

## Russia in the Epicenter of Geopolitical Turbulence: The Hybrid War of Civilizations



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**Abstract.** The article discusses mechanisms that are put into action during the hybrid war of civilizations that has unfolded at the present time. For this purpose, the concepts of two antagonistic megacivilizations – the West and the Non-West – have been introduced. We reveal the essence and genesis of the First and Second civilizational failures within Western civilization, reconstruct the anatomy of destruction of the national model of Russia’s social development after 1991 under the influence of the neocolonial governance system. We uncover and interpret the paradox of the lag in the development of the two megacivilizations, look into the genesis of the passionarity of the ethnos, and substantiate the primacy of geopolitical logic over economic logic. We provide an outlook of the current hybrid war between the West and the Non-West. The novelty of our approach consists in combining the knowledge of different sciences to explain social processes during the period of geopolitical turbulence. We look into philosophical phenomena (opposite dynamics of the material and spiritual spheres), cybernetic (full and partial cybernetic inversions), historical (birth of ethnic passionarity), political (hybrid wars), biological (neuroplasticity of the brain), cultural (cultural plasticity of civilization), economic (world currency, phenomenon of superprofits) factors. This made it possible to correlate objective and subjective factors in the confrontation between the two megacivilizations. The main conclusion of the study is that neither the West (USA) nor the Non-West (Russia) has clear advantages in the unfolding hybrid war of civilizations. The tactical superiority of the West is opposed to the strategic superiority of the Non-West; this situation does not allow us to make unambiguous predictions about the future winner.

**Key words:** geopolitical turbulence, world capital accumulation center, competition, war, world economic system.

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## Introduction

In February 2022, with the launch of Russia’s special military operation (SMO) in Ukraine, a de-globalization of the global geopolitical space (GGPS) began. Since then, Russia has been in the epicenter of geopolitical turbulence and has become the main actor in the Non-West coalition. As we noted earlier, the Russian Federation has very serious global advantages in this confrontation; they allow it to be considered as a possible future world capital accumulation center (WCAC) (Balatsky, 2014; Balatsky, 2022a; Balatsky, 2022b). At the same time, it is quite obvious that no objective geopolitical and economic prerequisites for a country to gain a leading position in the world can be implemented without some additional subjective organizational, managerial and cultural-historical conditions. In this regard, a natural question arises: does Russia have civilizational grounds for its transformation into a new WCAC? The Fourth (hybrid) World War, which began in 2014 and reached an explicit phase in 2022, led to a clear division of the world into two coalitions – “West” and “Non-West” – with the corresponding accumulation of huge resources for the unfolding struggle (Balatsky, 2022a; Balatsky, 2022b). The West coalition is quite monolithic and is represented by advanced countries, while the Non-West bloc consists mainly of developing states whose integration has not yet fully taken place. Although the West’s technological advantage is undeniable, its resource potential is inferior to the Non-West coalition. In this regard, there is a global geopolitical intrigue concerning the winner in the current confrontation. In the article, we will try to objectively consider Russia’s chances of a positive outcome in the unfolding hybrid war of civilizations. The novelty of our approach consists

in the reconstruction of the geopolitical logic of previous and current events with the identification of their historical dominant; the disclosure of the topic is accompanied by the use of material from related sciences.

### **Megacivilizations West and Non-West: main features**

Although the concepts of “West” and “Non-West” have already become widespread and well-known, there is no exact distinction between them. Although researchers have been dealing with the West – East opposition for a long time, let us point out the essential difference between the two concepts in order to avoid possible misunderstanding.

Today, two large communities, the West and the Non-West, represent megacivilizations that divide the world into two parts on a cultural basis. The concept of civilization, as considered by S. Huntington, is narrower, and it is based on people’s religious and cultural identity; thus, he counts eight major civilizations and several “torn” (undefined) countries (Huntington, 2021). Accordingly, the unification of countries and peoples with different religious and cultural identities forms a larger community, a *megacivilization*. Since the Western megacivilization originated in Europe and developed in North America, identifying its member countries and peoples is determined by the extent to which they follow established traditions. Today Western civilization includes the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and European countries; some states that did not originally belong to Western civilization can be considered as belonging to it since they are in the orbit of its interests and values: Israel, Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, etc. Latin American countries also

belong to the West according to all indications, but most of them are in a state of hidden opposition to the United States; thus, they are rather part of a different coalition – the Non-West. As for the rest of the countries, we can state with confidence that they belong to the Non-West bloc. In addition to purely cultural traditions, the binary system of division of the GGPS assumes other oppositions that coincide with the main one: center/periphery, rich/poor countries, etc. (Huntington, 2021, p. 38).

The accepted understanding of the West and Non-West megacivilizations generally corresponds to the existing ideas and assumes the confrontation between the Western culture of rich peoples with advanced technologies and the rest of the world. The essence of the clash is the West's desire to align the institutional and cultural environment of the entire GGPS according to its own standards and in its own favor, while the Non-West is trying to hinder this process. Western countries have orientations toward certain economic and political regimes – liberal ideology and elective democracy. These regimes put many countries of the Non-West bloc, including Russia, China, Iran, India and other states, at a disadvantage. Thus, the initial goal of the West is to “clean up” unfriendly economic and political regimes in order to preserve its privileged position in the GGPS.

The West/Non-West confrontation has a geopolitical dimension. For example, large countries with an unfavorable climate and terrain – Russia, China, India, etc. – cannot afford an elected democracy with a lot of political checks and balances like in the United States. That is why Vladimir Lenin put forward the political structure of the USSR as an institutional alternative based on the principle of democratic centralism – elective democracy in the regions with the strongest central government. Today this principle has been effectively implemented in China and gives impressive results. If Non-Western countries abandon a strong central government, they will face a collapse of their statehood as such; this is why they show such a staunch opposition to Western pressure.

Since the West is personified by the U.S., and the Non-West – by Russia, in the future we will consider this pair of countries to illustrate all the issues raised.

#### **The West/Non-West civilizational confrontation: Natural vs Artificial, Humanism vs Transhumanism**

Currently, the social boundary between the West and the Non-West is equivalent to the dichotomy of Artificial vs Natural or, to use modern terminology, Humanism vs Transhumanism. Today the West is breaking away from the traditional understanding of man, expanding it and going beyond it in its concepts. That is why the main manifestation of this process is the *gender revolution*, the essence of which lies in the denial of such traditional concepts as family, status of father and mother, and the binary gender system; promotion of same-sex marriage, etc. Thus, it is assumed that an individual is initially imperfect, and any of their elements, up to gender, can be “corrected”. This approach is opposed by more conservative circles of the population from Non-Western countries (and from Western countries, too), where such interference with human nature is considered unacceptable or, at least, undesirable.

The current Fourth World War is a clash between the West and the Non-West with the corresponding opposition in values. While the West provides humanity with endless opportunities for human transformation, its enhancement and, eventually, change into something else, perhaps more powerful, the Non-West wants to preserve the human principle in each individual and improve the world within such a global limitation. This is equivalent to the confrontation of “inhuman, but great” vs “limited, but human”. At the same time, the Western model assumes a “universal” subject – without pronounced parameters of gender, nationality, denomination, marital status, etc. In other words, a person becomes an abstract being to whom traditional biological and social oppositions such as man/woman, mother/father, Christian/Muslim/Buddhist/Jew, Italian/Chinese/Russian/Arab, etc. are no longer applicable. In the Non-Western model, the subject, on the contrary, receives

their “legitimate” individual characteristics, for example, a man, Russian, Orthodox, father of two children, etc. This is a fundamental difference that each person decides to the best of their understanding of the world and their preferences. The active minority in Western countries chooses the former; the majority in Non-Western countries chooses the latter.

The social confrontation between the Western and Non-Western models is equivalent to the dichotomy of Artificial vs Natural. However, in addition to social tensions, the Western model has other civilizational flaws. For example, from a philosophical point of view, the fundamental property of the world is its bipolarity and dialectic. It is the presence of two opposites that is the source of evolution and all progressive changes; eliminating the binary world automatically entails stagnation and regression. The rejection of gender binary jeopardizes the principle of naturalness that was present in all ancient Eastern and later Western philosophical teachings. The two fundamental principles of philosophy have traditionally been the *principle of unity* (being and non-being, nature and man) and the principle of naturalness (dualism, dialectic, polarity, structurality). Moreover, as L.A. Petrushenko rightly notes, “the history of the relationship of the principle of naturalness with the principle of unity ... is the prehistory of the relationship of the principle of development with the principle of substance” (Petrushenko, 2020, p. 68). Thus, transhumanism with its inherent rejection of gender binary means the denial of both the development of civilization itself and the source of its self-movement, because the world is self-moving and self-active due to its unity and dialectic (Petrushenko, 2020, p. 68).

Along with abandoning the natural binary in gender issues, the West ended up trapped in insurmountable contradictions in all spheres of life, when there began the complete denial of religion, history, morality, law, and science. For example, exuberant dancing in American churches and the benevolent attitude of the Roman Catholic Church toward same-sex marriage is tantamount

to a complete denial of all religious dogmas. The unilateral struggle for the rights of the non-white population led to the denial of American history, which was expressed in the demolition of monuments of the Founding Fathers of the United States during the 2020 presidential election campaign, the creation of historical films with nonwhite actors as characters belonging to representatives of the “white nation”, etc. The ban on discriminatory statements about transgender and bisexual leads to the ban on the activities of feminists who have traditionally defended the rights of women, which do not exist in the world of gender diversity; this, in turn, negates the traditional system of law; the 2022 seizure of Russia’s accounts and foreign exchange reserves, accounts and property of Russia’s citizens and companies abroad and the ban on Russian ships visiting international ports are equivalent to the elimination of the system of international law, the sacred right of private property, if not the Law at all. Large-scale dissemination of deliberately false information on foreign and domestic policy issues in the media means the collapse of the morality on which the Western megacivilization based its existence. By proclaiming gender diversity, the West provokes a global conflict with science, which still claims the opposite. By turning its back on the works of Russian writers and composers, the West cancels out its own cultural achievements, of which Russian culture is an integral part. Thus, Western civilization at this stage of development denies itself and its own cultural baggage.

These obvious social deviations of the West within itself make its development model extremely unattractive for the rest of the countries and peoples of the world; this fact once again emphasizes civilizational separation of the two worlds; the confrontation between the natural and man-made causes a split within the countries of the West – both in the USA and in Europe.

The emerging orientation of the West toward the construction of artificial worlds and artificial man will hereafter be called the *First civilizational failure* within the Western megacivilization.

