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CURRENT SITUATION AND PROMISING TOOLS FOR
EFFECTIVE INTERACTION WITH RUSSIAN COMPATRIOTS
ABROAD

Gurov Oleg Nikolaevich (a)*, Novikov Ruslan Yurievich (b)

*Corresponding author

- (a) Institute of Industrial Management (IOM) Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, bld. 3, 82–84, Vernadsky ave., Moscow, Russia, gurov-on@ranepa.ru
(b) JSC "Argumenty i Fakty", 42, Myasnitskaya Street, Moscow, Russia, gen.director@aif.ru

Abstract

According to the UN, in 2015, the number of migrants in the world was 243 million people. Representatives of national diasporas diversify and enrich local cultures, forming a significant component of leading states' intellectual potential. The number of Russian-speaking people in the world who associate themselves with Russian compatriots, according to various estimates, is from 25 to 50 million people. At the same time, the existing official Russian policy towards compatriots does not fully meet modern challenges. In world science in the 20th century, the Soviet, foreign, and emigre traditions of researching the Russian and Soviet emigration were actually opposed. In Russia itself, objective studies of Russian emigration began only at the end of the last century. Although now various scientific trends are converging, it is premature to talk about forming a joint and unified approach to a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of compatriots, their cultural potential for the historic homeland, and the world community. It is also premature to assert that a system of effective communications and measures for interaction between Russia and the Russian diaspora has been formed. These collisions are reflected in Russia's foreign policy towards compatriots. Large-scale activities to support and develop interaction with compatriots require revising the existing system, conducting an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of measures taken, and rebooting the entire system. The main focus of state work should be to protect the rights and legitimate interests of compatriots, promote their legal integration into the host countries' public life.

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1. Introduction

Supporting compatriots living abroad, protecting their interests and legal assistance, maintaining contacts, and preserving cultural community is an important component of Russian foreign policy. In 2020, a provision on supporting compatriots was introduced into the Russian Constitution, which should transfer state policy to a qualitatively more effective level.

Until now, the main activities focused mainly on working with the subjects and, first of all, with organizations of representatives and descendants of all waves of emigration from the USSR and Russia. The variety of large-scale processes and events in world public life in recent decades, the transformation of key concepts and categories of politics and culture demonstrate that the traditional approach to compatriots' concept is very outdated.

2. Problem Statement

It is necessary to revise Russia's foreign policy concerning Russian compatriots, to direct it to a broader segment of the world population than it is today, which associates itself with Russian and Soviet "roots."

3. Research Questions

1. Systematization of current positions and development of promising directions for foreign policy development with compatriots.
2. Analysis of the current directions of state policy concerning compatriots living abroad, carried out by the Russian Federation and foreign countries faced with population migration.
3. Analysis of problems and substantiation of topical directions for improving Russia's state policy on interaction with compatriots.

4. Purpose of the Study

The article aimed to identify positive and negative trends and form relevant tools for effective interaction with compatriots.

5. Research Methods

The methodology is based on the concept of political dynamics, within which the political process as a constant transformational dynamic of political and social structures is considered in the works of Almond, Bentley, Easton, Truman, and other scientists. The methodological basis is Hartmann, Lipset's methodological approaches in the field of research of the political and social behavior of the individual.

6. Findings

For modern Russian political culture, the category "compatriots" is, first of all, a humanitarian and spiritual concept. As Russian President Vladimir Putin noted in 2018 at the World Congress of Compatriots Living Abroad, the Russian World "has never been built exclusively and only on ethnic, national or religious grounds. It brought together and united everyone who is spiritually connected with Russia, who feels a spiritual connection with our Motherland, who considers themselves to be native speakers of the Russian language, culture, and Russian history" (Putin, 2018, para. 9).

In 2010, the Federal Law "On Amendments to the Federal Law" On the State Policy of the Russian Federation concerning Compatriots Abroad "was adopted. This law enshrined the right of compatriots to join the organizations of compatriots in various countries, receive official certificates confirming their belonging to such organizations, and participate in events, fixing the connection with the Russian World.

