was ready to limit Russia’s sovereignty in order to get “a pass” to the Western system. This policy and ideology were doomed from the very beginning, even before Primakov’s famous U-turn over the Atlantic. They provoked fierce resistance from society

and much of the elite, for whom sovereignty and independence had historically, and genetically, been ultimate values. Only if an idea proposed to the elite and society captures them can it become effective and serve as the basis for messages to the outside world.

3.7. Finally, in order to lead and win, the ideas underpinning foreign policy, foreign policy identity must correspond to existing and emerging global development trends. The idea of multipolarity was quite relevant and correct in the 1990s–2000s as an indication of the desirable direction in which to move in order to overcome U.S. hegemony. But now it is simply a statement of fact. Moreover, the idea of multipolarity is less attractive to the many countries that are unable to become one of the global centers in the foreseeable future. In this respect, “polycentricity” appears to be more appealing, but it, too, simply reflects the existing reality. In addition, like multipolarity, it lacks a normative basis, that is, rules and principles that should regulate relations and behavior of the centers of power.

3.8. *We are not suggesting that Russia should adopt a certain state ideology in the classical sense, which would provide “the only correct” view of historical development, claim that only its system of values is genuine and universal, and impose its views and values on all others.* We and the world had enough of that in the 20th century. We can all see now another “the only correct ideology” — “liberal democratism” — predictably falling apart. An advantage of Russia’s foreign policy is its de-ideologized and conspicuously pragmatic nature. Firstly, this policy is less expensive. Secondly, Russia can build balanced partnerships with different countries regardless of their internal political regimes and relations with each other, and position itself as a global player which does not impose any development patterns, but creates conditions for countries to build their own models.

3.9. A set of ideas that Russia could offer itself and the world can include its *three-pronged role as 1) a guarantor of international peace, exporter of security; 2) a force that supports the sovereignty and freedom of all countries to choose their own models of political and economic development, cultural diversity; counters ideological, political, and value hegemonism; and guarantees “new non-alignment”; 3) an advocate of protection of the environment, nature and Earth, a defender of a new development model based*

on the protection of the environment and, most importantly, mankind itself, its moral and physical health rather than constantly growing consumption.

3.10. The first two components of this mission — the strengthening of peace and the freedom of countries to choose development models — are in line with what Russia is already doing in global affairs, and with its main foreign policy achievements of the last decade. This is described in detail in Section 2. An open declaration of this as Russia’s mission in the world will capitalize its role in global affairs, without making its foreign policy any more expensive.

3.10.1. The mission of peace protection is extremely relevant in view of the threat of war between nuclear powers, which has palpably increased in recent years, and will be positively received by most non-Western countries and a large share of the population in Western countries, especially in Europe. Opinion polls indicate that people, particularly in Germany and France, are much more concerned about the threat of war and military conflicts than, for example, uncontrolled migration or economic crises. A highly probable deep global economic crisis precipitated by the coronavirus epidemic will further exacerbate the threat of war.

3.10.2. Special attention should be paid to Russia’s role as a guarantor of a “new non-alignment.” Autonomy and freedom to choose development models are placed by most countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America among their main foreign policy values. Many of these countries are drawn to Russia largely because they do not want to make a choice, prodded by Washington, between the two superpowers of the first half of the 21st century — United States and China — and view Russia as a “third power balancer.” Russia is seen as an alternative that is not strong enough to become a hegemon itself, but strong enough to allow many countries to avoid the hegemony of others.

3.10.3. The preservation of peace, security, sovereignty, and cultural uniqueness is consonant with the native identity of most Russians, forged by centuries of fighting for territory that has almost no natural protection such as mountains and seas. In the 19th and 20th centuries Russia was invaded by Napoleon and Hitler, and experienced foreign intervention during the Civil War. Support for cultural and civilizational diversity is also a deeply ingrained feature of Russian people who built their empire through integration, rather than conquest, by blending with the elites of

the incorporated territories. This idea is correlated to another traditional component of Russian identity, namely the desire to make the world a better place, and to the best Soviet-era foreign policy tradition, that is, support for anti-colonialism. *The difference is that unlike the Russian Empire and the USSR, present-day Russia is not going to sacrifice the interests of its own people for the sake of others, let alone fight for others. This must be made most clearly to both Russian people and the world.*

3.11. The third element of the proposed mission for Russia is the protection of the environment, the preservation of nature and Earth, naturally, in dialectical connection with the declared (albeit not quite explicitly yet) idea of saving the people, and it also fully corresponds to both external demand and internal identity of the country, its competitive advantages and internal development needs. Consonant with the internal identity also is the necessary focus on the spiritual and cultural development of individuals and society, not solely on material wealth and consumption. It would be wrong to urge the people, most of whom still live quite modestly, to exercise austerity. But elements of austerity must be imposed upon the wealthy to avoid excessive consumption. The inevitable decline in consumption caused by the new economic crisis should affect the rich in the first place. This does not mean going back to the communist-era egalitarianism that proved ineffective, but society must become fairer.

3.11.1. Affection for Russian nature is one of the most important factors of national identity. It is necessary to enhance it so that citizens were not only proud of their natural wealth, but were also determined to protect and augment it for the benefit of the country, its people and the whole world. At the same time, environmental protection, by definition, is impossible without multilateral cooperation. It is global and unifying in nature, it represents a powerful positive agenda, the potential for uniting many influential social movements and countries. A possible slogan is “*Let’s save the planet together.*”

3.11.2. It is also important that the issue of environmental protection unites almost the entire nation as well, including pro-Western liberals, statist, and modern Slavophiles.

3.11.3. Environmental protection is not always cheap, but it will have to be dealt with anyway due to both internal and external pressure. Hu-

manity seems to be approaching the limit of development at the expense of nature. Climate change is clear evidence. We need *a new development philosophy, the one based on preservation of natural wealth and natural diversity, and on improvement of the environment for human existence*. It is better to formulate and implement it of our own accord, setting trends and deriving political and economic benefits from it, rather than reacting and dragging behind. It is necessary to not just repeat the slogans and demands of the green movement, nurtured by continuous excessive consumption in the West, but to develop our own concept together with Asian, Latin American and African countries (for example, a BRICS or SCO initiative) and, of course, with reasonable Europeans. Some interesting ideas concerning a new philosophy of development are contained in the Club of Rome report issued at the end of 2019.

3.12. Designating Russia's mission for itself and the world in such a way is future oriented: the issues of peace, freedom of choice, and environmental protection will only become more and more relevant and pressing.

3.13. But these three concepts — peace saving, protection of sovereignty and the freedom of choice, and struggle against environmental pollution and nature protection — even if adopted, cannot complete the list of necessary ideas that Russia can and should offer itself and the world.

3.13.1. In particular, it is quite obvious that the traditional, but still evolving, Russian (and Soviet) multinational culture, especially literature, music, cinema, recognized as one of the greatest achievements of human civilization, needs to be promoted and advanced. It unites us with the peoples of the former Soviet Union and with the rest of the world, and it is a key, albeit somewhat sidelined, aspect of Russian identity. During the situation analysis, experts spoke of growing demand for Russian culture, including modern culture, in many leading Asian countries.

3.13.2. Another topic, which was repeatedly raised by the situation analysis participants, although not planned beforehand, is the need for Russia to develop a new humanitarian policy (development aid, educational support, assistance in emergency situations, promotion of the Russian language). Some of the suggestions on how to do this can be found in Section 4.

3.13.3. Another issue, which was mentioned during the situation analysis but was not discussed in detail and which needs further research is joint work to deal with natural and man-made disasters and, of course, pandemics. Some of the relevant suggestions made by our experts are contained in Section 4.

3.14. However, in combating the pandemic, it is important to remember other equally fundamental challenges and long-term objectives. The current model of civilization and the world system have entered a systemic crisis. We will have to fight many of its manifestations and find new solutions. Avoiding war is the key condition for success.

3.15. Much attention should be paid to devising and promoting the image of a future world order, which Russia will help to create. Some ideas have already been put forward, including during previous situation analysis sessions. But it is probably too early to talk about real contours of such a world order. The prevailing tendency is so far dismantling of the old orders. However, the idea of preserving peace as the ultimate goal of Russia's policy works for the future world order as well. We need to give history a chance.

3.16. The advantage of the proposed Russian "national ideas" for itself and the world is their relative inexpensiveness. They do not imply qualitative changes in Russia's foreign and domestic policy (even though the latter will have to adapt and society and elite to mobilize), nor do they require it to bear the financial costs of ensuring the development of foreign countries by certain ideological model. Russia just needs to furnish an ideological framework for the policy which it is already implementing in many ways and to articulate the identity that would reflect Russian historical traditions and competitive advantages, become attractive for most countries and peoples around the world, and emphasize Russia's positive contribution to world affairs.

3.17. These and probably other ideas should help consolidate Russia's new self-identity in the world. What are we? Just the second or third most powerful country? Just the heir to a superpower, the Soviet Union? Just a new edition of the Russian Empire? Or all of this and something new for ourselves and the world?

3.18. Although most of the situation analysis participants were statisticians, all of them repeatedly stressed the need to expand the circle of people and organizations actively involved in promoting ideas like those described above. The President alone and the foreign minister, even supported by state-run media, more effective than the Soviet ones, would not be enough. It is necessary for the parliament, NGOs, professional and religious organizations, and universities to get involved more actively in this work.

4. Recommendations for Implementing New Ideas for Russia and the World

4.1. Policy of Securing Peace and Preventing War

The 75th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War, the end of World War II, and the use of nuclear weapons by the United States against the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is a timely reason to speak loudly about the growing threat of war between nuclear powers and the danger of nuclear escalation of any military confrontation between nuclear countries, and proclaim securing peace — prevention with other responsible great powers and international community as a whole of any war between nuclear powers — one of Russia’s main missions, pillars of its international identity and one of the purposes of its existence as a great power and its contribution to global development.

The following should probably become key substantive elements of Russia’s policy in this sphere: reducing the threat of war between nuclear powers, and its escalation to the nuclear level, limiting the arms race, and strengthening Russia’s role in resolution of interstate and intrastate conflicts, and in peacekeeping.

