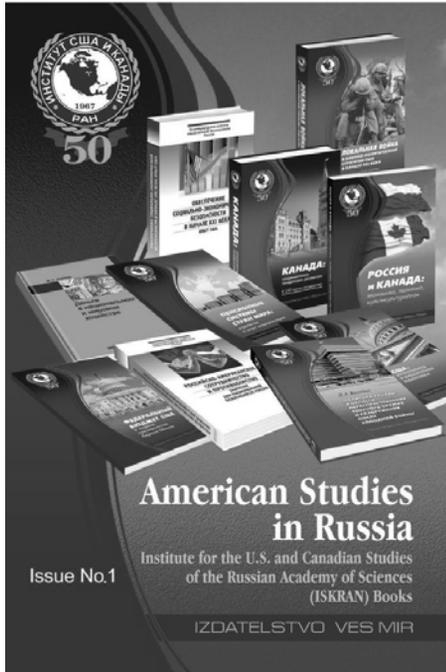


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Research monographs by ISKRAN authors

**American Studies in Russia, Issue No.1/ Institute for the U.S. and Canadian Studies.
Moscow, Izdatelstvo VES MIR, 2018 – 120 p.**



The year 2017 was a special year for the ISKRAN and scholars who specialize on the U.S. and Canada, because it marked two important anniversaries – 150th anniversary of Canada statehood and 50th anniversary of the Institute for the U.S. and Canadian Studies. To commemorate that remarkable year our researchers had written and published several monographs and research papers with the goal of informing the readers about the current political, military and economic trends in the U.S. and Canada. To sum up all those collective and individual efforts, in 2018 the ISKRAN published a digest entitled "American Studies in Russia" containing the abstracts of the books by ISKRAN authors in 2016 and 2017. The monographs fall into the categories of U.S. domestic policy, U.S. military policy, Russian-American relations and Canadian developments.

The authors pointed out contradicting elements of the Trump administration's domestic policy, like the intention to cut national debt while increasing military spending, tax cut coupled with refraining from reducing key federal budget spending attractors. Top internal challenges for the Trump administration, according to the experts, include servicing of national debt, increased budget deficit, financing major social programs, solving immigration problems, dealing with poverty and bridging the wage gaps. They also cite contradictions between the two parties on budget issues as a threat to national economic security of the U.S. One researcher concluded that it is not national debt itself, but debt-to-GDP ratio, that should concern budget planners. The experts also analyzed the demographic shifts in America and ensuing political and economic disparities between the population groups. One of the largest trends is the declining of the American middle class. The researchers also examined the U.S. policies of supporting the country's scientific and technological advancement, which included the analysis of partnerships between industries and universities, government support of hi-tech small businesses and other issues. They conclude that several industries in America successfully employ scientific breakthroughs, especially

information technology (such as artificial intelligence and machine learning) and biotechnology. It should be noted, that development of certain technologies might lead to unpredictable economic consequences, like AI's possible negative impact on employment. R&D is dominated by private companies and heavily depends on the influx of foreign highly qualified workforce. American education system is also analysed, including student loan debt issue and the amount of government subsidies. Government spending on education continued to grow reaching 7.1% in 2017. Higher education in the U.S. remains very expensive and it is not equally affordable to different population groups. Education, in its turn, is one of the key factors in employment. One of the authors researches declining share of youngsters in the country's labour force and the problems of part-time employment. The experts inform about projections of shrinking share of white employees and expanding amount of Asians and Hispanics. Unemployment rates vary between different ethnic groups. One of the authors notes the increasing wage gap between persons of different qualifications and decreasing role of trade unions in the labor market. Our researchers also look at American economy in a broader sense. American social sphere experienced negative influence of the global financial crisis including the rise of unemployment, income inequality and poverty. Investments in human capital remain one of the distinctive features of the American economy, which is the reason why social security, Medicare and Medicaid continue to grow. Part of the research was dedicated to the agricultural sector in the U.S. and food security issues. The U.S. has the largest and the most efficient agriculture in the world due to the use of scientific and technological advancements as well as a working system of government subsidies and regulations. According to the authors, American experience can be successfully applied to Russian realities.

The U.S. military policy was analysed mainly in the context of the U.S. strategy in local conflicts, because it reflects new types of threats the U.S. is facing on the battlefield. In modern local conflicts open military victory is insignificant for its outcome. Neither does technical superiority over the enemy play a decisive role. Irregular and paramilitary units can quickly become a capable fighting force that is necessary to account for. The experts note that the U.S. nuclear strategy is moving towards greater chance of use of nuclear weapons in local conflicts. Nuclear weapons capabilities remain a key element in providing security to America's allies. U.S. counter-terrorism strategy's main goal is to preserve American global leadership rather than eradicating terrorism per se. The U.S. policy to beef up its influence in the Middle East and Central Asia as well as combatting the Islamic State had met major challenges. The regime change policy and anti-Iranian stance have brought about quite the opposite results. The experts also look at the role of Africa and the Arctic region in Washington's military policy. To their view Africa became a testing ground for new policies, such as establishment of regionally allied forces. The Arctic helps to project military power to the Pacific region.