### The main mistake of the West

In 2007, Zbigniew Brzeziński published his program book, in which he analyzed mistakes of the American administration for 15 years after 1991, when the United States became the undisputed world hegemon (Brzeziński, 2007). During that period, America got its *first chance* to become a real world leader, but, according to Brzeziński, missed it. The fall of the USSR allowed the United States to pursue a linear foreign policy of pushing through its interests and decisions, regardless of the opinion of the international community. In fact, since 1991, diplomacy as a phenomenon of international relations has been eliminated, because the U.S. administration no longer showed readiness to *negotiate* and even *talk* to anyone at all. Such a reversal in politics led to a series of military clashes. The first of them was the Persian Gulf War for the liberation of Kuwait in 1990–1991; subsequently, this undertaking was continued in 1998, and then in 2003–2011 and in 2014. The next incident is connected with the U.S. peacekeeping operation in Somalia in 1992–1995, first in the form of Operation Revival of Hope, and then Operation Continuation of Hope. The third conflict took place during the war in Yugoslavia – first in the form of Operation Deliberate Force in 1995 during the bombing of Bosnian Serbs, and then Operation Allied Force or Noble Anvil during the bombing of Serbia in the Kosovo War. Another military incident is Operation Infinite Reach, during which the U.S. launched cruise missile strikes against Al-Qaeda bases in Afghanistan and Sudan in 1998. The fifth act is related to U.S. military measures in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in the form of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in 2001–2014.

Such a purely strong-arm strategy and interference in the internal affairs of various states caused an increase in anti-American sentiment around the world, which undermined the authority of the United States and allowed Brzeziński to talk about the country's missed first chance to ensure its global leadership. However, in his opinion, America

had a *second chance* since 2008 for the next 15 years, which should be implemented at all costs, because it will no longer have a *third chance* (Brzeziński, 2007, p. 215). And here the politician makes an unequivocal warning: “Nothing could be worse for America, and eventually the world, than if American policy were universally viewed as arrogantly imperial in a postimperial age, mired in a colonial relapse in a postcolonial time, selfishly indifferent in the face of unprecedented global interdependence, and culturally self-righteous in a religiously diverse world” (Brzeziński, 2007, p. 215).

Exactly 15 years have passed since the publication of Brzeziński's book, and time has shown that America missed its second chance. Over the years, the United States has launched another series of military conflicts. This is a five-day war in Georgia in 2008 between Georgia on the one hand and South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Russia on the other; the Georgian operation against South Ossetia was called “Clean Field” and was developed in advance by Georgia jointly with the United States, while the Georgian armed forces were trained in close cooperation with NATO. Another incident is the 2011 Libyan Civil War, also known as the First Civil War which was inspired and supported by the United States, including through the participation of a coalition of NATO member states. A similar situation took place in the preparation of the Civil War in Syria in 2011, in which the United States provided military assistance to anti-government forces. The year 2014 witnessed the first conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which was triggered by the desire of the Ukrainian leadership to join NATO and which ended with the accession of Crimea to the Russian Federation. In 2022, with the direct support of the U.S. administration, a new conflict arose between Russia and Ukraine in the form of the SMO. Thus, America spent the 2008–2022 period in its typical style of forcefully pushing through its interests in all parts of the world, contrary to the interests of other countries. Today, the United States is opposed by almost all countries that claim political sovereignty.

The above allows us to say that the main mistake of the West represented by its flagship – the United States – is a categorical unwillingness to take into account the interests of other countries and the specifics of their own political processes. Thus, America found itself in a state of war against everyone, which puts it in an extremely unfavorable position from a geopolitical point of view. The pronounced political egocentrism of the United States will hereafter be called the *Second civilizational failure* within the Western megacivilization.

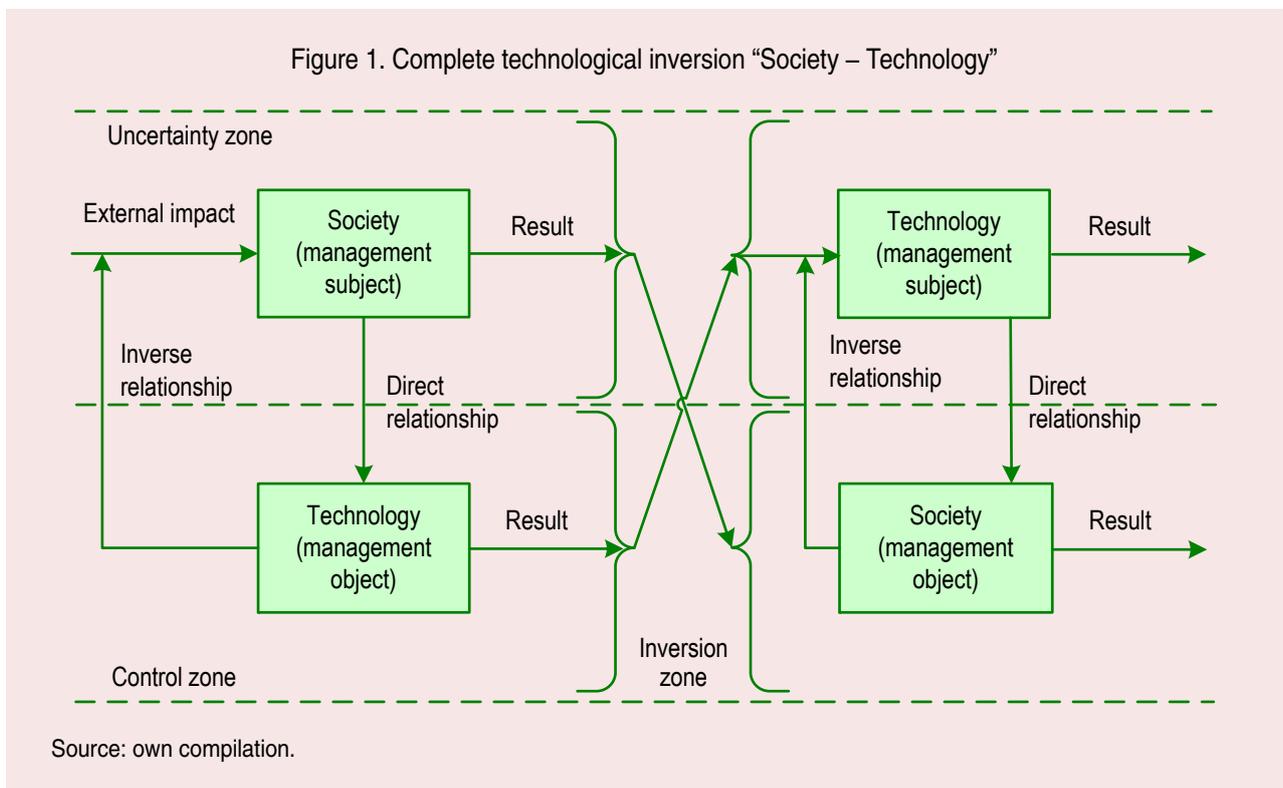
**Phenomenon of complete cybernetic inversion**

Above, we have considered two civilizational failures of Western civilization, which make it very vulnerable in the conditions of the hybrid war that has begun. However, for a better understanding, let us reveal their genesis, essence and occurrence mechanism.

Let us start with the First civilizational failure, for which two issues are relevant. First: Why was it Western civilization that turned out to be an advocate of Transhumanism and the Artificial

World? Second: why has this trend not affected the Non-West to the same extent?

The answers to these questions are based on the fact of the technological leadership of the West. It was Western capitalism that gave rise to the phenomena of economic growth and permanent technological progress that had not previously existed in the history of mankind. It was the capitalism of the West that created all modern technologies and all the existing culture within which modern humanity lives. However, such a situation is fraught with a well-defined danger, which has long been studied in philosophy and cybernetics: humanity as a subject of creativity and management gave rise to technological progress as an object of creation and management; but humanity was unable to cope with the scale of the phenomenon, underwent a systemic inversion and became its hostage and toy (Stoler, 1974). The described situation assumes that the subject and the object of control in the cybernetic system change places, as well as direct communication and feedback (Fig. 1).



In the 20th century, this philosophical and managerial problem became the topic of futurological discussions about whether a computer and artificial intelligence can get out of man's control. The current stage of the evolution of mankind convincingly shows that technology has really turned into a self-sufficient phenomenon that forces man and society to diligently adapt to its logic. The possibilities of technology and the ultimate rationalization of life gave rise to the ideology of Transhumanism and the need for a "human derivative" (Dugin, 2010, p. 11). We shall call the emergence of such a social phenomenon a *complete cybernetic inversion* (CCI), since there is a complete rearrangement of the places of two subsystems – the controlled and the controlling.

It is not surprising that the West, having let the genie of technological progress out of the bottle, was the first to suffer from it. One has always been aware of the seriousness of the civilizational challenge posed by technological progress. For example, back in 1934, Konstantin Tsiolkovsky made a shrewd warning: "Slow progress with a possible limitation of suffering and violence is better than fast-paced progress accompanied by great agony" (Tsiolkovsky, 2017, p. 378). However, technological progress, among other things, entails active institutional reforms, in relation to which English writer Robert Louis Stevenson, back in 1896 when dwelling upon the depopulation of the Polynesian natives said the following: "...the problem seems to me to stand thus: – Where there have been fewest changes, important or unimportant, salutary or hurtful, there the race survives. Where there have been most, important or unimportant, salutary or hurtful, there it perishes" (Stevenson, 2005, p. 45). The modern explanation of this effect is that radical institutional reforms and rapid technological progress lead to the destruction of human capital in all its manifestations – devaluation of education, professional skills and practical experience, reduced motivation, depressive states, stress, general health deterioration, etc. (Balatsky, 2021). This circumstance allowed V.M. Polterovich to view institutional reforms as being similar to technological changes, geographical

discoveries, wars and natural disasters (Polterovich, 2014, p. 169). Back in 1943, Joseph Schumpeter, while being an advocate of economic progress, introduced the concept of "creative destruction" that is generated by any innovation – technological and organizational. "Creative destruction", in his opinion, "is the very essence of capitalism ..., it illustrates ... the process of economic mutation" and "continuously revolutionizes the economic structure from within, destroying the old structure and creating a new one" (Schumpeter, 2008, p. 461).

The only way to mitigate these painful effects is to limit the pace of technological and institutional progress. However, in the context of global competition, it is not possible: lagging behind geopolitical rivals in the economic aspect may result in the death of the country and people concerned. The lack of alternative to this choice ultimately gives rise to the phenomenon of CCI.

