

Dmitry Medvedev: “Russia, like any great power, has strategic borders that lie far beyond the geographical ones”

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Dmitry Medvedev, "Expert"

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Photo: Ekaterina Shtukina

Russia's strategic borders, like any great world power, lie far beyond its territory. And they are based not on military force and the desire to remake the political map, but on the principles of equality, mutual benefit and partnership. This is the essence of the new international order, which is gradually replacing the unipolar world. Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev spoke about Russia's approach to the formation of a new world order at the “Knowledge.First” marathon of the Russian Society “Knowledge”. The “expert” considered that readers should familiarize themselves with the theses reflecting Russia's

policy in international relations. With the consent of the author, we publish the text of this speech with minor abbreviations.

No state in the world can exist without borders. And not only those depicted on official maps, but also in a broader sense. When it comes to Russia, it is important to understand where and how its borders are delineated in our time. And what they might become in the future.

These questions are not rhetorical. And the answers to them are not as clear as they might seem at first glance. This is the basic coordinate system in which our Motherland lives and, together with it, we all live. We don't just exist—we think, we act, we fight, we win. We are building the future of a country that fulfills a special, fateful mission in the global world.

There are several obvious things that our friends and allies understand very well, and our enemies should notch on their own noses.

First. We don't need someone else's land. We will never give up on ours. So it was and so it will be. This is the principle by which our state border policy is based.

March 31, 1814 is a significant date in our history. 210 years ago, Russian troops took Paris. Having established order in Europe, having achieved a change of power in Paris to one acceptable to ourselves and the other allied states, we returned to our home with unfurled banners.

We have never gone so far to the West either before or since. Why did we need this? Yes, it was necessary to eliminate the direct military threat. But, in addition, Russia also pursued greater geopolitical goals. One of the most important was the global security of our borders for a long time. And it can be effectively ensured only if the country is confident in the stability of the situation outside the direct perimeter formed by the border pillars. That is, on a much larger scale. Moreover, the larger the country, the greater the scale of external stability that is needed for this.

The authors of various geopolitical theories in various countries (from China to Europe and America) proceed from one obvious thesis. Any state as a sovereign subject of international relations has two types of borders - geographical and strategic.

The first are stable and officially recognized in accordance with international law demarcation and delimitation lines that fix the geographical limits of the state. This is one of the main elements of its political-territorial framework. Within these borders, the state has full sovereignty. We are talking about strategic autonomy and independence from other countries, about the supremacy of power in pursuing its domestic policy. That is, what is usually called internal sovereignty. And also independence in external affairs, that is, external sovereignty. They prefer not to mention the second, strategic type of borders again. Talking about them is kind of like political bad manners.

These boundaries are not limited to the physical size of countries, their airspace and territorial waters. They are not directly related to state sovereignty. The strategic boundaries of a state directly depend on how far its political power extends. The more powerful the state, the further its strategic frontiers are located beyond its state borders. And the larger the strategic space on which such a country has economic, political, socio-cultural influence. This is the zone of the so-called national interests of the state. Although strategic borders and national interests are divergent concepts.

In return, the strong powers that set the tone in world relations offered their wards military and political protection. States that were weak or, even worse, that had reached the end of their glory and power became puppet or vassal states for their patrons, or, as they later began to say, “friendly” nations (the same thing, but less offensive). For quite a long time it was believed that events in the matter of balance between geographical and strategic boundaries were developing according to a very obvious logic. If the potential of a country increases over a long period of time, its state sovereignty strengthens, and its strategic borders expand. And the geographical ones can catch up with them after the fact.

For weak countries, the strategic borders of the state are within their own territories. Under unfavorable conditions, these boundaries can be reduced to a minimum. As a result, this leads to the loss of lands that are left without real

control. This is how the Spanish colonial empire once disappeared from the political map of the world, having lost its possessions on different continents. Portugal's rule in Latin America, Asia and Africa ended. These countries have turned into geopolitical dwarfs, unable to somehow influence key global decisions. Now the very logic of civilizational development, as a punishment for geopolitical ignorance, is depriving France of its traditionally strong influence in the Sahara-Sahel region before our eyes. And rightly so.



