

SUMMARY

Subject of the thesis: Modern Russian foreign policy in the South Caucasus.

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Relevance of the research issue Is expressed in the fact that the foreign policy of the state is one of the most complicated mechanisms of activity, and the success of its implementation depends on the realism and consistency of the fundamental foreign policy doctrines.

Accordingly, in this context, one of the main tasks in the foreign policy research is the further development of the applied direction, which is dictated by the need to implement the existing theoretical developments in practice.

The geographic proximity of the South Caucasus and the still high degree of its integration with Russia determine the crucial role played by the Caucasian factor in Russian politics and economy. The important military-strategic position of the region predetermined the nature of the challenges faced by Russia in its "southern underbelly." Therefore, Moscow's policy is aimed at neutralizing existing and potential threats to the stability of the Russian Federation. At the same time, external and internal threats are closely interrelated, so that their neutralization requires a coordinated policy in the Southern and Northern Caucasus.

Economically, the South Caucasus does not play such an important role for Russia as it is in the military-strategic plan. A small region is not an important market, it does not belong to the world number. At the same time, Russia is interested in using the transit potential of the South Caucasus and in the further development of the transport corridor "North-South". Transit through the territory of Azerbaijan plays an important political and economic significance for Russia. It allows you to maintain contacts with Iran, India, the Middle East and the Middle East.

The current state of relations with Georgia prevents Russia from effectively developing relations with Armenia, which objectively weakens this country, which is Russia's most important partner in the region.

Thus, the study of Russia's foreign policy in the South Caucasus is particularly relevant in the ongoing transformation of the balance of power in this region. Understanding the mechanisms for developing Russian policy in the region is impossible without taking into account a number of internal political factors and comprehension of Russia's doctrinal attitudes, the identification and conceptualization of which actualizes the relevance of the research.

The object of research is Russia's foreign policy at the present stage.

The subjects of research is Russia's modern foreign policy in the South Caucasus.

The purpose is to identify the problems and prospects for relations between Russia and the South Caucasus at the present stage.

Research objectives:

- to study the foundations of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation;
- to analyze the process of making foreign policy decisions of the Russian Federation and their implementation;
- to characterize geopolitical interests of Russia in the South Caucasus;
- to identify the problems and prospects of Russian-Azerbaijani, Russian-Armenian, Russian-Georgian relations;
- to explore Russia's policy towards the unrecognized and partially recognized states of the South Caucasus.

Scientific novelty:

The interests of the Russian Federation in the South Caucasus are examined and it is proved that the interests of the Russian Federation in the region are determined both by strategic interests, and by economic and sociocultural interests. The foreign policy of the Russian Federation in the region should be based on a policy of equidistance / equicinity with all the subjects of the South Caucasus geopolitical space, since the political strategy of the "big brother" showed its destructive orientation;

The current foreign policy situation in the South Caucasus makes it possible to assert that the region's foreign policy players (the USA, the EU, etc.) and regional actors (Turkey, Iran) are becoming more active in the region. Thus, the strategic course of the Russian Federation in the region should be based on retaining the spheres of influence of the three traditional regions (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan), as well as 2 partially recognized and unrecognized (Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia).

Structure: two chapters, four paragraphs, the conclusion, bibliography list of used literature from 181 sources, including 38 sources in foreign languages. The total volume is 96 pages.

Summary: At present, the world is experiencing an interesting process of global change. The victory of Donald Trump in the presidential elections in the United States, "Breckzit" and the growing popularity of extreme right conservative groups in Europe can be considered the beginning of the collapse of the idea of a "united West". In the post-Soviet space, and especially in Georgia, the liberal worldview has always been under the umbrella of the "single democratic West," and Georgia's foreign and domestic policies have been constantly determined by the "pro-Western" course. Given the future ideological crisis of the "single West", the interest of Western countries in the periphery is likely to be reduced. American isolationism, emerging after Trump's election, could further weaken American interests in the Caucasus. It is difficult to predict what course America will take in relation to countries that are not members of Western institutions. At least in the next four years, America, most likely, will not be considered a strong supporter of pro-Western countries, as it was during the administrations of Obama and Bush.

These trends will give Russia the opportunity to strengthen its influence in the post-Soviet space, in particular in the South Caucasus.

2016 was the year of many "turns" for the countries of the South Caucasus. However, in the region there were no revolutionary changes and the status quo that had developed over many years, which was not destroyed even as a result of the "four-day" war in Nagorno-Karabakh in April.

Azerbaijan perfectly understands that good and good-neighborly relations with Russia are the main condition for stability for the country. Russia is Azerbaijan's largest trading partner (excluding oil exports) and will remain so for a long period.

In our opinion, the resumption of hostilities is fueled by a series of preliminary small-scale cross-border clashes in the Karabakh sector and other parts of the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, the lack of progress in peace talks and a shift in the military balance between Baku and Yerevan. On the diplomatic front, Azerbaijan provided support to Ankara and Kiev, and Russia, the United States and Iran sought to maintain constructive relations with Baku. At the same time, the April escalation did not lead to any changes in the format of the talks. The OSCE Minsk Group continues to be the only mechanism for resolving the conflict, despite the fact that it is often criticized for its inefficiency. Keeping the balance between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Russia made it clear that it wants to maintain the status quo, and the West is not going to actively interfere.

Unlike the Abkhaz national project, the South Ossetian has an irredentist character rather than a separatist one, so the ultimate goal of the Ossetians is to join Russia. South Ossetia quickly followed Abkhazia to sign the so-called Treaty on Alliance and Integration with Russia in 2014. Although the Abkhaz treat the treaty mainly as a threat to their sovereignty, Ossetians basically perceive it as an intermediate state and an effective framework for further integration.

Given the current situation, it is not advisable to expect radical changes in the nature of Georgian-Russian relations in 2017, but the increasingly processes taking place in the rest of the world make the regional political environment much more unpredictable. Accordingly, the process of normalization will continue to occur in the humanitarian and economic spheres, but without specific political changes.

Events in neighboring countries were alarming: the coup attempt in Turkey and the subsequent cleansing of the country's political elite, the lifting of long-term sanctions by Iran, the escalation of Russian-Turkish tensions and the thaw between these two major regional players after a while.

Relations with Russia remain a priority for all three countries, although their policy towards Moscow is different.