Currently, the CCI phenomenon is especially dramatic due to the stage at which humanity is now. For example, according to K. Schwab, today we are on the eve of the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR4) (Schwab, 2018, p. 48), while other researchers believe that it has already begun in 2000 (Xu et al., 2018). According to modern ideas, the First Industrial Revolution (IR1) was aimed at replacing the most difficult and primitive types of physical labor (for example, hammer work, manual handling of heavy things, etc.) and led to the *primary displacement of physical labor*, while the Second Industrial Revolution (IR2) gave rise to a *mass reduction in physical labor*, leaving only the lightest manual operations that require attention and professional skill (watch assembly, assembly line maintenance, etc.). The Third Industrial Revolution (IR3) launched the *primary displacement of mental labor* (computers took over simple calculations, collection, sorting, processing and storage of data), while IR4 will result in its *mass displacement* (due to the creation of complex digital systems and algorithms) (Balatsky, 2019). Consequently, in the 21st century, neither the muscular strength nor the human mind will be valuable, because they

are to be replaced by technical devices. Moreover, labor itself is losing its former significance in all its manifestations. At one time, F. Engels stated: "Labor is the source of all wealth, the political economists assert. And it really is the source – next to nature, which supplies it with the material that it converts into wealth. But it is even infinitely more than this. It is the prime basic condition for all human existence, and this to such an extent that, in a sense, we have to say that labor created man himself" (Engels, 2017, p. 558). However, now any work becomes routine. This is the *main civilizational challenge of our time*, the challenge of the technogenic civilization that the West has built.

The logical consequence of this challenge is depreciation of an individual and their natural properties. Suffice it to recall how the emergence and development of photography gradually almost completely eliminated painting as an area of art; computer technologies and training programs led to the depreciation of chess competitions; chemicals (doping) became the main factor in sports achievements, and Internet technology and electronic archives substituted traditional libraries and book depositories, as well as the work of their staff. And while IR1 and IR2 left people with a vast territory to which they could retreat, the sphere of highly skilled labor, at the mature stage of IR4, the displaced knowledge workers (university professors, lawyers, doctors, accountants, financiers, economists, managers, etc.) have nowhere to migrate. Technologies of artificial insemination, surrogate motherhood, cloning, and genome correction open up new opportunities for hybrid human evolution, elimination of family problems, relations between man and woman, etc.

Thus, the logic of technological development led to the devaluation of human and their life, giving rise to the phenomenon of CCI and the First civilizational failure. It is not surprising that the Western World, having become the architect of an Artificial civilization, was the first to distance itself from its natural origin; the more conservative communities of the Non-West, although affected by the influence of progress, are more actively

resisting the danger of the complete annihilation of Natural Man.

#### **Phenomenon of partial cybernetic inversion**

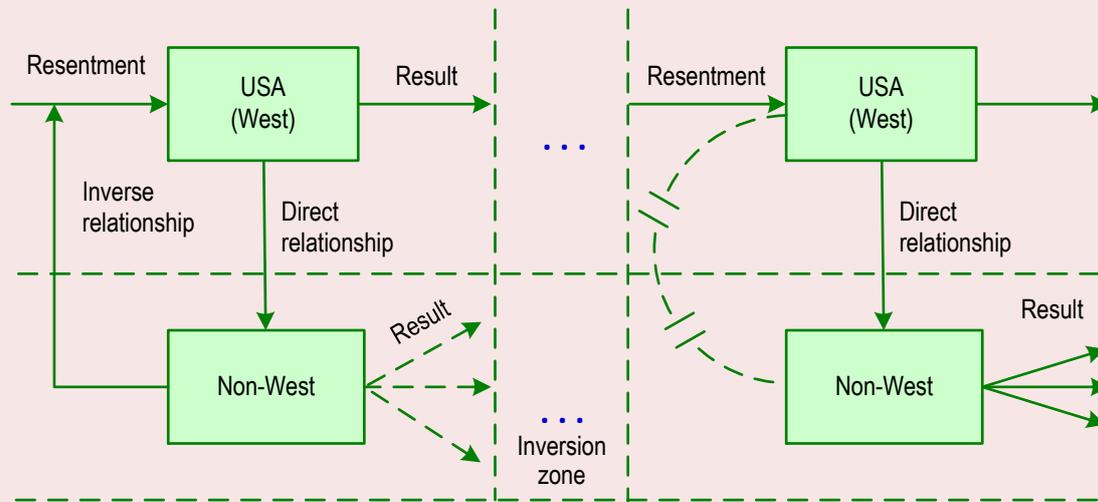
Now let us consider the genesis of the Second civilizational failure within Western megacivilization, which generates the main mistake of the West and consists in its categorical unwillingness to take into account the interests of other countries and its unpreparedness to enter into direct conflict with them. This phenomenon also has a cybernetic interpretation.

Proceeding from the fact that the West, represented by the United States, still acts as control center of the world economic system, its unwillingness to take into account the interests of the participants in this system means nothing more than a break in feedback in the corresponding cybernetic system. The United States deliberately ignores information about the life and activities of other states and peoples and thereby falls into an *informational geopolitical vacuum*. In fact, they cease to understand and anticipate the behavior of participants of the GGPS and thereby become exposed to all those risks that they themselves generate with their rash actions. Quite obviously, in such a situation, the West (USA) first becomes ineffective in managing the Non-West and then ceases to fulfill the mission of coordinator of world events altogether. Ultimately, it will face an unforeseen and extremely undesirable situation, which it will no longer be able to eliminate. It is possible that such undesirable events for the United States will be repeated until the country completely loses world hegemony. This will be followed by a full reformatting of the GGPS with the accompanying change of the WCAC.

As we have already mentioned, the Second civilizational failure is equivalent to the break of feedback in the corresponding cybernetic system, hence its partial destruction, and therefore this phenomenon itself will be called *partial cybernetic inversion* (PCI), when the two subsystems are in relatively autonomous mode (*Fig. 2*).

The reason for the emergence of the PCI is the monopoly position of the United States and its

Figure 2. Partial cybernetic inversion “West – Non-West”



Source: own compilation.

traditional and long-standing power, which allowed it to ignore their competitors. The military, intellectual and financial primacy of the U.S. for about 35–40 years was so overwhelming that it lulled the vigilance of the American administration. This led to a dramatic decline in the capacity of the country’s top leadership, including its presidents.

In relation to Russia, the PCI is also manifested in the U.S. political circles disregarding the accumulated knowledge and historical experience of interaction between the West and Russia. In this field, the United States has made several mistakes that are worth mentioning.

First, when instigating the conflict in Ukraine, the U.S. ignored the fact that throughout Russia’s history it was not Russia that acted as an aggressor toward the West, but vice versa. This is especially strange when we consider that British historian A. Toynbee wrote about it in detail 80 years ago. He noted: “The West, they will say, is the arch-aggressor of the modern era, and everyone will have their own example of Western aggression. The Russians will recall how their lands were occupied by Western armies in 1941, 1915, 1812, 1709 and 1610” (Toynbee, 2011, p. 252). Moreover, he recalls that up to the 13th century, relations between Russia

and the West were very successful. However, during the Mongol invasion Russia weakened and the Western neighbors took advantage of it by annexing Western Russian lands in Belarus and Ukraine; Russia managed to return those lands only in 1945 (Toynbee, 2011, p. 254).

Second, Russia has always provided an effective response to all military and technological challenges of the West. For example, Toynbee notes that the acts of aggression against Russia in 1610 (from Poland), 1709 (Sweden), 1812 (France), 1915 and 1941 (Germany) were successfully repelled; an adequate response was also given to the technological challenge of 1945 (the U.S. atomic bombing of Japan) in 1949. Despite these facts, the United States orchestrated a clash between Russia and Ukraine in 2014, which ended with the accession of Crimea to the Russian Federation and marked a new round of the arms race. The provocation on the part of the West resulted in Russia’s developing the Kinzhal hypersonic aviation missile system, which was adopted in 2017, and the Poseidon unmanned underwater vehicle equipped with a nuclear power plant, commissioned in 2018. After these events, the tenseness of the situation in the world has reached its peak.

Third, overly persistent attempts by the United States to introduce a democratic political regime in Russia after 1991 led to the exact opposite result – an unprecedented strengthening of the central government in the country during Vladimir Putin’s presidential terms. And this is after Toynbee shrewdly noted that since the 14th century, “autocracy and centralism have been the dominant of all ruling regimes in Russia” (Toynbee, 2011, p. 254). Moreover, Toynbee provided an absolutely accurate assessment of the reasons for this state of affairs: “Probably, this Russian–Moscow tradition was as unpleasant to the Russians themselves as to their neighbors; however, unfortunately, the Russians learned to tolerate it, partly out of habit, but also because, without any doubt, they considered it less evil, rather than the prospect of being conquered by aggressive neighbors” (Toynbee, 2011, p. 254).

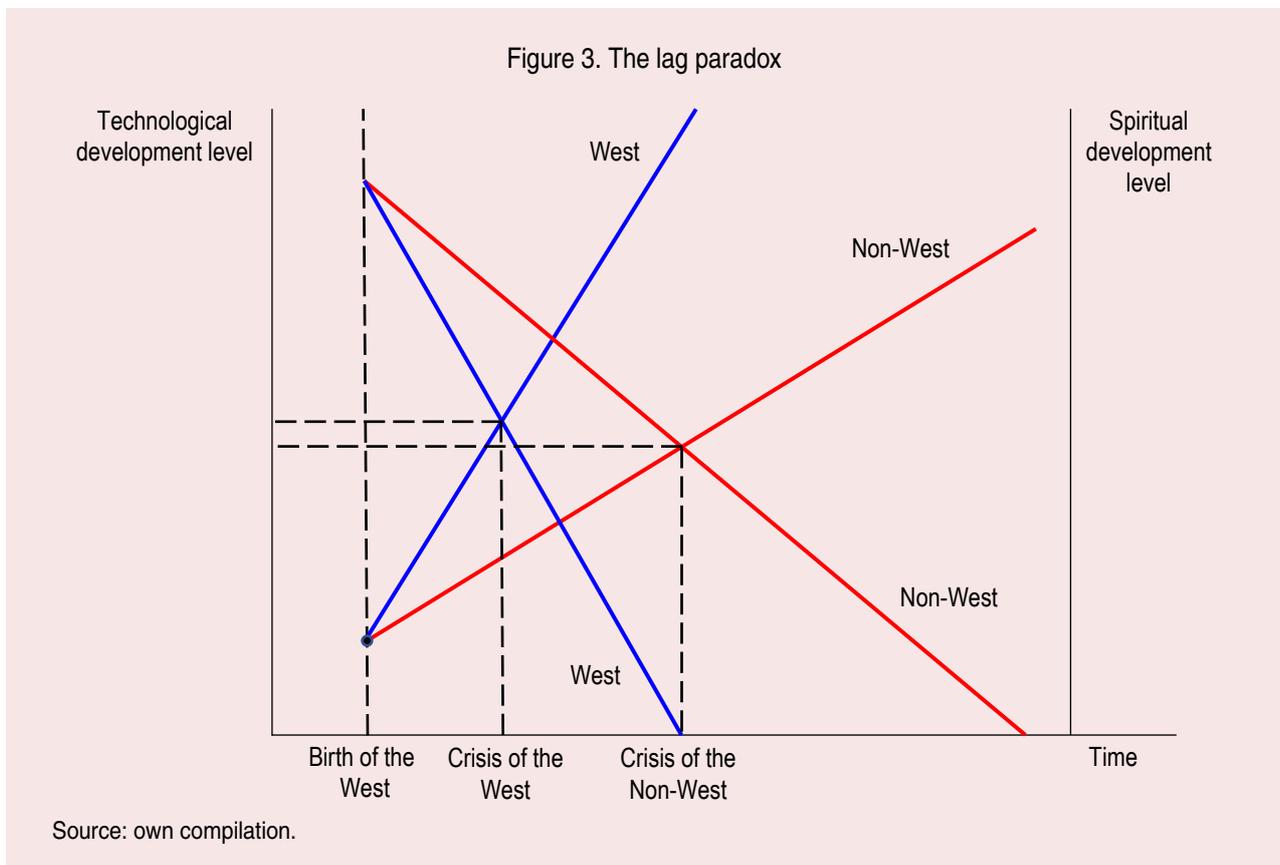
Fourth, the United States got involved in an active confrontation with Russia during the collapse of its own liberal democratic ideology. Since 1945,

the clash of the West with the rest of the world has shifted from the technological to the spiritual sphere (Toynbee, 2011, p. 261). The victory of the West over Soviet communism in 1991 exposed a similar confrontation with communist China and the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution of Iran. Apparently, the sympathies of the majority of the world’s population, including in Western countries, lean toward the spiritual attitudes of the Non-West.

