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**COUNTERING AMERICA'S ADVERSARIES  
THROUGH SANCTIONS ACT:  
The Psychological Aspect**



# Geopolitical Report

**“Countering America's Adversaries  
Through Sanctions Act”:  
The Psychological Aspect**

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## Geopolitical Report

A publication of the Association of Studies, Research and Internationalization in Eurasia and Africa (ASRIE) with the academic assistance of the members of [EU-RU-CM Network](#)

The second volume of *Geopolitical Report* titled “*Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act*”: *The Psychological Aspect* was written by Professor Evgeny Pashentsev, a Russian leading expert in Strategic Communication and Psychological Warfare, with the purpose of analysing the U.S. strategy of using sanctions against its adversaries.

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### Scope

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The association’s publication, *Geopolitical Report*, aims at investigating the current geopolitical and socio-cultural events and trends which are shaping the world of international relations, business and security creating a debate by allowing scholars and professional experts to share their views, perspectives, work results, reports and research findings. One can submit manuscripts, analytical reports, critical responses, short articles, commentaries, book reviews to [info@asrie.org](mailto:info@asrie.org). Information about the association’s goals, activities, projects and publications which can be freely downloaded can be found on the website [www.asrie.org](http://www.asrie.org).

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## Preface

Economic sanctions have long been a weapon of choice of the United States in its quest to weaken and eventually, if successful to subvert, its enemies. The logic of this strategy is an obvious one, if one knows what to look for and anticipate and is intended as a long-term act. It is an actionable form of policy in the form of economic warfare that stands at the crossroads of the attacking the tangible and intangible assets of a selected and targeted adversary. There are implications for the tangible and intangible effects at both the national and international levels.

Firstly, at the national level, it is intended as a means to weaken the economic capacity and integrity of the chosen victim by disrupting the natural flow and patterns of commerce and trade that are the basis of a country's prosperity. Therefore, the first likely effect is a tangible one, a decline in the amount of trade and commerce in the particular country concerned. At a further tangible level, the implication for the population is that they will be subjected to a form of collective and indiscriminate punishment that affects society's weakest members. One only needs to look at what is currently unfolding in Venezuela currently with the effects of sanctions on the national economy and the people.

An additional angle to consider is the intangible angle and aspects that can transpire as a result of the economic warfare being waged against a country. This is an instrument that is intended to try and divide society and cause general discontent, which can be then levered as mechanisms to move into the realm of political warfare and subversion. A country is held together through unwritten social contracts, where the population consents to the rule of the elite, if as a minimum their basic needs are met. In addition, the ruling elite of a country are held together through mutual interests as opposed to the more emotional connections between the government and the people. Economic sanctions are intended to weaken those societal bonds through creating disconnects through a breakdown of communications and relationships between these groups. People feel economic hardship and may lose confidence and belief in

the political leadership, the cohesion of the elites can be fractured through creating the perception of conflicting or contradictory interests with the political centre by micro-targeting parts of the economic and political elite. The brand resonance and the equity of the political brand may be heavily damaged, during which time foreign actors may take advantage and harness the growing public discontent and the increasingly isolated and insular government.

Also observable are the tangible and intangible effects on an international level too. Whereby other countries are coerced to limit or stop commerce with the target country, which also affects them financially too. A number of EU countries have been heavily hit by the sanctions and counter-sanctions, including already vulnerable economies such as Greece. This is very much a game of the façade of legitimacy, therefore a highly scripted narrative that depicts two diametrically opposed sides engaged in a battle of ‘good’ versus ‘evil’. The intangible effects are readily apparent on the reputation and the brand of the actors involved, where the actor that is able to control the information flows of the crisis event is better placed to control and dictate the course of events.

This paper by Professor Pashentsev is timely and neatly captures this ‘game’ of economic warfare that can readily morph into an act of political warfare. Given the potentially devastating effects of these tools on a given country, it is important to understand how they function. The present paper certainly contributes towards this understanding.

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## **“Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act”: The Psychological Aspect**

The discussion on the geopolitical confrontation between Russia and the United States is a heated topic in many analytical papers and documents, articles and monographs. One, increasingly important means of pressure on Russia in recent years are the escalating sanctions against the country. The psychological aspect of sanctions has become a booming topic of research both in Russia<sup>1</sup> and beyond<sup>2</sup>, which, however, is most devoted to the integrative aims, mechanisms and outcomes of sanctions pressure. This article analyses the provisions of the “Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act” (CAATSA). First, a brief review of the current trends in the development of strategic psychological warfare (SPW) against Russia is provided.

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<sup>1</sup> Мухин О. В. К вопросу об использовании средств информационной войны в экономике // Вестник Воронежского государственного университета. Серия: Филология. Журналистика. 2016. № 2. С. 123 – 125. URL: [elibrary.ru/download/elibrary\\_26414944\\_77031381.pdf](http://elibrary.ru/download/elibrary_26414944_77031381.pdf); Мирошниченко Л. Н., Шарый В. И. Санкции как средство информационной войны в экономике // Новая наука: от идеи к результату. 2017. №2; Санкции+. Что еще в арсенале давления Запада на Россию? Аналитический доклад /под ред. С. С. Сулакшина. М.: Наукаиполитика. 2014 etc.

<sup>2</sup> Blackwill R. D., Harris J. M. War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press, 2016; Sakwa R. Russia against the Rest: The Post-Cold War Crisis of World Order. Cambridge – New York – Melbourne – Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2017; Millwee J. S. Effectiveness of United States - Led Economic Sanctions as a Counterproliferation Tool Against Iran's Nuclear Weapons Program Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School, 2016; Nelson R. M. U.S. Sanctions and Russia’s Economy. Congressional Research Service. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017; Galbert S. A Year of Sanctions against Russia- Now What?: A European Assessment of the Outcome and Future of Russia Sanctions (CSIS Reports). Lanham – Boulder – New York – London: CSIS, 2015; U.S. Congress. 2017 Congressional Sanctions against Russia, Iran And North Korea. Red Dot Publications, 2017; Van Den Herik L. Research Handbook on UN Sanctions and International Law (Research Handbooks in International Law series). Cheltenham, UK – Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Pub, 2017; Eyster R. Economic Sanctions: International Policy and Political Economy at Work. New York – Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008; Gordon J. Invisible War: The United States and the Iraq Sanctions. Harvard University Press, 2012; Drezner D. W. The Sanctions Paradox: Economic Statecraft and International Relations (Cambridge Studies in International Relations). Cambridge – New York – Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1999; Economic Sanctions and International Law (Studies in International Law) /ed. M. Happold, P. Eden. Oxford – Portland: Hart Publishing, 2016; Haggard S., Noland M. Hard Target: Sanctions, Inducements, and the Case of North Korea (Studies in Asian Security). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017.

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In socio-political terms, strategic psychological warfare (SPW) is the explicit and implicit long-term focused psychological impact of competing systems' (state, supra-state, inter-state and non-state actors) attempts to inflict damages and/ or the liquidation (or assignment) of intangible assets on the other side in order to win in the material sphere.

The conceptual development of SPW started during the Cold War by both confronting sides and continued after it. In the research performed by RAND for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence) in the mid-1990s the term "strategic information warfare" was introduced, referring to warfare with blurred traditional boundaries, an expanded role for perception management waged on a global scale and the requirement of a new quality of public administration<sup>3</sup>. Against Russia, SPW is underway (and has not stopped since Soviet times) in order to weaken it aiming at the subsequent geopolitical reorientation or controlled separation of the country.

