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Russia Non-Russian View on Current Russian Politics

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RUSSIA'S STRATEGY TOWARD POST-SOVIET STATES AS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW DOCTRINE OF LIMITED SOVEREIGNTY (PUTIN DOCTRINE)

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Principles and practical implications of Russia's current policy toward the post-Soviet states are presented in this paper. On the basis of Russia's domestic legal and regulatory documents, as well as public statements of the leadership, it was concluded that the Kremlin has laid out a new foreign policy strategy and a corresponding foreign policy doctrine – “the new doctrine of limited sovereignty” (the “Putin Doctrine”), the main element of which is the concept of “limited sovereignty”. During the Cold War, that was also a major component of the “Brezhnev Doctrine” – the USSR's foreign policy doctrine regarding the states of “People's Democracies”. The main provisions and characteristics of the doctrine are provided.

Russia's aggression against Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014, attempts to annex Crimea and military intervention in Donbas, unprecedented pressure on Ukraine, as well as an open confrontation with the West testify to Russia's implementation of its planned strategy toward the countries of the post-Soviet space. It was laid out in a number of speeches by President Vladimir Putin in 2014 and later detailed in the fundamental policy and security documents of the Russian Federation.

After the first year of Russian aggression against Ukraine, I conducted a detailed political and security analysis of Russia's new aggressive foreign policy, primarily with regard to neighbouring countries in the post-Soviet space. This gave rise to the talk of a “reincarnation” of the foreign policy of “limited sovereignty” (the “Brezhnev Doctrine”), which was actively applied by the Soviet Union from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s toward the so-called “People's Democracies” – the states of Central and Eastern Europe as well as some other countries, satellites of the USSR^{1,2}. Further

1 I. Lossovskiy, *Зовнішньополітична стратегія Путіна як нова доктрина обмеженого суверенітету (Putin's Foreign Policy Strategy as a New Doctrine of Limited Sovereignty)*, “Міжнародні відносини Серія «Політичні науки», no. 5, 2015 [http://journals.iir.kiev.ua/index.php/pol_n/article/view/2514].

2 I. Lossovskiy, *Зовнішньополітична стратегія Росії щодо України як реалізація «Нової доктрини обмеженого суверенітету» («Доктрини Путіна»)* (Russia's Foreign Policy Strategy for Ukraine as an Implementation of the “New Doctrine of Limited Sovereignty” (“Putin's Doctrine”)), “Зовнішні справи”, 2015, no. 5, pp. 12-15; no. 6, pp. 12-15.

research confirmed the validity of the conclusions³.

A content analysis of the statements of the Russian president and programme documents of the Russian Federation, and Russia's current foreign policy and military activity at least since 2014 give grounds to assert the continued application of modern foreign policy doctrine of the Russian Federation. A fundamental part of it is the aggressive strategy of foreign and security policy against Ukraine and other post-Soviet countries that "dared" to show independence, especially in foreign policy, from Moscow and its ideas about the contemporary international order on the former "one-sixth of the Earth's land surface".

Definitions and Criteria of Aggression

Russia's regional activity is fully consistent with the definition of international, political, and military aggression according to international law^{4,5}. Under the initiative of the USSR, the UN worked for a long time to prepare a resolution of the General Assembly to define the concept of "aggression". This document was adopted on 14 December 1974⁶. Article 1 of the resolution states: "Aggression is the use of armed force by a State against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another State".

Article 3 further defines what constitutes an act of aggression:

(a) *The invasion or attack by the armed forces of a State of the territory of another State, or any military occupation, resulting from such invasion or attack, or any annexation by the use of force of the territory of another State or part thereof;*
(b) *Bombardment by the armed forces of a State against the territory of another State or the use of any weapons by a State against the territory of another State;*
(c) *The blockade of the ports or coasts of a State by the armed forces of another State;*
(d) *An attack by the armed forces of a State on the land, sea or air forces of another State;*
(e) *The use of armed forces of one State which are within the territory of another State with the agreement of the receiving State, in contravention of the conditions provided for in the agreement [...];*
(g) *The sending by or on behalf of a State of armed bands, groups, irregulars or mercenaries, which carry out acts of armed force against another State.*

Russia's actions in Georgia in August 2008, its military presence in Ukraine since the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula (February 2014), and intervention in Donbas fully meet the definition and criteria as aggression. Russia, respectively, is an aggressor state.

