

The truth and fictions about the place and role of Russia in the world

The Statement of the President of the Russian Federation to the Federal Assembly

Part 1

We are ahead of the whole planet

Russian President V.V. Putin decided not to enter into a debate with candidates for presidential elections, but beat rivals in a big way – an epoch-making speech in the format of a message. Formally, it was intended for the Federal Assembly, but actually for the whole planet. At least that's how a number of journalists in the US and their hostile media reacted to this speech. True, their comments both in the press and on TV are lost in topics more topical for Americans: the scandal with the receipt of Melanie Trump of the elite "Green Card", which is given for outstanding abilities (the so-called "Einstein's visa"), and the approaching trade war from Tramp's intention to impose duties on imports of steel and aluminum. In Europe, however, the response to the message was more energetic. Be that as it may, the journalists there decided that the Russian president actually declared war on the West.

Some journalists assured that the main object of the message is the Russian electorate, which is being prepared for the presidential elections on March 18. I think that the supporters of this view are very mistaken. It is obvious even without this message that the current president will be chosen by the necessary majority vote, regardless of the number of the participating mass. Local authorities and their youthful new bosses, whose fortunes depend on the current Guarantor, will make every effort to ensure that the voting went smoothly, i.e. as it should: sums up the election with the right percentages, even if they were drawn to zero. After all, seriously sick Yeltsin won in such polls. Why should you doubt the victory of the current Guarantor? Moreover, the people love him, write poems in his honor, sing songs and simply can not imagine Russia without Him. And all competitors are for the West. Here we also have a democracy with TV procedures. How are you, wicked gentlemen. Russian society has finally reached the level of democracy similar to the West and held real elections. It's not that under the Soviet regime – they voted for the nominated one! Although all competitors also understand that they have no chance, but participation is important. And what fame! All the time in sight, communication with the people, TV ... – though tiny, but a glory. Although no one remembers the competitors of the Guarantor in the previous elections, with the possible exception of Zyuganov and Zhirinovskiy. But this is not due to the election, but a constant presence on TV. They also need to the authority. It will be possible to say that such a percentage voted for them, for competitors. Although in reality these "percentages" will

actually vote for the current one, and the candidates and the people with their participation will give legitimacy to the upcoming action.

* * *

And now about Him, about who will again be elected to the presidency, more precisely about the power of the message of the epoch-making importance of the not yet re-elected president of the Russian Federation. It, once again I want to repeat, was oriented to the West, primarily the United States, although its two-thirds of the message were devoted to the internal successes of the country.

Before analyzing this message, it immediately makes sense to say that a team of speechwriters, which invites specialists of different profiles, so to speak, experts on specific topics, usually prepares such documents. Such documents are being prepared for at least a month, and often even more. Its content runs through meetings with those who are part of the country's leadership. In other words, this message, or rather its content, is the collective creativity of those who now determine the nature of Russia's domestic and foreign policy. The president simply voices the text in fact on behalf of the bureau-oligarchy, that is, the very authority that is the bourgeois-feudal superstructure of the present state. Therefore, my assessments, which are to be made during the analysis of this message, concern not only the president himself for the next post (since he is the main link in the power chain), but also the entire team: from the speechwriters to the current leaders of the country.

* * *

The incompetence of this team immediately catches the eye especially for those who are familiar with the speeches of Soviet leaders at party and business conferences and congresses. And it's not just the structure of the document (first successes, then "shortcomings", at the end of "kuzkina mother"¹), but in the tone of the presentation of the essence of the document. It is necessary to do something, to catch up-to overtake this and that, and certainly to such and such a year. As in A. Platonov: "Do it so, that by summer socialism could be seen from the grass!" The paradox of this approach reflects the current mindset of the entire population, including its leaders: living in a capitalist system, and thinking that they still live in socialism.

The speech Putin begins by stating that the current message "has a special, *milestone character*, as well as *the time* in which we live" (italics mine). Why is this message "milestone" not clear, meaning that before this, the Guarantor of such messages said 13, or 14 times. And "time" was also always "special" for him, since with such a mess and poverty "we" in the years of "decay of socialism" did not come across. For the Guarantor himself, maybe it is the "milestone": he is ambitiously going to the presidents for the fourth time. In the West, apart from Madame Merkel, it is unlikely that anyone will dare.

