Many people in the West are gradually beginning to understand that the days of the unipolar world are numbered, a unipolar world the United States has been recklessly dominating for the past number of years, using nothing but brute force and military conflict in an attempt to impose its world order on other countries. New superpowers are coming to the forefront, whose aim is to strengthen world peace and to protect the legitimate right all people have to live according to their own national laws and customs, without interfering in other countries' affairs. This is particularly visible in the Persian Gulf amid the so-called "Persian Gulf crisis". It initially looked as if reason had prevailed when the five permanent members of the UN Security Council as well as Germany signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which gradually began to normalize the situation in the region. But then Donald Trump not only withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal, but also imposed fierce sanctions against Iran and the Iranian people, who value their independence. By imposing sanctions against Iran, the US has made it clear that it wants to "make the whole world bend to its will" - the Russian Foreign Ministry commented. "This is being done in order to deprive Iran of export revenue and to undermine the Iranian economy, because the United States has long been dissatisfied with Tehran's independent policy, one reason being the fact that it prevents Americans from being able to feel like they fully dominate the strategically important region that is the Middle East," the website of the Russian Foreign Ministry. In 2019, Iran responded by announcing it would suspend implementing two parts of the deal, and after that point the world seems to have begun moving towards armed conflict at an alarming pace. But the world has changed, and a number of countries have taken urgent steps to stabilize the situation. French, German and UK Foreign Ministers have announced the creation of INSTEX, a new mechanism for facilitating legitimate trade with Iran. INSTEX will initially focus on delivering medicine, medical devices and agri-food goods to Iran. The decision to create a mechanism to facilitate trade with Iran that bypasses US sanctions was taken in order to establish normal trade relations with Tehran. Moreover, European NATO member states were very skeptical about the US-led initiative to establish a joint international naval mission, which is meant to protect the shipping interests of the West in the Strait of Hormuz. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas made a statement which clearly expresses this skepticism: "Germany will not take part in the naval mission proposed and planned by the United States." US Ambassador to Germany Richard Grenell expressed his frustration, declaring he was "outraged" by Angela Merkel's policy, as the German Chancellor had said Berlin did not intend to join the US mission in the Strait of Hormuz. In response to the decision Maas had announced, Grenell rudely barged in on Germany's affairs and made a dogmatic statement, saying that "Germany is the biggest economic power in Europe. This success brings global responsibilities." From what the American Ambassador has said, it is clear that he still sees Germany as an American protectorate, not an independent state, where American troops are still stationed. "The presence of foreign forces does not only not contribute to the security of the region, but also will be the main cause of regional tensions," Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said at a meeting with Oman's Foreign Minister in Tehran. Recalling the fact that Iran and Oman bear most of the responsibility to ensure security in the Strait of Hormuz, President Rouhani added: "Iran has been, and will be, the main guardian of security and freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz and the Sea of Oman during history." At the same time, noting Iran has never and will never start a war, Rouhani made it clear that the current tension in the region stems from America's unilateral rejection of the JCPOA and the illusion of the Trump administration. During this meeting, Oman's Foreign Minister Yusuf Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, in turn, described relations between Iran and Oman as "friendly and brotherly", adding: "Today, the region is experiencing fabricated and proxy crises, and the establishment of sustainable security in the region will definitely not be possible without Iran’s involvement.” In this regard, Iran and Russia are planning to begin carrying out joint naval exercises in the near future, Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi told IRNA (The Islamic Republic News Agency). According to Khanzadi, these joint naval exercises may take place in the northern part of the Indian Ocean, and in the Strait of Hormuz, which connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman. The US media
reported these plans, which they say have really frightened members of the Trump administration, because the news came as a big surprise, and now Washington simply does not know how to respond to these plans. The French newspaper Le Monde explicitly reported that conducting these naval exercises would spoil the whole game plan for Donald Trump and his team. Against this background, Iran has begun taking a tougher stance against the United States and its leadership. One event which stands out is when Tehran bluntly turned down an offer from US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to visit Iran and speak to the Iranian people. Pompeo appears to have become obsessed with the withered "laurels" of the notorious former Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland, who visited Kiev's Maidan Square back in the day, and handed out cookies to local residents. Ordinary people in Kiev did not understand the gesture, and thought that the Americans would later reward them with a million dollars for each cookie they took. They are still waiting for that reward. Even close US allies - the Gulf States, especially Saudi Arabia and the UAE - are feeling the negative consequences of US sanctions, as the Gulf tanker crisis and threat to the freedom of navigation have led to a hike in insurance costs for their ships and cargo. Another threat to the oil market in the Persian Gulf is that countries in Asia such as China, India, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, are already looking for alternatives, because they are afraid their oil supply will be disrupted if war breaks out and the Strait of Hormuz is closes. On top of all this, there is a significant outflow of investment from the Gulf countries, whose economies are partly dependent on the financial services of other States. According to US bankers from JP Morgan, Saudi Arabia lost $80 billion in investments last year, and the shares of the Persian Gulf countries plummeted, which had previously been highly valued by the financial market. Many people around the world are right to believe that unqualified sanctions against Iran are a moral, political and legal failure on the part of the United States. Imposing sanctions against Iran means that the United States has failed to fulfill its obligations to international institutions, one of them being the United Nations. Everyone loses here - Europe suffers a setback, as does Iran and the whole world, Washington has brought the world to the brink of war, to both political and economic stagnation. **Viktor Mikhin, corresponding member of RANS, exclusively for the “New Eastern Outlook” online magazine.**