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MULTIPOLAR WORLD:

THE PATH TO DIALOGUE OF CULTURES AND CIVILIZATIONS

The modern world is undergoing a global geopolitical transformation, irreversibly changing the axiological-normative landscape of humanity. The world order that emerged after the end of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, based on the dominance of Western civilization, which claims to finally determine the fate and rules of life for states and peoples in exchange for a share in the economic welfare, which is also concentrated in the West, has proved incapable of maintaining peace and security, fair and equal conditions of dignified life and free development for all.

The idea of globalization, which appeared attractive for a single interconnected world built on the basis of universal human values, has turned into claims for alienation of sovereignty and exclusivity of the legal standards developed in the Euro-Atlantic context. Moreover, in their interpretation by the so-called progressive-minded elites. The practice of supranational institutions, including the relevant jurisdictional bodies, has been dominated by the demand for unconditional tolerance of any form of progressive expression, even if it comes into radical conflict with national-cultural tradition, ethical and religious foundations of society, is shocking and offensive.

At present, the systematic purposeful actions of unfriendly foreign states and organizations convincingly demonstrate that the countries of the collective

West claiming global ideological and worldview leadership have not simply retreated from the so-called eternal fundamental values, including the rule of law, equality, justice, and inviolability of property, which have been gained by Western civilization itself, but have essentially embarked on a path leading to legal nihilism. The open imposition of the world order concept based on the rules adopted in the countries of the so-called liberal democracy and opposed to the axiological-normative systems of, in particular, Russia and China characterizes the extent of crisis of the international law as a form of expression of the consolidated will of the world community.

In these conditions of a turning point in history, Russian jurisprudence, as well as domestic social science in general, faces fundamental challenges related to deep re-thinking of the national state-legal system in the context of transition to a multipolar world and justification of the very attractive, promising, vital philosophic-legal and at the same time utilitarian concept of multipolarity. It is not about bringing some new system-forming ideal into the ideological and semantic space of Russian jurisprudence, but about the consistent up-to-date deployment of historically formed traditional cultural and value foundations and aspirations of the Russian statehood on the scale of national political and legal life and the international legal order. In this regard, it is important to keep in mind that the ideological and normative foundations of Russia's legal positioning in the multipolar world and the formation of a legal image of multipolarity as such were formally and legally consolidated and justified in a constituent (constitutional) capacity during the amendment of the Russian Constitution in 2020, in particular, in the system of principles of constitutional continuity and national spiritual and cultural identity (Article 67.1), Russia's responsibility for maintaining and strengthening of international peace and security, ensuring of peaceful co-existence of states and peoples, preventing of interference in the internal affairs of the state (Article 79.1).

It is necessary to overcome the illusion of an exclusive Western-centric interpretation of legal humanism, to get rid of the complex of peripheral and catching-up legal development, of depreciation of our own unique civilizational experience of the arrangement of state and legal life. To persistently and consistently reveal the sociocultural conditionality of law, which must ensure natural civilizational diversity and universal dialogue and only in this way can serve the common destiny of humankind. The words of academician D. S. Likhachev, describing the civilizational significance of Russia, need not only substantive reflection, but also ‘revival’ and wide disclosure in state and international practice: "Russia's mission," stressed D. S. Likhachev, — “is determined by the fact that it has united up to three hundred peoples — large, great and small, all requiring protection. The Russian culture has developed in the conditions of this multinationality. Russia served as a huge bridge between nations. First of all, as a cultural bridge.”¹

I should note that the multipolar world idea itself as an alternative to the models of hegemony or bipolarity cannot be perceived as a panacea and does not remove the accumulated fundamental problems, but rather indicates a general methodological direction for their solution, which needs scientific reflection and thorough verified concretization. The multipolar world is undoubtedly a qualitatively more complex ontological construction, the viability, sustainability, and effectiveness of which are determined by the real provision of multi-level dialogue, mutual recognition, and consideration of existential state interests that define the historically formed space, in which the objective diversity of modern cultures and civilizations manifests itself. The international dialogue characterizing the multipolarity should serve as a natural expression and continuation of the national constitutional dialogue, which can be presented as a system of forms, methods, means of governmental and civil

¹ D. S. Likhachev Selected Works on Russian and World Culture. 2nd edition, updated and revised / author and science editor A. S. Zapesotsky. SPb.: SPbUHSS, 2015. P. 57.

