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CONTENTS

THEORY, HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF POLICY

- Irkhin Yu.V.** Metamorphoses of the Postmodern Discourse
and Current Challenges Neomodernism 97
- Boltenkova L.F.** On Putin's Long State
(Reflections on the Article of Vladislav Surkov) 103

POLITICAL PROCESSES, INSTITUTIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

- Medvedev N.P., Slizovskiy D.E., Glebov V.A.** Gorbachev-Yeltsin – Putin:
Discussion around Models of Political Regime. What's next? 112

PROBLEMS OF EURASIAN AND POST-SOVIET COOPERATION

- Zalysin I.Yu.** Migration as a Factor in the Rise
of Terrorism of Religious Extremists 126
- Chemshit A.A., Statsenko O.S.** Ukrainian Political Project:
from Government Insufficiency to Social Degradation 131
- Krutko A.A.** A Pragmatic Model of Russian-Kyrgyz Relations
in the Context of Eurasian Integration 140

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND WORLD POLITICS

- Karadze T.V., Tombu D.V.** Problems and Contradictions
of Migration Policy in Modern Europe 149
- Martynenko E.V., Penzina A.I.** Analysis of the Role of the US
Printed Media in the Information War Between the USA and Russia 157
- Pashchenko L.V.** Russia's National Interests in the Arctic
and the Problems of their Implementation 164
- Davydov V.N., Jorge Augusto King, Idris Ahmad** World-System Analysis
and Regional Conflicts 170
- Kong Dekun** The Concept of Greater Eurasian Partnership
and "One Belt and One Road" Initiative 180
- Ju Orlindu** African Direction
in the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation 187
- Freddie Agonnode** Democracy at the Service
of Foreign Policy of the Republic of South Africa 196
- Shir Aka** Najibullah Russia's Strategy Towards Afghanistan 203
- Somar Ganem** Syrian Studies at the Institute
of Oriental Studies (the 200th Anniversary of the Founding
of the Institute of Oriental Studies of RAS) 208
- Olivier Védrine** A European Defense: Europe Will Have to Defend Itself 216

REVIEWS

<i>Pryakhin V.F., Medvedev N.P.</i> Review of the Article by A.A. Krutyko “Pragmatic Model of Russian-Kirghiz Relations in the Context of Eurasian Integration”	219
<i>Slizovski D.E., Medvedev N.P.</i> Review of the Article “A European Defense: Europe Will Have to Defend Itself” by Professor (H.C.) Olivier Védrine, French Journalist And Political Scientist	222
OUR AUTHORS.....	228

RUSSIA'S NATIONAL INTERESTS IN THE ARCTIC AND THE PROBLEMS OF THEIR IMPLEMENTATION

Based on the analysis of the conceptual documents of the Russian Federation the article determines Russia's national interests in the Arctic, as well as the problems of their implementations. The importance of the Arctic zone for the strategic development of Russia is determined primarily by the natural resource potential that forms the basis for the country's sustainable development. Along with the resource potential, of particular importance is the use of the possibilities of the Northern Sea Route (NSR) as a national transport highway. The special status of the Arctic is determined also by the geopolitical factor, the need to ensure the country's military security. At the present stage, the leadership of the country have taken serious steps to implement the planned national projects, however, along with the successes the author notes negative trends related to the worsening of the demographic situation in the region, growing shortage of professional staff and insufficient funding.

Key words: *the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, national interests, region, Arctic, Northern Sea Route, transport hub.*

The formation of the national interests of the state is a long process in which many generations of citizens participate. Various scientific schools have been formed in modern political science for the study of this category in historical, political and philosophical aspects. However, the interpretation of the content of the concept of "national interests" remains controversial and difficult to precise.

A great contribution to the study of national interests has been made by representatives of foreign science, we would like to note the contribution of such scientists as G. Morgenthau, R. Nibur, J. Rosenau, W. Lippman and K. Waltz. In the Russian scientific discourse, this problem started to be actively developed only in the 90-ies of the XX century. Theoretical discussions on the interpretation of the nature and content of this concept continue. The formation of interests and public awareness of them as vital are influenced by many different factors that are both internal and external. The most important among them are: the international

environment of the country, the national power of the state, the level of science and technology, as well as the level of knowledge. When considering the international factor, it is necessary to pay attention to such aspects as:

- geopolitical position;
- the presence of a military threat to the nation;
- availability of reliable allies ready to support it at the international level;
- the level of economic restrictions that can be applied against the country by the international community.

