

# Current State of Russia, Solidarity with Global South, and Prospects for Resolving Conflict in Ukraine



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As is well known, during more than one year Russia has been engaged in military conflict in Ukraine. Explaining the reasons and present state of the situation President Vladimir Putin emphasized in the following: “One year ago, to protect the people in our historical lands, to ensure the security of our country and to eliminate the threat coming from the neo-Nazi regime that had taken hold in Ukraine after the 2014 coup, it was decided to begin the special military operation. Step by step, carefully and consistently we will deal with the tasks we have at hand.” He also gave the high assessment of the strong efforts and cohesion of the Russia people: “I am proud, and I think we are all proud that our multi-ethnic nation, the absolute majority of our citizens, have taken a principled stance on the special military operation. They understand the basic idea of what we are doing and support our actions on the defence of Donbass. This support primarily revealed their true patriotism – a feeling that is historically inherent in our nation. It is stunning in its dignity and deep understanding by everyone – I will stress, everyone – of the inseparable link between one’s own destiny and the destiny of the Fatherland.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Presidential Address to Federal Assembly. Vladimir Putin delivered his Address to the Federal Assembly. Moscow. February 21, 2023.

There are many implacable facts that make clear the reasons why Moscow happened to be in the situation of leaving no alternative. One of them consists of West violations of legally binding commitment. It concerns the resolution of the UN Security Council which endorsed the Minsk agreements that were signed 2014-2015 and established the main measures for resolving the situation in Donbass. It was very astonishing that everyone who signed the Minsk agreements, except President Vladimir Putin, publicly admitted that they never intended to implement this particular Security Council resolution. And all this was accompanied by NATO instructors beefing up the Ukrainian Army, and Ukraine is getting more and more weapons.

As former German Chancellor Angela Merkel, former President of France Francois Hollande, former President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko, and also Vladimir Zelensky said: we needed the Minsk agreements to buy some time and to supply more and more weapons to Ukraine. From their side, it was only imitation game around the agreements.

One of the other key reasons was that since 2014 “Maidan”- a state coup, the Russian part of the population of Ukraine (about 17 %) had been consistently discriminated.

The first proactive move by the putschists after they took power by the unconstitutional ways in 2014 year was the demand to cancel the regional status of the Russian language and banish Russians from Crimea. In this regards Head of Foreign Ministry of Russia stressed: “It is war on everything Russian in Ukraine. Can you imagine that, for example, they cancelled the English language in Ireland? Or in Belgium they cancelled French, or in Switzerland they cancelled German? Can you? Or they cancelled Swedish in Finland. Can you even imagine this? Of course not. But nobody lifted a finger – not the small one, not the middle one – when the Russian language was totally cancelled in Ukraine. We have been knocking on all these doors: the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe), the Council of Europe: Why don’t you say something? Why don’t you tell them to behave?”<sup>2</sup>

Moreover then, the people who set up shop in the government and were recognized by the West had something to say as well. For example, then Prime Minister Arseny Yatsenyuk described as “subhuman” the Russians in Southeastern Ukraine who disagreed with the coup. Subsequently, Poroshenko became President of Ukraine and flaunted his ideas, claiming that ... the children of Ukrainians who are loyal to the regime would go to excellent kindergartens, schools and universities, whereas the children of the Ukrainians who did not accept the coup

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<sup>2</sup> Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s answers to questions during the Raisina Dialogue conference, New Delhi, March 3, 2023.

would sit in the basements.

When Zelensky was recently asked what he thought about the people in Donbass, he said they were “species” adding that if a citizen of Ukraine feels part of the Russian culture and the Russian world, then, for the sake of the future of their children and grandchildren, they should clear out for Russia.

Now, with the support of Europe, the United States and the collective West in general, Vladimir Zelensky... demand the return of the territories that were within the borders of Ukraine in 1991, when it became independent. I would like to ask those who pander to such demands: how are they going to feel about what will happen to these people? ... If they suddenly find themselves again within the borders of Ukraine as it was in 1991, will feel when they are called “species” or “subhuman” and when they are told to forget everything that is Russian or make off to Russia? ... So Russian top diplomat concluded: “We know what we are fighting for. We want to free these people from any threat that the current Ukrainian authorities can create for their lives, traditions, or families. History and geography cannot be chosen. We cannot leave these people to the mercy of Nazis and racists.”<sup>3</sup>

However the main reason is the following one:

It’s not a secret that today as was the case many times over the past several centuries, Russia faced blatant aggression from the collective West. This time, the Western countries used Ukrainian neo-Nazis as a spearhead of the attack. The West is providing massive military, financial, material and political support to the criminal Kiev regime with one goal in mind. Its goal is to inflict a strategic defeat on Russia. US President Joe Biden, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell repeatedly stated that Russia must be defeated on the battlefield. Russia must suffer strategic defeat. And this, they say, is existential for the West in the context of global domination.

