

Transformation of the Modern International Conflicts

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ABSTRACT

This article analysis the modern processes in international conflict resolution and transformation processes of solving inter-state and intra-state conflicts. Besides, Author gives own ideas on modern trends in international relations and conflict resolution which were researched on concrete cases and overall situation in modern world politics in XXI century.

KEYWORD: Transformation, International conflict, international systems, world order, armed conflicts

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The modern world is going through a period of profound transformations. There is a rethinking of the old fundamental foundations of international relations and an awareness of the new realities of the balance of power in the world. The existing values and applied methods of managing international processes are experiencing a crisis and do not meet modern international conditions, and the created ones have not yet received their due wide recognition.

Since the 90s of XX century, international scholars and politicians have been arguing about what a new international system of relations should be the key link of which would be a new world order. But there is still no consensus on this. The state-centrist system of the world, which emerged in 1648, is undergoing its transformation. If in this system identification was determined by belonging to the state, then the beginning of globalization at the end of the XX century led to the openness of society and transparency of state borders. There is a change in the geopolitical and geo-economic relations of forces on the world stage, which led to decentralization, which accelerated globalization. This gave rise to the need for the formation of new criteria of identity, based no longer on state affiliation.

Such processes were accelerated by the development of information communication and technologies, which allowed such new participants as non-state actors to enter the international arena. They became increasingly active in the emerging order. M.Lebedeva states that the problem (of world politics) is not that there are many non-state actors, but how they interact with each other. The study of this interaction is complicated by the absence of a certain

“common denominator”, which in the classical Westphalian system was national sovereignty¹.

The transformation of the world order and the growing contradictions between the centers of power have called into question of the possibilities of international legal regulation of international relations. This can be seen in the examples of how existing international law still retains its significance, but at the same time there are precedents for the selective application of international law. Increasingly, they were used depending on the situation and in favor of one of the parties. Globalization has not only created opportunities for development, but also increased the competition for the possession and control of resources. It revealed those sections of the contradiction of human society that had been frozen for a long time. As a result of interpenetration and interdependence, they have become a place of division and clash of interests, values and cultures. Globalization has objectively become accompanied by fragmentation. With the growing interdependence of the world, conflicts pose a serious threat to their expansion.

The global financial and economic crisis not only brought to the surface the existing systemic problems, increased the spontaneity of international relations and destabilized the situation in many regions, but also activated destructive transnational forces. Some of them, trying to take their place in the new conditions, intensified international tensions and became a source of destabilization.

¹ Лебедева М. Предметное поле и предметные поля мировой политики // Международные процессы. 2004. Т.2. № 2(5). Май-Август. –С.101.

According to SIPRI's analysis, the number of armed conflicts grew in the early 1990s, but by 2000 the number of conflicts began to decline². This provided the basis for an optimistic statement that the number of military conflicts in the world will not grow steadily in the XXI century. However, international events began to develop in a different direction. Military conflicts that began in the twentieth century continued, as well as new hotbeds of tension that developed into interstate wars.

This suggests that armed conflicts have once again become one of the most pressing problems in modern international relations. They break out where the emergence of conflicts seemed impossible. The events of September 2001 went down in history as a common event, marked as a tragedy of the American people, and as the beginning of a new phase of international relations, which resulted in the concentration of efforts of the world community to fight terrorism. At the same time, the number of local and regional conflicts increased dramatically, which were complicated by the tendency to blur the boundaries between internal and international conflicts, and the increasing influence of new types of participants.

Events in the world at the beginning of the XXI century do not allow us to doubt that armed conflicts remain elements of international relations. According to the conflict data program and the peace research institute (UCDP/PRIO), the number of armed conflicts involving the state in the post-cold war period was the highest in 1991 – 51, and the lowest in 2010 – 31. It began to grow and in 2014 increased to 40³.

The number of supporters of the forceful solution of international problems began to grow more and more. This is due to the fact that new types of military technology have given major powers the possibility of power superiority in armed conflicts. The most developed and powerful group of States began to move to a more active and offensive policy. New technologies have enabled them to achieve their goals quickly and at a lower cost. And often their actions began to provoke other countries to an arms race, which ultimately pushed them to a military conflict.

Conflict resolution has become a key issue for international organizations and States. The number of international peacekeeping operations has increased, but these operations are again mainly aimed at forceful pacification of the conflicting parties⁴.

In the context of the spontaneity of political contradictions in modern international relations, there is an increasing concern that the pain threshold for the use of force and justification for the outbreak of war between States is

decreasing. There is an imbalance between the technological capabilities of warfare and the lack of experience in the use of such technologies, which leads to a decrease in responsibility for the use of force. Moreover, the situation is complicated by the fact that there are no regulatory mechanisms for the threshold application of new technologies in the conduct of military operations.

The decentralization of the international system has allowed small and medium-sized countries to challenge the major powers. This behavior is explained by the fact that they are trying to increase their geopolitical importance and attract the attention of world powers in order to get support from them. Non-state actors have also become increasingly involved in armed conflicts. They have been called “non-systemic” conflicts related to threats from non-state actors of international and national security⁵.

