

**STATE IMAGE AS A FACTOR OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY
DECISION-MAKING IN IRAQ IN 2002-2003**

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RESUMEN

En este artículo "Imagen del Estado como factor de la toma de decisión rusa de la política extranjera en Iraq en 2002-2003" se analizan los resultados de la investigación empírica sobre la influencia de la imagen del estado en la toma de decisión de la política extranjera rusa. El proceso de decisión de la política extranjera se analiza desde la teoría prospectiva (D. Kahneman, A. Tversky) y de su tesis principal que en términos psicológicos el liderazgo político tiene más pérdidas que ganancias. Para superar algunas limitaciones de la teoría de la perspectiva en su aplicación al análisis de la toma de decisión de la política extranjera, utilizamos el concepto de autoimagen del estado en las relaciones internacionales. En resumen, planteamos que la autoimagen del estado, formada por la identidad, la posición y el rol, es el principal criterio que orienta el proceso de decisión. Para comprobarlo hemos utilizado el caso de la situación de la crisis iraquí en 2002-2003.

ABSTRACT

In the article "State Image as a Factor of Russian Foreign Policy Decision-making in Iraq in 2002-2003" we discuss the results of empirical research in the study of influence of state image on foreign policy decision-making of Russian political leadership. The process of foreign policy decision-making is viewed through the frame of prospect theory (D. Kahneman, A. Tversky) and its main thesis that psychologically for political leadership losses loom larger than the corresponding gains. To overcome some limitations of prospect theory in its application to the study of foreign policy decision-making, we use the concept of state self-image in international relations. In particular, we argue that state self-image, consisting of identity, status and role components, is the major criterion which directs the decision-making process. For case-study we use the situation of Iraqi crisis in 2002-2003.

Key words: decision-making, prospect theory, framing, state self-image, Iraqi crisis (2002-2003).

Any time when politicians are confronted with the problems which require solutions they put a question before themselves: which factors should determine their choice. The same question appears before researcher who wants to understand why politician preferred this particular course of actions, why he made the decision he made and not the other one.

The theories of decision making formulated in the context of analytical approach (Degtiarev, 2003, p. 164; Farnham, 1997, p. 265) present an obvious answer to this question: the subject creates hierarchy of alternatives, integrating sometimes not compatible with each other values, making calculations of possible choices and weighting its possible outcomes and then selects the one that maximizes benefits. At the same time, when new information appears decision maker is capable to make correction in the estimates.

The adequacy of this interpretation causes serious doubts among representatives of the so-called psychological approach in the analysis of decision-making process (Welch, 2003, p. 203). They are very persuasive when prove that any actor's decisions are influenced among other things by emotions, beliefs and values which make him to deviate from normative rationality, postulated by the analytical approach, and cause biases and errors while calculating and evaluating probabilities.

In the last decades the conclusions and estimates of scholars, who present the psychological school, found broad recognition among international academic community. In particular, in 2002 the Nobel Prize was awarded to the American psychologist D. Kahneman, who formulated (together with his colleague A. Tversky) the foundations of prospect theory which contradicted the basic postulates of rational choice in its application to *homo oeconomicus* (Kahneman, Tversky, 1979).

Scientific study of research potential of this theory by American (see Political Psychology, 2004) and some Russian scholars (see. Kiselev, 2000, pp. 221-266; Kornilova, 2003, pp. 47-51) reveals that its practical significance is not limited to the sphere of economic behavior. From the end of the 1980-s prospect theory is applied to the analysis of political behavior. In particular it is applied to crisis interaction of states in situations of international and national conflicts. At the same time, prospect theory "leaves open" a number of issues connected with the peculiarities of foreign policy decision-making.

In this article we consider the scientific potential of prospect theory in foreign policy decision-making, discuss some difficulties which appear, and highlight the possibilities to get them over with the help of the concept of state self-image in international relations. The conclusions we come are tested using as an example the decision-making process of Russian political leadership as far as the Iraqi crisis in 2002-2003 concerns.

Foreign policy decision-making in the context of prospect theory: its potential and limitations

Prospect theory divides the process of decision making into 2 stages – (1) preparation of choice options and (2) its estimates. During the first stage the importance is attributed to framing effects, that is to say, to the method of submission of alternatives which is connected with its order and means of representation of variants under consideration. The influence of framing on the formation of choices can be realized through the form of data presentation and with the help of manipulation of the importance of alternatives.