Thus, the illusion of unlimited power and permissiveness led the United States to the paralysis of its analytical segment of the management system and actions resulting either in the defeat of the West or the death of the whole world, including the West itself.

**The lag paradox**

To understand the general balance of forces in the West/Non-West hybrid war, it is necessary to consider its two dimensions – technological and spiritual. To do this, let us look at an extremely simplified, but very representative scheme in *Figure 3*.



Both megacivilizations, the West and the Non-West, have their own level of technological and spiritual development, which is reflected respectively on the left and right axes of Figure 3. For simplicity, let us assume that at the beginning of time, the West and the East were at about the same level of technological development and at the same spiritual level. The main characteristic and advantage of the Western world is its accelerated technological development compared to the rest of the world (in Figure 3 this is reflected by two continuous increasing straight lines, where the line for the Western world has a greater angle of inclination). However, at the same time, the West has degraded spiritually much faster (in Figure 3, this is reflected by two dotted descending lines, where the line for the Western world also has a greater slope relative to the timeline). We see that the intersection point of the two curves for the West corresponds to an earlier time period compared to the intersection point of the curves for the Non-West. The intersection points themselves can be interpreted as a crisis of Western and Non-Western civilizations, respectively, when the material principle begins to prevail over the spiritual one<sup>1</sup>.

According to this representation of civilizational progress it turns out that the lagging megacivilization of the Non-West is the one that arrives to a total spiritual crisis later than its competitor, the West<sup>2</sup>. Thus, we observe a kind of lag paradox, when a

<sup>1</sup> Figure 3 shows the process of overlapping spiritual and technological trends in the development of the two megacivilizations. However, the units of measurement of the two processes do not coincide, and therefore the intersection of the corresponding curves can only have a qualitative interpretation, illustrating only the very fact of the dominance of one or another side of social dynamics. Nevertheless, this is quite enough for the problem under consideration.

<sup>2</sup> It is easy to see that, depending on the angle of inclination of the corresponding curves, the Non-West may not only come to a crisis later, as compared to the West, but also at a higher level of spiritual and material development, which in itself means a less pronounced crisis. More generally, we can say that the preservation of humanity requires a radical reversal of the curve of spiritual development – from decreasing to increasing, preferably in both megacivilizations. To the Non-West, this illusory possibility is at least theoretically preserved; then the West clearly does not have time to revise its basic spiritual attitudes.

more advanced civilization finds itself in a state of spiritual crisis and disintegration earlier, while the lagging world gains a temporary advantage.

The considered paradox is based on the idea that modern world has not developed spiritually over time, but has degraded. René Guénon, a French philosopher, author of works on metaphysics, traditionalism and symbolism, is considered an outstanding advocate of this position. Such statements about the dynamics of the spiritual essence of humanity can be confirmed only by indirect data, but the whole course of world history and especially the last 100 years clearly show the validity of the Guénon doctrine, which allows it to be used as a working hypothesis<sup>3</sup>.

Strictly speaking, the lag paradox is a kind of metaphysical model of human civilization that requires at least a brief explanation. For example, the very existence of two lines of development – spiritual and technological (material) – is associated with an opposition that Aldous Huxley characterizes as “contemplation/action” (Huxley, 2018, p. 465); in Guénon’s terminology, this opposition is “speculation/action” (Guénon, 2021, p. 111). Depending on the prevalence of one or another pole, either a predominantly active human nature or a predominantly contemplative personality is formed. All the most ancient spiritual traditions postulate that the goal of human life is contemplation (i.e., direct and intuitive comprehension of God, the Absolute, Brahman, etc.), and the means to achieve the goal is action (transformation of the world and

<sup>3</sup> An example of digitizing moral and spiritual degradation can be found in an approach of Edward Glaeser to identify the seven deadly sins of humanity: greed, envy, laziness, gluttony, lust, pride and anger. For example, the increase in the phenomenon of gluttony can be assessed through the proportion of obese people or through the proportion of people who systematically practice religious fasting. The growth of pride and narcissism can be assessed through sociological measurements of people’s self-esteem; an alternative option is to measure the frequency of the use of the pronoun “I” in various cases in texts of popular songs over different periods (Palacios-Huerta I. (Ed.). (2016). *Cherez 100 let: vedushchie ekonomisty predskazyvayut budushchee* [In 100 Years: Leading Economists Predict the Future]. Moscow: Publishing House of the Gaidar Institute. P. 132). Thus, even the most subtle matters can be quite adequately digitized through indirect measurements and the use of proxy variables.

oneself); in Western teachings, the opposite is true: the goal is action, and the means is contemplation (in the lowest form – discursive thinking) (Huxley, 2018, p. 465). The doctrine of contemplation generates *spiritual (abstract) values of a holistic type* (truth, creativity, knowledge, beauty, love, etc.), and the doctrine of action generates *selfish material (concrete) interests* (household comfort, profit margin, retention of power, etc.). The above makes the diagram in Figure 3 more understandable. Accordingly, the moment when technological progress rather than spiritual values becomes the highest meaning of the development of civilization, indicates the onset of spiritual crisis.

The First and Second civilizational failures in the functioning of Western megacivilization are manifestations and indirect evidence of the lag paradox. Indeed, the technocracy of the West already denies the culture and history of mankind, considering them to be obsolete phenomena, and thereby removes the spiritual basis of man (Dugin, 2010, p. 12). We agree with I.R. Shafarevich who notes that the principle of the technological civilization of the West “consists in the gradual displacement of natural elements by technology” (Shafarevich, 2003, p. 366). In a more radical formulation, “the goal of Western progress is to destroy nature and replace it with artificial nature-technology” (Shafarevich, 2003, p. 366). If we follow Oswald Spengler’s logic, then “civilization is the very extreme and artificial states that can be realized by the highest kind of people” (Spengler, 2009, p. 43); the most important sign of the decline of Western civilization is the extinction of spiritual creativity. The fact that Raphael and Mozart, Cervantes and Goethe, Shakespeare and Dickens have already remained in the distant past of the West confirms this thesis. However, Shafarevich develops it by talking about two stages in the development of the Western world – the early, associated with the creation of science, and the late, within which technology is created. And while science discovers the laws of nature, and technology uses the laws of nature that are already known, the early stage of the existence of the West is based on spiritual

comprehension of the world, and the late one is based on practical applications of spiritual achievements (Shafarevich, 2003, p. 421). Of course, today there are already many additional signs of the spiritual degradation of the West, and there is no need for us to dwell upon them in detail.

The development of events around the SMO during 2022 also provides additional arguments in favor of a more noticeable moral decay of the West, which has gone too far in its political intrigues and does not stop even before instigating the leadership of Ukraine to bomb nuclear power plants and helping it to create a “dirty bomb” with radioactive stuffing<sup>4</sup>.

The lag paradox is important for understanding the emerging situation on the battlefield of the current hybrid war. In this regard, it is appropriate to recall Toynbee’s idea that Western and Non-Western civilizations use both material and spiritual tools. The latter is the worldview of the Non-West, which can outweigh the material tools of the West (Toynbee, 2011, p. 258). For example, since 1917, the idea of communism has been the greatest danger to the West.

We should add the fact that a person’s spirituality is naturally manifested in their material *self-restraint* and increased demands on themselves, whereas the philosophy of action, on the contrary, provokes increased claims to the outside world in the individual’s own favor, and also to material *expansion*. In practice, this means that a more spiritual individual is prone to professional perfectionism, is capable of greater concentration and being more efficient in work, producing higher-quality artifacts; whereas a purely material orientation of an individual often results in the production of flawed items, scamped work, and idleness. It is hardly necessary to prove that people’s spiritual qualities themselves are already a huge advantage of civilization when it collides with a geopolitical opponent. It is the great spirituality of the people, ultimately, that manifests itself at the

<sup>4</sup> See, for example: [https://aif.ru/politics/v\\_mid\\_rf\\_dopustili\\_sodeystvie\\_zapada\\_v\\_sozdanii\\_ukrainoy\\_gryaznoy\\_bomby](https://aif.ru/politics/v_mid_rf_dopustili_sodeystvie_zapada_v_sozdanii_ukrainoy_gryaznoy_bomby)

birth of passionarity, which will be discussed in more detail below.

Another important feature that shows spiritual degradation of society is the endless bustle of individuals, accompanied by “metaphysical anxiety” (Guénon, 2020, p. 21), which underlies most modern diseases – from cancer to mental disorders and dementia. In this regard, we can say that the West is a society of sick people. This circumstance cannot but provoke protest, a typical example of which is found in the viewpoint of the British intelligence officer G. Blake, who defected to the USSR: “...I’ve always hated competition between people. To get pleasure from it seems to me something humiliating and unworthy. It is necessary to do something well for oneself, and not in order to surpass or outshine another... For the same reasons I have never been attracted to business. I hate the idea of taking part in a rat race, where you either succeed or you will be thrown into a landfill like garbage, where a person is so caught up in making money that there is no time for anything else, even for the pleasure of spending this money” (Blake, 2006, p. 136). Then Blake delivers the final verdict regarding the individualism of the West: “When you compare yourself to others, you always become bitter or narcissistic, because there is someone better or someone worse nearby” (Blake, 2006, p. 137). In other words, a lifestyle with more spirituality will always be the center of attraction for huge masses of people.