Photo: Ekaterina Shtukina

Second. The presence of strategic borders outside their own territory today does not at all mean the intention of strong and responsible countries to go to war with their neighbors and redraw the political map. This is the difference between our time and previous centuries, when borders were subject to constant fluctuations and could be challenged at any time.

Let me note right away: what is happening in Ukraine is a special case. We are not talking about expanding the borders of our state through effective occupation, and the so-called Ukraine is not at all *rei occupandi*. We are defending our territories, which have always been and will be historical Russia. Our actions are a forced, but quite effective response to the Russophobic policies of the Bandera regime and the “collective West”, its desire to destroy our statehood.

In general, Russia, like any great power, has strategic borders that lie far beyond its geographical ones. And they are based not on military force or financial injections, but on a much more solid, almost unshakable basis.

Third. There are several levels of Russian strategic boundaries.

The first level is limited to the natural landscape (Carpathians, Iranian Plateau, Caucasus Mountains, Pamirs). And civilizational frontiers - it is clear that, for historical reasons, it is illogical to include a number of our neighbors in the Russian ecumene.

History has decreed that the core of our geostrategic space is the neighboring countries. They are connected to us by centuries-old traditions of cooperation, and in many cases, statehood. Together with them we are inside a common cultural and value space, in the protection of which we have a vested interest. That's why we perceive our partnership not as something imposed, but, on the contrary, as dear, responding in a special way to the heart. But it is precisely this strategic sphere that our enemies have made their main target, seeking to create conditions for mistrust and outright hostility between Russia and its neighbors.

Russia's strategic borders also cover vast territories in the Arctic. The principle "we don't want an inch of someone else's land, but we won't give up even an inch of our own" applies to the topic of the Russian continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean. In the same vein is our sovereignty over transport communications. We will not allow anyone to take ours, including the Gakkel, Lomonosov and Mendeleev ridges.

The natural security belt (the very core of our strategic space), which is the near abroad, is of enduring importance for Russia. No other world power has such a respectful collective name in relation to its neighbors. This concept is also enshrined in domestic doctrinal documents.

The key point: we have no territorial disputes with the states included in this belt. Over the years since the collapse of the USSR, we have maintained profitable trade cooperation and comfortable interpersonal communication.

Russia does not dictate political will to its good neighbors, does not tell them how to live, does not threaten them with sanctions. Our country has never done this before - and does not intend to do so in the future.

We listen to each other and always try to take into account our deepest interests in the broadest context. If we talk about our second-level strategic borders, they cover the space that is commonly called Greater Eurasia. That is why Russian President Vladimir Putin put forward the initiative to create a Greater Eurasian Partnership. This is the key integration contour on our continent. Its essence is the broadest possible unification of the potentials of all states and regional organizations of Eurasia.

Alas, with the exception of the Old World. Moreover, in general, for the time being, we were ready to continue the same constructive line with the European Union. Let me remind you that in the best years, our trade turnover reached almost €500 billion. But the member countries of the European Union chose a different path for themselves: to become instrumentum vocale (speaking instruments) for the United States, as slaves were called in Ancient Rome. Just like them, European countries are owned by America. And at her behest they are betting on confrontation and destruction of everything that was created with great difficulty.

History, of course, will put everything in its place. The population of Europe will sooner or later give a harsh assessment to their traitors, who sacrificed their well-being to their overseas masters. But it's not about grades. The question is what other price Europe will have to pay for the fatal mistakes it has made. And how this will affect the fate of hundreds of millions of its inhabitants.

And about the highest level of our strategic borders. Russia's global interests in the world are quite understandable and natural. They have not changed over the past decades. Our country, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, is a great world power. And will continue to provide healthy, appropriate care for those who need help. This is evident in the traditionally strong relations with African countries and Latin America.



