

In this Issue

In the current conditions of the change of cycles of war to a situation of neither war nor peace in the space of the countries of the Eastern Partnership, starting from September 2020, destructive tendencies deepen and spread the turbulence zone in the countries of the South Caucasus and the Black Sea region.

The issue of strengthening the statehood and integration choice for Armenia and other Newly Independent States has been an important part of the national development strategy from the very beginning of the existence of Armenia and these countries as sovereign states. Geopolitically, Armenia is located between large integration associations: the EU in the west and associations of post-Soviet countries in the east, the most important of which are the EAEU and the CIS. Armenia's relations with these associations expanded over time. On the one hand, the desire to take its place in the world economy and reform the national economic system was the motive for the country's rapprochement with the EU Member State. On the other hand, a deep structural relationship with the economies of the countries of the post-Soviet space, as well as a number of social and cultural factors, did not allow Armenia to significantly distance itself from cooperation with Russia and other CIS countries.

In the context of a military and political earthquake, the processes of enlargement of the EU and NATO, despite their apparent slowdown, remain relevant and are the subject of comparative analysis and political science discussion. The increasing activity of Europe on the world stage, intensified after the emergence of isolationist tendencies in the foreign policy of Russia and Turkey, and the remaining significant share of European states in the world economy, make the EU and NATO one of the most influential actors in world politics, whose members include several large and economically developed countries. All this makes membership in the EU and NATO extremely attractive for many of their neighbors, including the countries of the Eastern Partnership. Of particular interest is Armenia, which for many years faced a huge number of obstacles to the implementation of an independent foreign policy. At present, it seems extremely important to study how it is currently trying to promote its national interests in the new conditions, but with the use of international structures, traditionally key tools, thanks to which Armenia, throughout its post-war history of 2020, has gradually returned to the number of main actors in regional politics. It is also necessary to understand what exactly are the national and integration interests of Armenia in the field of European and Euro-Atlantic integration, as well as Eurasian rapprochement.

Armenia, which is among those Newly Independent States, continues to face a large number of military, political, social and economic problems and is in dire need of foreign policy allies. For these reasons, membership in the EAEU and the CSTO, as well as cooperation with the EU and NATO, continues to be one of the main priorities of the Armenian leadership. The current crisis in relations between Russia and the West, which arose after the political processes that took place in Ukraine in 2014 and began on February 24, 2022, is one of the main problems of European security, the impact of this conflict on the escalation of hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and also on the risk of a new large-scale war in the South Caucasus and other geopolitical processes. It is hard to overestimate how the fighting affects and destabilizes the situation around

Nagorno-Karabakh, where Russian peacekeepers are stationed, as well as fragile regional stability. For the Armenian statehood, both in history and at the present stage, all this affects the economic, political, military and many other areas of international cooperation. Finding ways out of this situation is an important task for the entire region and the world.

In ‘Armenian Statehood in Foreign Policy Realities: the First Steps of the First Republic’, Gegham Petrosyan analyzes the ways of establishing the First Republic of Armenia, where a number of problems of a geopolitical, economic, military, interethnic nature are intertwined. The complexity of the analysis and resolution of numerous problems of an international nature of the First Republic of Armenia is explained by the presence of both a sharp differentiation in the positions of internal factors, and a clash of interests here, largely contradictory, external factors of international relations. The geopolitical position of the First Republic is due to the fact that after gaining independence, this smallest country in terms of territory and population in the South Caucasus was involved in a tough confrontation with Turkey. Armenia was almost completely economically isolated from the outside world by the imposition of a transport blockade by Turkey. This article also analyzes the development of the Armenian statehood, the formation of its foreign policy at the current stage of historical development, it is necessary to clearly understand that historical experience and the peculiarities of the national values of the Armenian people have a key influence on these processes.

In his article ‘Erdogan against Turkey: Stalemate of “Patriot-F-35-S-400” triangle’, Hayk Gabrielyan analyzes the activities of the President of Turkey to strengthen his leadership position through the development of military and defense partnerships. The author explains the motivation of the Turkish President to receive American F-35 fighter jets and Patriot anti-aircraft missile systems.

In the modern world, there are more and more new challenges and threats that both the political leadership of Turkey and the Army have to respond to, taking into account the views and interests of various political forces and social groups. The author comparatively analyzes internal political difficulties and the attempted military coup in Turkey in 2016, remaining an internal Turkish conflict, attracted much attention from Russia due to their potential impact on the stability of the country and the development of Russian-Turkish relations. According to the author, various political forces in Turkey have made attempts to influence the tone of Russia in relation to the conflict that has arisen. One of the clearest examples of such interaction is the active economic and military cooperation between Turkey and Russia. However, the current situation in the Middle East, the war against radical Islamism, which initiated destructive processes in the countries of the region, creates obstacles to the development of normal interstate relations. Inevitably, these processes also influence the development of Turkish-Russian relations. The involvement of Turkey and Russia in the Syrian events unwittingly affects the historically established geopolitical interests of the states in the region, as well as very painful ethnoterritorial problems that have not yet been resolved. In this context, the author analyzes the inconsistency of military cooperation between Russia and Turkey for the supply of S-400 air defense systems, since Turkey was the first NATO country to acquire these S-400 air defense systems from Russia. Such a decision by Turkey