The United States may find it increasingly hard, costly, and risky to use military force and the instruments of soft power are not sufficient to achieve their goals. With the limits of both hard military power and soft power in mind, the expert community of the USA aims to explore the space in between: nonmilitary ways of coercing, deterring, weakening, and punishing those that threaten the U.S. security and interests. In 2016, RAND prepared a report for the United States Army on alternate approaches to securing U.S. interests that complement hard security and potentially make it more effective. In addition to defining and categorizing power to coerce (P2C), this report examines how to exploit certain advantages the United States has over potential adversaries in the realm of nonmilitary options. "Coercive power, as well as statecraft employing it, may include economic sanctions, punitive political measures, cyber op-

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<sup>3</sup> See more: *Molander R. C., Riddile A. S., Wilson P. A. Strategic Information Warfare. New Face of War. Santa Monica: National Defense Research Institute, RAND, 1996.*

erations, covert intelligence operations, military aid, propaganda, the constriction or manipulation of trade, the interdiction of goods and people, and support for political opposition, among other measures”<sup>4</sup>.

For many reasons, economic sanctions come first in the set of instruments of the US P2C and this is not accidentally. «Hand in hand with its enhanced ability to find and track money, the United States has been able to bring important banks, American and foreign, into line with financial sanctions. A combination of fines, moral suasion, and, perhaps more important, the implied threat to tarnish the reputation of noncomplying banks has enabled the authors of financial sanctions to gain sufficient cooperation. The U.S. Treasury Department has the authority to label banks operating in the United States as complicit in money laundering and, by implication, suspected of tax evasion. The fear of a “scarlet letter” from the IRS is usually enough to gain compliance»<sup>5</sup>.

Thus, for the last years, the USA used sanctions in the context of geopolitical confrontation, not in the least against Russia. The use of military force against Russia is not analyzed in the RAND report, apparently because of the obvious mortal danger of such confrontation for the United States. In economic terms, sanctions against China, if they would be introduced, would bring greater risks for the United States themselves. This is stated explicitly in the report: “Like trade sanctions, financial sanctions may entail costs for those that impose them. The scale of these costs depends on the economic importance of the state being targeted. This is less of a problem with regard to sanctions on Russia and on Iran than on China, which is a very important source and user of global credit and currency exchange. China has substantial credit- and capital-generating capacity of its own. Forbidding U.S. banks from

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<sup>4</sup> Gompert D. C., Binnendijk H. *The Power to Coerce: Countering Adversaries Without Going to War*. Research sponsored by the U.S. Army Quadrennial Defense Review Office and conducted within the RAND ArroyoCenter’s Strategy, Doctrine, and Resources Program. RAND Arroyo Center, part of the RAND Corporation. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2016. P.17.

<sup>5</sup> Gompert D. C., Binnendijk H. *The Power to Coerce: Countering Adversaries Without Going to War*. Research sponsored by the U.S. Army Quadrennial Defense Review Office and conducted within the RAND ArroyoCenter’s Strategy, Doctrine, and Resources Program. RAND Arroyo Center, part of the RAND Corporation. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2016. P.17.

doing business in China could hurt those banks more than it would China... Finally, China is not without coercive power of its own—for example, its huge holdings of U.S. sovereign debt”<sup>6</sup>.

So the use of sanctions against China is dangerous, but not so much in relation to Russia – perhaps because of its relative economic weakness and obviously smaller role in the world economy. But if there would be no Russia, one would not be ashamed to openly put pressure on China in the military sphere, because it does not have nuclear parity with the United States. From this perspective, the geographical position of a friendly Russia moves the potential military threat to China for thousands of kilometers to the West. And the Russian raw materials, still existing in some areas of high industrial and intellectual potential, are important for China too (this order of interests may upset many Russians, but it was not China that contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the destruction of science and industry in Russia in the 1990s, but local oligarchic clans with kind assistance of the US).

In 2016, the Rand Corporation published several scenarios for a future war against China. The study entitled “War with China: Thinking the Unthinkable” was commissioned by the U.S. Army. The core idea of the document: “While planning to win a war with China remains necessary, it is no longer sufficient: The United States must also consider how to limit war and its costs. This study seeks to begin filling the hole in thinking about Sino-U.S. war by examining alternative paths one might take, effects on both countries of each path, preparations the United States should make, and ways to balance U.S. war aims against costs should war occur.”<sup>7</sup> The authors of the report compare the scenarios for war in 2015 and 2025 and conclude: “Although prospects for U.S. military victory then would be worse than they are today, this

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<sup>6</sup> *Gompert D. C., Binnendijk H.* The Power to Coerce: Countering Adversaries Without Going to War. Research sponsored by the U.S. Army Quadrennial Defense Review Office and conducted within the RAND ArroyoCenter’s Strategy, Doctrine, and Resources Program. RAND Arroyo Center, part of the RAND Corporation. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2016. P.18.

<sup>7</sup> *Gompert D. C., Cevallos A. S., Garafola C. L.* War with China: Thinking the Unthinkable. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2016. P.IV.

would not necessarily imply Chinese victory”<sup>8</sup>. The logic of a changing balance of forces makes the war for China less risky at a later stage. So, the Chinese (even if they would be very, very bad guys) have no interest in seeking a military conflict with the U.S. at this stage, as it would only come with great risks. Conversely, for the U.S., a conflict at this stage would be more favourable, as it will become more risky over time. And, which country is seeking confrontation with China using the pretext of trade issues, the lack of support related to the North Korean crisis etc. It is not the Chinese fleet which tries to support Venezuela against the U.S. by openly threatening its government. It is the U.S. fleet with its nuclear weapons that has been appearing for many years now near the Chinese shores given its obvious intention to get rid of the North Korean leadership. It is curious that even the RAND analytics confirm this U.S. hard line towards North Korea. “North Korea’s leaders are not entirely wrong to believe that the United States wants them gone and will continue to isolate and punish them until they are; consequently, sanctions against them have little coercive value”<sup>9</sup>.

Simultaneous (although significantly different) pressure on China and Russia naturally reinforces the strategic partnership between the two countries, because **together** they become hard-vulnerable in the face of hostile U.S. policy. Although Russia and China, under these circumstances, do not form an **aggressive military bloc against anyone** they are forced to pay more attention to the military aspects of their multilateral cooperation.

It is unlikely that the authors of the RAND report forgot about these consequences of pressure on Russia. But some would perhaps admit that it is not the best but rather the most acceptable result of such geopolitical confrontation. Finally, the strategic rapprochement between Russia and China can be used to intimidate the

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<sup>8</sup> *Gompert D. C., Cevallos A. S., Garafola C. L.* War with China: Thinking the Unthinkable. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2016. P. XII.

<sup>9</sup> *Gompert D. C., Binnendijk H.* The Power to Coerce: Countering Adversaries without Going to War. Research sponsored by the U.S. Army Quadrennial Defense Review Office and conducted within the RAND Arroyo Center’s Strategy, Doctrine, and Resources Program. RAND Arroyo Center, part of the RAND Corporation. Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2016. P. 34.

West by the threat coming from the East and, in this situation, to achieve greater control by the U.S. over its allies, growth of profits from the arms race, the reduction of social spending and control over the minds of its citizens and finally, to get additional funds for the fourth industrial revolution from the taxpayer (all that is in process).

