

Globalization Political Processes in Their Dynamics and Development*

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Today, the global community discusses a great number of scenarios and alternatives of the future development. Russian scholars and experts are also actively involved in global political forecasting which is reflected in the proceedings of International Congresses on Globalistics held by the Faculty of Global Studies at Lomonosov Moscow State University.

The developmental trends of global political processes result from the nonlinear character of the global political system, its transformation and partial dysfunctions and bifurcations. Today we observe a discrepancy between the old twentieth-century trends of political development of the ‘global world’ and the new trends of formation of a polycentric world. The collision between old and new trends and a qualitative transformation of the world political system into a new global system generates a new content of political processes of globalization.

Presently, the analysis and *forecasting of trends of the development of political globalization* become more and more relevant and important. In what follows we describe the most evident and significant trends of political globalization (see also Chumakov 2013: 32).

‘The Global Character’

In the global world, we deal with ‘different phenomena and processes that obtain a global character’ (Chumakov 2013: 32).

We believe that ‘the global character’ is a qualitatively new characteristic of the world political system which gradually evolves into a global political system. This new ‘global character’ means a transformation of the system of international relations, a change in the nature and content of world connections and relations, as well as a change in the geopolitical status of individual states and global actors, *etc.* Globalization leads to structural changes in the world political system and to reconstruction of the whole system of international relations.

One of the manifestations of the global character of the world political system is the interaction between global political processes at different levels – global and regional, global and local, regional and local, – that takes place, first of all, in economic, informational, and ecological and, in the last turn, in political sphere. Through this interaction and interrelation the world gradually becomes globally integrated.

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New Structure of the Global World

The global world of the twenty-first century will be structured based on different principles from which a new hierarchy will emerge. Thus, different foundations will define the global actors' geopolitical status.

The global world hierarchy comprises the following structural elements: centers of power, candidates for the status of the world's center of power, economic, political, military, and civilization poles, global powers, and regional powers. This hierarchy of structural elements, more precisely, a contest for an appropriate position in it, will define the course of global political processes and scenarios of future development (Ilyin and Leonova 2013).

It is often argued that the global world is not a community of equal nations, but a system of subordination, a rigid hierarchy of states and regional political systems. With the emergence of new economic, military, and political poles, a new configuration of the global world will gradually arise which, in its turn, will be characterized by 'mobility of the world system structures' and 'variable rules' of its functioning (Grinin 2013: 73).

The global world structures will be mobile, and the rules of functioning and principles of activity will be changeable. It is not the rules and international law but the global actors' economic and geopolitical interests which may be rather egoistic and not defined by international rules and laws, that will become of major importance. This trend will be strengthened by the increasing scale of globalization processes which will expand to large and peripheral (in terms of globalization) territories alongside with a growing number of global actors (including large multinational corporations, non-governmental organizations, terrorist organizations, and criminal syndicates, *etc.*).

The Change of Geopolitical Landscape

The formation of a new structure of the global world will trigger the change of its geopolitical landscape. One of the significant trends of the twenty-first century, as Valentin I. Seguru-Zaytsev (2011) forecasts, will be 'a continental, and later a transcontinental crystallization and consolidation of the world geopolitical space' in which the scenario of the future will be not the 'clash of civilizations', but 'a competition of civilizations' which is 'natural for the market economy'.

The nuclear weapons can level the political weight of countries and blocs; otherwise, if some of them lack such weapons, a hierarchical distance will deepen.

The USA Remains the Center of Power of the Global World

On the basis of this forecast we can assume with a big degree of confidence that in the twenty-first century the USA will still remain the center of power of the global world.

Although recently much has been written about an obvious weakening of the USA's hegemony, these forecasts turned out to be obviously premature; however, Leonid Grinin is right, arguing that '*a change of the leader in the world can hardly occur, there is no equal absolute favorite to replace the USA*'. He believes that '*...though the USA will lose their positions, nobody will be able to become an absolute leader of the new world*'. It seems prophetic when he says that '*today the United States concentrate political, military, financial, monetary, economic, technological, ideological, and even cultural leadership, –*

all at the same time. Meanwhile, there is – and in the near future there will be – no single country or group of states in the world that could unite several aspects of leadership. Besides, neither China, nor India or someone else will be able to charge themselves with such a heavy burden due to the lack of economic opportunities, possible political risks, or because of the lack of experience and necessary associations, and also due to their ideological weakness’ (Grinin 2013: 65, 73; Grinin and Korotayev 2014).