That definition of aggression was adopted by the UN General Assembly Resolution,

3 I. Lossovskiy, *Зовнішньополітична стратегія Росії щодо країн пострадянського простору як реалізація нової доктрини обмеженого суверенітету (Russia's Foreign Policy Strategy for the Post-Soviet Space as an Implementation of a New Doctrine of Limited Sovereignty)*, "Стратегічна Панорама", no. 2, 2018, pp. 19-30.

4 I. Lossovskiy, *До 20-ї річниці будапештських "гарантій": Агресія Росії проти України як фактор ерозії міжнародно-правових режимів нерозповсюдження (For the 20th Anniversary of the Budapest "Guarantees": Russia's Aggression against Ukraine as a Factor in the Erosion of International Legal Non-Proliferation Regimes)*, "Зовнішні справи", 2014, no. 11, pp. 6-11.

5 I. Lossovskiy, *Міжнародно-правовий статус Будапештського Меморандуму (International Legal Status of the Budapest Memorandum)*, Київ: УАЗП 2015.

6 *UN General Assembly Resolution 3314 (XXIX) of 14 December 1974* [www.un.org/en/documents/decl_conv/conventions/aggression.shtml].

not by a multilateral international treaty. The previous definition, provided in an earlier international legal document – the London Convention, adopted on 03-05 July 1933 under the auspices of the League of Nations by 12 states⁷, including the USSR, which initiated and authored the draft text of the document – is deprived of this “disadvantage”: The London Convention is an international treaty that imposes specific international legal obligations on its signatories, and the text contains five criteria of aggression. It is envisaged that

the State which is the first to commit any of the following actions will be recognized as an aggressor in an international conflict:

- *declaration of war on another State;*
- *invasion the territory of another State by its Armed Forces, with or without declaring war;*
- *attack by its land, naval or air forces, with or without a declaration of war, on the territory, vessels or aircraft of another state;*
- *naval blockade of the coasts or ports of another State;*
- *provision of support to armed bands formed in its territory which have invaded the territory of another State, or refusal notwithstanding the request of the invaded State to take, in its own territory, all the measures in its power to deprive those bands of all assistance or protection.*

At the same time, “no political, military, economic or other consideration may serve as an excuse or justification for the aggression”.

The 1933 convention has no expiration date and is in force today for the signatory states

and their successors, including the Russian Federation. An important feature of this document is that it had a specific practical legal application in December 1939, when the League of Nations, identifying on its basis an act of aggression of the USSR against Finland (Soviet-Finnish War of 1939-1940, the so-called “Winter War”), excluded the Soviet Union from the organisation. Thus, the 1933 convention is not only a document of international legal theory but also a valid international treaty, the application of which had significant legal consequences.

Russia’s military and political actions against Ukraine over the past seven years have been often called a hybrid war by international experts and politicians⁸. Manifestations of a hybrid war are fundamentally different from those of a classical war, the basic principles of which were formulated by the prominent Prussian military theorist and classic of military art C. von Clausewitz in 1832⁹. These classical principles were used by the authors of both the London Convention of 1933 and the UN General Assembly Resolution of 1974. However, even taking into account the factors of hybrid warfare, actions of the Russian Federation fully meet the criteria of aggression.

Changes in the World Order, Real Sovereignty of States, and the “Brezhnev Doctrine”

Russia’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine undermines the remnants of the Westphalia international system that emerged in 1648 as a result of the Thirty Years’ War. Key principles of the Westphalia world order, in force until recently, include the priority of “nation-states”, “national interests”, and “national/state sovereignty”; balance of

7 *Convention for the Definition of Aggression* [http://heninen.net/sopimus/1933_e.htm].