Budget cuts for education and science as well as the rapid creation of the image of an external enemy in the face of Russia and China, are closely connected – the latter is designed to distract from the former, and, if necessary to explain it. The Trump Administration's budget for 2018 calls for a sharp increase in military spending and stark cuts across much of the rest of the government including the elimination of dozens of long-standing federal programs that assist the poor, fund scientific research and aid America's allies abroad. The cuts could represent the widest swath of reductions in federal programs since the drawdown after World War II, probably leading to a sizable cutback in the federal non-military workforce, something White House officials said was one of their goals<sup>10</sup>. Vested corporate interests, the arms race and the militarization of public consciousness have led to two World Wars, and a third one, humanity may not survive.

This report pays special attention to the possibilities of controlling information-psychological impact on human consciousness based on the specific example of the CAATSA .

In this regard, particularly noteworthy are the innovations in Sections 241 and 243 of the Act, which de facto extends the application of sanctions on a virtually indefinite number of Russian legal entities and individuals:

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence and the Secretary of State, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a detailed report on the following:

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<sup>10</sup> *Paletta B., Mufson S.* // The Washington Post. 16.03. 2017.

...(A) An identification of the most significant senior foreign political figures and oligarchs in the Russian Federation, as determined by their closeness to the Russian regime and their net worth.

(B) An assessment of the relationship between individuals identified under subparagraph (A) and President Vladimir Putin or other members of the Russian ruling elite.

(C) An identification of any indices of corruption with respect to those individuals.

(D) The estimated net worth and known sources of income of those individuals and their family members (including spouses, children, parents, and siblings), including assets, investments, other business interests, and relevant beneficial ownership information<sup>11</sup>.

The American State authorities are required to «Identify, investigate, map, and disrupt illicit financial flows linked to the Russian Federation if such flows affect the United States financial system or those of major allies of the United States», (Clause 1, Section 243), especially in Europe (Clause 3, Section 243). Section 243 of the Act among other objectives, aims to «Identify foreign sanctions evaders and loopholes within the sanctions regimes of foreign partners of the United States», that should bind all other states to follow sanctions against Russia<sup>12</sup>.

“We have possibly entered a period that is in many aspects comparable to the Cold War,” Russia Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Ryabkov said.<sup>13</sup> According to him, Moscow is expecting in the beginning of 2018 new complications in

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<sup>11</sup> One Hundred Fifteenth Congress of the United States of America. At the first session. Begun and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday, the third day of January, two thousand and seventeen. An Act. To provide congressional review and to counter aggression by the Governments of Iran, the Russian Federation, and North Korea, and for other purposes. H. R. 3364. Authenticated U.S. Government Information.

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>13</sup> *Sharkov D.* New Cold War? Russia and U.S. Ties Resemble Soviet-Era Showdown, Says Top Moscow Diplomat // *Newsweek*. 12.05.2017. URL: [www.newsweek.com/new-cold-war-russia-and-us-ties-resemble-soviet-era-showdown-says-top-moscow-735014](http://www.newsweek.com/new-cold-war-russia-and-us-ties-resemble-soviet-era-showdown-says-top-moscow-735014) (accessed: 25.01.2018); Рябков об отношениях России и США: ситуация крайне сложная и тяжелая // РИА «Новости». 05.12.2017. URL: [ria.ru/politics/20171205/1510272922.html](http://ria.ru/politics/20171205/1510272922.html) (accessed: 05.12.2017).

connection with the preparation of the “sanctions report” in the United States. According to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, the report can be dedicated to “the links of the oligarchs of Russian business with Russian government officials”<sup>14</sup>.

The timing of the adoption of the law was exactly synchronized with the events in Russia. Section 241: “*Not later than 180 days* after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence and the Secretary of State, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a detailed report”. Given that this enactment occurred after the signing of the Act by President Donald Trump on 2 August 2017, the report should be completed no later than February 2, i.e. in the midst of the Russian presidential campaign.

The U.S. government provides the financial support of the process, rewarding informants for obtaining interesting information (Section 323) and establishing the Countering Russian Influence Fund, for which is appropriated \$250 million in 2018 and 2019 (Section 254). No similar actions were taken in relation to Iran or North Korea, against which the sanctions are also prescribed in this Act<sup>15</sup>.

This caused anxiety among Russian business circles, fueled by numerous publications in the mass media about the dire consequences of the application of the law to specific individuals and their businesses. Unable to get answers from Washington, the business people understand the situation as follows: “...the Americans are telling us to take our problems to Putin and to leave them alone.”<sup>16</sup> The Law and numerous media publications are aimed at provoking an attack of the business community against Vladimir Putin and, at the same time, many publications inform the Russian population that Vladimir Putin compensates the losses of Russian oligarchs with money of

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<sup>14</sup> Рябков об отношениях России и США: ситуация крайне сложная и тяжелая // РИА «Новости», 05.12.2017. URL: [ria.ru/politics/20171205/1510272922.html](http://ria.ru/politics/20171205/1510272922.html) (accessed: 05.12.2017).

<sup>15</sup> *Иноземцев В.* «Черная метка» российской элите: чем опасны санкции США против России // Информационно-аналитический портал «Хвиля». URL: [hvylya.net/analytics/geopolitics/chernaya-metka-rossiyskoy-elite-chem-opasny-sanktsii-ssha-protiv-rossii.html](http://hvylya.net/analytics/geopolitics/chernaya-metka-rossiyskoy-elite-chem-opasny-sanktsii-ssha-protiv-rossii.html) (дата обращения: 22.09.2017).

<sup>16</sup> See for example: The Oligarchs Are Next: Russian Businessmen Prepare for U.S. Sanctions // The Moscow Times. 23.12.2017. URL: <https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/the-oligarchs-are-next-russian-businessmen-prepare-for-us-sanctions-59391> (accessed: 22.11.2017).



the Russian taxpayers<sup>17</sup>. This is done with the hardly covered intention to provoke mass disorder during the peak of the presidential campaign. Of course, this is an element of psychological warfare which in turn is an essential part of the sanctions against Russia.

On January 29, the U.S. Treasury Department released an unclassified list of influential Russians linked to the Kremlin. The document includes the names of 210 Russian officials, major businessmen and CEOs of state companies. Dubbed the “Kremlin list”, the document was a legal requirement of a sanctions bill passed by Congress last year. Though the U.S. has not imposed new sanctions on Russia yet, they will result from the classified report that has been shown to Congress; as U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told lawmakers. Grilled by the Senate Banking Committee on Tuesday, Mnuchin responded to Senators Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and Bob Menendez (D-New Jersey) who asked about the new sanctions. *“I assume you haven't read the classified version”*, Mnuchin told Menendez, CNBC reporter Kayla Tausche. *“There will be sanctions that come out of this report”*. *“Unfair”* to say that the Treasury was delaying the sanctions, Mnuchin added that there were *“hundreds of pages”* in the classified report shown to Congress on Monday, and that the sanctions will be based on *“a lot of the work the intelligence community did”*<sup>18</sup>.

Whether new sanctions will ever be imposed and, if so, how severe they will be, is however another matter. According to the Chief Executive Officer of the Russia based VTB Bank Andrei Kostin, the seriousness of potential sanctions will depend on the balance of power between the Administration of U.S. President Donald Trump and his opponents<sup>19</sup>. Some experts in the West say that even the broad nature of the public list should cause Kremlin-linked oligarchs to worry. But many others worry that by making the unclassified list so broad, the Trump administration has failed to

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<sup>17</sup> За друзей Путина заплатит население. URL: <https://fishki.net/anti/2465729-za-druzej-putina-postradavshih-ot-sankcij-zaplatit-naselenie.html/gallery-5155291/> (дата обращения: 22.01.2018)..