At the end of this section, we note that the lag paradox discussed above is an extremely simplified model of the ongoing civilizational shifts. In reality, the ascending line of technological progress and the descending line of the level of people’s spiritual development can break in any variety of ways – not only by stabilizing the situation, but by temporarily reversing the trend. However, at large time intervals, the directions of general trends are preserved.

#### **Destruction of the national model of Russia’s social evolution; the anatomy of Neocolonialism**

Russia has approached the open phase of the Fourth Hybrid War with the West with a colossal volume of various problems. In this regard, one

should find out whether the Russian Federation is capable of acting as a full-fledged participant in the war and whether it can count on winning. Thus, let us consider four global social problems of Russia, which have been finally exposed by 2022.

*Problem number one: political autism of the Russian population.* After 1991, the country faced an extremely negative effect of initial conditions dating back to the Soviet times. Thus, in the USSR, the ideological and political education of young people in schools and universities was based on dogmas and was conducted rather primitively; moreover, political life in the country itself was so inert and artificial that resulted in the fact that school and university graduates almost completely rejected politics as an area of their interest. The aversion of young and middle-aged people to politics lay at the heart of the indifferent attitude of the Soviet population toward the collapse of the USSR. People either did not understand what was happening, or even supported the fall of the communist regime, not realizing that the entire statehood in general was collapsing with it. After 1991, the political consciousness of all the former peoples of the USSR was generally paralyzed by the need to survive in new conditions. So far, there have been no radical changes; Russians do not have a sense of belonging to one people; there is no understanding that the country is in danger again; petty everyday problems still outweigh people’s political consciousness.

*Problem number two: total de-professionalization and de-qualification of the country’s cadres.* After 1991 Russia experienced an unprecedented degradation of the national economy. All high-tech industries were closed or reduced to the limit. This resulted in a lack of demand for science, developments and, ultimately, high-quality education. Professional knowledge, skills and experience gradually “evaporated” due to the absence of demand. In fact, the preservation of professionalism and skill in any field has become a marginal strategy of the few, instead of being a nationwide idea, which it used to be in the USSR. Today in Russia, almost all industries are staffed

with lay people who do not have specialized education and work experience and therefore are forced to master various skills on their own, which in most cases leads to outdated and unproductive amateur activity.

*Problem number three: absence of the adequate political elite.* After 1991, power, including top positions in government and big business, was taken by those who completely denied the main principle of the political elite – Service to the Fatherland. Even the very concept of Fatherland for most of these people has lost its meaning, because they moved their money, real estate and family members abroad. In Russia, representatives of the authorities and large companies have no values except for the opportunity to amass wealth and subsequently export it to more prosperous countries. This syndrome of rats fleeing a sinking ship has been manifested in all strata of the Russian population.

*Problem number four: the absence of a state ideology in Russia.* Paragraph 1 of Article 13 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation states: “Ideological diversity shall be recognized in the Russian Federation”<sup>5</sup>. The recognition of ideological diversity led to the absence of ideology in general; therefore the population found itself without an elementary spiritual basis, without an understanding of prospects and a unifying principle. In the conditions of the SMO, this problem revealed itself to the fullest extent. Mass evasion of mobilization and the flight of conscripts from the country are particular signs of the ideological vacuum in which the Russian population exists nowadays.

These four problems are enough to destroy the national model of Russia’s development. In this regard, let us recall Lee Kuan Yew’s formula for Singapore’s development: “The country’s success = Brilliant management + Total personnel perfectionism” (Lee, 2018). These conditions are equivalent to the presence of high professionalism in personnel and the most responsible political

elite, which Russia has lacked for the last 31 years. Moreover, given the absence of ideology and a sense of unity among the people, we can say that as it launched the SMO, it had no basis for victory. However, in this regard, reasonable questions arise: how this state of affairs has developed and whether it can be corrected.

As a rule, such obvious institutional failures rarely occur on their own; they are man-made. For Russia, they are a natural consequence of neocolonialism, the system of external governance established after 1991 (Balatsky, 2022a). The actions of the network of Western emissaries and the puppet government complied with the following scenario.

The current RF Constitution was adopted in 1993 and the aforementioned Paragraph 1 of Article 13 was specially introduced into it. After the collapse of communism, Russia was no longer given a chance to preserve the old ideology or build a new one. Moreover, at that moment there were no objective conditions for the development of a new ideological course; in the future, it remained only to preserve this paragraph in the Constitution, thereby making any attempts to develop a state ideology illegal. At the same time, the principle formulated by Zygmunt Bauman (Bauman, 2008, p. 40) was brought into action. In the modern interpretation, Bauman’s principle looks like this: opportunities divide people, while the lack of opportunities unites them (Balatsky, 2011, p. 136). The entire era of Russia’s existence since 1991, especially since the beginning of the 21st century, was characterized by a general contradiction: Russian citizens were gradually living better and better, while the country was sliding into an abyss – to the final loss of technological sovereignty (Balatsky, 2022a, p. 56). This contradiction was also man-made: oil and gas rents were “smeared” across the entire population of the country, providing people with a very decent standard of living; thus, there emerged a tendency toward disunity of the population. Russian citizens purchased apartments and houses, went on trips and vacations abroad, bought modern imported motor vehicles, while domestic production was gradually deteriorating, causing the loss of

<sup>5</sup> See: <http://duma.gov.ru/legislative/documents/constitution/>

technological sovereignty. In the conditions of the SMO, the problems of disunity of the people and the absence of strategically significant industries have been completely exposed. Today, the gigantic Russian political opposition, which has moved to other countries and is conducting anti-government propaganda from there, as well as the considerable amount of the population embittered by the deterioration of life after the start of the SMO, is a typical example of the man-made implementation of the Bauman principle in the absence of state ideology.

The disunity of the people was reinforced by the disavowal of the country's history and the aberration of the Russian language. For example, already in the late USSR, Joseph Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev and partly Vladimir Lenin were partially demonized, and after 1991 they were subjected to full-scale falsification. As a result, almost the entire Soviet period was devoted to a kind of historical anathema, which undermined the connection of the people with their own history. Currently, the debunking of the positive deeds of earlier historical figures, including Peter the Great, is in full swing. Thus, the process of denigrating the history of the Russian state gradually goes deep into the centuries, so that the people are deprived of their roots and the subject of historical pride for their country. Not only the media, but also scientific conferences, textbooks and monographs are filled with new false interpretations of historical facts. In parallel, the unified state exam campaign and the reform of the Russian language, aimed at introducing formal rules that have never existed before, have led to the fact that today almost the whole country speaks incorrectly, making unthinkable accents in words that previously did not cause any discrepancies. The new rules are imposed on school students without any alternative and are the basis for passing the exam. Even the voice robot in Yandex navigator pronounces certain Russian words with incorrect stress. Finally, the West, which "took offence" at Russia because of the SMO in Ukraine, stooped so low as to reject even the great literary and musical works of representatives of Russian culture.

These measures to undermine the integrity of the Russian people were accompanied by two more "special operations": undermining the professionalism of the population and alienating the political elite from its country of origin. To ensure the success of the former, not only the knowledge-intensive economic sector was destroyed, but also a *mechanism of negative selection* was set up, when not the best but the worst representatives of the people were appointed to all leadership positions in politics and economics. This ensured that no real political and economic problems of the country would be solved; at the same time, such a situation suppressed the natural desire of people for professional excellence. Moreover, we should note that the mechanism of negative selection can only be *artificial*, because in natural conditions, the very presence of large-scale problems leads to the fact that the top government posts become occupied by competent people. In Russia, this did not happen, which once again testifies that social degradation processes are instigated from the outside. And, finally, the logical conclusion of the neocolonial policy is the alienation of political and economic elites from their country of origin. This was achieved by Russia's international openness, when its citizens could freely move their capital abroad; the instability of the Russian regime against the background of the reliability of Western countries predetermined the unambiguous choice made by the elites. The currently unfolding campaign to "punish" (arrest of accounts, seizure of real estate, refusal of visas, etc.) representatives of Russian elites for the actions of the Russian leadership that are undesirable for the West once again confirms the man-made nature of the policy pursued against Russia in the previous period.

We should note that the degradation of the population and elites in Russia has by no means reached its limit; rather, it has further impressive prospects. We find it appropriate to recall the results of Universe 25, an experiment conducted by John Calhoun in 1968–1972 on the example of a mouse population (Calhoun, 1973): the creation of an artificial Utopia for animals, in which food, territory

and building material for nesting were unlimited, led to the complete depopulation of the group of mice selected for the experiment. The result of this work was “death squared”: extinction of a population occurs in two steps – first the rupture of *social ties* between individuals, and then their social autism and indifference due to the loss of the *meaning of life* (Calhoun, 1973). It is this algorithm that is being implemented today by the puppet regimes of the West in relation to countries and peoples subject to weakening and destruction.

Currently, in Russia, the SMO contributes to overcoming all these syndromes, but the question is whether a radical change in the situation is possible in this direction in the conditions of the active phase of the hybrid war with the West.

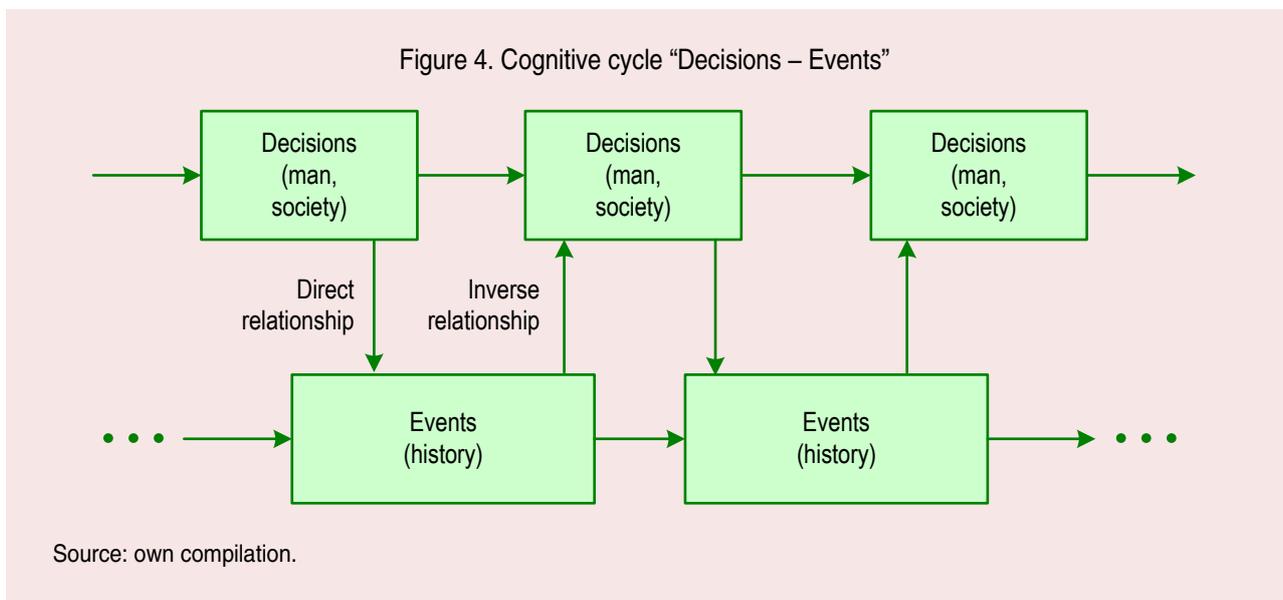
**Cognitive cycle “Decisions – Events”**

When studying historical dynamics, one should take into account the key mechanisms of transformation of social systems; let us consider one of such mechanisms in this section.

