

17-19 сентября 2009 г. в Йоханнесбурге состоялась научная конференция «Африка в новом мире», организованная Южно-Африканским Институтом международных дел, по случаю 75-летия этого старейшего научно-исследовательского учреждения ЮАР.

Институт Африки РАН представлял на этой конференции ведущий научный сотрудник Центра российско-африканских отношений, д.и.н. А.Ю. Урнов, выступивший с докладом «Россия и Африка». Ниже представлен текст доклада.

Dr. Andrey U.Urnov

Senior Researcher, Doctor of History

Institute for African Studies, Moscow

Russia and Africa

Mr. National Chairman of South African Institute of International Affairs.

Excellencies.

Dear colleagues.

On behalf of the Russian Institute for African Studies may I first of all express our deep gratitude for the invitation to participate in this Conference celebrating a momentous event – the 75th Anniversary of SAIIA. On this occasion Professor Alexey Vassilyev, Director of our Institute, sent to SAIIA a congratulatory message which I had the honor to present yesterday to Madame National Director.

The introductory invitation paper we received starts with a postulate that the world of ours is coming back to “the classical terrain of great power rivalries” and that Africa should be ready to respond to the geopolitical shifts at work..

What is actually happening? After the break up of the Soviet Union the mankind found itself living in a Uni-Polar World – not fully Uni-Polar, but close to it. Among the distinctive features of this world were unilateral, often illegitimate actions of a dominant power, its hyper use of force, disdain for the basic principles of international law. Former Yugoslavia and Iraq serve as examples. The Uni-Polar model which replaced the Bi-Polar one did not make the world safer. No problems had been resolved, new centers of tension created.

By the end of the XX century the situation began to change. This process continues today. The world is moving from a Uni-Polar Model not back to a Bi-Polar, but to a new, Multi-Polar one.

But this is not a return to the past. It is not the process of power transition, but rather of power sharing between a number of centers of influence which are strong enough to bargain on equal terms so that no state or a group of states is in a position to impose its will on the rest of the world.

There is nothing in it for Africa to be afraid of. On the contrary, it creates more favorable conditions for Africa to protect and promote its interests, gives it more options. Provided, of course that Africa's policy is wisely and creatively pursued and its unity gets stronger. And I wish every success to his Excellency A.O.Konare in his efforts to put Africa on the road to the United States of Africa..

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I'll venture to say that at the time of the Cold War Africa felt itself better and more comfortable than right after its end.

One of the front lines of the Cold War ran across Africa. The interests of the Soviet Union and those of Africa then coincided to a great extent. Africans wanted decolonization and genuine independence. To achieve these goals they had to struggle against colonialism, racism and later-neocolonialism. And their adversary was the West, not North, but West.

The Soviet Union was on their side. There was a combination of pragmatic and ideological reasons for that.

In the Cold War confrontation in Africa and the Third World as whole the West most of the time was on the defensive. That gave the Soviet Union a chance to weaken the enemy, strengthen its international positions and extend its sphere of influence. Sounds expansionist, imperialistic?

But the combination I spoke above was an organic one. Ideology was part and parcel of the Soviet foreign policy. Everything was seen in the context of world struggle between Communism (Socialism) and Imperialism. For the Soviet Union solidarity with the oppressed peoples of the Third World, the liquidation of colonial system and support of newly liberated countries was one of the main fields of this struggle. Hence the USSR was Africa's ally in the Just Cause. And quite helpful one.

It was on the Soviet Union initiative that in 1960 the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, while some leading Western states refused to vote for it.

For that matter, ideology was a very important component of the Western policy as well. The existence of most ugly oppressive regimes was justified by the necessity to counter Communism, protect the Free World and save democracy. For a number of years anticommunism served as a cover up for the Western support to Portuguese colonialists, South African and Rhodesian racists.

Being in Johannesburg, I think it is appropriate to put on record the support, which the USSR and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union rendered to the ANC and SACP. I was a Party functionary then and had the privilege to know in person such outstanding freedom fighters as Oliver Tambo, Alfred Nzo, Moses Kotane, J.B.Marks, Jusuf Dadoo, Joe Slovo, Moses Mabhida, Chris Hani and many others. May I invite you to honor these heroes with a minute of silence.

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Back to our time. Russia is not the Soviet Union. Its vision of the world is different. No communist messiahism. More pragmatism, less ideology, although no foreign policy can be totally deideologized.

As a result of the chaos and destruction of the last decade of the 20th century my country lost much of its political and economic might, although military we were still strong enough to destroy much of the world. Then Russia began to recover. Its role in the world affairs has grown substantially, it is trying to win back its global status. But the wounds have not yet been fully healed. There are still many problems to solve and many things to put in order. And the current crisis does not help. So, using Professor Eze expression I'll say that today our "First world" is Russia.