The category of national interests is abstract and subjective because of the vagueness of the language and the multiplicity of criteria for determining a particular interest. If we consider all of the above factors, then undoubtedly the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation (the Russian Arctic) occupies a special place in the system of ensuring the strategic national interests of our country in the field of economy and infrastructure, defense, geopolitics and environmental protection. The Russian Arctic has an area of about 9 million square km, it is home to more than 2.5 million people, which is less than 2% of the country's population and about 40% of the population of the entire Arctic. At the same time 12 to 15% of the country's GDP is created in the Russian Arctic and about a quarter of Russia's exports originate from here.

Many research works are devoted to the resource base of the Arctic, both in domestic and foreign scientific literature. It should also be noted that estimates of the Arctic's resource potential vary widely and continue to be reviewed and updated. E.A. Telegina notes in the article "Resources of the Arctic region: prospects and problems of their development" notes that 11 large oil and gas fields have been discovered in the Arctic seas of the Russian Federation, 45 fields have been discovered on the shelves of the Russian Federation, among them 6 unique fields, reserves of each of which exceed 500 million tons [7. P. 40-41]. A group of American researchers led by D. Gautier presented the results of the study, which reads that "the Arctic contains 83 billion barrels of undiscovered oil reserves (about 10 billion tons), which is about 4% of the world's proven oil reserves, as well as 1550 trillion cubic meters of gas [5]".

However, along with hydrocarbon reserves and a variety of natural resources, the Arctic is extremely rich in marine bioresources and unique fauna. Undoubtedly, the key national interests in the Arctic should include the use of the Northern sea route (NSR) as a national transport highway.

Russia for many centuries in the harsh climatic conditions has been developing and inhabiting the Arctic area. Today, Russian North is inhabited by representatives of various ethnic groups, along with the Russian population, there are numerous small nations: Chukchi, Komi, Sami, Veps, Karelians, Yakuts, Nenets and others. The close interweaving of many ethnic groups and their cohabitation led to the formation of the original culture of the peoples of the Russian North, which is reflected in their myths, fairy tales, folklore and unique wooden architecture.

Active development of the Arctic territories for industrial and military purposes took place in the Soviet period. However, after the collapse of the USSR, in the 90s the country's leading position in the Arctic was lost, and the policy that was waged at that period experts assess as a failure. A new wave of activation of the Russian Arctic policy began in the 2000s. Two expeditions organized by the Arctic and Antarctic research Institute of Roshydromet became significant events testifying to the "return" of Russia to the Arctic. As a result of the Arctic-2000 expedition it was found that the underwater ridges of Lomonosov and Mendeleev are an extension of the continent and the Arctic continental shelf of Russia is by 1.2 million square km. bigger than it had been estimated previously [8. P. 87]. Then, during the high-latitude Arctic-2007 expedition deep-sea manned vehicles MIR-1 and MIR-2 plunged to the bottom of the Arctic Ocean and set the flag of Russia there. These actions of Russia caused discontent on the part of other Arctic countries and served as a catalyst for the revision of the role and importance of the Arctic spaces, and opened a new stage in the development of Arctic international cooperation

Due to the growing role of the region and the unfolding competition between the circumpolar States, there was a need to improve the state policy of development of the Russian Arctic. Over the past decade, the country's leadership has adopted a number of conceptual documents that clearly identify the national interests of the Russian Federation in the Arctic and outline ways to implement them.

"Fundamentals of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the period up to 2020 and beyond" is among the fundamental strategic national documents. In 2013-2014, two very important documents were adopted: "Strategy for the development of the Arctic zone and national security until 2020" [6] and the state program of "Socio-economic development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2020", which laid the basis for the development of the Russian Arctic. In the above documents, the leadership of the country identified priority areas of the development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation, including:

- complex socio-economic development of the Russian Arctic zone;
- development of science and technology;
- creation of modern information and telecommunication infrastructure;
- ensuring environmental safety;
- international cooperation in the Arctic;
- ensuring military security, protection and defense of the state border of the Russian Federation in the Arctic^[4].