The stage of evaluation involves two phases: determination of subjective utility of gains and losses and weighting of probability for any variant of choice.

The function of subjective utility, that is a very characteristic feature of the first phase of evaluation, has three peculiarities. The first one deals with the fact that our estimates of gains and losses start with the reference point. It means that subject's perception of potential gains and losses depends on some point of reference which is not necessarily associated with the status quo. Here one should mention that the bigger importance is attributed not to absolute but to the relative utility of the alternative under consideration that is presented as positive or negative deviation from the reference point.

Another peculiarity of subjective utility function draws our attention to the fact that when subject of decision making views situation in the domain of losses he is inclined to risky decisions, but he is risk averse when expects gains. As a rule, fear to take risky decisions make politicians to prefer zero option, that is to say, they prefer to reserve status quo.

At last the third peculiarity stresses the fact that psychologically losses loom larger than the corresponding gains.

The availability of the above mentioned peculiarities is explained with the help of the notion of "endowment effect" which appear as the consequence of our ownership: "People value what they have more than comparable things not in their possession" (Levy, 2003, p. 270). To some degree this is applicable to political capital as well: state status, influence, trustworthy relations with our allies. The endowment effect is compatible with another one – renormalization (Jervis, 1994, pp. 35-36). It presupposes that individuals almost instantly get used to the gains they've got but to adjust oneself to the inflicted losses needs considerable time.

The second phase of the evaluation presupposes weighting of probabilities which determine the attractiveness of the variants of choice. In accordance with prospect theory, actors usually overestimate low probabilities

and underestimate - the middle and high probabilities. In other words, they attribute much more attention to the events which look unlikely or impossible as compared to the events the probability of which seems to be relatively high.

Although prospect theory proved to be an effective instrument for the analysis of the processes on the international arena, there is a number of issues which require further definition and consideration. Among them is the specificity of political decisions. As we mentioned earlier, prospect theory is used for the study of international relations and politics relatively not long ago. Primarily its major academic niche was economics: *homo oeconomicus* and market behavior. However, political market differs considerably from the economic one (Rosenberg, 1991). First of all, the results of political choice for the individual as a rule are remote in time. Buying something at department store, we get the feedback almost instantly. The consequences of our support of this or that government course of action becomes “visualized” years later and sometimes decades. Secondly, the environment of political decision-making is rather uncertain. Political decisions include alternatives which sometimes are very complex and ambiguous. For example, in the process of resolution of the national security problems it is very difficult to determine the exact price of “goods”, calculate the expected utility of every alternative, and after-effects of the choice we made.

The latter is of principle value because from the point of view of prospect theory, without the formation in our consciousness of the problem issue (i.e., the starting point of decision-making) the decision in itself loses any meaning. Keeping this in mind, many researches stress the point that the above mentioned endowment effect works very selectively. It is caused by consumer expectations, but not – by the deduced value meanings (for instance, money) (Levy, 1994, p. 12). Probably, this is connected with the subjective attachment of human beings to their possessions. And it is this that explains the absence of the endowment effect as far as money and other signs concern. But how we can treat the occupied territories, missile launchers, territory of our state? Are they material things or “tokens”, signs? Does politician experience attachment to such kind of objects (Sharif, 1994, p. 153)? Prospect theory does not answer these questions.

The importance in the study of endowment effect is conditioned by the fact that with its help the main postulate of prospect theory, that under different representations of equivalent choice our preferences change, is substantiated. This thesis is especially important for political analysis because the symbolic meaning of political and economic assets and liabilities in

international relations should strengthen the endowment effect (Levy, 1992).

Another issue deals with the thesis of prospect theory that posits: reference point usually means some stable state of affairs which actor is used to. D. Kahneman and his colleagues especially stress the point that the reference point need not necessarily be the status quo, i.e., status quo is *usually* considered to be the reference point (Kahneman, Knetsch & Thaler, 1990). The matter is that on the representation of a problem in our consciousness can influence various kinds of expectations, level of aspiration, claims, social norms, i.e., factors which are not connected with the status quo. In other words, we can consider as status quo some imaginary situation in the future or some events from the past.