caused a sharp negative reaction from the United States and NATO as a whole, so the United States does not stop trying to get Turkey to give up Russian air defense systems. In this regard, the United States excluded Turkey from the American program for the production of the 5th generation F-35 fighter-bomber and carried out a series of unilateral sanctions. The author considers a paradoxical situation when Turkey, on the one hand, believes that future EU membership remains a strategic goal, and an alliance with NATO is an important step in the development of military power, and on the other hand, the Turkish side is criticized and distrusted by Western countries due to military cooperation with Russia.

In the article 'Mapping Political Populism in the European Post-Transitional Periphery', Nane Aleksanyan conducts a comparative analysis of the construction of new populist ideologies and projects in the countries of the European periphery, as well as steps to effectively counteract populism. The author's explanation of populism as a political and social phenomenon of our time shows a peculiar understanding of radicalization in the Newly Independent States, taking into account the level of distortion of the transforming post-Soviet society and political regime. Comparison of Western and post-Soviet forms of populism is important for clarifying common and national features, ideological and political manifestations. This article examines the essence of political populism and the general features of its manifestation and features of the myths constructed by populists, as well as the typology of modern populism in the context of its connection with the ideology of conservative nationalism and the mistakes of the liberal mainstream. The author analyzes the phenomenon of resilience of the ruling parties of the European periphery and their ability to lead is often not regarded by voters as undoubted advantages and advantages of a politician, since the use of populist technologies to manipulate public opinion leads to a change in the alignment of parliamentary political parties. The author explains the main reasons why certain segments of the population of the European periphery place unreasonable hopes for improving living conditions on charismatic, expressive and self-confident figures who demonstrate the ability to transform a routine political process into vivid theatrical performances. According to the author's understanding, in attracting and retaining public attention, the personality of a politician, his self-proclaimed talents and bright performances, become more important than professionalism and political convictions. In this sense, obeying the laws of modern political theater, populist politicians regularly play the role of 'servants of the people', make a promise to restore democracy and stop the rule of corruption. The conclusions of this article expand and supplement the theoretical ideas in the field of research on the phenomenon of political populism and the study of personal characteristics of politicians of the populist type in the countries of the European periphery.

In the article 'Reflections on the Transformation of the World Order: Emerging Trends and Impending Perspectives', Karine Khojayan conducts a comparative analysis of globalization and the emergence of new global threats, noting the need for an international discussion of the principles of a civilized organization of the world. The author pays attention to the conditions when the world is undergoing transformation, when new actors appear that challenge the modern political organization of the world, it is important to use such methods of influencing public consciousness, which would be a

fairly effective tool to achieve the goals set in the foreign policy activities of public authority. According to the author, the mechanisms of hegemonic stability are a necessary condition for maintaining global peace and stability. For a critical analysis of what the author uses the ideas of Charles Kindleberger, Robert Gilpin, Immanuel Wallerstein and other researchers. The current realities of the development of the international system allow us to conclude that the importance of soft power mechanisms in the relations between the actors of world politics will steadily increase. This trend is connected, first of all, with the fact that the use of exclusively violent means of realizing one's own interests becomes impossible even for large states and influential international organizations. The author pays attention to the fact that in line with global trends, changes are taking place in national economic systems, which differ, however, in their own trajectories. As a result of their implementation, there was a sharp change in the trajectory of the development of economic relations, accompanied by huge social costs due to insufficient attention to the state of economic relations and the peculiarities of their previous development, deformations of the institution of private property, unjustified alienation of property objects from the bulk of the population with excessive enrichment of its small stratum, the discrepancy between the institutions being formed and the actual emerging economic relations. The author's interpretation is becoming more and more obvious in that the choice of ways for further development of countries requires an analysis of their own practice of systemic economic transformations, a detailed study of the main directions of development of the world economy, and a generalization of the experience of adapting industrialized countries to the realities of the modern world market. Being an inevitable consequence of the general patterns of development, the processes of transformation of economic systems at the same time require a theoretical understanding of not only the general, but also the specific in their implementation, taking into account modern trends in economic dynamics and the challenges of rapidly developing globalization processes. At present, awareness of the relationship between the transformation of economic systems and modern globalization challenges, patterns and trends in the information and scientific and technological development of the world economy is becoming especially important. The growing interaction of national economies, the accelerated development of globalization processes are increasingly influencing the formation of the vector of economic transformation, the effectiveness of systemic changes.

