

The geopolitical cosmology of the greater eurasian space

Pavel Karabushenko¹, Olga Oskina¹, Leonid Podvoysky¹ and Natalia Podvoyskaya²

¹ *Astrakhan State University, Astrakhan, Russia*

² *National University of Science and Technology “MISIS”, Moscow, Russia*

Abstract. The geopolitical dimension of the Eurasian space involves the creating process of various architectural models of its world order based on different algorithms of behavior. The most figurative representation of this geopolitical geometry is presented by cosmological models describing not just the alignment of forces in the international scene, but also the motives and purposes of leading players' behavior and the role of obvious and clear outsiders in this process. These constructions are based on different perceptions and understandings of national interests and values of specific political elites and their leaders, who create a vision of the future by means of this strategic planning.

In geopolitics, visions of the future are doctrinal, declarative and embellishing in nature and they are also programmatic concepts of political elites and their leaders striving to express themselves outside their national state. These visions sometimes are mythological in nature, out of synch with reality and resemble utopian social projects. There is more destructive than constructive in such projects. It is crucial to quickly separate the myth (utopia) from reality for modeling geopolitical cosmology, to give a fact-based analysis of current trends, and not to go into the world of endless political fantasies. There are dozens of failed constructions for one successful project. The geopolitical cosmology of the Greater Eurasian Space is no exception here.

Keywords: Eurasia, Caspian region, geopolitics, cosmological political worldview, models, elites, strategy and tactics, issues of war and peace

¹ Corresponding author: Pavel_karabushenko@mail.ru

1 Introduction

Eurasia has always been a historically significant continent, on the territory of which great events have taken place that have shaped the course of the world history of mankind. There are the origins of the world's oldest civilizations (China, India, Persia, Greece), the centers of world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Islam), the territories of global imperial projects' emergence and the centers for the growth of scientific knowledge... Nowadays the main part of political, economic and cultural events somehow revolves around this region, attracting the most interested countries belonging to other geopolitical spaces into the sphere of their gravity.

In this study, the authors set the task of describing the currently existing models of the cosmological geopolitical worldview, by which the world perception of modern political elites and their leaders is expressed. The object of this study is Eurasia as a large geopolitical space, and the subject is a political cosmology. To solve the tasks, the authors use the whole range of methods and laws that exist in modern geopolitics (the law of dualism of the sea and land, the law of the "Coastal zone", the principles of historical dominance, etc.) [1, 2]. Furthermore, the methods of dialectics, comparative studies, historical semiotics and modeling were used in the study. The research objective of this article is to show the realism of existing geopolitical projects, to identify its strengths and weaknesses, to reveal promising opportunities.

2 Cosmological models of geopolitics

As a strategy, geopolitics always deals with modeling of the political space and creating an intelligible cosmological political worldview. Since Antiquity, political thinking has divided geographical space into "friends" and "foes". What is more, "friends" have been endowed with such qualities as civility, safety, predictability, while "foes" have been the opposite in all of this – they have been barbarians, have carried a threat and, due to their unpredictability, have been incomprehensible. Modern models of perceptions of the geopolitical space are based on approximately similar contrasts.

It is in such cosmological models of geopolitics the ruling political elites express their spatial and strategic worldview – their cultural and historical vision, political perception of the world, and geopolitical attitude. Political elites are what they cogitate in geopolitics. And they rely on and have to constantly take into account existing laws in geopolitics.

The existing laws of geopolitics can be repealed only by the laws of a stronger geopolitical will. As a rule, such breakdowns occur at transitional moments in political history, for instance, when the model of the world order changes - the bipolar world turns into a monopolar one, and that one, for its part, gives way to a multipolar world order.

By means of geopolitics, the world's political elites deal with the issue of all international relations – who is the leader at this historical moment, and who is the outsider. Consequently, the theme of imperial projects (supremacy and subordination), the analysis of national identity and the question of defending one's national interests are very often touched upon in the discussion.

Among the most relevant characteristics and ways of ensuring the stability of geopolitical structures there are: the presence/absence of hierarchy; the elaboration of a special mechanism of stability; principles of communication and an exceptional type of the political structure of models. These principles in the system of geopolitical interaction are

reproduced regularly throughout the entire historical process, bringing together the periodic shift of trends and the emergence of leading states and outsiders.

