

## A Different Type of Russian-U.S. Relations

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The near half a century of the Cold War between the USSR and the U.S. and the subsequent 15 years of "NATO enlargement" created in the heads of both the Russians and the Americans a stereotype based on the perception of each other as almost natural geopolitical rivals, doomed to confrontation, if not by geography, then by history.

Meanwhile, almost throughout the entire historical coexistence of the North American United States and the Russian Empire, their relationship served as a model of loyalty and mutual benefit.

### Diplomatic Idyll

There was plenty of reason for that - starting with shared complex feelings in respect to the UK, which was seen by the ruling circles in both countries as a treacherous Albion. Not surprisingly, back in 1775, Catherine the Great categorically turned down King George III's request for military aid against the rebellious colonists. In 1780, at the height of military operations, Russia came out with the well known Declaration of Armed Neutrality (clearly anti-British).

It is also impossible to ignore the sense of our natural geopolitical complementarity: The continental role of the North American state in the Western Hemisphere and of the Eurasian empire in the Eastern Hemisphere was rather similar. It was no accident that in 1814, just a few years after Russia had established diplomatic relations with America, Emperor Alexander I was highly instrumental in facilitating the signing of the Treaty of Ghent, the peace treaty that ended the War of 1812 between the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. During that war, incidentally, British expeditionary forces captured and burned Washington, a fact that those on the Potomac banks prefer not to bring up today. Although at the time, during its wars with Napoleon, it was not the main theater of military operations.

The Russian-American Treaty on Trade and Navigation (1832) established the most favored nation principle in commerce, providing tangible confirmation of the two countries' complementarity in the economic realm.

Russia did not belong in the category of old European colonial powers and neither did the US. Therefore, the Monroe Doctrine, which proclaimed that European powers would no longer colonize or interfere with the affairs of the nations of the Americas, was subsequently treated with understanding in Russia. After all, it went alongside the continental foreign policy isolationism, a principle proclaimed by the founding fathers: Both G. Washington and T. Jefferson believed that the American republic must stay out of Old World conflicts.

The acquisition of French Louisiana and Mexican Texas, as well as the 1846-48 war with Mexico, as a result of which Arizona, New Mexico and California became American states, was regarded as a natural striving by the Union to expand within natural geographic borders. Furthermore, the U.S.'s first colonial experiments against the Spanish in Cuba and the Philippines, in 1898, were regarded as the application of the Monroe Doctrine rather than as the start of a new foreign policy course, pursued by a power with global ambitions.

Not surprisingly, during the Civil War between the North and South, Russia, without a second's hesitation, took the side of Lincoln's Union government - unlike, for example, the British or the French Empire, which recognized the Confederate States of America as a warring side.

After all, several years prior to that, during the 1853-56 Crimean War, the United States, while maintaining official neutrality, provided Russia with essential diplomatic support, unlike its traditional allies, Prussia and Austria.

Considering the legitimacy and the striving for the status quo as the natural characteristics of Russia's foreign policy, it was important that officially, Lincoln was waging that war under the purportedly democratic, legitimist slogans - for the preservation of a strong and powerful Union, against the southern separatists. (Although it must be acknowledged that the states that had left the Union had every legal right for doing that.)

Needless to say, no one in Russia's ruling circles at the time was concerned with such lofty and contradictory issues underlying the Civil War as the resistance of the traditional mode of life and economic setup to capitalization, as well as the struggle between "free trade" and "protectionism." Incidentally, at the time, the "reactionary Southerners" supported the freedom of trade, since the purely commodity based economy of the cotton growing South depended on the use of natural rent, whereas the "progressive Northerners," determined to protect their domestic manufacturers, favored a tough protectionist customs policy.

In addition to that, Abraham Lincoln, already in war, on January 1, 1863, issued the famous Emancipation Proclamation, turning, right before the international community's eyes, a war against separatists into a war against slavery.

A few years prior to that, Russia had already abolished serfdom - the peasants' dependence on landlords, which was not, of course, slavery in the direct, American sense of the word, but which, for propaganda purposes, was cast in exactly that way. Therefore, the St. Petersburg imperial government, which was quite liberally minded at the time, evidently could not but support the defenders of free labor.

At the same time, President Lincoln himself was not necessarily pushing for the absolute and immediate abolition of slavery in the southern states or for the destruction of the contemporary economic setup. He was on record as saying that he would prefer to preserve the Union but, if possible, without the abolition of slavery. Furthermore, the famous Proclamation only declared the emancipation of the slaves in the enemy camp, not in the Union states.

