Russia's role in promoting Great Eurasia geopolitical project

MARK ENTIN - EKATERINA ENTINA

Introduction

«We are a great power»[1], the leaders of young democratic Russia insisted, using perhaps only slightly less equivocal vocabulary even when everything around was breaking. The country was breaking up into fiefdoms. The money disappeared even before it reached the Treasury. The economic crisis, compared with which the current financial situation of Greece looks more like childish shenanigans, was raging. There was a lack of experience in management who was unable to cope with the required spontaneous transition from a planned economy to a market economy, and the change from the decrepit totalitarian system to something fundamentally different led to society having to pay a monstrous cost. Taking an initiative in the conduct of foreign policy was unimportant and had to be disregarded for some time. «Without Russia, Europe isn't Europe and Asia isn't Asia. Without our involvement the rest of the world can't cope with any global problems. We are destined to be a great power, uniting lands and peoples, because of our giant size and geographical location, our culture and history, our contribution to the global civilization»[2].

It was true then. Unfortunately, Russia's Western partners, extrapolating only recent trends into the future, ignored this obvious truth and both they and Russia have had to pay a very high price as a consequence. This is even more relevant today when words, either beautiful or bitter, are finally supported by concrete actions. Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov recalls this in his latest article *Historical Perspective of Russian foreign policy*, published in the

[1] Boris Yeltsin address to US Congress-Joint Session of Congress, Washington, D.C., 1992 (Transcribed from the video *Great Speeches*, Vol. X), http://www.speeches-usa.com/Transcripts/047_yeltsin.html; Выступление Президента Российской Федерации Б.Н. Ельцина на совместном заседании палат Конгресса США о перспективах развития сотрудничества между Россией и США, 17 июня 1992 г. / Ельцин Центр // http://yeltsin.ru/archive/audio/8995/ (accessed August 14th, 2016).

[2] Compilation from Boris Yeltsin speeches, *inter alia* in the Ministry of Foreign affairs of the Russian Federation – Президент Российской Федерации в МИД России, 12 мая 1998 г. / Журнал «Дипломатический Вестник», июнь 1998 год, Официальные материалы // http://archive.mid.ru//bdomp/dip_vest.nsf/99b2ddc4f717c733c32567370042ee43/0c49f77568c6d653c3256889002a5db5!OpenDocument (accessed August 14th, 2016).

prestigious magazine «Russia in Global Politics» on March 3rd 2016. He writes that: «the first Russian emperor managed to put Russia into the category of Europe's leading countries in a little over two decades. Since that time Russia's position could no longer be ignored. Not a single European issue can be resolved without Russia's opinion»[3].

Russia is at the forefront of the global war against international terrorism. With weapons in hand it is fighting to try to solve even the most acute bloody conflicts as a result of a comprehensive inclusive political process. For this purpose it is in constant dialogue with the other permanent members of the UN Security Council and the non-permanent members, who are elected on a rotational basis. In broad and varied efforts, it is seeking to involve and rely on such influential international organizations as BRICS, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), all created with its participation. Together with other European and Asian nations it is implementing its own large-scale, ambitious geopolitical integration project which is looking towards the future and seeking to open new horizons.

In this article we will reflect upon this project, following the works and views of a number of leading Russian experts in international relations, among whom is such a powerful figure as the Honorary Chairman of the Presidium of the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy, Dean of the School of International Economics and Foreign Affairs of the National Research University - Higher School of Economics S. A. Karaganov. It is S. A. Karaganov who has made the most significant contribution to a new vision and understanding of this project. When undertaking this he and his team relied on a modern, positive, unifying vision of the main ideologemes of classical Eurasianism, proposed by the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev. Continuity is quite logical, because Nursultan Nazarbayev was the first of the world's political leaders who justified the need for the creation of the EAEU and its transformation into an open, inclusive association. His exceptional role in this sense has been always stressed by his counterparts[4].

Under S.A. Karaganov's supervision the first work touching upon this topic was published[5]. This was followed by a general research into the topic

[3] Sergey Lavrov's article *Russia's Foreign Policy: Historical Background* in «Russia in Global Affairs», // http://www.mid.ru/web/guest/foreign_policy/news//asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2124391?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB (accessed August 14th, 2016).

[4] «The initiator of this project, – as was bluntly said by Vladimir Putin not later than in last June, – is here with us today, on this very panel. It is President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev». Excerpts from transcript of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin intervention at the plenary session of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, Moscow, June 17th 2016 // http://en.special.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/52178 (accessed August 14th, 2016).

[5] T.B. Bordachev - S.A. Karaganov - A.A. Bezborodov - A.T. Gabuyev - K.V. Kuzovkov - A.B. Likhacheva - A.V. Lukin - I.A. Makarov - Ye.A. Makarova - A.S. Skriba - D.V. Suslov - I.N. Timofeyev, *Towards the Great Ocean -3: Creating Central Eurasia*", edited by S.A. Karaganov, Moscow, Valdai International Discussion Club, 2015.

by the Valdai Discussion Club[6]. His last report, *Toward the Great Ocean: Turn to the East*, has just been published[7]. Many ideas which have been developed in them are reflected now in the most recent Moscow foreign political and economic initiatives[8].

Describing the current mind-set, he emphasized the following:

> It seems that a kind of 'Great Eurasian community' will be created in the next decade. When we started talking about this a few months ago, it seemed like a fantasy, but it is already happening now. At today's conference, the idea of the 'Great Eurasian community' was mentioned for the first time, but it was immediately taken seriously. At first, I put forward the idea as a declaration: the world is falling apart into blocs, one of them will be the 'Great Eurasia', which should probably be formed around SCO and a system of dialogues should be created [...]. It turned out that the idea was so mature that it has been instantly picked up by all. It is pleasing that our friends from Asia, who had previously thought less freely, began to think more creatively, to put forward new ideas [...] incidentally, we believe that the 'Great Eurasia' should be open to European countries. Europe is a part of Eurasia[9].

The situation in the world is difficult at the moment. Russia is painfully going through temporary economic difficulties both coincidental and structural in nature. In many areas, international cooperation is at an impasse, which has resulted from the choices rashly made by Western partners in favor of pointless and dangerous policies of confrontation. It is now necessary and essential to unite opposing forces to find a way out. The state of the global economy and trade raises legitimate concerns. Geopolitical risks have never been higher, as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) repeatedly warns in its periodic reports.

Despite all of this, emerging Moscow's geopolitical integration project has identified and rationalized many of the challenges, and proposes answers to them. Step by step it takes shape, becoming international political and economic reality and attracting more and more countries.