In 'Civic Journalism as a Phenomenon of Digital Civilization', Greta Gevorgyan analyzes the mechanisms of development of civic journalism and its connection with the social activity of politically conscious citizens, with their protection of civil rights and freedoms. The author argues for the civilizational and democratic significance of the digital society, in which the possibilities of citizen journalism have expanded, it has acquired new large and small forms. New citizen journalists operate in new media, the accessibility and inclusiveness of which has allowed voices of varying degrees of loudness to be heard. They flow into the media space, complement it, sometimes compete with it in terms of influence. Professional journalists, ordinary users, civic activists and eyewitnesses of events operate in the Armenian information field of the 21st century, and all of them influence the formation of the general agenda in different ways. The author considers ways of bringing citizen journalism closer to professional

journalism, raising legal and ethical issues that affect legislative initiatives in the field of information, telecommunications and the behavior of ordinary users on the network. Separately, there is the problem of typology and classification of new journalists in the media system of the Eastern Partnership countries, the interaction of civil and professional media and users. In this sense, the structure of the media environment becomes more finely dispersed and fragmented, since it no longer consists of individual media and editorial offices, but of individual users and actors. According to the author, the same participant can play different roles in the media system, thus acting as a journalist or blogger, on behalf of the editorial board or on his own behalf, and also change these roles. The agenda of the media of the Eastern Partnership countries and informal information channels has a national character, which distinguishes their civic journalism from the world.

In the article 'How to Reconcile Equality with Freedom? On the Two Ways in Liberalism', Naira Mkrtchyan analyzes the philosophical dimension of equality and freedom, as well as various issues of understanding and analysis of the theory of liberalism. The author explains the relationship between political ideas and values, equality and freedom mainly within the framework of the works of Isaiah Berlin and John Rawls. The author argues for the presence of a variety of acceptable values and lifestyle options, which are associated with the concept of value pluralism, make the question of the relationship of this concept with the foundations of various ideologies vital. In particular, there is a problem of correlation between the concept of value pluralism and liberalism. In this context, the crux of the issue is whether a liberal ideology can be pluralistic or whether liberal universal provisions are incompatible with the concept. If the conflict of values is an integral part of human existence, then this fact cannot be ignored in the interactions of social groups, peoples and states. However, a number of questions arise here that actualize the need to address the idea of pluralism of values. Such questions include the following: is the conflict of values necessarily associated with value relativism? In continuation of the author's argument, the concept of pluralism of values, formed under the influence of the events of the 20th century, leaves a number of debatable questions, without losing its relevance both in political science and in political and philosophical discourse. Although the ideas of Berlin and Rawls have long been the subject of philosophical research in various directions, the concept of pluralism of values is practically not developed in Armenia, and the ideas of pluralism of values are not popular. Both the key concepts that make up the concept of values pluralism and the arguments about the relationship between the concept of values pluralism and ideology need to be elaborated, which determines the choice of the topic of this article.

The second volume of the journal features three book reviews focusing on Russia, the EU and the failures of post-Soviet democracy, the Velvet Revolution in Armenia, and the daily lives of women in war and peace in the South Caucasus. The problem of unresolved protracted conflicts in the post-Soviet space continues to put the countries of the Eastern Partnership in a difficult position, and the EU, instead of supporting European integration, is trying to choose tools for effectively influencing Russia and them, thereby making it increasingly necessary to generalize successful practices of negotiation processes and experience settlement.

Since 2020, a new stage of common threats has emerged in the Eastern Partnership space, that is, the COVID-19 pandemic, the Second Karabakh War, the escalation in eastern Ukraine and the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, which in 2022 not only did not become less conflicting, but also actualized the issue of international intervention in protracted conflicts.

The countries of the Eastern Partnership found themselves between war and peace, against the backdrop of the ongoing transformation of the political organization of the world, once again exposed the disunity of the international community in matters of approaches to promoting peace in conflict regions. All the new contradictions appearing in the broad Russia-EU foreign policy agenda make hardly noticeable the prerequisites for stepping up joint work to counter crises and conflicts and searching for new formats for cooperation between these actors in the post-Soviet space. At the same time, there are current formats of negotiation processes, but the effectiveness of these formats, as well as the intensity of work within their framework, is increasingly unsuccessful and is subjected to harsh criticism from the international community.

The democratization of the Eastern Partnership countries remains important and, as the example of the Velvet Revolution in Armenia will show, it led to the strengthening of democratic institutions and the decline of authoritarianism, but unfortunately it did not save the Armenian society from war and the ongoing aggression from authoritarian countries. In the context of regional turbulence, the sustainable development and quality of life of the peoples of the South Caucasus has traditionally been studied, but a separate study of women's life in conditions of war and peace has been considered only recently. A comparative analysis of women's everyday life in the conditions of war and peace in the South Caucasus, as well as women's history and gender anthropology by modern ethnologists and researchers makes us pay close attention to the study of women's daily practices and distinctive features.

These book reviews are for all those who are interested in European integration, the democratization of political regimes and the improvement of the quality of life in the countries of the Eastern Partnership.

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