In 1863-64, the Russian Ministry of the Navy sent two squadrons (under the command of Admirals A. A. Popov and S. S. Lesovskii) to the US Pacific and Atlantic coast to study the possibility of cruising those waters. At the time, there was a real danger of Great Britain and France attacking Russia, preoccupied with putting down the Europe

incited insurrection in Russian Poland (the Austrian Poles took a low profile, whereas the Prussian Poles were being gradually assimilated by the Germans).

But in addition to that - to the mutual consent of the St. Petersburg and Washington Cabinets - the visits by the Russian squadrons to New York, Boston and San Francisco, as well as the official events that accompanied those visits, became the evident confirmation of Russia's support for Lincoln's Union government, as well as an opportunity for the Americans to show their friendly feelings toward Russia.

M. N. Katkov, the most influential Russian journalist at the time, described the United States as "our natural and reliable ally" <sup>1</sup> in case a European war broke out. The prominent Russian conservative considered the United States to be Russia's closest ally: After all, we had no cause for serious rivalry. (Incidentally, that view was shared even by such an avowed revolutionary democrat as A. Herzen. <sup>2</sup>

Even so, it has to be acknowledged that the Russian advocates of a rapprochement with the United States used such a diplomatic term as "union" a little bit too often. And it seemed that they defined it rather differently than the way it was defined in the American diplomatic tradition. Consider: back in 1796, at the end of his presidential term, George Washington stated in no uncertain terms that the U.S. real policy was to stay out of permanent alliances in any part of the outside world. Thomas Jefferson, in his 1801 inauguration speech, reiterated the fundamental principle of American foreign policy: "Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none."

In reality, one should only have talked about mutually beneficial, long-term cooperation with the United States, which is a worthy goal of any diplomatic efforts.

But the perception about the possibility of "Union" like relations between the two not quite European countries were at that time quite common both in Russia and in America. So when in April 1866 the news came about the attempt on the life of Alexander II (by revolutionary Karakozov), not only U.S. President Andrew Jackson sent congratulations to the Russian emperor on his lucky escape but also both houses of Congress adopted a joint resolution with greetings and best wishes to the emperor and the people of Russia. The resolution was taken to Russia by an extraordinary mission, which was led by Assistant Secretary of the Navy Gustavus Vasa Fox.

The mission was given a cordial reception in St. Petersburg, which had a certain political significance, obvious to the guests, the hosts and the diplomatic corps of the European countries. Both Emperor Alexander II and the broad circles of Russian society (the aristocracy, the merchant class, the military and even ordinary people in the street) demonstrated utterly friendly feelings toward the Americans.

The American delegation visited a large number of military installations. Like the Russian naval delegation in the States in 1863, the Americans in Russia in 1866 received the military and military-industrial information in which they were interested: Russian-American cooperation had begun back during the Crimean War and continued without interruption right until the October 1917 coup.

It was in that socio-political environment - without so much as a hint at any threat for the Russian Empire from the United States - that Russian possessions in North America were ceded in 1867.

Back in the spring of 1853, shortly before the Crimean War, N. N. Murav'ev-Amurskii, the legendary governor general of East Siberia, submitted to Emperor Nicholas

I a memo concerning the need to strengthen Russia's positions on the Amur River and the Sakhalin Island, as well as the importance of closer relations with Washington. "The dominance of the North American States in entire Northern America is as natural as it is natural for Russia, if not to control entire East Asia, at least to dominate the entire Asian coast of the Eastern Ocean," Murav'ev-Amurskii wrote.

After the Crimean War, in 1857, similar argumentation was used by Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich, who insisted that our empire "must make every effort to consolidate its positions at the center, in those indigenous Russian territories that, in their ethnicity and faith, constitute its core, primary force." <sup>3</sup> He was backed by, among others, Admiral E. V. Putiatin, who had made a substantial contribution to asserting Russia's positions in the Far East.

At the same time, it should be borne in mind that the imperial government strove to develop vast East Siberian and Far Eastern tracts of land and stage a rapprochement with the United States not at just any price. Thus, for example, the Baikal-Amur railway project, first put forward by an American, P. Collins, was dismissed by the Russian authorities in 1857 as "premature," despite its evident economic advantages. In particular, they deemed inexpedient - in the absence of a railroad from central Russia to Irkutsk - to link East Siberia (Far East) to foreign markets and make the province's domestic interests dependent on other countries' interests. Political and strategic considerations, not surprisingly, prevailed over economic considerations.