This project was officially announced in the framework of the 2016 St. Petersburg international economic *forum* and later discussed not only with China, but with ASEAN and other nations[10].

[6] *The Turn to the East: The Development of Siberia and the Russian Far East during the Strengthening of the Asian Direction of Russian Foreign Policy,* in «International Relations», Moscow, 2015.

[7] S. A. Karaganov - O. N. Barabanov - A. A. Bezborodov - T. V. Bordachev - A. V. Kazakova - A. B. Likhacheva - A. V. Lukin - I. A. Makarov - A. S. Pyatachkova - A. S. Skriba - A. K. Sokolova - D. V. Suslov - I. N. Timofeyev, *Toward the Great Ocean: Turn to the East. Preliminary Results and New Objectives*, edited by T.V. Bordachev, Moscow, Valdai International Discussion Club, 2016.

[8] Transcripts of President of Russia Vladimir Putin address at the eighth meeting of Russian Federation ambassadors and permanent envoys at the Russian Foreign Ministry, Moscow, June 30th 2016, http://en.special.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/52298 (accessed August 14th, 2016).

[9] S. A. Karaganov, *The first outlines of the Great Eurasia*, http://karaganov.ru/publications/363 (accessed August 14th, 2016).

[10] Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's opening remarks at the Russia-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, Vientiane, July 25th, 2016, http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2368092 (accessed August 14th, 2016).

It permits numerous opinions to be put forward by partisan politicians and experts surrounding everything that Russia is doing or intending to do. It helps to give a meaningful response to any concerns as to whether Russia is seeking to assume any special role in Eurasia, or whether it already has this by right. Its most characteristic features include the questions: How is Eurasian policy of Russia related to the popular concept of Eurasianism and does it require a predetermined spatial framework? To what extent, when carrying out this policy, does Moscow hope to rely on the various international organizations with its participation? Will it have enough resources and time to plan for its effective implementation? What could be opposed to the intentions of foreign players to prevent such geopolitical integration project?

Rational motives of association

The world has reached some *consensus* at present on certain fundamental aspects: power should belong to the people - according to classical ideas this is the core wisdom, the essence of democratic society. People are bearers of sovereignty and should determine their own destiny, without outside intervention, especially military intervention. This is the underlying principle of the UN Charter, which has become the absolute norm of international law; indeed current international law does not permit any violation of this.

However, two approaches to its understanding and practical interpretation have arisen in the international arena. One of them is supported mainly by the *corps d'élite* of NATO members and members of the European Union. According to their interpretation, when it comes to protection or the establishment of democracy, the fight against totalitarian regimes and dictatorships or recovery from brutal violence or humanitarian catastrophe, NATO, the EU and their leading member States, or the international coalition led by them, consider it necessary to intervene in some way. Their perceived duty is to help the people to make the right choice, even if this is through secret operations, supplying armed opposition and illegal groups with money, ammunition and lethal weapons or even through direct military intervention. They appear to disregard the potential catastrophic consequences this adventurism may lead to.

The opposite approach, perhaps best described as 'healthy conservatism', requires respect for the rule of law and order agreed by each sovereign State in the creation of a modern world order, and this is advocated by Russia, China, the other members of the BRICS together with the overwhelming majority of UN members. Their starting point is that the Charter of the Global Security Organization States that the non-interference in internal affairs and the sovereign equality of States should be strictly observed. Actions in circumvention of the agreed policies of the UN Security Council are unacceptable and any coercive measures should only be introduced on the

basis of its decisions. Thus, in their view, no one should infringe on the rights of the people to determine their course of movement to freedom and a more equitable and just State system; it is immoral and inexcusable to sacrifice their fate for abstract speculative ideals.

This approach has been supported by all the recent developments in not only Asia, Africa and Latin America, but also now in Europe. The forcible change of power in countries, based on support and assistance from outside and the overthrow of legitimate governments and political regimes using unconstitutional means, has brought untold misery and suffering. They have created a power vacuum, which various political and religious extremist groups have not failed to take advantage of. It has resulted in an extremely dangerous degradation of public institutions and security forces, made temporary political instability permanent and wrought a heavy blow to the local economy. To evidence this, just look at the current conditions in Libya, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan, Somalia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Black Africa. The list is incomplete, but it is more than persuasive.

Russia follows this approach, building a policy of development assistance. K. I. Kosachev, the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of Russia wrote about it on many occasions when he was the Head of Rossotrudnichestvo[11]. The Eurasian geopolitical project is based on this, the concept that no one should impose anything onto anyone, in spite of the unfounded allegations to the contrary. No one is pushing protesters to occupy the streets. All project participants are guided by the one main criterion: do they achieve a positive net benefit, a positive balance between the gains of a participant from being in the project as a result of its implementation, and their possible losses, in the spheres of economy, social development, security and political stability.

Only an unconditional positive balance could encourage the 'founding fathers' to create the Customs Union and Common Economic Space, and then enhance their prospects of further conversions to the EAEU, and attract Yerevan and Bishkek to join it. Only confidence in the net benefits of the project led to even geographically distant countries beginning to place requests for admission to the EAEU. Within a very short time the EAEU and the Member States have entered into a pioneer agreement on a free trade zone with Vietnam, the fastest-growing economy in Southeast Asia. Even now, despite the economic downturn in Russia and continuing sanctions campaign, about sixty states have lined up to conclude similar agreements[12].

Of course, no one is going to idealize cooperation within the EAEU. There is no necessity in it and it is obvious from the outset of such a new

[11] The Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation.

[12] Among them officially «over 40 States and international organisations have expressed the desire to establish a free trade zone with the Eurasian Economic Union» as was vaunted at 2016 St. Petersburg

large-scale integration project that there will be a large number of structural problems. These are connected with an inherent focus on promoting own national interests, the different state and level of development of economic structures of the participants and with fierce competition between various self-interested lobbies.

In addition, there are currently more obvious problems burdening unification: such as fluctuating national currencies, falling prices for goods and services of traditional exports, volatile markets and deterioration of relations with external partners. These have been described in detail in professional and research papers[13].

However, the deciding factor is not the matter of acute individual problems but in a systemic assessment by participants of the overall balance of 'for' and 'against'. This approach differs from that espoused by inveterate critics of Eurasian integration, such as a former senior consultant of the European Council on Foreign Relations who then moved to the European Institute for Security Studies, Nicu Popescu[14]. In addition, there is no certainty that it would be even a little easier to deal with them individually.