<sup>18</sup> ‘There will be sanctions’ Treasury tells Congress about ‘Kremlin list’ // RT.31.01.2018. URL: <https://www.rt.com/usa/417400-mnuchin-sanctions-kremlin-list/> (accessed: 18.02.2018).

<sup>19</sup> ‘Kremlin List’ is overture to new sanctions — VTB CEO // TASS. 05.02.2018. URL: <http://tass.com/economy/988555> (accessed: 12.08.2018).

distinguish between Putin allies and other Russian figures — and in doing so, has made it clear that it is not serious about imposing sanctions<sup>20</sup>. This line reflects the rising split in the U.S. establishment on its modus operandi towards Russia. Several simultaneously conducted disinformation and misleading campaigns which are up to a certain point friendly and unfriendly (because of a partial and/or brief coincidence of interests) make the situation much more vague for the main actors. The evident instability of global markets (the crisis is possible) and several risky local crises (with the potential to develop to a global level) influence the course of the strategic communication of the U.S. and other countries. Guerre à la guerre.

The U.S. tries to coordinate their politics of sanctions all over the world, also in Europe. But currently, the EU is not eager to widen sanctions against Russia. During a meeting between the Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and his Belgian counterpart Charles Michel in the wake of the publication of the so-called “Kremlin report”, both sides have spoken out in favour of dialogue and cooperation. After the talks with Medvedev, Belgium’s Prime Minister Charles Michel said that the EU had made the decision not to support the extending of sanctions against Russia. At the same time, he noted that there is a certain amount of disagreement between Russia and the EU, however, “dialogue is open, because dialogue is the only way to manage differences and in order to better understand the different processes, so that there is more stability”<sup>21</sup>.

Only some governments in Europe are ready to follow the anti-Russian hawks in Washington. They are eager to use sanctions as an instrument to motivate different social strata to act against the current Russian government in evident coordination with CAATSA. The UK provides an evident example of this. Unexplained Wealth Orders (UWO), which came into force on 31 January 2018, force wealthy people to

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<sup>20</sup> *Taylor A.* ‘The Kremlin list’: Why Russian oligarchs shrugged // *The Washington Post*. 30.01.2018. URL: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/01/30/the-kremlin-list-why-russian-oligarchs-shrugged/?utm\\_term=.c915f5cd97bb](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2018/01/30/the-kremlin-list-why-russian-oligarchs-shrugged/?utm_term=.c915f5cd97bb) (accessed: 08.02.2018).

<sup>21</sup> *EU Makes Decision Not to Boost Anti-Russia Sanctions – Belgian PM* // *Sputnik*. 30.01.2018. URL: <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201801301061191402-eu-sanctions-anti-russia/> (accessed: 22.11.2017).

explain the source of their assets if there is reason to suspect corruption. UWO are formally not only aimed at Russian criminals. Although precise figures are impossible to obtain, the IMF has estimated that the amount of money laundered globally equates to between 2% and 5% of global GDP annually. This means that between \$800 billion and \$2 trillion is illegally funneled through the system, which, regardless of a margin of error, is staggering. It is clear that substantial amounts of this money ends up laundered in the UK. The National Crime Agency (NCA) has estimated that it could be up to £90 billion per year, much of which has ended up in London's property market<sup>22</sup>. But the time of UWO of coming into force (two days after the publication of the "Kremlin list", in the peak of the presidential campaign in Russia and under the current sharp contradictions between Russia and the West), the emphasis on its anti-Russian vector in the speeches of officials and in numerous articles in the mainstream media, provide ground for such a conclusion.

It is not a secret that since the early 1990s, Russian oligarchs found London one of the best places to live. Many of them became even citizens of the UK. Of course, they invested a lot of dirty money in the British economy during that period and afterwards. A lot of journalistic and academic research has been done in this area long before the outbreak of the current global crisis<sup>23</sup>. UWO allow government officials to keep hold of assets including property until they have been properly accounted for. In an interview with *The Times*, the security minister warned: "We will come for you, for your assets and we will make the environment you live in difficult". Dozens of targets have already been identified, according to *The Times*, Mr. Wallace commended on the BBC drama *McMafia* (on the Russian mafia in the UK) "really good portrayal" of the international nature of organised crime. "So far it's very close to the truth, the international nature of organised crime and the impunity with which some

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<sup>22</sup> *Keen F.* Unexplained Wealth Orders Global Lessons for the UK Ahead of Implementation. RUSI Occasional Paper, September 2017. London: RUSI, 2017. P. 3.

<sup>23</sup> *Hollingsworth M., Lansley S.* Londongrad: From Russia with Cash. The Inside Story of the Oligarchs. Fourth Estate, 2010; *Hoffman D. E.* The Oligarchs: Wealth and Power in the New Russia. New York: Public Affairs, 2003; *Midgley D., Hutchins Ch.* Abramovich: The Billionaire from Nowhere. London: HarperSport, 2005 etc.

of these people operate and the brutality of it, is absolutely correct”. He then referred to the so-called Laundromat case – a scheme in which fake companies mainly based in the UK were used to launder Russian money through Western banks. “The government's view is that we know what they are up to and we are not going to let it happen anymore”<sup>24</sup>.

The public in Russia and the UK can raise a question. How is it possible that those criminals have been living in luxury and safety in the very centre of London since the greatest robbery of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which was the case of Russia in 1990s. Why are such measures only introduced nearly 30 years since the first wave of criminal “Russian Big Money” appeared on the Thames? Is it because all previous British governments have been totally controlled by the Russian mafia or is it because it was profitable for some within the British elites to close their eyes to the fact that real estate booming and prosperity of some other sectors of the British economy were partly based on vast criminal investments of immigrants from different countries? Transparency International identified £4.2 billion worth of property in London deemed to have been purchased with suspicious sources.

Strangely, the UWO were introduced tardy. As Simon Jenkins writes in “The Guardian” “some have been screaming about “buy-to-leave” for years. They have been protesting against ludicrously low property taxes and the permitting of towers blatantly aimed at foreign money littering the Thames bank, towers that will stand as lasting totems of the Cameron era. Indulging money-laundering property purchase – coded as “inward investment” – has been government policy under the chancellor, George Osborne, and the London mayor, Boris Johnson”<sup>25</sup>. According to RUSI Occasional Paper, “...the presence of corrupt money in the property market has evidentially been a contributory factor in the housing crisis by driving up prices substantially. It

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<sup>24</sup> Russian oligarchs in UK told to explain luxury lifestyles // BBC News. 03.02.2018. URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-42926819> (accessed: 08.02.2018).

<sup>25</sup> Jenkins S. When it comes to corruption, Britain really should shut up // Guardian. 28.07.2015. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jul/28/cameron-corruption-britain-transparency-property> (accessed: 08.02.2018).

is in this context that the introduction of UWOs must be understood”<sup>26</sup>. In other words, not only Russians but also ordinary British suffered; the global British image was seriously damaged as well. Neither Russian nor British national interests will suffer from the objective application of UWO beyond its artificial binding to the Russian elections.

