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## System as a Paradigm of International Relations

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ISSUES OF THEORY, METHODOLOGY AND PRACTICE  
OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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- Халқаро тадқиқотлар назарияси,  
методологияси ва амалиёти масалалари ■  
■ Вопросы теории, методологии и практики  
международных исследований ■

**U.A. Khasanov**

**System as a Paradigm of International  
Relations**

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**System of Complexity**

The system of international relations is undergoing a period of serious transformation. The changes that have occurred have touched upon the fundamental principles and structure-forming elements of the world political system, thereby determining the long-term trends of its development.

Despite the experience gained and the amount of research on the problems and dynamics of the development of modern international relations, the ideas on the new world order are contradictory. This is due to the persistence of instability, unpredictability and uncertainty around the world, as well as due to the complexity and differentiation of the main actors in the formation of a new world order.

The theory of international relations as an important part of the political science, determines the methodology for studying this extremely important area of state activity. It studies the nature of world politics, the logic, laws, and functional principles of its development. It is similar to a certain model of the architectural structure, where each element has its own certain function, place and purpose in the complexed mechanism of global development.

Determining the causal relationship of specific phenomenon is impossible without the knowledge of the general patterns of development at

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systemic level. Recognition of the same law of the balance of power, security categories, national interests or other important segments of the system would be difficult to perceive the significance of certain changes in political relations. A proper understanding of these laws, application of established functional principles and methods of their research would help us to find the place of the phenom-

enon or process under consideration in a number of other similar phenomena and events.

The systemic approach is a fundamental methodology in studies of international relations, which gives the most complete picture of this field, identifying patterns, structural segments, connecting links, driving forces, mechanisms in their relevance and complex interrelation.

In other words, the study of whole complexity of related issues, in many ways interdependent and inseparable processes in the world gives us a holistic view to understand the basic principles of the systems' development. The object of this research method is the system as a complex phenomenon and processes in the world. It contains roots, causes, conditions and consequences of repetitive processes, and their connectivity to the development of its subjects as a pattern.

According to the analysis of prominent Russian scholar Elgiz Pozdnyakov, the task of a systemic approach as a method of studying international relations is not to analyze the foreign policy of individual states, but to identify the mechanism of functioning and development of the system as a whole, the patterns of its life activity. "Determining the integrity of the system is the basis for the transition to the study of a set of systemic links. Each self-organized system has its own special method of communication, which includes whole plethora of autonomous and different elements. Understanding of the structure is one of the important ways to deal with the system. Actually, systemic research begins in essence only when the structure of the system becomes the subject of a special analysis. Identifying the structure of the system refers to a specific theoretical research task." [1]

Thus, according to this Russian scholar, it becomes clear that the study of international relations without system logic is impossible. One does not exist apart from the other. Without first examining its structure, it is difficult to understand the way in which the individual elements of the system interact and function, the nature of the factors that form the

model and the patterns of their behavior. This, in turn, will help determine the specific features and purposes of the principle of dynamic balance of power in world politics.

As the scientist noted, “within the framework of the proposed approach, the structure of the system of interstate relations in its general form can be represented in the form of three hierarchically interrelated levels - the level of power-centric relations, the level of contradictions and the level of system’s super-structure. Its positive side is seen in form, which allows us to present intergovernmental relations in a more orderly manner, and not as a vastly anarchic and not amenable to any rational systematization of many connections.” [2]. These three levels proposed by him, although they are of a general nature in defining the structure of the system, are extremely important from the point of view of understanding the principles of the functioning of the system of international relations.

Applying the term “System” to the sphere of international relations, one must remember its rather conditional character. Any system invariably offers a kind of ideal sample when considered a field of knowledge. Various theories give us a conceivable example of the processes taking place in the political arena (internal or external), as so called model, if the participants strictly obey the rules of behavior. Such a model brings different elements into a definite, coherent state, which Max Weber calls as Ideal type. For example, such conceptual terms like “State”, “Nation”, “National Interest”, “Society” or “Capitalism” are defined as ideal types and models.

The main subject or central actor of the system of international relations is a state with its specific nature and behavior. Outside the system, there is no state, therefore no room even to think about the system of international relations. In this context the science of politics by itself is predominantly engaged to the phenomenon of the state in its complexity and nature.