8 V. Gorbunin (ed.), *Світова гібридна війна: Український фронт (World Hybrid War: Ukrainian Front)*, Національний Інститут Стратегічних Досліджень, Харків: «Фоліо» 2017.

9 C. von Clausewitz, *On War*, Oxford, USA: Oxford University Press 2008.


forces and coalitions; and implementation of international treaties.

The Yalta-Potsdam system, established after World War II, became another modification of the Westphalia world order. It enabled the formation of a bipolar world, which revived the concept of “limited sovereignty” of states under the control of “great powers”. Only two superpowers – the USA and the USSR – had full or real sovereignty¹⁰ in such a system. “Limited sovereignty” was given to their satellites – countries belonging to the two hostile blocs. As these countries were not completely independent in their foreign and domestic policies, they acted in accordance with the national interests and guidelines of the two superpowers. Restriction of sovereignty within the Western bloc was much milder than within the Eastern bloc.

Ideology of the Communist bloc has been called the “Brezhnev Doctrine” by political scientists and politicians in the West. The main provisions of this doctrine were formulated in the article “Sovereignty and International Responsibilities of Socialist Countries”, published more than 50 years ago, on 26 September 1968, in the newspaper *Pravda*¹¹ immediately after the defeat of the “Prague Spring”. A new, adjusted vector of the USSR’s foreign policy was developed. The Soviet leadership assumed the authority to interfere in the affairs of Socialist countries that deviated from the pro-Soviet course. The main point was that each Communist Party was responsible not only for its own people but also for all Socialist countries. Sovereignty of an individual country could not contradict

the interests of global Socialism and the world’s revolutionary movement.

The new trend observed is the gradual formation of a new world order – a “new multipolar system”, better called a “unipolar multicentre system”. A fundamental feature of such a world order is full real sovereignty for the only state in the world – the United States. A number of states, although actively involved in the activities of a wide network of international organisations, seek to gain real sovereignty (China, India, Russia, Brazil, Iran, as well as the EU). Most other countries that participate in a wide network of international organisations voluntarily relinquish part of their sovereignty.



Today’s policy of the Russian Federation toward Ukraine and other countries of the post-Soviet space is aggressive and, by analogy with the doctrine of “limited sovereignty” (the “Brezhnev Doctrine”), implements a “new doctrine of limited sovereignty”

Russia’s aggression is in no way in line with Russia’s real economic and other capabilities. Russia, by brandishing conventional weapons and threatening with nuclear weapons, is trying to intimidate its neighbours, positioning itself as a large regional power, and is trying to regain the status of a separate “pole” or at least a “centre of power” in global politics.

10 A. Kokoshin, *Реальный суверенитет в современной мирополитической системе (Real Sovereignty in Modern World Political System)*, Москва: Изд. «Европа» 2006.

11 D. Okunev, *Социализм в опасности: как появилась «доктрина Брежнева» (Socialism in Danger: How “Brezhnev’s Doctrine” Came about)*, “Gazeta.ru”, 26 September 2018 [https://www.gazeta.ru/science/2018/09/26_a_11997739.shtml].

New Doctrine of Limited Sovereignty: The “Putin Doctrine”

Today’s policy of the Russian Federation toward Ukraine and other countries of the post-Soviet space is aggressive and, by analogy with the doctrine of “limited sovereignty” (the “Brezhnev Doctrine”), implements a “new doctrine of limited sovereignty”, which was actively developed during 2014 against the background of the annexation of Crimea and military aggression in Donbas. According to official data alone, the Russian-Ukrainian war in Donbas claimed about 14,000 lives, and more than 30,000 people were maimed and wounded.¹² Information about the number of casualties among the Russian military and mercenaries is classified, as in May 2015 Vladimir Putin signed a decree that classified information revealing the losses of the Russian Armed Forces “in peacetime during special operations”. Previously, according to the Law of the Russian Federation “On State Secrets”, only information about losses during war was protected.