Thus, the factor of external threats becomes determining in the formation of UWRS (Unity the Weak Round the Strong) structures (for instance, the second half of the twentieth century - the epoch of the "Cold War"). The strengthening of the leader, the concentration of resources, the delegation of authority contributes to the unity and configuration of the UWRS structure. During the weakening of the USSR, we see the wrack of the system and its subsequent collapse. With a low level of external threats, the structure of the UWAS (Unity the Weak Against the Strong) develops. This formation is dictated by the desire to achieve equal safety without infringing on their sovereignty [3].

Beyond that, the success or failure in the implementation of these projects largely depends on the extent to which they provide a constructive foundation capable of resisting and combating the destructive tendencies of modernity. Most such projects remain models on paper, never moving to the stage of their practical implementation. Therefore, it is especially crucial for political elites and their leaders to make a timely diagnose of all these constantly emerging schemes - to sort the wheat from the chaff. "Trash theories" seriously litter the scientific space, bringing chaos and turmoil to the analysis of geopolitical realities. As a matter of fact, it turns out that they do not even have the power of words, but only the ability to initiate infoshum at the request of their political curators.

3 Cosmology of Eurasia

Geopolitical cosmology draws geometric projections of the "political space" and through these images clearly demonstrates and explains the essence of the events taking place here. It is a kind of translation of the rational into the figurative for a better perception of the perfect schemes offered. Cosmology suggests us a figurative perception, which involves a variety of geometric schemes illustrating the models under consideration [4].

To construct any cosmological geopolitical model, it is necessary to proceed from what Eurasia is for their developers in this case: how they perceive, understand and evaluate it. The more "friends" and fewer "foes" are in this space, the closer they will be to the perfect integration model.

The first question in geopolitics has always been the issue of the depth and quality of historical analytics. While for the United States the historical context of Eurasia is of no interest at all and they build their cosmology taking into account only the latest historical realities [5, 6], for Russia, India, Iran or China, the history of Eurasia plays an essential (key) role, since it allows them to realize who they are and what they can expect from other countries such as them.

The next issue is the solution to the identity problem. It is not merely a question of an ordinary division into "friends" and "foes", but the forming-up of constantly updated models according to the proposed algorithm: "ours – other – stranger – enemy". L.N. Gumilev considered Eurasia as a history of the development of infinite diversity and genuine tolerance, which for thousands of years have been building a unique Eurasian identity through numerous conflicts [7]. And today Eurasia is a historical and cultural area in which an European and an Asian constantly peer into each other's faces and see similarities and differences, what brings them together and what repels them. From determining these characteristics, they build their relationships to each other.

The next are the problems related to the search for the main reference points. Such reference points in Eurasia are the centers of power (centers of political decision-making + areas of economic growth) and key geometric configurations. It is these "points" that make

up the scale of dimensions of the geopolitical space. By key geometric configurations are meant regions that have an internal structure and are able to influence the surrounding international space. One of such key areas is the Caspian region, which is evaluated by lots of geopolitics as the axial region of Eurasia.

Obviously, each geopolitical space is formed by particular models reflecting and solving specific challenges and threats. For lack of time, we are going to outline only such already existing models, which are most often represented as geometric shapes. They are divided into models of actual conflicts and models of promising alliances.

The first are zones of increased geopolitical threats: 1) Iran - Israel - Saudi Arabia; 2) Syria - Libya - Iraq; 3) Pakistan - India - China; 4) China - Japan - USA; 5) Russia - Afghanistan - USA; 6) Russia - Ukraine - EU/USA (the so-called "collective West"). Within these major conflicts, there are many more "smaller" unresolved problems ("frozen conflicts") waiting to be activated.

The second group (the group of promising alliances) should include such projects as: 1) RIC (Russia - India - China); 2) TIR (Turkey - Iran - Russia); 3) EU - Russia - China ("great Eurasian Axis": Berlin - Moscow - Beijing); 4) Israel - Saudi Arabia - Egypt; 5) CCC: Caucasus - Caspian - Central Asia; 6) Japan - USA - North Korea... Various large and small alliances are constantly emerging and dying out, determining the integration rhythms of Eurasia by their appearance.