Therefore, the treaty had been prepared amid such secrecy that it took France and Britain, as well as the entire "post-Crimean" Europe, completely by surprise. London's annoyance and concern were quite predictable: After all, the Russian-U.S. Treaty (1867) not only made Russia and the United States close neighbors, but also enabled the Americans to surround British possession in North America from all sides. As P. A. Valuev, Russia's liberal minister of internal affairs (irked either by the treaty or the secrecy of its preparation) wrote in his diary, "We are selling a part of our territory on the quiet, and doing a disservice to Great Britain, whose Canadian possessions are now seen increasingly at odds with the Monroe Doctrine." <sup>4</sup>

By the beginning of the 20th century, the relationship between the Russian Empire and the North American United States was not encumbered by any significant friction. It was also not an accident that the Americans responded positively to Emperor Nicholas II's initiative to call the Second International Disarmament Conference in an effort to stop or at least slow the arms race. In 1899, the conference took place in The Hague, but the European great powers were unable to overcome their distrust and resentment: Disarmament failed to materialize. (Although an international arbitration commission for the pacific settlement of international disputes was set up in The Hague.) But in 1904, the idea was backed by young American President Theodor Roosevelt, and in 1907, the Russian tsar summoned a second conference. A large number of international agreements on rules pertaining to the conduct of war and protection of international trade were signed, although no binding decisions on arms limitation were made. Europe still relied on military force.

Growing Pains

First cracks appeared in the Russian-US relationship in December 1911, when, under pressure from the U.S. pro-revolutionary lobby, President W. H. Taft declared the termination of the Russian-U.S. trade agreement - starting January 1, 1913 (December 19, 1912 according to the Old Style Russian calendar) - which had been signed 80 years prior to that. (The cooling of relations did not last very long, however, and already in September 1914, a Russian-U.S. treaty on pacific settlement of disputes was signed, which entered into force in March 1915.)

That happened following what would today be considered a quirk: The persistent refusal by the imperial government to permit a certain category of American citizens to enter Russia was regarded as a violation of the letter of the 1832 interstate trade agreement. That referred to former Russian subjects who had shortly prior to that had been naturalized in the United States following their emigration or expulsion from Russia for their revolutionary activities.

They were, in effect, subversive elements, former Russian revolutionaries. Many of them were Jewish, so it was not very difficult for their supporters and sponsors in the U.S. to portray the anti-revolutionary (counter terrorist in today's jargon) measures of the imperial government as anti-Jewish.

It must be said that the Taft administration strongly resisted the pressure of "public opinion" and the narrow-minded liberals in Congress, who were outraged by the fact that Russia had refused to grant visas to "law-abiding American citizens." But despite the White House's attempts to defuse the conflict, by December 1911, the House of Representatives adopted a rather tough resolution abrogating the 1832 Russian-American trade agreement, and then it was to go before the Senate.

To prevent the Senate vote and to avoid more serious diplomatic consequences, President Taft preferred to go it alone and announced the abrogation of the treaty in full compliance with the text of the treaty but without any reference to political complaints against Russia. The treaty was simply declared void on grounds that it was obsolete and did not completely respond to the needs of political and economic relations between the two countries. Secretary of State Philander Knox did all he could to explain the situation to the Russian Foreign Ministry, in which the U.S. president had to take such a serious step. In a note declaring the abrogation of the treaty, the head of the U.S. diplomatic service wrote:

"I am instructed to express the desire of my Government, meanwhile, to renew the effort to negotiate a modern treaty of friendship, commerce, and navigation, upon bases more perfectly responsive to the interests of both Governments. I am directed by the President at the same time to emphasize the great value attached by the Government of the United States to the historic relations between the two countries, and the desire of my Government to spare no effort to make the outcome of the proposed negotiations contribute still further to the strength and cordiality of these relations." 5

The Foreign Ministry of Russia, which was at the time in a state of undeclared war with revolutionary terrorism, refused or was unable to regard the US actions other than as hostile. Although the proposed formula of notification about the abrogation of the treaty (by mutual consent) enabled both the Washington administration and the St. Petersburg Cabinet to save face.

Minister Sazonov's official reply to the note did not go beyond the bounds of cold politeness, but his conversation with the American ambassador in St. Petersburg

reflected, like in a drop of water, the entire contemporary (as well as ongoing) difficulties of mutual understanding by the political classes of both countries of each other's political realities. The content of that meaningful conversation was presented in a telegram to Washington dated December 16, 1911.

An avowed liberal and patriot (and even a "liberal imperialist," as was usually the case in Europe before World War), Minister Sazonov told Ambassador Guild that "the United States should deliberately consider the sacrifice of a present and prospective market of hundreds of millions of dollars, knowing that Russia in return sold so very little to the United States."