The idea of "milestone" reflects such a conclusion of the president: "I repeat: the changes in the world are of a civilizational nature." What kind of changes is there in the "civilizational" scale that no one, other than Russians, notices? Russian experts have long

¹ Russian expression for the threat to the West.

rattled this concept of a change in "civilization," and the speechwriters recorded this nonsense in this message. What has changed in the civilizational now? For several decades after the collapse of the USSR, the capitalist system has dominated the world. As an island, there is a socialist China, which, nevertheless, on the *international arena* acts precisely within the framework of the laws of capitalism. Then what is this, an empty phrase in the message? Not really. Simply Russians, living in a state that catastrophically rolls back to feudalism, really experience changes of a civilization scale. At least there was not one country in the world after the collapse of the Roman Empire, in such a short time from socialism, through bandit capitalism, to return to feudalism. In fact, galloping three "civilizations." And it seems to the heralds that the whole world is experiencing a similar metamorphosis. What the world, of course, does not know. Further on in the course of the message we meet a cunning phrase substituting one country for another. The recorders wrote: "It was at such *turning points* that Russia repeatedly proved its ability to develop, to renew, to develop lands, to *build cities, to conquer outer space, to make grandiose discoveries* (italics mine).

Neither tsarist Russia, nor the present, did this, and all this applies to the USSR, the very country that the present leaders destroyed. What discoveries did Putin's Russia? How can you talk about conquering the cosmos, when one rocket after another falls. What cities did Russia build today? In fact, during Putin's reign, several thousand towns and urban-type settlements and about 20,000 villages were perished. And this is not all the "achievements" of Russia in the last 20 years. Mr. President explains:

We also went through large-scale and painful reforms, coped with entirely new and very complex economic and social challenges, preserved the unity of the country, established ourselves as a democratic society on a free, independent path.

Words are good! But what really led to the "free, independent way":

78 thousand factories and factories were liquidated in the country. The volume of agricultural production fell by half. The country purchases 50% of foodstuffs abroad. 43 thousand libraries, 22 thousand kindergartens, 23 thousand schools, 4 800 hospitals and the same number of polyclinics were closed. However, during this time, 20 thousand Orthodox churches were opened. (How much work is thrown to the wind!)

During Putin's rule of 140 million Russia, at least 4 million people left, among them primarily young people and scientists.

During Putin's reign, the country received 1.5 trillion petrodollars and did not build any roads that meet the highway standards.

And here are also other results of the "development" of the country during the years of the Guarantor's rule. Here is a list of positions on which Russia currently ranks 1st (data for the period 2013–2014):

1st place in the world for the number of suicides among the elderly, children and adolescents.

1st place in the world regarding the number of divorces and children born out of wedlock.

1st place in the world regarding the number of abortions and the number of children abandoned by their parents.

1st place in the world regarding absolute population loss.

1st place in the world for the consumption of alcohol and alcohol-containing products.

1st place in the world for the sale of spirits.

1st place in the world for the sale of tobacco.

1st place in the world regarding the number of people who died from alcoholism and tobacco smoking.

1st place in the world for mortality from diseases of the cardiovascular system.

2nd place in the world on sales of counterfeit medicines.

1st place in the world for heroin consumption (21% of world production).

(The number of drug addicts in Russia on the list: 209 thousand in late 1999, 800 thousand in June 2017. According to the Federal Drug Control Service of the Russian Federation (2014), there are 8 million addicts in Russia).

1st place in the world in terms of the number of aircraft crashes (13 times the world average).

And the president assesses this situation as follows: "We have ensured stability and stability in almost all spheres of life." How can you talk about sustainability and stability, when such indicators mean the inevitable death of Russia.

Naturally, without mentioning the figures, Putin still recognized some "shortcomings," more precisely "lagging" even in such a strong expression: "It is the very lag – this is the main threat and this is our enemy." The president manages the country for 18 years, and the situation does not "break".

Further on the text of the message went – "it is necessary". Among these "must" is and this: "ensure and prosperity in Russian families."

In this issue, there are some successes: in 2000 there were 42 million below the poverty line, and now only 20 million citizens. Therefore, "on the principles of justice and targeting, it is necessary to build the entire system of social assistance."