In comparison with the Soviet Union our foreign policy is less ambitious. We no longer lay claim to world leadership. But we are ready and willing to assume our share of responsibility for the state of the world affairs, to cooperate with other major players in making the world safer, healthier and wealthier. Russia has become politically and economically stronger, so now it is in a position to augment its contribution to the formation of a new world order.

In his latest Internet address to the citizens of Russia President Medvedev emphasized in particular two problems which, in his opinion, must be dealt with as top priorities:

- nonproliferation of nuclear weapons and
- lowering of risks of injuries technogenic climate changes.

We are realists and very well understand that there could never be a full harmony in the world. There would always be competition, contradictions and conflicts of interest.

The objective is to create conditions for the competition to be fair, nonaggressive and in conformity with international law. Balance of interests must be sought and assured. Security of one party must not be built at the expense of security of others. It should be indivisible. The use of force can only be legitimate if it is sanctioned by the UNSC or in case of self defense in accordance with the UN Charter article 51.

Our policy is open and predictable, balanced and multivector. We are ready to cooperate with any country willing to reciprocate.

Of course, we are not altruistic. Above all we pursue our national interests – protect our sovereignty, security and territorial integrity. We want to create favorable external conditions for our development and modernization. We want to be an influential center of international life, to have a positive image and be held in respect by the world community.

We want our economic cooperation with foreign states to be mutually beneficial, but at the same time – to bring us maximum benefits and minimum risks.

Very important for Russia is the protection of legitimate rights and interests of our compatriots

abroad, in particular in the Baltic Republics.

And, of course, we have to be well armed, so it would never come to somebody's mind to threaten us and our allies. Our history taught us, that unilateral concessions never bring respect, gratitude, or profit.

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Now to Africa, its place in our foreign policy of today and our plans for the future.

During the nineties of the last century Russia's relations with Africa shrank pitifully. The reasons were not only economic, but political as well. The notion "Africa is of no use for Russia, only a burden" became quite popular among some politicians. It had a poisonous effect on the part of society, stimulated xenophobia and racism, fortunately – on a limited scale.

Gradually things began to change, not only because of our economic recovery, but due to a more broadminded and rational perception of the modern world by the Russian leadership.

I fully agree with the author of the above mentioned introductory invitation paper that despite all the problems and difficulties Africa is facing today its global significance in the XXI century cannot be disputed.

I want to be frank and admit that Africa is not a top priority of the Russian foreign policy. Still there is a rather broad range of world problems on which the interests of Russia and Africa are close or coincide and there are many fields in which they can fruitfully cooperate.

What brings us together is a common interest in the formation of the just and democratic world order, based on collective approach to the resolution of international problems and the superiority of international law. We reject the Uni-Polar model, the attempts of one country or a limited number of countries to impose their will on the rest of the World. Our cooperation in the UN proves that eloquently.

In the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation approved by President Medvedev in July 2008, a goal is set to expand the multiform cooperation with African states on bilateral and multilateral basis, including dialogue and cooperation within the G-8 and G-20 framework.

Another goal set is to assist the efforts aimed to settle the regional conflicts and crisis situations in Africa, to promote dialogue with the African Union and subregional organizations. Russia is interested in the establishment of peace and security in Africa, in its stable socio-economic development, because that constitutes an essential component of collective security system, offers new possibilities for the expansion of Russia - Africa economic and political relations.

On economic cooperation. Point number one here is the collaboration in the sphere of natural resources. There are two tracks of such collaboration. The first one stems from the fact that Africa and Russia own over 60% of the world natural resources and their interaction in this field is natural and can be of great benefit to both. The countries whom God blessed with mineral wealth should join forces to safeguard their sovereign right to control this wealth especially in the face of attempts to declare it "an

international asset" under a false pretext of "reestablishing justice". They have to coordinate their efforts in the global markets to counter, among other things, the speculative spasmodic leaps of prices.

This is not a call for the monopoly cahoots. It is self-defense. Russia fully supports the idea that as far as mineral resources are concerned the legitimate interests of all players – producers, consumers, transporters and transitors – must be assured.

The second track is bilateral cooperation with African countries. Russia experiences a growing deficit of some minerals. The deposits of 35% of them, including manganese, chrome, bauxite, zinc and tin are losing their commercial profitability. The bulk of undeveloped deposits is situated in the remote areas east of the Ural Mountains and, strange as it may sound, in a number of cases it is less expensive to extract and transport minerals from Africa than to put into production these deposits of Siberia and Far East.