The appearance of the above mentioned issues to a considerable degree is conditioned by the fact that in the majority of works, devoted to the framing effect in the sphere of foreign policy decision-making, there is under close scrutiny only influence of framing on choice. Very often than not, researchers leave without their attention the problem of sources of this effect and do not explain, why decision-makers prefer this and not the other point of reference.

Another reason of mismatch which appears when we use prospect theory is the simplified interpretation of the endowment effect. In its interpretation the accent is traditionally made on the manipulative aspect, i.e., the influence on choice of the way of alternatives' presentation. This approach presupposes that alternatives have been already formed and proposed to the decision-maker. However, in practice the construction of alternatives and reference point, as a rule, is made by the actor himself. Beside this, it is rather common when attention is called only to a single variant in the multiplicity of possible variants of problem resolution. That is why we are inclined to prefer to define the term "framing" as the method, used by decision-maker, to determine the content of problem and the reference point that is used for the estimates of potential gains and losses which are associated with the given problem.

Summing the above mentioned reasoning up, we contend that in politics actor confronts with the a number of alternatives, choices, which are often ambiguous and uncertain; the consequences of choice are distant in time and very complex to make a prognosis of situation. In other words, the real situation supplies political decision-makers with only few (and very often insignificant) guiding lines. In this respect the interaction of international actors is the function of personality and cognitive characteristics of participants of political process.

The conclusion, that subjective factors themselves independently of objective circumstances influence the formation of framing, is congruous with the thesis of Kahneman and Tversky about determination of reference point by the imaginary events (see, Berjikian, 2002, p. 778). Researchers, who analyze the process of foreign policy decision-making in the context of constructivist paradigm, stress the importance of identity in the creation of reality. For example, T. Hopf is very persuasive when he proves that personal identity becomes the heuristics which is used for data processing (Hopf, 2002). Developing this thesis further, one can suppose that the formation of a problem in the consciousness of decision-maker is realized in the context of his identity as well.

That is why one of the major objectives put before the advocates of prospect theory is connected with the development of methods which could help to explain how the peculiarities of self-perception of a subject influence his comprehension of the problem he resolves. This is especially important when we determine the framing of decisions in situations when the key variables become the ones which could be hardly operationalized: for example, power, reputation, security, identity.

The second objective of no lesser importance lies in the demand to expand the prognostic value of the theory under our consideration. In the determination of decision domain and reference point as well there is necessity in the exhaustive or complete information about attitudes and preferences of a politician. In the result of this feature such analysis frequently becomes possible only in its application to the events which have already become our history. To make prognosis of decisions there is need in universal scientific constructs which, upon one hand, could depend to a lesser degree on time and situation, and , on the other hand, - could be relatively complete in its reflection of the self- perceptions of political actor about the world and ways of interaction with it. We are of the opinion that the concept of state self-image in international relations corresponds to these criteria.

State self-image in international relations and foreign policy decision-making

To our minds, the expediency in the usage of the concept of state self-image in the analysis of foreign policy decision-making follows from the very nature of foreign policy. To make the idea more clear, let us consider the definition of foreign policy that was formulated by B. Goldsmith. This definition has a number of advantages: first of all, it connects foreign policy with the process of decision-making; secondly, - reflects the conditions for

the formation, maintenance and change of the state self-image during its interaction with the other actors.

In accordance with the B.Goldsmith's definition, foreign policy is the choice between competing values performed by the state in interaction with the other actors (Goldsmith 1999). The key notions here are choice, competing values, other actors, i.e., participants of international relations and state (as participant of international relations).

We are of the opinion that the concept "state self-image in international relations" (Kiselev & Smirnova, 2004a) helps to reveal the main points of the notions "state", "other participants of international relations". In accordance with the concept, state through its political leadership constructs and represents self-images. Every self-image consists of three components ordered in a certain way. The foundation of the self-image constitutes identity, which provides continuity and succession during turnover and replacement of political leadership and is manifested in values of a nation-state, its history and peculiarities of political system. The second, more changeable, component of state self-image is status of a state in the existing system of international relations. The third one – the most mobile – is connected with what is introduced into home and foreign policy by political leadership because every new leader in his/her own way perceives identity, status and generates roles which the state plays on the international arena. The ratio of the enumerated components predetermines the configuration of state self-image in the particular international situation.