According to the government's plans, by 2020 the Arctic should become the "leading strategic resource base" of the country [4]. An important step towards the implementation of the adopted strategies was the identification of a list of priority projects to be implemented in the Russian Arctic in the long and short term periods [2]. 145 projects were included in this list, the priority direction of

development is the extraction and processing of minerals, as well as projects aimed at the development of transport infrastructure. The most capital-intensive and large-scale transport projects are the creation of the “Northern latitudinal route”, the Murmansk transport hub, as well as the construction of the seaport in Sabetta, 30% of which should be implemented in the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous district, more than 10% – in the Murmansk region and more than 6% – in the Arkhangelsk region [2].

Along with the formation of the conceptual framework for the development of the Russian Arctic, we can note a number of successful practical steps to implement it. Even in the context of changing conditions associated with the fall in the energy prices and sanctions policy, the country leadership is consistent in implementing the planned socio-economic projects. The most ambitious project is Yamal LNG, which involves the construction of three lines of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant with a total capacity of 16.5 million tons per year on the resource base of the South Tambeyskoye field. In 2018, ahead of schedule, the Yamal LNG plant, which became the largest producer of liquefied gas in Russia, was brought to full capacity. A modern Sabetta international airport was put into operation, which can take almost all types of aircraft, as well as a seaport.

It should be noted that the international project Yamal LNG is unique in its complexity due to work in the Arctic, its technology and the need to comply with environmental standards. In addition to foreign partners, about 700 domestic enterprises from 60 regions of Russia took part in its implementation. Forecasts of skeptics who argued that under the current price situation the payback period of Yamal LNG would increase significantly did not materialize.

According to the head of NOVATEK L. Michelson, “the payback of the project is good” facilitated by the current prices in the Asian LNG market. The first results are positive, so “the implementation of the Yamal LNG project gives 0.12% growth to the entire GDP of the country and will increase the markets for liquefied natural gas [9].”

The implementation of such a large-scale project as Yamal LNG in the Arctic became possible only under the condition of joint responsible international cooperation of many countries and it is a proof of the inefficiency of the sanctions policy.

In recent years, much has been done in terms of the modernization of transport infrastructure, as without the creation of modern transport corridors, it is impossible to ensure the sustainable development of the Russian Arctic zone. The implementation of an important project for the development of the Russian North – Murmansk transport hub continues, it will create a year-round deep-sea port on the West Bank of the Kola Bay for the processing of oil cargo and transshipment of coal, integrated into the North-South international transport corridor. According to official data, “a third of the work for the construction of the Murmansk transport hub has been completed” [3]. The volume of cargo transported via the Northern Sea Route increased by 80% in 2018 in comparison to 2017 [1].

However, despite the huge efforts made by Russia for the integrated socio-economic development of AZ, it is necessary to point out to a number of problems that are solved slowly and inefficiently.

1. Currently, there are more than 500 normative legal acts regulating legal relations in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, but in many ways they contradict each other, they are fragmentary and do not correspond to the realities of the time. Experts note the need to adopt a new special, system-forming, inter-sectoral, comprehensive Federal Law "On the development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation". However, the draft law is still not adopted and is being finalized.

2. The demographic situation in the Russian North is of serious concern, there is a decline in the number of working-age population and its outflow to more prosperous regions of Russia continues. There has been a steady trend of outflow of young people from the region, which in the near future will lead to a shortage of specialized personnel.

3. There are still problems of technological nature, including economic and technological backwardness of the Northern regions, deterioration of transport infrastructure, insufficient financing of priority projects.

The piling problems increase the political uncertainty in both the medium and long term periods. In order to realize Russia's national interests in the Arctic, we believe it is necessary first of all to create favorable conditions for the life and welfare of the residents of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation and to strengthen the scientific and technological potential of regional universities engaged in the training of specialists for work in the Far North.

Impressive, the presence of the Russian Federation in the Arctic are causing some countries, the desire to revise the existing system of agreements and limit the ability of Arctic Russia, which is manifested in the attempts of internationalization of SMEs, the redistribution of offshore borders. The absence of reliable allies in the region in Russia requires the search and mobilization of domestic resources for its development and implementation of priority national projects. Economic development of the Arctic zone of Russia is a necessity for sustainable development and security of our state.

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