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The World in the 21st Century: Scenarios of the World Order

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The article focuses on the analysis of current trends in the system of international relations. The problems of the future world order are especially acute in the conditions of disappointment in globalization ideas. The authors analyze the reasons of unification tendencies in the second half of the 20th century and the reasons of countries aspiration for more isolation and independence in the spheres of policy, economy and culture. The authors have considered the wide range of possible tendencies for international relations development: from the countries striving for isolation to the countries intending to create coalitions based on mutual economic interests. The authors argue trans-regional economic partnerships will be the most widespread form of countries' associations in the coming decades.

Keywords: international relations, multipolar world, monopolar world, military-political blocs, globalization, regionalization, trans-regionalization.

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1. Introduction

The modern world enters the era of large-scale political changes determined by the unevenness of the technological and economic development processes. If during the second half of the 20th century the main trend of international development was globalization, in recent years, opinions about the change in the international relations development from globalization to regionalism (Kheifets, 2016, Mukhachev, 2015, Obolenskii, 2015) are met more and more often in the literature.

In this connection, the analysis of political, social and economic factors that determine the prospects and dynamics of future models of

international relations and the world order as a whole becomes highly relevant.

Drivers of the globalization process were the Western countries led by the US: they also became the main beneficiaries at the initial stage (Minakova, 2016; Supyan, 2001). The driving force behind globalization, in addition to the state policy, was the technological progress. Innovations in the field of transport, communication, processing and transmission of information have reduced the costs of international business, expanding opportunities for foreign trade and investment. Even during the bipolar confrontation between the US and the

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USSR, Western countries took an active part in creating a system of international standards aimed at realization of their interests, legitimizing and institutionalizing their aspirations for influence and power on a global scale.

Parallel to the process of globalization, the trend towards regionalization of the global economy is developing – the desire of some countries and groups of countries to protect themselves from the negative aspects of globalization. In assessing the consequences of regionalization, there is no consensus. On the one hand, regionalization can contribute to increasing the competitiveness of countries and emerging regions; on the other, it leads to stratification of the global economic space. Many authors now agree that the future world will be multipolar (Mukhachev, 2015, Patrik, 2014).

Along with determination of new power poles in the international arena, international relations themselves will gain a new quality in the future, i.e. rationality. Rationality should be understood as the trend to search solutions (institutional, standardizing, organizational, technological, etc.) acceptable for the majority of the parties and keeping the costs down (total and separately for each participant).

To understand the processes of changes in the sphere of international relations, the results of the analysis of transaction costs were used, which was one of the reasons for the rapid spread of the globalization processes. The changes in existing and newly created international institutions (organizations, blocks, funds, etc.), whose activities are aimed at regulating interaction between countries and groups of countries, have been analyzed.

2. Monopolar world: opportunities, costs and risks

The period after the end of the Cold War was characterized by a number of distinctive features.

For almost two decades, the United States was the “centre of power” and the global leader in the economic, political, military, scientific and technological spheres. It accounted for about 20 % of the world GDP and almost half of world military spending. The United States remained the world’s innovation centre and global technology leader. Actions aimed at consolidating American dominance in the world economic processes, in making key global decisions, were considered during this period as fully justified, and American political leadership as de facto legitimate.

A number of models promoted by the USA have spread in the world: the open market economy, democratic institutions, etc. The process of globalization in this period mainly took the form of westernization – developing countries transformed their economic and political institutions according to the Western pattern. At the same time, the system of international relations was built in accordance with the “centre-periphery” model, where the role of the centre – the generator and distributor of new values and standards – belonged to the countries of the West and their US leader.

For the developed countries of the West, globalization including trade liberalization and an increase in the capital flow across national borders in a variety of forms, has contributed to the growth of international activity of companies and, in general, an increase in the rate of economic growth. The opportunities to export goods and services, the movement of capital contributed to the growth of output, the emergence of new technologies, more efficient use of resources, active economic growth, and restraint of inflation. Competition with foreign producers forced national companies to look for the ways to reduce production costs, to make the production more economically efficient. Participation in world trade has also become a stabilizing factor for the national currency and

the economy as a whole (Minakova, 2016: 112). In the United States, in particular, the share of foreign trade in relation to the national GDP by the end of the 20th century reached a record level in the history of the country – 25 %. Only for the years 1987-1997 American export increased by 140 %, which contributed to the economic growth in the amount of 30 % of its total value (Supyan, 2001: 19).