Depending on the domination of this or that component one can differentiate three types of configuration of state self-image. Identification pattern mean that in its foreign policy the state is guided, first of all, by the values which are reflected in its history and culture and consolidated in social-political system. In the context of status pattern the place of a state in the international system, peculiarities of relations with the other states come to the foreground. The role pattern makes accent on the fulfillment by a state of accepted obligations, its duties and responsibilities. Change in the ratio of identity, status and role components brings with it the transformation of state self-image (preserving at the same time the sameness of a state to itself) (Kiselev & Smirnova, 2003).

In this respect we would like to pay attention to the following very important aspect. Frequently state images are viewed exclusively through the cognitive lenses. For example, R. Herrmann treats them as conscious descriptions of foreign countries by means of language (Herrmann, 1985, p. 31). However, image formation is not only reflection of reality (cognitive aspect), it is its reconstruction where enormous significance is attributed to

emotional and personality attitude of a subject to the particular thing or event (affective- evaluative aspect). More than that, every component of image – identity, role and status – can have emotional coloring of its own (for example, perception of identity can cause positive emotional experience, while status – negative one). That is why study of image could be hardly separated from research of its affective-evaluative aspects.

Following the above mentioned line of reasoning, the process of transformation of state self – image could be described in the following way: comprehension by politician of social and political changes in the world results in the formation of a new configuration of state self-image at the expense of creation of a new ratio of identity, status and role components and its emotional coloring as well.

Analysis of the self-image perceptions gives us a key to understanding of political behavior not only of a particular state, but also how this state perceives the actions of the other actors of international relations as well: their images are created taking into account the peculiarities of the image of the proper state. Often, changes of the latter bring transformations in presentation of the other states too. In other words, the notion of state self-image enables us to discover the peculiarities in the state functioning in the context of its interaction with the other actors.

The following key term of the definition of foreign policy under our consideration is the term “choice” that presupposes, at least, the availability of two alternatives. Each alternative is associated with a set of beliefs about possible outcomes. The beliefs in its turn are connected with the values or preferences of subjects. In such a way, the analysis of decision-making should start with the determination of the hierarchy of values created by an actor.

The advocates of school of political realism believe that on the international arena states solve two types of tasks: economic and military. Not infrequently the political issues are singled out as an independent class of tasks as well. From their own part, the representatives of psychological approach suggest that the motives of power and influence, success and affiliation (Winter, 1993) play the major role in home and foreign politics. Along with this, both the political realists and psychologists consider for every state, as central, three spheres of activities: provision of security, well-being and integration to the world community. Obviously, in the process of selection of the variant of political decision the priority is attributed to one of these spheres. But - to which one in particular?

In order to find an answer to this question there is sense to turn to the concept of multiple identities (Huddy, 2001). In accordance with the con-

cept, the notion of homogeneous identity on the level of individuality or a group is an illusion. Due to the fact that individuals and groups have a certain set of identities, their behavior is determined by the one that under the influence of beliefs or circumstances (for some time) becomes the dominant. With all this going on, the dominant at the very moment identity will be estimated as the leading one and to a major degree determine the subject's self-esteem (see, Walker, 1992, pp. 29-30) (Similar explanation of state behavior on the international arena - see, March, Olsen, 1989).

In other words, during making decisions the politicians can emphasize in the problem its economic aspect, the aspect connected with the provision of national security, the task of integrating the state into the world community. But depending on the specificity of subject's self-perception (and thus the particular situation) one of these aspects becomes the prevalent. For instance, the decisive factor that urged the Soviet leadership to station troops in Afghanistan was connected with the fear that otherwise the USA could strengthen its influence there. In this case the identity of the USSR, built on the opposition to the USA, was projected on the decision-making and predetermined the choice.

In such a way we found out that the basic components of the decision-making process, dealing with our understanding of the essence of the problem, formulation of alternatives and selection among them, are determined by the peculiarities of actors' self-perceptions. Now we are to demonstrate how the concept of state self-image can contribute to our study of the framing of a problem. Formation of this vision supposes the definition of decision-making domain, reference point, and estimates of gains and losses which could be the result of the decisions taken. In the construction of every among the enumerated elements of framing there could be used various components of state self- image.