Since the 1990s, the Kazakhstan leadership has become the most active and highly authoritative supporter of the economic union between the countries that emerged from the former Soviet Union. The President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev became the leading and most authoritative theoretician of the inevitability of integration in Eurasia. He built a bridge between classical Eurasianism and modernity, promoting the huge positive political charge that Eurasianism contained. He did a lot to understand how closely the peoples of Eurasia are related and proved that their convergence and integration within the common integration project is objective in nature. He proposed a concrete vision of how it should be done[15].

However, prior to the 2010's there were no prerequisites for the success of an ambitious Eurasian project. In the former Soviet Union the centrifugal tendencies dominated. Even the Union State established by Russia and Belarus was largely based on paper. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) provided a rather 'civilized divorce' of parts of the once united

International Economic Forum, http://en.special.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/52178 (accessed August 14th, 2016).

[13] Taras Tsukarev - Evgeny Vinokurov, *Agenda for the EEU Economy. Russia*, in «Global Affairs», October 28th, 2015, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/valday/Agenda-for-the-EEU-Economy-17779 (accessed August 26th, 2016); *Cooperation between Russia and ASEAN countries. Asia-Pacific News Brief*, issue 2 (5), May 2016, http://apec-center.ru/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/web-ENG-nccapr-apecs-2016-22.pdf (accessed August 26th 2016); Ali Hakim, *Sink or Swim: Can the EAEU Survive for the Long Haul?*, in «Harvard Political Review», June 6th, 2015, http://harvardpolitics.com/world/sink-swim-can-eaeu-survive-long-haul/ (accessed August 26th, 2016).

[14] Nicu Popescu, *Eurasian Union Uncertainties*, in «Eurasian Visions», pp. 33-38.

[15] Catalogue of works of the President of Kazakhstan, http://personal.akorda.kz/ru/category/knigi (accessed August 14th, 2016).

country rather than fostering cooperation between them. This image describes the situation at the time best, according to a wide range of researchers, such as Cory Welt and Henry E. Hale of George Washington University. In the foreword to one of the most recent systemic works on the challenges faced by Eurasia[16] they write: «CIS served more as a protracted mechanism for divorce than a basis for new forms of integration»[17].

The accumulated experience of independent existence forced a reassessment of values, but this work is of course ongoing. There are strong doubts, little *momentum* and *élites* are divided, with groups advocating different interests. Nevertheless, it has been the experience of seeing the failure of other options of development, such as the policy of trying to gain from confrontation between the major external players which has been fraught with many negative consequences, that provides reassurance in the concept. Other options are unreliable and ambiguous, they don't minimise risk but largely enhance it, both internally and externally. It is thus essential to follow the path of minimising risks and attaining sustainable development together, and the formation of a common economic space creates a much more favourable prospect to achieving this.

Therefore the outlines accepted in the West, which describe the integration processes in Eurasia, do not look quite so consistent. Russia has been criticised in many ways: for its attempted dictatorship in relation to its neighbours, for attempts to preserve an archaic way of life, for its desire to restore the empire and for its desire to oust the US and EU from the sphere of its vital interests (without accepting they should be involved or for their nurturing anti-democratic coalition). All such contentions are, at the very least, unproven and often they are more reminiscent of propaganda. Their connection with reality, to put it mildly, is not always clear and it seems that they were created, not necessarily consciously, in response to a political order with only one purpose – to induce doubts and cause fear and suspicion about the intentions of Russia.

The assumption that the new independent Russia, freed from its totalitarian past and communist ideology, is identical to the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union is blatantly biased.

The desire for integration and the creation of a broad homogenous economic space is universal. They are equally progressive, whether in Western and Central Europe, or in Eurasia.

[16] *Eurasian Visions. Integration and Geopolitics in Central Asia. PONARS Eurasia Policy Perspectives September 2015*. Based on the papers presented at PONARS Eurasia policy workshop *Security and Regional Integration in Eurasia* held at Nazarbayev University, Astana, Kazakhstan, in June 2015 and co-sponsored by Nazarbayev University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. PONARS Eurasia Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, Elliott School of International Affairs, The George Washington University, p. 98.

[17] Cory Welt - Henry E. Hale, *Foreword* in «Eurasian Visions», p. VIII.

Some analysts, who are closely observing the emergence of the new trend in the development of certain regions of Europe and Asia, draw particular attention to the fact that Russia has begun to implement its geopolitical project not during the best of times, when the conditions for its launch are far from optimal. Relations with the collective West have become progressively more problematic, particularly as concerns of confrontation with neighbouring countries has deepened having regard to the conflict relating to Ukraine, and resulted in even greater caution. In neighbouring countries the fear has intensified that the Ukrainian scenario could be repeated in other places. Therefore, in their relations with Moscow, they have been ready to rely on other powers of the first *echelon*[18].

The international situation is really exceptionally difficult everywhere. It is also highly volatile and it is difficult to expect a rapid improvement in the near future. However, looking at this from a slightly different perspective, it would be incorrect and is unfair from all viewpoints to shift the blame for this onto Moscow. It cannot be disputed that completely different forces destabilised the Greater Middle East, and the current situation is not due to the common neighbourly relations between Russia and the EU or Russia and NATO. In fact the lessons learnt from the current situation, could well be just the opposite, that it is crucial to join forces in order to avoid repeating the mistakes made previously and stop the dangerous trends and general instability; there is nothing better than association, integration and cooperation.

It is worth analysing this taking a critical view on the concept that the Eurasian geopolitical project is rooted in Slavophilism (with early ideas about geopolitics comprising the eternal fight between the oceanic and continental nations) in the post-revolutionary and in post-Soviet Eurasianism in general and the destructive part of the movements of post-Soviet Eurasianism (labeling themselves as 'Neo-Eurasism').

Such propositions imply that Eurasianism is always reactionary. In the past it was explained as if it was necessary to fence themselves off from Western influence. Currently it is monopolized by Russian ultranationalists, the extreme left, extreme right and the military. In connection with the events in Ukraine it has merged with the slogans of the *Russkiy Mir* and protection of compatriots outside the national territory[19].

This requires a deeper understanding, because linguistically, geographically and politically many articles designed to clarify and explain, even in part and with the best of intentions, often only create more confusion[20].

[18] *Ibidem*.

[19] Andrey Makarychev, *Reassembling Lands or Reconnecting People? Geopolitics and Biopower in Russia's Neighborhood Policy*, in «Eurasian Visions», pp. 7-12; Viatcheslav Morozov, *Kazakhstan and the "Russian World". Is a New Intervention on the Horizon?* in «Eurasian Visions», pp. 13-18.