The driving force of globalization, in addition to the state policy, has become technical progress: the achievements of the 4th and 5th technological waves. Innovations in the field of transport, communication, processing and transmission of information have reduced the costs of international business, expanding opportunities for foreign trade and investment. Thus, the average cost of sea freight traffic declined from \$ 95 per tonne in 1920 to \$ 27 (in constant prices) as early as 1960 and subsequently changed little. At the same time from the mid-1950s to the late 1990s the cost of air cargo transportation decreased by 78 %. As a result, the share of air freight transportation in the total volume of transportation in the USA increased in monetary terms from 7 % in 1965 to 28 % in 1998. The cost of land, primarily road transportation, also decreased; As a result, its share in foreign trade increased from 28 % in 1965 to 34 % in 1998. The breakthrough in information and communication technology has led to a multiple reduction in costs in the field of international communication and trade in services. For example, in 1930 a three-minute telephone conversation between New York and London cost \$ 293 (in 1998 dollars), in 1998 – only 36 cents. Currently, various international services can be provided via the Internet or through satellite communications. Financial instruments operating in real time appeared, and as a result, the scale of the movement of capital between different countries increased sharply, and the corresponding costs decreased.

A significant international institution for a monopolar model of the world order is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a military-political bloc established in 1949 at the initiative of the United States to protect Europe from the influence of the Soviet Union. The contribution of the member countries to the technical equipment and maintenance of the grouping of troops varies: the military expenditures of almost the entire Eurogroup of NATO demonstrate a negative trend for a decade and a half. If in 2000 the share of defense budget allocated by European members (and also Canada) averaged about 2 % of their GDP, then by 2005 it had fallen to 1.8 %, and by the beginning of the economic crisis in 2008 the figure was already 1.65 % (Fig. 1). At the same time, US military spending in this period only increased, reaching by 2011 almost 75 % of the total defense costs of all members of the alliance (Nadtochei, 2009: 19). Thus, it can be said that NATO membership facilitates the burden of military spending for the European allies.

Even in the course of the bipolar confrontation, the United States took an active part in creating a system of international standards that promote or are aimed at implementation of their interests, legitimizing and institutionalizing their aspirations for power and influence on a global scale. The architecture of international relations developed in the second half of the 20th century includes a system of international intergovernmental organizations: NATO, WTO, IMF, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and other international financial institutions (Table 1). For decades, the range of issues addressed by international economic institutions has been consistently increasing. In the 1990s the IMF and the World Bank have expanded the set of conditions for participating countries wishing to obtain loans, including conditions related to internal governance and institutional structures that pursue economic policies. In 1995, when the

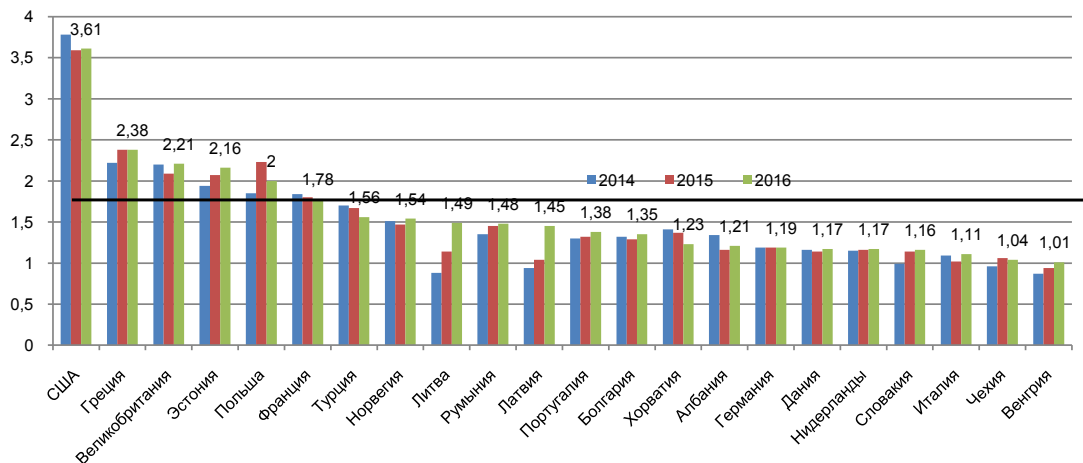


Fig. 1. Defense budgets of the NATO member countries in 2014-2016, % from the GDP in prices and exchange rates of 2010 (less than 1 % is allocated by Canada, Slovenia, Spain, Belgium and Luxemburg)