Elements of the concept of “limited sovereignty” were contained in the “Monroe Doctrine” developed by Secretary of State and future US President J. Adams in 1823, which became the basis of the then US expansion in the Western hemisphere. The “Monroe Doctrine” was designed to legitimise the ways of Washington’s direct and indirect interference in Latin America under the pretext of helping to resolve internal conflicts. Guided by the “Monroe Doctrine”,

the United States made considerable efforts to subdue the continent to its interests, and the declarative protection of the region from potential aggression by European powers contributed to the consolidation of American hegemony.

The nearly 200-year history of the “Monroe Doctrine” ended in November 2013, when attending a summit of the Organization of American States, Secretary of State John Kerry said the United States was officially rejecting it.¹³

The main ideas and basic elements of the so-called “Putin Doctrine” were formulated in public speeches of its instigator – the Russian president, in particular in the address to both chambers of the Federal Assembly of the country in connection with the “Offer of State Council of the Republic of Crimea on the accession of the republic to the Russian Federation” (so-called “Crimea Statement” made on 18 March 2014); the “Valdai speech” of 24 October 2014; the appeal to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on 04 December 2014. On 26 December 2014, a new Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation¹⁴ was adopted, which listed among Russia’s main external dangers “establishing regimes in neighbouring states whose policies threaten Russia’s interests”.¹⁵ With this document, the Russian Federation sought to “legitimise” the probable future expansion at the expense of its neighbours. Thus, among the main tasks of the Russian Armed Forces in peacetime, there is the “protection

12 У ООН повідомили про кількість жертв бойових дій на Донбасі (*The UN Reported the Number of Casualties of Hostilities in Donbas*), “Radio Svoboda”, 03 September 2020 [<https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-oon-zhertvy-viyny-na-donbasi/30818348.html>].

13 *Remarks on U.S. Policy in the Western Hemisphere*, US Department of State, 18 November 2013 [<https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2013/11/217680.htm>].

14 *Order of the President of the Russian Federation on Military Doctrine*, 05 February 2010 [<http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&nd=102135800>].

15 *Концепция внешней политики Российской Федерации (утверждена Президентом Российской Федерации В.В.Путинным 30 ноября 2016 г.) (Concept of the Foreign Policy of Russian Federation)*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of RF, 01 December 2016 [http://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2542248].

of Russian citizens outside the country from armed attack on them". Therefore, even in distant countries, Russian-speaking citizens have the right for military protection by the Russian Federation.

According to S. Karaganov, one of the main ideologists of contemporary Russian foreign policy and Putin's personal adviser, "The main mistake of the country's foreign policy in the past was the lack of any clear policy towards the post-Soviet space. The only thing Russia did was subsidizing and buying/corrupting of elites, which proved ineffective. As the conflict in Ukraine has shown, it is impossible to get rid of the global crisis in this way".¹⁶



Statements about the need to abandon the arms race disappeared from the text of the 2016 concept. Instead, there is a rather aggressive statement for such a policy document that Russia will not tolerate any pressure from the United States and will respond to any unfriendly actions

To properly understand the evolution of modern Russia's foreign policy, it is important to analyse its concept document¹⁷, approved by President Putin in late 2016, as well as the previous editions of 2008 and 2013. In 2016, Russian ideologues for the first time conceptually divided the world into Asia-Pacific, Euro-Atlantic, and Eurasian regions. The latter region is considered a zone of exclusive interests of Russia. That version of the concept introduced the

provision of "soft power" as an integral part of modern international politics to solve foreign policy problems in addition to traditional diplomatic and "energy" methods. Considerable attention was paid to the issue of a "clash of civilisations". The 2016 text of the concept does not mention Russia explicitly as an integral, organic part of the European civilisation, but there are serious accusations against the geopolitical expansion of the EU and NATO.