The policy of reducing the threat of war between the great powers has a global aspect, which implies first and foremost strengthening nuclear deterrence, shaping and advancing a new philosophy of (multilateral) strategic stability, and a regional dimension, namely the reduction of the threat of war in three regions crucial for international security and global stability — Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Wars in these regions are very likely to involve global powers and develop into world wars.

This report does not include detailed recommendations on how to reduce the threat of “big” wars in individual regions. We can offer them if necessary, and devote special situational analyses to their elaboration.

4.1.1. Reducing the Threat of War between Nuclear Powers, Strengthening Multilateral Strategic Stability

A war between the great powers, especially with the use of nuclear weapons, has always been and remains a major threat to peace, security and human civilization as a whole. As we noted in Section 1, the threat of war between nuclear powers is high again (by some estimates, higher than during the “mature” Cold War, approaching the level of the 1960s).

However, unlike in the previous Cold War, nowadays a nuclear war may not be caused by a sudden nuclear first strike by one great power against another, but rather by the escalation of a political crisis to the level of non-nuclear and then nuclear military confrontation, error or provocation.

In the new geopolitical, political and technological circumstances, the policy of war prevention must obviously differ from Cold War-era practices and concepts (maintaining strategic parity, limiting and reducing nuclear warheads and delivery vehicles). An attempt to launch a new round of arms limitation in the spirit of the late 1980s and early 1990s can only increase mistrust, impair deterrence, and stoke general tension. It is necessary to focus on reducing the risk of any war among nuclear powers and consider this risk as the major threat of the contemporary time. This requires, first and foremost, the improvement of political relations between nuclear countries, the strengthening of mutual deterrence, and fastening of multilateral strategic stability in its new understanding. (However, disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons should remain a desirable long-term goal).

4.1.1.1. Advancing a New Philosophy of Multilateral Strategic Stability

As the first step in promoting the policy of reducing the threat of war between nuclear powers we suggest adopting and popularizing a new concept — multilateral strategic stability — by stressing its inclusive nature and other differences from the classical Cold War-era and Post-Cold War-era concept of strategic stability. The new concept can be defined as “a state of relations between nuclear countries in which the threat of any direct military confrontation between them and the threat of its developing into a nuclear one is absent or low.” This notion applies not only to nuclear weapons, but to all types of weapons that great powers can use to inflict strategic damage upon each other, applies not only to nuclear war, but to any military clash between nuclear countries, including unintentional ones, and includes not only Russia and the United States, but all nuclear countries.

Such adaptation of the concept of strategic stability is likely to be welcomed by many countries which view the bilateral Russian-American process of reducing and limiting strategic nuclear weapons and the traditional concept of strategic stability as something distant and as some sort of Cold War-era “theology.” Indeed, the threat of a sudden nuclear first

strike by one nuclear superpower against another is hardly likely today. However, an unintentional collision in the gray zone, like cyberspace, with its further escalation to the nuclear level, escalation of intrastate and regional conflicts are real threats that exist, affect many countries and make many of them concerned.

A new understanding of multilateral strategic stability will create conditions for launching expert and then political discussions among representatives of nuclear powers of the ways to reduce the threat of war and focusing on those factors that are most likely to provoke it. These include political and military-political confrontation between nuclear countries in general and the absence of rules of such confrontation, the low quality or absence of dialogue between them, a high degree of mistrust, absence rules of military behavior in new operational domains (cyberspace, outer space), risks of the use of biological and genetic weapons, as well as proliferation of destabilizing weapons that blur the line between nuclear and non-nuclear weapons.

The summit of permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, preliminary planned for September 2020 in New York, seems the optimal forum for launching such dialogues. However, since it might not take place, promotion of such ideas should not be tied to this summit only.

Since the proposed notion of multilateral strategic stability is based on the reduction of the threat of any war between nuclear powers, it would be appropriate for Russia to invite all official members of the nuclear club, who are also permanent members of the UN Security Council, to adopt a declaration on the inadmissibility of any use of military force in relations with each other as threatening with nuclear escalation and catastrophe for the planet and mankind. It is desirable to make this declaration one of the major outcomes of the P5 summit. It is also worth continuing attempts to convince the United States to reaffirm the joined statement made by Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan in 1985 on the inadmissibility of nuclear war with each other. If the United States refuses, the declaration on a nuclear war inadmissibility should be promoted within the Russia-India-China format, as well as with France, Great Britain.

4.1.1.2. Strengthening Bilateral and Multilateral Deterrence

Given the general lack of trust, intensified struggle for the future world order, the confrontation imposed by the United States in an attempt to retain its waning leadership, as well as the collapse of tradi-

tional arms limitation regimes and the rules of the game, *the most effective way to reduce the threat of war between nuclear countries and the great powers in general is strengthening of mutual deterrence, both nuclear and non-nuclear*. Nuclear states' nuclear policy should focus not at the so-called "overcoming of deterrence" through naïve dreams of quick liquidation of nuclear weapons, but instead on mutual strengthening of deterrence.

Understanding that a military victory is impossible is the best incentive to refrain from using military force and to reduce the degree of confrontation.

Russia has already made serious progress in this respect without huge financial costs. Its latest strategic weapons, especially hypersonic ones, render senseless not only attempts to achieve military superiority over Russia, but an arms race as such. The latter's price for the other side is becoming qualitatively higher. The modernization of Russia's non-nuclear deterrence capability reduces incentives for nuclear escalation if a military conflict breaks out. Russia's decisive actions in Georgia, Crimea, and Syria, and its firm position on Ukraine and Venezuela have moderated the West's expansionism and interventionism. Russia is also strengthening deterrence capabilities of its partners, for example, China's in its relations with the United States, particularly by helping build its own early warning system. Such system all by itself strengthens stability and reduces the threat of war by mistake. This does not incur heavy expenses for Russia but brings it economic benefits.

Firstly, Russia should continue to improve its nuclear and non-nuclear deterrence capabilities, without getting drawn into the arms race and keep the share of military spending at 4–5% of GDP. This share is minimal compared to the scale of threats in the world, and Russia has made substantial progress spending dozens of times less than the United States and NATO, while its defense policy brings not only political and geopolitical, but also economic gains (provision of new markets and increase of high-tech exports). In order to avoid getting drawn into a new arms race, Russia should continue preemptive creation of newest weapons systems, without necessarily launching their mass production. Of course, it is necessary to continue moving away from the principle of military-strategic parity with the United States in its classical sense (approximate quantitative equality of strategic nuclear forces) as well as from the principle of in-kind response to American actions in the military-strategic sphere at both the official and doctrinal levels and in public discourse.

Secondly, Russia should probably continue helping to strengthen the deterrence capabilities of other non-Western power centers, which play an independent role in world affairs, primarily China and India.

Thirdly, Russia should repeat officially and at the regular basis that there can be no “limited” nuclear war against Russia, a nuclear war against Russia in Europe without retaliation against the United States, or Russia’s defeat in a large-scale non-nuclear war. Moscow is already dropping similar hints at the military and diplomatic levels. It would be desirable to make such statements at the highest political level and record them in official documents. Perhaps it is worth saying that if nuclear weapons and land-based medium-range missiles are deployed near Russian borders, Moscow would be forced to officially adopt the preemptive strikes doctrine.

4.1.1.3. Strengthening Dialogues between Nuclear Powers on Deconfliction and Strategic Stability

Efforts to reduce the threat of war between nuclear powers should not by any means be limited solely to strengthening deterrence. It is important to foster and enhance bilateral and multilateral dialogues, especially between the military. These dialogues should probably not focus on further arms reductions. Such attempts will lead nowhere. Moreover, in the current political atmosphere and a *de-facto* Cold War the United States has unleashed against China and Russia, these attempts would result to further deterioration of political relations and further strengthening of mistrust. Deconfliction and conceptual issues of strategic stability in general appear to be the most important topics for reducing the threat of war and building confidence, as well as where a positive outcome is likely. Such negotiations can be conducted in any format acceptable to other nuclear countries: all nuclear states, only the official “nuclear five,” Russia-China-U.S., Russia-China-India, or bilateral dialogues with the U.S., China, India, France, Great Britain, and Pakistan, and in a more remote prospect with Israel and North Korea.

In terms of deconfliction, it is worth trying to negotiate the rules of conduct at sea, on land, in the air and cyberspace, measures to prevent the most dangerous types of behavior (dangerous approximations, flights without transponders, cyberattacks against military and strategic facilities), establish and strengthen military-to-military hotlines and other communication mechanisms in peacetime and during crises, inform each other about important movements of the Armed Forces, and invite

observers to military exercises. It is deconfliction and the development of rules of conduct in the military sphere that the NATO-Russia Council should focus on.

A successful example of deconfliction is the system of interaction with the United States and Israel in Syria, created at Russia's initiative, which has helped avoid direct military clashes between the military of these countries (although dangerous situations occurred all the same). In 2016, Russia invited NATO, Sweden, and Finland to adopt new security measures in the Baltic region's airspace, requiring military aircraft to switch on their transponders during flights. Although this initiative was not supported by NATO, it is worth pushing this and other initiatives further, including in relations between other nuclear countries (e.g. China-India).

It would also be prudent to propose a full-fledged deconfliction mechanism similar to that in Syria for the entire area of Russia-NATO frontier. Such initiatives should be offered as publicly and regularly as possible. NATO, which is unwilling to lower the level of confrontation (mostly in a bid to justify its own existence) often hides such initiatives even from its own members.

4.1.1.4. Strengthening Predictability and Confidence-Building Measures

Increasing predictability in the military sphere, especially at the strategic level would be an important contribution to reducing the threat of war between nuclear states. It is necessary to steer a middle course between predictability and uncertainty. Such approach enhances deterrence, retains the possibility to improve military technologies, and at the same time reduces the likelihood of crises. The main means of ensuring predictability are the transparency and confidence-building measures and regimes provided for in such agreements and declarations as New START (signed in 2010), the Open Skies Treaty (signed in 1992), and the OSCE's Vienna Document (signed in 2011), as well as military-to-military dialogues and discussions on military and nuclear doctrines. If the United States does not allow to extend the New START, it would be proper to suggest preserving its transparency and confidence-building measures, albeit truncated, in order to strengthen predictability.