Table 1. International Financial Organizations

No.	International Financial Organizations	Number of member countries
1	The Asian Development Bank (ADB)	67
2	World Trade Organization (WTO)	162
3	The World Bank (WB)	188
4	The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	61
5	The Eurasian Development Bank (EBRD)	6
6	The Islamic Development Bank (IDB)	56
7	The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)	48
8	The International Monetary Fund (IMF)	189
9	The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	189
10	The International Bank for Economic Cooperation (IBEC)	8

World Trade Organization was established, a new set of obligations was developed for its members that touched on a number of areas of domestic legislation (Woods, Narlikar, 2002: 182). Currently, international economic institutions are dealing with issues that were previously resolved at the level of national governments.

An example of solving social and economic problems of individual states can be the activities of the Inter-American Development Bank, which, along with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, is one of the three largest financial organizations in the world. IDB

succeeded in reducing inflation, modernizing and improving the work of banking supervision systems, and the legal and regulatory framework of the financial sector as a whole (Lobantsova, 2005: 141).

Within the monopolar model of the world order, countries that stick to the US foreign policy derive benefits from their subordinate position by reducing transactional costs in the economic sphere, reducing defense spending. At the same time, they partially lose the opportunity to defend their national interests in both political and economic spheres.

Thus, the monopolar model of the world has its strengths and weaknesses. It is advantageous for countries that have occupied a sufficiently high place in the international hierarchy. Its drawbacks include the absence of the factor that constrains such processes as the use of military force, the emergence of new hotbeds of international tension, deepening the gap in the incomes of poor and rich countries, the growth of terrorism and the number of refugees.

3. Old and new military-politic and economic alliances and partnerships

The military-political blocs created during the Cold War were the elements of the political and economic confrontation between the countries of the West and the USSR. The largest of these are NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization. In addition, at the initiative of Western countries, a number of small military-political blocs were established, which were also built into the global confrontation system (Table 2).

In 1992, a number of countries of the former USSR formed the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), whose task is to ensure the security of its members and stability in the post-Soviet space. In 2009, the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEF) was established to provide security and strengthen the defense functions of its member countries (Table 3).

The Welsh summit of NATO in Newport (September 2014) has become a new turning point for changes in NATO's military-political bloc. In fact, it marked the transition from collective security to the 'new old' collective defense (Mironova, 2016: 89). The North Atlantic Alliance is largely an instrument of the United States in the implementation of their policies on the European continent.

In recent decades, international life has a new trend – transregionalization – the creation of economic associations with a large number of participating countries. At the same time, the determining factor for participation in such alliances is not territorial proximity and the

Table 2. Military-political blocs in established during the period of the USSR existence

Military-political blocs	Member countries
The North Atlantic Alliance (NATO)	1949 – Belgium, Great Britain, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Canada, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, USA, France. 1952 – Greece, Turkey. 1955 Germany. 1982 – Spain
The Warsaw Treaty Organization	1955 – Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, the GDR, Poland, Romania, the USSR, Czechoslovakia. 1991 – termination of the contract
The Pacific Security Pact (ANZUS)	1951 – Australia, New Zealand, USA
The Military-Political Union (ANZUK)	1971 – Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Singapore. 1975 – termination of the organization
Organization of the South-East Asia Treaty (SEATO)	1955 – Australia, Great Britain, New Zealand, Pakistan, USA, Thailand, Philippines, France 1977 – termination of the organization
The Central Treaty Organization (CENTO)	1955 – Great Britain, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, the USA. 1979 – termination of the Organization's activities
The Western European Union (WEU)	1948 – the organization included 28 countries 2011 – termination of the Union

