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**Prospects for the development of Russia's relations  
with African countries**

Thesis Brief  
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## **Relevance of the research**

Africa has enormous potential that goes far beyond natural resource extraction, cultural diversity, entrepreneurship and innovation. In 2035, Africa will have the largest potential labor force in the world. According to the UN, by 2050 Africa's population will double to 20% of the world's population <sup>1</sup>. It is here that the growth of world markets is observed, and with them the problem of using the potential and creating jobs and development prospects arises. At the World Economic Forum in Davos, it was noted that six of the ten fastest growing countries in the world are African <sup>2</sup>. Average annual GDP growth in Africa for the period 2000-2019 was about 4.2% compared to a global rate of 3.1% <sup>3</sup>.

At the same time, the African continent is the most restless in terms of security. Of the 14 peacekeeping operations currently conducted by the United Nations, 7 are in Africa. Three-quarters of the national borders of African countries are disputed, they are not regulated by treaties between neighboring countries. On this continent and around it, terrorist attacks, hostage-taking by pirates, armed actions of separatists against legitimate authorities, coup d'état and other emergencies very often occur.

The African states have set themselves a very ambitious agenda for the necessary social and economic transformation, the goal of which is for Africa to become a prosperous continent by 2063<sup>4</sup>. This project involves broad international cooperation, and Africa is open to such cooperation. The same time leading countries of the world are developing strategies for interaction with African countries, seeing them as very promising partners. In recent years, strategic planning documents for Africa have been

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<sup>1</sup>UN report on the demographic situation in the world (2020) // <https://www.un.org/ru/un75/shifting-demographics> (Accessed 02/16/2021)

<sup>2</sup>Six of the world's 10 fastest-growing economies are in Africa // <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/08/afcfta-proof-that-africa-heading-for-substantial-growth/> ( date appeals 16.02.2021)

<sup>3</sup>world bank. GDP (current US\$). Databank, World Bank national accounts data, and OECD national accounts data files. 2019 // <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/ny.gdp.mktp.cd> (Accessed 02/16/2021)

<sup>4</sup>African Union Agenda 2063 // [https://au.int/Agenda2063/popular\\_version](https://au.int/Agenda2063/popular_version) (Accessed 17/06/2021)

adopted or updated in the European Union <sup>5</sup>, Germany <sup>6</sup>, the United States <sup>7</sup>, India <sup>8</sup> and other countries.

Russia attaches great importance to the development of relations with Africa. Speaking at the first Russia-Africa Summit in October 2019, President of Russia V.V. Putin said that the development of ties with African countries "is one of the priorities of Russian foreign policy <sup>9</sup>. " In the implementation of this agenda, it is necessary to clarify the existing forms, means and methods of interaction, as well as to search for new models that allow us to actively participate in the formation of a new world order. To do this, it is necessary to clarify the theoretical and conceptual foundations of Russian-African cooperation. Relationships must take into account historical and ethno-cultural characteristics, since Africa needs African solutions. That is why development cooperation is the universal formula for inclusive engagement with the African continent. It is also necessary to study foreign experience of successful development of relations with African countries. All of the above determines the relevance of the topic of this dissertation research.

**The problematic situation** in Russian-African relations is that Russia has an acute geopolitical and geo-economic need for the intensive development of ties with African countries, but the currently proposed theoretical basis and conceptual approaches do not fully meet this need.

**The research hypothesis** is that in the current conditions of world conflict, uncertainty, and instability, Russia needs to find such a basis for cooperation with the countries of the African continent, which will allow developing relations not with some

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<sup>5</sup> Joint communication to the European parliament and the council. Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa. Brussels, 9.3.2020. R. \_ 2 // [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/communication-eu-africa-strategy-join-2020-4-final\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/communication-eu-africa-strategy-join-2020-4-final_en.pdf) ( date appeals 17.06.2021)

<sup>6</sup> A n enhanced partnership with Africa. Continuation and further development of the Federal Government's Africa Policy Guidelines 27 March 2019 // <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/2203542/6274c1b95ddfe1126f9d466a8d9e10c5/190327-afrika-ll-volltext-data.pdf> ( date appeals 19.04.2020)

