

THE FOREIGN POLICY CONCEPT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

*Approved by
the President of the Russian Federation
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June 28, 2000*

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation is a system of views on the content and main areas in the foreign policy activities of Russia.

The legal basis of this concept consists of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the Federal laws, other legislative acts of the Russian Federation that regulate the activity of Federal bodies of state power in foreign policy, generally recognized principles and norms of international law, and international treaties of the Russian Federation, as well as the Concept of National Security of the Russian Federation that was approved by Decree No. 24 of the President of the Russian Federation on January 10, 2000.

The international situation that has taken shape by the beginning of the XXI century has required reevaluation of the overall situation around the Russian Federation, of the priorities of Russian foreign policy and the possibilities of ensuring it with resources. Along with certain strengthening of the international positions of the Russian Federation, negative tendencies are in evidence as well. Certain plans related to establishing new, equitable and mutually advantageous partnership relations of Russia with the rest of the world, as was assumed in the Basic principles of the foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation, endorsed by Directive No. 284-rp of the President of the Russian Federation on April 23, 1993, and in other documents have not been justified.

The uppermost priority of the foreign policy course of Russia is to protect the interests of the individual and the society. Within the framework of that process, the main efforts should be directed towards attaining the following main objectives:

To ensure reliable security of the country, to preserve and strengthen its sovereignty and territorial integrity, to achieve firm and prestigious positions in the world community, most fully consistent with the interests of the Russian Federation as a great power, as one of the most influential centers of the modern world, and which are necessary for the growth of its political, economic, intellectual and spiritual potential;

To influence general world processes with the aim of forming a stable, just and democratic world order, built on generally recognized norms of international law, including, first of all, the goals and principles in the U.N. Charter, on equitable and partnership relations among states;

To create favorable external conditions for steady development of Russia, for improving its economy, enhancing the standards of living of the population, successfully carrying out democratic transformations, strengthening the basis of the constitutional system and observing individual rights and freedoms;

To form a good-neighbor belt along the perimeter of Russia's borders, to promote elimination of the existing and prevent the emergence of potential hotbeds of tension and conflicts in regions adjacent to the Russian Federation;

To seek concord and coinciding interests with foreign countries and interstate associations in the process of resolving the tasks that are determined by the national priorities of Russia, and on this basis, to build a system of partnership and allied relations that improve the conditions and parameters of international cooperation;

To uphold in every possible way the rights and interests of Russian citizens and fellow countrymen abroad; and

To promote a positive perception of the Russian Federation in the world, to popularize the Russian language and culture of the peoples of Russia in foreign states.

II. THE MODERN WORLD AND THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The modern world is going through fundamental and dynamic changes that profoundly affect the interests of the Russian Federation and its citizens. Russia is an active participant in this process. Being a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, possessing a substantial potential and resources in all spheres of vital activity and maintaining intensive relations with the leading states of the world, Russia exerts significant influence on the formation of a new world order.

The transformation of international relations, the end of confrontation, steady elimination of the consequences of the "Cold War," and the advancement of Russian reforms have substantially broadened the possibilities for cooperation in the world arena. The threat of a global nuclear conflict has been reduced to a minimum. While the military power still retains significance in relations among states, an ever greater role is being played by economic, political, scientific and technological, ecological, and information factors. Coming to the fore as the main components of the national might of the Russian Federation are its intellectual, information and communications capabilities, the well-being and education level of the population, the degree of combining of scientific and production resources, and concentration of financial capital and diversification of economic ties. The overwhelming majority of states are firmly set on pursuing market methods of managing the economy and democratic values. The major breakthrough in a number of key areas of scientific and technological progress leading to the formation of a single, worldwide information environment, the deepening and diversification of international economic ties add a global nature to interdependence of states. Prerequisites are being created for build a more stable and crisis-resistant world structure.