Now about justice, about which Guarantor spoke many times, but things are still there. Apparently, the head of the country is either hypocritical or does not really know that Russia is immersed in the capitalist system. In which capitalist country did he find "justice"? In textbooks on the political economy of capitalism, for example, in the textbook of Paul Samuelson, Nobel Prize laureate in economics, it is said: the capitalist economy works efficiently only when the poor become poor and the rich get richer. It is clear that Mr. Putin did not read such textbooks, although, at the Leningrad University at the faculty where he studied, the political economy of capitalism was taught. He obviously was not up to books, all the time absorbing social activities and cooperation with future employers. But there must be at least one economist among the president's team. Dvorkovich, for example, has accumulated his knowledge in the United States. And now: that's how justice looks like in the Russian version now?

In Russia, the share of the rich is 1–2%, the middle class – 15–20%, in the class "below the average" – 30–35%, the poor 40–45%.

Russia ranks first in the capitalist world among developed countries by a gap between the upper and lower quintile (10%). According to official data (for the first half of 2017), the gap is 1 to 14.3, and according to independent experts, the difference in wealth is 1 to 40 (and in Moscow – 1 to 60).

The results of such *equality* are reflected in such a figure: in 2016 the share of the richest people in Russia, counting by the population of the country, was 0.05%, but 89% of national wealth was concentrated in their hands. *This is significantly higher than in any other significant capitalist state in the world* (For comparison, in the USA: 4.2% of the wealthiest own 78% of the national wealth of the country).

And here are not the richest: the salary of the head of the Ministry of Finance (this is without counting the countless benefits) per month – 1.73 million rubles, the Minister of Economic Development – 1.16 million rubles, etc. The average salary for the Ministry of Finance was 138 thousand rubles. And the average salary in Russia in 2017 was equal to 39 thousand rubles, while 11.5% of Russians earned up to 12 thousand rubles a month.

For any more or less musing person, it is evident that the next "we need" of the Guarantor it was and will remain an empty sound.

The next miracles and magic words of the Russian president:

In previous years, due to active support of the family, motherhood, childhood, we were able to reverse the negative demographic trends: we achieved growth in the birth rate and reduced mortality, managed to smooth out the consequences of the two most difficult overlapping demographic failures of the period The Great Patriotic War and the end of the last century.

Mr. President, why is the Great Patriotic War? The problem of the population and the average life expectancy (ALE) were resolved as soon as possible during the years of Soviet power. By the way, in a short historical period, from 1917 to 1960, the SPL in Soviet Russia was more than doubled: from 32 years to 69.1 years. The catastrophic fall of both began with the introduction of capitalism, i.e., since 1991. The mention of the Patriotic War is an attempt to throw some of its deeds on the USSR.

But one of the general indicators that determine the state of society is the Human Development Index (HDI). It consists of many indicators, among which the main are: the level of medicine, education and per capita income per person. So, even in the years of the collapse of the USSR (1990-1991) on this index, the country was on the 33rd place. By 2000, it had sunk to the 60th place. By 2014, his level rose to 51 places (from 188 countries), but never reached the index of the Soviet period.

One of the essential variables in the HDI is, as was said, medicine. The president devoted a rather large amount of time to this topic, in which he positively assessed all that was done, and called for the next "necessary" to "more," so to speak. And, not just "more," but: "We should focus on the highest world standards. ... Ambitious tasks must always be set." I'm sure that he hardly imagined these standards. Forced to enlighten.

First of all I want to record: according to the state of the level of healthcare, Russia ranks 53 out of 54 (according to the Bloomberg rating as of March 5, 2016).

And here are the "high" standards:

According to the budgets of 2016 in Russia, health care accounted for about 3, 290 billion dollars, which corresponds to 1.5% of the budget, the United States - 1 trillion 121 billion dollars, which corresponds to 28.2% of the budget. The social security in Russia, which is financed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, accounts for 4, 346 billion dollars, which is about 2% of the budget. In the United States, this item of spending (within the framework of social security, social security income, and veteran costs) is 1 trillion 604 billion 722 million dollars, which is almost 42% of the budget. In general, in the United States on the so-called "human resources" account for 73.24% of the budget, in Russia – about 4%.

Will Russia be able to carry out "ambitious" tasks under the current leadership? There is only one answer to this question – no.