In modern neuroscience, the *principle of neuroplasticity of the brain*, introduced into science by Jerzy Konorski, is well known and consists in the ability of the brain to change under the influence of human experience, including for example, transferring the functions for which the damaged areas of the brain were responsible to other parts of

the brain (Goleman, 2005). At the societal level, this has its equivalent in the *principle of cultural plasticity of civilization*, which assumes the ability of the social system to adjust the decisions made by its leaders depending on the circumstances.

The principle of cultural plasticity of society is responsible for the evolution of peoples and countries. For example, in the absence of this principle it would be impossible to explain how the German culture of the 20th century could give rise to fascism and Nazism with all the ensuing consequences. It is equally problematic to explain such a phenomenon as the transformation of Singapore from a littered small territory into the most advanced dwarf state in just half a century. The principle of cultural plasticity is based on the *cognitive cycle “Decisions – Events”*, which consists in the fact that society (an individual) produces certain decisions that generate certain new events that are taken into account in the next round of decision-making; and so on indefinitely (Fig. 4). The conjugacy of the cognitive process of people’s comprehension of reality and their actions aimed to change this reality forms a “laced” scheme of history described by George Soros (Soros, 1996). This cycle demonstrates the inextricable connection between mental processes and the material environment.



The significance of the cognitive cycle “Decisions – Events” is that it removes the predetermination of any outcome in the geopolitical confrontation of different forces. According to this principle, not only people *produce* events, but events also *shape* people. This question is closely related to the well-known problem of the role of personality in history. However, G.V. Plekhanov, who comprehensively examined this question, only outlined the answer, pointing out that certain historical conditions are required for the realization of an individual’s potential (Plekhanov, 2013). Such an answer requires a *static* cross-section of the situation under consideration: the conditions either exist or do not. At the same time, the cognitive cycle “Decisions – Events” gives us a more complete *dynamic* picture and suggests that even in the absence of initial conditions for realizing the potential of a particular outstanding personality, they can eventually be created. Moreover, a series of events can form the desired conditions, which themselves will generate and demand the personality required to implement certain decisions. The most impressive illustration of how this scheme works can be the fact of the repeatability of scientific discoveries and developments: if there is a request for a corresponding discovery (development) and there are conditions for performing the necessary procedures, then there emerges not one person, but many people who are able to satisfy the need.

The above clarification is important for understanding the course and consequences of the ongoing SMO and the entire global hybrid war. During the eight months of hostilities in Ukraine, one could observe the extreme indecision and inconsistency of the Russian leadership in conducting them. The policy of these months was based on the “One step forward – two steps back” principle. However, the very course of the operation and its results at different stages gradually led to a change in the nature of management decisions on the part of the Russian authorities. Currently, there is a great consistency in the actions of the RF Armed Forces. However, the main conclusion from what has been said is that an initially generated event can

lead to completely unpredictable consequences. For example, if it is carried out for a sufficiently long time, it can bring new political elite to power, generate a new ideology and qualitatively different management decisions.

#### **Structural model of an evolutionary leap**

The balance of forces in the GGPS alone does not make it possible to foresee any events, and even more so the outcome of the resulting clash of megacivilizations. The result of such conflicts largely depends on the range of subjective factors that either allow or do not allow the objective potential of civilization to be implemented. To determine this group of factors, L.N. Gumilev introduced a very successful concept, *passionarity* of an ethnic group, which means the amount of vital energy available in the ethnic system; in turn, the *passionarity* of the ethnos is manifested in the work it performs that takes the form of historical events (Gumilev, 2016, p. 283). Using Arthur Schopenhauer’s terminology, we can say that the historical work of an ethnos (civilization) is crystallized in the totality of its *deeds* (geographical discoveries, wars of conquest and defense, acts of self-sacrifice, etc.), guided by great hearts, and *creations* (sculptures and paintings, musical works of composers, books of philosophers and writers, discoveries of scientists, etc.), requiring a great head (Schopenhauer, 2011, p. 86). This makes it possible to understand the magnitude of the ethnic group’s *passionarity tension*, i.e. its specific *passionarity* (Gumilev, 2016, p. 283).

We agree with Gumilev that *passionarity* is based on the concept of an *ethnic field*, i.e. certain energy vibrations that permeate all representatives of a particular ethnic group (Gumilev, 2016, p. 317). However, he saw the source of explosions (leaps) of the people’s *passionarity* in planetary-cosmic, purely natural processes: solar radiation, tectonic movements of the Earth’s crust, seismological activity, electromagnetic storms, etc. Such an idea is deeply erroneous and can serve as an example of primitive reductionism, when social and spiritual phenomena are reduced to physical and chemical reactions.

A. Toynbee explained the evolutionary turns of civilizations much more subtly and insightfully, introducing the “Challenge – Response” model into consideration, rightly believing that any significant historical phenomenon is a reaction to an existential challenge from the outside world (Toynbee, 2011). Indeed, only extraordinary events stimulate the unification of large groups of people and cause their concerted actions. In this regard L. Gumilev was in solidarity with A. Toynbee: “A genuine connection [between peoples and cultures] is a spiritual connection, not a generic one, not a natural one, not a social one, and it is achieved only in the face of “absurd situations” and “last questions” when people communicate on an existential level” (Gumilev, 2016, pp. 373–374). However, the response of an ethnic group, even ensuring its simple self-preservation, does not in itself lead to social evolution and the progress of civilization. Nassim Taleb, who clarified the mechanism of evolutionary turn, drew attention to this circumstance. According to his understanding, social systems have the ability to improve themselves (increase their functionality relative to the initial state) under the influence of adverse circumstances. This property is based on the mechanism of *hypercompensation (hyperreaction)*, when the system more than compensates for the damage it suffered due to the initial stress (Taleb, 2014, pp. 73–75). The presence of such a property allows social systems to evolve by releasing their hidden reserves. Somewhat later, the mechanism of hypercompensation, including the main phases of its course, was revealed in literature (Balatsky, 2015, p. 119); let us now clarify these earlier results.

The above helps to synthesize all available knowledge to reveal the mechanism of the birth of the passionarity of an ethnic group (state). Let us consider its schematic representation (Fig. 5), which we will call a *structural model of an evolutionary leap*. To do this, we will break the whole process into several stages.

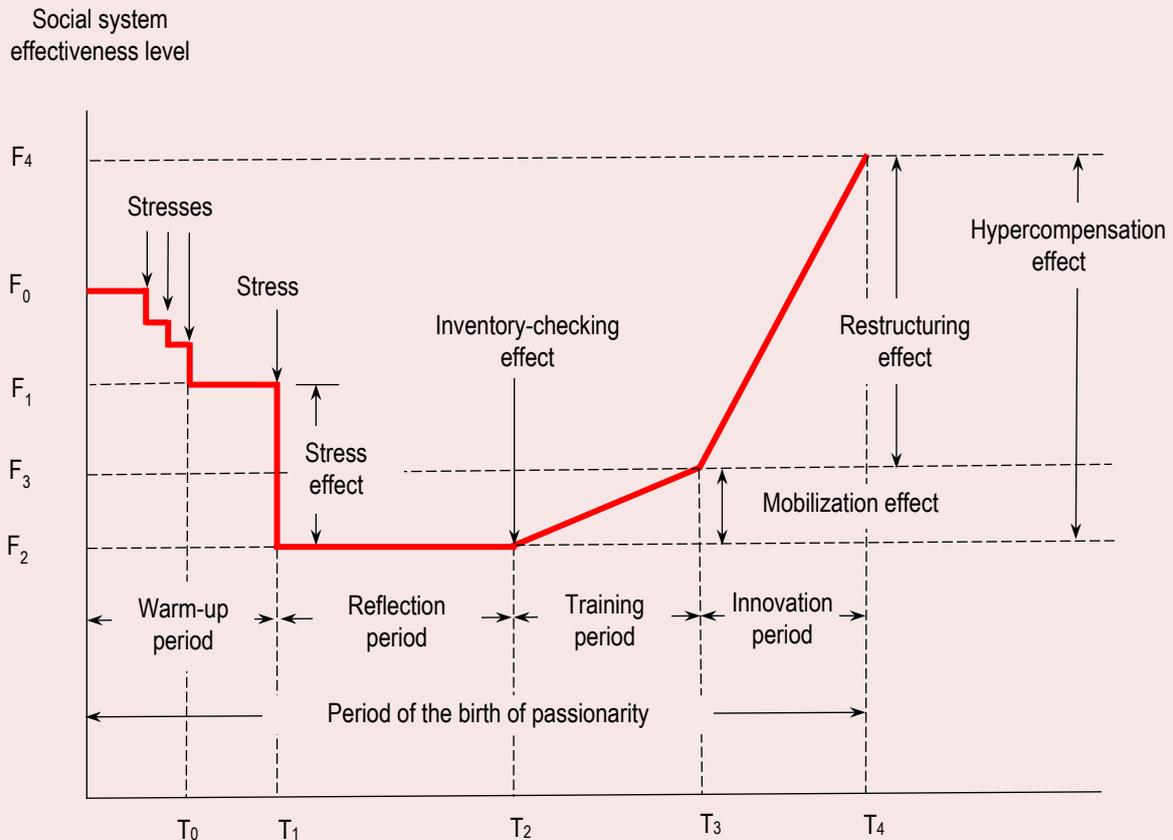
At the first stage, which forms the *warm-up period*, stressors (challenges) emerge consistently,

which reduce the functionality of the system and cause primary problems. According to our logic, the one-act process of emergence of stress (challenge) does not always lead to the emergence of a hypercompensation mechanism. In many cases, the system needs a “warm-up” and a shock shake, so that all segments of the population become aware of the problem that has arisen. A typical example of such a warming up of the Russian people is the Patriotic War of 1812, when Napoleon Bonaparte was able to not only reach Moscow with his army, but also take it, whereas after he barely managed to leave Russia with the insignificant remnants of the army. A similar situation took place during the Second World War, when Adolf Hitler and his army reached Moscow and Leningrad fairly quickly, but after that a new stage of confrontation began with the preponderance of the Soviet armed forces and the subsequent defeat of Germany. Thus, the birth of the passionarity of an ethnic group is a dynamic process, stretched over time and implemented sequentially over several historical periods, including as a result of a *cascade of external challenges*. As a rule, among a series of stresses, the one that turns out to be the most painful appears and acts as the “last straw that broke the camel’s back” (in Fig. 5 this is illustrated by the conditions  $F_0 > F_1; F_1 > F_2$ ).