Nikolay S. Rozov also believes that ‘the USA, despite all the debts and diverse difficulties, possess unsurpassed scientific, educational, technological, military, and political potential and, therefore, will preserve global leadership for a long time’ (Rozov 2010: 90).

Polarization between Modernization and Geopolitical Strategies

The trend of ‘polarization between modernization and geopolitical strategies’ (the term introduced by Alexander S. Panarin) is observed in the globalizing world. In his works, Panarin notes the alternative character of the two models in the Far East region: Japanese and Chinese, Atlantic and some ‘alternative’.

Eurasia gradually becomes rather diverse in its structure since the Asia-Pacific system is developing on the basis of the strategy of the Atlantic Western modernization (with the USA and Japan as its leaders), while the new continental system is searching for an alternative (where China is leading, but vacancy for Russia is still open).

Panarin forecasts in a prophetic way a ‘new geopolitical delimitation between rimland and heartland: between Japan (remaining within the framework of the Atlantic model) and the West, on the one hand, and China and Russia – on the other hand’. Such delimitation, in his opinion, will become an ‘accelerating factor of the forthcoming polarization’ (Panarin 2008: 62). Today such polarization of forming systems takes place not only in the Far East region but also in the entire globalizing world, and in the sharpest and polarized form – in Eurasia.

Instability of the Global World and Growing Extensivity and Intensity of Conflicts

Due to the dynamics of globalization processes, the political aspect of the global world will be characterized by changing the status of the global actors within the hierarchy and general instability of the hierarchical pyramid. The former centers of power and poles of the global world will yield to the new, more dynamically developing, and energetic candidates for these statuses which have obvious competitive advantages. The complication of global political processes will only increase instability.

Besides, the subjective factors start to play an increasing role; and these are not even the political leaders’ personal preferences, but their involvement and passion in establishing the political order, as well as the character and methods of political management.

The evolution of international relations and global political system will be accompanied with growing instability and uncertainty which will contribute to the formation of a multipolar and polycentric system of the global world. This system will probably lack general ‘rules of the game’, principles and standards of global actors’ behavior, and institutions and organizations that could effectively regulate and control the interaction between various poles and centers of power of the global world.

When analyzing the model of a polycentric global world, Vladimir V. Shlyapnikov comes to a conclusion that ‘multipolarity by itself does not guarantee stability... It will be even more difficult to support the balance of powers and a strategic stability in the twenty-first century. In the situation when the UN and other international institutions are actually ineffective, a multipolar chaos becomes rather possible’ (Shlyapnikov 2011: 204).

The increasing range of the conflicts and their growing intensity is an already evident tendency. Alongside with traditionally problematic territories of Africa, conflicts have spread to many regions of the global world: Israel and Palestine, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Ukraine, *etc.* An absolute majority of current conflicts is connected with a fight for limited resources, especially for fossil fuels. While in the twentieth century the cause of many conflicts was an access to oil, in the twenty-first century it is the competition for access to territories with prospects for shale gas production. This struggle will take the forms of ‘clearing of territories’ and elimination of ‘redundant population’ about which Panarin wrote so eloquently in his book ‘Global Political Forecasting’ (1999).

Inefficiency of International Structures

International structures, such as the UN, the European parliament, OSCE, the Group of Seven and the Group of Twenty, the World Bank and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *etc.* show inefficiency with respect to an adequate response to challenges of political processes of globalization. They were established during a different historical epoch and allocated with different functions, not connected with monitoring and management of global political processes. Therefore, it is not surprising that they turned out to be unprepared and functionally incapable to solve tasks set by the globalizing world.

From a certain point in time, to be exact, when ‘the global state’ and changing format of the international political system started to emerge, the existing international institutions and structures, which used to be efficient in the past, proved to be very imperfect tools. Today, one can maintain that international institutions for management and control of the development of the global political system do not keep up with the speed, dynamic and scale of unfolding political processes of globalization. Later on, their further degradation is rather possible.

