

## DOUBLE STANDARDS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AS A THREAT TO RUSSIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

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This paper makes an attempt to do a comprehensive analysis of double standards policy from the standpoint of content analysis of that notion, review of literature, assessment of reasons for its frequent use in the practice of international relations and the consequences of the wide use of that practice in the global politics. Besides, special focus is put to mutual relation between double standards policy and the needs to ensure the national security. To implement those areas of the study, the authors studied a great deal of theoretical works, analyzed the required information on thematic Internet pages, reviewed regulations of the Russian Federation on the national security as empirical materials. The authors systemized subjective and objective factors causing double standards policy to emerge. The paper proves that under double standards policy in the global political space the only guarantee of national security for Russia may be clear and express articulation of own general national interests to ensure it, and competent staff training and organization of information agencies capable to clearly stand to the information line beneficial for the Russian Federation in foreign contacts will contribute to that.

**Keywords:** Double standards, national security, doublespeak, information war, global policy, international relations, multipolarity.

### INTRODUCTION

Double standards are applied in international relations more and more frequently. Surely, the uncertainty in the global politics deepening and taking rather odd shapes is the cornerstone of that process. During the opposition of the two great powers in 1950-1980s, the world was bipolar. It excluded sharp actuality of double standards in assessment. Everyone was right in an own way and the rhetoric was aimed rather at involvement of foreign policy parties into the orbit of its influence rather than acknowledgment of a certain absolute truth. Then, after the fall of the socialist camp, expectations and hopes of the monopolarity of the global space emerged. The ideas on so-called universal human values were popular [23]. Regionalization issues became to jibe in the face of globalization needs [22]. Yet those expectations did not pay off. Global concord did not happen. Global powers are gradually actualizing – secretly or otherwise, individually or through coalitions – their national (regional) interests. That process is becoming more and more obvious. Meantime, the rhetoric of cold war winners has not disappeared. “Universal human values”,

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“ideals of democracy”, “political freedom”, and “humanism” are still acting as markers to check the international relations parties for loyalty to the basic players in the global politics including first of all the USA and the EU. However, the essence of the problem is that currently it is hard to identify where the generally accepted principles of international relations implemented via the UN and initiated within democracy and peaceful cooperation framework begin, and where they contradict to the national interests of particular countries and even turn into a formal, meaningless rhetoric directed against vital interests of some countries.

Those difficulties are causing disbelief, growing regional trends, freedom in the interpretation of the international law. Finally, use of double standards is becoming a more and more frequent tool of the global politics to protect the national security of a country or a group of allies.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This research has been done based on general scientific principles of historicism, comparative historical analysis, comparative analysis, classification. Using systemizing method, subjective and objective factors are specified which are causing double standards policy. Within the use of application-specific empirical methods, respective sites were studied hosting the materials related to international relations issues (around countries/regions like Syria, Kosovo, Crimea, South-East of Ukraine, etc.). Besides, we reviewed in detail respective regulations on assuring the national security of the Russian Federation. Among them, there are Federal Act of December 10, 2010 No. 390-FZ “On security” [1], Strategy of National Security of the Russian Federation till 2020, approved by the Decree of the President of the RF dated December 31, 2015 No. 683 [2] and Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation dated December 25, 2014, approved by Decree of the President of the RF No. Pr-2976 [3].

### **RESULTS**

Origin of double standards in international relations relates, first of all, to potential global politics leaders who think it possible to freely interpret the rules of play established for everyone, and, second, to quite uncertain formulation of the rules as such which prove to allow for two-fold interpretation [4]. Concerning the first case, double standards policy may here be explained by subjective factors. It is best expressed by the ancient Roman proverb *Quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi*. From the standpoint of the contemporary law, in particular, public international law, all parties to legal relationships are equal. However, some are apparently more equal than the others. Double standards policy may be expressed in a secret way, via cheating, smart interpretations, sense manipulations (we have informers, they have snitches; we have secret service agents, they have spies, etc.), and in a straight, unveiled way, via bribing with privileges or direct bullying.