It is detected that most often such models are built in the shape of geopolitical triangles. At the same time, it is referred to both global strategic projects (for instance, RIC) and regional projects solving tactical issues (for instance, TIR). Some models are built in the shape of closed systems ("rigid triangles"), while others are linear in nature. There are models in which states participate, and there are those in which entire regions ("CCC") are participants. But there is already some negative experience. For example, in recent years, there is more and more talk about the crisis and the decline of the "Chimerica" project, which describes the economic and political relationship between the United States and China [8, 9]. This hybrid (Chimerica - China + America), like all chimeras, has turned out to be not a viable geopolitical element...

Taking this negative experience into account, it should be mentioned that geopolitical cosmology should try to avoid utopian projects and not create international chimeras. It only brings chaos to international relations, since they violate the principle of Occam's Razor: "*Entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitate*" ("No more things should be presumed to exist that are absolutely necessary"). Indeed, pluralism unnecessarily breeds anarchy.

4 The axial region of Eurasia

The history of Eurasia is essentially a history of the stand-off between sea and land. The main events of this story are concentrated around the Mediterranean basin and the Great Eurasian Steppe. But there is an invisible third element between them, which later, with the light hand of Mackinder (Halford John Mackinder), has got the name of the axial region - the Caspian [10].

The Great Caspian geopolitical project is a land project, not a sea project, which is consistent with the traditions of building international political relations between Russia, China and India as land civilizations [11].

At the end of the XX century, Z. Brzezinski considers Eurasia as the fiefdom of the United States. There is a place only for the United States in his geopolitical cosmology, and all the others are only physically present, without defining anything, since they are

"nothing" for Washington. Russia, India, China, and Iran are seen as pawns in the global game of the United States, which declare their activation undesirable for ensuring the national interests of the United States [12]. It is then that Brzezinski pays attention to the Caspian as a region of possible future conflicts, following the example of the conflicts in the Persian Gulf zone.

In many ways, this is an outdated model with blatantly imperial manners. Such theories are on the verge of political demagoguery and fall under the section of political propaganda of specific ideological dogmas. In later works, Z. Brzezinski reconsiders his so unambiguous approach to American hegemony. "We should know from our experience," he says, "that the use of military force has unintended consequences and is also very, very expensive. - Explaining his change of attitude, he says. - ...We can no longer be a global policeman, because this will lead us to bankruptcy, cause a domestic political social explosion and foreign policy one will lead to the loss of legitimacy of the United States" [13]. In his opinion, "America may experience the same systemic paralysis that was in the 1980s in the Soviet Union" [14].

The United States is jealous of Iranian-Chinese cooperation, seeing it as the key to the success of the survival of sanctioned Tehran. Meanwhile, Washington forgets that it is China that has helped the States in many ways to cope with the global financial and economic crisis of 2008 [15]. According to American analysts, Moscow and Beijing actually "have stolen" Washington's geopolitical strategy and implemented it in practice in 1996 in the form of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) which they have created. The SCO includes almost all those countries for which the American concept of Greater Central Asia (GCA) has been developed [16]. In this regard, attention should be paid to the concept of the "Greater Caspian Region", which in recent years has begun to attract the eyes of the United States and its allies more and more. This concept is used by them as a possible new foothold for their dominance in Eurasia [17].

American analysts admit that "today there is a clash of four world Powers: Russia, China, the United States of America and Europe, which have different reasons for their interest in the Caspian Sea and sometimes contradictory interests. As a result of growing competition, *the Greater Caspian Region* is gaining global strategic importance". The American Big Caspian project includes not only the "Caspian Quintet" itself, but also neighboring countries such as Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Thus, all the republics of the former USSR were in the zone of this project [18]. The aim is to block Russia's presence in the post-Soviet space.

At the same time, Russia begins to develop its own concept of the "*Greater Caspian*" - a kind of geopolitical region, which is a complex political and geographical formation. According to Russian analysts, this region includes five states of the Caspian Sea itself (Russia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan), as well as neighboring countries (the Greater Caucasus and Central Asia region). These countries and nations historically form a unique ethno-cultural and socio-political space [19]. Obviously, the struggle of ideas (as the "struggle of shadows") will continue around this axial region of Eurasia in the future and will bring lots of surprises to everyone.