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On our relations with particular African countries. The record of state and government exchanges provides an authentic list of Russia's main African partners. Back in September 2006 President Putin visited South Africa. At the time of his presidency Moscow was visited by the leaders of Angola, Gabon, Guinea, Nigeria and Ethiopia. There were two visits of Russian Prime Ministers to Africa in 2002 and 2007.

Finally in June this year President Medvedev paid state visits to Egypt, Nigeria, Angola and Namibia (to my personal gratification as the first Soviet/Russian Ambassador to this country). In the course of Medvedev's stay in Egypt and Angola Russia's relations with these states were characterized as "strategic partnership". In Nigeria the President called it Russia's "key partner".

Russia Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov often meets with his African colleges.

Russia has diplomatic relations with all African states.

The relations are developing with African Union and regional organizations, including SADC.

So, I believe, that our political interaction with Africa can on the whole be assessed as satisfactory. Since the nineties of the last century it had advanced considerably, although we are still far away from even thinking of a plan to convene Russia-Africa Forum.

The scale of Russia-Africa economic cooperation is modest to put it mildly. In the course of negotiations in all four countries Medvedev visited it was noted that bilateral economic cooperation lags much behind the political interaction and had to be raised to the level of the latter.

Some figures. Our statistics service proudly reported that in 2008 Russia's trade turnover with African countries had grown by 40-50% in comparison with 2007. Great! But what's the total figure? 8,2 billion dollars, half of which falls on Egypt. Our trade with Angola is only 40 mln dollars while trade between Angola and China exceeds 25 bln. dollars and the total turnover between China and Africa is more than 100 bln dollars. Of course, Russia does not intend to compete with China, but the cited figures show that

there is a big room for the improvement in the Russian-African trade.

The direct investments of Russian companies in Africa amount to 4 bln dollars, total investments – to about 10 bln dollars.

My friend and colleague Ambassador Korendyasov calculated that there are 17 big Russian companies active in 13 countries of Africa. The total amount of existing and planned projects is 44. Most active are Gasprom (8 projects), Lukoil (6), Alrosa, Rusal, Renova, Rosatom, Norilsk-Nickelm, Sintez (3 each). The leading host countries - South Africa (10 projects), Libya (7), Angola (5), Argeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia (4 each). Others - Nigeria (3), Egypt, Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo.

I believe it would now be logical to specify some documents signed and projects launched in the course of Medvedev's visit to Africa. The President, as you know, was accompanied by a big group of businessmen.

The documents, signed in Nigeria include the agreement on peaceful use of atomic energy, memorandum of understanding on the research and use of outer space, agreement on establishing a joint company by Gasprom and Nigeria National Oil Corporation which, in Medvedev's view, can result in billions US dollars of Russian investments. Apart from exploration of oil and gas, Gasprom is expected to participate in building pipelines in Nigeria and probably in the construction of the Transsaharan pipeline – from Nigeria to North Africa and Europe.

The memorandum on co-operation between Gasprom and National Oil Corporation was also signed in Namibia. In Angola the mid-term programs of economic, scientific, technological and trade cooperation was signed and the agreement was concluded to form the ANGOSAT, Angolan national system of satellite communications and broadcasting.

Medvedev's assured Russian businessmen that the Government will protect and facilitate the activities of both state and private Russian companies in Africa.

Alongside with the exploitation of mineral resources the major spheres of our cooperation with African countries are energy, infrastructure, telecommunications, fishing, education, health, tourism, technical-military assistance.

Our common enemy is a current crisis. With the fall of demand the prices and profits fell, so many Russian companies had to sell part of their assets, limit the production and suspend the implementation of investment programs. That may affect their activities in Africa. On the other hand negative consequences for our collaboration may have the impact of the crisis on Africa itself. Let's hope that by joint efforts of world community the present and coming difficulties will be overcome. I say "hope", because I am not sure. But all of us must try on all the levels – international (UN, G-8, G-20), regional and national.

To counter the crisis it is essential to form a new, more efficient, transparent and just international financial system. This problem was thoroughly discussed by President Medvedev and his African hosts. In

Africa much can be done by the AU and NEPAD which all of us expect to play a very important role in the resolution of the development problems of the Continent.

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Now about Russia participation in the development aid. As a conscientious member of World Community Russia accepts its responsibility to contribute to aid programs

Here we proceed from two assumptions

- Russia is not responsible for the underdevelopment and poverty of the former colonial world.
- The main responsibility for the resolution of underdevelopment and poverty problems rests on the governments of developing countries.