Difficulties in the Formation of Global Management Mechanisms

The inefficiency of international institutions and structures proves an actual absence of mechanisms of management of the formed global political system, which Alexander Chumakov repeatedly emphasizes in his works. In the absence of such mechanisms of global management and control over global political processes, the centers of power of the global world become the most effective agents of global management. As long as global political processes are volatile, they will be directed and controlled by the global political leaders.

We can agree with Chumakov's idea that just as before, the global world ‘with a great variety of closely interconnected and, at the same time, actively opposing actors, remains self-regulated and, moreover, generally spontaneous, and absolutely deprived of any management...’ (Chumakov 2013: 34). But we agree only with the first part of his statement. Self-regulation defines freedom of action and the right to defend national interests. How-

ever, this freedom and right are presently under a rigid control of still the only center of power of the global world – the USA. In the future, the global world can become polycentric, and new centers of power will emerge in Asia, Latin America, Eurasia, and may be in Africa. And then the global space will be divided between spheres of their interests, and instead of global management there will be contractual processes between centers of power concerning the division of spheres of influence and control over them.

When contradictions grow at the peak of competitive fight between the operating centers of power and candidates for this status, wars will be waged. For certain centers of power these will be wars to secure their achieved status in the global hierarchy, for others – to force out competitors and to occupy their place. Today it is already obvious that wars will be in the format of regional conflicts and outside the competitors' territory.

The Formation of New Blocs. The Era of New Coalitions

The phenomenon of global regionalization observed in the global world objectively leads to the formation of regional systems and subsystems of international relations (Leonova 2013). The maturization of these regional systems and subsystems will inevitably promote the formation on their basis of economic, political, and military and strategic blocs, associations and coalitions.

The authoritative researcher Leonid Grinin points out an interesting trend. He believes that '*an era of new coalitions*' starts in the new global world. 'During the search for the steadiest, most favorable and adequate organizational supranational forms, various and the even quickly changing intermediate forms can emerge since the players on the world and regional political arenas will look for the most favorable and convenient blocs and agreements'. '...At the same time, those will win who pursue the most active policy of forming blocs and entering new associations and can get the maximum number of partners in different spheres. A country's influence will increase, conditionally speaking, through "earning" points from participation in one or another union and block' (Grinin 2013: 73, 74).

A vigorous competition for limited natural resources makes countries' economic interests become decisive in many respects and define the vectors of foreign policy, thus, becoming prioritized over ideological goals. The instability of the global political system will increase in the situation of growing conflict intensity in the world. Consequently, the geopolitical and economic interests that underlie the formation of coalitions and blocs will be very dynamic, unstable, and quickly changing. It will be manifested in a rapid change of priority vectors of foreign policy, partners, allies, and enemies.

Thus, it is possible to denote this trend as 'a formation of new blocs', a historical stage when there will be many unstable and constantly reformatted blocs, coalitions and associations. However, this does not at all mean a split of the global world and its further fragmentation. Today in many regions of the world we observe processes of active integration which lead to the formation of large regional systems. Elsewhere we wrote that alongside 'hot' or latent conflicts in the global world, we observe more and more a competition between regional associations, each headed by a regional power (the USA, the EU, China, Russia, Brazil, India, the Republic of South Africa, *etc.*). Previously neutral states are involved into the sphere of attraction of the country – a regional leader, – or are forced to choose among the competing blocs. The states with considerable resources – raw, power,

strategic, including those holding advantageous geopolitical position, demographic, *etc.* – find themselves a focus of attention of the leading powers and become objects of competition for a sphere of influence through the inclusion in a regional system or a corresponding political (economic, strategic) bloc (Ilyin, Leonova, and Rozanov 2013). We can observe a growing scale of such blocs due to the involvement of new members or partners (including observer states or the so-called associated members), leading to a geopolitical expansion of the blocs.

Geopolitical Pluralism

One may point to an expanding geopolitical pluralism in the globalizing world as well as to a differentiation of geopolitical positions and interests of regions especially in Latin America, Southeast and Northeast Asia, and Africa.