[20] Marléne Laruelle, *Eurasia, Eurasianism, Eurasian Union. Terminological Gaps and Overlaps*, in «Eurasian Visions», pp. 1-5.

From Slavophilism to the fourth wave of Eurasianism[21]

These views can't all be amalgamated. The pre-eminent representatives of the Slavophile movement and panslavism paid much attention to the contrast between Eurasian and Westernism. They sought to justify that the Slavic peoples had a special identity, the presence of which would be enough to enable them to be considered as a whole and to formulate practical politics based upon this premise. They tried to ascertain what perspective was given by the original path of their development based upon this specific identity. However, in this sense slavophilism started to fade before the reforms of the 1860's - 1870's that transformed the Russian Empire, occurring immediately after the ruthless suppression of the Polish unrests. Its nationalist basis by definition made it biased, limited and narrow-minded.

However, some of the ideas developed then, have stood the test of time and were picked up by later generations. They have become an integral part of the rich heritage of classical Eurasianism, ethnogeny concepts and attitudes, supported among others by such prominent thinkers and artists as the Roerich brothers[22].

Russian philosophers and cultural experts of the XIX century rightly pointed out that under no circumstances had history been linear. It contrasts to what was stated by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and similar doctrines, which are still dominant in the US and EU. They struggled with the idea that in its development mankind rises up step by step, moving from one civilization to another, and at the top is western civilization. They were fighting in favor of the equality of cultures, dialogue of civilizations, cooperation, inclusiveness and the value of each of them.

It is significant that this approach was confirmed in the Millennium Declaration of the UN General Assembly adopted at its 55th session, on 8 September, 2000. Thus it says: «Differences within and between societies should be neither feared nor repressed, but cherished as a precious asset of humanity»[23].

Perceptions of Eurasianism, based on inherent geographical categories, were born in the depths of the White emigration[24]. They flourished in the first half of the 1920's[25]. At that time, the book *Europe and Humanity* by N. S.

[21] According to our classification, 'Neo-Eurasism' became the third wave or a dead-end offshoot of Eurasianism, which clearly opposes its most modern actualized understanding.

[22] Famous Russian painters who spent major part of their life in India and preached Eurasia destiny to protect the world against global evil. Yuri Roerich, *Materials of anniversary conference*, Moscow, Roerich International Centre, 1994, http://lib.icr.su/node/772 (accessed August 14th, 2016).

[23] http://www.un.org/ru/documents/decl_conv/declarations/summitdecl.shtml (accessed August 14th, 2016).

[24] *Political and legal views of Eurasians*, http://studme.org/1854051630520/politekonomiya/politiko-pravovye_vzglyady_evraziytsev#730 (accessed August 14th, 2016).

[25] «The power of the continent: Russia-Eurasia», http://studme.org/105604125855/politologiya/vlast_kontinenta_rossiya-evraziya (Accessed June 17th, 2016).

Trubetskoy[26] was followed by *Eurasian publications Exodus to the East. Premonitions and Achievements*[27] and *On the Road. Adoption of the Eurasians*[28]. *Eurasian Chronicles*[29] and some editions of the «Eurasian Times» were also published.

Many famous thinkers and public figures made their intellectual contribution before the Eurasian movement split and came to nothing, among them P. A. Berdyaev, P. N. Struve, P. N. Milyukov and I. A. Ilyin. P. N. Savitsky (1895-1968) is considered its brightest and consistent ideologist. Influenced by his charms, a prominent Russian historian Lev Gumilev much later created his own theory of ethnogenesis.

'Geographical' Eurasians rejected as meaningless and false the idea of Europe being just a combination of West and East, and instead of two continents Europe and Asia, they offered to distinguish one more. The third 'median' continent was given the name Eurasia. Since Russia comprises a considerable part of it, this view on geography entailed far-reaching consequences and conclusions about geopolitical and cultural character.

Their main idea is that Russia does not fall into either the European or Asian parts. It is a unified whole, with a special type of civilization and culture, 'Russian Oecumene' and Russia-Eurasia. It is a region that has absorbed the rich heritage of eastern, western and southern peoples, including the Byzantine Empire and the largest in history 'Mongol Empire'. It is the unity of physical and spiritual principles, geographical and socio-cultural relations and their synthesis. It is thus the 'Middle Kingdom' that connects Japan, China, Indo-China, Iran, the Near East and Europe.

Eurasians saw the might of Russia in the fact that while remaining a strictly continental power, it could unite peoples, countries and continents to resist the pressure from oceanic civilizations, including competing for the border area, not by war and violence, but using peaceful means. Therefore it would be a mistake to confuse ideological perceptions of 'geographical' Eurasians and their followers with the concepts of Halford Mackinder, an unconventional British geographer, historian and theorist of international relations[30], who is regarded in the West as one of the founding fathers of modern geopolitics[31].

[26] N. p., Sofia, 1920.
[27] N. p., Sofia, 1921.
[28] N.p., n. p., 1922.
[29] N.d., n. p., n. d.
[30] V. A. Dergachev, *Geopolitics. Russian Geopolitical Encyclopaedia. 2010-2014*, http://www.dergachev.ru/Russian-encyclopaedia/21/08.html (accessed August 14th, 2016).
[31] Halford Mackinder, *Britain and the British Seas*, London, n. p., 1902 (Халфорд Маккиндер, *Британия и Британские Моря*, Лондон, 1902); H. Mackinder, *The Geographical Pivot of History*, in «Geographical Journal», 23, 1904 (Х. Маккиндер, «Географическая точка опоры в истории,» Географический журнал, 23, 1904); Halford Mackinder, *Democratics Ideals and Reality*, London, n. p., 1919 (Халфорд Маккиндер, *Демократические идеалы и реальность*, Лондон 1919); H.

He perceived the whole history of humanity as an ongoing conflict and confrontation between the oceanic and continental civilizations and considered the latter to always have an advantage. The concept of 'The World-Island' was of primary importance in developing his theory, in which he included Eurasia and Africa. The most inaccessible part of 'The World-Island' was called the 'Heartland', a huge part of the continent, covering the central and northern areas, where rivers flow into inland seas or into the Arctic Ocean. 'Heartland', he thought, was the core of the Earth, or Eurasia, inaccessible for the sea powers and the geographical and geopolitical axis of the world goes through it. Thus, it is a 'geographic foothold in history' and around it lies an inner or marginal crescent, which acts as a buffer zone between civilizations.