That's why we assume that with the exception of outbreaks of natural and man-made calamities, including human tragedies caused by military conflicts, the assistance should be rendered to those countries whose government not only proclaim but actually try to overcome poverty, illiteracy, infectious deceases and other misfortunes.

The psychology of dependency should not be encouraged. And, of course, corruption and misappropriations which unfortunately often accompany foreign assistance must be relentlessly fought.

So far the bulk of our aid still goes through international organizations and funds. But we are preparing to substantially expand our aid on bilateral basis.

Russia has written off about 20 bln dollars of debt of African countries. The writing off of another 547 mln dollars is being negotiated with five African states allocations for development aid from the Russian Federal budget grew from 50 mln dollars in 2003, to 215 mln in 2006. In 2009 – 2012 we plan to allocate additional 100 mln dollars for aid to the poorest countries.

The objective is to assure a stable trend leading in perspective to the appropriation of 0,7 percent of the GNP for the purpose of aid, as recommended by UN. A bit diplomatic. But that is the official wording.

Russia introduced a preferential system for the African traditional export commodities. No import duties and no quota limitations. South African agriculture was among the beneficiaries.

While rendering the assistance the donor should always realistically assess its efficiency, check if the objectives of aid have been achieved, if the correlation of expenditures and results achieved is rational, are these result stable and lasting and so on.

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Peace making is of vital importance for Africa. We are not among leading actors in this sphere of activities, but our role is growing. Today 230 citizens of Russia participate in all UN peace missions and

operations on the Continent. The contribution of our aviation groups deserves to be singled out (Sierra-Leone, then Sudan, Chad). A number of African peace makers annually trained in Russia has increased to 400.

A few words about education programs. We are proud that about 25 thousand Africans got their higher education in the Soviet Union. Now four thousand fifty hundred Africans study in higher education institutions of Russia. 700 scholarships are annually granted to African countries by the Russian Government.

Russia supports the "Education for all" program. In 2008-2012 we will allocate 43 mln dollars to the World Bank for the implementation of international program of raising the quality of basic education, which was initiated by Russia.

Health. Our voluntary contribution to the Global Fund against AIDS, T.B and Malaria is 40 mln dollars. In 2007- 2009 Russia will contribute 20 mln dollars for the WB program against Malaria in Africa. In 2008-2009 we will pay 18 mln dollars to finance the WHO measures against polio.

Humanitarian Aid. Since 2005 Russia makes regular payments to the World Food Program. In 2007 this money was spent on the emergency food aid to Kenya (2mln), Somalia (1 mln), Guinea, Democratic Republic of Congo and Mali. In 2008 the aid was rendered to Ethiopia (4 mln) and Kenya (2 mln).

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A sensitive matter – the problem of new world governance. A lot has to be done. But the UN supremacy must be maintained. It must be reformed, but to be stronger and more efficient. The attempts to weaken or undermine the UN, or to build some parallel structure are unacceptable.

About the UNSC reform.

No common position has been found either in the UN, or between Russia and Africa, or in Africa itself – as far as candidacies for the permanent membership are concerned.

If my understanding is correct, Russia's general position is the following:

- The time for the reform is ripe.
- The council should be more representative, hence the necessity of enlargement.
- The enlargement should not be excessive, the Council should remain compact, otherwise it may turn into "mini G.A" and its efficiency will suffer.
- The enlargement by 10-11 new members is excessive.
- The reform should be implemented in accordance will the UN Charter.

- The model of the reform should have the broadest possible support of member-states, preferably their consensus.
- The status of the five permanent member is enviable.
- Africa is entitled to the SC permanent membership.

That's in general. But Devil is in details. So far no model can claim the majority support, and, let's be frank, the African proposal is not among favorites. Instead of consolidating the UN, the heated controversy around irreconcilable proposals is polarizing it. It does not bring the reform closer, but rather makes in more and more remote, perpetuates the status quo. Political will to compromise is imperative.

My humble opinion - the African proposal is too ambitious and does not look passable. And there has to be an agreement on candidacies. I am for South Africa, but don't quote me.

Under the circumstances a compromise intermediate model with several "semi-permanent" members may be a solution for a time being.

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So, is Russia coming back to Africa? My friend Professor Shubin is of the opinion that the question as such is incorrect, since Russia has never left Africa. Technically he is right. But I believe that essentially the question is appropriate, because not long ago Russia was on the way out of Africa. Now the trend has been reversed. I don't expect any big leaps, but I am pretty sure, that Russia's presence in Africa will grow and its cooperation with African states will expand. That is good enough for the beginning. Thank You.
