

Russian Pillar

Vladimir Chizhov

In March 2019, the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the European Union, Ambassador Vladimir Chizhov, emphasised our common Eurasian home when he addressed the Delphi Economic Forum in Greece. He sketches the broad outlines of Russia's view of the current international order.

I would suggest that we start from the beginning and try to contemplate what the international world order is *per se*. For centuries the world lived within Westphalian sovereignty, then the First World War brought us the system of Versailles and, in 1945 in the Russian city of Yalta, countries of the anti-Hitler coalition agreed on how they would co-exist taking into account the results of the Second World War. However, those agreements were soon swept away by the waves of a new confrontation, namely the Cold War.

But the moment came when the Cold War, with its concept of mutual assured destruction, was gone too. What then replaced it? Alas, while a part of our Eurasian continent was going through painful political and economic transformations in pursuit of an optimal democratic organisation and a fair market model that would suit it most, the so-called 'enlightened' West, professing its alleged experience and wisdom, proclaimed 'the end of history' and defined the triumph of an arbitrary set of liberal values and globalisation as the world development vector with no alternative, as a new formula of the 'bright future for all mankind'.

However, failure awaited the authors of social, economic and political engineering at this turn as well. The basically objective globalisation process did not follow the path they had marked. It became obvious that other continents and centres of power, rather than the traditional West, were starting to play a key role. Thereby, the world entered an era of multi-polarity.

It is not a coincidence that at the current stage we witness the widest ever plurality of opinions on what the international world

order is and, more importantly, what it should be. It is common knowledge that the modern system of international law was formed within the institutions that had been established following the Second World War, first of all the United Nations, but also the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and, no matter how paradoxical it may sound, NATO. (The latter, I would note, continuing to spasmodically enlarge rather out of necessity than choice.) However, today the very notion of 'international law' is subject to revision and dilution. For a number of years now our European and American partners, instead of adhering to this well-known and clear-cut term, have been implanting in their vocabulary and official documents the formula 'internationally recognised rules and norms'. Moreover, they are trying to accustom their interlocutors around the world to it. Meanwhile, inventors of this novelty find it difficult to explain what the difference between law and these 'rules and norms' is, and who had actually recognised the latter and when.

It is natural that Russia, being a responsible international player, a nuclear power, and Permanent Member of the UN Security Council, should be concerned with this situation. We have felt this threat long enough and as, I would repeat, a responsible power, have generated quite a few far-reaching initiatives throughout the last two decades that are aimed at strengthening the world order on the basis of international law and establishing such a security system, first and foremost in Europe, that would provide equal guarantees to all. Besides, Russia has never tried to monopolise this work, and was always open to co-operation with those who were ready to take part in it.

Neither did we refuse initiatives suggested by others. For instance, when in 2010 NATO published its Strategic Concept we positively assessed well-formulated principles of 'security guarantees' and suggested extending them to all countries of Europe. The answer we got was: our proposal is for Alliance members only, so please be content with second class security. It is clear that, with such an approach, talking about equal distribution of security guarantees over Eurasian space was pointless.

Against this background some European countries opted for a simplified way – gave up and rushed to join NATO without thinking that the day would come when they would be requested to incur unbearable and unjustified expenses, participate in missions and operations far from their borders and interests, as well as deploy foreign military bases on their territories. And the Russian proposal to sign a European Security Treaty that would have provided for making legally binding the well-known principle that no one shall enhance one's security at the expense of security of others (enshrined, by the way, as a political commitment in the OSCE

Charter for European Security signed by 54 Heads of State and Government) remained unaddressed.

However, even under such circumstances we do not give up and continue upholding the above-mentioned principles. Meanwhile, given particular aspects of Russian mentality, political culture and perhaps the old-fashioned, as it may seem to many, concept of decency, Moscow never imposes anything on anyone, and does not interfere in internal affairs of other states – contrary to statements certain capitals consider it possible to make following the fashion of blaming ‘omnipotent’ Russia for all the troubles in the world.

At the same time, some of our ‘prosecutors’ feel free to impose on other countries their own views on how the latter should live in such a cynical manner that can be described as absolute disregard for all norms of interstate behaviour. One does not need to go far to find examples: right now we are witnessing Washington’s unprecedented interference in the domestic affairs of Venezuela. The US openly calls on the military of the country to defect to a self-proclaimed political leader and threatens with persecution those who remain faithful to their oath. Genuine economic terror is unleashed, sinister extra-territorial sanctions are introduced. Washington managed to ‘wear down’ EU Member States – except, I would particularly stress, Greece, Cyprus, Slovakia and Italy, as well as the Vatican – resulting in the fact that the ‘International Contact Group’ formed by the European Union took a biased stance, and thereby deprived itself of the opportunity to act as an impartial mediator.