In 2016, the Presidential Decree "On the Approval of the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation" came into force, where the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of compatriots is declared as one of the main tasks of Russian foreign policy. Separately, it is noted the following needs:

- to promote the consolidation of compatriots in order to ensure their rights in the states of residence effectively,
- to promote the preservation of the identity of the Russian diaspora and its ties with the historical homeland,
- to promote the voluntary resettlement of compatriots to the Russian Federation (Gerasimova, 2018).

The comprehensive plan of the main measures for the implementation of the state policy of the Russian Federation in relation to compatriots living abroad for 2021–2023 fixes several current activities that can be carried out to communicate with compatriots. However, these current events literally duplicate the previous document for 2018–2020 and do not consider changes in the international situation, technological development, and other documents (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2021).

The presented tasks seem vague and vague and require serious adjustments in a changing global paradigm. It is necessary to comprehend the existing international experience, to consider what policy other countries are pursuing towards their compatriots.

The phenomenon of a Russian compatriot is a unique phenomenon for world culture. In the XX–XXI centuries, the Russian state's emigration amounted to 4 or 5 waves, depending on the definition used; each outcome was due to separate critical circumstances and different political, economic, ethnic, and religious combination problems. This topic is ambiguous and painful for the titular nation, representatives, and descendants of compatriots living abroad.

With all the ambiguity and risks for different countries and the world community as a whole, there is no doubt that the formation, attraction, and accumulation of human capital provides the state's intellectual potential, being an important component of national wealth (Trost et al., 2018). According to the UN, the main directions of migration are from Mexico, China, the Philippines, and India to the United

States; between Russia and former Soviet republics; from Bangladesh to India and other countries. Representatives of national diasporas diversify, enrich local culture by applying knowledge, competencies, and skills in social processes, increasing human resources and intellectual potential. More than half of migrants in developed countries have secondary / higher education, higher education, or work. Migrants form the most important component of intellectual potential for modern states (United Nations, 2016).

The USA, Finland, Switzerland, Turkey, and other countries carry out official programs to support compatriots living abroad. Common to support programs is the recognition of the important role of compatriots in ensuring cultural, political, and economic dialogue, raising the intellectual level in the world community, state support for a wide range of systemic activities in this direction (Champlin & Knoedler, 2020; OECD, 2015; Piccoli, 2020).

The protection of Russian compatriots is a strategic task for the Russian state since we are talking about a significant population: experts say 25–30 million. The opinions are understandable due to the scale and drama of the 20th-century events that caused emigration, the unclear definition of compatriots in the legislation, and the ambiguity of self-identification by the compatriots themselves (Lapteva, 2019).

The complexity of counting is a multilevel problem due to the deployment of various scenarios of bilateral relations between countries, alternative definitions of the national diaspora, and different methods of counting in individual states. The numbers can be justified in different ways.

The Russian world is a reasonably orthodox community, united often by differently interpreted concepts: common origin, involvement, and commitment to the Russian language and culture. Indeed, tens of millions of people are global; it is a particular historical and cultural space that provides cultural and linguistic identity. The development of the Russian world in a socially-oriented vector has the potential to normalize international relations based on the best that exists in Russian culture. We want to highlight the ability of the Russian people to empathize, sympathize and show solidarity. These qualities make it possible to preserve humanity in a period when numerous technogenic and political challenges threaten the existence of a person in the philosophical sense. Such work requires active interaction with compatriots, the use of their resources as a potential for increasing Russia's prestige in the international arena.