<sup>7</sup> Remarks by National Security Advisor Ambassador John R. Bolton on The Trump Administration's New Africa Strategy, December 13, 2018 // <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-national-security-advisor-ambassador-john-r-bolton-trump-administrations-new-africa-strategy/> ( date appeals 11.03.2020)

<sup>8</sup> Prime Minister's address at Parliament of Uganda during his State Visit to Uganda. July 25, 2018 // <https://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/30152/Prime+Ministers+address+at+Parliament+of+Uganda+during+his+State+Visit+to+Ugand> (accessed 11.03.2020)

<sup>9</sup> Summit Russia - Africa. October 24, 2019 // <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61893> (Accessed 03/13/2021)

limited group of them, but with all African countries. The theoretical basis of these relations could be not one theory, but a theoretical system. The concept of sustainable development of the United Nations could serve as a conceptual basis for this. Russia has certain opportunities for interaction with African countries on all 17 sustainable development goals and competitive advantages in cooperation on goal 16 - "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions".

**The purpose of the research** is to develop recommendations based on the analysis of the current state of Russian-African relations to improve their effectiveness based on the concept of sustainable development.

To achieve the goal of the study, the following **tasks are supposed to be solved**:

1. Determine the theoretical system of Russian-African relations, identify the most significant theories for the development of Russian-African relations.
2. Analyze conceptual approaches to relations between Russia and African countries, identify the most promising among them, taking into account Russian capabilities.
3. Consider foreign experience in the development of relations with the countries of the African continent, evaluate its positive and negative aspects.
4. Establish progress in advancing Russian interests in the African direction.
5. Identify problems in Russian-African relations.
6. Suggest promising directions for the development of Russia's relations with African countries.

**The object of the study** is the modern relations of Russia with the states of the African continent.

**The subject of the study** is the conceptual foundations for improving Russian-African cooperation.

**The theoretical basis of the research** is the activity approach, as well as systemic, structural-functional and institutional approaches. The activity approach most fully takes into account the need to develop recommendations to improve the effectiveness of Russia's foreign policy activities in Africa. It was developed by such

scientists as L. S. Vygotsky, A. I. Leontiev, S. A. Rubinstein and <sup>10</sup>others; <sup>11</sup>The activity approach is especially widely used in psychology, pedagogics, sociology and other scientific fields. At the same time, scientists ask themselves the question, “what parts does the activity consist of and can these parts be spatially summarized into a single whole?” <sup>12</sup>. The analysis of scientific literature makes it possible to propose the following constituent elements of activity for such summation: subject, object, goal, means, methods and conditions of activity.

Africanism can be laid as the theoretical basis for the first two components of Russia's foreign policy in the African direction. The objectives of Russia's foreign policy activities in Africa are considered in the dissertation in the light of the concept of sustainable development, covering a wide range of international activities. The theoretical basis for studying the means and methods of Russian -African interaction can be a theoretical system of interrelated theories of decolonization, modernization, pan- Africanism and the new world order, united on the basis of the theories of decolonization.

The problems of colonialism and the rethinking of the processes of decolonization, postcolonization and neocolonization open up significant prospects in the knowledge of contemporary world political and social processes. The key to the study of these theories are the works of the most famous postcolonial theorists: the founder of postcolonial studies (postcolonialism) E. Said <sup>13</sup>; subalternity theorist G. Spivak <sup>14</sup>, thinker and researcher of the processes of decolonization and post-colonialism F. Fanon <sup>15, 16, 17, 18</sup>; one of the major modern researchers of post-

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<sup>10</sup>Vygotsky L. S. Questions of the theory and history of psychology. Collection. op. in 6 vols. T. 1 // M. 1982 .

<sup>11</sup>Rubinshtein S. L. Fundamentals of general psychology. In 2 vols. T. 2 // M., 1989.

<sup>12</sup>Shchedrovitsky GP Initial representations and categorical means of activity theory . Selected works // M.: Shk . cult. floor., 1995, p. 239.