In case of the theory of international relations, the actions of states are considered in the framework of the specifics of the international community, which is external environment for states and to which their activity is directed and defined as foreign policy. In its turn, the external environment has a constant impact on the state in proportion to what processes and phenomenon are characterized by itself. The state here is the main actor in

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the relations and subject of political relations in the world. There is no contradictory divergence of the logical connection between its separate parts. In other words, the state in these sense acts, as the supreme goal of the development of any ethnic group and gaining the recognition from the international community is an "Idea fixe" for them. Otherwise, it would not be possible to explain the aspirations of Palestinians, Southern Sudanese, Kurds and many others to acquire their own statehood. After all, a sovereign state is not only the personification of power within the country, but also in the international arena. Only the state has real power to act as a subject of the international community, to conclude treaties and agreements announce of the war or make peace.

In the modern world, the specifics of relations have changed, but the principles, rules and mechanisms for the development of the international system, its basic categories such as "balance of power", "security", "national interests", "foreign policy and its instruments" and others are constant, have not changed, did not lost their universal meaning. On the contrary, they have become more rigid and uncompromising. The threats and contradictions of the bipolar world were replaced by the threats of a new order, and as a result, through completely new problems arose in complicated process of defending national security.

After the end of the Cold War, international relations have moved from the tough confrontation of the two military blocs, called the bipolar system, to a new state. Having lost the previous foundation, they found themselves in the thrall of new, no less serious «diseases.» No adequate mechanisms have been created to maintain the international

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system in a stable state in the changed conditions. A series of events that destabilized the situation in a number of countries in strategically important regions of the world, the prevalence of pro-Western sentiments, the formation of various blocks and temporary, rather unstable alliances in them confirm this idea once again.

In this regard, we note one very important detail - the state is sovereign only in the framework of its capacity

and physical boundary and in its limit to protect itself adequately. Otherwise, it ceases to exist in the full sense of the word. World politics, a phenomenon of the external environment of the state, acts as an important shell of the power struggle, and is constant, for survival, superiority,

leadership, the establishment and change of the rules and norms of international communication.

The greatest names of the school of “Political realism” are such scholars like Hans Morgenthau, Reinhold Niebuhr, George Schwarzenberger, Nicholas Spykman, Robert Strausz-Hupň, George Kennan and Saul Cohen were among the first to study the role and place of the state in international relations, as well as the entire system of world politics. This school is essentially the first to begin to study a system as the complex tangle of issues related to the laws, mechanisms, attributes, tools and the main driving forces of international relations, where the state is considered the main actor. R. Aron, G. Kissinger, R. Osgood, J. D. Singer, R. Gilpin, C. Waltz, R. Cohan, J. Nye, K.W.Deutsch, I. Wallerstein, B. Buzan, A. Wolfers and others have also contributed to continue traditions of the school.

In the methodology of studying contemporary international relations, the significant role is given to the definition of some of its rather important system-forming elements. The system of international relations includes everything, which is traditionally referred to the term “World politics”. Social, ethno-confessional, economic, military-strategic, cultural, geopolitical, scientific and technological, and many other aspects characterize it. Representatives of this school theoretically substantiated such key concepts as “Theory of Systems”, “Functionalism”, “Communication Approach”, “System level”, “Sub-System level”, “External Environment”, “Internal Environment”, “Dynamic Equilibrium”, “Principles of Decision Making» and etc. Any issue of world politics within the framework of the study of the international system is always connected with the relations of states among themselves, their foreign policy, goals and priorities, interests and factors of international security. This is the basis of international communication, the foundation of the entire system of international relations. The system has its own laws of development and such a sum of elements and connections, the sublimation of which gives a special quality.

The system of international relations consists of the aggregate of sovereign states separated by political boundaries. This is not just some kind of amorphous community or a random set of states and in the case of each individual participant, there is always a special individuality, a system of values and traditions that, of course, makes its own adjustments to the unique architecture of the community of states.

For example, the Syria or Iraq are not strong actors in the Arab World. However, the development of the situation in these countries is under the scrutiny of the entire international community, as well as the

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deepening the Afghan crisis affects the security not only the Central Asian nations or neighboring regions, and even big powers of the global politics. These examples fully reflect the interconnectivity, reliance and nature of the processes with the trends of the system-wide and sub-system levels.

System - Structure relations represent in connection with foreign political activity of the nations and does not relate on the will, desire, intentions, goals or interests of individual states and depend on whole complexity of international development. This is an important point to understand the relationship between system - structure and foreign policy of every actor, objective and subjective, necessity and free will.