At the same time, the view prevailed during the situation analysis that increased transparency compared to the current level (for example, the strengthening of the Vienna Document proposed by Germany and

some other Western countries) would not be advisable for the time being since such steps could tighten control over Russia's military activities without removing the main reason for the deteriorating military-political situation and growing threat of war — confrontational policy of the United States and NATO. The participants recommended that emphasis should not be placed on openness per se, but rather on the development of rules of conduct in areas where military escalation is most likely, such as cyberspace, and that confidence-building measures should be linked to the reduction of political confrontation. At the same time, the experts agreed that it would be appropriate to negotiate greater transparency and confidence-building measures in the military sphere with non-Western countries multilaterally, for example, within the BRICS, Russia-India-China (RIC) or SCO framework.

A dialogue on the military and nuclear doctrines of nuclear countries is an important tool for enhancing transparency and predictability without giving undue benefits to others. Russia should propose such a dialogue both at the bilateral level with the United States and at multilateral levels, including between Russia, India, and China.

4.1.1.5. Improving Political Relations between Nuclear Powers, De-escalation

An essential element of the policy of reducing the threat of war is the improvement of political relations between the nuclear powers and the lessening of confrontation. Russia should keep saying that securing peace requires the improvement, or at least normalization, of relations not only between the U.S. and Russia, but also between the United States and China, and between China and India, and propose concrete initiatives to improve them.

It would be advisable to propose negotiations between Russia, China, and India, including at the SCO, on a new philosophy of multilateral strategic stability and confidence-building measures in the military sphere. Cooperation can also be stepped up within the SCO and RIC on Afghanistan, international terrorism, radical extremism, and drug trafficking in general as a unifying agenda for Russia, China, and India. India could be engaged in the dialogue on the integration of the EAEU and the Belt and Road project, as well as in trilateral negotiations on the Greater Eurasian Partnership. A trade agreement between the EAEU and India could be signed. In the future, Russia, China, and India could hold joint military exercises.

Russia should adjust its rhetoric regarding the Indo-Pacific Region, while maintaining a critical attitude towards the American understanding of the Indo-Pacific, but not criticizing the idea itself. Apart from the United States, the Indo-Pacific concept is being also advanced by Japan and India, but their understanding differs significantly from that of the United States and does not place emphasis so explicitly on containing China, much less Russia. Moreover, both New Delhi and Tokyo advocate more intensive engagement with Moscow and its greater involvement in Pacific affairs as an independent player. By supporting the very idea that India is one of the leaders of the Pacific region, as well as those Indian and Japanese approaches to the Indo-Pacific, which allow coordination of the latter with the Chinese Belt and Road initiative, Moscow will strengthen its relations with New Delhi and Tokyo and consolidate its position as an independent great power, thus reducing the risk of bloc polarization in the region.

Moreover, it would be appropriate to speak about “coordinated development” and compatibility of the non-American concepts of the Indo-Pacific with the Great Eurasian Partnership in contrast to the American approach that views them as opposing each other. All the more so since India, Japan, and South Korea show great interest in Eurasian processes, and India is directly involved in them through the SCO and its policy in Central Asia. It would be advisable therefore in the future to promote EAEU free trade area agreements not only with India, but also with Japan and South Korea, and eventually, or simultaneously, with China. (Our economic forecast indicates that such agreements may look much more attractive in five to ten years than they do now).

Russia should continue proposing to strengthen military-to-military dialogue with the United States, as well as to begin to restoring normal work of embassies and consulates on each other’s territory in order to overcome the diplomatic crisis of 2017–2018. Humanitarian help Russia provided to the US during the COVID-19 pandemics is a good step in this regard.

Russia should also resume dialogue on security issues with the major West European countries, thus strengthening their aspirations for strategic autonomy. With France such a dialogue has already started. “Two plus two” format — simultaneous negotiations of foreign and defense ministers — has been resumed with Paris and Rome. With the EU as a whole the emphasis should be on dialogues on climate, environmental protection, non-military aspects of cybersecurity. However, the main

emphasis should be on bilateral and multilateral security dialogues with individual European countries. With NATO — a military dialogue only; with the OSCE — mainly on the Ukraine crisis. (Apparently, the OSCE has long lost its relevance as a platform for constructive solutions and can hardly be used for resolving crises other than the Ukrainian one, for which it had indirectly created preconditions, when the organization allowed itself to be used for blocking the creation of a pan-European security system).

During the situation analysis, several experts called for active proposing of de-escalation of relations between Russia and NATO in general and reduction of tension and military activity. The alliance is deliberately stoking tensions in a bid to shore up its dwindling legitimacy. We should not play along. As we have already claimed many times, Russia should not resume political dialogue within the framework of the Russia-NATO Council, for it would only legitimize the Alliance and keep it going. Instead, Russia should offer military-to-military dialogues with individual European countries such as France, Germany, UK, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, and Finland. At the same time, as has already been stated many times before, political dialogues with Poland and the Baltic countries would be pointless and counterproductive. These countries should gradually be pushed into self-isolation.

It is necessary to persistently raise the awareness of European audiences of the fact that military expenditures in European NATO countries already exceed those of Russia in times (according to 2019 data of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), France spends more on its military than Russia).

Russia should persistently inform European countries behind closed doors (both at the official and expert levels) that one of the main reasons for a possible big war in Europe is further attempts to draw Ukraine and Georgia into NATO, as well as attempts to pull Belarus to the West's side, including through another color revolution. So since a formal withdrawal by NATO of its promise made at the Bucharest Summit in 2008 on eventual membership of Ukraine and Georgia is unrealistic, it would be reasonable to persuade both government officials and the expert community of European countries to remove the issue of their accession to the alliance from the public agenda insofar as may be practically possible. In addition, it is important to unofficially determine the “red lines” regarding the intensity of their cooperation with NATO in general. This may include such steps, unacceptable for Russia, as the establishment of per-

manent NATO military bases on their territory and supplies of weapons designed for a large scale war against a technically advanced adversary (missile defense and air defense elements, etc.).

4.1.1.6. Developing Rules of Conduct in Areas Which Are Most Dangerous in Terms of the Risk of Outbreak and Escalation of War

The situation analysis participants noted that one of the most significant aspects of the policy to reduce the threat of war between nuclear powers is the adoption by as many countries as possible of rules of conduct in “gray zones,” that is, areas where the distinction between war and peace, nuclear and non-nuclear weapons is blurred, and where the risk of military conflict and its escalation to the nuclear level is the highest. These are primarily cyber weapons, high precision conventional weapons, space-based weapons (deployed in outer space to target objects on Earth), missile defense systems, anti-satellite weapons, ground- and sea-based medium-range and shorter-range missiles, and the use of artificial intelligence in the military sphere. Today, their role in the military is increasing, and they may often be the ones that will play a crucial role in modern wars between great powers (especially at initial stages), while the rules of their use and development, not to mention restrictive regimes, are either nonexistent or crumbling.

Russia has already proposed a number of important initiatives in these areas.

- A series of proposals concerning military aspects of cybersecurity has been put forward. In 2009, at the summit in Yekaterinburg, “Agreement on Cooperation in Ensuring International Information Security between the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization” was signed. In 2011, Russia submitted to the UN a draft “Convention on International Information Security,” which included measures to prevent military conflicts in cyberspace. In 2011 and 2015, Russia and SCO countries submitted to the UN a document “International Code of Conduct for Information Security,” which was not adopted because of the U.S. opposition. In 2015, Russia and China signed the bilateral “Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of International Information Security.” In November 2018, Russia submitted to the UN General assembly a new draft resolution titled “Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security,” proposing rules of

responsible conduct of states in cyberspace. The document was supported by a significant majority.

- Russia's initiatives also concern both the non-deployment of weapons in outer space and the adoption of an appropriate multilateral treaty at the UN level. As early as 2004, as the first step, Russia made a unilateral commitment not to deploy weapons in outer space first. In 2005, all CSTO countries reaffirmed this commitment. At the Conference on Disarmament in 2014, Russia and China presented a draft "Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects." In 2017 at a BRICS summit, they presented a new version of the treaty, which was supported by the other member states. The document prohibits the deployment of weapons of any kind in outer space and any forcible action against space objects. The United States opposes this treaty. In 2016–2017, within the framework of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, Russia, jointly with the United States and China, called for a discussion on transparency and confidence-building measures in space activities, as well as the prevention of deployment of weapons in outer space. Finally, in 2019, Russia and China adopted the "Joint Statement on Strengthening Global Strategic Stability in the Modern Age", thus reiterating their commitment not to deploy weapons in outer space first.
- In 2019, after the United States' unilateral withdrawal from the INF Treaty, Russian President Vladimir Putin sent messages to NATO leaders, the NATO Secretary General, the EU foreign policy chief, and the Chinese president, proposing a moratorium on the deployment of intermediate-range and shorter-range ground-based missiles in Europe and other regions of the world, stressing Moscow's readiness for reciprocal verification. Of all the NATO countries, only French President Emmanuel Macron, who had previously stated the need to intensify cooperation with Russia in general, expressed willingness to consider the Russian proposal. Nevertheless, Moscow remains committed to its unilateral pledge not to deploy intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles in Europe and other regions first and to respond to U.S. actions on this issue in kind.

These initiatives remain fully relevant. Given the U.S. opposition, which will continue in the near future, it is necessary to focus on promoting these initiatives among non-Western countries and in Western Europe. In particular, it would be appropriate to extend the Russian-Chi-

nese initiatives on information security and non-deployment of weapons in outer space to all SCO and BRICS countries, to promote them jointly in the BRICS Plus format (especially during Russia's BRICS presidency) and the UN General Assembly. It is worth initiating bilateral dialogues with European countries on military aspects of information and communication technologies (ICT), intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles, and space, inviting them to either join Russian initiatives or develop similar ones jointly.