For his part, the ambassador explained to Sazonov that "the nature of the American people was completely misunderstood in Europe; that the nation was in no way materialistic in its temperament, but on the contrary was more easily appealed to by questions of sentiment where the appeal was made on the ground of humanity and civilization than any other nation in the world; and that, whether mistaken or not, if they believed in a cause they were ready to make any sacrifice for its accomplishment." He also said that "from the American point of view absolute freedom of speech and freedom of movement appeared to be the best cure for treason and conspiracy."

In response, Sazonov "very courteously but with much emphasis declared that what might be true in America was not true in Russia and that the United States did not appreciate the Russian situation." He also confirmed that "the Russian Government, while refusing, as a matter of principle, to accept any Jew whom the United States chooses to send, regardless of his character or previous record as a violator of Russian laws, yet is perfectly willing to admit for temporary sojourn any respectable American Jew who can show reasonable grounds why, for business affairs, it is necessary that he should visit Russia."

Sazonov repeated in substance that "Russia could never accept a policy of absolutely free admission, by which the United States or any other nation would be given the power to send back into Russia a Jewish Nihilist, for example, to plot against the Empire, merely on the ground that he had remained long enough out of Russia to be naturalized as a foreign subject or citizen." 6

Mutual misunderstanding between the sides was evident.

The Russian European liberal for some reason expected from representatives of one of the most religious countries in the world "a purely market" approach to the issue at hand, even though it was moral and political rather than economic.

The American liberal had no more reason to expect from the Russian emperor, whose grandfather had fallen victim to revolutionary terror and whose government had for several years been fighting mass terror (which killed thousands of officials and innocent passersby), permission of "absolute freedom of movement."

Evidently, neither representative of the great powers was prepared for real dialogue.

Meanwhile, today, such an intensive discussion of visa procedures regulating relations between sovereign governments with respect to "undesirable foreigners" may not but appear surprising to anyone who is familiar with the current visa procedures used by the U.S. Embassy in Moscow - even prior to September 11.

But after the USA Patriot Act was adopted and the so-called war on terror declared by the United States on a global scale, American "neo-cons" (descending mostly

from former Trotskyites) actively supported the tightening of all administrative restrictions, including visa restrictions. None of them preferred to recall anymore the strange democratic prejudices of more than a centuries ago, like, for example, the one to the effect that "absolute freedom of speech and freedom of movement appears to be the best cure for treason and conspiracy, by removing any possible grievance."

It was only when a revolution took place in Russia that the heads of both supporters and opponents of the revolution suddenly cleared.

At first, the American liberals were overjoyed. As Ambassador Francis wrote in his telegram from St. Petersburg, that revolution was the embodiment of the principle of governance that the Americans supported and defended. <sup>7</sup> The United States became the first country that, as early as March 20, 1917, formally recognized the revolutionary Provisional government which came to power (presumably in accordance with the principle of governance so dear to official Washington) as a result of a military coup and uprising by a group of starry-eyed Duma liberals and nationalists.

But just a few years after the "visa crisis," the avowed American liberals had a chance to see that the Russian imperial government had been right in doing what it did. Already by late 1919, following a rise in Communist propaganda in the United States, Washington had to resort to similar measures with respect to the so-called anarchists, the use of which by St. Petersburg toward "revolutionary elements" caused Russian-U.S. disagreements in 1911. (The Americans, whose political mythology is revolutionary through and through, preferred to use the term "anarchists" to refer to subversive anti-state elements.)

In early December 1919, U.S. Secretary of State Robert Lansing directed the US ambassador to Riga to get in contact with the unrecognized Riga regime on the matter of sending to Soviet Russia about 150 foreigners of Russian descent through Latvian ports. On December 23 of the same year, in a telegram to the U.S. Ambassador to the UK (Davis) cited different figures and was more eloquent: "There are being deported from the United States to Soviet Russia about 250 citizens of Russia who are undesirable here. These persons, while enjoying the hospitality of this country, have conducted themselves in a most obnoxious manner; and while enjoying the benefits and living under the protection of this Government have plotted its overthrow. They are a menace to law and order. They hold theories which are antagonistic to the orderly processes of modern civilization. They have indulged in practices which tend to subvert the rights which the Constitution of the United States guarantees to its citizens. They are arrayed in opposition to government, to decency, to justice. They plan to apply their destructive theories by violence in derogation of law. They are anarchists. They are persons of such character as to be undesirable in the United States of America and are being sent whence they came. The deportation is in accordance with the law." <sup>8</sup>

I believe that the Russian authorities, in 1911, could have used exactly the same language to describe undesirable foreigners with American passports who "indulged in violent practices, in derogation of law" on Russian territory.