Definition of decision domain and reference point could be done with the help of the dominant component of image. Most likely, in case of domination of identity component the problem will be framed in terms of values and spheres of influence; in case of domination of status component – in terms of state position in the system of international relations. At the same time the combination of both approaches is possible as well. For example, the USA agreement with Canada and Mexico about free trade in January 1994 (NAFTA) was presented simultaneously as realization of “American dream” (identity) and instrument of realization of American leadership (status) (Skonieczny, 2001, p. 438).

Prospect theory focuses our attention on the cognitive factors of expression of judgments and decision-making. Let us reiterate, in reality decisions

are often made under the influence of emotions and not only rational calculations. More than that, to our minds, the influence of affective component of state self-image, connected with the emotional coloration of politician's perception of identity, status and role of his country, probably, reveals itself in the evaluation of situation from the point of view of potential losses and gains too.

The suppositions, formulated above, should be tested in their application to specific decisions. To do this we examine the influence of the self-image of Russia on the framing of Iraqi problem in the minds of Russian political leadership in 2002-2003.

Russia's self-image as a factor of framing in the period of Iraqi crisis 2002-2003

Let's recall in short the chronology of events that preceded the emergence of Iraqi crisis. To the moment of war termination in the Persian Gulf in 1991 the Security Council of UNO adopted a number of resolutions; one of these resolutions obliged Iraq to accept on its territory the UNO's inspectors who were to control the process of disarmament. On the 16-th of Dec., 1998, the inspectors' commission that constantly found on its way the obstacles, created by Baghdad, had to leave the country. On the 17-20-th Dec., 1998, the USA and Great Britain conducted military operation "Desert Fox" without UNO's sanctions. Its aim was to destroy the objects where the components of weapons of mass destruction and its means of delivery could be produced. The action caused concern of Russia which stressed that the fulfillment of UNO's resolution, dealing with Iraq, should be done only with the help of political methods.

The operation "Desert Fox" does not made cooperation of Iraq with the institute of international inspectors more productive. On the 8-th of Nov., 2002, Security Council of the UNO adopted resolution that provided Iraq with the last opportunity to get rid of the weapons of mass destruction and threatened serious consequences in case of not following these conditions. Iraq had to accept the requirements of international community, and UNO's inspectors came to Iraq back. On the 7-th of Dec., 2002, Iraq provided UNO with the information about its programs of military built-up, but Great Britain regarded the data as incomplete.

On the 21-st of Jan., 2003, the USA declared that they were ready to begin military actions against Iraq without UNO's resolution. In its turn Russia continued to insist on the resolution of the situation in Iraq by means of peaceful methods, and on the 5th of March, 2003, it signed to-

gether with Germany and France the declaration about necessity to support and continue the activities of international inspectors. This action complicated seriously the relations between Russia and the USA and did not bring Russia some tangible gains, according to the minds of political experts (Terekhov & Suslov, 2003; Tsigankov, 2003).

In the framework of prospect theory this position of Russian political leadership denotes its perception of the situation *in terms of losses*, conditioned by the specificity in the understanding of Russia's role and place in the world; to put it more precisely – the principles which should guide the process of international relations and solution of international problems.

Research design

The main aim of empirical research was to identify and describe the basic psychological mechanisms of framing in foreign policy decision-making, connected with the peculiarities of state self-image using as an example the Russia's approach to the regulation of Iraqi crisis in 2002-2003.

In the process of research we test three hypotheses: 1) framing of options for choice is carried out as the adjustment of state self-conception, international situation and the creation of a situational self-image of a state; 2) the dominant identity, status or role component of the state image determines decision domain and reference point, relative to which the decision-makers assess the outcomes in terms of gains or losses; 3) affective component of state self-image is used for framing the options as military, economic and political gains or losses.

In the framework of our study we analyzed 264 statements, which characterize Iraqi crisis in 2002-2003 in the texts of public speeches of Russian key foreign policy decision-makers, namely, President V. V. Putin and minister of foreign affairs I. S. Ivanov during the period under study.