Statements about the need to abandon the arms race disappeared from the text of the 2016 concept. Instead, there is a rather aggressive statement for such a policy document that Russia will not tolerate any pressure from the United States and will respond to any unfriendly actions.

Speaking at the annual meeting of Russian ambassadors to foreign countries, held in Moscow on 19 July 2018, Putin strongly stressed the inadmissibility NATO military infrastructure approaching Russia's borders, the inclusion of Ukraine and Georgia in the alliance's orbit, the irresponsibility of such "aggressive steps" of the alliance, which pose a threat to Russia, as well as the inevitability of Russian retaliation. Thus, it was emphasised that Ukraine and Georgia continue to be seen in "orbit" of Russia's national interests. Putin was openly threatening that if the West continues its policy of deterring Russia, local military conflicts could escalate into a single global catastrophe.

On 25 July 2018, the US State Department released Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's declaration on Crimea, unequivocally condemning Russia's policy of intervention in Ukraine and attempts to annex Crimea,

¹⁶ *Стратегия для России. Российская внешняя политика: конец 2010-х — начало 2020-х годов (A Strategy for Russia: Russian Foreign Policy at the end of 2010s-beginning of 2020s)*, Council on Foreign and Defence Policy, May 2016 [http://svop.ru/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%B7%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%8B_23%D0%BC%D0%B0%D1%8F_sm.pdf]

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, n.15.

which undermine the foundations of the international world order and fundamental principles of international relations, in respect of which Russia had made clear commitments to strict compliance. In the declaration, the American side reaffirms its consistent policy of non-recognition of the Kremlin's claims to sovereignty over territories seized by force in violation of international law. At the same time, the politically similar declaration of Sumner Welles ("Welles Declaration") of 23 July 1940 on the non-recognition by the United States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania's inclusion in the Soviet Union was mentioned. In fact, today's aggressive policy of the Russian Federation toward its neighbours is compared to a similar "neighbourly" policy of the USSR.

Thus, starting in 2014, the official normative and legislative level in Russia actually enshrines the legitimisation of the deepening and continuation of the war in eastern Ukraine, as well as possible further Russian expansion into adjacent territories in the future.

There are at least five internal factors that are the basis of the current political regime in Russia and the internal basis of Putin's foreign policy "doctrine", namely: the consolidation of the authoritarian regime within the country, which significantly limits the place and role of political opposition; large-scale corruption at all levels, including at the highest level; the use of the country's vast energy and other natural resources both to maintain domestic political and economic stability and as a "weapon"¹⁸ to guarantee foreign policy influence; a powerful comprehensive propaganda machine that actively uses hybrid methods of information warfare (bluff, misinformation, manipulation), which have internal and

external directions; and the concept of the legitimacy of the use of Russian military force abroad "to protect Russian speakers".

The fundamental components of the "Putin Doctrine" were not officially proclaimed by the Russian leadership, as, at one time, the "Brezhnev Doctrine" was not proclaimed in the USSR. However, what is used in practical international activities, especially in the post-Soviet space, can be outlined as follows:

- Russia does not see the collective West as a credible partner because, despite warnings in Putin's famous Munich speech in 2007, the US, NATO, and the EU continue to ignore Russia's vital, historical and regional interests in the post-Soviet space, spreading its influence and "dragging" the countries of the region into their structures, pursuing a policy of "containment of Russia";
- Russia does not see itself as part of the Euro-Atlantic community; it is a country of "sovereign", "controlled" democracy, with about 80% of the population supporting Putin's aggressive policy toward Ukraine, foreign policy of "land acquisition", anti-Americanism, and confrontation with the West. It is emphasised that Russia has its own identity and belongs to a separate civilisation that professes its own system of values. The ideology of the "third way", the "third type of civilisation", and the revival of the notorious concept "Moscow – the Third Rome"¹⁹ is gaining popularity again;
- In the current conditions of disintegration/weakening of the unipolar world order, when a new multipolar ("multicentric") world is just being formed, "uncontrolled chaos" and "lack of rules of the game" are available and highly desirable for Russia, which significantly expands the boundaries of acceptable behaviour in the world for the Kremlin. Hence Russia's