At the same time, new challenges and threats to the national interests of Russia are emerging in the international sphere. There is a growing trend towards the establishment of a unipolar structure of the world with the economic and power domination of the United States. In solving principal questions of international security, the stakes are being placed on western institutions and forums of limited composition, and on weakening the role of the U.N. Security Council.

The strategy of unilateral actions can destabilize the international situation, provoke tensions and the arms race, aggravate interstate contradictions, national and religious

strife. The use of power methods bypassing existing international legal mechanisms cannot remove the deep socio-economic, inter-ethnic and other contradictions that underlie conflicts, and can only undermine the foundations of law and order.

Russia shall seek to achieve a multi-polar system of international relations that really reflects the diversity of the modern world with its great variety of interests.

Taking into account mutual interests is the guarantee of effectiveness and reliability of such a world order. The world order of the XXI century must be based on mechanisms of collective resolution of key problems, on the priority of law and broad democratization of international relations.

Russia's interests are directly related to other tendencies as well, such as:

Globalization of the world economy. Along with additional possibilities for socio-economic progress, the expansion of human contacts, this tendency gives rise to new dangers, especially for economically weak states, and increases the probability of large-scale financial and economic crises. There is a growing risk of dependence of the economic system and information environment of the Russian Federation on outside impact;

Intensification of the role of international institutions and mechanisms in world economics and politics ("Group of 8", the IMF, the World Bank and others), caused by an objective growth of interdependence of states, and the need to enhance management of the world financial-economic system in contemporary conditions;

Development of regional and sub-regional integration in Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, Africa and Latin America. Integrated associations are acquiring an ever greater importance in the world economy, and are becoming a significant factor of regional and sub-regional security and peacemaking;

Military-political rivalry among regional powers, growth of separatism, ethnic-national and religious extremism. Integration processes, in particular, in the Euro-Atlantic region are quite often pursued on a selective and limited basis. Attempts to belittle the role of a sovereign state as the fundamental element of international relations generate a threat of arbitrary interference in internal affairs. The problem of proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction and means of their delivery is acquiring serious dimensions. Unregulated or potential regional and local armed conflicts pose a threat to international peace and security. The growth of international terrorism, transnational organized crime, as well as illegal trafficking in drugs and weapons are beginning to exert significant influence on global and regional stability.

The threats related to these tendencies are aggravated by the limited resource support for the foreign policy of the Russian Federation, making it difficult to uphold its foreign economic interests and narrowing down the framework of its information and cultural influence abroad.

Yet the Russian Federation has a real potential for ensuring itself a worthy place in the world. Further strengthening of Russia's statehood, consolidation of civil society and the rapid transition to stable economic growth are of decisive importance in this respect.

In the past decade Russia has been able to utilize additional possibilities of international cooperation that are opening up as a result of radical transformations in the country; Russia has advanced significantly along the road of integrating in the system of world economic ties; it has joined a number of influential international organizations and institutions. Through its intensive efforts, Russia has managed to strengthen its positions in a number of principal areas in the world arena.

The Russian Federation is pursuing an independent and constructive foreign policy. It is based on consistency and predictability, on mutually advantageous pragmatism. This policy is maximally transparent; it takes into consideration the legitimate interests of other states and is aimed at seeking joint decisions.

Russia is a reliable partner in international relations. Its constructive role in resolving acute international problems has been generally acknowledged.

A distinguishing feature of Russia's foreign policy is that it is a balanced one. This has been predetermined by the geopolitical position of Russia as one of the largest Eurasian powers, requiring an optimal combination of efforts along all vectors. Such an approach predetermines Russia's responsibility for maintaining security in the world both on a global and regional level, and presupposes the development and mutual complementarity of foreign policy activity both bilaterally and multilaterally.