Let us turn to the Russian language's support, we see that the main work is produced in the mainstream of formal events that do not always meet modern requirements. The focus is on raising the level and expanding the scope of teaching the Russian language abroad and supporting Russian language courses abroad. Such an "academic" approach should be complemented by digital technologies' achievements, which allow teaching using relevant and relevant educational tools and methods. It is necessary to decisively expand the work to promote the Russian language, especially to improve the quality of Russian language proficiency from directly compatriots to all Russian-speaking citizens in the former USSR's contours. The reason is that the Russian-speaking population abroad, raised in Soviet / Russian culture, has the potential to support and advance Russia's interests.

At the ideological and conceptual levels, it is necessary to link the areas of work with compatriots to current tasks of interest to Russia and compatriots more closely. An indicator of such programs and

events' success will be their relevance and usefulness for the compatriots themselves - indicators that can be measured.

The special relevance of the digital direction is because new opportunities have generated new risks. Several years ago, some articles introduced the concept of "meta-parasite" into the humanities. The concept of "mega-parasite" personifies the fear of incomprehensible and hostile phenomena that spread in the information society in ways similar to how it happens with parasitic infections. The meta-parasite became possible due to the rapid improvement and spread of digital technologies. The fundamental phenomena and tools of modern life ceased to have natural boundaries (Gurov, 2018). Today it is easier to "introduce" speculative and opportunistic ideas into public opinion by manipulating the political process and fake news than verified facts. Humanity must prevent the further development of meta-parasitic phobias, fears, and panic phenomena as a motivator for civilizational development, develop awareness and understanding of the mechanisms of the impact of information flows on social life. Simultaneously, digitalization in political practice should not imply a complete transition to online as the only promising area of work with compatriots. The coronavirus pandemic has confirmed the value of live communication, cooperation, and solidarity and has proven the humanitarian component's importance and relevance in social processes.

There is a positive experience of promoting such values through print media, which have not lost their importance. The Russian weekly newspaper *Argumenty i fakty* has a well-built infrastructure, professional expertise, and reliable results of promoting an urgent agenda for compatriots in various countries and has a broad and loyal audience in the near and far abroad. For developing online cooperation, it is necessary to work out relevant formats and channels that can motivate and unite people. An example is the automated information system (AIS) "Young Compatriots," launched in 2020. Its functionality includes an information block with legal documents, contacts of Russian federal structures, information about education in Russia for compatriots, event announcements, the ability to invite partners to events.

The relevance of this direction is that the problems facing Russia today objectively reduce Russia's attractiveness in the eyes of young people in the neighboring countries. Such problems are the low level of socio-economic development compared to the leading Western countries, an underdeveloped business environment, not significant achievements in culture (compared to the past). We also observe negative trends in the international environment:

- lack of proper regulation of the ICT environment;
- growing economic, ethnic and religious stratification in the developed countries of the "golden billion" and in the countries of the "third world";
- deepening "gap between generations," world economic and financial crisis;
- coronavirus pandemic;
- collapsing social and political foundations in countries of "exemplary democracy" (for example, the US presidential elections in 2020);
- activation of aggressive military-political players in the immediate vicinity of Russian national borders.

These conditions require risk analysis, mobilization of resources for at least partial mitigation of negative factors in the short term. In the long term, these actions are necessary to bring Russia to a decent level of authority as a state that stands for social and political progress, international security, and the establishment of traditional moral values. Many foreign policy initiatives of the Russian leadership are devoted to the problem of getting out of the current situation. Over the past decade, the Russian leadership has consistently proposed uniting all countries' efforts in the fight against pressing global problems. Working with compatriots to achieve this goal is one of the most important foreign policy areas, requiring the use of the potential of the state, public associations, and individual citizens (not necessarily with Russian roots). New directions of work must be implemented to overcome the following risks:

1. The "anti-Russian" sentiments that have developed in recent years among some of our compatriots abroad often demonstrate a prejudiced attitude towards the foreign policy initiatives of the Russian leadership.

2. Inefficiency of the current structure of interaction with compatriots. Collisions in the hierarchy between various organizations, the lack of clarity of the professional profile and functionality of various structures, the presence of incomprehensible and self-proclaimed organizations and personalities claiming that they are "authorized to represent compatriots" form political, economic, and reputational risks.