*1.1. Subjective factors.* We put the “special” policy of the USA in the contemporary world first, based on monopolization by that state of the “democracy guardian” status and the “world order”. It seems that the said status is rather seriously shared by some part of the American society and population of other states. For instance, in the EU an opinion is typical that membership in NATO is a mandatory part of the system of guarantees for economic investments, a sort of military and political umbrella to protect member countries from possible destabilization by enemies (i.e., aggression from the East). The Americans, at least a lot of them, are sure that only thanks to the foreign policy of the USA the world did not turn to a chaos and endless wars. A cynical expression of that policy is taking the shape of controlled chaos system established in the regions where, due to various mental, economic and other aspects, an organized order system may not be established. “Controlled chaos” is becoming a choice of a lesser or a larger evil. Finally, the US political establishment may actually implement in no particular order the interpretations of some or other events or actions in international relations. We say nothing about the situation of uncertainty in connection with legal formulation of rules of play and assessments basically identified by international public law. Here, when regulations have two-fold nature, each country is entitled to be governed by its own interests. Yet, sometimes the USA and its partners are engaged in elementary doublespeak, suggesting postulation of veiled lies in diplomatic interactions. In that situation, not the national interests should be spoken about, but the special status of the global mentor, whose role has been taken by the US in a dogmatic way. Such a status will allow justifying any unlawful acts. Concerning double standards policy, it is being applied automatically.

A great role to explain the extending practice of double standards is played by such reason as revival of the national state in the global politics [5]. Not long ago, it would seem that some universal global order will be established to govern the rules of play of all the contemporary states. There have been many speculations on so-called universal human values to come instead of international and interstate conflicts. The UN was expected to play a special part. It was seen that the countries after the cold war would have more common interests rather than contradictions. However, the political reality went the other way. Instead of some contradictions fallen into the oblivion the others came to, being not less sharp. In practice, it caused double standards policy to be applied by states as a technological method to implement own national interests. In some sense, that tool turned out a logical consequence of the idea on the absence of global acute contradictions and availability of ultimately developed international law to settle any global conflicts based on clear and exact instructions, which was actively postulated not long ago. In fact, appeal to the international experience is not becoming a meaningless rhetoric seeking to put an unlawful policy into a nice and legal shape. National states are increasingly applying that method being afraid to gain the character of cynics and

international criminals which is sanctioned in the current international practice. Not to get under the pressure of sanctions, national states have to find in the contemporary regulations relevant ambiguousness and unclearness which will in some way legitimize their acts before the global community.

As the third reason of subjective nature, immorality immanently intrinsic to politics, especially foreign, may be noted. The rulers understand that the voting public will rather forgive cheating, hypocrisy, violence, doublespeak, two-facedness in international cooperation, as all those negative manifestations are easily justified by caring of the public (potential voters). Such lies may be interpreted as noble to achieve high goals, to praise the homeland (democracy/progress/humanism/other suitable term). The rulers know that double standards in that situation do not need much veiling or complication with other words. Only a show needs to be done. People will stay indignant for a while for the sake of appearance and then will forgive and forget. So, for instance, was in the UK when mass media inspired by the government were feeding the public opinion of the British in connection with mass genocide by Serbia against Kosovo Albanians, while then, when independent investigation was made after Beograd bombing, it was found that the violence-related figures had been much exaggerated and second, the aggression had been occurring by Albanians against Serbs as well, the British mass media shocked the public with the conclusion on farfetchedness of anti-Serbia actions, their one-sidedness and flatulence. The Foggy Albion population was angry but only for a while. New, more “worthy” newsbreaks would emerge like sickness of Queen’s cat, and the attention would focus on pets.

*1.2. Objective reasons.* Besides subjective reasons, enhancing the wide-scale use of double standards practices, objective reasons should be mentioned, namely the lack of clarity and unambiguousness in the international policy rules. The universality notion (i.e., unambiguousness) of the rules was born under the certainty that we are living in a *consensus* (concord) society. Yet it is far from that. Rather, the contemporary reality and the global politics are fitting here in a fullest way being in the reality of *dissensus* [6-8], with the main goal to search for compromise or minimizing the results of a conflict instead of good faith that “what is good for a Russian is a benefit for a German as well”. In fact, everyone knows the real wording of that proverb. The growing strain of contradictions in international relations makes this peculiarity of the global politics hardly a universal rule. The belief that there are a few “truths” instead of the sole one is an objective reason for double standards policy implementation. In such a case, they act as a tool for fighting for the right believing that some people are deceived for the benefit of others. If everyone cannot be well, let those who are more decent get the preferences. Identifying of the most decent persons is fully within biased abuse of discretion depending on the suggestive force of the reasons considered above.