III. PRIORITIES OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN RESOLVING GLOBAL PROBLEMS

A successful foreign policy of the Russian Federation must be based on maintaining observance of a reasonable balance between its objectives and possibilities for attaining these objectives. Concentration of politico-diplomatic, military, economic, financial and other means on resolving foreign political tasks must be commensurate with their real significance for Russia's national interests, while the scope of participation in international affairs must be adequate to the actual contribution to strengthening the country's positions. The diversity and complexity of international problems, and the existence of crisis situations assume a timely evaluation of the priorities of each of them in the foreign political activity of the Russian Federation. There is a need for enhancing the efficiency of political, legal, foreign economic and other instruments for protecting the state sovereignty of Russia and its national economy in conditions of globalization.

1. Forming a new world order

Russia is interested in a stable system of international relations based on principles of justice, mutual respect and mutually advantageous cooperation. Such a system is called upon to ensure reliable security for each member of the world community in political, military, economic, humanitarian and other areas.

The United Nations must remain the main center for regulating international relations in the XXI century. The Russian Federation shall resolutely oppose attempts to belittle the role of the United Nations and its Security Council in world affairs.

Intensification of the consolidating role of the United Nations in the world presupposes:

Strict observance of the fundamental principles in the U.N. Charter, including the preservation of the status of the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council;

A rational reform of the United Nations Organization seeking to develop a mechanism of rapidly reacting to world developments, including the enhancement of its potential for averting and settling crises and conflicts.

Further enhancing the efficiency of the U.N. Security Council which bears the main responsibility for maintaining international peace and security and, giving that body broader representation by including new permanent members in its composition, first of all, authoritative developing countries. The reform of the United Nations must be based on the immutable right of veto by all permanent members of the U.N. Security Council.

Russia attaches great importance to its participation in the Group of 8 of the most industrially developed states. Regarding the mechanism of consultations and coordinating positions on the most important problems of the day as one of the important means of upholding and advancing its foreign political interests, the Russian Federation intends to build up its cooperation with partners in this forum.

2. Strengthening international security

Russia calls supports for further decrease of the role of the power factor in international relations, along with the simultaneous enhancement of strategic and regional stability. Toward this end, the Russian Federation shall: unswervingly fulfill the commitments its has taken upon itself in compliance with treaties and agreements in the spheres of limiting and reducing armaments, and its participation in negotiating working out and concluding new accords consistent both with its national interests and the security interests of other states;

Russia is prepared to consent for a further reduction of its nuclear potential on the basis of bilateral agreements with the United States of America, and — in a multilateral format - with the participation of other nuclear powers on condition that strategic stability in the nuclear sphere will not be upset. Russia shall seek preservation and observance of the 1972 Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems - the cornerstone of strategic stability. The implementation of the plans of the United States to create a national missile defense system will inevitably compel the Russian Federation to adopt adequate measures for maintaining its national security at a proper level;

Russia reaffirms its unswerving course toward participating jointly with other states in averting the proliferation of nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and means of their delivery, as well as relevant materials and technologies. The Russian Federation is an ardent supporter of strengthening and developing relevant international regimes, including the creation of a Global system of control over non-proliferation of missiles and missile technologies. The Russian Federation to firmly adheres to its commitments under the Treaty on a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests, and urges all countries of the world to join it;

Russia attaches special attention to such an aspect of consolidating strategic stability as ensuring information security;

Russia intends to further promote the strengthening of regional stability by participating in the processes of reducing and limiting conventional armed forces, as well as adopting confidence-building measures in the military sphere;

Russia regards international peacemaking as an effective instrument for resolving armed conflicts, and calls for the strengthening of its legal foundation in strict accor-

dance with the principles in the U.N. Charter. Supporting the measures to build up and modernize the potential of the United Nations' anti-crisis rapid response, the Russian Federation intends to continue its active participation in peacekeeping operations conducted both under the auspices of the United Nations, as well as in specific cases of regional and sub-regional organizations. The need for and degree of such participation shall be measured against the national interests and international commitments of our country. Russia proceeds from the premise that only the U.N. Security Council has the authority to sanction use of force for the purpose of achieving peace;