The structure of relations between states is formed due to foreign policy and interactions between states. It does not depend on the intentions of states, much less on the political motivation for their actions. It depends on the actions themselves. Again, states manifest themselves effectively within certain structural boundaries, prerequisites and conditions. This is a complex dialectical process, the result of which is a modification of both the structure and foreign policy activities of states.

### **Phenomenon of International System**

There are two main approaches, describing the specifics of the system and the state as its main actor. One of them can be called an attributive approach. It sees the power of the state as something inherent to it, as its attribute, a physical property that can be measured. Another approach considers power from a behavioral perspective that linked to the actions of nations in the international system and interconnect other nation. Both of these approaches are based on their own set of arguments in defending the phenomenon of national power.

Political ideals and high moral principles, however high they may be, have little value in life if not supported by national power. Once Machiavelli noted that all armed prophets have conquered and unarmed ones were defeated. However, the state itself is the full embodiment of power. The current situation within or outside the state may at any time require the use of it. However, it is even more necessary to remember them now in the face of the well-known events in post bipolar system of world politics, which created a fundamentally new political situation in Eurasia and the Globe as a whole. This circumstance has already led to a change in the international balance of power. Apparently, new serious changes are brewing in it, associated with the events in Europe, the Middle East, Ukraine and other regions of the world.

In this regards, a famous speech of Otto von Bismarck to the Budget Committee of the Prussian Chamber of Deputies on September 30, 1862 may clearly define the phenomenon of power: “The great questions of the time will not be resolved by speeches and majority decisions, but by iron and blood.” [3], Commenting on this statement, Mikhail Bakunin said: «Bismarck with the usual courage, his characteristic cynicism and contemptuous frankness expressed in these words the whole essence of the political history of peoples, the whole mystery of state wisdom. The continued predominance and triumph of force — that is the real essence; all that political language is called the right, there is only the consecration of the fact, established power» [4].

These opinions may be treated differently, but it is unlikely that anyone will deny the role of power in politics in general and in international relations in particular. «There are only two decisive forces in politics: the organized force of the state, the army, and the unorganized force of the masses,» Friedrich Engels also noted [5].

Attempts to find universal criteria of power and ways to measure it have a long history. They are closely related to the school of «political realism» and its recognized leader Hans Morgenthau. In relation to the concept of «power», the school of «Political realism» can be attributed to a typically attributive direction in its assessment. It is based on the premise that relations between states are a struggle for dominant influence. Power rivalry between them, the pursuit of dominance, and the struggle for it inevitably generate such a phenomenon as the balance of power. Whenever and wherever relations between independent and sovereign states have arisen, whether in ancient Greek City-States or in the modern system, the power relations between them have been and still are decisive. This provision Morgenthau considers as the Iron law of politics» [6].

Offering different formulas and definitions of power, Morgenthau simultaneously identifies real components that shape the strength of the state. These include the geographical location of the state, its natural resources, industrial capacity, the number and quality of the armed forces, human resources (demographic factor), national character, national morality, the quality of diplomacy, the level of state government [7].

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Klaus Knorr was also among the first researchers to undertake a multivariate analysis of national power. In his famous work «the Military potential of States» (translated into Russian), he distinguishes between the real and potential power of the state. Real power is the resources mobilized at a given time; potential power is the resources that management can mobilize at all. By «military capability», Knorr means «potential military power», understood as “...the ability of a state to deploy the required number of armed forces, together with the necessary support, in the event of war» [8]. While Knorr insists that, the multiplicity of factors should be taken into account in assessing the strength of the state. It has not been able to overcome the main obstacle of the attributive approach [9].

Following Morgenthau and Knorr, subsequent generations of researchers continued to see their main task in identifying and systematizing various groups of «power» factors for a long time. However, along the way, the question of how these factors interact for education because of what might be called the combined force of the state has not been resolved. The complexity of combining in a single holistic concept of the power of many qualitatively different factors and components has caused a number of researchers the desire to reduce the number of its determinants to several basic.

The transformation of potential of power from possibility to reality depends on the specific conditions of the place and time. Under certain systemic and structural circumstances, even the mightiest nation may become helpless. The best examples of this in modern inter – state relations are the failure of the Vietnamese and Afghan campaigns of the most powerful modern powers – the United States and the Soviet Union.

Whatever, however, the definition neither to give «power» with regard to international relations, it can be regarded not only as the notion of a purely conventional and relative. At the time, some scholars note the one-sided metaphysical meaning of the concept of «power», expressing, in his opinion, only the lack of our knowledge about the nature of a law and the way it works. He considered this concept to be unsuccessful in the sense that it expresses all phenomena unilaterally, while the processes of nature are based on the relationship between at least two active components-action and counteraction. Existing knowledge of the force suppose that only one component is active, the current, and the other is passive, perceiving that virtually eliminates the time interaction.