Recently, Russia has also increased its ‘geopolitical pluralism’ trying to redefine its traditionally prioritized relations with Central Asian countries in the post-Soviet territory. The Russian Federation has also tightened connections and increased the dynamics of relations with the countries of the Middle East and the Asian-Pacific region. At the same time, for a long time the European vector of foreign policy remained for Russia the most important and significant. Russia has also shown an obvious interest in development of partnership with the Latin American and African countries, which is often presented as ‘a return’ of Russia to these continents.

After it became clear that ‘reloading’ relations between Russia and the USA was rather a failure, one often speaks about the change in Russia's geopolitical codes and the turn towards the East, first of all to a strong partnership with China. The active interaction between Russia and the countries which used to be beyond the priority vectors of its foreign policy strengthens a trend to *flexibility and polyvariance* of the globalization of political processes.

Conflict between the State's National Interests and Globalization. The Realization of National Interests in the Globalizing World

However, the trend of decreasing interest of independent in states' sovereignty is opposed by another trend of globalization of the twenty-first century, namely *an increasing conflict between the state's national interests and globalization*. This marks a conflict which seems to be especially acute in the political sphere. At the end of the twentieth century it seemed that the role of the nation-state started to weaken while the economic aspect of globalization developed, manifesting in strengthening economic interdependence between countries, in the increasing role of multinational corporations, in the development of international financial markets, and in the internationalization of capital and business. The dismantling of the nation-state seemed inevitable and was a matter of the near future. However, when an increasing number of functions of the state were transferred to the supranational level, it became more and more obvious that there were a number of serious problems which could be hardly solved within the framework of interstate structures (the UN, OSCE, the European Parliament, *etc.*). These are issues and tasks affecting countries' national interests whose solution remains a prerogative of a national state.

That is why the expected hollowing out or even a decline of the state has not taken place yet, and will hardly take place in the near future. Figuratively speaking, its funeral was premature, and a funeral march was played inappropriately.

The problem of national interests of individual states in the global world remains the subject of disputes and reflections. *National interest is an objective restraint for the process of political globalization.* Perhaps this obstacle will be eliminated in the future, but if so it will occur gradually within the search for a balance between national interests of every country and the global system of political interdependence and hierarchy of states.

Competitiveness between the Authoritarian States

The global financial and economic crisis has revealed another challenging trend of globalization – a demand for, and competitiveness between the authoritarian states.

In the course of the world economic crises a number of states whose political system is commonly referred to as authoritarian, showed their economic and political efficiency, and proved to be worthy competitors of the European democratic states. Moreover, in the twenty-first century, a unique *competition is observed between the traditional democratic states which developed within the framework of the liberal and democratic model, and countries whose regimes are customary referred to as authoritarian.* And today, after a number of global financial and economic crises countries with authoritarian regimes demonstrate their economic and political efficiency, and are worthy competitors of the democratic states with a liberal economy.

This trend has been denoted as a ‘Return of Great Authoritarian Powers’ (meaning that they are among leading global actors), and many analysts and experts already ask a question as to what is more effective in the conditions of globalization – ‘dictatorship or democracy’.

It seems that over the twentieth century, democracy, apparently, proved its efficiency. But in the twenty-first century, it appeared that not only the liberal and democratic way of development may be successful. Authoritarian regimes where the state plays a dominating role in economy and politics also have prospects and future in the context of the global trends of development.

In this regard, new prospects open for Russia which has not yet been admitted into the ‘club’ of democratic states with market economy.

The Changing Role of the Periphery of the Global World, and Effective Geopolitical Strategy of Developing Countries

As a result of unfolding globalization processes, especially their economic aspect, the development of the periphery has considerably accelerated. The moving of economic growth pole and of financial streams to the Asian-Pacific region, to the countries which until recently were considered as the periphery of the global world, becomes obvious.

These countries of the former periphery become an important bloc of the world system and gain an important function: not only that they provide the world economy with raw materials and industrial goods, but gradually they become investors in the Western countries.

The growing economic development and economic contribution of the global periphery countries into the world economy involves the increase of their political 'weight' in the global political system, and raises their status in the world hierarchy.

Panarin believes that the geopolitical strategy of the developing countries (including those which used to belong to the 'second world' and the ones that during globalization were pushed aside into the 'third world') will consist in the 'geopolitical development' connected with the search for ways of growth and effective alternatives to industrialization trends. This strategy will be formed, most likely, as an anti-western one.