Another topic covered was the developments in Russian-American relations. After the end of the Cold War the U.S. was trying to become the sole superpower without a peer competitor, while at the same time Russia was struggling with its numerous do-

mestic problems. NATO enlargement along with other bilateral issues like arms control, BMD and regional conflicts greatly contributed to the crisis that ensued. The “reset” of the bilateral relations under the Obama administration resulted in a failure, although reflected that Washington understood the need to improve ties with Moscow. Russia’s isolationism hasn’t brought any positive results. Nowadays it seems the Cold War – style engagement is back except for ideological contradictions. Like in the past, the countries embrace propaganda and smear campaigns, increase their military spending risking a new arms race. But for the sake of strategic stability both countries are obliged to find common interests like preservation and strengthening of the NPT regime, combatting international terrorism, climate change, international crime, global epidemics and cooperating on energy issues. The parties also need to keep the existing arms control regime afloat and preserve the INF and the New START. Non-nuclear strategic weapons systems must become subject of arms control discussions and talks. The experts came to the conclusion that Moscow might help mitigate the crisis through unilateral initiatives. Russia should not respond symmetrically to American propaganda campaigns. Low-profile economic stands in the way of fruitful Russian-American relations is the extent of the countries’ economic interaction. The results of the 2016 elections brought about the one-party rule in Washington, where the President has very low support of the Congress. Anti-Russian stance remains the only subject, where the parties agree. Since the Magnitsky Act the Democrats have become even more critical of Moscow than the Republicans. The authors also examine military dimension of the bilateral relations, they compare the contents of national security strategies of both countries and analyze the BMD capabilities of the U.S. among other things. They argue that the Trump administration will continue Obama’s policy to support the development of a space-based ballistic missile intercept layer. Cybersecurity in Russian- American relations is also considered. Cyberspace is described as a battlefield of the new Cold War 2.0. There is a threat that such a standoff will produce an arms race in cyberspace. The experts advise Russia and America to adhere to the principles of free, accessible, open and resilient global internet infrastructure. Another subject covered is the Post-Soviet space, which has been a fiercely contested ground between Russia and the U.S. The Ukrainian crisis has brought the confrontation to a whole new level. In the chapter about the relations in the Russia-U.S.-China triangle the author concludes that the main driving factor in Russia-U.S.-China relations is the rise of the PRC, which aims to tilt the existing geopolitical rules to its favor.

Canadian studies are one of the major research activities at ISKRAN. The Department of Canadian Studies remains a top think tank in that sphere in Russia. Three monographs published by the institute in 2017 are dedicated to comprehensive analysis of that country. The 2015 elections in Canada resulted in a victory of the Liberal party. The researchers examine the economic program of the Liberal government. Its first measures were aimed at reducing taxes for the middle class and supporting those with lower income. The longer-term strategy is based on massive infrastructure investments. Canada is also doing well in external economic exchanges. Many countries, developed (EU) as well as developing (China, India) are seeking to expand trade and

investment relations with Canada on the base of bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements. At the same time Canada is facing challenges such as the economic slow-down, turbulence in the global markets and volatility of commodity prices. One of the distinctive elements of Canadian domestic policy is multiculturalism - a policy aimed at managing ethnic differences and encouraging the full and equal participation of all minorities in the social, economic and political life. Canada's cordial relationship with its southern neighbor and a top economic and foreign policy partner came under question when Donald Trump was elected President, because of the ideological contradictions between him and Canadian PM Justin Trudeau, who established friendly relations with Barack Obama - another target of Trump's bashing. In a chapter dedicated to Canada's Arctic policy the author describes the country's position on resolution of territorial disputes. The author also examines various aspects of Canada's participation in the Arctic Council and describes Canada's plans to delineate the outer limits of its continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean. Currently Canada is carrying out a strict anti-Russian foreign policy. It actively supported the regime change in Ukraine and initiated a strict sanctions against Russia, which is determined by the dynamics of the U.S.-Russian relations. One of the monographs mentioned in the digest is focused on Canada's policy with regard to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The author notes that during the Cold War Canada actively participated in non-proliferation and missile defence talks and opposed militarization of outer space. It took part in the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1995, as well as in negotiations on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. The book also gives an overview of Canada's regional nuclear policy, namely in South Asia, the Korean Peninsula, the Middle East and the former Soviet republics. The author then consecutively examines Canadian position with regard to conventional arms control, missile defense and space weapons.

This brochure is only the first issue in what is supposed to be a series of publications aimed at informing the English-speaking audience on the state of U.S. and Canada research performed at the Institute. ISKRAN plans to publish digests like this yearly.

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