But at the time, neither the media nor the majority of U.S. Congress members wanted to hear anything about applying universal principles to specific conditions in a particular country.

The history of our relations with the United States (as well as American history per se) abounds in such ironic paraphrases.

## Single and Indivisible

Today, some rather important events and trends in the Russian-U.S. relationship have somehow been forgotten. Only a few will remember that the only force defending the integrity of Russian territory at the most difficult time was the U.S. State Department.

Throughout the Russian Civil War, American diplomacy maintained remarkable firmness on two issues - non-recognition of the Bolshevik government and preservation of the territorial integrity of historical Russia. The U.S. State Department was defending that integrity firmly and consistently, despite the apparent financial gains involved in the deal with the Bolsheviks.

In a memorandum to President W. Wilson, the U.S. secretary of state (B. Colby) acknowledged that "Russia is among the largest factors in the complicated system of production and distribution by which the world is clothed and fed."<sup>9</sup> But unlike the New York business circles, which were actively looking for the most effective methods of making money with the Bolsheviks, American diplomacy did not forget about the non-material component of foreign policy.

In their time, the Americans amply paid for their own unity and integrity. Not surprisingly, on August 10, 1920, U.S. Secretary of State B. Colby, in a letter to the Italian ambassador, Baron Avezana, explained his department's position on the issue of Russia's territorial integrity: "This Department <...> has been persistent in refusing to recognize the Baltic States as independent states apart from Russia. This Government feels that no permanent and just settlement of Eastern European affairs can be thus attained. The revulsion felt by the civilized world against the tyranny now holding Russia in its power is shared by this Government. This tyranny disregards all principles upon which dealings and relations between nations are founded and is not freely chosen by any considerable part of the people of Russia. A permanent and wise solution of the problem of Russia, it would seem, cannot be reached until there is put into effect a plan whereby all elements of the Russian people will be represented effectively for the consideration of the reciprocal needs, political and economic, of the different regions which made up Imperial Russia. Such a solution is vitally important to both Europe and Asia. In spite of the fact that the American Government does not see any immediate prospect of achieving such a result, it thinks that a decision arrived at in any international conference to recognize as independent governments the factions which now exercise some degree of control over territory which was part of Imperial Russia, and to establish their relationships and boundaries, is not advisable and will seriously prejudice the future of Russia and an enduring peace.

"Dispositions of this sort must prove to be temporary and without doubt would fall when faced by a restored Russia resolved to vindicate its territorial integrity and unity.

"The fact that Soviet leaders show indifference to certain losses of territory is without doubt explained by zeal for propaganda to spread their economic and social views, and by the feeling that peace, even though it be at the cost of Russian territory, provides the best medium for propaganda and intrigue, weapons which they would rather use than armed force. There is no doubt that their own armies, containing with the existing regime, give them some cause for fear." <sup>10</sup>

In the same memo, B. Colby wrote that "The United States maintains unimpaired its faith in the Russian people, in their high character and their future. That they will overcome the existing anarchy, suffering and destitution we do not entertain the slightest doubt. The distressing character of Russia's transition has many historical parallels, and the United States is confident that restored, free and united Russia will again take a leading place in the world, joining with the other free nations in upholding peace and orderly justice.

"Until that time shall arrive the United States feels that friendship and honor require that Russia's interests must be generously protected, and that, as far as possible, all decisions of vital importance to it, and especially those concerning its sovereignty over the territory of the former Russian Empire, be held in abeyance. By this feeling of friendship and honorable obligation to the great nation whose brave and heroic self-sacrifice, contributed so much to the successful termination of the war, the Government of the United States was guided in its reply to the Lithuanian National Council, on October 15, 1919, and in its persistent refusal to recognize the Baltic States as separate nations independent of Russia. The same spirit was manifested in the note of this Government, of March 24, 1920, in which it was stated, with reference to certain proposed settlements in the Near East, that "no final decision should or can be made without the consent of Russia."

"In line with these important declarations of policy, the United States withheld its approval from the decision of the Supreme Council at Paris recognizing the independence of the so-called republics of Georgia and Azerbaijan, and so instructed its representative in Southern Russia, Rear Admiral Newton A. McCully. Finally, while gladly giving recognition to the independence of Armenia, the Government of the United States has taken the position that the final determination of its boundaries must not be made without Russia's cooperation and agreement. Not only is Russia concerned because a considerable part of the territory of the new State of Armenia, when it shall be defined, formerly belonged to the Russian Empire: equally important is the fact that Armenia must have the good will and the protective friendship of Russia if it is to remain independent and free."