The growing role of economies of Asian and other countries of the periphery, and, as a result, an increase in their political influence will lead to a situation when they will define the new rules, norms and standards of behavior of the Western countries in the global world or even, although it may sound extremely fantastic, will dictate the global scenario of development. It is quite possible that many political standards and norms of political development of the global world will be as well defined by growing economies not by the western countries led by the USA.

Thus, in the twenty-first century not only western, but also other civilizations will be centers of power of the global world.

The Enhanced Role of the Ummah in Global Political Processes. Transformation of the Ummah into a Collective Global Actor

Dmitri Efremenko forecasts that globalization will gradually 'lead to the end of the economic, cultural and technological dominance of the European civilization that has been lasting for more than five centuries' (Efremenko 2009: 162).

Political processes of globalization have considerably affected the diverse and fragmented Islamic world, generating a trend of strengthening its unity. The need to find adequate responses to challenges of globalization promotes a unity and a unique synthesis of various currents of Islam, not in religious and dogmatic but in socio-cultural aspect (though at present the contradictions between different currents and groups of Muslims are increasing).

One can question the forecasts about the possible creation of 'the new Caliphate'. One thing is out of question: the globalizing world system as an entity with developed information and communication technologies promotes the formation of a unique 'Islamic International' with participation of many thousands of Islamic financial, political, cultural and spiritual and educational organizations, united by the common ideology, goals, and view on global problems. Gradually, the ummah turns into a quasipolitical bloc or coalition of states which is actively resisting and counteracting westernisation and globalization in its western version.

Supported by numerous Muslim Diasporas in the Western countries, Islamic non-governmental organizations and public centers may strengthen the political position and role of the ummah in the global world. In the twenty-first century, the ummah will become an influential global actor that will actively participate in developing a scenario for the global world and whose opinion Western countries will have to consider.

In this context, Russia meets new geopolitical prospects and challenges. One of them is a search for a constructive political interaction with the Muslim world.

The destruction of centuries-old moral traditions of Christian and Muslim civilizations, hollowing out ethical standards. With this, the substitution of ethical ideals has reached a scale of becoming one of the urgent global problems for the humankind. This causes alarm and concern not only among Muslims, but also among orthodox Christians, including the Russian Orthodox Church which makes its contribution to the solution of this problem.

‘Our Orthodoxy, – Alexander Panarin writes, – gives Russia good chances to establish fruitful contacts with the Muslim type of spirituality. Russian culture, which is Orthodox Byzantine by its origin, similar to Islamic religion, is mainly ethical-centric. In the territory of Russia one can observe a phenomenon of a world-wide and historical value, namely, the emergence of a civilizational and geopolitical system which is a product of joint creativity of the Christians and Muslims. Nowhere in the world can one find such a steady synthesis of the kind!’ (Panarin 2008: 72)

Reflecting on the problems connected with global political processes one can agree with the famous scientist Pavel Tsygankov who emphasizes an *artificial and even subjective character of the developmental trends of the global world which are arising and gaining strength*. ‘The most developed and strong international players use objective processes and trends to further strengthen their positions, and also to manage or even to create (“construct”) the for them most favorable directions’ (Tsygankov 2011: 200).

Summarizing the trends of globalization in political processes, one can make a conclusion about the *variability of global development* which potentially contains a number of possible directions. This variability is ensured by a large number of global actors with different characteristics, aspiring to realize their economic and geopolitical interests.

In the global world, new vectors of development, new dimensions, key problems and points of bifurcation constantly emerge. The global world is changing through the shifts in its structure, hierarchy global actors' activity and relationship between them, values, ideals, goals and prospects of development.

In conclusion, we would like to remind of Alexander Panarin's observation that *‘the preservation of the global civilization and geopolitical balance between the East and the West still depends on Russia’*. A strong Russia, despite all upheavals in its politics, will keep holding the torch of *political and spiritual leadership* in Eurasia. Any attempts to weaken and especially to ignore Russia as a political actor of the world threatens with a direct collision between the Western, Muslim, and Pacific worlds in their fight for repartition of the oikumene’ (Panarin 2008: 77).

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