The strength of any state is understood as general pattern to defend its interests and achieve objectives in the international arena through appropriate means. The material basis of this ability is built on economic,

scientific, technological and innovative potential of the state. However, its true meaning and content is acquired in the process of interaction of nations in the system, outside of which it turns into the useless abstraction.

Understanding the relative, comparative nature of the power of the state is by no means an acquisition of our time. Many researchers have come to the conclusion about the systemic nature of force long before the word «system» has found a modern co-holding. Thus, the American researcher of international relations F. Schumann in the 30-ies of the last century noted: «in the system of States in which sovereign units are involved in a constant struggle, force has always been a relative value... A state that exists in complete isolation from other states cannot have “power interests”; as such, interests grow out of contact, rivalry and conflict between States. The concept of the «power» of a state, taken by itself, is meaningless; it becomes so only in comparison with the power of other states» (emphasis added. – *U.Kh.*) [10].

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Long history of studying international relations has clearly shown not only the limitations, but also the futility of attempts to explain the essence of relations between states by means of physical and mechanical concepts of power. Attempts by many researchers to determine the exact meaning of the concept of state power were also in vain. These attempts have not gone beyond the elementary-total approach, that is, the desire by simply summing up the various factors to get a holistic understanding of such a complex phenomenon as the power of the state.

It is necessary to summarize the factors and values related to qualitatively different areas: economic, social, political, scientific and technical, moral and psychological, organizational and managerial, etc. They are either incommensurable at all, or can «dock» only with a great stretch.

The analysis of the concept of state power in a systemic context, that is, in the context of interaction and interdependence of states, assumes as a prerequisite the existence of what is called power relations in the international political language. International relations are regarded primarily as the relations of the most powerful actors. This approach expresses the view, shared by many international policy researchers, that relations between states are not simply a set of completely disordered

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actions, but a hierarchically structured system. It has a small number of states with relatively high power and influence («centers of power»). That is the relationship between them and is like the core of all world politics, around, which revolves everything else.

Power relations, in turn, inevitably and necessarily generate such a phenomenon of inter-state relations as the balance of power. It is within the framework of each period of development of the system of balance

of forces that the relative power (force) of each state party to the system is determined. Outside the action of a particular system of balance of power, the power (force) of the state is only some abstraction.

Thus, as the ratio of private economic, military or other indicators that characterize the state with some individual parties, and the ratio of political forces in inter-state relations as a whole is revealed not in static indicators, but in the dynamics of changes in the system-wide balance of power.

There is little to explain the behavior of states in the international arena, if power of the state taken separately. The emphasis on the attribution of power is one of the weakest points of the school of «political realism». One of the merits of the so-called behavioral direction of research in international relations is precisely the desire to move away from the attributive understanding of force and bind it to the specific interests, goals and behavior of the state.

Many of the representatives of this trend are of the opinion that the power of the state is only an instrument for the achievement of its national interests and goals and, outside of them, loses all reasonable meaning. As one moderate critic of the school of «political realism» Stanley Hoffman observed, «It is dangerous to attach key importance to a concept that is nothing more than instrumental. Power is a means to the realization of a set of different goals (including the power itself). The quantity and quality of the power used by people are determined by their intentions... The theory of "political realism" neglects the factors that influence or determine goals... Faith and values which largely unite the purposes of the state, as well as the motives of statesmen, are either not taken into account by it or are discarded altogether.» [11].

In the practical policy of any nation defending its interests, two points are inseparably connected: the moment of the goal and the moment of the means. The interests of the state on the world stage are realized with the help of political goals and a system of means serving the implementation of these goals. There is a close interdependence between interests and goals, on the one hand, and the means of their realization, on the other. The specific interests and objectives of the state determine the necessity of the means. The interests and goals, in turn, are largely depend to its place and role in the system of inter-state relations, the nature of interaction between states. The quantity and quality of the required funds is determined by the potential capabilities of the state, the level of its scientific, technical and economic development, the nature of the socio-political system.