The aim, object and hypothesis of research conditioned the solution of the following tasks:

1) To define the frequency of occurrence of identity, status and role components of Russia's self-image in the speeches of its key foreign policy decision-makers which determine the attitude and role of state in the period of Iraqi crisis in 2002-2003;

2) To measure the emotional coloring of Russia's self-image;

3) To determine the role of self-image in the framing of a problem under consideration from the point of view of possible gains and losses using as an example the process of formation of Russian foreign politics in the period of Iraqi crisis in 2002-2003.

The basic procedure of research was content-analysis. To realize the above mentioned tasks we apply the following procedure to code the texts: the selected statements were coded as having relevant information about identity, status and role of a state. Each statement was coded as having positive, negative and ambivalent emotional coloring. Besides this, to determine the reliability of the obtained data we use the methodic of content-analysis "Verb in the Context (VICS)" of S. Walker and his colleagues (Walker, Schafer, Young, 1998).

To process the obtained data we use the social statistics software package SPSS for Windows.

The following non-parametric statistical criteria were employed:

- 1) Mann-Whitney U test – to compare two groups of cases on one variable quantitatively measured;
- 2) Wilcoxon T test – to compare the distribution of two variables in the same sample;
- 3) Criteria of descriptive statistics (mean, frequency).

Data and analysis

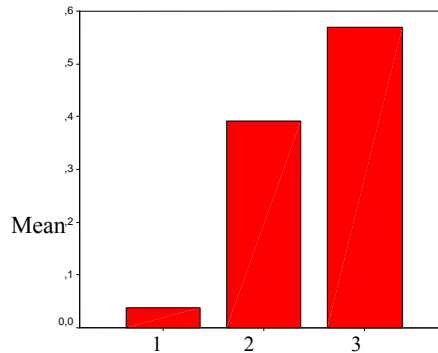
The profile of Russia's self-image in the period of Iraqi crisis in 2002-2003 is characterized by the dominance of the role statements – 53 %. Status statements constitute 44% of the analyzed statements, identity statements – 3%.

The comparison in the distribution of variables, denoting frequency of appearance of identity, status and role statements with the help of Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test, reveals the existence of significant difference in representation of identity and status statements ($p = 0,008$), identity and role statements ($p = 0,008$). At the same time the difference in the distribution of status and role variables is insignificant ($p = 0,441$). In other words, one can suppose that the situation with Iraq in the period under discussion was perceived by the Russian political leadership on the basis of the ideas of its obligations and spheres of responsibility on the international arena, in the Persian Gulf, and its relations with the other international actors.

These results are reflected in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Frequency of occurrence of identity, status and role statements in speeches of the main foreign policy decision-makers of Russia in the period of Iraqi crisis in 2002-2003



1- identity statements; 2 – status statements; 3 – role statements

The domination of role component reflects concerns of Russian politicians by the methods of Iraq's disarmament of the anti-Iraqi coalition. Status component in its turn defines the content of the principles, which were used as the guiding ones by the Russian political leadership to develop its position. Here we should emphasize that the main influence on the latter was exerted by the expectation of threats, which brought the existing situation with, not only for Russia, but for the world in general as well.

According to the minds of Russian political leadership, the main threat was associated with the creation of a unipolar, unified world (16 % of statements about threats), fraught with disintegration of the existing system of international relations (16 %). That is why, assuming the availability of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq (20 %), it was against military actions (9,87 % of statements about principles in performing the roles) and favored strict fulfillment of UNO's resolutions (34,55 %), integration of the world community's efforts, including the "Big Eight" states, to solve this problem, and bringing back UNO's inspectors to Iraq (2,47 %). The importance of the last thesis becomes evident in the light of domination of the categorization of Russia as the permanent member of Security Council (40 % of statements about the position of Russia on the international arena) and the accentuating of its contribution to the fruitful work of international inspec-