NATO's position that intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles can be deployed in Europe but without nuclear warheads should continue to be rejected and criticized further as there can be no guarantee that they will remain non-nuclear in a critical situation. Their deployment, in any form, especially in the countries adjacent to the "dividing line" with Russia, will increase the risk of war and will require the parties concerned to formally commit themselves to the doctrine of preemptive strikes.

In addition, Russia should probably propose new initiatives to reduce the threat of war, addressing military aspects of cybersecurity, high precision conventional weapons, missile defense, and artificial intelligence.

- In particular, as regards military aspects of information and communication technologies, the situation analysis participants proposed drawing up a list of strategic infrastructure facilities and invite other countries to make a commitment to refrain from cyberattacks against such facilities at all times. At a minimum, this list should include nuclear facilities and communication systems used for running and controlling them, early warning system satellites, government communications systems, nuclear power plants, and the water supply systems in major cities. The ultimate goal is to adopt a relevant UN Security Council resolution. However, at first it would be desirable to adopt appropriate rules at Russia's initiative within the framework of the SCO, BRICS, and RIC, and then, if possible, in the form of bilateral declarations with the United States, NATO, China, India, and NATO's European member countries.
- Regarding high precision weapons, experts called for proposing rules prohibiting their permanent deployment at such a distance from the borders where they could threaten nuclear deterrence capabilities and other strategic forces. They also suggested considering the possibility of creating a transparency system to effectively distinguish high-precision nuclear weapons from non-nuclear ones, and informing each

other of the movement and deployment of high precision weapons capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

- Regarding artificial intelligence, at this point Russia should engage in multilateral and bilateral dialogues with the United States, China, India, and European countries to discuss its impact on international security and its ability to provoke a war between nuclear countries, as well as the development of standards and rules, albeit purely political and declaratory, for using artificial intelligence in the military sphere. As artificial intelligence technologies improve and the role of humans in combat operations decreases, greater emphasis on drones and robots lowers the threshold for the use of military force. This may create an uncontrolled military-political situation and increase the risk of war, including nuclear war, immensely.
- Regarding missile defense, Russia should speak up against attempts by any nuclear power to create a full-scale strategic missile defense system, and should call for adopting an appropriate multilateral declaration. Particularly destabilizing are the U.S. plans to deploy missile defense elements in outer space. Russia should also invite nuclear countries to begin dialogues on the development of criteria (geographical, quantitative, and qualitative) for the ability of ABM systems to limit nuclear deterrence capabilities, as well as on measures of transparency and exchange of information on missile threats. For this purpose, the experience of the 2010–2011 Russian-American and Russia-NATO missile defense negotiations can be used to explore some of the interesting ideas on cooperation and reduction of the destabilizing impact of these systems that were proposed back then.

4.1.1.7. The New START Extension

It was repeatedly stressed during the situation analysis that one of the important elements of Russian efforts to strengthen multilateral strategic stability and reduce the threat of war is the idea of extending New START, the only remaining regime ensuring predictability and transparency in the field of strategic nuclear forces, up to 2026. In addition, some experts proposed preserving some of the transparency measures provided for in New START (informing each other about the status of strategic nuclear forces, conducting inspections) even if the treaty is terminated.

At the same time, it may not be sensible in the current circumstances to propose, let alone try, starting negotiations on new rounds of nuclear

arms reduction and limitation either on a bilateral level with the United States or in trilateral formats involving China. Such attempts will end in failure (it will not be possible to agree on new nuclear arms cuts and limitations now or in the foreseeable future), while inevitable mutual accusations of bad faith conduct will only make things worse and may even spur a new arms race. Whereas the United States will put the blame for the collapse of “big” treaties limiting and reducing strategic nuclear forces on Russia and China.

Russia’s initiative to spread New START regime to some of the latest delivery vehicles created after its entry into force, including hypersonic ones, should also be presented as proof of its commitment to reducing the threat of war and limiting the arms race. The U.S. position that the limitations should also apply to non-strategic nuclear weapons as a condition for the extension of New START must be not only rejected further, but depicted as a step threatening to dismantle restrictive regimes completely, provoke a new arms race, and further stoke military-political tensions both between Russia and NATO, and in other parts of the world.

4.1.1.8. Positioning Hypersonic Delivery Vehicles as Curbing the Arms Race

It is important to claim that Russia’s latest strategic systems, including hypersonic ones, are intended to limit the arms race rather than provoke it and thus save Russia the trouble of increasing defense spending in the coming years or trying to maintain approximate quantitative parity with the United States in terms of strategic nuclear forces. Russia has already been criticized by the United States and some of its allies that its newest systems are extending the arms race into new realms. Refuting this criticism and promoting the policy of peace will require Moscow not only to be proud of having outpaced the U.S. in creating hypersonic weapons, but also to present them as a factor that strengthens deterrence and limits both the arms race and growing spending on nuclear weapons and on conventional ones.

It should be stressed continuously that possessing such systems makes it impossible for an adversary to win both nuclear and non-nuclear war, and reduces incentives for starting them, as well as for an arms race. In addition, the new generation of strategic weapons challenges the usefulness of the adversary’s existing military assets, and increases significantly the vulnerability of aircraft carriers and some other systems. Finally, it

makes any conceivable missile defense system ineffective, limiting or even preventing an arms race in this field.

Considering the above, it may be appropriate to officially announce that, given the creation of hypersonic delivery vehicles by Russia, maintaining quantitative strategic nuclear parity with the United States is no longer a mandatory imperative of Russia's defense policy and that Moscow will not try to catch up with Washington if it decides to build up its nuclear arsenals. It is especially important to make such a statement after the termination of New START.

It is also desirable to state publicly at the highest level that Russia considers the latest hypersonic weapon systems as a weapon that can only be used in retaliation or under attack, rather than for a first strike (such accusations can already be heard), and therefore does not intend to produce them in greater numbers than necessary for credible second strike capability. It is also worth saying that if similar weapons appear in the United States and other countries, Russia will not seek quantitative parity with them, much less superiority, since having a certain number of them already guarantees the ability to inflict unacceptable damage upon the enemy in a retaliatory strike.

Needless to say, it is important to state clearly that these unilateral commitments do not mean a refusal to improve existing weapon systems or develop new ones. However, work to create new weapons should be carried out in accordance with the principle of reasonable sufficiency in its new interpretation, rather than quantitative parity, let alone superiority.

4.1.1.9. Developing New Arms Limitation Regimes in the Future

Despite negotiations on new arms reduction and limitation agreements would be counterproductive now and in the medium term, some experts remarked, that Russia should point out, that development of such regimes may again become desirable in the long term, and future regimes should include all destabilizing weapons along with nuclear ones (space-based, high-precision, missile defense, laser, and hypersonic, as well as stricter rules and restrictions for the use of cyber systems, etc.).

However, before such agreements are reached, it will be necessary to overcome the confrontation between the United States and Russia and between the United States and China, improve China-India relations and foster more positive relations between the nuclear powers in general. At a minimum, the United States should cease its attempts to achieve military-strategic superiority over other great powers and to use an arms

race or a threat of it as an instrument of economic exhaustion and confrontation. Secondly, all nuclear states should adopt a common concept of (multilateral) strategic stability, start appropriate dialogues, develop rules of conduct in areas where a breakout of war is most probable, and approve partial transparency and confidence-building measures.

As a long-term and very distant prospect, Russia should reaffirm its NPT commitment to complete disarmament and, accordingly, its support for the total elimination of nuclear weapons as such together with other dangerous types of weapons. Naturally, it could only be possible if the great powers overhaul their relations with each other to exclude the threat of war in general and base them on partnership and trust, rather than deterrence.

4.1.1.10. Reaffirming Commitment to Nuclear Nonproliferation (While Getting Ready for the Opposite)

Finally, reaffirming Russia's commitment to nuclear non-proliferation appears to be an important component of its policy to strengthen strategic stability. Moscow is already de facto the main defender of this regime. Firstly, together with China it is a party to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action for Iranian nuclear program, which fully complies with its terms and tries to rescue it (at a time when even European countries have started to de facto ruin it, while trying to shift the blame to Tehran). Secondly, together with China it takes a responsible and balanced position to address the North Korean nuclear issue. Thirdly, Russia hinders America's policy of forcible regime change in countries that do not have nuclear weapons. U.S. interventions against Iraq and Libya have delivered the strongest blow to nuclear non-proliferation in recent decades.

The US attempt to hurriedly resolve the North Korean nuclear issue through bilateral dialogue has obviously failed, once again demonstrating the importance of the multilateral format and Moscow's participation in it as a participant in the six-party talks. Russia should step up its dialogue with North Korea. Perhaps it should propose a trilateral meeting between Russia, China, and North Korea, or a four-party meeting with South Korea.

If JCPOA fails completely, Russia should use its position in the UN Security Council to block attempts to impose new international sanctions upon Iran, step up military-technical cooperation with Iran by supplying advanced air defense systems to it (at the same time making sure that this does not create any major imbalance in Iran's relations with

Saudi Arabia), and invite the international community to discuss the idea of giving Iran security guarantees in exchange for abandoning its military nuclear program.

However, Russia should prepare for possible (and quite probable, according to some estimates made during the situation analysis) proliferation of nuclear weapons in Asia and the Middle East by the early or middle of the 2030s.

4.1.2. Advancing Russia's Image as an Effective Peacemaker

An important component of the peace-building policy is the promotion of Russia's image as an effective peacemaker which plays a key role in the settlement of many conflicts. Peacemaking and conflict resolution is the most obvious and down-to-earth way to produce peace. Russia has undeniable advantages in this respect. Firstly, Russia has rich experience in effective peacemaking and successful conflict resolution both in the post-Soviet space and in the Middle East, not simply through the use of military force, but through political settlement. Secondly, by maintaining balanced partnerships with all regional leaders in the Middle East, Russia creates good prerequisites for further successful peacekeeping policy in the region. Thirdly, Russia has high-quality diplomatic and intelligence services, and, thanks to the successful military reform, efficient Armed Forces, and the ability to quickly deploy them for peacemaking and peacekeeping operations.