<sup>13</sup>Said E. V. Orientalism // St. Petersburg: Russkiy mir , 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Spivak GC Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the history of an idea. R. C. Morris (ed.) // NY: Columbia University Press. 2010.

<sup>15</sup>Fanon, F. Black Skins White Masks // London: Pluto Press, 1986.

<sup>16</sup>Fanon, F. A Dying Colonialism // London: Penguin. 1970.

<sup>17</sup>Fanon, F. The Wretched of the Earth // London: Penguin. 2001.

<sup>18</sup>Fanon, F. Toward the African Revolution // New York: Grove Press, 1964.

colonialism H. Bhabha <sup>19</sup>, as well as modern researchers of the theory of "colonial power" A. K. Obregon <sup>20, 21</sup> and D. V. Mignolo <sup>22</sup>.

The theoretical foundations of modernization are considered in the dissertation through the prism of the views of such scientists as S. Eisenstadt, P. Sztompka and V.L. Inozemtsev <sup>23, 24, 25</sup>, as well as the African author J. Matunhu <sup>26</sup>. The theory of modernization is quite common among developing countries, including in the post-Soviet space, it is widely used in political practice <sup>27</sup>. Taking into account the fact that the main funds in the line of development assistance to African countries come from Western countries, which are largely guided by this theory, close attention should be paid to it. At the same time, a clear distinction must be made between modernization, Westernization and Americanization.

The theories of Pan- Africanism are based on the classical works of K. Nkrumah, H. Adi and other scientists and politicians <sup>28, 29</sup>. This direction of theoretical thought seems to the applicant very relevant and important in the current conditions, when calls are increasingly being made for the cohesion of African countries, finding African solutions to African problems. It is better to solve complex problems of the continent by joint efforts. In addition, Pan- Africanism has not only a theoretical basis, it is also very widespread in African identity. In particular, one can recall the African proverb "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

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<sup>19</sup> Homi K. Bhabha . The Location of Culture // Routledge Classics, 1994.

<sup>20</sup> Anibal Quijano Obregon Colonialidad del poder y clasificación social // Journal of World Systems Research. Colorado. Vol. VI, no. 2, Fall/Winter. pp. 342-388.

<sup>21</sup> Anibal Quijano Obregon Colonialidad del poder , eurocentrismo y América Latina. La colonialidad del saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales . perspectivas latinoamericanas // Buenos Aires. CLACSO. 2000.

<sup>22</sup> Walter D. Mignolo Coloniality of Power and Subalternity // Duke University Press. 2001.

<sup>23</sup> Eisenstadt Sh. Revolution and transformation of societies. Comparative study of civilizations // M. 1999 .

<sup>24</sup> Sztompka P. Sociology of social changes. Per. from English. ed. V.A. Yadova // M.: Aspect Press. 1996. 416 p.

<sup>25</sup> Inozemtsev V.L. Westernization as globalization, and "globalization" as Americanization // Questions of Philosophy. 2004. No. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Matunhu J. A critique of modernization and dependency theories in Africa: Critical assessment // African Journal of History and Culture Vol. 3(5), pp. 65-72. June 2011.

<sup>27</sup> Nazarbayev N . A . Sight in future : modernization public consciousness // [https://www.akorda.kz/ru/events/akorda\\_news/press\\_conferences/statya-glavy-gosudarstva-vzglyad-v-budushchee-modernizaciya-obshchestvennogo-soznaniya](https://www.akorda.kz/ru/events/akorda_news/press_conferences/statya-glavy-gosudarstva-vzglyad-v-budushchee-modernizaciya-obshchestvennogo-soznaniya) (date appeals 27.04.2021)

<sup>28</sup> Hakim Adi . Pan- Africanism : A History // London: Bloomsbury , 2018 .

<sup>29</sup> Nkrumah K. Africa must unite // M. Progress. 1964.