Table 3. Military-political blocs in 1990-2015

Military-political organizations and blocs	Member countries
Organization of the Collective Security Treaty (CSTO)	1992 – Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. 1993 – Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia. 1999 – Azerbaijan, Georgia, Uzbekistan left the organization. 2006 – membership of Uzbekistan restored. 2012 – Uzbekistan left the organization
The North Atlantic Alliance (NATO)	New members: 1999 – Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic. 2004 – Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia. 2009 – Albania, Croatia
The Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO)	2009 – Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Finland, Sweden

existence of common borders, but common interests. These coordinated economic interests and relevant interstate agreements determine the effectiveness of such interaction (Kheifets, 2016: 127).

Participation in trans-regional partnerships does not require member states to transfer part of their sovereignty to a supranational level, unification of financial policy and other limitations of national policy. The absence of supranational bodies makes it possible to respond quickly to new challenges of the world development. In fact, the only interstate institutions regulating the activities of economic partnerships are relevant interstate agreements on the establishment of such partnerships. To address the issues that affect the interests of some participants (for example, commercial disputes), partnerships rely primarily on existing interstate institutions: international arbitration, the World Intellectual Property Organization, etc.

In 2014, on the initiative of Russia, the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) was established, whose tasks include ensuring the freedom of movement of goods, services, capital and labour; conducting a coordinated, coherent or unified policy in the economic sectors. The EEU was established for the purpose of cooperation,

comprehensive modernization and enhancement of competitiveness of national economies and creation of conditions for stable development in the interests of raising the standard of living of the population of the member states.

In 2016, the leaders of 12 states from the Asia-Pacific region signed the first agreement on a trans-regional mega-partnership – the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). In the future, it is possible to expand its membership, including China.

Other trans-regional agreements are at the final stage of preparation: EU-Canada, EU-Japan, Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TATIP), Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and some others (Table 4). New alliances will allow to coordinate economic processes in countries producing almost 90 % of the world GDP; the implementation of these agreements will lead to fundamental changes in the structure and nature of the international division of labour and, ultimately, to a profound reformatting of the world economy.

Another type of economic partnership initiated by China is international cooperation in the framework of the system projects “Silk Road Economic Belt” (SREB) and “Maritime Silk Road” (MSR) of the 21st century. This

partnership will cover countries where about 4 billion people live (that is about 60 % of the world's total population) and could become the largest trans-regional economic partnership, within which more than 45 % of the world GDP will be produced.

The main objectives of SREB and MSR of the 21st century are to enhance mutual trade by simplifying trading and investment procedures and to eliminate the barriers that exist in this field; to use unique natural advantages of participating countries; to enforce bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the financial field, to promote settling in national currency, to develop financial institutes; to activate contacts, etc. (Kheifets, 2016: 35).

In May 2015, the leaders of Russia and China reached an agreement on pairing the projects of the EEU and SREB, including the removal of various barriers in trade, the creation of a system for protecting mutual investments, mechanisms for resolving investment disputes, setting priorities for cooperation in high technology, etc. China has already begun financing the development of project documentation in Russia for the Moscow-Kazan high-speed railway. The volume of Chinese loans from the corporate sector and the Silk Road Fund may amount to 400-450 billion rubles.

In the opinion of the EEC Minister of Trade V. Nikishina, joining of the EEU and SREB is a good opportunity for Russia to gradually integrate into international chains of value added. This would help to restructure the economy, and to build up the density of contacts necessary for mutual trust with China, to gradually prepare for competition in the 21st century.

In the situation of reducing the risks of a global war with the use of weapons of mass destruction that developed at the end of the 20th century, the processes of supranational international regulation of economic cooperation have reached

a new level. We can talk about the institutional shift in relations between countries from the "hard power" instruments – military-political alliances, to the "soft power" instruments – economic partnerships and agreements beneficial for all cooperating participants.