In the early 1990s, Russia quickly froze the main conflicts in the post-Soviet space, and if it were not for the West's destructive role, many of them would have been resolved today. It played an important role in ending the civil war in Tajikistan and stabilizing the situation in Kyrgyzstan. Russia still ensures the security of Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan. In Transcaucasia, Russia maintains the balance of power between Armenia and Azerbaijan, preventing the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict from igniting a big war again, and plays a major role in the peace settlement in general. In the early 2000s, Russia came close to resolving the Moldovan-Transnistrian conflict and proposed a plan for the federalization of Moldova ("Kozak Memorandum"), which was supported by both sides of the conflict, but torpedoed by the United States and the European Union at the last moment.

Russia's actions against Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 were also examples of successful peacemaking. In 2008, Russia stopped the humanitarian catastrophe caused by the Georgian invasion in South

Ossetia, prevented even greater destruction and loss of life, and tried to resolve the conflict through international negotiations on the status of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in full compliance with the “Medvedev-Sarkozy plan.” It was the West’s blatant attempt to make up for the negative consequences of Mikhail Saakashvili’s escapade for Tbilisi that forced Russia to accept the independence of the two Transcaucasian republics. In 2014, Russia warded off a humanitarian catastrophe in Crimea and prevented attempts by Kiev and Ukrainian nationalists to kill opponents of the regime that had come to power as a result of a coup, in Donbass. Moscow played the main role in creating the basis for a political settlement of the conflict in Donbass — Minsk Accords — and has been consistently insisting on their implementation ever since, thus facilitating de-escalation of the conflict at the very least.

Russia’s key peacekeeping role in the conflict in Eastern Ukraine is complemented by its active humanitarian policy: it is Moscow that literally ensures the socio-economic survival and minimum welfare standards for the Donbass population, including the payment of pensions and social benefits, as well as the reconstruction of war-torn facilities. It would be important to promote this mission more actively abroad, especially in the non-Western world, as a vivid example of Russia’s foreign aid policy.

Finally, situation in Syria has become a significant success of Russia’s peacemaking and conflicts cessation policy.

- In 2013, Russia prevented U.S. military strikes on Syria, if not a full-scale war like that in Libya, by proposing and successfully implementing, jointly with the United States, a plan for eliminating Syria’s chemical weapons.
- Since 2015, Russia has prevented by effectively using its Armed Forces a collapse of the Syrian regime, allowed it to regain control over much of the country and preserve Syrian statehood, staved off a massive humanitarian catastrophe, prevented genocide of religious minorities, and significantly reduced the terrorist threat. Moscow sought to minimize the scale of destruction and the suffering of civilians, wherever possible. So-called “de-escalation zones” made it possible to minimize fighting and move most of the rebels to other areas, rather than destroy them through offensive and clean-up operations.
- Russia plays a primary role in the political settlement of the Syrian conflict, actively promoting the constitutional process and dialogue between the Syrian authorities, the opposition, and civil society.

- Russia's peace-building role in Syria, both in military and political terms, is a good model of multilateralism, engagement with key regional players and joint movement towards a settlement. It is multilateralism that is one of the reasons for Russia's success in Syria, an example of which is the Astana format.
- Russia's peace-building role in Syria is combined with an active humanitarian policy, including humanitarian and economic aid, and assistance in reconstruction of the economy and infrastructure, and peaceful life. But this aspect of Russian policy in Syria has so far not been promoted energetically enough among the international, especially non-Western, audiences. However, Syria is an example of how Russia creates and strengthens peace not only as the absence of war, but also as a normal peaceful human life.

At the same time, Russia, to the best of our knowledge, receives significant economic dividends from its policy in the Middle East. It is important to demonstrate it to the Russian society.

Russia's successes in Syria have enabled it to play a more important, and in fact central, role in the Libyan peacemaking process, which intensified in early 2020. Attempts to resolve this conflict have clearly demonstrated Moscow's completely new role in the Middle East. As in Syria, Russia's peacemaking efforts in Libya imply its close cooperation with regional centers of power and external players: Moscow is working closely with Egypt and Turkey (although they support the opposite sides in the Libyan conflict), France and Italy (which also support the opposite sides), Germany, and the United States.

As a member of the Middle East Quartet, an important partner of Israel and the Arab world at the same time, Russia also plays a major role in regulating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. And its role is likely to grow in the near future: under Trump, the U.S. no longer acts as a mediator, but instead espouses Israel's position, particularly that of the most radical wing of the Israeli establishment.

Finally, in the past few years, Russia has sought to strengthen the CSTO's peacekeeping function: in 2010 the organization undertook the mission to help resolve internal political crises in member countries, and is creating a rapid reaction force to be used for peacemaking and peacekeeping purposes.

Given this success, we propose the following concrete steps aimed at positioning peacemaking and conflict resolution in cooperation with

other countries as one of the main components of Russia's policy of securing peace:

- Increase the importance of peacemaking and military conflicts resolution in Russia's official foreign policy rhetoric and policy documents, such as the Foreign Policy Concept;
- Build closer cooperation with international organizations and international NGOs dealing with peacemaking and post-conflict reconstruction, humanitarian organizations (UN, Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières, etc.);
- Position Russia as one of the main and successful peacemakers through parliamentary diplomacy and interaction of expert communities;
- Engage CSTO countries and the organization itself more actively in UN peacekeeping missions and those under the UN auspices;
- Engage China and BRICS countries more actively in the economic reconstruction of Syria and use this argument for encouraging EU countries to pitch in as well, especially as the constitutional process moves forward there;
- It is worth creating a state-run information portal dedicated to Russian peacemaking efforts to show the success of military, political, diplomatic, and humanitarian aspects of Russia's peace-building policy.

4.1.3. Promotion of the Policy of Securing Peace

The situation analysis participants emphatically stressed the importance of a new language for the new peace policy, different from the one that was used during the previous Cold War. They mentioned such terms as 'policy of peace-creation,' 'peace-saving,' 'strength for peace' as opposed to the U.S. slogan "peace through strength," 'policy of peace and freedom,' 'just peace,' etc.

Many instruments of the proposed policy were named in the relevant sections above. Following are our proposals regarding key measures to promote and advance it as a whole, as well as the forces that should be engaged with on a priority basis for its implementation.

4.1.3.1. Possible Measures to Launch and Promote a New Policy of Securing Peace

The proposed policy allows no haste. It should cover a period of 10–15 years, a time during which a new world order will be created.

Launch of this policy should be timed to the 75th anniversaries of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War and end of the Second World War. If the epidemiological situation allows, it would be desirable to hold a “peace summit” in Moscow in the framework of the celebration, with the participation of the heads of states that will be present at the Victory Parade, to announce then the launch by Russia of the new policy of securing peace, with an emphasis on reducing the threat of war between nuclear powers, limiting the arms race, strengthening peace in Europe, Asia and the Middle East, and on peacemaking. This policy should also be presented at the BRICS and SCO summits, and together with China it should be promoted at the announced P5 summit. As a result of the latter Russia should propose to adopt a declaration or statement on the inadmissibility of any war among nuclear states.

Parliamentary diplomacy can become an important instrument for advancing the peace protection policy. Russia could propose establishing an annual inter-parliamentary Peace Forum and host its first meeting at the initiative of the Russian Federal Assembly, dedicating it to the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. In addition to foreign parliamentary delegations, representatives of the world’s main confessions, expert community, public and youth organizations should also be invited to attend the forum.

Russia’s important priority in the year of the 75th anniversary of the Victory should be the policy of historical memory to promote the image of the USSR as the main victim of Nazi Germany’s aggression and at the same time as a country that played the main role in defeating it and bringing the United Nations to victory in the Second World War, to oppose attempts by hostile forces to equate the Soviet Union to Hitler’s Germany, shift part of the blame for the beginning of this war to the Soviet Union. These attempts are an important element of the current policy of containing and confronting Russia, and cementing its image as a “historical” aggressor and oppressor. Therefore it would be important to hold an international historical conference in Russia to speak about the contribution of the Russian Empire and the USSR to the “struggle for peace”, from the Hague conferences of 1899 and 1907 to Soviet peace initiatives during the “mature” Cold War.

Finally, it would be appropriate to adopt a new version of the Russian Foreign Policy Concept, identifying protection of peace as one of its main foreign policy priorities, its principal mission and contribution to world affairs, and outlining the main elements of this policy.

4.1.3.2. Russia's Partners in Implementing the Policy of Securing Peace

Russia's main partners in implementing the policy of securing peace should be non-Western countries: EAEU and CSTO allies, SCO and BRICS partners, Asian and Middle Eastern countries. As for Western countries, Russia should interact primarily with France, Germany, and Italy, which have recently been seeking greater foreign policy autonomy from the United States and calling for broader cooperation with Russia, as well as with Finland, Austria, and Switzerland as non-bloc countries that are not hostile.

It is necessary to pursue this policy in cooperation not only with states as such, but also with public organizations, political parties (especially from the non-Western countries), religious organizations and the expert community of foreign countries. Let us emphasize that the new slogans and the new policies should be targeted primarily to Russian society, as well as non-Western societies and countries, and only then to the West. Parliamentary and public diplomacy, dialogue between experts and between universities are important mechanisms for implementing this policy. In particular, Russia's natural partners are anti-war organizations and movements, humanitarian NGOs, and churches (of all faiths). As indicated by the situation analyses participants, initially Russia's approach to interaction with the Western political parties should be very careful.

In order to engage Russian and foreign NGOs in advancing the policy of securing peace, it would be advisable to create a separate section in the Public Diplomacy category of the Presidential Grants Fund, dedicated entirely to the protection of peace in the broad sense of the word. Russian universities and organizations such as the Valdai International Discussion Club, the Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund, the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, and the Russian International Affairs Council could play a major role in forging cooperation with foreign NGOs on these issues. But eventually a wider range of organizations should be engaged in this work.