In preparing the dissertation, the literature on the world order and its current stage was studied. Among foreign authors, the applicant notes such authors as I. Wallerstein <sup>30</sup>, E. Toffler <sup>31</sup>, F. Fukuyama <sup>32</sup>. Domestic scientists are also studying this topic, among them the works of E.Ya. Batalova <sup>33</sup>, N.V. Guseva <sup>34</sup>, S.I. Kiseleva <sup>35</sup>, A.I. Neklessy <sup>36</sup>, A.I. Dugin <sup>37</sup>, A.N. Mikhailenko <sup>38, 39, 40, 41</sup>, S. Kortunova <sup>42</sup>, T.A. Shakleina <sup>43</sup> and other authors.

A systematic approach was necessary to study Russia's interaction with the regional system (African Union) and subregional structures, as well as with the leading African countries. The structural-functional approach was useful in analyzing the leading areas of Russia's cooperation with African countries. It is also worth noting the works of researchers of the theory of functionalism E. Durkheim <sup>44</sup>, M. Weber <sup>45</sup>, T. Parsons <sup>46</sup>, R. Merton <sup>47</sup> and N. Luhmann <sup>48</sup>. The institutional approach was used

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<sup>30</sup> Wallerstein I. Accelerated fall. The advent of the era of multipolarity. Decline of the US empire: crises and conflicts // M.MAKS Press. 2013. S. 67.

<sup>31</sup> Toffler E. Future shock // M. AST. 2008. S. 58.

<sup>32</sup> Fukuyama F. The end of history and the last man // M. AST. 2007. 588 p.

<sup>33</sup> Batalov E.Ya. Beginning of the 21st century: a world without poles, a world without a global leader / Leadership and competition in the world system: Russia and the USA / ed. ed. HELL. Bogaturov, T.A. Shaklein. M.: KRASAND, 2010. S. 41–45.

<sup>34</sup> Guseva N.V. To the consideration of the foundations and principles of the emerging world order and integration processes in the modern world // Greater Eurasia: development, security, cooperation: Issue 1. Part 2. M.: INION RAN, 2018. S. 68–90.

<sup>35</sup> Kiselev S. Competitiveness of Russia and its competitive strategy // [http://kapital-rus.ru/articles/article/konkurentosposobnost\\_rossii\\_i\\_ee\\_konkurentnaya\\_strategiya/](http://kapital-rus.ru/articles/article/konkurentosposobnost_rossii_i_ee_konkurentnaya_strategiya/) (date accessed: 14.04.2019).

<sup>36</sup> Neklessa A. I. The system of geo-economic world order as a global project / Economic theory on the threshold of the XXI century. M., 2001. S. 126.

<sup>37</sup> Dugin A. I. Theory of a multipolar world. Pluriversum. M.: Academic project, 2015. S. 43.

<sup>38</sup> Mikhailenko A.N. Polycentric world: what should it be like? // Questions of political science. 2015. No. 4 (20). pp. 89–101.

<sup>39</sup> Mikhailenko A.N. Russia in a polycentric world // Ethnosocium and international culture. 2016. No. 7 (97). C. 9–24.

<sup>40</sup> Mikhailenko A.N. The modern stage in the formation of a polycentric world // Questions of political science. 2019. No. 1 (41). pp. 83–94.

<sup>41</sup> Mikhailenko A.N. Contours of the new world order // Ethnosocium and international culture. 2019. No. 8 (134). pp. 143–158.

<sup>42</sup> Kortunov S. Politics and diplomacy. Formation of a new world order // International life. 2002. No. 6. S. 77–93.

<sup>43</sup> Shakleina T.A. "America's dilemma" in shaping the modern world order. The results of US actions and the formation of the "Eurasian center" // International processes. 2019. No. 4. pp. 5–19.

<sup>44</sup> Hayward JES Solidarist Syndicalism: Durkheim and DuGuitt // Sociological Review. Vol. 8. 1960.

<sup>45</sup> Weber M. Favorites. The Image of Society // Lawyer. 1994. 702 p.

<sup>46</sup> Parsons T. The system of modern societies. Moscow: Aspect Press. 1997. 270 p.

<sup>47</sup> Merton R. Explicit and latent functions. American sociological thought; comp. E.I. Kravchenko; under total ed. V.I. Dobrenkov. M. 1996. S. 393–461.

