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International Policy

Bakonina M. S. The Islamic Republic of Iran's Political System and Challenges to Its Stability.

The Islamic Republic of Iran's political system is usually considered to be an autocracy. The article presents the IRI's current political process from the perspective of classic models of democracy created by M. Hauriou, J. Schumpeter, and S. Huntington. The author argues that the analysis of Islamic institutions, ways of recruiting elites, electorate's behavior, a degree of press freedom, and election processes indicate that they to some extent correspond to the classic descriptions of an elitist institutional democracy, though not a liberal but an Islamic one. Only the Supreme leader's expansive powers and lifelong rule do not allow categorizing the Iranian political model as a true democracy. The author raises a question whether it can achieve that status when the Assembly of Experts would elect a Supreme ruler through a legitimate procedure.

Keywords: *Iran – the Islamic Republic – elites – elections – free press – autocracy – democracy – Huntington's "two turnover test" – institutionalism – supreme leader* 11

Belaschenko D. A., Yakimova E. A. Ukraine-Israel Relations: a New Stage and Old Issues.

The article deals with various specific features of relations between Israel and Ukraine under the presidency of V. A. Zelensky. The authors observe political and economic components of the bilateral cooperation, noting key areas of mutual interest and reasons for some tensions between the two countries. The focus is on the issue of historical memory and prospects for developing some economic ties.

Keywords: *Ukraine – Israel – repatriates – historical memory – free trade* 30

Lobov R. N. North Korea's Economic Development under the Sanctions.

The article contains an analysis of recent key trends in political and economic life of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The focus is on the amendments that were added to the Socialist Constitution in 2019. The author also observes measures, which the DPRK's authorities undertook to prevent the spreading of COVID-19 in the country.

Keywords: *North Korea (the DPRK) – politics – society – economy – COVID-19* 46

Mamedova L. K. Poland's and Hungary's Issues with Observance of the EU Basic Principle of the Rule of Law: the Evolution of EU Institutions' Approach.

The European Union institutions have accumulated some reservations about the Polish and Hungarian authorities during the recent years. The main reason is systematic violations by Warsaw and Budapest of the basic EU principle – the rule of law. Thereby, the European institutions are mulling some new instruments of financial commitment for those EU member-countries, which do not observe the common democratic standards.

Keywords: *the European Union – rule of law – Poland – Hungary* **60**

New Eurasia

Pritchkin S. A. Russia's Policy in Central Asia in the XXIth cent.

Central Asia has always been a historically and strategically important region for Russia, characterized by deep interdependency in security, economic, transport, and industrial areas. The geopolitical situation there altered in the beginning of the XXIth cent. The terror attack of September 2001 led to the invasion of Afghanistan by the USA and its NATO allies, supplemented by their military presence in Central Asia. Meanwhile, the rising world power of China has also shown its interest in the region. The Chinese have been promoting various economic and infrastructural projects there since the early 2000-ies. Russia gradually adapted to the new situation and began restoring its influence basing on its traditional strengths: economic integration, cultural and historical ties. Nowadays Russia is facing a challenge of maintaining its long-term strategic regional interests in the presence of other assertive actors, especially China.

Keywords: *Russia – Central Asia – Eurasia – Russian foreign policy – geopolitics – the EAEU – the CSTO – the Eurasian integration – China – the USA – NATO* **76**

Kochedykov I. E. Migration as a Factor in Moldova's Politics.

The article observes main approaches to exploring the effects of migration for the country of origin. The author interprets the sociological surveys' data and evaluates the degree of migrants' influence on national politics. Additionally, the Moldavian governmental policy dealing with diaspora is observed in the article.

Keywords: *Moldova – emigration – state – elections – the CIS* **93**

Economy

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Sports nowadays have far exceeded the limits of traditional competition, transforming into a vast industry. It attracts investments that fuel construction of huge sports facilities, contributing to economic growth. Organization of sports competitions generates numerous part-time and permanent jobs. Manufacturing of sports equipment and apparel has become an entire high-tech industry. The modern communication media propel its development, allowing large swathes of population to view competitions worldwide. E-sports have become a distinct way of leisure, attracting mostly the younger generation.

Keywords: *sports industry – e-sports – sports equipment – healthy lifestyle – sports facilities – advertising* 107

Sosnov G. I. Turkey's Energy Security: Solving Internal Problems by Escalating Regional Conflicts.

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Keywords: *Turkey – energy sector – resources – encouraging investment – external sources – dependency – risks – conflicts – perspectives* 122

Mordvinova A. E. The Eurasian Development Bank's Role in Deepening Integration between the Country-Members of the Eurasian Economic Union.

The article observes the Eurasian Development Bank's key objectives, features, and priorities for business. The author specifies and analyses the bank's basic functions and aspects of work focused on deepening the integration between the state-members of the Eurasian Economic Union. Various economic, financial, and political constraints to full utilization of the EDB's potential are also noted in the article.

Keywords: *Armenia – Belorussia – Eurasian integration – the Eurasian Development Bank – the Eurasian Economic Union – Kazakhstan – Kirghizia – Russia – Tajikistan* 136

Nikulin A. A. Global Gold Market in Recent Geo-Economic Conditions:
Can the Precious Metal Maintain Its Defensive Asset Status?

The article contains an analysis of global gold market, facing the recent geo-economic challenges and constraints resulted from the COVID-19 global pandemic. The focus is on forecasts made by international experts dealing with the precious metal's prospects as an investment and hedging instrument. Possible impact of the aforementioned factors on the development of global gold trade is also noted here.

Keywords: *precious metals – global gold market – gold trade – investments in gold – COVID-19 – trends in the global gold market* 152

Stratagems

Suponina E. V. Weakness of the Virus and strength of the Corona
(about meeting of East and West waiting for the end of Pandemic
and the beginning of Apocalypse).

The author explores the present and future of the Middle East. The regional transformation is going on, notwithstanding a number of regime changes in several countries. The COVID-19 pandemic aggravated the worsening economic conditions. The author's forecast is alarming. The terrorist threat has not been removed and is spreading to other regions. Arab countries, Israel, Iran, and Turkey are struggling for regional dominance. What does the future hold for the region, where Russia has recently reclaimed its key role? What is the U.S. policy in the Middle East? What are arguments for continuing presence in that region and what difficulties arise in this regard?

Keywords: *Middle East – international terrorism – pandemic – coronavirus – oil prices – Russian foreign policy – the U.S. vital interests – Israel – Iran – Turkey – Arab countries – world order – strategic stability* 172

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Book review: *Quisling V.* Russia and Ourselves / by Vidkun Quisling ; transl. from German by K. Dovzhenko. Moscow : Totenburg, 2019. 206 p.

Keywords: *Vidkun Quisling – the Norwegian fascism – "the National Union" – history of Norway in the XXth cent. – the far-right and radical ideologies* 188

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