At the second stage, which forms the *period of reflection*, there emerges an *inventory-checking effect*, when the possibilities of the social system, its shortcomings and hidden reserves undergo total reconsideration. At this very stage of self-knowledge the society and its management system form the vector of all further structural transformations intended to neutralize the problems that have arisen (condition:  $dF_2/dT = 0$ ).

At the third stage, which forms the *training period*, the *mobilization effect* is launched, when all the resources of the system are focused on strictly defined, vital areas. At the same time, the system undergoes structural cleaning so as to eliminate unnecessary, harmful or questionable elements

Figure 5. Structural model of an evolutionary leap



Source: own compilation.

and projects; this, in turn, contributes to a more rational redistribution of resources (the effect of  $F_3 > F_2$  is achieved). In practice, this stage is associated with the change of leadership elites at all levels, the dominance of the principle of professionalism in all spheres, and the elimination of ideological opposition.

The fourth stage, which forms the *period of innovation*, provides the *effect of restructuring* the social system on the basis of a new organizational model. At this stage, as a rule, completely new solutions are generated for the government; besides, new management and organizational structures are built so as to effectively address the tasks set. This large-scale restructuring of the entire system makes it possible to radically increase its efficiency and achieve results that previously seemed unattainable.

Thus, the functionality of the system turns out to be greater than in all previous time periods, including the moments of primary challenges (stresses) (provision of conditions  $F_4 > F_0 > F_1 > F_3 > F_2$ ).

Taken together, the above effects promote a hypercompensation mechanism and thereby launch the birth (“explosion”) of the passionarity of the people.

In conclusion, we should at least mention three points in the formation of passionarity. First, the foci of passionarity are dynamic. As the WCAC moves in time and space, so the centers of passionarity move around the planet. There are many examples proving the correlation between the centers of world capitalism and the passionarity-related activity of their peoples. Second, passionarity can be both *positive* (sacrifice, courage,

creativity, ability to overcome hardships, etc.) and *negative* (cruelty to the enemy, ideological intransigence, egocentrism, pride, etc.). Both components of passionarity go hand in hand and add drama to historical clashes. Third, passionarity is formed due to two phenomena: an increase in the *efficiency output* of the system and an upward shift of the boundary of its *potential*. In other words, both the *potential capabilities* of the system and the *efficiency of their use* are growing.

The structural model of the evolutionary leap that we have considered serves as an analytical basis for the study of the West/Non-West confrontation. This introduces a dynamic aspect to the analysis, because the initial power landscape does not guarantee a particular course of events, but, on the contrary, creates prerequisites for changing the initial disposition.

#### **Primacy of geopolitical logic, the red lines, and two eternal clans**

The cognitive cycle “Decisions – Events” considered in the previous sections and the structural model of the evolutionary leap shed light on the fact that the subjective factor, being woven into the logic of objective events, is also largely predetermined. However, at the current stage of geopolitical turbulence, there is another group of factors that reinforces the conclusion we have drawn.

For brevity, let us call these additional factors geopolitical and dwell upon them in more detail. The fact is that the geopolitical logic operating with *existential entities* during the change of the WCAC becomes *decisive* and subordinates macro- and microeconomic policy, diplomacy and military strategy. For example, when the very existence of the United States as the hegemon in the GGPS is at stake, then no moral, humanistic and other considerations are of great importance. The situation is similar for Russia, which reacted to the 2014 provocations of NATO (U.S.) penetration into the territory of Ukraine; the result of Russia’s response was the accession of Crimea to the Russian Federation.

In this case, we are talking about the so-called *red lines*, which cannot be crossed. Red lines are understood as certain conditions of peaceful coexistence, and their violation is tantamount to a declaration of war. For example, the prospects of removing Russia from Sevastopol and the permission to deploy NATO (U.S.) military bases there were perceived by Russia’s top leadership in 2014 as an unacceptable event, which triggered the events leading to the accession of Crimea to the RF. In turn, the Ukrainian authorities reacted to the loss of Crimea by imposing a water blockade: they cut the supply of water from the Dnieper through the North Crimean Canal that covered 85% of the peninsula’s fresh water needs<sup>6</sup>. No subsequent measures for the construction of reservoirs on the territory of Crimea could solve the problem that resulted in a humanitarian catastrophe of soil salinization, equated by the Russian government to the genocide of the republic’s population. Thus, Ukraine shifted the territorial conflict to a geopolitical dimension, which necessitated an invasion of the Zaporozhye Oblast to unblock and take control of the North Crimean Canal. Ukraine’s preparation of a strike on the Donbass, followed by an offensive on Crimea, only strengthened Russia’s intentions; all this resulted in the SMO of 2022.

The entry of a geopolitical rival into the territory that belonged to Russia in the recent past is the red line beyond which there actually begins the disintegration of the state; no government can put up with such a situation. We can say that the red lines negate even the restrictions imposed on the country by the neocolonial system of external governance.

The latter requires clarification because of an apparent logical contradiction between the country’s dependence on external governance and independence in decisions concerning red lines. The fact is that in any sufficiently large

<sup>6</sup> See: <https://www.pnp.ru/social/pochemu-oon-zakryvaet-glaza-na-vodnuyu-blokadu-kryma.html>

state claiming political independence, there are always two political clans – a nationally oriented power bloc and a cosmopolitan-minded economic alliance. The former includes senior officials of the country’s law enforcement agencies, primarily the Armed Forces, and the latter includes heads of major companies and economic departments. The power bloc (siloviki) is inherently conservative and nationally oriented, because its task is to preserve and protect the state; otherwise, with the collapse of the state, its entire power bloc would disappear. However, the security forces cannot and should not develop the economy, without which the country does not exist. This mission is intended to be carried out by big business and economic departments (the liberals), which are inherently oriented toward foreign markets and trade expansion, and are interested in the country’s international openness; otherwise, business restricts itself, shrinks and degrades. In a sovereign country, a balance is maintained between these two political clans. However, during the period of geopolitical turbulence, when geopolitical logic becomes dominant, the political weight of the security forces increases. This manifests itself in the security forces controlling the red lines, crossing which is tantamount to declaring war and transferring political power into the hands of the military.

The above mechanics of the interaction between the two political clans helps us to understand the events of recent years in the GGPS. Thus, in 2014 the West’s complete control over Russia in the sphere of economy and culture “stumbled” upon the red line in Crimea; as a result, the power bloc became more active contrary to the interests of the economic bloc. Such a preponderance led to the undermining of the system of neocolonialism in Russia. In 2022, this incident was repeated, the security forces further strengthened their influence, and the comprador elite found themselves in an ambiguous position. The further course of events will determine which political group will eventually prevail.

Something very similar, but less obvious, is happening in China in 2022, where the aggravation of the situation in Taiwan has also become a red line for China’s security forces. China considers Taiwan as its integral part, and the final separation of its island part is tantamount to denying the integrity and capacity of Chinese civilization and the collapse of the former economic model of mainland China. The conflict between China and the United States over Taiwan in 2022 has already led to the strengthening of the country’s power bloc and Xi Jinping’s positions; it was manifested in the reassignments to the highest posts of the state at the 20th Congress of the CPC.

Thus, the red lines of geopolitics act as the last restrictions in the loss of political sovereignty by the countries. And that is why the logic of red lines promotes the collapse of the neocolonial system of U.S. governance. This phenomenon can be called the *primacy of geopolitical logic over economic logic*.

However, it would be a mistake to think that geopolitical factors are reduced only to red line markers. Over the past 400 years, the role of the geopolitical factor has been increasing. For example, city-states (Genoa and Venice) could still be at the center of the First Cycle of Capital Accumulation, whereas the second cycle required a full-fledged state. At the same time, a country that had not yet fully won its national independence (Holland) could become a WCAC during the second cycle, whereas this was no longer acceptable during the third cycle. While in the course of the third cycle a relatively small European country (Great Britain) could lead the world in the presence of even larger powers (Spain, France and Germany), the fourth cycle brought into the arena the largest capitalist state of the time (USA). Today, the geopolitical logic of the transformation of the world system requires that Russia should become a WCAC, since it is largest country in the world and the country that is richest in natural resources in the capitalist world. It is possible to violate this logic only by splitting the Russian Federation into several parts and thereby

carry out a fundamental geopolitical reformatting of the GGPS. Thus, geopolitical logic urges the West and Russia to answer an existential question: to be or not to be. This circumstance largely explains mutual intransigence of the West and Russia.

### **Prospects of the hybrid war**

Everything discussed earlier allows us to come close to understanding the current hybrid war, its present and future course. At the same time, as we have shown, Russia turned out at the epicenter, having approached this event while being extremely poorly prepared. At first glance, Russia seems to have no chance of winning in the confrontation that has started; but this is not the case, and we will prove it below.

The fact is that the First civilizational failure of the West is a problem in itself, because most people, even within the West, do not accept the new technogenic ideology. In this regard, all Western countries are divided into two parts – supporters of natural life, the natural principle in man and national culture and supporters of transhumanism and cosmopolitanism. It is no coincidence that now, for the first time in its history, the differences between the Republican and Democratic parties of the United States have become not only significant, but also fundamentally insurmountable. The countries of Europe are also split into two camps, whose positions are increasingly crystallizing around the attitude toward Russia.

The second civilizational failure of the West introduces an additional split within this alliance, when part of the Western states turn away from the general anti-Russian line due to the disagreements and contradictions that have arisen. For example, Hungary from the very beginning adhered to the strategy of cooperation with Russia and distancing itself from Ukraine. A further split was outlined after the explosions at Nord Stream-1 and Nord Stream-2, when Europe was completely cut off from hydrocarbon supplies from Russia and became fully dependent on the United States. Taking advantage of the situation, Washington set prices

for liquefied natural gas for Europe four times higher than for their own industry<sup>7</sup>; the German chemical corporation BASF decided to curtail business activity and reduce the number of jobs when European gas prices were six times higher than their level in the United States<sup>8</sup>. However, in addition, America has begun to vigorously promote the Inflation Reduction Act, which implies tax cuts and energy benefits for companies investing in its territory. In addition, the bill legitimizes the “Buy American” agenda in relation to the electric car market. The United States not only carries out monopolistic inflating of gas prices for Europe, but also redirects European business and capital to its territory. It is not surprising that in such circumstances, the authorities of France and Germany began negotiations on retaliatory measures that could ignite a trade war between the two most important representatives of the West – the United States and Europe. Thus, eight months after the start of the SMO, there outlined a split in the Collective West, and its unity turned out not so strong.