It seems however, UWO are not only and not so much targeting oligarchs. **Russian oligarchs are not leaving** the UK – it seems to be rather a measure against ordinary businessmen and immigrants. According to Ben Wallace, as part of an organized crime crackdown, officials could now seize suspended assets worth more than £50,000<sup>27</sup>. However, this amount of money is far from the market price of luxury mansions which cost 200-1000 times more in central London. A lifestyle to match the glossy home pushes the annual bill for mansion owners to over £500,000 a year – more than the average cost of a London home<sup>28</sup>. The absolute majority of people who left for the UK out of **extreme necessity and because of the robbery** of the country by the Yeltsin- regime and its nouveau riche people, form up to now a qualified labour force searching for better salaries (besides Russian communities, there are also similar French, American, and other communities living and working in the UK). Many rich and middle class Russians continued to arrive in the UK in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. But in fact, owners of puppies-in-prams make up far less than 0.5% of Russians in London<sup>29</sup>. London is an increasing focus for middle-class Russians, both as a place to live and a place to visit. So perhaps, oligarchs are not the primary goal of UWO (which does not exclude the use of their funds in a potential war with Russia in future<sup>30</sup>), but a psychological pressure on the majority of Rus-

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<sup>26</sup> *Keen F.* Unexplained Wealth Orders Global Lessons for the UK Ahead of Implementation. RUSI Occasional Paper, September 2017. London: RUSI, 2017. P. 4.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>28</sup> £250,000 per year: the cost of running a 'millionaire's home' in central London // Evening Standard. 13.12.2018. URL: <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/250000-per-year-the-cost-of-running-a-millionaires-home-in-central-london-9002564.html> (accessed: 08.02.2018).

<sup>29</sup> How the Ukraine crisis is affecting Russians in Moscow-on-Thames // The Guardian. 06.04.2014. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/06/among-the-russians-in-london> (accessed: 08.02.2018).

<sup>30</sup> Boris Berezovsky was killed in his bathroom because he was preparing to give to Vladimir Putin evidence of a plot involving leading oligarchs to topple the strongman in a coup. The exiled Russian tycoon was slain by Western se-

sians in the UK during the presidential campaign (these Russians have a right to take part in the Russian elections). The question raises: how to understand the reasoning behind this anti-Russian campaign. Is it perhaps, because the majority of Russians are more criminal in comparison with other national communities in the UK? Many titles in leading mainstream UK newspapers may force people to think so<sup>31</sup>.

However, the reality regarding Russian criminality in the UK is quite different. Figures from the Ministry of Justice show that as of September last year there were 35 people of Russian nationality imprisoned in England and Wales, including 34 men and one woman. This had fallen from 51 prisoners by the end of 2016. The figure is lower than for other European countries including Poland, which has 891 citizens imprisoned, Lithuania, 424, and Portugal, 245. The data which are coming from the Russian Embassy in the UK show that less than 10 Russians are imprisoned<sup>32</sup>.

Asked about the difference between its figures and the Government data, the Russian Embassy in the UK said: “We base our data on the notifications that the British authorities send us pursuant to their international legal obligations”. We also double check these notifications since persons recorded as “Russians” are often not Russian nationals<sup>33</sup>. In any case, 35 or less than 10, those figures are by any means many times less than criminals from the majority of other EU countries, even small

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cret services linked to the plan to overthrow the Kremlin leader. Sokolov, the head of a major Moscow private security agency, said his ex-boss intended to return to Russia, and had opened negotiations with Putin on allowing him to return, despite the years of bitter opposition to the president. 'Boris forwarded Vladimir Putin a letter with repentance. 'The theory comes from Berezovsky's former long-time head of security Sergei Sokolov, who disputed the version of British police that the ex-billionaire took his own life, aged 67, in Berkshire in March 2013. – See more: Exiled oligarch Boris Berezovsky was murdered because he was about to hand Putin evidence of a coup plot, claims former head of security // Mail Online. 25.03.2015. URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-42926819> (accessed: 08.02.2018).

<sup>31</sup> The truth behind McMafia: London is 'the jurisdiction of choice' for Russian crime gangs // News. The Essential Daily Briefing. URL: <https://inews.co.uk/news/world/russian-crime-london-mcmafia/> (accessed: 08.02.2018); From Russia With Blood // BuzzFeed. URL: [https://www.buzzfeed.com/heidiblake/from-russia-with-blood-14-suspected-hits-on-british-soil?utm\\_term=.hn27DGmnE#.veeo3095R](https://www.buzzfeed.com/heidiblake/from-russia-with-blood-14-suspected-hits-on-british-soil?utm_term=.hn27DGmnE#.veeo3095R) (accessed: 08.02.2018); Are Russian killers on the streets of Britain? // The Guardian. 17.03.2013. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/17/russian-killers-on-streets-of-britain> (accessed: 08.02.2018); McMafia 'very close to the truth', minister says, as Russian oligarchs warned of corruption crackdown // The Telegraph. 03.02.2018. URL: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/02/03/mcmafia-close-truth-minister-says-russian-oligarchs-warned-corruption/> (accessed: 08.02.2018); Is Russian crime arriving on UK shores? // BBC. 28.04.2013. URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-22310575> (accessed: 08.02.2018) etc.

<sup>32</sup> Russian embassy hits out at BBC over 'clighed' McMafia // The Telegraph. 06.01.2018. URL <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/01/06/russian-embassy-hits-bbc-clighed-mcmafia/> (accessed: 08.02.2018).

<sup>33</sup> Russian embassy hits out at BBC over 'clighed' McMafia...

ones. So, the level of Russian criminality and criminal assets in the UK are consciously and extremely exaggerated (of course, if not to admit to a conspiracy theory that all these moderate figures about the criminality of Russians are a result of the total control of the British juridical system by “Putin’s mafia”). Of course, serious organized criminality exists in Russia like in many countries. And many criminals left for the UK.

A press report compiled by the Russian Embassy in London blasted the UK government for practicing double standards when it comes to prosecuting high-profile Russian criminals that are now residing in the UK. Only between 2002-2016, the UK has refused to extradite 51 Russian citizens by direct and personal decisions of the Home Secretary or as a result of chicanery tactics in London courts. Dozens of cases are still pending. The UK doesn’t provide any compelling reasons for such refusals... It never fails to amaze us that Russian citizens who fled to the UK as fugitives, while there becoming British citizens. Once having a legal status, such individuals can also legalize their funds acquired by criminal methods – quite a handy instrument for them for laundering money and obstructing justice. However, the question remains why are the British authorities willing to take them under their patronage?”<sup>34</sup>

The “enforcement agencies” can apply for an Unexplained Wealth Order. In England and Wales these include the National Crime Agency, HMRC, and the Financial Conduct Authority. So, the authorities may use this orders selectively to put pressure on not only the rich but on the middle class immigrants as well by requesting documents and financial information regarding their properties in London. This should all be understood within the current atmosphere of anti-Russian propaganda ( the very possibility of such requests force people, under the current circumstances, to be cautious in their declaration of sympathies towards Russia ).

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<sup>34</sup> Why Are Fugitives From Justice Welcome in the UK? // The Embassy of the Russian Federation to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and the Northern Ireland. Press Release. 16.03.2017. URL: <https://www.rusemb.org.uk/fnapr/6008> (accessed: 08.02.2018).

So, this UK based supportive CAATSA campaign has the following tasks:

1) to discredit Russia through exposing the “mass corruption” of Russian citizens in the UK;

2) to motivate the entire business community in the UK for active counteraction and to act against Vladimir Putin;

3) to motivate ordinary Russians to go against Russia because of fear to lose property assets and their jobs in the UK and possibly being labeled as Russian agents or even condemned as criminals. All that because of “Putin’s aggressivity”;

4) to some extent influence native Russians (millions of them live in different Western countries ) for active protest against Russia’s “ authoritarian regime”;

5) to cause a change in the mode of thinking and behavior of citizens of different countries, especially they who are under the so-called “influence of Russian propaganda”.