However, opponents failed to isolate Russia in the international arena despite their Herculean efforts. The unfriendly countries’ ruling circles have admitted it, albeit unwillingly. The modern world is a multipolar place, and few out there are willing to pull their chestnuts out of the fire for former parent countries, or to sacrifice their national interests for the benefit of the infamous golden billion.

It makes perfect sense that about three-quarters of the countries around the world chose

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<sup>3</sup> Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s interview with TASS news agency, Moscow, March 28, 2023.



A Symposium on Global Independence and Peace held in Tokyo on April 22, 2023 was attended by some 100 in all, including foreign delegates from Italy, Russia and Mexico and people in various walks of life in Japan.

not to join the sanctions against Russia and adopted a balanced position on the situation in and around Ukraine, despite the unprecedented pressure, blackmail and threats coming from the United States and, in general, the Anglo-Saxons and their satellites in order to make them change their minds and to force them to oppose Russia and join the anti-Russian coalition.

Russia Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov directly described the Western block methods of persuasion:

“The developing countries were basically silent until the West started blackmailing them, threatening them, sanctioning those who would not sanction Russia. Many friends of mine in the developing world are telling me how this is being done. The Americans tell them they must vote this way, or else. And they say they will vote the way they are told because they believe this can be explained by the United Nations Charter and so on. But what do they get in return? And the answer from the Americans is they won’t be punished. A very fair deal.

“I have quite a number of friends in New York, and when I was there for the last UN General Assembly session in 2022, I talked to them. Many, if not most of them, said that they fully understood what was going on and that we should not be angry at the way they vote.

They told me what arguments the Americans have been using when they persuaded people to vote against Russia in the General Assembly. The arguments were very straight. Do not forget that you have a bank account in such and such a bank and do not forget that your kids go to Stanford. Bluntly.”<sup>4</sup>

Today, many countries of the Global South and the Global East, a.k.a. the Global Majority, see Russia as a reliable and predictable partner that is open to interaction based on equality, balance, and mutual consideration of interests. They are well aware of the fact that the issue is about the nascent international order. Their place in the future world depends on the outcome of this confrontation. This outcome will also determine whether they will be able to retain their ability to follow their traditions and values, to profess their religion, and to provide instruction to their children in their native language as part of this new multipolar world, or whether they will find themselves in a subordinate position where any prime minister or president from a Western capital will tell them how to go about their lives and run their economies, and in which ways they must sacrifice their own people in order to appease the West. The latter remains determined to live at the expense of other countries, who in turn demonstrate that their colonial mentality is still alive and well. Like 500 years ago, the West is trying to promote its colonial and neo-colonial methods in order to maintain its hegemony.

Countries like China and India, as well as many countries of Eurasia, the Asia-Pacific region, the Middle East, and Latin America are well aware of what is at stake. They are unwilling to give up their legitimate national interests in order to help the Anglo-Saxons and their minions maintain their hegemony or, more accurately, try to maintain their hegemony in the international arena.

The results of President Xi Jinping’s visit to Russia just in March 2023 clearly showed the entire international community that any attempts to pursue divide-and-conquer policies are doomed.<sup>5</sup>

It is quite remarkable that even leading think tanks in the West are forced to admit that important reasons why the “Global South and Global East” sympathize with Russia now lie in their deep distrust of the West. On the eve of the well-known Munich Security Conference 2023 year, its organizers published an analytical report, the key theme of which

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4 Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s answers to questions during the Raisina Dialogue conference, New Delhi, March 3, 2023.

5 Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s remarks at a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund, Moscow, March 27, 2023.

In the said Symposium on Global Independence and Peace, a scene of “Kayo-Rokyoku (traditional storytelling art of Japan with singing)” entitled “Alas, Hiroshima” by Mayama Ichiro, storyteller, describing the sorrow of a family who lost its members by Atomic bombing in Hiroshima.



was the division of countries into “liberal democracies” and “revisionist autocracies seeking to change the world order”.