The quote, in which he described the essence of his global approach, and that made him famous, reads as follows: «Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island commands the world». He believed that in order to establish such domination, it would be sufficient to unite Germany and Russia in any form - either by union or conquest. However, later taking into account the geopolitical reality, H. Mackinder abandoned many elements of his concept, but few people recognise or remember that aspect. It is more significant that he was followed by many of the largest schools of geopolitics in the world, including in the USA (Nicolas J. Spykman and his theory of 'Rimland', realist schools of international relations by Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski and neoconservatives), Germany (Karl Haushofer) and Russia (ideologist and founder of neo-Eurasianism Alexander Dugin)[32].

It is not a surprise that H. Mackinder's theory remains popular even now. Such simple, beautiful, artificial, convenient and all-explaining teachings are always in demand and easier to accept. However, if Z.Brzezinski and his school of geopolitics reduced all their concepts to 'a chessboard', transforming the whole planet into a sphere of vital interests considering only the United States as a remaining superpower and a counteraction to the integrative role of Russia in the surrounding area[33], the proponents of neo-Eurasianism actually offer in response a directly opposing scenario.

According to the ideas advocated by them, the benefits of the end of the 'Cold War' were used by the oceanic civilizations ('sea powers') for their own

Mackinder, *The Round World and the Winning of Peace*, in «Foreign Affairs», 21, 1943 (Х. Маккиндер, «Глобальный мир и победоносное шествие мира,» Международные отношения, 21, 1943).

[32] Aymeric Chauprade, *Halford Mackinder and Heartland*, translated for Oko-Planety by Dmitri Luft, http://oko-planet.su/politik/politikdiscussions/132721-halford-makkinder-i-hartlend.html (accessed August 14th, 2016).

[33] V. Polikarpov, *Zbigniew Brzezinski. Making Russia a Pawn*, Moscow, n. p., 2011, p. 240. Annotation, http://www.litres.ru/vitaliy-polikarpov/zbignev-bzhezinskiy-sdelat-rossiu-peshkoy/ (accessed August 14th, 2016).

unilateral interests and they continued the 'Cold War', but using other methods[34]. They therefore support the need to fight back against attacks on the 'land powers' and the aggression against them, using any available methods. These methods should not be drawn from the arsenal of liberalism, communism, ultra-radicalism, superiority theories, racism, intolerance, xenophobia, or something similar[35].

In classical Eurasianism, two principles are naturally intertwined. On the one hand, the emphasis was on the denial of the universal values of Western civilization and the need to confront its hegemony. Therefore, a division of Eurasia into three independent parts was purely artificial. On the other hand, imperatives of the unity of peoples with a common destiny, culture and geography were of primary importance. Following them was proclaimed necessary and self-evident to solve common problems. These include ensuring a peaceful harmonious development, a high level of prosperity and preservation of civilizational identity.

That was the second peaceful, creative and future facing principle which was the inspiration for President Nursultan Nazarbayev and his associates in their own country and far beyond its borders. Then, it inspired the fourth wave of Eurasians. In their reflections, they went far beyond him.

For them opposition, as well as confrontation are unnecessary and meaningless. Of course, they should take the best from each, the most advanced knowledge and practices and actively use them. To be precise, it should be what you really need and what is beneficial, not imposed. It should not go against its own interests, but rather to meet them. It should not do any harm to their traditions and culture, but be used for their prosperity.

However, the main focus is on overcoming their isolation, joining efforts, matching different integrative projects nurtured by individual countries and groups of States. The main priority of the Eurasians of the fourth wave is association. In other words, it is a geopolitical project, which is convenient for all countries and peoples and gives everyone a chance to find a place in it, adequate to their capabilities and preferences.

It is clear that this project is of a completely different scale and level of organization in international relations. It allows Russia to substantially optimize its highly positive contributions to global development in which all Russians firmly believe.

Territorial scope of the Eurasian project

It is apparent that the practical politics of modern Russia has no relation to the games between land and sea powers, and it doesn't claim domination

[34] *Time to Return our Holy Relics: the Principles and Strategy of the Coming War* // http://evrazia.org/print.php?id=2787 (accessed August 14th, 2016).

[35] A. G. Dugin, *Foundations of Geopolitics*, Moscow, Dugin's Foundation of Geopolitics, 1997; A.G. Dugin, *Project "Eurasia"*, Moscow, Dugin's Foundation of Geopolitics, 2004.

in the Heartland in the geopolitical situation. Therefore, it is possible to agree with experts, such as the French historian, sociologist and political scientist, Deputy Director of the Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies at George Washington University, Marlène Laruelle. She states that Moscow's policy does not reflect old type of Eurasianism and suggests that we should not confuse intellectual constructs and historic popular ideological movements with the real strategy exercised by the authorities[36].

The Russian political, business and intellectual *élite* is founded on the multipolar world. Having past desiring for Eurocentrism, the *élite* began to build smooth, close and friendly relations with the major emerging powers of the world in a number of regions: China, India, Brazil, South Africa and others. Included within these newly formed relationships, were negotiations of terms for economic development and foreign policy. That is how the Russian-Chinese-Indian consultative mechanism and the BRICS were born.

From a scheme with an abstract location of the participants, identified by scientists BRICS has become one of the supporting international structures of the modern world, exerting a growing influence on global developments. Within its framework, numerous dialogues at all levels have been established, including regular meetings of specialized ministers. The possibility for consultations and periodic checks in advance of and during international forums and meetings of other international organizations are very popular. BRICS is particularly active in the financial field and the BRICS summits give great momentum to negotiations on key issues of the global agenda and building practical cooperation. Its long-term development strategy was supported at the last Summit held in Ufa in the summer of 2015.

The SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) Summit coincided with the Summit of BRICS. The SCO is another supporting organization, for which the members and the neighbouring countries have great hopes. One of the most important and anticipated decisions, outlined in preparation for the Summit, was aimed at integrating or 'pairing' the Silk Road Economic Belt project and EAEU activities.

Chinese journalists described it as shaping a new reality in Asia[37]. Russian experts called it a breakthrough decision which created a political framework for the amalgamation of integrations in Eurasia[38]. In addition, following the CIS Summit and the meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in Astana on October 16th- 17th 2015, the leaders adopted a

[36] Marléne Laruelle, *Eurasia, Eurasianism, Eurasian Union. Terminological Gaps and Overlaps*, in «Eurasian Visions», pp. 1-5.

[37] Jang Jin, *Ufa Summit's Sign of Shift in Eurasian Geopolitics*, in «Global Times», July 8th, 2015 // http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/930917.shtml (accessed August 14th 2016).