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It was only on October 4 that L. Martens, an unofficial representative of Soviet Russia to the United States, received an opportunity to present to Baron Avezana G. Chicherin's opinion on the note.

The Soviet commissar readily repeated the opinion of the German ultranationalist journalist M. Harden, who, back in 1905, wrote that "Russia was in fact a colonial land which must be governed in a business-like manner by commercial agents and clerks of business firms." 12

The anti-British component of the U.S. policy did not elude G. Chicherin, who wrote that "Mr. Colby, in his desire to maintain the integrity of the Tsarist territory, not merely dissents from Britain's policy, but is actually engaged in a struggle against her policy. Obviously the groups he represents perceive that other, viz., British, interests have established themselves in the new states separated from Russia, and Mr. Colby sees no other way of combating those interests than to abolish the independence of these states."

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It was not State Department officials but diplomats of the Leninist school who spoke at that time about "oppressed nationalities," supporting the independence of "new states, separated from Russia."

There are several explanations of why during the Civil War in Russia the United States had only recognized the independence of three former Russian provinces - Armenia, Poland and Finland, refusing to recognize other parts of the Russian empire as independent states.

The fact is that American philanthropists had for years campaigned against the Ottoman Empire for the anti-Armenian reprisals by the Young Turks, helping the numerous Armenian refugees from Turkey. So after Russia de facto withdrew from the war and Mustafa Kemal Pasha's people came to power, the United States had no other option but to offer the Armenians protection under "international law" by recognizing the independence of the newly formed Armenian state (but without the delimitation or demarcation of its borders).

As for the Polish question, it was among the "humanitarian legends" of Western diplomacy. Not surprisingly, when, by late 1918, all three empires, which had in their time divided up the territory of former Rzeczpospolita, collapsed, Washington recognized the independence of the new Polish state. Furthermore, the Duchy of Warsaw, created by Napoleon and transferred under Russian control in 1815 by the resolution of the Vienna Congress, unlike the Polish lands of Germany and Austria, preserved its national makeup, calling itself Polish Kingdom: The Russian emperors were at the same time Polish monarchs.

As far as Finland is concerned, by 1917, it already had a high degree of "international legal personality" [the ability to act, exercise rights, bear duties within the system of international law]: The former Swedish province, in the early 19th century, it became an autonomous Grand Duchy with the Russian Empire, and the Russian monarch ruled it as the Grand Duke of Finland. It minted its own currency, while Russian subjects on Finnish territory were regarded as foreigners. It was as Grand Duchy (in the absence of the monarch ruled by the regent) that Finland secured recognition by the United States and Europe in 1917-18.

But the Baltic provinces were under the direct sovereignty of Russian monarchs. That was why the local separatist leaders found themselves in such a difficult situation when they attempted to gain "international recognition" not only from the Bolsheviks but also from the Europeans and the Americans.

Before the Reds' military victory in the Civil War, the governments of all countries in alliance with Russia proceeded from the need of preserving its territorial integrity. In 1919, French General A. Niessel received the following instructions: Allied and friendly governments, even though they are opposed to the division of Russia and intend to restore its unity, consider it fair to ensure the internal independence that had been gained by the Baltic countries.<sup>14</sup> ("Internal independence" probably meant autonomy and self-government.)

Soviet Russia was the first to recognize Estonia, in February 2, 1920. It was only after Gen. Vrangel's defeat that Russia's allies, the UK and France, after hesitating for a year, recognized Estonia and Latvia, in January 1921, and Lithuania, in December 1921.

The Americans waited the longest: In 1919-1921, the State Department responded rather coldly to persistent appeals from the Lithuanian, Estonian and Latvian authorities

for diplomatic recognition. Furthermore, even the advocates of such recognition within the U.S. diplomatic service were putting forward "pro-Russian" arguments. Thus the U.S. representative to Riga (Young), in the summer of 1920, reported to Washington:

"The leading men here are under no illusions as to the future relation of these states to Russia and realize full well that with an orderly, well established government in Russia the Baltic Provinces will in time again become a part of what will probably be a federated Russia. With a view to assisting in bringing into being the very thing for which our Russian policy stands, I strongly recommend the immediate de facto recognition of the three states, to be followed in the near future, if conditions continue as at present, with a de jure recognition of Latvia and Lithuania, coupled with a reservation or statement to the effect that this recognition shall in no way be interpreted as a deviation from our policy of leaving to future adjustment the determination of the relations which shall exist between these states and a new Russia. Estonia must wait until she clears herself from the taint of Bolshevism." 15

The fact was that contrary to legends, the Baltic regimes had never overindulged in anti-Communist activities. While in 1919, German and Baltic volunteers, 16 together with Russian White Guards were shedding their blood fighting Bolsheviks, all of those 'ulmanises-paatses' were ready to form an alliance with just anybody for the sake of seizing and retaining power on their home turf.