At the same time, they acknowledge that there is a third camp - the states of Africa, Asia and Latin America not willing to join the anti-Russian sanctions and attempts to isolate Russia, because the “global South” has many claims to the West.

“Countries like those in Africa, Latin America, and Asia who did not denounce Russia’s military intervention in Ukraine demonstrate their displeasure with the current international order, making it easier for Russia and China to gain allies and undermine the rules and principles of the system, according to the report.”<sup>6</sup>

“Disappointment with the existing order is widespread in Africa, Asia and Latin America,” the document notes:

“Many of these countries are steadily losing faith in the legitimacy and fairness of an international system that does not give them either a proper voice in global affairs or sufficient solutions to their basic problems. For many states, experts estimate, these failures are linked specifically to the West.

“They believe that the Western-led order is characterized by postcolonial domination, double standards, and disregard for the problems of developing countries, rather than by liberal principles and true multilateralism.”

The authors of the report have to admit that “Instead of helping (developing countries.-

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<sup>6</sup> Hazem Salem Dmour. Munich Security Conference 2023 and the Crossroads of the Current World Order, March 6, 2023.

Kommersant) to deal with soaring food and energy prices, the West has chided them for a lack of solidarity with Kiev.” They noted: “For countries that have faced the West shutting out devastating wars and conflicts in their own regions, many of which are far more deadly than the war in Ukraine, the request not to remain neutral in the European conflict has certainly sounded absurd.”<sup>7</sup>

Naturally, many people wonder - what are the reasons of the current broad support to Russia among the non-West world? One of them definitely is the following:

Sergey Lavrov noted:

“We never form friendships in order to oppose other people. Look, with a fierce hybrid war underway, we are not forcing anyone to take sides. The countries of the Global South, the Global Majority, are in a position to draw their own conclusions.

“We are all adults here. Let’s not try to be condescending, like our Western colleagues are when they publicly demand everyone, including countries representing great ancient civilisations, follow their orders. Here lies the difference between us and what the Western civilisation, which is obsessed with its greatness and exceptionality, is degenerating into. ... we are not urging anyone to make a “holy war” against the West, crusaders or anyone else. This war is being imposed on us. The successors of crusaders and other conquerors have decided that Russia is an obstacle to their global domination. This has nothing to do with reality. We are not trying to prevent any country from pursuing their lawful interests. But when NATO announces its desire to subordinate the entire world and rule the whole show even in Asia, I believe the feeling of justice that is inherent in the Russian people and the majority of all world civilisations, must express its weighty word.”<sup>8</sup>

In conclusion, we would like to highlight that in a broader sense the key basis of Moscow today international visions was defined in the new version of Russia’s Foreign Policy Concept that was published on March 31, 2023. This document defines the priority areas, goals and objectives of the country’s international activities, it will be the road map for the Russian Foreign Ministry and other ministries and departments. According to the document, Russia is a unique country-civilization, a bastion of the Russian world and one of the sovereign centers of world development, and in the light of the unfriendly actions of the West it will defend its

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7 Munich conference in danger. Kommersant, Kommersant FM, 17.02.2023.

8 Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov’s remarks at the opening of the founding congress of the International Russophile Movement, Moscow, March 14, 2023.

right to development “by all available means”, says the new Concept. Moscow sees the current US course as the main source of risks not only for itself, but also for the entire world, and intends to eliminate the “vestiges of domination” of Washington and its allies, and instead of cooperation with Western countries, it is now only interested in peaceful coexistence. The document stresses that Russia will build relations with other states depending on their policies toward it and is ready to use its armed forces to both repel and prevent aggression against it or its allies. Among the main principles are stressed that Russia seeks a system of international relations that will protect the identity and equal development conditions of all states and increase the participation of developing countries in the global economy.

Russia’s foreign policy priorities include the indivisibility of security and rejection of hegemony in international affairs as well as support to the creation of a multipolar international system. Russia’s foreign policy is peaceful, open, predictable and based on international law. Moscow supports international efforts to protect “universal and traditional spiritual and moral values.”<sup>9</sup>

(Lecture given at a Symposium on Global Independence and Peace held  
in Tokyo on April 22, 2023)

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<sup>9</sup> The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, March 31, 2023.