18 V. Panyushkin et al., *Газпром: Новое русское оружие (Gazprom: New Russian Weapon)*, Москва: «OZON.RU» 2008.


19 V. Surkov, *Одиночество полукровки (Loneliness of a Half-Breed)*, "Россия в глобальной политике", 2018, no. 4.

efforts to carry out hybrid interference in internal affairs, electoral processes, and referendums, both in the countries of its traditional “sphere of influence” and in the West (USA, UK, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, etc.). The main tasks of such intervention are: imbalance and destruction of the international integration structures of the West (primarily the EU and NATO); erosion and destruction of a world order based on international law, universal values, and obligations; destruction of Euro-Atlantic unity; imposing on the broad masses of the European community and graduate students a sense of frustration and doubt about the viability of liberal democratic values;

- The system of international treaties and international law in general for Russia is not a system of rules/coordinates of international relations; it is rather a “restaurant menu” from which to choose what is beneficial to Russia at a particular historical moment²⁰. The role of international organisations is significantly reduced, as cooperation with them for strong states loses its meaning as soon as it begins to interfere with their national interests. Russia operates on the principle, “For us – all that is beneficial to us, and for our opponents – international law”.

The concept of “national/state sovereignty” is relative for most states. Real sovereignty²¹ is an attribute of exceptionally strong states. Others in one way or another cede part of their sovereignty to either stronger partners/allies or international security organisations. The post-Soviet countries are effectively deprived of the right to real sovereignty, as they are endowed

only with “limited sovereignty” that does not contradict Russia’s vital interests. Such “conceptual arguments” justify the “legitimacy” of Russia’s ongoing aggression in Ukraine and the attempted annexation of Crimea, the 2008 intervention in Georgia, Russia’s interference in political processes in Belarus in August-November 2020, and, at the same time, its non-provision of help during the 30 years in the case of a sustainable settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.



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The new world and European order that Putin is trying to impose extends Russia’s influence throughout the Baltics (except Germany), not just the post-Soviet space. An important factor here remains the plan to complete the construction of the Nord Stream-2 pipeline, which will require the expansion of Russia’s naval presence in the Baltic Sea under the pretext of the need for its military protection. In the same way the illegal construction of the Crimean Bridge across the Kerch Strait and the active bandit extraction of oil and gas using stolen drilling rigs in Ukraine on the Black Sea from oil and gas fields that were also brutally stolen from Ukraine “required” a significant increase in military-marine presence of Russia and closure for navigation of large areas in the

20 I. Lossovskiy, *International Law as a Restaurant Menu for Putin*, “Unlimited Democracy: Analytics” [<https://www.unlimiteddemocracy.com/>].

21 *Ibid.*, n.10.

Black Sea, under the contrived pretext of protecting the “Russian” infrastructure.

Since the abovementioned “new doctrine of limited sovereignty” (the “Putin Doctrine”) refers to the basic categories of the Westphalia international system, it can be considered that related to the growth of these new “centres of power”, this doctrine is an attempt to further modify the Westphalia world order.



***subversive activities,
military infiltration, media
propaganda, cyber-attacks,
information manipulation, and
speculation about the “problems of
the Russian-speaking population***

Despite the fact that the Baltic states are full members of NATO, Russia continues to exert provocative pressure on them, which shows that Russia is testing the strength of the alliance’s unity and does not give up hope of spreading the “Putin Doctrine” to the Baltic countries. According to a number of analysts, the next target of Russian aggression may be the Baltic states, which can happen by a campaign to destabilise these countries – subversive activities, military infiltration, media propaganda, cyber-attacks, information manipulation, and speculation about the “problems of the Russian-speaking population.