Special attention in this regard deserves modern nuclear missile weapons as a component of state power. Hundreds of books and articles have been written about its role and influence on the development of military-political relations in today's world, which eliminates the need to dwell on this problem in detail. I will note only one thing: sometimes some authors attach a self-sufficient importance to nuclear missile weapons, absolutize their role, and tear them away from politics and political relations. This is a big and dangerous mistake, which could be called «nuclear-missile fetishism». The fear of these weapons easily turns into the opposite feeling, namely, a reassessment of their role and importance and an irrepressible desire to possess them at any cost as a powerful tool of politics. Moreover, those who aspire to get it today, much better, than other «theorists» do, understand its political essence and importance. After all, both conventional weapons and nuclear weapons are not created by themselves, only because of the simple logic of the development of military technology (although, of course, we must admit that it has a significant impact on this process). Its creation is mainly the result of the power policies of states and their respective relations based on the balance of power.

Of course, the reverse effect of modern weapons systems on the policies of states also has its own specificity and distinctiveness. Nuclear missile weapons have created a completely new military and political situation in the world. At least most researchers and politicians agree that a General war in the current circumstances is unlikely, and this fact, if not entirely, is largely due to nuclear weapons.

As for the question of whether the creation and stockpiling of nuclear missiles has a stabilizing or destabilizing effect, there is no agreement, as in many other areas. Some American analysts (e.g., Organski, Kugler)

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believe that nuclear weapons have neither a sobering effect on their possessors nor a deterrent effect on their adversaries [12]. Hutt and Russet, for their part, believe that the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons is marginal, especially when compared to other factors [13]. Gilpin believes that the emergence of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction has had and continues to have a profound impact on the behavior of States [14]. Although its ultimate consequences still require clarification, it is already possible, in his opinion, to assert that it has had on international relations influence in three aspects.

Mutual deterrence of opposing nuclear powers imposes restrictions on the use of violence and protects the international community as a whole from all-round war. Successful deterrence is the result of the use of force as a balance of opposing force, not the result of the elimination of force as such. Nuclear weapons provide the state with a «firm guarantee of independence and physical integrity». It practically equalizes all nuclear powers. A powerful power will think three times before attacking a small state that also possesses nuclear weapons. Therefore, according to some analysts, the proliferation of nuclear weapons can create a system of universal deterrence and peace.

The most disturbing aspect is that the possession of nuclear weapons largely determines the rank of a state in the hierarchy of international prestige. Since even a relatively backward society is capable of producing nuclear weapons economically and technically, the former identification of the industrial potential of a state with its military power and prestige is clearly outdated. The conclusion is that the acquisition of nuclear weapons is becoming an attractive target for an increasing number of modern States [15].

In other words, nuclear weapons, as an essential element of a state's modern power, have not changed the nature of power relations among States – they continue to operate in the same way as in the pre-nuclear era. Its impact affected mainly on reducing the number of issues and questions, which States, according to the former measure, was willing to take the risk of war. As for the rest, as before, relations between States continue to be based on the balance of power.

### **Paradigm Shift in Security Studies**

Today, many leading scholars perceive the Eurasia as the key arena of international politics, by virtue both of its significance in the modern world and the role that it will play in determining the contours of future scenarios.

In many studies, this assertion is defined in scope of goals, tasks and priorities of the foreign policy of the United States, set out regularly in US National Security Strategy [16] and various reports and policy papers, prepared by leading American scholars and former policy makers. One of the recent ones is the document called «Extending American Power» Project. It was prepared in May 2016 by «group of current and former government officials, strategists, and scholars spanning the political spectrum met for a monthly dinner series through the Center for a New American Security's «Extending American Power» project, co-chaired by Dr. Robert Kagan and the Hon. James P. Rubin. The goal of the series was to bring together a bipartisan group to help shape the national conversation on America's role in the world. The group convened multiple times to discuss a range of regional and functional issues from the Middle East to Asia to the international economy» [17].

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Many researchers and academicians defend the chief premise, from which the United States proceeds in the formulation of its national strategy. It is the recognition of the instability of the present-day world, the existence of threats to the security of both itself and its allies, and the challenge they present to America's world domination. The report notes that the balance of power in the world is subject to constant changes, is unstable, and is fraught with various threats. One such threat is seen in the instability of a number of regions of the world, in which certain countries have the possibility of inflicting damage to the national interests of the United States. The authors of the above-mentioned project say, «American leadership is critical to preserving and strengthening the bedrock of today's international order, which is being shaken by a variety of forces. The final report comes at a critical time, as U.S. allies are calling for increased U.S. engagement, and the American public is debating a greater international role.» [18].