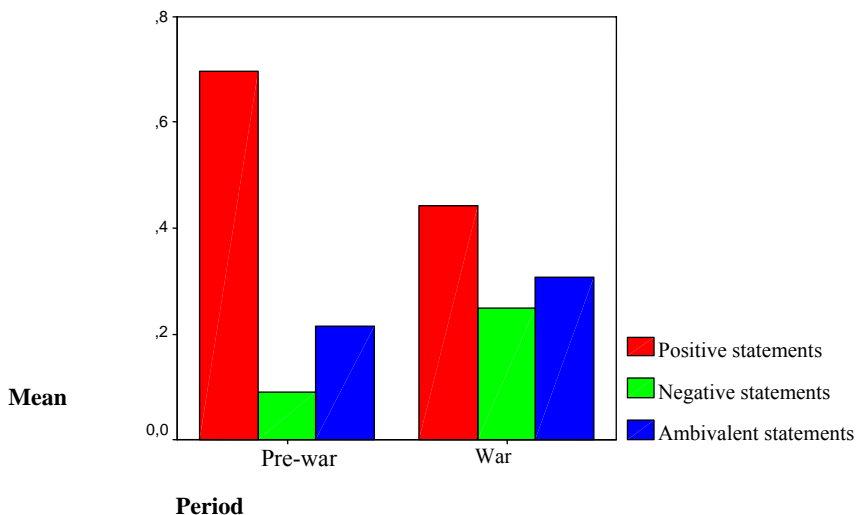
tors (18,18 % of statements about roles). The above mentioned principles of resolution of Iraqi problem, peculiarities of the perception of status of Russia on the international arena became the basis for the formation of the *decision domain*.

The historical analogy with Afghanistan used by the Russian political leadership helps to determine the place of the *reference point*, i.e., the criterion for the estimation of the situation from the point of losses and gains. As it is known, the antiterrorist operation in Afghanistan did not cause negative reaction in the world. After terrorist attacks on the 11-th of Sept., 2001, the relevancy of such operation evoked very few doubts. It is not occasionally that the actions of antiterrorist coalition created by the Bush administration to overthrow the Taliban regime did get UNO's sanction.

On the contrary, in the Iraqi case the USA did not only have no support of the UNO, but could hardly give the reliable evidence about the existence of weapons of mass distraction in Baghdad (25 % of statements about relations of Russia with the other states). In other words, the military operation in Iraq was conducted contrary to the principles which had been fixed and realized in Afghanistan in 2001 (the Russian leadership followed them) and was estimated by contrast with it.

Figure 2.

Ratio of positive, negative and ambivalent statements in the speeches of the main foreign policy decision-makers in Russia in the period preceding the Iraqi military intervention in March, 2003, and during the military operation in Iraq



Taking into account the place of the reference point, we come to the conclusion that the Russian leadership perceived the situation from the point of view of *losses*. The ratio of positive, negative and ambivalent statements which characterize the self-image of Russia speaks in this favor.

For instance, after March, 2003, the share of positive statements decreased from 69 % to 44,25 %, and frequency of occurrence of the negative ones increased from 9 % up to 25 % (the level of significance of difference for positive and negative statements constituted 0,077). Also, the number of ambivalent statements increased from 21,33 % up to 30,75%. The data, we've got, confirm the fact that with the beginning of military actions in Iraq the deviation of real situation from the reference point in the domain of losses increased considerably

The indexes describing the leaders' world view regarding international politics correlate with the change in the emotional coloring of the Russian self-image (Indexes were calculated in accordance with the methodic VICS (Walker, Schafer & Young, 1998). P1 characterizes the nature of political universe, P2 – realization of political values, P4 – control over historical development. See also, Kiselev & Smirnova, 2004b). From the moment of the beginning of antiterrorist operation in Iraq the political world was regarded by Russian politicians as less cooperative (the meaning of P1 diminished from 0,50 to 0,14), and the perspectives of the realization of political objectives were perceived pessimistically (the meaning of P2 dropped from 0,61 to 0,11). It is noteworthy that there is change in the locus of control from self to other (before the beginning of military actions P4 constituted 0,71 and after – 0,44). To put it differently, Russian politicians felt that they could hardly control the development of situation in the region.