According to Adrian Bradshaw²², the former deputy supreme commander of NATO’s Joint Forces in Europe, the alliance must be prepared for a full-fledged Russian attack

on member states: “Russia can believe that the large number of regular troops it can concentrate in the short term what we saw during the capture of Crimea can be used in the future not only to intimidate and deter, but also to seize Alliance territory. NATO must adapt to the methods of hybrid warfare used by Russia in Ukraine”. He compared Russia’s behaviour to the escalating dominance of the Soviet Union, saying that Russia could resort to further escalation of the conflict to avoid the return of already occupied territory. The alliance’s military leadership should take into account the following: Russia is acting contrary to international rules and norms; in recent years, the Russian Federation has significantly increased funding for the defence industry, including nuclear weapons; the Russian regime actively and destructively uses disinformation campaigns.

Other post-Soviet countries with significant Russian-speaking populations, including Belarus and Kazakhstan, may be the next target of Russian external aggression to “protect” the “Russian world”. Back in the autumn of 2014, Putin tried to test the reaction of the leadership of these countries but received a rather sharp response from their leaders, who emphasised the independence and sovereignty of these states in relations with Russia²³. Russia is actively interfering in the political process in Belarus today, against the backdrop of unprecedented protests following the undemocratic and unfair presidential election on 09 August 2020.

Putin’s threat is far greater than the threat posed by the Islamic State, as victory over the latter will depend only on the amount of resources allocated to it. Russia has a nuclear arsenal, and its strategy is to continue the

22 У НАТО порадили підготуватися до “масштабної атаки Росії” на Європу (*NATO Has Advised to Prepare for a “Large-scale Russian Attack” on Europe*), “Korrespondent”, 21 February 2015 [<https://ua.korrespondent.net/world/3482347-u-nato-poradyly-pidhotuvatysia-do-masshtabnoi-ataky-rosii-na-yevropu>].

23 І. Lossovskiy, *Росія – «держжава-ізгой» (Russia Is a Rogue State)*, “День”, 2015 [<https://day.kyiv.ua/uk/article/svitovi-dyskusiyi/rosiya-derzhava-izgoi>].

imperial expansionist policy in the post-Soviet space through military force and powerful propaganda, as well as attempts to destroy the international security system by undermining unity within NATO and the EU, for instance through outright bribery of the elites of individual countries or financial support of radical and marginal European parties.

For 20 years now, the actual form of government in Russia has been a personal dictatorship. Symptomatic in this regard are the statements of the former deputy head of the Putin administration V. Volodin, now the chairperson of the State Duma, who noted that as long as there is Putin, there is Russia; in case there is no Putin, there is no Russia²⁴. Russia's system of government is unstable, so it requires constant personal intervention by Vladimir Putin, whose authority is markedly and steadily declining. It could fall at any time, which the West feels is not in its interest today because it fears for the possible fate of Russia's nuclear arsenal. However, today's situation may well be reminiscent of the late Soviet era, when a year, or even six months, before its collapse, few in the West expected the imminent beginning of such revolutionary, rapid, and turbulent political changes on one-sixth part of the Earth's land surface. It should be mentioned here that the problem of the danger of the proliferation of Soviet nuclear weapons was then solved fairly quickly – in just three years²⁵.

Conclusions

It can be argued that Russia's aggressive international military and political activity, especially against Ukraine and other post-Soviet countries, and other manifestations of Russia's domestic and foreign policy in at least the last six and a half years testify to the conformity of its actions to the criteria defined in this article for the implementation of the "new doctrine of limited sovereignty" – the "Putin doctrine".

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24 Володин: "Есть Путин — есть Россия, нет Путина — нет России" (Volodin: "If There Is Putin, There Is Russia; No Putin – No Russia"), "МК.ru", 23 October 2014 [<https://www.mk.ru/politics/2014/10/23/volodin-est-putin-est-rossiya-net-putina-net-rossii.html>].

25 Ibid., n.5.

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