4. From globalization and regionalization to transregionalism

Globalization at the present stage of historical development is an objective process of integration of industrial and postindustrial economies associated with the growing interdependence of countries and regions in a confined, limited space of the planet. The most significant features of globalization are the creation of a single economic space, the formation of a world market for finance, goods and services, the establishment of multilateral cooperation, the reduction of political and transaction costs, the rapid spread of technological innovation, the emergence of a global information space, the emergence of business beyond national boundaries, etc. Though globalization is quite contradictory while along with the positive, it also has negative consequences: the ruin of the national business, the growth of unemployment, the reduction of guarantees of workers' rights, the erosion of the concept of the sovereignty of states, the threat of national culture loss.

Parallel to the process of globalization, the trend towards regionalization of the world economy is developing – the desire of individual countries¹ and groups of countries to protect themselves from the negative aspects of globalization. There is no consensus in assessing the consequences of regionalization. On the one hand, regionalization can contribute to increasing the competitiveness of countries and emerging regions; on the other, it leads to stratification of the global economic space.

The process of regionalization has been observed for a long time and has intensified in the last decade. The largest regional associations include the European Union, the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA), the South American Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). According to the WTO data, as of the end of 2015, 619 regional trade agreements (RTA) were registered. 413 RTA entered into force, of which 233 refer to free trade agreements, 128 to agreements on economic integration, 29 to agreements on customs and similar unions.

In recent years, agreements have been signed and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU); the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP); the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TATIP); the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the EU-Canada, EU-Japan Agreements; EU-China Free Trade Zones, EU-Vietnam, US-India, US-Morocco (DCFTA), US-Thailand; Pacific Agreement on Close Economic Relations (PACER Plus – Australia, New Zealand, Pacific Islands Forum); Free Trade Zones “The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa” (COMESA) have been established. The new format of the European Union is the agreement on the establishment of a deep and comprehensive free trade area with third countries. Such agreements are signed or are being prepared for signing with Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, with Mediterranean countries Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

At the same time, it is important to understand that the formation of regional economic associations does not hinder globalization and even “pushes it by acting as ready-made building blocks for the construction of a qualitatively new world economic system” (Obolenskii, 2015: 5). In recent years, the development of regionalism has manifested a new trend – the creation of transcontinental associations.

We can talk about the emergence of a new phenomenon in the international life – transregionalism, it originates primarily on the basis of common economic interests, and not the common borders. The economic role of geographical proximity in the conditions of the development of new types of transport and other communication networks is receding into the background.

New partnerships do not require that countries delegate part of their sovereignty to a supranational level and unify macroeconomic and monetary and financial policies, so new partnerships are more sustainable elements of the global economic space than traditional regional integration associations. In the latter, there is an increase in contradictions and disintegration tendencies precisely due to the imposition of certain supranational decisions.

This does not mean that new economic partnerships will not have problems on the way of their development. However, the formation of such partnerships is more rational than the waste of enormous efforts and resources to form and maintain the stability of classical integration associations, which assume a certain consistency and interconnection of specific stages of the integration process. New partnerships are more adapted to their transformation through expansion or compression.

Transregionalization will lead to fundamental changes in the structure and nature of the international division of labour and ultimately to a profound reformatting of the global economy. Already now new economic alliances produce almost 90 % of the world GDP.

5. From monopolar to multipolar world

We can observe significant changes in international relations currently. They are the result of large-scale and rapid social and economic

transformations in developing countries – the balance of economic and political forces is changing in favour of a multipolar world order (Mukhachev, 2016: 216).

The situation in the world began to change noticeably already in the early 2000s and especially in the period of the global financial and economic crisis of 2008-2011. The United States significantly undermined its own authority and influence in the world by invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. Its declared right to intervene in the affairs of other states weakened the credibility of American policy. The destabilizing invasions of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya have shaken faith in the US ability to effective global leadership. Military superiority was illusory, as it turned out that it is impossible to solve the problems of the modern world with the military force. The financial crisis has destroyed the notion that the United States has unconditional competence and unquestionable authority in financial and economic matters (Solov'ev, 2015: 69).

K. Waltz and a number of other authors consider the stable existence of the multipolar world impossible, believing a heterogeneous structure with a multitude of centres of power is very unstable and leading to “the struggle of all against all” (Waltz, 2007: 915). This is explained by the fact that because of the asynchronous development of countries there is a new inequality, and as soon as the state reaches the level of economic and military power comparable to the potential of the leading states of the world, it requires for itself a new status signifying the redistribution of spheres of influence in the world. At the same time, countries that are opposing poles of power in a multipolar world, are forced to incur significant costs for the maintenance and renovation of the military complex.