Russia proceeds from the premise that the use of force in violation of the U.N. Charter is unlawful and poses a threat to the stabilization of the entire system of international relations. Attempts to introduce into the international parlance such concepts as "humanitarian intervention" and "limited sovereignty" in order to justify unilateral power actions bypassing the U.N. Security Council are not acceptable. Being prepared for a constructive dialogue on upgrading the legal aspects of employing force in international relations in conditions of globalization, the Russian Federation proceeds from the fact that the search for concrete forms of response on the part of the international community in different acute situations, including humanitarian crises, must be conducted collectively on the basis of strict observance of the norms of international law and the U.N. Charter;

Russia shall participate in activities conducted under the auspices of the United Nations and other international organizations to eliminate natural and man-made disasters, other emergency situations, as well as in rendering humanitarian aid to the suffering countries;

Russia regards as its most important foreign policy task to combat international terrorism which is capable of destabilizing the situation not only in individual states, but in entire regions.

The Russian Federation calls for the further measures to intensify cooperation among states in this area. It is the direct duty of every state to protect its citizens against terrorist encroachments, to prevent any activity on its territory aimed at organizing such acts against citizens and interests of other countries, and not to provide asylum to terrorists;

Russia shall purposefully combat illegal drug trafficking and the growth of organized crime; it shall collaborate with other states in a multilateral format, first of all, within the framework of specialized international agencies, and on a bilateral level.

3. International economic relations

The main priority in the foreign policy of the Russian Federation in international economic relations is to promote the development of the national economy, which, in conditions of globalization, is unthinkable without broad integration of Russia in the system of world economic ties. In order to achieve these objectives, it is necessary:

To ensure favorable external conditions for forming a market-oriented economy in our country, and the establishing a renewed foreign economic specialization of the Russian Federation, one that would guarantee maximum economic returns on its participation in the international division of labor;

Russia shall seek to reduce to a minimum the risks relating to Russia's further integration in the world economy, bearing in mind the need to ensure the country's economic security;

Russia shall promote the formation of a fair international trade system with a full-fledged participation of the Russian Federation in international economic organizations that ensure protection of the national interests of our country in those organizations.

Russia shall assist the expansion of domestic export and rationalization of import into the country, as well as Russian entrepreneurship abroad, uphold its interests in foreign markets and oppose discrimination of domestic manufacturers and exporters, strict compliance by Russian subjects of the foreign economic activity with Russian legislation in performing such operations;

Russia shall actively work to attract foreign investments, first of all, into the real sector and priority spheres of Russia's economy;

Russia shall seek to ensure the preservation and optimal utilization of Russian property abroad;

Russia shall service its foreign debt in accordance with the country's real possibilities, and shall strive to achieve maximum recovery of funds from the credits provided to foreign states;

Russia shall form a comprehensive system of Russian legislation and international legal and treaty basis in the economic sphere;

Russia must be prepared to utilize all its available economic levers and resources for upholding its national interests.

Taking into account the growing threat of global disasters of a natural and man-made nature, the Russian Federation calls for an expansion of international cooperation to ensure environmental security, including with the use of state-of-the-art technologies, in the interests of the entire international community.

4. Human rights and international relations

Committed to the values of a democratic society, including respect for human rights and freedoms, Russia sees its goals as being the following:

to seek respect for human rights and freedoms the world over on the basis of respecting the norms of international law;

to protect the rights and interests of Russian citizens and compatriots abroad on the basis of international law and operative bilateral agreements. The Russian Federation will seek to obtain adequate guarantees for the rights and freedoms of compatriots in states where they permanently reside and to maintain and develop comprehensive ties with them and their organizations;

to develop international cooperation in the humanitarian exchange area;

to expand participation in international conventions and agreements in the human rights area;

to continue bringing legislation of the Russian Federation in conformity with Russia's international obligations.