6) to complicate the development of business, cultural and other ties of British people with Russia;

7) through the evident emphasis on a threat coming from Russian criminals to calm other national communities (and not to lose money from the newcomers to the UK). At the same time, it is a signal to other national corrupted organizations that UWO, at the current stage, are not directed against them but could possibly target them if their countries are not in line with the interests of the U.S. elites.

The “UWO PSyOP campaign” is directly synchronized with the U.S. sanction policy and the hostile stance and declarations against Russia of the current British government. For example, the Defence Secretary of the UK Gavin Williamson, declared that Moscow could cause “thousands and thousands and thousands” of deaths in Britain with an attack that would cripple the UK's infrastructure and energy supply. In his January 2018 interview with the Telegraph, Gavin Williamson said Russia has been researching the UK’s critical national infrastructure and how it connects to con-



tinental power supplies with a view to creating “panic” and “chaos”. Delivering his assessment of the threat from what he calls an increasingly assertive Kremlin, he said it was willing to take action “that any other nation would see as completely unacceptable”. However, Igor Konashenkov, a spokesman for the Russian Defence Ministry, responded on that by saying it is likely Mr Williamson “has lost his grasp on reason”<sup>35</sup>.

The new sanctions act not only threatens with additional measures of economic and financial pressure, but launches almost a total "witch hunt" for compromising materials on all members of the Russian leadership who, for one reason or another, don't suit Washington. The obvious task is to encourage attempts to provide information on business competitors or opponents in public service. And all this will be used in SPW against Russia with the aim of reducing the value of its intangible and tangible assets and triggering socio-political instability. The real purpose of the law is not the fight against corruption. Certain external forces in Russia are more likely to support corrupt officials by presenting them as the “fighters for democracy”, and vice versa, the ones who are fighting corruption, as “stranglers of freedom” (which, of course, does not preclude the use of exposure of a significant number of corrupt officials as a consumable in order to cover anti-Russian operations and possibly discredit innocent people).

The scheme was tested in the late 1980s – early 1990s, when the best friend of the Western ruling circles was the corrupt regime of Boris Yeltsin (notwithstanding that facts of corruption in Yeltsin's government were heard in the U.S. Congress<sup>36</sup>). During the “reign” of “Tzar Boris” (one of Yeltsin's nick names in Russia) the living standards of Russians fell drastically, on several occasions (the greatest drop since the Second World War when more than twenty million Soviets were killed by Nazi in-

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<sup>35</sup> Russia says Britain's Defence Secretary's claim of attack threat 'like something from Monty Python' // The Telegraph. 26.01.2018. URL: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/01/25/crippling-russian-attack-britains-infrastructure-could-kill/> (accessed: 08.02.2018).

<sup>36</sup> U.S. Policy toward Russia, Part II: Corruption in the Russian Government. Hearing, October 7, 1999. 2000. GPO, Washington, DC. 2000.

vaders). In the 1990s, clans of oligarchs emerged and expanded through illicit enrichment practices. The same practice of supporting oligarchs by the USA is happening in the context of Russia's neighboring country Ukraine<sup>37</sup> (where the oligarch Petr Poroshenko is at the pinnacle of power as a result of the coup with the support of the West), or distant Venezuela (Venezuelan fugitive oligarchs live in luxury in Florida<sup>38</sup>) and in many other countries. Of course, all these countries and their elites are far from being ideal ones but things went from bad to worse as a result of the U.S, interference.

The President of the United States was pressured by the signing of the law (if the President vetoed the bill in August 2017, no doubt, it would have been overruled by a two-thirds majority vote in Congress). After signing the Act, D. Trump stated that, although he went to sign it for the "sake of national unity", the Act ties the President's hands in conducting foreign policy, violating several provisions of the Constitution. Trump expressed hope that the Congress will not interfere in his foreign policy: "Still, the bill remains seriously flawed – particularly because it encroaches on the executive branch's authority to negotiate. Congress could not even negotiate a healthcare bill after seven years of talking. By limiting the Executive's flexibility, this bill makes it harder for the United States to strike good deals for the American people, and will drive China, Russia, and North Korea much closer together. The Framers of our Constitution put foreign affairs in the hands of the President. This bill will prove the wisdom of that choice"<sup>39</sup>. Thus, he is able to retreat from the literal fulfillment of all the terms and provisions of the adopted document, and even to challenge the entire law in a different political situation. Today, however, to depart from

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<sup>37</sup> See more: *Пашенцев Е. Н.* Стратегическая провокация «Украина». М.: МЦСПИК, 2014.

<sup>38</sup> *Despart Z.* Corrupt Businessmen Looted Venezuela, and Now Many Live Quietly in Houston and Miami // Houston Press. 18.04.2017. URL: <http://www.houstonpress.com/news/breaking-down-the-rockets-tough-next-two-weeks-10041042> (accessed: 13.02.2018).

<sup>39</sup> Read President Trump's statements outlining his concerns about the Russia sanctions bill // Los Angeles Times. 02.08.2017. URL: [www.latimes.com/politics/washington/la-na-essential-washington-updates-read-president-trump-s-statement-1501687924-htmstory.html](http://www.latimes.com/politics/washington/la-na-essential-washington-updates-read-president-trump-s-statement-1501687924-htmstory.html) (accessed: 22.10.2017).

all the major provisions of the law D. Trump will not be able to do so, without going contrary to his own interests.

The experts are right to emphasize that this law is a forceful, bipartisan statement that US Congress continues to view robust economic sanctions as a cornerstone of US foreign policy, in which Congress will play a leading role in restricting trade, sometimes in conflict with the president's authority to conduct diplomacy<sup>40</sup>. The Russia section of the law significantly expands the scope of the US sanctions against Russia and will no doubt seriously worsen the international situation as a whole.

In the current international situation which in the foreseeable future is more likely to deteriorate, perhaps abruptly, it is important to pay attention to some objective points in the field of strategic communication (I mean here the synchronization of deeds, words, and images in public policy) in the context of the adoption of the CAATSA.

1. The current sanctions against Russia have a long history, long before the events in Ukraine (The Magnitsky Act, 2010, etc.), and the list of the most significant of them is given in the CAATSA.

Meanwhile, Russia is justifiably and increasingly concerned about the approach of NATO to Russia's borders, the consequences of the coup in Ukraine, the deployment of systems of global missile defense near the borders of Russia and China, and prospects for the development of a rapid non-nuclear global strike (Conventional prompt global strike (CPGS)). In 2008, Congress created a single, combined fund to support research and development for the CPGS mission. Congress appropriated \$65.4 million for this program in FY2014, \$95.6 million in FY2015, and \$88.7 million in FY2016. The Obama Administration requested \$181.3 million for FY2017<sup>41</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> *Jeydel P., Egan B., Rathbone M.* and others. A Detailed Look at the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act // Steptoe. 10.08.2017.

<sup>41</sup> *Wolf A. F.* Conventional Prompt Global Strike and Long-Range Ballistic Missiles: Background and Issues. Congressional Research Service. 2017. February 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Despite the report of the Congressional Research Service of the United States for 2017 concluding that there are objective serious risks of misunderstanding of the US actions on the part of Russia and China in the framework of possible CPGS and its adoption of an attack with nuclear weapons or a disarming non-nuclear strike and the corresponding nuclear response by those countries. “As a result, while the measures described above can reduce the possibility of misunderstandings, they probably cannot eliminate them. Moreover, they cannot address concerns, often expressed by officials in Russia and China, that the United States might use these weapons, along with other conventional strike systems and missile defenses, to acquire a the ability to attack strategic or nuclear targets in these nations without resorting to the use of U.S. nuclear weapons”<sup>42</sup> But the U. S. lawmakers in the majority continue to support the efforts on the development of CPGS.