Finally, the last reason we would focus on is great domination of dynamics over statics in the global development. Those peculiarities of the contemporary society were well noted by Z. Bauman. He wrote, "Today the situation is changing and the most important element of that change is the advent of the new short-term mentality to replace the long-term one" [9]. The author suggests that a contemporary person has no links or any stable social preferences. Man is losing values, except for basic values of pleasure, comfort, and convenience. Hence, it is quite easy to symbolize own actions. They require from man in the course of interaction only consent, loyalty, purely external identification, not obliging for true solidarity which presumes not only communicative aspect (true strive for close cooperation) but also assessment aspect (ideal to establish strong links with other person's values). The absence of ideals is the reason for overwhelming domination of cathectic needs [10]. As man strives for ideals, but cannot gain them within postmodern paradigm due to leveling and depreciation of values, he is standing to pseudo-ideals related mostly to consumption standards. They are stable while in the course of social action within group communication they meet the need for rationalizing the existing reality. Man does not even suspect how easily he/she can reject the pseudo-ideals. Being pseudo-ideals, they cause social pseudo-stability and pseudo-steadiness; as a product of the postmodern epoch, they form the readiness to be rejected at any time when individually rationalized need for them is missing. Such kind of evolution caused degradation, erosion of strict norms of the international law. Not too long ago, it seemed clear and understandable. Currently, it cannot serve as an exact and certain benchmark of the global politics. Meantime, the stable habit to be governed by it as an international arbitrator causes the double standards practice to grow.

*1.3. Double standards policy development variants and assurance of the national security in Russia.* G.V. Yatsenko suggests the two variants for double standards policy development: "critical" and "utopic" [11]. The second variant suggests full denial of double standards policy based on development of a uniform understanding of the international regulations provisions and their just and fair application. Such a variant may hardly be implemented in the near future. We paid so much attention to the reasons of the analyzed phenomena deliberately. In the near future we see no opportunities in connection with which these reasons will lose their significance. Therefore, most probable from our standpoint is the "critical" variant. The most likely result within its paradigm may be further deformation of the international law. The core problem here is that the main arbitrator in public international relations is the UN emerged as the guardian of the international law principles after the victory over Nazism. The winning countries thought back then that coming to agreement was quite a real result. Those positions were shaken when the world became bipolar during the Cold War. At least, universal problems were solved via two-party negotiations. In our times, the world has become

multipolar. It makes doubt that the international law regulations will have equal effect in each interstate block and international organization.

We opine that this kind of scenario is actualizing the issue of national security in international relations. This is especially crucial for Russia which has over two years been under the conditions close to international isolation, especially in relation to the groups of countries which were mainly oriented at by our foreign policy including in the sphere of economic relations.

Clause 9 of Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation dated December 25, 2014, approved by Decree of the President of the RF No. Pr-2976, reads that peaceful development at the current stage is followed by growing global competition, strain in various areas of interstate and interregional cooperation, competition of value orientations and development models, instability of the processes of economic and political development on the global and regional levels against the background of general complication of international relations. Gradual redistribution of power in favor of the new centers for economic growth and political attraction is occurring. That is really so. The global order is rapidly changing currently. The instability of its contours puts the issues of national security into the context of finding own place in the new reality, search for stable allies, civilized identification of our state, large by area and by global influence [24].

The formation of a new polycentric global model is mentioned in Clause 13 of Strategy of National Security of the Russian Federation till 2020, approved by the Decree of the President of the RF dated December 31, 2015 No. 683. It stresses that it is accompanied by growing global and regional instability, acute contradictions in connection with uneven global development, deepening gap between the level of countries' welfare, struggle for resources, access to markets, and control over traffic arteries. Competition between states is covering the values and models of public development, human, scientific and technological potential more and more. In the struggle for influence in the international arena, the whole set of political, financial and economic and information tools is being used. Special services are being used more and more often.

As double standards policy is actually reduced to cover the national interests with the façade of international law, for Russia, the only guarantee to assure its national security may be exact and clear articulation of own general national interests. That does not mean that the Russian Federation should reject the norms of the international law, leave the UN or PACE and implement aggressive regional policy. The point is on the need to sharpen the skills to protect own interests in a legal and in a political way and not get exposed against being accused by opponents through own ill-considered actions.