(non-governmental) nature, demanded in the state-organized society for the purposes of its self-organization by defining — on the basis of fair and equal participation, correlation of traditional spiritual and moral ideals, and actual vision of strategic perspectives — value and content meanings regarding the grounds, properties, interconnections, limits and prospects of formation, implementation, and development of constitutional norms and institutions.

Obviously, the real, practical development of multipolarity is naturally associated with the expansion of space and growth of struggle of ideas related to both international interaction and organization of national constitutional life.

The most important thought-starters and basic principles of building a multipolar system of international relations are defined in the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, approved by Presidential Decree No. 229 of March 31, 2023. These are: sovereign equality of states, respect for their right to choose models of development and arrangement; non-acceptance of hegemony in international affairs; cooperation on the basis of a balance of interests and mutual benefit; non-interference in internal affairs; supremacy of international law in regulating international relations; indivisibility of security; diversity of cultures, civilizations, and models of social organization; responsible leadership of leading states; the predominant role of sovereign states in decision-making in the sphere of maintaining international peace and security.

It should be highlighted that this understanding of multipolarity, considered as the basis of the new international order, reflects Russia's principled vision of the trajectories of development of the international system, which has been developing gradually. In particular, it should not go without mention the Russian-Chinese Joint Declaration on a Multipolar World and the Establishment of a New International Order (Moscow, April 23, 1997) and the Joint Declaration of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China (Beijing, December 2, 2002). These documents reflect the notion that, as the main trends of the multipolar world formation intensify, effective measures are

needed to ensure mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit rather than hegemonism, and power politics, dialogue and cooperation rather than confrontation and conflicts.

Relying on these fundamental attitudes, Russian jurisprudence should offer its own well-founded vision of the holistic concept of multipolarity, which would not only serve as an ideological and doctrinal basis for clear, precise geostrategic positions of Russia and implementation of the national development course, but would also be competitive and really demanded in the world community, ensuring trust, good-neighborly relations, and partnership in the interests of the commonwealth. At the same time, understanding of the value and normative side of multipolarity should be complemented by an adequate concept of the composition, structural organization, and details of the institutions that will serve as tangible embodiment and guides of this concept.

In this regard, I would like to draw attention to the fact that serious substantive work remains to be done to substantiate, in particular, the legal nature and prospects for the BRICS development, as well as in relation to and in interaction with other forms of cooperation, including the CSTO (the Collective Security Treaty Organization) and the SCO (the Shanghai Cooperation Organization), since these issues are still pushed to the side.

In general, with regard to the justification of the multipolarity concept, it is not a question of revising the foundations of international law and universally recognized categories that define modern statehood, but of forming a model for the implementation of international law that is adequate to the conditions of a changing world, which would reflect and ensure the coordinated fair implementation of the true diversity of sovereign interests of all members of the world community.

In this regard, I would like to dwell a little more on some issues that require special attention in the formation of the scientific concept of a multipolar world.

First, the very terminological construction of multipolarity, stemming from the natural-scientific notion of poles, polarity, should not mislead as to its focus on the relations of attraction and repulsion. What matters is not the diversity of power centres, but the nature of ties, correlation, and interaction among the members of the world community. In this case, the understanding of international law as a system of addition, not subtraction, of sovereignties, which are not limited, but mutually supported and mutually reinforced through the international legal order, correctly noted by the Chairman of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation V. D. Zorkin, is of crucial significance.

Second, multipolarity implies recognition of and respect for the natural interests of states beyond their borders, which are based on the historical, cultural, religious, linguistic, and human community of the peoples living in the territories concerned. Without questioning the fundamental principle of sovereign equality, international legal mechanisms must be ensured to take into account the interests of compatriots and the position of the state of their cultural and historical affiliation.

Third, the concept of human rights needs a serious rethinking, which should be removed from the artificially limited liberal-Western value-philosophical context, freed from the political burden of geostrategic expansion, and linked to the idea of national-state identity based on traditional spiritual and moral values.

Thus, the specifics of the Russian paradigm of human rights can be characterized primarily (but not only) in terms of the dominant value of the Motherland as a political and civilizational unity, the well-being of which is the basis and condition for the realization of the potential of each citizen. Equally important here is the aspect of the moral conditionality of freedom, the meaning of which is not liberation, but being a worthy member of society.

The situation of global socio-economic inequalities provoked by the centuries-long colonialism requires special attention in the light of the concept of human rights. In the logic of consistent recognition and guarantee of the right of peoples to development and pursuit of happiness, it is necessary to ensure more equitable mechanisms of global economic interaction based on the special responsibility of leading countries for the well-being of other peoples.