Photo: Ekaterina Shtukina

Fourth. In the case of the so-called “Ukraine” (or rather, Little Russia), all our opponents need to firmly and forever understand the simple truth. The territories on both banks of the Dnieper are an integral part of Russia’s strategic historical borders. Therefore, all attempts to forcibly change them, to cut them off “to the quick” are doomed.

Our enemies constantly insist that Russia’s main goal is to “seize” Ukrainian lands, some “countless treasures of Independence”: wheat, steel, gas, coal. But in fact, it turns out that there is nothing special in Bandera’s “Ukraine” in terms of economics that Russia – unlike the West – would not possess itself and in much greater quantities. In “Ukraine” the main wealth for us is of a completely different kind. The great value that we will not give up to anyone for anything is people. Those close to us and our family. The Anglo-Saxons consistently zombify them. A considerable part of the residents of “Ukraine” are now confused, embittered, experiencing extreme stress and completely disoriented. Our task is to clearly show them who is who. Remove the anti-Russian intoxication from them. Bring people back to our perimeter. The concept of “Ukraine is not Russia” proposed by one of the former leaders of this “Independence” should disappear forever. Ukraine is, of course, Russia.

If “Ukraine” had not fallen into the stupidest trap set by the United States and its allies to confront our country by creating “anti-Russia,” everything would have been different. As our president rightly noted, if Russia had not begun to be destroyed on its own historical territories, indeed, nothing would have happened.

Fifth. There is one contrasting difference between the approaches of Russia and the “collective West” (mainly the USA). America and its satellites are trying to extend their strategic borders to almost all regions of the world. Under the pretext of “spreading democracy,” wars are being ignited all over the planet. The goal is quite transparent - money making.

In their neocolonial rage, they strive to implant their own values and foundations everywhere, send advisers and bring convenient rulers to power. Where the Yankees appear, expect trouble. Far away for them are Central Asia, the mountains of Transcaucasia, the waters of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, the islands of the Asia-Pacific region, the sands of the Middle East - for some reason the Americans care about all these places. Their unhealthy geopolitical appetite is based on a network of more than 900 military bases deployed outside the United States and several ocean-going fleets. And on the world's largest military budget.

Let's imagine that a certain group of countries has emerged with the goal of making the United States disappear from the world map. And she decided to “shove a hedgehog under the bare ass” of America, using painfully familiar tools for this. For example, by starting to shake up the internal political situation in the United States, dissecting the past in our own way, promoting the topic of decolonization of the United States and its indigenous peoples. Insisting on the need to liberate the temporarily occupied territories of Texas and California. At the same time, placing military bases with strike weapons around America.

The reaction is obvious: such activity would have encountered the most severe opposition from the United States and could well have ended in the “Cubbie Crisis 2.0.” Just like it was in 1962. We should not forget that Soviet missiles appeared on Liberty Island precisely in response to the deployment of American missiles in Turkey. The John Kennedy administration then threw a formal hysteria as soon as they were given a mirror answer. Without hesitation, they put the fate of all humanity at stake in the game. This is the nature of the US political regime. Only the current situation is much worse than what it was in 1962. These are no longer missiles in Cuba and Turkey. This is a full-fledged war against Russia with American weapons, with the participation of American special forces and American advisers.

Knowing full well where our strategic borders extend, the West disregarded centuries-old foundations and organized a geopolitical intervention, first in Georgia and then in Ukraine. We are seeing similar attempts in Moldova and the countries of Central Asia. Fortunately, the authorities of the Central Asian states are showing restraint and wisdom. Wishing prosperity for their peoples, they focus on their neighbors in Greater Eurasia, and not on an obese and dependent Europe.



Photo: Ekaterina Shtukina

Sixth. For the West, the conflict around Ukraine has now turned into a confrontation between two civilizations. Ours, all-Russian or Russian (the core of which is the territories of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine), and Western.