The empirical study we conducted demonstrated to advantage the considerable influence of cognitive and affective components of self-image of Russia on the framing in the process of definition of the position of Russian political leadership towards the Iraqi crisis in 2002-2003. The decision of Russian political leadership - not to support the initiative of the USA and 49 other countries which joined the anti-Iraqi coalition (in spite of the successful experience of cooperation between the USSR and the USA in the period of Iraqi-Kuwaiti conflict in 1990-1991 and further deepening and development of Russian-American relations) - was determined by the fact that the situation was perceived by the Russian politicians in the *domain of losses*. Such perception in its turn was conditioned by the peculiarities of self-image of Russia in the period under consideration. In correspondence with the basic postulates of prospect theory, while making this decisions the Russian politicians demonstrated their predisposition to risk. In the

existing situation the possible “cooling” of relations with the USA seemed to the Russian political leadership to be less painful as compared to the support of military operation in Iraq without the UNO’s sanction.

Discussion of results

The influence of state self-image on the process of foreign policy decision-making is connected with the consideration of the structure of behavior as simultaneously cognitive, affective and evaluative one. In particular, the state self-image predetermines the priorities in the formation and choice among the available options.

The conducted research enabled us to reveal the impact of cognitive and evaluative components of image on the problem representation in the mind. We demonstrated that political actors react on the socio-political transformations in the world through the changes in the ratio of image components: identity, status and role. In other words, the decision-maker perceives the events, situations not only from the point of view of its content, but from the point of view of its significance for the self-perception of a state as well. For example, the domination of status component means not only that the situation is perceived in the context of relations with the other international actors, but reflects the fact that in the given moment the status component is the most important one for the categorization of the situation as compared to the identity and role components. Thus, the definition of state image in terms of identity, status and role components gives us an ample opportunity to be more precise in the construction of the hierarchy of actor’s values which direct his or her choice.

From the point of view of prospect theory, the dominant component of image helps us to determine the domain of a problem in the sphere of a state’s relations with the other international actors, its identity and realization of role duties, responsibilities. Also, the leading component of state image enables us to determine the reference point in a more correct way: that is to say, to define the guiding line that is used by the decision-maker for the estimation of the measure of success of the chosen political course.

At the same time, in the context of our formulation of patterns of interaction among state image components the conclusions and prognosis about the representation of a problem in the consciousness (and consequently about decision-making) could be more precise. We suppose that images, differing in ratio of its components, bring with them the distinguished problem representations.

The previous attempts in the study of patterns of interactions of state image components dealt with research of dynamics of the USA self-image in the inauguration speeches of American presidents during the period in 1946-2001 (Kiselev, Smirnova, 2004a). It was proved that the changes in the American foreign policy after the “Cold War” had been accompanied by the transformation of the profile of the USA self-image. However, the main focus of attention in the above mentioned research was attributed to the interaction of the first two dominant components of state image. In particular, the relationship between identity – status and identity-role components were examined. Nevertheless, the obtained results give us all grounds to come to the conclusion about the importance of further research of the issue of mutual influence of state image components.

The data, we’ve got, did not let us to confirm unambiguously and in a clear way the influence of the affective component of state image on the framing of a situation in the consciousness of an actor in the domain of losses or gains. Upon one hand, the results of research demonstrate the changes in the emotional coloring of state self-image in response to the new situation and circumstances. More than that, our data fixed the variation of positive, negative and ambivalent emotions in reaction to the changes of the same situation. On the other hand, the estimates of gains and losses do not reveal the direct relationship with the emotional coloring of state self-image.

Also, it is worth mentioning that in spite of the obvious significance of the emotional component of politics, this component does not attract the proper attention of researchers still. The assertion looks fair in its application to the study of foreign policy decision-making and international relations, partly, due to the fact that for a long time the main focus of research in the given scientific niche was on the rational actor. That is why further studies of the role of emotions in foreign policy decision-making are in dire need now.

Conclusion

Summing the above mentioned reasoning up, we draw a conclusion that state self-image plays an important role in all stages of the process of decision-making in international politics. Its influence on framing is realized through the accentuating the component that is categorized by an actor as the most completely reflecting the peculiarities of the existing situation and its own self-perception. Simultaneously with this there is a process of restructuring of the profile of the state self-image at the expense of change of

the dominant component. The latter, in its turn, determines decision domain and the reference point which are used for the evaluation of the situation. Together with this, we can't but take into account that the emotional coloring of the state self-image influences the framing of a problem in terms of gains or losses.

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