[38] S.A. Karaganov, *The First Outlines of the Great Eurasia* // http://karaganov.ru/publications/363 (accessed August 14th, 2016).

document stating their commitment to coordinate integration activities. After it the Eurasian Economic Commission was granted with mandate to conduct negotiations.

Such complementarity of synergies is understandable. There is a great future for the integration of assets and talents of China and the EAEU in order to implement large-scale projects. Currently, the second and third largest world economies of China and Japan are the economic centres of attraction for Asian countries. If current trends of rapid and dynamic formation of EAEU continue, this new integrated association is going to become a new member. Based on the queue of countries wanting to participate and sign an agreement with the EAEU to join the free trade zone, the Union has potentially become aligned with these economic powers in the political and institutional dimension.

EAEU is underpinned by CSTO very well and this must be seen as one of the EAEU virtues. The rules are identical everywhere: strong economic development requires political stability and security. In Asia, the external risks, including the threat posed by terrorism, religious extremism, instability of exports and massive flows of refugees, are extremely high. An international security organization such as CSTO, with its rapidly strengthening anti-terrorist structures and highly professional divisions of rapid response, is ready to deal with these challenges.

EAEU has only recently appeared on the political map of the world. It has yet to prove its worth and gain prestige and influence, but the first steps it has made appear quite encouraging. Based on the extent of the economic free movement of goods, capital, services and labour outlined in the founding treaties, EAEU can claim to achieve in a few years what took decades for other integration associations. With its methods of making political programs and economic decisions, it provides all the Member States with all the guarantees of equality and equal rights, taking full and consistent account of their national interests.

At the same time a supra-national body, the Eurasian Economic Commission, which is given executive and regulatory functions, manages daily activities[39]. The Eurasian Economic Court promises to become an important tool in ensuring the unity of supra-national legislation and legal practice. It has already proceeded with the trial of the first cases submitted for its consideration[40]. With a number of decisions already made, it has significantly simplified access to international justice for legal entities, compared to the legal position of the European Union Court of Justice. EAEU plans to elaborate and sign many new multilateral agreements which will make the integration processes more concrete, substantial and sustainable.

[39] http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ (accessed August 14th, 2016).
[40] http://courteurasian.org/ (accessed August 14th, 2016).

In terms of foreign policy EAEU gives all member States additional weight and strengthens their negotiation position in relations with third countries and their associations. In addition, it allows Russia to interconnect the circle of international institutions it has created, to make them mutually supportive and complementary. In regard to the economy, EAEU offers member States broader markets of production and sales, allowing cost optimisation and helps to achieve improved competitiveness. It has therefore also made the common economic space more attractive for non-residents and external investors.

From the perspective of effective management, it allows and encourages focus on best practice. In addition to all of this, the successful establishment of EAEU opens the prospect of raising the question of the amalgamation of integrations, as mentioned above. These include such projects as the Chinese Silk Road Economic Belt, the fundamental decision of principle about which has already been made. It also includes the economic zones, communities or partnerships emerging in the Asia-Pacific region resulting in building integrated North-South and East-West railroad, maritime and other most sophisticated infrastructures and development clusters. Meanwhile the EU risks remaining on the side of the rising powers of the Eurasian economic development processes, if it continues to hesitate and put forward endless conditions.

Russia has left behind all the fairy tales about global domination, 'Heartlands', global axes and imposing its ideas and way of life on others. Given its role in world affairs, the UN Security Council and the Nuclear Club member status, active participation in a number of large-scale international projects launched by it and the experience of existence in the various political systems, Russia punches above its weight, claiming in Eurasia the role of unifier, integrator and link between different peoples, countries and regions. S. A. Karaganov stated this in the preface to his book, *Turn to the East: The development of Siberia and the Far East in the face of increasing Asian vector of Russian foreign policy*[41].

Russia rightly plays a role of one who helps, encourages and promotes the broadest possible international cooperation; it is able to make a decisive contribution to smoothing the contradictions and conflicts hindering the access of individual countries and peoples to such cooperation, as demonstrated in finding an acceptable solution in the negotiations on Iran's nuclear program. It was Moscow that insisted on a diplomatic solution, which allowed Teheran to return to world politics and world economy, and the international community to obtain the required guarantees against Iran securing the capacity to produce weapons of mass destruction.

[41] Sergei A. Karaganov, *A turn to Asia: the History of the Political Idea*, in «Russia in Global Affairs», January 13th, 2016, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/pubcol/A-turn-to-Asia-the-history-of-the-political-idea-17926 (accessed August 26th, 2016).

In order to reinforce the described positive role it could play in Eurasia, a role beneficial to all, Russia is ready to actively promote joining forces not only in economics, but also in soft and hard security. This includes: the joint fight against drug trafficking, organized crime, smuggling of migrants and refugees, money laundering; the joint prevention of violent attempts to change legitimate governments; the establishment and strengthening of genuine anti-terrorist fronts; and the establishment of a fully-fledged system of collective security, in which it could act as one of the guarantors. In summary, as outlined by the head of the Russian Foreign Ministry, it is about «the role that rightfully belongs to our country as one of the leading centres of the modern world, a provider of development, security and stability»[42].

Another extremely important resource, which Russia could share with the countries and peoples of the super-regions, is energy. It is a recognized leader in this area undertaking the large-scale construction of the most modern nuclear power plants and offering a stable supply of hydrocarbons to meet all needs. This is particularly relevant taking into account future price increases which will inevitably arise due to underfunding of investment in the sector at present as a result of the current crisis of overproduction.

Obviously, such a role goes very far beyond the spatial scope of EAEU, Eurasia in understanding of theorists of Eurasianism, 'Heartland', which neoconservatives continue to use to scare the layman, or the bilateral Russian-Chinese and Russian-Indian and Russian-Iranian relations, etc. It may be required and implemented only in the super-region. Another term, gradually entering into circulation, is 'within the mega-region'. It could cover the whole of Asia and that part of Europe, which, following the Asian countries, find it profitable and promising to participate in it.

The optimal framework for its implementation in the context of integrations could be the Great Eurasia, which has been the subject of discussion by leading Russian analysts of Valdai Club, the Foreign and Defence Policy Council, the World Economy and International Affairs Faculty of the Higher School of Economics since 2015, and now international academics have started talking about it. Conceptually, the idea of the Great Eurasia is being developed but it has huge potential. Only in the scale of such colossal super-regions it will be possible to gradually extinguish the flames of armed conflicts, build a true system of collective security, reconcile with historical enemies, remove mutual suspicion and mistrust, ensure political stability, reduce the economic fluctuations that result in swings in world growth or recession, end poverty, achieve sustainable economic development and build at least a little more fair order for all.