Later in 1919, the Estonian authorities did all that they could to prevent the Northwestern Army under Gen. N. N. Iudenich's command from capturing Petrograd and then hindered the dispatch of its units to the Denikin Front. The government of Jan Tynisson (former deputy of the State Duma) was so strongly opposed to the idea of making Estonia a "base of Russian reactionary forces," seeking peace with the Bolsheviks, that it ordered its army to completely disarm the Russian White Guards - the volunteers who were defending Revel (Tallinn) from the Reds in the 1918-19 winter. The Estonians not only captured all weapons, military depots of the Northwestern Army, and steam engines and railway cars, but also looted the property of Russian army officers.

In January 1920, the Estonian authorities decided to start playing for big stakes. When Gen. N. N. Iudenich, following the disbandment of his army, attempted to go to Europe, he was suddenly arrested - in effect, held hostage to ransom. The hot-headed Estonian "anti-Communists" were expecting to grab the Russian money allotted to former officers of the Northwestern Army as "severance pay." Needless to say, Gen. N. N. Iudenich refused even to discuss the plan, but it was only a demarche by allied missions that prevented his deportation to Soviet Russia: The train carrying the general was already headed for the border.

U.S. diplomats had to intervene when in March-April 1920, shortly before a treaty with Soviet Russia was signed, the authorities of "independent and democratic Estonia" started registering "former Northwestern Army officers whose extradition to Soviet Russia will be demanded by Bolsheviks." It was only a direct threat from the U.S. State Department to halt food supplies to Estonia that was able to stop the most fervent business partners of the Lenin government.<sup>17</sup>

Not surprisingly, the Americans were rather skeptical about the human qualities of the Baltic politicians and the seriousness of their prospects for the future. Evan E. Young, in April 1922, wrote to Washington: "It is idle at this time to discuss the question as to whether the Letts, the Estonians and the Lithuanians were morally justified in

proclaiming their independence in the hour of Russia's weakness. The simple fact is that these nationalities, though unquestionably animated by nationalistic aspirations, preferred the creation and establishment of what may be termed modern civilized governments to their existence either as a part of Soviet Russia under a communistic regime or with the status of autonomous soviet republics. Whatever their future may be, it is certain that their action in proclaiming their independence has resulted in the maintenance of at least this part of the former Russian Empire free from the ravages and destruction of communism and bolshevism.

" <...> Rather does it seem that through a certain measure of encouragement to the so-called States one may make certain that this part of Russia will remain free from the ravages of the present Moscow regime." 18

### Recognizing the Obvious

It was not until after the Reds achieved a final factory and the hopes for restoring historical Russia disappeared that Washington decided to grant diplomatic recognition of "the governments in the Baltic provinces" - moreover, under rather instructive circumstances and in a rather didactic manner.

When it became necessary for the Republicans to win, in Massachusetts elections, the support of voters of Baltic descent, their Senate leader, Lodge, urged U.S. President W. Harding to recognize the Baltic governments as soon as possible. President W. Harding agreed, and on July 21, 1922 gave his Secretary of State C. Hughes instructions to announce their recognition without delay: At the time U.S. foreign policy was equally dependent on the votes of new immigrants as it was on the opinion of diplomatic experts and politicians.

The U.S. secretary of state (Hughes) carried out the directive the following day, but deemed it necessary, on July 25, 1922 to provide a special explanation on that matter: "The United States has consistently maintained that the disturbed conditions of Russian affairs may not be made the occasion for the alienation of Russian territory, and this principle is not deemed to be infringed by the recognition at this time of the Governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania which have been set up and maintained by an indigenous population."19

Evidently there were no formal reasons for the years-long policy of non-recognition of the Moscow government: The principal causes were of a purely moral, cultural, civilizational, and political, not economic character.