As the author of the “General Guide” published by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, M. Gillis states that: “everywhere in the world, the problem of nuclear proliferation is of increasing concern”⁶. Such a conclusion becomes even more relevant if we take into account that in conditions when the solution of international conflicts is increasingly based on the power factor. It is observed that major powers are reconsidering the importance of weapons of mass destruction in ensuring security. The development of technology allows countries to turn this weapon from strategic to tactical. The nuclear deterrent regime is increasingly weakening. “Agreements” on arms control are broken. Cooperation has been replaced by a one-sided approach. Restraint has been replaced by redundancy⁷. Facts have become more frequent when the system of control over the proliferation and use of WMD began to be applied selectively. Tannenwald, Director of the International Relations Program at the Watson Institute at Boston University, concludes that arms race has resumed. The nuclear taboo is losing its force⁸.

Extremist terrorist groups, in the current situation around the WMD control regime, rushed to get these weapons. There were facts of their application. For example, the sarin attack on the Tokyo subway in 1995 and in Syria in 2013. The principle of sovereignty in the state-centrist system largely deterred States from interfering in internal affairs. The ongoing global changes have led to the fact that international conflicts have also undergone their transformation. They increasingly began to manifest themselves not only as interstate contradictions. Thus, according to SIPRI, the number of inter-State conflicts is decreasing, and the number of intra-State armed clashes involving other States is increasing. There are more and more cases of interference in internal affairs under various circumstances. There were attempts of humanitarian

²Ежегодник СИПРИ 2016: вооружения, разоружения и международная безопасность: Пер. с англ. ИМЭМО им.Е.М.Прикова РАН. – М.: ИМЭМО РАН, 1998 – 2016. – 2017. – С.2-3.

³ Щербакова Е. После II Мировой войны в вооруженных конфликтах с участием государства погибло более 10,5 миллиона человек // <http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2016/0689/barom01.php>

⁴Баранов Н. Динамика современных геополитических конфликтов // <https://nicbar.ru/politology/study/kurs-geopoliticheskie-problemy-evropejskogo-razvitiya/274-tema-10-dinamika-sovremennykh-geopoliticheskikh-konfliktov>

⁵ См.: Новая эра конфликтов и насилия // <https://www.un.org/ru/un75/new-era-conflict-and-violence>

⁶Гиллис М. Разоружение. Общее руководство. -Нью-Йорк: Организация Объединенных Наций. Третье издание. 2013. -С.4.

⁷Танненвальд Н. Как разрушилась система разоружения // Россия в глобальной политике 2018. №6. Ноябрь/Декабрь. <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/yadernoe-tabu-ischezaet/>

⁸Tannenwald N. The Vanishing Nuclear Taboo? // Foreign Affairs, 2018. № 6.November/December.<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2018-10-15/vanishing-nuclear-taboo>

intervention without the consent of the official authorities. This contributes to the internationalization of the conflict and the undermining of the principle of national sovereignty⁹.

Military action was understood as an armed clash between two armies or groups. This is not just an armed clash. In the information space, there are other types of collisions. Arvind Gupta, Director of the Vivekananda Foundation (India), notes that no one can objectively answer the question of how hybrid wars will end. In this sense, the difference between wars in their narrow interpretation and conflicts is thinning. Various factors lead to violence and war is only one aspect¹⁰.

The global political system continues to function according to the principles of power politics, which is based on the use or possibility of using violence. Diplomatic and economic instruments of interaction between States have been used for a long period of time to cultivate stability for the benefit of all. However, the territorial integrity of States and the physical security of their populations and institutions are still guaranteed by military resources and capabilities¹¹. In this sense, "asymmetric wars" are not new phenomena.

Thus, analyzing the trends in international relations, we can conclude that modern conflicts have a number of features: Firstly, conflicts began to arise due to the confrontation of different systems of values and lifestyles. The parties to the confrontation began to either conflict or converge on a civilizational basis. The civilizational affiliation of the participants in the clashes began to provide solidarity on a wide scale. Such a confrontation is difficult to resolve.

Secondly, the struggle for resources is gaining momentum. As the depletion of natural resources and to reduce the possibility of their use can lead to conflicts over the ownership of them.

Thirdly, the technological capabilities of developed countries allow them to reduce the risks of war for themselves, which creates a perception of their impunity.

Fourthly, the development of information technology makes it possible to reach all segments of society, which turns them into a factor of war. They have become not only a reserve for personnel, but can also become direct participants in an armed conflict. Therefore, most of the victims of modern armed conflicts are civilians, whose losses are disproportionately large in relation to the losses among the military.

Fifthly, there is a transition from wars between States to wars between societies. If earlier there was a war between

armies, then in the information space there is a war between stories. There is a process of substitution of value orientations of the opponent.

Sixthly, the internationalization of internal conflicts preserves broad international intervention in conflict resolution, which often undermines the principle of sovereignty;

Seventhly, the participants in armed conflicts are increasingly either countries that are not comparable in their resources, or States and rebel movements, armed extremist and criminal groups. The number of asymmetric conflicts is growing.

Eighthly, the manageability of conflicts is reduced, caused by a simplified vision of the complex process of their settlement. State and non-State actors have become involved in the settlement of the conflict, which brings an element of unpredictability to the conflict.

Ninthly, modern mechanisms for regulating international relations were created in the context of the previous stage of technological development. Therefore, new ways of dealing with conflicts cannot be regulated due to a lack of common understanding.

Thus, the technological revolution has created not only opportunities for the development of society, but also diversified the ways of conflict management. In addition, the situation is aggravated by the fact that new actors appear in the emerging new world order, which complicates the possibilities of regulating international relations.

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