Such approach logically leads prominent American analysts to conclude on the necessity of tough counteraction to the enumerated threats, and also of active participation in the solution of international problems and maintaining its leading edge in economic, political, military, commu-

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nicational, and other spheres: «...to preserve and strengthen this order will require a renewal of American leadership in the international system. Today, the very bedrock of this order is being shaken by a variety of forces - powerful and ambitious authoritarian governments like Russia and China, radical Islamic terrorist movements, long-term shifts in the global

**Modern nations are mobile and active, embodying their own characteristics of a cultural, technological, social, historical nature, but always subject to harsh conditions and trends determined by the functional laws of the system of international relations. They influence the development of the system, but the system has a constant impact on them in accordance with its laws.**

economy, the rise of non-state actors, the challenges of cyberspace, and changes in our physical environment.» [19].

We have dwelt in detail on the national interests of the United States for the reason that it is today the only superpower in the world, and stability in the system of international relations hangs in many ways on its policies. Overall, everything said above provides sufficiently convincing evidence, in our opinion, that today, just like in previous times, political leaders, in the words

of H. Morgenthau, «think and act in the notions of interest determined as power.» [20].

The proof of these words can be seen not only on the example of the United States, for which the problem of national interest has become a kind of an *idēe fixe*, but also in the case of other states and, first of all, those which have recently become independent. Russia is no exception, showing a keen interest in the elaboration of her own national interest, especially since Vladimir Putin's 2018 victory at the presidential elections. However, in one vital sense there exists a marked difference between these two states. Whereas the United States with its new administration led by President Donald Trump is at the edge of its political turbulence, Russia is a state trying to reshape new balance of power in crucially important parts of Middle East and Eastern Europe despite of complicated economic situation.

The main features of these changes are connected with the departure from the world arena of the Soviet Union as a superpower, the disintegration of its colossal sphere of influence, the emergence in its place of new independent states, and regional political arena. These include the crises in Syria, Iraq, the series of conflicts in Caucasus region, including replicating trans-border clashes in Nagorno-Karabakh and conflict in Ukraine as prime case. This issue became a troubled spot in International agenda and remains under the close look of leading political analysts almost everywhere.

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As the important segment of the International system, the rivalry for influence in the strategically vital regions, such as Central Asian - which involves all the leading global and regional powers such as Russia, China, US, Pakistan or India and even others, have the potential to turn the region into a troubled buffer zone between the West and the East. The rivalry for domination or prevailing influence in Central Asia, besides everything else, promises great advantages in the field of possession of rich energy resources. This is especially important, if one takes into account the high logistical risks to transport such reserves from the Middle East, especially in the contest of Syrian Crisis and struggle against violent jihadists of ISIS, makes this region permanently unstable.

Other mattering players of the international system - Russia and China will most likely be the powers that in the context of current regional politics have already shown the real counteraction to the interests of the United States in Eurasia. Therefore the «middle» states, including first of all the states of Trans-Caucasia, Turkey, Iran and Central Asia, will be obliged to take their bearings geopolitically and decide, on the basis of their national interests, what position they should adhere to. The deteriorating the situation in Afghanistan have created a certain foundation for this. Many analysts believe that despite of any kind of statements on temporary character of military presence in Afghanistan, the United States have no plan to leave the region, at least in the foreseeable future.

In other words, some big power rethinking the geopolitical importance of the Central Asian region, but also expressing the desire to create a legal base for carrying out the effective policies. In plans to restore the «Silk Road,» primary attention is devoted to the maintenance of the balance of power favorable for themselves in the Caspian region and in Central Asia. This is aimed in the final analysis at the neutralization of hegemonic aspirations on the part of Iran from the South, Russia from the North and Chinese economic expansion from the East through its OBOR project.

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Due to such researches current system emerged after the disintegration of bi-polarity is neither «unipolar» nor «multipolar.» As of today, it has not yet developed sufficiently enough to make a comprehensive evaluation of its nature and form, and all judgments at this point must be provisional. Today in the world, only one superpower really exists but, in our view, one should not draw a conclusion that it exerts a decisive impact on the development of international relations overall.

### **In Lieu of Conclusion**

Modern nations are mobile and active, embodying their own characteristics of a cultural, technological, social, historical nature, but always subject to harsh conditions and trends determined by the functional laws of the system of international relations. They influence the development of the system, but the system has a constant impact on them in accordance with its laws.

All this once again confirms the often-repeated truth: the system of international relations is always a complex set of close and relevant levels, functional principles and laws. In addition, the system deserves continuous research to find a proper answer to the question: why the world is moving in certain direction and not otherwise.

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