The authors of the report “Global Trends: Paradox of Progress” consider three scenarios of the world order development in the perspective

up to 2035: 1) islands, 2) orbits, 3) communities. These scenarios reflect possible combinations of critical trends and those choices that states and societies can make.

The **“island” scenario** assumes that many states, in response to the instability of the global economy, the complexity of ensuring security, seeking answers to technological and social challenges, will concentrate on solving internal problems. By reducing contributions to intercountry co-operation, they will pursue protectionist policy to protect domestic markets, create barriers to cross-country migration, etc. They will prefer bilateral trade agreements that correspond to their interests instead of multilateral agreements. The extreme manifestation of the scenario will be the “partition” of the world, in which countries occupy a defensive position, behave like “islands” in the sea of instability. The engine of economic growth will be innovation and entrepreneurship at the local level.

The **“orbit” scenario** unfolds as a result of competition of the most powerful states for spheres of influence. By the mid-2020s the United States, China, Russia and Iran will form large regions in which they will become “gravitational centres” (economically, politically and militarily), while other countries will be “satellites” moving in close or distant “orbits”. Economic interests will keep the leading states from direct military conflicts. Diplomatic and economic coercion, propaganda, cyberattacks, indirect application of military force will blur the boundaries between the states of peace and war. Special efforts will be required to reduce risks and expand international cooperation.

The **“community” scenario**. The growing challenges in the sphere of economics and management will force national governments to delegate greater powers to local governments and active groups and organizations in society, business, etc. The forms of implementation of

power, governance and regulation will change: there will be a shift from institutional interactions mediated by common norms to direct interactions between interested parties and groups. Especially important functions, such as international politics, defense, will remain the sphere of competence of national governments. At the same time, a wide range of issues in the sphere of economy, finance, education, infrastructures, and others will be regulated at the level of local authorities, public and religious organizations. A key management tool will be the control and operation of information, the definition of an “agenda” for a wide range of communities. The specifics of this scenario in different countries will depend on the degree of “openness” of societies, the willingness of governments and society itself to the “diffusion of power”, the transfer of authority to the local level, collective decision-making, etc.

Globalization, initiated by the industrially developed countries of the West in their own interests, has gradually created the conditions for an economic and technological breakthrough in developing countries and especially the so-called fast-growing giants (primarily China and India). In the global balance of economic and political forces, the presence of China and India (17.08 and 7.02 % of world GDP at purchasing power parity, respectively) becomes increasingly significant. According to the forecast of the Foreign Affairs magazine, in 2050 the share of the USA, the European Union and Canada will account for less than 30 % of the world GDP, which is less than in 1890 (Mukhachev, 2015: 219).

The future in solving global challenges belongs not only to large intergovernmental organizations. The tendency to solve international problems at the level of small regional structures between the interested powers is also gathering momentum. In the future, this adaptive system of international relations, which involves partial and

intermediate solution of the tasks of international cooperation through informal arrangements and a phased, “fractional” solution of problems, will be further developed (Patrik, 2014: 9).

In this connection, the meaning of the term “global governance” changes: today it is the collective efforts of sovereign states, international organizations and other non-state actors to respond to common challenges and use opportunities that go beyond what is possible for a particular country.

In addition to the long-standing world organizations with official membership, there are many regional blocs, multilateral security alliances and groups, clubs, transnational professional networks, technical organizations, global networks for coordinating joint actions, etc. States still dominate the world, although non-state players are increasingly helping to formulate the international agenda, define new rules and monitor compliance with obligations. The emergence of new actors, including informal ones, in the international arena is justified. “No multilateral organization could cope with all complex transnational problems alone, to solve them efficiently and actively. The presence of many organizations and forums is not always ineffective, as it gives countries the opportunity to act relatively aggressively and flexibly, to respond quickly to new challenges”.