Yet it was only 10 years later, under President F.D. Roosevelt, that the Americans agreed to recognize the obvious and to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. That recognition was in full compliance with the behests of the founding fathers with respect to "peace, friendship and commerce" with all countries, whatever their political regime might be. Furthermore, throughout the post-revolutionary period, American business circles were demonstrating to government officials the obvious advantages from trade with the USSR. According to the Handbook of the Soviet Union, published in 1936 by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 20 U.S. exports to the USSR had grown almost 200 percent in the 1924-1931 period, as had the U.S. balance of trade. During the six years of Great Depression, U.S. exports of industrial, power engineering,

and agricultural equipment, motor vehicles and components to the USSR had reached 8 percent of total US exports.

At the same time U.S. diplomacy was unable to deny the sheer "right to revolution" or judge a particular regime on grounds of legitimacy.

Therefore, as soon as the Soviet Union expressed its readiness to play according to the generally accepted rules of international diplomacy, while Hitler demonstrated to Washington that it was not always necessary to worry about "people's will," the most serious impediments to the diplomatic recognition of the Soviet regime disappeared. Especially given that the USSR had agreed to pay the Americans the debt of the Provisional Government - not directly, of course, but in the form of additional interest on new loans.

### Unsurprising

The Americans' anti-separatist diplomatic rhetoric and politics is quite explicable. The fact is that the US's entire political history shows that during the first one and a half centuries of its existence, the country was the least of all interested in supporting revolutionary regimes or participating in the revolutionary re-carving of the world's political map.

Ten years after their victory in the revolutionary war for independence (the full costs of which were, as a matter of fact, paid by the French crown, not the Continental Congress), the U.S. authorities flatly refused to have anything to do with the Jacobin revolutionaries.

Later, in 1919, the U.S. Congress refused to ratify the Versailles Treaty, an absolutely revolutionary document in its goals and effects, whose authors had attempted, in place of the ruined Austro-Hungarian Empire, to create a system of so-called nation-states, but ended up with the continuation of the world war. Although the administration of W. Wilson, an interventionist president, took an active part in drafting the treaty, Congress remained adamant.

Two years before the Monroe Doctrine was proclaimed, in 1821, one of its authors, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams (the future U.S. president), declared in no uncertain terms that America "goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy.

"She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all. She is the champion and vindicator only of her own. She will commend the general cause by the countenance of her voice, and the benignant sympathy of her example.

"She well knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own, were they even the banners of foreign independence, she would involve herself beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standard of freedom.

"The fundamental maxims of her policy would insensibly change from liberty to force.

"She might become the dictatress of the world. She would be no longer the ruler of her own spirit." 21

Likewise, there was nothing surprising about the fact that in 1921, the State Department had, until the very last moment, hoped that historical Russia would be restored.

What is surprising is that modern American philanthropists all of a sudden went for "color revolutions" and "the export of democracy" to Mesopotamia and Afghan mountains.

The founding fathers had never imagined that in their worst nightmares.

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#### NOTES

- 1 Katkov M. N. 1863 god. M., 1887, No. 2, pp. 961-962.
- 2 See: Kuropiatnik G. P. *Rossia i SShA: ekonomicheskie, kul' turnye i diplomaticheskie sviazi, 1867-1881. M., 1981, pp. 31-54.*
- 3 K. N. Romanov to A. M. Gorchakov, December 7 (19), 1857. See: Bolkhovitinov N. N. *Russko Amerikanskie otnoshenia ii prodazha Aliaski. 1834-1865. M., 1990, p. 111.*
- 4 *Dnevnik P. A. Valueva, ministra vnutrennikh del, vol. 2. M, 1961, pp. 195-196.*
- 5 See: the telegram of the secretary of state to the U.S. ambassador in St. Petersburg, Dec. 15, 1911, as well as other materials in: *The Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1911, pp. 695-696. (Hereinafter, The Papers.)*
- 6 *The Papers...*, 1911, pp. 696-697.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 1917, p. 1207.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 1920, Vol. III, p. 692.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 436.
- 10 *Ibid.*, pp. 462-463.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 465.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 474.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 Niessel A. *L'évacuation des Pays Baltiques par les Allemands, Paris-Limoge-Nancy, 1938, p. 32.*
- 15 *The Papers...*, 1920, Vol. III, p. 652.
- 16 Reference is to Russian Germans in the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire.
- 17 *The Papers...*, 1920, Vol. III, p. 649.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 1922, Vol. II, pp. 871-872.
- 19 *Ibid.*, pp. 873-874.
- 20 *Handbook of the Soviet Union. N.-Y., 1936.*
- 21  
[http://www.millercenter.virginia.edu/scripps/digitalarchive/speeches/spe\\_1821\\_0704\\_ada.ms](http://www.millercenter.virginia.edu/scripps/digitalarchive/speeches/spe_1821_0704_ada.ms)