<sup>48</sup> Luman N. Introduction to system theory. M. Logos. 2007. 359 p.

in the analysis of the prospects for the implementation of the sustainable development goals in African countries, especially in terms of the implementation of Goal No. 16 "Peace, justice and strong institutions".

The work also found application in analytical works that explore the theoretical provisions of political realism. Among foreign studies of political realism, the work of M. Griffiths, D. <sup>49</sup>Bushehr 's <sup>50</sup>fundamental research, S. Guzzini 's work <sup>51</sup>, M. Hollis and S. Smith 's review <sup>52</sup>, and a collection of papers edited by S. Lobell, N. Ripsman and J. Taliaferro <sup>53</sup>. Of great importance is the classic collection of articles on neorealism edited by R. Cohane <sup>54</sup>, as well as a study edited by I. Newman and O. Waver <sup>55</sup>.

**Methodological basis of the study.** The choice of methods used in the research is determined by the boundaries of the object and subject of research. A significant place in the study was occupied by general scientific methods of empirical knowledge, as well as general logical methods and techniques of research. In the course of considering the prerequisites for decolonization, as well as the historical retrospective of the relations of the world community with the countries of Africa, the historical-systemic, interpretative and historical reconstruction methods were used, with the help of which the analysis of the links between actors and events was carried out. These methods also helped to explain the essence and nature of the key aspects of Russian-African relations at the present stage.

Periodization and the historical method are among the additional methods designed to reveal the issues under study in more detail. On the basis of a comparative analysis and a descriptive method, a comparison was made of foreign and Russian experience in building relations with African countries, the main trends and problems

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<sup>49</sup>Griffiths M. Realism, Idealism and International Policy. A Reinterpretation // NY: Routledge. 1992.

<sup>50</sup>Boucher D. Political Theories of International Relations // NY: Oxford University Press. 1998.

<sup>51</sup>Guzzini S. Realism in International Relations and International Political Economy // NY: Routledge. 1998.

<sup>52</sup>Hollis M., Smith S. Explaining and Understanding International Relations // NY: Oxford University Press. 1990.

<sup>53</sup>Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy. ed . by Lobell SE, Ripsman NM, Taliaferro JW // NY: Cambridge University Press. 2009.

<sup>54</sup>Keohane R.O. ( ed .). Neorealism and Its Critics // NY: Columbia University Press. 1986.

<sup>55</sup>Neumann IB, Waever O. (ed.) The Future of International Relations. masters in the Making ? // NY: Routledge . 2001.

of their development at the present stage. Quantitative methods are widely used in the work, including various indices and ratings. For convenience, the digital data are visualized in the form of tables and figures.

When referring to empirical data contained in the statistical materials of Russian, foreign state and international organizations, as well as in the media, methods of content analysis, generalizations and a systematic approach were used. To systematize the data presented in the study, analysis, synthesis, generalization and statistical method were used.

**Information basis of the study** is the data contained in scientific monographs, official documents of the state authorities of the Russian Federation, the countries of the African continent, the European Union, the People's Republic of China, the United States of America and the Republic of Turkey. The study actively used data from resolutions and decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations, official documents of the African Union, international monetary and financial organizations, as well as information from their regularly published statistical and analytical reports.

In preparing the study, materials from the media and a large segment of Internet resources were studied. The literature used in the course of the research was obtained from authoritative databases (Electronic Library of the Russian State Library, Springer, Sciencedirect, SCOPUS, Web of Science and Google Scholar and Sustainalytics).

**The research results proposed for the defense:**

1. Russia needs intensive development of relations with African countries. The theoretical basis of this area of foreign policy activity of our country can be not one theory, but their system, which could be based on a group of theories related to the colonial past of the continent. It includes theories of decolonialization, postcolonialism, neocolonialism. Russia did not have colonies on the African continent; at present, it is not accused of neo-colonialism. At the same time, this group of theories is very popular in Africa. To complete the theoretical foundation of Russia's African policy, this group of theories must be supplemented by the theories of modernization, pan- Africanism, and world order. In this way, it would be possible to obtain a theoretical substantiation

of the subject, goals, conditions, means and methods of Russia's foreign policy activities in Africa.