Even earlier, on 13 December 2001, the United States announced its unilateral withdrawal from the anti-ballistic missile Treaty /ABM/ signed by Moscow and Washington in 1972, and which long served as an obstacle to the creation of a missile defense shield allowing to expose the “sword of the cosmos”. Clearly, the US took advantage of the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and USSR in order to move to global domination which they practically did nearly without opposition. It is their message to mankind that also helps to explain the reasons for the Russian concern about the U.S. actions and the Russian response to them in the security sphere, including its information and psychological aspect.

And this is not a mythical Russian intervention in elections around the globe, but quite a constructive criticism of US foreign policy where and to what extent it contradicts the national interests of other countries. The active support by Russia for the concept of a multipolar world that reflects (and will reflect much more in the future) the real order of things. In this world there is no supremacy of only the US but of China, Russia, India, and some military blocks too. This world is not perfect, but

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<sup>42</sup> Ibidem. P.36.

open for development and the search for better models of social development in line with the new technological and social conditions. But this approach is not welcomed by the oligarchic clans in the USA dreaming about the “Golden Times” of the 1990s and even much more.

2. Statements about Russia's intervention in the presidential elections in 2016, coming particularly from certain circles of the Democratic Party in the USA (more correctly to say – from certain circles of TNCs), serve as a pretext not only to put the constant pressure on D. Trump, but similarly to develop a global anti-Russia campaign, including its sanctions aspect. Meanwhile, former US President Bill Clinton exercised direct intervention in the re-election of Boris Yeltsin for a second term in 1996. There is a lot of evidence for that.

One of the last examples is to be found in an interview for the leading Stephen D. Malzberg's program on *Newsmax TV* with political consultant Dick Morris. Clinton's communications director George Stephanopoulos described the influence of D. Morris in Clinton's administration as follows: "Over the course of the first nine months of 1995, no single person had more power over the president."<sup>43</sup> In July 2017, it turns out that none other than the President of the United States Bill Clinton personally intervened in the presidential elections in Russia. And Dick Morris helped him. Morris said in particular: *“When I worked for Clinton, Clinton called me and said, ‘I want to get Yeltsin elected as president of Russia against Gennady Zyuganov, who was the communist who was running against him... We, Clinton and I, would go through it and Bill would pick up the hotline and talk to Yeltsin and tell him what commercials to run, where to campaign, what positions to take. He basically became Yeltsin's political consultant”*.

In other words, it is possible to speak about the direct intervention by the United States in the presidential campaign in Russia (polls suggest that at the beginning of

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<sup>43</sup> Interviews – George Stephanopoulos // Frontline. URL: [www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/clinton/interviews/stephanopoulos.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/clinton/interviews/stephanopoulos.html) (accessed: 22.10.2017).

the campaign Yeltsin's support was approximately ten times lower than his main competitor Gennady Zyuganov). And, it went beyond telephone calls of course. Perhaps, it should have been better for the Democrats, before organizing the dubious campaign about Russian interference in the American elections and to insist on sanctions, to address their own interference in the Russian presidential elections.

3. The search for effective and long-term strategic compromise proposals for the US (e.g., in terms of implementation of structural projects in Eurasia) and the effective presentation of appropriate expectations. Be aware that in certain American elite circles, there are strong apprehensions that after the possible loss of their positions in Eurasia, it will face a united and increasingly dominant force in the world under China's leadership (as was earlier feared in relation to the USSR). And, that this force will be hostile, and set aggressively against the United States.

In 2016, China became the first trading partner to the EU's leading economy – Germany. Meanwhile, the United States has dropped from the first to the third place, not only behind China, but also behind France<sup>44</sup>. This fact is remarkable. And, how to bring back the largest foreign debt in the country's history, when in trade with its most important allies, the United States loses its leading position and when the bellicose rhetoric against its economic rival China comes together with a huge trade deficit with that same country?

Of course, this would be possible as a result of a strong progressive transformation of the socio-economic system in the United States which would be in the interests of the whole nation, and not in the case of the stagnation of the country as a result of the dominance of egoistic needs of the elites.

The leading countries of Europe and Asia are patient enough to cope with the zigzags of U.S. foreign policy. Here counter strategic compromise proposals are not just necessary, they should be transparent, understandable for the wider population

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<sup>44</sup> China Has Overtaken the U.S. as Germany's Biggest Trading Partner. Fortune. 24.02.2017.URL:<http://fortune.com/2017/02/24/china-germany-us-france-trade/>(accessed: 22.11.2017).

and, of course, sincere. It is important to recognize the existence of selfish corporate interests on both sides of the fence, the necessity of their limitation and it is reasonable to check each other systematically in specific cases, without demonizing the opposite side. An alternative to this approach will sooner or later result in a third world war, where the ashes of the United States will not be distinguishable from the ashes of Russia and China. This worse but possible scenario should encourage statesmen on both sides of the ocean to opt for more balanced approaches. Unfortunately, the split in the ruling circles of the USA, the dominance of groups searching for the global confrontation and domination, greatly complicates the achievement of compromise solutions. The blocking of the participation of US companies in the mining of the Russian Arctic shelf<sup>45</sup>. The United States oppose the implementation of Stream 2<sup>46</sup>, and so on.

4. The rampant situation, fueled by vested interests and a sanctions policy leads not to peace but to war. It naturally encourages the other side to respond within the framework of psychological warfare. If the response is moderate or absent at all, the image and real influence of the leadership of the country under sanctions can be damaged. The aim is then to push for the internal destabilization of the unwanted government and thus creating conditions for its overthrow from within. If the response is adequate and active, the country is represented as aggressive, threatening and demanding for new sanctions, which lead to a further deterioration and a higher level of international tension. In these circumstances it is easier to justify in the eyes of internal and external target audiences, for example, a sharp increase in military spending, presenting it as a forced response to the external threat.