[42] Sergey Lavrov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Historical Background*, in «Russia in Global Affairs», March 3rd 2016, http://www.mid.ru/web/guest/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2124391 (accessed August 14th, 2016).

Self-sufficiency of resources for building the Great Eurasia

There appears to be only one answer to the question of whether Russia has enough resources to carry out a large and ambitious project such as the Great Eurasia. The answer is no, it doesn't, but the question has been formulated incorrectly. It is not and should not be about the Russian project or Russian monopoly on this project. All the potential participants are interested in the formation of the Great Eurasia. Therefore it would be correct to pose the question about combining resources, their association and securing tremendous synergies, about co-creation and contributions to the whole.

A reformulated question may be more appropriately phrased as: do these titans of the modern world, such as India, Iran, Pakistan, China, Russia, Kazakhstan and ASEAN members, which will be joined by other countries with rapidly growing economies, have sufficient resources, political will and strategic vision in order to start the Great Eurasia project and succeed in this endeavor? An affirmative answer to the first part of the question is quite obvious. Business activity in the world is moving to Eurasia. The major thrusts of growth, drivers of economic development across the globe and huge human resources are concentrated there. They also include countries that have significant military, political and diplomatic potential. Among them is Russia, able to act in relation to the Great Eurasia as the «main guarantor of its security and international peace in general and protection against the destabilizing action of external forces»[43].

Reality itself will give the answer to the second part of the question. It will depend upon how effectively the cooperation within BRICS develops and how fast the Silk Road project, revived by China, develops. It will also be dependent upon how naturally the implementation occurs in connection with the integration processes within the former Soviet Union and how fast the alliance and partnerships of the countries, which are members of EAEU, CSTO, SCO and other international and integration structures, will occur.

A further reformulated question would be: is there confidence that the Great Eurasia project would be more competitive in comparison to all the others? This is a question with three components to the answer. In response, it is first necessary to understand if it is compatible with the natural tendency of sovereign States to solve their problems themselves or follow the changing geometry of cooperation and collaboration. Secondly, it is important to understand if a competition between much more compact, but real and effective integration projects already existing in parts of Eurasia hampers its successful implementation. Thirdly, one needs to understand how the

[43] S.A. Karaganov, *The Eurasian Promise*, http://karaganov.ru/publications/378 (accessed August 14th, 2016).

structure of the Great Eurasia interacts and relates to other mega-projects involving European and Asian countries, including the Pacific and Euro-Atlantic trade and investment partnerships (TPP and TTIP).

Modern history gives many examples of successful international and foreign economic maneuvering of some States involving a policy of special relations, equidistance, adherence to the status of neutrality, use of natural, geographic, administrative or other benefits without formal participation in any alliances, communities and partnerships. Europe is a good example where Austria, Finland and Switzerland demonstrate very interesting experiences and good economic results. They had an opportunity to fully enjoy the benefits of independence and individualism.

However, under the weight of circumstances and with the necessary prerequisites, they radically reconsidered their position in the world.

Austria and Finland abandoned their neutral and special *status* and joined the European Union, and Finland became part of one of the eighteen EU battle groups established under the Common Security and Defense Policy of the EU as well. Switzerland formally remains committed to neutrality, but through a system of agreements with the EU, known as Bern-I and Bern-II, and the entry into the Schengen area, it has actually turned into an external partner of the integration association. In any case, as many leading Swiss politicians confess, no step in many areas can be taken by them without consultations with Brussels.

Throughout the recent period, Azerbaijan, rich in hydrocarbon, expertise and manufacturing capabilities, has been rapidly developing. The pace of this development is quite impressive and can be compared to China in some years. It has been developing both economically and socially.

Its capital has become one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Baku managed to skillfully maneuver between more powerful global and regional players. However, the unexpected happened: prices on all its exports have slumped and the national economy doesn't have a margin of safety. Azerbaijan is facing a market recession, which at any point could grow into something bigger.

The Asia-Pacific 'tigers', quickly growing economies of the first and second waves, and countries which in the past could appear to carry out economic miracles, face a different dilemma. If they do not join an economic group, it will be more difficult to defend their interests and to fight discrimination in the regional and interregional markets. They will lose much in competitiveness compared to the others.

Thus, the old gamble on the non-participation option does not work anymore. It is fraught with the risks of less resistance to external challenges and threats, or loss of competitive opportunities and benefits. All States are facing one or another option and it is now necessary to play by the new rules and join one or another more general, traditional or integration project.

A series of large, regional or sub-regional projects are currently being implemented throughout the territory of Eurasia. The most advanced of these is the Western European project, but because of the whole string of crises, it is not in the best of shape today. The youngest is the Silk Road Economic Belt. Prior to this, Beijing had already created a large-scale free trade zone with a large group of Asian-Pacific countries. During 2015 it seriously expanded its geography, including signing a free trade agreement with Switzerland. EAEU is quickly developing, offering third countries various forms of joining, which will be to its and their advantage. In the near future, the emergence of a new economic group of South Korea, China and Japan is likely.

Until now, the EU was hostile to the establishment of the integration processes under the leadership of Russia and tried to prevent them. However, it had little influence on the free trade zone formed by China and is looking at the opportunities offered in connection with the revival of the Silk Road with great interest. Beijing sees the Western European project as a given, creating numerous bridges for entry the vast single EU market. It is looking to sign a non-preferential trade agreement with EAEU[44]. So the interaction between integrations is erratic, limited and contradictory in nature.

However, Russia has made an attempt to dramatically change the situation on a conceptual level pushing now for practical solutions. Moscow has put forward the idea of integration and associations of integrations in a practical way, justifying proposals on formation of common spaces from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It is trying different possibilities to pave the way for the creation of the Great Eurasian community. Its approach is different because of its nature of inclusion, provision for all third countries to benefit from the amalgamation of integrations, not 'choosing the better of two evils'. Its approach is aimed at finding legal structures that will be convenient for all and will help to reduce any contradictions. It is also aimed at the pursuit of public interest.