As the ultimate manifestation of multipolarity, the “G-Zero world” is discussed, in which collective global leadership is almost impossible due to the dissipation of power between countries with widely divergent interests. The basis for such a forecast is the growing dispersal of the collective activities of states on a variety of different platforms, not only world treaty-based organizations or top-level forums, but also all sorts of problem-

oriented networks and partnerships, whose membership varies depending on the situation, short-term interests, common values and current opportunities.

If we are not talking about limit versions of the world order, but more balanced and realistic, then it is the multipolar world that is thought to be the best alternative to the monopolar one in terms of achieving sustainable and predictable development of mankind and ensuring global security (Kalyuzhnyi, 2011: 236).

6. “Rational world” as a perspective for the mankind

Economic, informational and cultural globalization has resulted in the growing coherence of the world, the dependence of countries and regions on each other. In conditions when globally distributed chains of value creation are formed, troubles (natural cataclysm, economic crisis, local military conflict, etc.) in any regions cause losses for participants in the economic process located in other parts of the world. Even the situation in countries that are practically not included in the world division of labour affects the global economic space, since it creates significant consequences (the flow of refugees, piracy, etc.). On a pragmatic basis – concern about the preservation of the conditions for the functioning of a globalized economy – there are practices for management and regulation of processes in the economic, social, cultural, political and military spheres at the interstate level, institutional forms for these practices are created (international organizations, regional and transregional agreements, alliances, etc.).

General or coordinated actions at the interstate level require explicit articulation and justification of goals, interests, principles, restrictions on the approaches, tools and instruments used, that is, the rationalization of actions in the international field. There are

numerous discussions and communication platforms aimed at rationalization that ensure international interaction – the very presentation of a certain position requires it to be logically understandable and acceptable for many parties.

Ideas about a possible rational world order have been repeatedly arising throughout the history as utopias. At the beginning of the 20th century, “political idealism” in the interpretation of international relations postulated the necessity and possibility of peaceful progress of mankind when using international institutions for conflict resolution. As a result of two world wars, “political realism” won in the ideological field, due to which the configuration of international relations is the result of balance of interests and forces of states in ideological, political, military, economic and other spheres, the result of power confrontations.

The historical trajectory of the idea of a rational world order repeats, with some lag in time, the trajectory of economic globalization. Economic globalization started in the second half of the 19th century and was interrupted by two world wars, but restarted in the second half of the 20th century, and its rates increased dramatically as a result of the technological revolution – the dissemination of information and telecommunication technologies that drastically reduced the costs of trade and financial transactions. Similarly, the technologies of digital revolution create a new technological basis for possible new, radically more rational, forms of international interaction, cooperation, the construction of globally distributed polycentric control systems, regulation and management for processes in various fields (economics and finance, ecology and the use of natural resources, weapons, transport, etc.).

Creation of the weapons of mass destruction and the emergence of the concept of “unacceptable

damage” in the middle of the 20th century have led to the fact that the global war has ceased to be seen as a possible means of achieving the goals in international politics, achieving advantages in the competition between countries. Such a war is perceived as a catastrophe, which can occur as a result of a technical malfunction or an error in the political game. The creation of a collective security system that guarantees blocking of the conflicts development between states, their development into a global conflict with the use of weapons of mass destruction has become quite urgent. The collective security system should also prevent targeted damage as a result of a technical malfunction or “leakage” of such weapons and its use, for example, by terrorist groups.

For 70 years after the end of the Second World War, the transition from the predominance of “hard power” instruments in relations between countries and alliances to the use of “soft power” instruments mainly has been gradually proceeding. Such instruments have become, among other things, the institutions of economic cooperation, regulatory institutions in various fields, norms and standards for various fields of activity.

Potential conflicts between countries and the possibility of unilateral dominance of stronger ones are not eliminated at all, but there is the possibility of transferring the competition of states to another sphere – competition in the creation of institutions, “rules of the game”, platforms for cooperation, formats of economic and other activities. Competition in this sphere is less destructive in comparison with local wars and even more so in comparison with the global war. But the main thing is that at the same time international relations are being interpreted not in terms of victory and defeat, but in terms of increasing efficiency or increasing costs. “Winners” are states that are able to offer the global community such institutional solutions

that will reduce the costs of the largest number of participants.