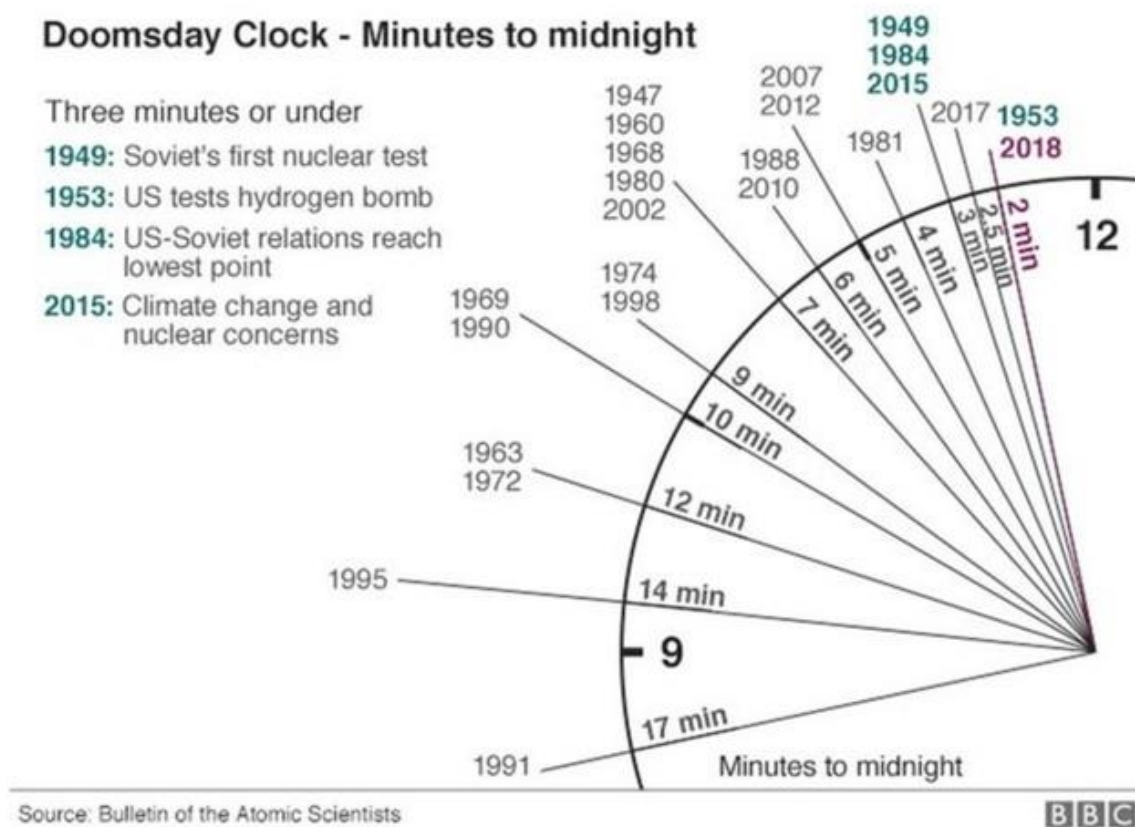
Attempts to unleash a big war far beyond the US mainland, creating favorable conditions for the economic breakthrough of the country (as it happened in the First

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<sup>45</sup> US Bans Providing Goods, Services for Arctic Offshore Projects With Russia // Sputnik. 31.10.2017. URL:[sputniknews.com/us/201710311058706074-usa-bans-russia-arctic-offshore-support/](https://sputniknews.com/us/201710311058706074-usa-bans-russia-arctic-offshore-support/) (accessed: 22.11.2017).

<sup>46</sup> US vows to help Europe repel Russian aggression // uk.news.yahoo.com. 28.11.2017. URL: <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/us-vows-help-europe-repel-russian-aggression-195948081.html> (accessed: 08.02.2018).

and Second World Wars, when the United States shared the victory, without experiencing the hardships of war on their own territory), must resolutely stop. And it is not only the deeds and the words of governments, but, above all, the real activity of civil society, where and to what extent it actually exists. Sleeping people will not stop greedy rulers (i.e. the corresponding egoistic interest groups). It is also necessary to take into consideration that the break-up of a mechanism for military confidence and security, along with reduced time for decision-making in terms of a possible nuclear attack to minutes and even seconds, dramatically increases the risk of possible tragic mistakes.



Growing concerns about a possible nuclear war and other global threats have pushed forward the symbolic Doomsday Clock<sup>47</sup> in January 2018 by 30 seconds - to just two minutes before midnight. It is now the closest to the apocalypse it has been

<sup>47</sup> The minute hand on the Doomsday Clock is a metaphor for how vulnerable to catastrophe the world is deemed to be. The symbolic device was created by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists in 1947. It was founded at the University of Chicago in 1945 by a group of scientists who helped develop the first atomic weapons. Today, the group includes physicists and environmental scientists from around the world, who decide whether to adjust the clock in consultation with the group's Board of Sponsors – which includes Nobel laureates. // BBC News. 25.01.2018.



since 1953. The BAS said it had acted as such because the world was becoming "more dangerous": the escalated tensions on the Korean peninsula, the new US nuclear strategy that was expected to call for more funding to expand the role of the country's nuclear arsenal. Similarly, the rising tension between Russia and the West were a contributing factor. In addition, the "weakening of institutions" around the world in dealing with major global threats - including climate change etc.

5. We should make more use of international scientific channels to discuss trends, issues in the field of strategic communication, in particular, related to psychological warfare. These questions are of interest not only to specialists, but rather to a wide range of researchers from related disciplines. Attracting adequate attention to PW, which has a negative impact on the public consciousness in different countries can be an important channel of influence on the minds of the people, increase their civic engagement and social responsibility.

6. Under these conditions, it is important to find approaches that provide foundations for mutual understanding and cooperation. Despite the hostile, biased and non-constructive approach to Russia and China in the National Security Strategy of the United States of America, December 2017, this document contains a valuable positive position: "Competition does not always mean hostility, nor does it inevitably lead to conflict..."<sup>48</sup>.

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It is important to find more long-term elements for cooperation not only between Russia and the United States, but between all the leading countries of the world. The strategic task is not in searching for the alternative configuration of global political and military blocks (or conserving the old ones), but rather on the basis of joint interests try to solve the principal issues of mankind. The efficiency of strategic commu-

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<sup>48</sup>National Security Strategy of the United States of America. December 2017. Washington, White House. P. 3.

nication as means of collaboration is negligible in the case that strategic interests and goals mismatch drastically. In this case, strategic communication inevitably becomes a tool of information warfare. There should be no illusion of the contrary. Meanwhile, the basic national interests require the opposite: the harmonious interaction of countries in the interests of their mutual exchange and solution of global problems. It is also important to achieve an adequate projection of the goals, achievements, failures, prospects, etc. of this interaction in the minds of target audiences that they perceived this interaction as their vital cause.

That is why compromises are essential, as well as the searching for ways to combine interests. Strategic communication can be very fruitful for the creation of a climate useful for such search, but it can aggravate the situation as well. To a certain extent, strategic communication itself is an important (and partly autonomous) factor of rapprochement or estrangement of the parties, and it is vital to procure that it serves to the accomplishment of the first task. We can fully agree with the point of view of Dennis M. Murphy, a professor of information operations and information in warfare at the US Army War College: “Basic theory – you may not change someone’s mind, but you can find areas of agreement where interests overlap”.<sup>49</sup>

Such a programme of joint optimization of strategic communication is completely impossible to implement in the current situation of growing tension between Russia and China on the one hand and the USA on the other. There is a need for a serious revolution in the core economic, technological, social and political shifts of the three countries with the consideration of their national peculiarities. This is the common interest in order to overcome the threat of a new world war and to provide conditions for a worthy democratically and progressive development for all mankind.

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<sup>49</sup> *Murphy D. M.* Actions, Images, Words. Strategic Communication as a Key Leader Skill Set. April 2010. Southbridge, April 26 – 29, 2010.

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# ASRIE

## Association of Studies, Research and Internationalization in Eurasia and Africa GEOPOLITICAL REPORT

### Volume 2/2018

This report provides a new view of the anti-Russian sanctions, revealing their latent long-term consequences. It is especially useful to researchers in international security policy.

**Dr. Darya Bazarkina (Russia), Professor at the Department for International Security and Foreign Affairs at the Academy of National Economy and Public Administration under the President of the Russian Federation**

Dr. Pashentsev has a very interesting stance on the political context and the psychological aspect of the sanctions against Russia. He holds a solid and acute view on the question.

**Dr. Ernesto López (Argentina), director of the Institute of National Problems at the National University of Lanús**

The researcher analyzes the sanctions in the context of strategic psychological warfare. Economic sanctions are a traditional weapon of the United States to weaken or in the best case to subvert their enemies; CAATSA is not an exception to this rule.

**Dr. Konstantin Pantserov (Russia), professor at Saint-Petersburg University**