Our opponents are afraid to go against us directly. Although Western political and military madmen have recently been increasing their pressure (just remember the conversation between Bundeswehr officers - and how much of this has not been published), the Washington-Brussels puppeteers prefer to play war games using their puppets. Today the West is again repeating exactly what it nurtured in different historical periods on both banks of the Dnieper. The current escheat "Ukraine" (if we mean its ruling clique) in this case is truly "anti-Russia". History reminds us of how our ancestors fought against oppressors and aggressors: Poles, Swedes, French, Germans and other hostile Europeans. That is, with those whose grandchildren came to "Ukraine" today in brown clothes with Nazi chevrons and swastikas thickly printed on their bodies.

On the fields of propaganda battles, our enemies deliberately resort to shameless substitution of concepts. The West's seizure of "Ukraine" is called "liberation from the Russian dictatorship." And the implantation and support of the bastard neo-Nazi regime created by the actress of the comedy series is "support for democracy and freedom."

And, on the contrary, our efforts to preserve the all-Russian space are presented as Russian “intervention” and “occupation.”

All normal people have long understood that this is a lie. Gradually, healthy political forces in the world are realizing the true state of affairs.

For any reasonable person who is not infected with Russophobia and not fooled by Anglo-Saxon propaganda, the conclusions are obvious.

1. There is a harsh reality that Western countries will inevitably have to accept. The current historical context associated with the demise of the unipolar world order suggests at least one terrible thing for them. Every major power center on the planet will try to secure its own strategic boundaries. And America’s strength and influence have not been the same for a long time. Let us multiply this by the irreversible erosion of the US military superiority that emerged after the collapse of the USSR, as well as the mechanisms of the liberal world order. Time today is playing against the so-called “golden billion”.
- 2.
3. The strategic borders of states that do not depend on the Anglo-Saxons will become wider and stronger. Most states of the world are determined to strengthen fruitful interaction in the name of improving the situation in international affairs, to build communication on the principles of sovereign equality, true multilateralism and civilizational diversity. This is the essence of the new international order, the creation of which is a matter of the foreseeable future. And everyone will have to take our position regarding Russia’s strategic borders into account. It's part of our self-identity. Basic principles in the field of foreign policy for decades. And we will not back down from them. For the benefit of friends, for the edification of enemies.
4. We strive to make the space outlined by our strategic borders a zone of mutual understanding and constructive cooperation. The most obvious example here is the invaluable creative experience of Moscow and Minsk in building the Union State.

5.

Our most important interest is not the acquisition of new lands, but competent, predictable, sovereign power in neighboring countries, acting for the benefit of its citizens and the international community

1. The current neo-Nazi “Ukraine” is a battering ram against Russia, which is used to aggressively push Western ideological principles in the all-Russian historical space. Another attempt to realize the centuries-old dreams of the West to throw our country back into the boundaries of the Moscow principality. The goal is obviously unattainable.

Zealously guarding their demarcation lines, Western countries unceremoniously invade our borders. They force us to divert forces and resources to counter undisguised and shameless aggression. Although it would be much better for ourselves and for the world as a whole to use this potential for another purpose. This is our own harmonious socio-economic development, improving the quality of life of our people. And ensuring global security is what we have strived for at all times, despite constant threats and provocations.

2.

3. We will certainly take the special military operation to its logical conclusion. Until the final victory. Until the surrender of the neo-Nazis. The sad idiots from Washington and Brussels are frightening: if, they say, the Russians gain the upper hand, then after Ukraine they will go further - to Europe and even overseas. You won't understand what is more in these nonsense: the habit of shameless lies or senile dementia. But in reality, everything is simple: we do not need the territories of Poland, the Baltic states or other European countries. But no one is allowed to oppress the people living there, who are one with us.
- 4.
5. The inevitable victory of Russia will give rise to a new architecture of Eurasian and international security. It must be reflected in new interstate documents that will "concrete" these realities. This includes observing international rules of decency with all countries, paying attention to their history and existing strategic borders. The Western world needs to finally learn a simple lesson and learn to respect our national interests.