**Discussion.** In the science, there is no uniform understanding of double standards policy. We will consider some of the most productive approaches to understand the essence of the phenomena under research.

G.V. Yatsenko gives the following definition: “judgments, principles and norms forming in their generality the conditions under which assessment of various things and phenomena is interpreted depending on the level of loyalty to the subject of assessment with formal judicial equality”. From the standpoint of A.N. Mikhailenko, the main feature of double standards is the uncertainty about the assessment standard as such [12]. Ye.N. Tovanchova points that double standards are “situations where two persons, groups, etc. are treated in a totally different way which is unfair to either of them” [13]. V.N. Kazantseva treats double standards as a means of information war [14]. Ye.V. Bulipopova sees under double standards a form within which natural domination of a person over other is manifested [15]. A.V. Nozdrin points to such an important component in understanding double standards as doublespeak [16]. A.F. Tuzova in her author’s abstract of PhD thesis offers the following definition: “Double standards are a principal variation of approaches to assess the same or similar events and phenomena, caused by any unconscious subjective reasons or conscious motives, frequently of a lucrative nature” [17].

In compliance with the definition by R. Cooper, “double standards are a set of principles giving more freedom to some person or group rather than other” [18]. In J. Freedland’s opinion, double standards are “rules, principles, judgments, etc. from the standpoint of a stricter application in connection with some group of persons, circumstances, etc. rather than with other” [19]. D. Cole defines double standards as a situation “...when assessment of the same actions varies depending on the relationships between each of those subjects with the assessor” [20]. Finally, as opined by J.W. Russel, double standards are a tool to organize communicative space to ensure advantages for interpretation of generally accepted rules and norms governing cooperation [21].

## CONCLUSION

The above definitions of double standards policy allow identifying own understanding of the term. We suggest that its definition may be worded based on a few system-forming characteristics of its content. Among those, the following may be specified: 1) deceiving; 2) doublespeak; 3) clear division of sociopolitical space into friends/foes; 4) pursuing personal benefit; 5) substantial blurredness of the standard assessed. The above five characteristics are implemented via double standards policy while the foe’s image is present in the consciousness of recipients. Simultaneously, certain stereotype assessments are used, either existing or formed to protect double standards from being revealed as false and speculative. The foe’s image is created to pursue two goals: 1) self-identification and 2) identification of threats for public existence (true or false). In the first case, public values are actualized (via ideological influence, national consciousness mechanisms are enacted), and in the course of stereotyping the cognitive aspect

of the stereotype created is filled inside the consciousness. Respective cognition builds the vector connotations required for identification: to friends and to foes. Regarding the identification of “public threats”, it should be noted that such search creates relevant emotional background in perception of friends and foes, forming the affective aspect of the stereotype created. The establishment in mass consciousness of the affectations required to begin stereotyping process is leading, via causal attribution, to patterning of particular characteristics of friends and foes accepted by the public as the most important to build a simple and clear view of the social reality. The basis of causal attribution is the dehumanization of the foe’s image, generously ascribing various qualities and features characterizing it in a most negative way. The mechanism for incomplete attribution as a result of translation into the mass consciousness of the foe’s image catalyzes such a basic characteristic of a social stereotype as transition of patterned stereotype assessment manifestations into the unconscious. Meantime, the following dependency is observed here: the richer the emotional background of the foe’s image perception, the quicker its assessment characteristics are patterned and transferred to the unconscious, settling there in the form of artificial stereotypes. At this stage, the policy of double standards is perceived by recipients in a noncritical way and the rulers do not need to make too much effort to build a beautiful façade of the international law norms. A recipient frightened with the foe’s image will believe any tales.

The analysis of double standards policy makes us regard with criticism the wishes of a few researchers of that issue and some politicians on elimination of that public influence tool. Such wishes may hardly be admitted up-to-date. We are convinced that the global politics may not be deemed a one-way street and if our political opponents use double standards as an important manipulative method to control the public consciousness, rejection of such practice could undermine the national security of Russia. Quite the reverse, the Russian state should amply employ speechwriters, international lawyers, PR experts to assess weak points in relevant legal norms, contracts, agreements, to make qualified and adequate political reports, to arrange information agencies capable to strictly maintain the information line in foreign political contacts beneficial for the Russian Federation. Only this way may Russia create a stable system of block relations with friendly states, correctly prepare the public opinion in foreign states and protect its national security without belligerent solution of political problems.

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