5. Information support for foreign policy activities

An important area in the foreign policy activities of the Russian Federation is communicating to the broad sectors of the world public objective and accurate information about its positions on the main international problems, foreign policy initiatives and actions by the Russian Federation, as well as on the accomplishments of Russian culture, science, and intellectual work. Coming to the fore is the goal of forming a positive perception of Russia abroad and a friendly attitude to it. An integral element of this work should be purposeful efforts aimed at explaining to the public at large outside of

this country the essence of the internal policy of Russia and of the processes going on inside the country. Emerging as a pressing task a rapid development in the Russian Federation of its own effective means of informational influence on the public opinion abroad.

IV. REGIONAL PRIORITIES

A priority area in Russia's foreign policy is ensuring conformity of multilateral and bilateral cooperation with the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to national security tasks of the country.

The emphasis will be made on the development of goodneighborly relations and strategic partnership with all CIS member states. Practical relations with each of them should be structured with due regard for reciprocal openness to cooperation and readiness to take into account in a due manner the interests of the Russian Federation, including in terms of guarantees of rights of Russian compatriots.

Proceeding from the concept of different-speed and different-level integration within the CIS framework, Russia will determine the parameters and character of its interaction with CIS member states both in the CIS as a whole and in narrower associations, primarily the Customs Union and the Collective Security Treaty. A priority task is to strengthen the Union of Belarus and Russia as the highest, at this stage, form of integration of two sovereign states.

We attach a priority importance to joint efforts toward settling conflicts in CIS member states, and to the development of cooperation in the military-political area and in the sphere of security, particularly in combating international terrorism and extremism.

Serious emphasis will be made on the development of economic cooperation, including the creation of a free trade zone and implementation of programs of joint rational use of natural resources. Specifically, Russia will work for the elaboration of such a status of the Caspian Sea as would enable the littoral states to launch mutually advantageous cooperation in using the region's resources on a fair basis and taking into account the legitimate interests of each other.

The Russian Federation will make efforts to ensure fulfillment of mutual obligations on the preservation and augmentation of the joint cultural heritage in the CIS member states.

Relations with European states is Russia's traditional foreign policy priority. The main aim of Russian foreign policy in Europe is the creation of a stable and democratic system of European security and cooperation. Russia is interested in the further balanced development of the multi-functional character of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and will make efforts in this direction.

It is important to fully use the rule-making potential which continues to be fully valid, that this organization has accumulated after the adoption in 1975 of the Helsinki Final Act. Russia will strongly oppose the narrowing down of the OSCE functions, specifically the attempts to redirect its specialized activities to the post-Soviet space and the Balkans.

Russia will work for making the adapted Treaty on the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe into an effective means of European security and for imparting a comprehensive nature to confidence-building measures, including, specifically, coalition activities and naval activities.

Proceeding from its own requirements to the building of a civic society, Russia intends to continue its participation in the activities of the Council of Europe.

Of key importance are relations with the European Union (EU). The on going processes within the EU are having a growing impact on the dynamic of the situation in Europe. These are the EU expansion, transition to a common currency, the institutional reform, and emergence of a joint foreign policy and a policy in the area of security, as well as a defense identity. Regarding these processes as an objective component of European development, Russia will seek due respect for its interests, including in the sphere of bilateral relations with individual EU member countries.

The Russian Federation views the EU as one of its main political and economic partners and will strive to develop with it an intensive, stable and long-term cooperation devoid of expediency fluctuations.

The character of relations with the EU is determined by the framework of the June 24, 1994 Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation, establishing partnership between the Russian Federation, on the one hand, and the European communities and their member states on the other, which is yet to achieve its full effectiveness. Concrete problems, primarily the problem of an adequate respect for the interests of the Russian side in the proc-

ess of the EU expansion and reform, will be dealt with on the basis of the Strategy for the Development of Relations between the Russian Federation and the European Union, approved in 1999. The EU's emerging military-political dimension should become an object of particular attention.

Realistically assessing the role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Russia proceeds from the importance of cooperation with it in the interests of maintaining security and stability in the continent and is open to constructive interaction. The necessary basis for that was laid in the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between the Russian Federation and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization of May 27, 1997. The intensity of cooperation with NATO will depend on its compliance with key clauses of this document, primarily those concerning non-use or threat of force, and non-deployment of conventional armed forces groupings, nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles in the territories of the new members.