At the initiative of Moscow, some work for the pairing of the Silk Road Economic Belt project and EAEU has already begun. As mentioned above, the necessary political decisions have been already made; in this way EAEU is moving to the East. During June 2016 visit of Russian President to China, negotiations on establishing a comprehensive trade and economic partnership in Eurasia based on the Eurasian Economic Union and the Chinese Silk Road Economic Belt project were launched. Russia sees this as «the first step towards creating a broad Eurasian partnership that would involve the EAEU members, other CIS States, China, India, Pakistan, and in the future also Iran»; the idea that «also received the support of Southeast Asian leaders at the Russia-ASEAN summit in Sochi in May 2016»[45].

[44] Statement by Mikhail Evdokimov on the session *Eurasian Economic Union in the Context of Global Economy*, International Conference Yalta-2015, in «International Affairs», no. 1, 2016, pp. 83-86.

[45] http://en.special.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/52298 (accessed August 14th, 2016).

All these pave the way for broad «cooperation in Eurasia», that «avoid shaping exclusive trade and economic blocs» in supercontinental mega-region, with «an increasing number of countries» showing «interest in such collaboration»[46]. This view is confirmed by Sochi declaration of the ASEAN-Russian Federation Commemorative Summit to mark the 20th Anniversary of ASEAN-Russian Federation Dialogue Partnership *Moving towards a Strategic Partnership for Mutual Benefit*. It invites to «explore the possibility of mutually beneficial cooperation among ASEAN, EAEU and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)»[47].

However, EAEU doesn't forget the West. The Eurasian Economic Commission sent an official invitation to the leadership of the EU to start negotiations. A proactive stance on this issue was taken by the current presidency of the EAEU, which has moved to Kazakhstan. The «development of close and respectful cooperation between the EAEU and the EU» was discussed «during the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum with European Commission President, Mr. Juncker, and Italian Prime Minister, Mr. Renzi»[48]. It was emphasized by the new Strategy for Russia, proposed by the Council for Foreign and Defense Policy in mid-2016, that they stand for the «policy of creating of the Great Eurasian Community, open to the world and aimed at cooperation with the countries of the EU»[49]. On many occasions the Russian leadership reiterated «that not only has Russia not abandoned the idea of establishing a common economic and humanitarian space from the Atlantic to the Pacific together with the European Union, but we also think this would be the most promising policy in terms of guaranteeing the entire Eurasian continent's long-term sustainable development»[50]; «we are interested in Europeans joining the project for a major Eurasian partnership»[51].

If common sense and not obsolete dogma prevails, there is no doubt that the perception of 'foreign' integration projects as strictly competing and even hostile is overcome. Associations of integration projects have a great future, although the way to achieve this is likely to be complex and arduous.

The relationship between the Great Eurasia, the TPP and TTIP is much more complicated and controversial because both the TPP and TTIP were a reaction to the slide of the WTO and rapid ascent of China. These were

[46] Vladimir Putin interview to Chinese news agency Xinhua recorded on June 17th, 2016 on the sidelines of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, St Petersburg, June 23rd, 2016, http://en.special.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/52204 (accessed August 14th, 2016).

[47] http://en.russia-asean20.ru/documents/ (accessed August 14th, 2016).

[48] http://en.special.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/52298 (accessed August 14th, 2016).

[49] *The Strategy for Russia*. *Russian Foreign Policy: the End of 2010 - the Beginning of the 2020's*, Moscow, SVOP, 2016.

[50] As it was 'stressed' by Vladimir Putin once again on June 30th 2016 in his biannual address to Russian diplomats, http://en.special.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/52298 (accessed August 14th, 2016).

[51] http://en.special.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/52178 (Accessed august 14th, 2016).

created not just to search for more effective mechanisms of cooperation and commitment to the common good, but by their nature they are aimed against someone. The Eurasian project should not in any case have such focus. Its creed is the association of integrations, mobilizing efforts to solve common problems and to maximize synergies.

Despite the fact that it originally appeared as a quest for the mega-project, which would be in the same trend as the TPP and TTIP, the idea of the Great Eurasia has rapidly evolved. It is radically different in its objectives, nature and content. Its calling is not to win, oppose or impose but to assist in the development and identification of joint, common, multi-lateral decisions. The authors of the fourth report of the Valdai Club on this subject advocate that: «his will make it possible, as early as the mid-term, to come close to establishing in Eurasia a new international political entity based on common interests and many shared values. This will rally Eurasia and make it an independent center of power and influence on a global scale»[52].

With regard to the strategic vision of the Great Eurasia, there is much to be done in order to remove any speculation and make it fully pragmatic, detailed and convincing. It is important to show the powerful positive effect of the successful implementation of the project if it is built properly, writes Dmitri Trenin, director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, in the June issue of IFRI Journal on Russia and CIS[53]. All independent academics, interested analysts and the intellectual *élite* of Europe and Asia should participate in its development, in cooperation with the Russian expert community.

Of course, it will have many active opponents who have excelled in using tactics known under the brand name of 'divide and rule'. However, the advantage of this really great and beneficial project lies in the fact that it is much more difficult to hinder its implementation compared to projects realized only by a handful of countries.

[52] S. A. Karaganov - O. N. Barabanov - A. A. Bezborodov - T. V. Bordachev - A. V. Kazakova - A. B. Likhacheva - A. V. Lukin - I. A. Makarov - A. S. Pyatachkova - A. S. Skriba - A. K. Sokolova - D. V. Suslov - I. N. Timofeyev, *Toward the Great Ocean: Turn to the East*, *Op. cit*., p. 36.

[53] D. Trenin, *Russia's Asia Strategy: Bolstering the Eagle's Eastern Wing*, in «Russie. Nei. Visions», IFRI's Russia/NIS Center, no. 94, June 2016.

La Fondation Jean Monnet pour l'Europe

The Jean Monnet Foundation for Europe was created in 1978 by Jean Monnet, Father of the European Community. Together with his name, he bequeathed to the Foundation all his personal archives, to which were later added those of Robert Schuman and other builders of Europe. These archives represent the historical roots of the present European Union. Jean Monnet entrusted the Foundation with the mission of:

- organising these records in a form accessible to students, teachers, researchers and leaders of public institutions and private activities, as well as ordinary citizens interested in their content, with the aim of contributing, through a knowledge of the past, to an understanding of the present and the preparation of the future;

- creating an awareness of this heritage throughout Europe and countries overseas in other continents. The means used by the Foundation to achieve this aim include the publication of «Red Books», meetings, exhibitions, the internet and, more recently, television broadcasts, both on local stations and the major mass-media networks.

Ferme de Dorigny, CH - 1015 Lausanne
Tél : +41 (0)21 692 20 90. Fax: +41 (0)21 692 20 95
Site Web: http://www.jean-monnet.ch