Explosions at the gas pipelines and the rising gas prices require at least a brief comment. Thus, the breakdown of gas pipelines, which, as some believe, had been inspired by the United States and carried out by the United Kingdom<sup>9</sup>, made America a monopolist in the liquefied gas market in Europe. This allowed the United States to raise prices dramatically in order to ensure its super profits. Even if we assume that gas prices in the U.S. are at the cost price level, then their 4-fold excess provides American exporters with a profit margin of 300%, and in the case of a 6-fold increase – 500%. If we

<sup>7</sup> See: <https://rus-bel.online/novosti/economica/platitza-gaz-v-4-raza-bolshe-makron-udivilsya-tsenam-amerikanskih-postavshhikov/>

<sup>8</sup> See: <https://inosmi.ru/20221028/sholts-257300349.html>

<sup>9</sup> According to an official statement, the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation has proof indicating a Western trace in the organization and implementation of these terrorist acts on pipelines. See: <https://rg.ru/2022/10/01/razvedka-v-kurse.html>

consider a more realistic hypothesis, according to which the level of American prices is twice as high as the cost price, then the estimates of profit margins will rise to 600 and 1,000%, respectively. It is not surprising that for the sake of such a profit, the U.S. is ready to sacrifice political partnership with Europe and pretend not to hear the arguments of not only rivals, but also partners.

Today there are already other cases of dubious cooperation within the West. For example, according to official information, NATO members provided Ukrainian wounded soldiers with preserved blood that after examination by Ukrainian doctors was found to be HIV and hepatitis-infected<sup>10</sup>. Thus, assistance to Ukraine is carried out according to the principle of maximum economy, even if it directly contradicts basic medical standards.

Consequently, the unity of the West is just a political cliché, and in its absence, Russia's chances of a successful confrontation increase. Moreover, time will play into Russia's hands: the disintegration of the Western coalition will continue and the Non-Western alliance will be gaining strength.

But no matter how the two civilizational failures have affected the West, this still cannot compensate for the deplorable state of Russia after 31 years of neocolonial degradation. However, here lies the intrigue: the balance of forces may fundamentally change if there emerges the passionarity of the ethnos in the Russian Federation. The logic of military confrontation can bring other elites to power, generate the demand for professionalism, produce a capable ideology and ensure the unity of the people. But this effect is not applicable to the West. It is due to the fact that it is the West that takes an active position and produces global challenges aimed at Russia, which is forced to respond to these challenges; the West itself is in hothouse conditions, and their violation in extreme cases will only lead to an "uprising of the masses", which is already beginning to manifest itself; the Second

civilizational failure may result in the Western elite ignoring this internal challenge as well. In other words, there is an *asymmetry in the functioning of A. Toynbee's* "Challenge – Response" model. And this asymmetry works in favor of Russia.

The realism of the birth of passionarity is confirmed by numerous historical analogies. For example, in 1917, when the country was losing the First World War, when its government was ruling incompetently for many years and the country was under pressure from foreign capital, there emerged a political force represented by the Bolshevik Party and its leader Vladimir Lenin so as to preserve and subsequently modernize and strengthen a new type of state – the USSR. By 2000, the Russian Federation under the leadership of Boris Yeltsin was on the brink of another collapse, but successor Vladimir Putin and his team managed to keep the situation under control. Napoleon's invasion of the Russian Empire in 1812 was not being repulsed for a long time; it had to take quite a while for all the mechanisms of the structural model of the evolutionary leap to start working in full force. Nevertheless, it eventually happened. A similar situation occurred during the 1941–1945 war: initially, the Soviet troops were losing one battle after the other, but in four years the country went through a complete transformation when the economy, the defense complex, and the armed forces of the USSR unconditionally surpassed the potential of Germany. We can say that it took at least three years for the full manifestation of the passionarity impulse, but it ultimately did emerge. During this time, there appeared previously unknown military leaders, engineers, reconnaissance operatives, etc., who used their talent to contribute to an almost impossible victory<sup>11</sup>. It can be that in 2–3 years after the start of the SMO Russia will be able to neutralize its "low start" and turn into a state with effective government.

<sup>10</sup> See: <https://lenta.ru/news/2022/11/03/natokrovsvu/>

<sup>11</sup> The logic of the course of a long war is revealed quite well in the popular work: [https://zavtra.ru/blogs/oчерк\\_o\\_воjnah\\_za\\_prostranstvo\\_воjnah\\_aresa\\_evolyutciya\\_i\\_razvitie](https://zavtra.ru/blogs/oчерк_o_воjnah_za_prostranstvo_воjnah_aresa_evolyutciya_i_razvitie)

Paradoxical as it may sound, the war of attrition works in favor of Russia rather than the West. The fact is that the United States is already beginning to overexert its forces in several directions. The maturing China – Taiwan conflict may at any moment radically weaken the United States not only by an armed clash, but also by severing economic ties, which is already underway. There are no guarantees that the unification of North Korea and South Korea will not begin during the period of geopolitical turbulence. All these events will sooner or later lead to the weakening of the US dollar as a world currency, which will be a rapid and large-scale collapse for the United States. To illustrate the consequences of such an event, we will perform some calculations, like those performed by Yu.I. Mukhin (Mukhin, 2022, p. 45).

Currently, the status of the U.S. dollar allows the issuing country to print the corresponding banknotes and use them to purchase real values supplied from abroad. This possibility rests on the international consensus regarding the recognition of the U.S. as the hegemon of the GGPS. Then the profitability of the operation of issuing dollars into international circulation is determined by the ratio of their face value and cost. According to available data, the cost of 1-dollar and 2-dollar bills is about 5 cents; the cost of 5-, 10-, 25- and 50-dollar bills is 10–11 cents, 100-dollar bill – 12.5 cents; alternative sources provide approximately the same figures<sup>12</sup>. Then the profit margin of issuing a 1-dollar bill will be 1900% (i.e.  $[(100-5)/5]100\%=1900\%$ ), and a 100-dollar bill – 79900% (i.e.  $[(10000-12.5)/12.5]100\%=79900\%$ ). Thus, the using of dollars for the purchase of goods from outside provides the American state with the profitability of the operation from two to 80 thousand percent per year. Even if we take into account all the reservations and limitations of the calculations carried out, the final profit margin is still tremendous. Granted, this profitability is not total for the American economy,

<sup>12</sup> See: <https://na-zapade.ru/zametki/usa/kakova-realnaya-sebestoimost-u-dollara-ssha-iz-chego-ih-delajut/>; <https://www.icpress.ru/news/19835/>

but the presence of a sufficiently large amount of dollar money intended for foreign economic needs increases the efficiency of U.S. business up to a level that is beyond the dreams of businesses in other countries. These fabulous figures are the basis of the equally incredible political power of the United States. Accordingly, as soon as the established emission process is disrupted, the U.S. power will begin to collapse rapidly. Moreover, analysts at the American edition of Fox Business have already suspected Russia and China of working on the creation of a new gold-backed currency that can, if not completely replace, then significantly displace the U.S. dollar as the world reserve currency<sup>13</sup>.

To illustrate the balance of power in the modern GGPS, let us consider how many countries currently have true political sovereignty. Taking into account all possible reservations, we can argue that today there are only a few countries in the world that are independent of the direct dictate of the United States. These are North Korea, Iran, Afghanistan and, with some reservations, Turkey and Belarus. Russia is trying to win its sovereignty through military means, while China is trying to win it peacefully<sup>14</sup>. India is also carrying out the final political balancing act to defend its independence; Pakistan has been fighting for the same thing for many decades with varying success. If their attempts do succeed (and this is more than likely), then the American hegemony will collapse, and with it its monopoly on world economic markets and the phenomenon of superprofits. The further course of events will already be in favor of the Non-Western coalition.

<sup>13</sup> See: <https://ruposters.ru/news/31-10-2022/nachali-podozrevat-kitai-rossiyu-razrabotke-novoi-obespechennoi-zolotom-valyuti>

<sup>14</sup> It is noteworthy that the “filter” of international economic sanctions can serve as a kind of criterion for political sovereignty. For example, Iran and North Korea are record holders for the duration of sanctions against them. Afghanistan was directly at war with the United States on its territory. Belarus has already come under sanctions, and previously it was constantly limited in economic activity. Russia has become a record holder in terms of the scale of the sanctions imposed on it. Finally, selective economic sanctions are already being imposed on China today.

Thus, the clash of West and Non-West megacivilizations has begun, and its outcome remains essentially open. Any predictions about the result of the strategic confrontation will be ridiculous and groundless. Each side has a chance.

### Conclusion

We have discussed major social mechanisms involved in the geopolitical confrontation of megacivilizations and the hybrid war between them. However, even knowing and understanding the workings of these mechanisms and the laws operating in the GGPS, we cannot make a reasonable verdict about who the future of our world belongs to. We agree with Slavoj Žižek who argued that the movement of capital is behind the entire progress and all the catastrophes in real life (Žižek, 2012, p.189). In turn, Nassim Taleb introduced a successful metaphor in the form of a so-called *event generator* (Taleb, 2009), which “feeds” the social system with new phenomena, processes and events, giving it the necessary complexity and diversity. It is the circulation of capital and the underlying logic that ensure the operation of the notorious event generator and act as an inexhaustible fuel for the endless transformation of the social system (Balatsky, 2013).

Having analyzed the confrontation between the West and the Non-West, we did not consider their ideologies, social order and way of life. It is the ideological foundations and their verbal reflections that determine the potential of the corresponding

state, people, civilization and megacivilization. We agree with V.A. Volkonsky who said that “... words are deeds as well. ... a large number of correct words usually increases the likelihood of the general development of ethical systems of communities and all mankind” (Volkonsky, 2021, p. 43). Conversely, a large number of incorrect words increase the likelihood of a general degradation of civilization. From this viewpoint, the West is losing ground, generating more and more dubious theses, slogans and values into the information space; this does not speak in its favor. In Russia, on the contrary, there are more and more people who speak the right words. It takes only to hear those right words. If this does not happen, then Russia will shamefully lose the current civilizational confrontation and will leave the scene of the GGPS. In this regard, one should remember that history knows no “if” and no mercy: a state that had every reason to turn into a new center of the world and missed its chance has no right to exist and is not worthy of pity.

I would like to emphasize that the content of this article should not be considered as a string of strict scientific statements, but as a system-wide description of a set of mechanisms and effects that are most significant for understanding the modern historical situation. At the same time, such a description can significantly help in the development of a general political and economic strategy of the state.

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