At the same time, on a number of parameters, NATO's present-day political and military guidelines do not coincide with security interests of the Russian Federation and occasionally directly contradict them. This primarily concerns the provisions of NATO's new strategic concept, which do not exclude the conduct of use-of-force operations outside of the zone of application of the Washington Treaty without the sanction of the UN Security Council. Russia retains its negative attitude towards the expansion of NATO.

Substantive and constructive cooperation between Russia and NATO is only possible if it is based on the foundation of a due respect for the interests of the sides and an unconditional fulfillment of mutual obligations assumed.

Interaction with states of Western Europe, primarily with such influential ones as Britain, Germany, Italy and France, represents an important resource for Russia's defense of its national interests in European and world affairs, and for the stabilization and growth of the Russian economy.

A topical task in relations with the states of Central and Eastern Europe is, as before, the preservation of the existing human, economic, and cultural ties, the overcoming of the crisis phenomena, and providing an additional impetus to cooperation in accordance with the new conditions and the Russian interests.

There are good prospects for the development of the Russian Federation's relations with Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Russia stands for putting these relation onto the track of goodneighborliness and mutual cooperation. An indispensable condition here is respect by those states of the Russian interests, including in the key question of respect for the rights of the Russian-speaking population.

Russia will give an all-out assistance to the attainment of a just settlement of the situation in the Balkans, one based on the coordinated decisions of the world community. It is of fundamental importance to preserve the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and to oppose the partition of this State, something that is fraught with the threat of emergence of a pan-Balkan conflict with unpredictable consequences.

The Russian Federation is prepared to overcome considerable latter-day difficulties in relations with the U.S., and to preserve the infrastructure of Russian - American cooperation, which has been created over almost 10 years. Despite the presence of serious, and in

a number of cases, fundamental differences, Russian - American interaction is the necessary condition for the amelioration of the international situation and achievement of global strategic stability.

Above all, this concerns problems of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as prevention and settlement of the more dangerous regional conflicts. It is only through an active dialogue with the U.S. that the issues of limitation and reduction of strategic nuclear weapons may be resolved. It is in our mutual interests to maintain regular bilateral contacts at all levels, not allowing pauses in relations and setback in the negotiating processes on the main political, military and economic matters.

Asia enjoys a steadily growing importance in the context of the entire foreign policy of the Russian Federation, something which is due to Russia's direct affinity with this dynamically developing region and the need for an economic upturn in Siberia and the Far East. The emphasis will be on the invigoration of Russia's participation in the main integration structures of the Asia-Pacific Region - the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, the regional forum on security of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Shanghai Five (Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Tajikistan), in whose creation Russia played an active role.

One of the crucial directions in the Russian foreign policy in Asia is developing friendly relations with the leading Asian states, primarily with China and India. The concurrence of the fundamental approaches of Russia and the PRC to the key issues of world politics is one of the basic mainstays of regional and global stability. Russia seeks to develop mutually advantageous cooperation with China in all areas. The main task is, as before, bringing the scale of economic interaction in conformity with the level of political relations.

Russia intends to strengthen its traditional partnership with India, including in the international affairs, and to aid overcome problems persisting in South Asia and strengthen stability in the region.

Russia views the signing by India and Pakistan of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and their accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as an important factor of stability in the Asia-Pacific Region. It will support the line for the creation of nuclear weapons-free zones in Asia.

The Russian Federation comes out for a stable development of relations with Japan and for the attainment of a true goodneighborliness corresponding to the interests of both countries. Within the framework of the existing negotiating mechanisms, Russia will continue a search for a mutually acceptable solution of the formalization of an internationally recognized border between the two states.

Russian foreign policy is aimed at building up the positive dynamism of relations with the states of South East Asia.

It is important to develop further relations with Iran.