Mr. President touched on a significant topic – the average life expectancy. I'm sure that neither he nor his speechwriters even understand what this indicator means. But first quote from the message: "The most important basic indicator of the *well-being* of citizens and the country is, of course, the duration of life (italics mine)". The word "well-being" is too vague, since living safely you can reach up to 50 years, and unfavorably – up to a hundred years. In fact, the *ALE is an accumulative indicator, concentrating in itself all the factors of the development of the state*, exceeding even the HDI by its conceptual volume. In fact, *this indicator is the determinant of the country's progress: the higher the ALE, the more progressive the country is*.

The president informs: "In 2000 it was a little more than 65 years in Russia, and for men it is generally less than 60. This is not just a little, it is tragedy, it is tragically small." This is really small. But it turns out:

In recent years, the growth rate of the average life expectancy in Russia is *one of the highest in the world*. We managed to achieve this. Life expectancy has increased by more than seven years and is 73 years. But this, of course, is not enough. Today we are obliged to set ourselves a goal of a fundamentally new level. By the end of the next decade, Russia must confidently enter the club of the countries "80 plus", where the life expectancy exceeds 80 years. This includes, among others, countries such as Japan, France, Germany (italics mine).

How could it be written and said this? Putin definitely confused that he is leading not a socialist state, but a capitalist one, in which it is basically impossible to determine planned figures. (They can be foreseen, predicted, but not determined.) Especially for such an indicator, which affects a lot of variables that are not planned in a market economy even under the influence of the state on this market. The president broadcast as if at the party congress of the CPSU, which he erected such installations *to the law* with its inevitable execution. It is not clear how his speechwriters came up with the idea to write such absurdities, and to voice it to the president. And from which ceiling they took, that their growth rates are the highest in the world. For what period did they determine these rates? In addition, the current average life expectancy of Russia is not 73 years, but 71.

Here is the table. This shows that in 2017 Russia takes 154th place in this indicator from 224 countries. Nepal, Kazakhstan, Honduras, and even Ukraine are above Russia by four positions; and lower by three lines – Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, and North Korea. And how then can we say that "our demographic policy has proved its effectiveness"? By the way, before the counterrevolution of 1991-93, the USSR occupied the 88th place in the average life expectancy. Bourgeois power reduced it to 154 place.

2017	US	Japan	Russia	Germany	China	India
ALE, years	80	85.3	71	80.8	75.7	68.8
Place in the world	43	2	154	34	102	164

Why did Mr. President decide that by the end of the next decade on the average life expectancy Russia will go to the club "80 plus"? It must also known that one of the factors that support the average life expectancy is the average standard of living of citizens, determined through the ratio of GDP to the population of the country.

According to the World Bank, in 2010 it was \$ 9,980 in Russia, in 2016 it dropped to \$ 9,720. And the "80 plus" it ranged from 30 to 70 thousand dollars. Could the speech-writers calculate to what level of GDP it would be necessary to bring the economy of the country to its level of life in line with the level of such countries as, for example, Sweden, Norway, France, Germany, etc. But the president promised to increase GDP by only 1.5 times (!). Apparently, he and his team proceed from the fact that not only will the paper endure, but the Orthodox people will swallow this fantasy of 80-year-olds.

It should be borne in mind that welfare is just one of the factors of the average life expectancy. Its foundation is education and science. It turns out, that even here Russia is ahead of all. Here: "International experts recognize that our primary school is already one of the strongest in the world."

Who are these international experts who admit this? Many teachers, even inside the country, on the contrary, complain about the complete collapse of school education, and here – "the strongest in the world"? Can I judge from several Olympiads won by individual talented Russian schoolchildren? Putin judges. And this is what the Global Competition Index for 2016 says (there are no more recent data). Out of 137 countries, Russia, strangely enough, was not at the top of the list, but on the 50th place, behind not only all developed countries of the world but a developing country like China (38th place). And regarding the quality of the educational system in general, Russia occupied a completely odd 64th place.

The president outlined the state of science in Russia in the most high-flown colors. The international organization has other calculations: in terms of the quality of the research institutes, Russia was (in 2016, no more recent data is available) at the 41st place, on the ability to innovate at 65th place, on the staff of scientists and engineers in 50th place.