Rationalization of international relations is a tendency to search for solutions (institutional, regulatory, organizational, technological, etc.) that are acceptable to a large number of parties and reduce costs (total and for all participants separately).

Thus the rationalization of international relations can receive a special impetus as a result of the interconnection of the global Internet and a new generation of digital technologies. Big Data, Blockchain and similar technologies will become the basis of global digital platforms that will allow to take into account, control and regulate almost any flows – financial, trade, arms transfers, etc. The fields of application can be a global security system, financial transactions monitoring, in particular, to reduce corruption and minimize the use of off-shores for tax evasion.

The result can be the formation of a “transparent world” in which the flows of the most important resources and capitals, the actions of different actors and their consequences are “visible” to all interested parties, while illegitimate actions and actions aimed at obtaining unilateral benefits, damage, withdrawal from responsibility, and the same become rather complicated.

Information platforms that provide such “transparency” and the ability to respond to “wrong” actions should be the subject of common ownership of many states and other non-state actors. The development of formats for such property is a special task. Thus, an important aspect of the “transparent world” will be the formation of legal and ethical principles for the operation and use of information platforms. At the same time, access to global information platforms should be open to all countries, regardless of their contribution to the formation and support of the platforms.

7. Conclusions

Globalization, including the liberalization of trade and the increase in the flow of capital across national borders in a variety of forms, has contributed to the growth of international activity of companies and, in general, an increase in the rate of economic growth. The initiators of globalization are the industrially developed countries of the West. Gradually, globalization has created the conditions for the economic and technological breakthrough of developing countries. These countries have become poles of power in their regions, which changed the usual geopolitical map of the world.

In recent decades, a new trend has emerged in international life – transregionalization – the creation of economic associations with a large number of participating countries. At the same time, the determining factor for participation in such alliances is not territorial proximity and the existence of common borders, but common interests. Participation in trans-regional partnerships does not require member states to transfer part of their sovereignty to a supranational level.

The process of regionalization has intensified in the last decade. This is due to the desire of individual countries and groups of countries to protect themselves from the negative aspects of globalization. Moreover, in the modern

world, the tendency of solving international problems at the level of small regional structures is gaining momentum. In the future, this system of international relations, based on a partial and step-by-step, multistage solution of the international cooperation tasks will be further developed.

It is worth noting that as a result of the technical and economic development of recent decades, the world has become largely interdependent. This interdependence should ultimately induce member countries of international relations to solve existing problems together – first of all, on the basis of pragmatic considerations. Rationalization of international relations is a tendency to find solutions that are acceptable to a large number of parties and reduce costs. Rationalization of international relations can receive a special impetus as a result of the interconnection of the global Internet and a new generation of digital technologies. The result can be the formation of a “transparent world” in which the flows of the most important resources and capitals, the actions of different actors and their consequences are “visible” to all interested parties, while illegitimate actions and actions aimed at obtaining unilateral benefits, damage, withdrawal from responsibility, and the same become rather complicated.

¹ As one of the latest examples of states’ desire to defend national sovereignty, Brexit can be mentioned when, following the results of the 2016 referendum, more than half of the UK residents voted to withdraw from the European Union. As the main reasons of Brexit experts call the immigration crisis in Europe, subsidy support for the weaker economies of the European Union, control over social legislation.

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Мир в XXI веке: варианты мироустройства

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В статье представлен анализ современных тенденций, определяющих перспективы нового мироустройства. В ситуации разочарования в идеях глобализма особую остроту принимают вопросы будущего мирового устройства. В работе анализируются причины, обусловившие процессы глобализации во второй половине XX века, а также причины, вызвавшие обратный процесс – стремление стран – участников международных отношений к большей обособленности и самостоятельности в политическом, экономическом и культурном аспектах. Рассмотрены возможные тенденции развития международных отношений: от стремления отдельных стран обособиться от остального мира до стремления стран создавать коалиции на основе общих экономических интересов. В качестве наиболее распространенной формы объединений стран в ближайшие десятилетия авторы называют трансрегиональные экономические партнёрства.

Ключевые слова: международные отношения, многополярный мир, однополярный мир, военно-политические блоки, глобализация, регионализация, трансрегионализм.

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