Finally, it is necessary to promote the ideas of peace more vividly in the media. The threat of war, including nuclear war and the popularization of Russia's peace policy should become important topics for Russian media reports. Emphasis should be placed on the fact that Russian defense efforts and the strengthening of deterrence are, first, low-cost, and, second, are aimed at preventing war and "saving peace" for the whole world.

4.2. Policy of Protecting the Freedom of Choice and Sovereignty

As more and more countries seek to pursue an independent foreign and domestic policy, strengthen their sovereignty, and refuse to join any bloc, the second unifying idea for Russia's foreign policy and its mission should be the protection of the freedom of countries to choose development models, cultural diversity, sovereignty, rejection of hegemonism.

By defining its mission in such a way, Russia will be able to take a worthy place in the world of tomorrow, which will be increasingly characterized in the coming decades by the US confrontational policy towards China and their global competition, — despite the fact that Russia will unlikely remain the third superpower. The concept of the Greater Eurasian Partnership fits perfectly into this policy as well.

Since, as in the case of the peace protection policy, Russia is already doing much to protect the sovereignty and the freedom of countries to choose models of development and their cultural diversity (see Section 2 for details), but has so far not positioned this as its distinctive contribution to world affairs, the main recommendations for advancing this policy concern its wrapping. Still, some new foreign policy initiatives might also be desirable.

The main elements of the proposed policy are: protecting sovereignty and countering illegal interventions, regime change policies; protecting cultural diversity and the freedom of countries to choose development models, countering hegemonism and universalism; positioning Russia as a guarantor of a “new non-alignment” and forming it jointly with other countries that seek to strengthen autonomy in a world of increasing US confrontational policy towards China; providing active support to the existing Non-Aligned Movement.

4.2.1. Protecting Sovereignty and Freedom

Just two or four decades ago, state sovereignty was called a relic of the past, and its protection was criticized as running counter to the realities of the globalizing world, a bad tone. Today, sovereignty is again becoming the main value in the overwhelming majority of states, both non-Western and increasingly Western, and demand for it is growing everywhere. COVID-19 pandemics strengthens this trend. By countering the policy of forceful regime change, externally supported color revolutions, Russia has already become the main protector of sovereignty in the world.

- Russia has cut the ground from under the five-hundred-year-long Western dominance in politics, economy, and culture, which had been based on its military preponderance.
- Russia has managed to stop a series of color revolutions and interventions designed to change regimes. Examples of success — Syria and Venezuela.
- At the global level, Russia continues to defend the principles of sovereign equality of states and non-interference in internal affairs. In particular, it has urged the UN General Assembly to draw up a convention on the non-recognition of illegal coups.
- By developing integration within the EAEU, Russia strengthens the sovereignty and positions of its members in relations with external players. In the EAEU and the CSTO, small countries have real equal rights in making common decisions. These organizations are a factor that strengthens their sovereignty.
- Russia makes an important contribution to the protection of the sovereignty of other countries by developing military-technical cooperation with them, by building their defense and deterrence capabilities, and by starting to deliver information security systems.
- By building balanced partnerships with key centers of power in Asia and the Middle East and seeking to maintain a balance of power between them, Russia encourages their independence. Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, South Korea, and many African countries view Russia as an alternative power center partner and use their partnership with it in order to pursue a more independent policy.

The following steps could fortify the image of Russia as a defender of sovereignty at home and abroad:

- Creation by Russia (possibly together with BRICS and SCO countries) of a Global Alliance for Sovereignty and Diversity as an informal association of countries advocating the protection of sovereignty as one of the highest values. The founding summit should preferably be held in Russia, and it could be initiated either by Russia, or BRICS or the SCO, or a larger number of countries.
- Enlarging the “support group” for a UN General Assembly draft resolution on the inadmissibility of external forcible regime change and coups. It can be presented together with China, RIC, the SCO, or BRICS.
- Positioning Russia’s military-technical cooperation with foreign countries, export of Russian weapons, military equipment, and se-

curity systems, including information systems, not only as an instrument for realizing its own interests, but as its contribution to the independent development of these countries, protection of their sovereignty and security.

- Positioning Russia's policy in Syria and Venezuela not only as the promotion of its interests, much less the protection of their ruling regimes, but as the protection of sovereignty and statehood.
- Holding a major international scientific conference in Russia to discuss sovereignty in international relations in the 21st century.
- Promoting the view that Moscow does not seek to suppress any revolutions or actions against the present authorities in general, but only counters external interference and coups inspired and/or supported from abroad. This is important because external opponents and the internal opposition are trying to portray Russia as a "suppressor of freedom" at home and abroad, as a global defender of dictatorship. The proof of the contrary is Moscow's neutral attitude towards recent revolutions in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, and Abkhazia, where there was no external interference.

4.2.2. Protecting Political and Cultural Diversity, and the Freedom to Choose Development Models

As a multiethnic country whose peaceful existence, development and internal security depend directly on respect for diversity, Russia, with its history and cultural openness, naturally fits the role of one of the main defenders of cultural, civilizational, socioeconomic and political diversity in the world, and the right of countries to choose their own development models. Russia is already de facto playing this role, but has not presented this as one of its positive contributions to world affairs yet. While countering the West's hegemonic and universalist policies, Russia does not force its own model of development or any model upon others. It only creates conditions for them to freely develop or choose their own path, the one they consider necessary. This approach manifests itself in Russia's policies in Syria, Libya, and Venezuela.

Additional measures strengthening the image of Russia as an advocate of diversity and the freedom of countries to choose development models may include the following:

- Creation by Russia (possibly jointly with BRICS partners) of the Global Alliance for Sovereignty and Diversity mentioned in Section 4.2.1;

- Emphasizing in the Russian Foreign Policy Concept, other policy documents and speeches the freedom of countries to choose development models as one of the most important principles of Russian foreign policy and the basis of its approach to the settlement of internal conflicts;
- Suggesting a UN General Assembly draft resolution stating that there is no universal model of development and emphasizing the need to counter the universalization of political, civilizational and cultural values;
- Suggesting a UN General Assembly draft resolution laying out principles for the resolution of intrastate conflicts, according to which external players must not impose their own ideas regarding development models on the countries involved in conflicts, but should only create conditions for these countries to choose or develop such models on their own.

4.2.3. Russia as a Guarantor of a “New Non-Alignment”

One of the most important instruments that can be used for strengthening the image and role of Russia as a defender of the freedom of countries to choose development models, of their sovereignty and diversity is its positioning as a guarantor of a “new non-alignment,” a power center which would save many countries the trouble of having to make the “either-or” choice and thus enabling them to maintain internal and external autonomy.

As China turns into a full-fledged superpower, a system resembling a bipolar one will form in the world against Beijing’s will. The US is contributing to this greatly. The threat of block to block polarization, including the technological sphere, will increase as a result of American efforts, and Washington will directly or indirectly push an ever larger number of countries to make a choice “either-or”. In time Russia, too, might find itself in a difficult situation, as it dismisses the possibility of becoming anyone’s junior partner, but at the same time it will be behind the XXI century superpowers’ in terms of aggregate potential.

A solution could be the positioning of Russia as the leader of a “new non-alignment” (while maintaining friendly and strategic partnership relations with China and building healthier relations with the United States). It will also make Russia a desirable partner for those countries that do not want to make a strategic choice “either-or”, which Washington

will be imposing on them. Already now many of these countries view Russia as a “third power balancer,” cooperation with which strengthens their position and independence, but which is unable and unwilling to impose its own hegemony upon them.

It would be appropriate to openly proclaim a “new non-alignment” and the protection of sovereignty as Russia’s new mission and to hold the founding summit of the “new non-alignment” in Moscow, inviting Asian, Middle Eastern, African, and Latin American countries to attend it. At the same time, as the experience of Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, South Korea, and a number of other countries shows, formal allies of the United States may also participate in this movement. Russia’s allies should be invited to join it, too.

Naturally, Russia must maintain close cooperation (which, surprisingly as it is, it does not so far) with the existing Non-Aligned Movement. Perhaps it is worth integrating Russia’s initiatives to protect the freedom of countries to choose development models, diversity and sovereignty with this Movement. This issue needs to be studied further, including with India as the informal leader of the existing Non-Aligned Movement. In this case, the non-aligned movement would become united, whereas Russia and India would become its leaders.

4.3. Policy of Protecting Nature / Earth: “Let’s Save the Planet Together”

Like nuclear war, environmental degradation is a major threat to mankind, life on Earth in general. The environmental and climate agenda has already come to the fore in developed countries and is gradually taking priority in many developing countries. Protecting nature is one of the most important “global public goods,” the provision of which can effectively improve the image the country and strengthen its leadership. It is also an urgent need for Russia itself. For all the difficulties, this issue is unifying for both Russian society and for relations with other countries. Therefore, Russia’s mission for itself and for the world and its contribution to global development should include not only the protection of peace and the freedom of choice for countries, but also environmental protection and global environmental security.

This will strengthen Russia’s leadership potential, improve its image in the eyes of elites and the public, and create a powerful positive agenda for cooperation. Environmentalism is a rare example of universal

value, and Russia with its natural potential could play an important role in building this agenda. At the same time, it is obvious that Russia needs its own agenda in this area, not an agenda that is proposed or imposed by others.

Russia's environmental protection possibilities have been underutilized. The country has a wealth of nature and more than half of its territory is almost unaffected by human activity. Russian nature is an important element of national identity. It is necessary to motivate it inside the country and to direct it outwards so that citizens were not only proud of Russia's natural wealth, but were also determined to protect and multiply it for the benefit of the country and the planet.

4.3.1. Russia's Current Environmental Protection Initiatives

Russia is already taking, although not too actively, steps in the field of nature protection. However, these efforts are so far chaotic, not properly presented in official rhetoric and are generally viewed as marginal policy direction.