One could not believe the Western international organization, were it not for the lamentations of Russian scientists about the destruction of the Russian Academy of Science (RAS) and the mass departure of young specialists from Russia. Against the

backdrop of the collapse of the RAS and the scream of scientists, these words are merely mocking:

Our technological development must be based on a powerful base of fundamental science. In recent years, we have been able to seriously increase its potential, and in many areas have reached the forefront. Great merit here belongs to the Russian Academy of Sciences, our leading scientific institutes.

I will not even give comparative figures for the financing of science since it is quite obvious that for the author of the message they are as indifferent as for the public on whom this message fell.

Neither the president nor the speechwriters, apparently, were not embarrassed by such parts of the masterpiece:

The powerful Eurasian transport arteries will be developed. The construction of an automobile road is already underway, which will become an important part of the Europe – Asia-Pacific corridor.

For beginning, can anyone determine what this "APR" (Asia-Pacific region) is? Where are its borders and who goes there? When I wrote my monograph on the non-existent "APR," I found a wide range of experts on the second part of the question: how many countries are included in the "APR"? It turned out: from 11 to 61 countries. Some in this non-existent "APR" managed to squeeze India and even the countries of the Middle East. Now, it does not matter. The important thing is that:

This means that our country will be one of the world leaders in the transit of containers between Europe and Asia.

Let me remind you: on behalf of the president, the articles on the development of the Russian Far East (RFE) and on this very transit were repeatedly published. By the way, all the Eurasianists are talking about it for about 40 years. But none of them glanced at the globe. What countries of Asia will Russia cooperate with, meaning that, whether it be the Baikal/Amur Railway or an automobile road, they will bury themselves in the areas of the Sea of Okhotsk where, in addition to the Japanese island of Hokkaido, no other country is of either Asian or even Pacific origin? What kind of Asia are we talking about? This is the same meaningless phrase as the following:

We will continue the active policy of attracting investments, forming centers of social and economic growth in the Far East. We will create all conditions for people to live comfortably here, come here to increase the population of the Far Eastern regions.

These talks about the Far East have been going on for more than half a century. Several major programs for the development of this region were adopted and approved. In some of them, I had to participate as the director of one of the institutes in Vladivostok. None of them worked. The current program, adopted and signed by the president, also does not work, as well as the previous ones. People leave Russian Far East, the population decreases. And against this background, there are regular fanfares. Well, what prompted the authors of the message to introduce such a passage?

Russia should not only be a key logistics, the transportation hub of the planet but also to emphasize *one of the world centers* of storage, processing, transmission and reliable protection of information files, the so-called – big data (italics mine).

Where did this "planetary" boasting, without borders? Neither the US, nor China, nor other great powers, superior to Russia in all macro-indicators, did not undertake such a mission: to become a "world information storage center." A dilapidated Russia – easily.

And how is it possible to say such words?

... I want to once again thank the workers of the agro-industrial complex for the record harvest [of grain] for the whole history of the country – 134 million tons. Notice, this is more than a record harvest in the Soviet Union. In 1978, the previous achievement was recorded – 127.4 million tons. Now we regularly go out on crops for 100 million tons.

The country buys almost 50% of food abroad, but the president reports on grain, the amount of which really exceeded the level of the USSR, but 40 years ago and only 7.4 million tons. Does the president think that in 40 years the Soviet Union could not increase the grain yield to the specified figure? To whom are these calculations addressed?

The speaker dozens of times repeated similar assessments and arguments regarding other aspects of domestic politics that “need to be deepened, increased, and strengthened”, if not hundreds of times, and in the future will be repeated in the next hundreds.

At the same time, it should be noted that the author of the message has never touched upon the topic of crime and corruption in the country. This contrasts sharply with the analysis of the domestic situation in the country compared with the reports of Xi Jinping, in which these topics are central. Of course, before the election, such figures, discrediting the country's leadership, and, first of all, the president himself would be useless. And they are impressive. That's where Russia is exactly ahead of the US.

I give data for 2016 by the degree corruption of the United States are on the 18th place with corruption index 74; Russia – 131 places with index 29, surrounded by countries such as Nepal, Ukraine, Guatemala. This figure, according to the agency Transparency International, means that Russia was the most corrupt country in Europe.

to be continued in Part 2