The situation around Venezuela is obviously a manifestation of a consistent systemic line to ruin the current architecture of world legal order, rather than a solitary case or unremarkable episode. Planting across the information sphere unsupported accusations against certain countries of carrying out hideous chemical attacks and immediately, without any judicial proceedings, imposing sanctions or even launching air strikes are considered to be almost the norm today. It is particularly alarming that this line is also adopted in the military sphere, in non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We have to acknowledge that today’s situation is in a way much more dangerous than the one of the Cold War years – then, for all the depth of ideological differences, common sense and responsibility for the world’s fate pushed antagonistic powers to take wise decisions in the area of arms control and disarmament.

Today, we are virtually on the edge of the last line. Its crossing will mean complete dismantling of checks and balances in the nuclear field. And it is not about passions or whims of particular leaders, it is rather about a consistent policy that was formed 17 years ago, at the time of

another US Administration – the one that derailed the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. And each time Washington denounced another treaty with Russia it was done under an absolutely invented pretext. As a result the New START Treaty is, in fact, the only one left, its lifespan stretching only until 5 February 2021.

A similar situation is observed in the field of economy. It is worth noting that the system of pipelines ensuring European energy security was created when the Cold War was at its height. In those days there existed, of course, forces that tried to hinder the development of these projects, but the then leaders of countries of Western Europe managed to find the strength not to submit to this pressure. We can only hope that the current generation of European leaders will inherit their courage.

Speaking about economy I need to emphasise that attempts to influence Russia's policy via sanctions are ridiculous. Events of recent years demonstrated that such efforts are in vain and, by the way, make the interests of European business also suffer a lot, as well as our relations in general, including with our largest trade and economic partner – the European Union.

Against this backdrop the easiest thing for Russia would be to follow a trend that is in fashion today and 'pivot to Asia', especially since it is there that the bigger part of my country's territory lies. Actually, we are increasingly active in developing mutually beneficial co-operation with the People's Republic of China, ASEAN countries [Association of Southeast Asian Nations], and other Asian partners, but we are not doing it to undermine or punish Europe. We do not make friends 'against Europe' or the West as a whole. Figuratively speaking, we are implementing the concept projected by the Russian coat of arms whose double-headed eagle (though admittedly inherited from our common ancestral homeland with Greece, Byzantium) looks at the same time to the West and to the East. I would add that Russia, as a country located on two continents and thereby uniting Eurasia by virtue of its geography, history and cultural tradition, is genuinely interested in maintaining equally friendly relations on the West and on the East.

Currently, leaders of major EU countries are more and more often thinking of a new configuration of co-operation in Europe and are more outspoken about the need to take their fate in their hands. I believe it is important that EU Member States remember that they will not be able to uphold their positions against rising economic giants – in Asia today, in Latin America tomorrow, in Africa the day after tomorrow – unless they listen closely to Russia's words about establishing a common economic

and humanitarian space in Eurasia. Defending what we call ‘European civilisation’ is only possible if one of its supporting pillars, Russia, is fully engaged.

Meanwhile, the world is witnessing a deficit of mutual responsibility of nation states, including those the UN Charter assigns with special responsibility for maintaining global peace and security. Aspiring in no way to the laurels of the Oracle of Delphi, I would nevertheless take the courage to predict: unless Russia’s partners in the UN Security Council shoulder this responsibility, a ‘legal jungle’ will emerge on our planet faster than we may assume. In my view, it would be an extremely lamentable outcome of reflecting on the heritage of the first democrats in the history of mankind, those who lived in Ancient Greece and, I am sure, put much brighter hopes on their descendants.



NATO Aegis Ashore Ballistic Missile Defence, Deveselu, Romania

‘Missile Misdemeanours’

Russian Embassy Press Officer’s reply to a media question concerning the Report of the House of Commons Defence Committee ‘Missile Misdemeanours: Russia and the INF Treaty’

Question: How could you comment on the Report of the House of Commons Defence Committee, which blames Russia for the collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty?

Answer: We have carefully studied the report of British parliamentarians and, in our opinion, it distorts the true state of affairs surrounding the INF Treaty and contains one-sided assessments. Russia strongly rejects baseless allegations of non-compliance with the INF Treaty. The responsibility for the collapse of the Treaty rests entirely with the United States. It was Washington that deliberately brought the situation to a deadlock and rejected our proposal to settle reciprocal claims on the basis of mutual transparency.

Willing to preserve the INF Treaty, we have repeatedly expressed our concern over non-compliance by Washington. As the US media have recently reported with reference to Pentagon representatives, the United States plans to conduct a medium-range ground-based missile test in August [2019], and a ballistic one in November. Obviously it is impossible to establish production of such weapons and prepare for tests so quickly, in just a few months. Therefore, the relevant work has been conducted by the Americans for a while, under the ban.

It is precisely the question that we have been consistently raising: under the guise of using target missiles to test missile defence systems, the US was working on the medium-range ground-based ballistic missile technology. We have been pointing out that, since 2015, the US has deployed launchers capable to launch medium-range cruise missiles from the ground in the missile defence base in Romania. The same launchers are to appear in 2020 on the site constructed by Americans in Poland.

Unfortunately, British parliamentarians have preferred to ignore these and other well-known facts in their report.

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