5 Issue of war and peace

There are absolute ("eternal") problems in geopolitics. These include the issue of war and peace, which is a real curse for all mankind and the main headache for all political elites of all times and all nations. And it is the solution of this question that has always had a decisive influence on the final version of the cosmological geopolitical worldview.

Geopolitics is always a question of war and peace, namely when some states need war, and when some states need peace. The balance of these forces gives the general direction and content of geopolitical strategies. Within these categories, the foreign policy tactics of most states maneuver, playing a prominent role in the global political scene.

Victory in a modern warfare depends on who reflects much more among the opponents. In the present world, the profile of military threats is changing literally before our eyes, which makes analysts constantly rethink the type and nature of wars. In a modern warfare, the main goal now is the eradication of the enemy's self-consciousness, changing its civilizational and cultural code. These are already mental wars that are being waged not so much by the military as by scientists, to be exact, by specialized scientific elites. And this war is aimed at changing the enemy's self-consciousness [20]. Geopolitical wars are mostly "shadow wars". It is a struggle of ideas, doctrines and values for the right to determine other ideas, doctrines and values. In the world of high technologies, such wars will occur more and more in the mental plane of the mankind. In 2021, the US President J. Biden has announced the end of the era of military spread of democracy around the world, and the beginning of the strengthening of the "soft power" technologies [21]. The end of one era immediately has given rise to the realities of a new strategy.

If in the XIX century the structure of the Eurasian space is determined by the geopolitical struggle of the British and Russian Empires (the so-called "Great/Grand game"), with the decline of three other empires (Ottoman, Persian and Chinese) [22], then in the XX century it is a confrontation between the USA and the USSR. In the XXI century, the red line of geopolitical tension will be between the so-called "collective West" (the USA and the EU) and the "collective East" (Russia, India, China). But in all cases, Russia and the Anglo-Saxon world are involved in this great geopolitical game.

If in the 1990s the US military doctrine allows for two full-scale wars in different parts of the world simultaneously, at present (the 2020s) the US military strategy allows for a war with only one great nuclear power, provided the support of its allies. This change in strategy of behavior is evidence of the weakening of the USA military-economic power and the emergence of new political centers in the world. The world is once again becoming multi-tiered. It is becoming multipolar. And this multipolarity is emerging precisely in Eurasia [23].

The hegemon of the monopolar world is gradually losing its leadership position, which allows the US critics to talk about their imperial project-ending. It is proved by the American identity crisis [24]. The prospect of a military conflict in eastern Eurasia (China and the United States) opens up two possibilities for Japan, as the strategic ally of the United States: 1) in case of China's defeat - further deepening of Japan's enslavement from the United States and 2) in case of China's victory - liberation from colonial rule (occupation) on Washington.

The relations of the collective West with Russia are developing quite dramatically. As long as the collective West plays against Russia in the post-Soviet space, its relations with Moscow will always be uncomfortably strained.

The prospects of Eurasia's geopolitical strategy of directly depend on when the Eurasian Powers will begin to form their own models of international behavior and how successful they will be for them. Geopolitical planning consists of placing markers along the "friend-or-foe" line and drawing so-called "red lines" defining zones of national interests and the limits of the power of specific international actors.

6 Conclusion

The considered problem allows us to clarify what Eurasia is in its historical context and in the perspective of a geopolitical strategy. And here some differences at the level of understanding of geopolitical conflicts' nature are found out. If the Western elites consider these conflicts as a combat between liberal democracy and authoritarian autocracies, as a struggle between globalism and national projects, then the leading Powers of Eurasia evaluate these contradictions as a confrontation for their sovereignty and final liberation from the last colonial oppression of the collective West.

There are prospects for those geopolitical projects that take into account all the positive and negative aspects of objective reality to the maximum extent, those that base on scientific rather than ideological analysis, those that manage to gain the greatest number of supporters and minimize the critical capabilities of opponents.

Authors' contributions

The article has been written by a team of authors, all authors have taken equal part in the theoretical analysis of the problem and in carrying out the research.

P.L. Karabuschenko considered the features of geopolitical cosmology, summarizing modern points of view and wrote the original manuscript. O.I. Oskina analyzed the ideas of foreign authors on the research problem, was responsible for editing the article. L.Ya. Podvoisky analyzed and interpreted the results of the work, introduced additional information on the subject. N.L. Podvoiskaya contributed to the revision of the article.

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