Domestically, Russia's main initiatives and achievements in terms of environmental protection are as follows:

- 2017 was declared Year of Ecology, within the framework of which a number of new specially protected areas were created, a transition to the best available technologies was started, and the modernization of the waste management system was announced.
- The state program "Social and Economic Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation" was extended for five years until 2025. The program does not set environmental tasks separately but states that its third stage (2021–2025) will require the adoption of decisions regarding further management of the most hazardous sunken nuclear and radiation objects and radioactive waste.
- In 2018, the National Project "Ecology" (2019–2024) was approved, which calls for reforming the system of municipal solid waste management, introduces air pollution quotas, envisages ecological rehabilitation of water bodies, and proposes a number of biodiversity conservation projects.
- The "National Strategy of Long-Term Development of the Russian Federation with Low Greenhouse Gas Emissions" is being prepared; in the end of December, 2019 the Russian Government adopted the "National Plan of Action of the First Stage of Adaptation to the Climate Change for the Period till 2022".

In foreign policy, the environmental agenda of Russian foreign policy manifests itself in signing (in 2016) and ratifying (in 2019) of the Paris Agreement within the framework of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Moscow was a fairly constructive, albeit low-active, participant in negotiations on the agreement.

BRICS is the platform where Russia not only joins environmental initiatives, but also initiates and actively promotes them. During the previous Russian presidency (in 2015), the format of BRICS environment ministers' and senior environmental officials' meetings was initiated. In 2018, at Russia's initiative, BRICS countries signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of environmental protection. It was accompanied by the BRICS Clean Rivers program, initiated at about the same time. In 2019, Russia proposed drawing up a list of the most environmentally effective technological solutions for industry in BRICS countries. Environmental protection is one of the priorities of Russia's BRICS presidency in 2020.

Environmental protection is also a major priority of Russia's policy in the Arctic Council. Russia will chair the Council in 2021–2023, and the environmental agenda will be central to its presidency.

Over the past few years, Russia has been repeatedly urging the United States and the EU to remove investments in “green technologies” from under sanctions, and to establish environmental cooperation in the Arctic. There has been no response so far, but the position itself needs to be maintained and promoted more actively among non-Western states, as well as the EU and U.S. public at large.

4.3.2. Recommendations for Promoting the Policy of Protecting Nature / Earth

First of all, it is necessary to promote, both inside and outside the country, Russia's image as a “green country,” emphasizing the wealth and diversity of its nature as a value, not just as a resource for economic development. It would be desirable to announce at the top level, that economic development and environmental protection are mutually complementary, not conflicting, goals, and that the green economy should become an important and profitable part of the national economy as a whole.

More importance should be attached to environmental protection in the Russian Foreign Policy Concept and other foreign policy documents

and speeches. The Arctic is one of the main parts of Russia's natural wealth, a region of special international interaction and special responsibility to nature. It is necessary to maintain its status as a global asset under Russian jurisdiction. The Arctic should become the world's main platform for scientific cooperation, a natural laboratory for studying climate change. This will raise Russia's status in the world no less than the exploitation of the Arctic as a repository of resources or a transport artery, a narrative that currently prevails in modern discourse.

The idea of nature conservation can also be tied to another big project —Russia's pivot to the East. East Asian countries are experiencing severe environmental problems and shortages of resources, and Russia could help solve them, primarily as a supplier of environmentally-friendly and resource-intensive goods as well as ecosystem services (agricultural products, wood products, water-intensive products, marine wealth, energy-intensive products manufactured using hydropower, data processing and storage services, ecotourism, etc.). *Siberia and the Far East should become a unique region for the development of an innovative resource-based economy using a fusion of natural wealth and high technologies.*

Commitment to safeguarding and multiplying natural wealth for the sake of the country and the planet should be reflected in ambitious goals to reduce all types of pollution and in large-scale environmental initiatives. A nationwide forest planting project could become one of them. Such a project will not only improve the environment in the country (including protection of biodiversity and reduction of risks of disaster) and solve the important task of bringing abandoned land back into use, but will also involve the population in environmental initiatives, and even earn money: many global investors are willing to pay for reforestation as compensation for their carbon footprint. It would be desirable to present (for example, within the framework of BRICS, the SCO, or possibly the UN) an initiative to strengthen international cooperation for the restoration of forests destroyed by fires and logging.

Another promising idea that could consolidate Russia's role as a protector of environment could be measures to stop using household plastic products. Appropriate measures should be taken both domestically and internationally (e.g. in BRICS, in dialogue with the EU).

The idea of developing ecotourism in Russia appears to be quite promising in terms of improving Russia's image, consolidating its reputation as a protector of environment and strengthening the unifying agenda.

It is important to gradually facilitate the visa regime for ecotourists and develop the relevant infrastructure and market.

Finally, Russia needs to initiate a nationwide movement against the habit of littering and polluting nature. “Let’s make our country clean” is an important slogan for many organizations, parties, and for citizens who would like use their skills and knowledge.

4.4. Strengthening Russia’s Role in International Cooperation to Combat Pandemics

4.4.1. Humanity has faced the threat of dangerous viral infections at least ten times in the past twenty years.¹ However, it is the COVID-19 epidemic that has made pandemics a priority threat to international security and human life in general. It has become truly global, claiming the number of lives comparable with wartime death tolls, triggering a world economic crisis, with developed Western countries, whose health systems were considered well prepared for such challenges, being hit the hardest.

4.4.2. The scale of the epidemic and the inability of many countries to cope with it on their own make the battle against pandemics one of the highest priorities of international cooperation in the years to come. Active participation in these efforts protects the state’s own citizens (the population of no country in the world can be protected until the population of all other countries without exception is protected, too), thus strengthening its attractiveness and leadership potential on the international stage.

4.4.3. The practice of international cooperation to combat pandemics is very diverse and includes both bilateral (providing aid) and multi-lateral cooperation. The latter is built around the World Health Organization, the United Nations (Security Council, General Assembly, and the Development Program), the IMF, the SCO and global governance institutions such as the G20, BRICS, and the G7.

¹ 2002 — severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-CoV coronavirus infection); 2003, 2005, 2012 — avian influenza (H5N1); 2009 — swine influenza (H1N1); 2012–2013 — Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS-CoV coronavirus infection); 2014 — increase in polio cases in the Third World; 2014–2015 — Ebola virus disease in West Africa; 2015–2016 — Zika fever; 2017–2019 — increase in measles cases worldwide; 2019 — Lassa fever in Nigeria; 2019–2020 — COVID-19 coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2).

4.4.4. Russia has significant scientific and material resources and potential in the field of health care and is already actively participating in international cooperation in this area. Russia has created vaccines against Ebola, Marburg virus disease, tick-borne encephalitis, measles, various types of flu, many other dangerous viruses, and supplies them to other countries. Russian scientists work in cooperation with leading foreign organizations and laboratories in many countries of the world.

4.4.5. Russia supports, and sometimes initiates, the strengthening of health cooperation within the BRICS, SCO, UN, and G20 framework. Since 2011, BRICS countries have held regular meetings of their health ministers, and established working groups in five areas: strategic health technologies to combat infectious diseases (led by Brazil); medical technologies (led by Russia); strengthening sanitary control (led by India); drug research (led by China); and reducing the risk of non-communicable diseases, prevention, health promotion, and universal health care coverage (led by South Africa). At the 7th BRICS Summit in Ufa, held in 2015 under the chairmanship of Russia, the member states undertook to work together in such areas as managing the risks of new infections with pandemic potential; fulfilling commitments to reduce the spread of and eradicate infectious diseases that impede development (HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, neglected tropical diseases, polio, measles); and researching, developing, producing and supplying medicines ensuring better prevention and treatment of infectious diseases. Since 2015, Russia has contributed about \$40 million to fight Ebola through the United Nations and bilateral assistance to African countries.

4.4.6. Finally, Russia is very actively cooperating on a bilateral and multilateral basis to combat the COVID-19 outbreak, thus improving its image among part of the elites and population in many countries. Combating the epidemic was immediately proclaimed one of the priorities of the Russian presidency in BRICS and the SCO. Russia has been supplying tens of thousands of test systems to foreign states to detect the new infection. Recipients include EAEU countries, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Venezuela, Mongolia, North Korea, and Iran. The Defense Ministry has provided massive humanitarian assistance to Italy, Serbia, China, and the United States. The assistance to Italy and the United States has produced an important political effect by reducing the demonization of Russia and making it more attractive for people and elites.

4.4.7. In a draft UN General Assembly proposed in March 2020, Russia called for solidarity in the struggle against coronavirus. The resolution recognizes the WHO's leading role in combating the pandemic, renounces trade wars and unilateral sanctions adopted in circumvention of the UN Security Council, denounces discrimination of states, peoples and individuals, counters price gouging for essential goods, and emphasizes the need to disseminate reliable information about the new virus. In fact, sanctions make it difficult to deliver humanitarian aid to affected countries, even if they do not prohibit it directly, and weaken their health systems. Trade wars exacerbate the global economic decline and prevent economic recovery after the epidemic. The move has put the U.S. and the EU on the defensive and boosted Russia's authority in the eyes of non-Western countries, especially after the draft resolution was blocked by the United States, the EU, Ukraine, and Georgia for political reasons.

4.4.8. All this creates a solid foundation for raising the issues of combating pandemics and cooperation in addressing them, giving them more priority in Russia's foreign policy, not on an ad hoc basis, but permanently. A common priority is multilateral cooperation to strengthen epidemiological control, develop new vaccines and test systems, and share anti-epidemic experience. The following steps and initiatives that Russia could undertake to promote cooperation in the field of combating pandemics appear to be most appropriate:

- Providing further humanitarian aid to different countries to supply them with test systems and medical ventilators made in Russia, helping with sanitization. The priority is to be given to countries that are most affected by the epidemic and lack such supplies, as well as EAEU member states and other friendly countries.
- Joining the WHO-launched international Solidarity project so that Russian health organizations could participate in clinical trials of drugs for the treatment of the new coronavirus infection, using the best world practices. Russia is not yet part of this project.
- Joining a similar EU project called Discovery (coordinated by the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research). This will create an additional positive agenda in relations with the EU.
- Promptly informing the WHO about all Russian prototypes of vaccines against COVID-19 and the results of their testing.
- Stepping up interaction with BRICS, SCO, and G20 countries in conducting research in the field of epidemiology, immunobiology, genetic profiling of various infectious agents, including particularly

dangerous ones, and ensuring close coordination on these issues with the WHO.