3. The increased role of ICT, particularly messengers, platforms, and social networks in political processes, along with the opportunities noted above, also carries risks. Technology products become not just subjects but moderators of large-scale political action. Controlling information risks requires rejection of the indiscriminate use of communication mechanisms, a profound analysis of their use's appropriateness, taking into account the long-term consequences.

4. As a result of D. Biden's victory in the US presidential elections, there is a high probability of further escalating tension in international relations, aggressive manifestations towards Russia. Russian compatriots may be under pressure to weaken ties with their historic homeland, which will require additional "compensation" projects beyond the platforms involved, such as RT or Sputnik. It is necessary to establish a system of effective communication with compatriots, which will allow:

- ensure a multilateral, interactive nature of communication, the relevance of information, and the absence of a biased agenda;
- carry out communication in Russian and in the languages of the countries of residence;
- focus on mutual support and the development of solidarity within the community.

5. As a separate area, it is necessary to intensify work with the Russian-speaking population in the CIS and the EAEU, agree on common goals, develop and approve a strategy and tactics at the interstate level intercultural interaction. It is necessary to consider the possibility of creating an all-Russian forum/conference/union specifically from the countries of the former USSR, entrusting the supervision of its activities to one of the current authoritative heads of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation.

6. The situation in Ukraine should be considered as a separate risk. The current difficulties are caused by provocations and attacks on the interests of the Russian-speaking population of this country, legitimized by the Ukrainian leadership's recent decisions. In particular, in 2020, the law "On complete general secondary education" came into force, providing for reducing teaching in Russian. In 2021, the

law's norm "On ensuring the functioning of the Ukrainian language as a state language" came into force. The service sector is transferred exclusively to the Ukrainian language. It is necessary to conduct an assessment and a profound revision of the current state of affairs in Ukraine, to prepare comprehensive plans for appropriate measures (and their financing) to change the situation radically.

7. A severe challenge is the situation caused by Turkey's foreign policy. In recent years, Turkey has consistently and persistently pursued imperial ambitions, including in many former Soviet republics of the Black Sea / Caspian regions, where the overwhelming Russian-speaking population needs serious protection from the ideas of Pan-Turkism, which implies Turkic integration under the auspices of Turkey.

8. A separate sensitive area is the international situation in the coronavirus pandemic context, in the fight against which Russia is ready to provide assistance to the whole world.

9. It is necessary to consider the prospects for the development of cooperation with compatriots at the regional/municipal level. International relations at the level of regions and cities, successful and rich experience in the implementation of which exists, for example, in Moscow, make it possible to provide communications that smooth out the sharp corners of world politics, promoting the categories of economic expediency and cultural cooperation (Sidorov, 2020).

7. Conclusion

Supporting compatriots abroad is an important task of Russian foreign policy. This work's relevance and significance are confirmed by program documents adopted by the country's leadership on state policy at a qualitatively new level. The new requirements imply expanding the ongoing activities to the entire foreign population involved in the Russian language and culture. Activities to support and interact with compatriots require an audit of the existing system, an analysis of the effectiveness of activities, and a reboot. This work's implementation requires resources, including appropriate funding from domestic government and financial structures, charitable foundations, patrons, and other organizations. It is necessary to audit, revise, and update the Comprehensive Plan of Basic Measures for the Implementation of the State Policy of the Russian Federation concerning compatriots, preferably for three years according to the scheme for the federal's preparation and approval budget of the Russian Federation. This process will require setting specific long-term and short-term goals, formulating a mission, and ways to improve it (Safonov & Gurov, 2020). It seems appropriate to consider the issue of raising the level of management of work with compatriots to the upper echelons of state power. For this task, it is necessary to make appropriate proposals, taking into account the President of the Russian Federation's current employment, the Chairman of the Government, and the chairmen of the respective chambers of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.

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