Improving the overall situation in Asia, which is faced with growing geopolitical ambitions of a number of states, a mounting arms race, and preservation of sources of ten-

sions and conflicts, is of fundamental importance for Russia. Of greatest concern is the situation in the Korean Peninsula. Efforts will be focused on assuring Russia equitable participation in the solution of the Korean problem, and on maintaining balanced relations with both Korean States.

The protracted conflict in Afghanistan creates a real threat to security of the southern CIS borders and directly affects Russian interests. Russia, in cooperation with other states concerned, will make consistent efforts with a view to achieving a lasting and fair political settlement of the Afghan problem and interdicting the exportation of terrorism and extremism from that country.

Russia will work to stabilize the situation in the Middle East, including the Persian Gulf zone and Northern Africa, taking into account the impact which the situation in the region has on the situation the world over. Based on its status as a co-sponsor of the peace process, Russia intends to pursue an active participation in the normalization of the post-crisis situation in the region. Russia's priority in this context will be restoring and strengthening its positions, particularly the economic ones, in this region of the world, so rich and important for our interests.

Viewing the Greater Mediterranean as a hub of such regions as the Middle East, the Black Sea region, the Caucasus, and the Caspian Sea basin, Russia intends to steer a purposeful course toward for turning it into a zone of peace, stability and goodneighborliness, something that will help advance Russian economic interests, including in the matter of the choice of routes for important energy flows.

Russia will expand interaction with African states and assist an earliest possible settlement of regional military conflicts in Africa. It is also necessary to develop a political dialogue with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and with sub-regional organizations and to use their capabilities for enabling Russia to join multilateral economic projects in the continent.

Russia seeks a higher level of political dialogue and economic cooperation with countries of Central and South America, relying on a serious progress achieved in its relations with this region in the 1990's. It will strive, specifically, to expand interaction with the states of Central and South America in international organizations, to encourage Russian science-intensive industrial exports to Latin American countries, and to develop with them military-technical cooperation.

While defining regional priorities of its foreign policy, the Russian Federation will take into account the intensity of and trends in the formation of the main world centers and the degree of preparedness on the part of their members for the expansion of bilateral interaction with Russia.

V. THE SHAPING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF FOREIGN POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The President of the Russian Federation, in conformity with his constitutional powers, shall provide guidance of the country's foreign policy and as the Head of State shall represent the Russian Federation in international relations.

The Federation Council and the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, within the framework of their constitutional powers, shall pursue legislative work to support the foreign policy course of the Russian Federation and fulfillment of its international obligations.

The Security Council of the Russian Federation shall execute preparation of decisions of the President of the Russian Federation in the area of international security and control over their implementation.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation shall provide direct implementation of the foreign policy course approved by the President of the Russian Federation. The Foreign Ministry of Russia shall be in charge of coordination of foreign policy activities pursued by federal bodies of executive power and of control over them in conformity with Decree by the President of the Russian Federation of March 12, 1996, #375 “On the Coordinating Role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation during the Conduct of Unified Foreign Policy Line of the Russian Federation.

The Russian Federation's constituent entities shall promote their international ties in accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the Federal Law “On Coordination of International and External Economic Ties of the Subjects of the Russian Federation” and other legislative acts. The Foreign Ministry of Russia and other federal bodies of executive power shall give aid to subjects of the Russian Federation in the course or their realization of international cooperation, in strict respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation.

During the preparation of decisions on the conduct of the State's foreign policy course, the federal bodies of executive power shall cooperate, if necessary, with Russia's non-governmental organizations. A broader involvement of non-governmental organizations in the sphere of the country's foreign policy activities is consistent with the task of ensuring maximum support by the civic society for the state foreign policy and is capable of contributing to its effective implementation.

Consistent execution of foreign policy creates favorable conditions for the fulfillment of the historic choice of the peoples of the Russian Federation in favor of the rule-of-law State, democratic society, and a socially oriented market economy economy.