- Establishing an effective system of information exchange with BRICS, SCO, and G20 countries on the development of means for early detection and treatment of various infectious agents, coordinating activities with the WHO.
- Initiating a global information campaign on antibacterial resistance and biosafety within the BRICS and SCO framework and eventually the G20.
- Initiating the creation of an international development bank under the auspices of BRICS, the SCO or the G20 to finance research in the field of epidemiology.
- Developing, within BRICS and the SCO, the principles and rules of international cooperation to prevent epidemics, including the principles of price regulation for medicines and medical products, and temporary customs regulations to prevent epidemics.
- Establishing an effective system of information exchange with BRICS, SCO, and G20 countries, and within the WHO framework, on the use of digital technologies to control infectious diseases, including particularly dangerous ones.
- Coordinating BRICS and SCO positions at the WHO and promoting better funding and broader rights for the organization.
- Sharing best practices within the BRICS, SCO, and G20 framework to improve the national health systems.
- Coordinating, within BRICS and the G20, assistance to countries with less developed health systems.
- Stepping up interstate cooperation on health issues within the EAEU, and eventually ensuring intergovernmental integration in this sphere.

4.5. Optimizing and Strengthening Russia's Humanitarian Policy

4.5.1. Currently, Russia's humanitarian policy is not matching its potential and is less impressive, than foreign policy successes at other dimensions. This prevents to win other countries' greater solidarity with the Russian approaches, policies and projected values. Despite Russia carries out large-scale and effective humanitarian activities in regions such as Syria and Donbass, in general, this activity is not considered a foreign policy priority and is quite fragmented.

4.5.2. Understanding of humanitarian policy as cooperation in the field of culture, art, education, and work with compatriots, which exists in Russia, needs significant renewal. In addition to these certainly important dimensions, a fully-fledged humanitarian policy should include foreign assistance (including support for foreign NGOs) and, in general, everything that ensures human rights, including vital ones, access to the benefits of culture, medicine, and civilization as a whole. Russia's humanitarian policy should use the full range of human rights concepts adopted in international practice, with a focus on traditional values that support not only rights of the individual, but also the rights of the family and communities. The COVID-19 pandemics and the aid in struggling it that Russia provides to the other countries made such a renewal a matter of high necessity.

4.5.3. Integrity and overall coordination of Russia's humanitarian policy are not sufficient. The activities are dispersed among several agencies (Foreign Ministry, Defense Ministry, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, the Federal Agency for the CIS Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation (Rossotrudnichestvo), Finance Ministry, Ministry for Emergency Situations), while the key agency responsible for carrying out humanitarian policy, Rossotrudnichestvo, has been pushed to the sidelines of official foreign policy, with residual funding which is barely enough to keep it going but not to operate efficiently.

4.5.4. The work of Russian NGOs and Rossotrudnichestvo is not productive enough as their planning is seldom based on preliminary assessment of the target audience's needs and rarely evaluates the effectiveness of events held, except for collecting publications from the local press. With a few exceptions (repair of schools and kindergartens, Russian teachers' work, supplies of textbooks, the Emergencies Ministry's disaster relief activities), Rossotrudnichestvo and humanitarian NGOs do purely symbolic work (holding roundtables attended by the same people who think positively about Russia as it is, organizing exhibitions and concerts). As a result, the circle of people loyal to Russia is not expanding, no pro-Russian part of the elite is cultivated, and no long-term interdependence and partnership are built. In less developed countries, such activities are often perceived as an attempt to replace real aid and development assistance with "balalaika diplomacy," that is, they ulti-

mately weaken rather than strengthen Russia's influence and solidarity with its point of view.

4.5.5. The corporate sector, with a few exceptions, is reluctant to participate in humanitarian activities abroad, considering them an additional burden and in most cases gets involved in the "comfort zone" activities, such as organization of concerts and installation of monuments.

4.5.6. Joint activities with foreign humanitarian organizations are rare, despite the fact that foreign and international humanitarian NGOs are interested in such cooperation, and such programs could become an important factor in influencing the foreign non-governmental sector and, through it, political circles.

4.5.7. The aspect of Russia's humanitarian policy that needs a re-shape most is foreign assistance. Its overall coordination at the federal level is insufficient, and it is often "detached" from foreign policy issues. Most of the funding is distributed through the Finance Ministry and goes to international organizations, which essentially does not in any way help identify this funding as Russian. Russia's use of the OECD methodology (even though Russia is not a member of this organization!) to estimate foreign aid leaves out a significant part of Russia's real assistance to foreign states in terms of security and economic development, which for this reason cannot be classified as aid neither by Russia itself nor by its recipients, which significantly weakens the foreign policy effect from such aid. Finally, Russia neither has a single foreign assistance database, nor does it properly promote and popularize this policy. There is no web portal that would present Russia's foreign aid in its entirety as part of its foreign policy.

4.5.8. *Considering the above, Russia's humanitarian policy needs a fundamental renewal.* It is necessary to update the set of ideas that should be communicated to the audience, diversify approaches, make work more productive, assess the needs, and evaluate effectiveness.

4.5.9. The underlying message of Russia's humanitarian policy should emphasize that Russia is not seeking to set up favorable regimes in foreign states or export political values and interfere in their politics. Russia's goal is to preserve and ensure the dignity and the right to peace-

ful development of people, families, communities, and countries, and their sovereignty.

4.5.10. It is probably necessary to organize coordination of Russia's humanitarian policy with the decision-making center in one-stop-shop mode, after which Russian NGOs and the corporate sector should be engaged to support humanitarian policy, and cooperation with foreign NGOs should be established. The Foreign Ministry Board could become such a center, working together with Rossotrudnichsestvo and the Foreign Affairs Directorate of the Russian President. Another option would be creating a special division within the Presidential Administration.

4.5.11. It is advisable to diversify the efforts: educational programs, cultural events, symbolic and commemorative actions should be supplemented with nature protection efforts, ecological and medical programs, and socially-oriented infrastructure projects.

4.5.12. The corporate sector should be more actively involved in the implementation of humanitarian policy, which will help reduce costs and thus provide support to Russian companies in areas where they can derive benefits. At the same time, Rossotrudnichsestvo should step up its work to lobby the interests of Russian companies abroad. Legislation should be amended to allow companies to receive tax deductions for charitable activities.

4.5.13. The relevance or irrelevance of a project should be assessed based on demand in local society, its political and economic efficiency, so as not to disperse resources where they are not needed or where such efforts will not be appreciated.

4.5.14. It is necessary to use the possibilities of local NGOs better by undertaking joint or outsourced projects. If it is not essential that a project be implemented by Russian citizens, local NGOs should be engaged wherever possible.

4.5.15. Rossotrudnichsestvo shall be reorganized and strengthened, and its funding increased. The foreign aid budget should be taken away from the Finance Ministry and handed over to the Foreign Ministry, making Rossotrudnichsestvo responsible for distributing most of it

(when this does not concern military and macroeconomic aid or direct participation of Russian agencies such as the Ministry for Emergency Situations). Rossotrudnichestvo should also be instructed to create and operate a web portal on Russian foreign aid policy that would reflect all aspects of such activities, not only those that meet the OECD criteria or the mandate of the agency itself. During the reorganization it will be necessary to amend the Statutes of Rossotrudnichestvo in order to correct the one-sided interpretation of the term ‘humanitarian’.

4.5.16. It is advisable to increase the quotas for budget-financed training programs and include in them not only higher educational institutions, but also vocational schools. A preliminary assessment of the demand for certain occupations is also necessary. It is essential to provide monthly allowances to students in order to cover their living expenses, provide them with accommodation in dormitories, and introduce special visa regulations allowing students to work. If they want to continue working and living in Russia, agreements should be concluded with Russian companies operating abroad, wherever possible, to ensure priority employment of Russian university graduates.

4.5.17. It is necessary to open Russian educational institutions abroad, which will use Russian teaching methods and standards, and invite teachers from Russia in order to popularize Russian education. Education in such institutions in many countries may be fully or partly paid. In addition, kindergartens should be supported, particularly in disadvantaged regions and countries.

4.5.18. Russian language training necessary for enrolment at Russian educational institutions should be increasingly provided in the home countries of prospective applicants. It is advisable to open Russian language classes in populated areas, primarily in disadvantaged countries and regions. In prosperous countries, however, such classes may be at least self-sufficient and thus pay for “social” classes and schools.

4.5.19. Nature protection projects may become an important aspect of Russia’s humanitarian policy. In addition to responding to industrial disasters, rehabilitation of areas after fires, special attention should be paid to environmental rehabilitation in territories affected by military conflicts, to nuclear safety, and to contamination of soil, water and air

with isotopes, toxic substances, and hazardous metals. Similar environmental actions, cleaning of oil-contaminated soil, forest planting with the participation of local residents are possible in Syria and Iraq. Efforts to collect and dispose of plastic products would be welcomed in many Asian countries, and may even partly pay off as recycling technologies develop further.

4.5.20. Special attention should be paid to post-conflict rehabilitation, development projects, and the fight against poverty. Objectively, Syria is the main recipient of Russian projects to rebuild housing, infrastructure, and energy facilities. However, demand for such efforts is also high in other countries and regions that are relevant to Russian foreign policy. These include such projects as repairing and equipping school buildings, hospitals, and polyclinics, organizing trips of Russian medics there, training and supporting local medical personnel, providing drinking water, electricity, and communications, helping with wastewater treatment, decontamination, medical rehabilitation of the victims of armed hostilities and mines, and demining. These programs are in demand in Syria, Iraq, Central Asia (Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, partially Uzbekistan), and African countries. In many of them such projects should also rely on local NGOs, many involve the interests of Russian companies.

4.5.21. Finally, an important priority is the coverage of Russia's humanitarian policy in the media and its popularization. In addition to the creation of a single web portal of Russian foreign aid, humanitarian policy needs broader coverage in the Russian media targeting foreign audiences (first of all Russia Today) and in the Russian-language media in the post-Soviet countries.

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