2. There are various conceptual approaches to the development of Russian-African ties. The utilitarian concept comes from Africa's wealth of natural resources, which many countries of the world are in need of. The geopolitical concept is that Africa is in a favorable geographical position, has great demographic and political prospects. The concept of development assistance is that Africa is still perceived as a continent of poverty that needs to be helped to develop. The concept of regional multipolarity comes from the fact that Egypt is the largest center in northern Africa, Ethiopia in the east, South Africa in the south and Nigeria in the west. The concept of African renaissance, or the concept of the African renaissance, consists in a special path for the countries of the African continent. The author's concept of the "Door to Africa" is to develop relations with African countries through the Russian industrial zone in Egypt and through the BRICS outreach mechanism. Conceptually, the United Nations concept of sustainable development, which includes 17 development goals, is the most relevant to Russia's interests in Africa.

3. The leading countries of the world are pursuing an active policy towards Africa, in which strengths and weaknesses are revealed. The accelerated growth of China's trade and investment in Africa over the past 20 years has propelled Beijing to a leading position and greatly strengthened its position on the continent. At the same time, the resulting imbalance in trade and investment relations, as well as the excessive debt dependence of African countries on Beijing, raise accusations of China's neo-colonial approaches. The main direction of US policy on the African continent remains the protection of its national security on distant frontiers. The African continent plays the role of a supporting logistics hub for the Washington power bloc. The European Union is the largest donor on the continent, and actively interacts with African countries in the military-political and educational spheres. The new EU strategy in Africa provides for the priority development of cooperation in the digital and "green" spheres. In the presence of a fairly strong position of Brussels on the continent, relations between Europe and Africa are complicated by the colonial past and are to a


certain extent one-sided. Turkey successfully interacts with African countries in the economic, educational and military spheres. At the same time, Turkey's policy on the continent is criticized by the West because of the threat of Islamization of the continent.

4. Russia has achieved certain successes in relations with African countries in the areas of politics, trade and economy, security, environmental protection and healthcare, science and education, as well as the cultural and humanitarian sphere. Among the achievements, one should single out the creation of financial mechanisms to support business interaction between Russia and Africa, such as the Russian Export Center and Russia's participation in the African Export-Import Bank as a shareholder. Russia's positions are quite strong in the energy sector. The defense industry has a special and very successful status within the framework of economic cooperation, and the growth of African countries' imports of domestic weapons and military equipment helps to strengthen Russia's position on the continent. Quite significant is the assistance to the countries of the continent of our specialists in the field of security and countering terrorism. Most of these achievements are relative and inferior to the corresponding positions in Africa of other world powers.

5. There are some problems in the development of Russia's relations with African countries. The strengthening of Russia's position in the African direction is a challenge for Russia's geopolitical and economic opponents and can cause symmetrical and asymmetric actions. Russia does not always find effective responses to these challenges. There is not enough positive information about Africa in the Russian information space. Russia does not have a well-developed “model of the future” that would be attractive to Africans, and the one that was positioned in the USSR as a model of a just society currently has no equal analogue in Russia, although this issue was noted in the declaration of the first Russia-Africa summit as one of the priorities in Russia's relations with the continent. The main problem in Russian-African relations is the lack of a grand strategy in this foreign policy direction.

6. Prospects for the development of Russia's relations with African countries depend on a sound concept. As such, it is most expedient to accept the concept of sustainable development of the United Nations. The countries of Africa are very

diverse, and therefore the conceptual basis should be broad enough. The seventeen goals of sustainable development deal with issues of security, economic development, education, healthcare and other areas. At the same time, all these areas are under the same heading of the concept of sustainable development, which makes it possible to avoid fragmentation and achieve integrity in Russian-African relations. At the same time, the emphasis in African politics should be placed on Sustainable Development Goal No. 16 - "Peace, justice and effective institutions", where Russia has competitive advantages.

  
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