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The purpose of the journal is to promote scientific exchange and cooperation between Russian and foreign political scientists.

The journal is intended for the publication of the results of fundamental and applied scientific research. Thematic focus of the journal is reflected in the following permanent headings: “Domestic history, ethnology and ethnography”, “History of international relations and world politics”, “History and philosophy of politics”, “Political institutions, processes and technologies”, “Political culture, ethnohistory and ideologies”, “Political problems of international relations and globalization.”

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GEOPOLITICAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE EURASIAN REGION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

A complex geopolitical situation has developed in Eurasia in the post-Soviet era suggesting different scenarios for the development of the international situation in the region. This is the reason for many discussions about the content and prospects of the modern Eurasian space

Key words: Europe, Asia, Eurasian space, geopolitics, geo-economics, globalization, centrifugal processes.

Eurasia as a socio-cultural community combines European and Asian features and consists of a number of special ethno-cultural territories that have developed as a result of its historical development. These are Central Asia, the Caucasus, Crimea, Transnistria, Central Asia, Ukraine, Belaya (White) Rus, the Kaliningrad Russian exclave, and the Baltic States. In this sub region, the new states are reconsidering their history and national identity. The old traditional paradigm of national security, oriented towards the imperial vertical and citizenship, is being transformed under the influence of globalization and restructuring of Eurasia. In this situation, there is a need for social integration as an answer to the challenges of the new reality.

After the collapse of the USSR, centrifugal processes with different geopolitical vectors appeared in the Eurasian space [11. P. 11-18]. In particular, almost every former Soviet republic started to create its own development and security strategy. Moreover, the former autonomies of Georgia declared secession from Georgia and the proclaimed their own states.

In addition, various integration structures have been formed, uniting various states. These are the CIS, the Union of Belarus and Russia, GUUAM (Georgia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova), the Central Asian Union, etc [6. P. 50-59].

Having declared their sovereignty, the states faced a number of complex problems. First of all, it is necessary to work out an optimal development and security strategy. At the same time, the interests of the Eurasian states in many positions are divergent. Not to mention the fact that all of them, including Russia had to overcome post-imperial complexes.

With the collapse of the USSR as the “organizing state” of the Eurasian regional space, integration forces weakened, and there was an imbalance of relations in the system “regional center – regional periphery.” In addition, various external forces rushed to Eurasia. Competition developed between them for the possession of natural resources that Eurasia possesses. At the same time, a number of actors intended to use such opportunity to expand their religious influence on the countries and peoples of Eurasia in order to strengthen their geopolitical status [2. P. 16-21].

Thus, the political process in the southern and western peripheries of Eurasia acquired a high degree of intensity and a special character, creating a general situation of instability [7. P. 40-45]. Centrifugal tendencies began to increase in the peripheral contact zones.

As a result, the restructuring process becomes spontaneous in the periphery. As a result, there are a number of open armed ethnic conflicts. It is especially evident in the contact zones in the southern (Central Asia and the Caucasus) and south-western trans-border periphery (Transnistria) of Eurasia [5. P. 41-52]. It is a reflection of specifics of the political processes in the peripheral contact zones during the regional crises, when the previous system ceases to operate effectively.

In the geo-social space of the peripheral contact zones, there is an intersection/interface of systems that differ in their essential characteristics: geographical, cultural, ideological, social, and political. All cultural systems enter into interaction and interpenetration in the territories of such a zone. It should be borne in mind that contact zones in the Eurasian region are formed in the process of historical social development of Eurasia with cultural and political processes in neighboring regions.

The policy of the regionally forming imperial center could result in the relative assimilation of the culture of the peripheral territories in different ways. It can be motivated not only by internal integration problems, but also by the wish to ensure the security of the state. In other words, the peripheral contact zone in its culture and psychology reflects the process of interfacing among the neighboring states and peoples and all that is associated with it. Thus, the peripheral contact zone has an important communication and information function, provides movement of regional and global systems through interaction, and at the same time provides the necessary stability of their internal disequilibrium.

The balance of interests in the contact zones of Eurasia during the bipolar period contributed to the stability of the international security system [3. P. 73-87]. The collapse of the bipolar system is one of the reasons for the destabilization of the post-Soviet space.

Geopolitically, there are intra-Eurasian contact zones. They are located in the modern border of Russia. For example, these are the territories of the southern Russian Urals, the Northern Caspian Sea, the Belgorod-Voronezh region, Stavropol-Kuban, Rostov-on-Don-Donbass-Luhansk. In historical terms, they record-

ed the stages of spatial and cultural development of Russia. Given the borderline nature, the population of the periphery can focus on different centers of power or states, using their support or contradictions to their advantage.

The emergence of conflicts throughout the periphery of Eurasia was the result of the collapse of the system of regulation of the Eurasian space, its transition from a mono- state (the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union) to a multi- state, international one [12. P. 126]. Initially, there was a growing opposition to the former center not only as a bearer of power – an administrative and state institution, but also as a bearer of certain imperial values. In a number of cases, the latter were directly identified with the carriers of Russian ethno-culture. For example, this could be observed especially in the Baltic States and Moldova. As an alternative, the periphery made a bid to leave the USSR and create sovereign states. But in real life, in the political process of sovereignization, ethno-cultural guidelines began to come out more and more in the first place, replacing the former supranational ones, which were presented as totalitarian and suppressing the national culture of peoples.

Indeed, there is a position that ethno-national identification in the Soviet Union was “very significantly replaced by the Soviet identification,” and the concept of the existence of a “new historical community – “the Soviet people” and “friendship between peoples” was only the result of a myth created by official ideologists. At the same time, there is no denying that for a certain time there was a certain consensus in inter-ethnic relations and a culture of tolerant inter-ethnic communication [10. P. 5-18]. It was carried out by both administrative and cultural and educational measures. And if we ignore the inevitable rhetoric and pathos of political ideology, we, first of all, see the important result. It is also necessary to take into account that for a number of ethnic groups (absolute and relative “minorities”), dual ethnic or supra-ethnic identification contributed to their self –assertion or survival in contrast to the claims of the titular ethnic groups for historical or cultural superiority. The USSR central government consistently pursued a policy of balance between ethnic elites, supporting minority elites in the Union Republics in one way or another. In addition, the Russian-cultural component increased in a number of ethnic regions of the USSR, which also played a certain role in terms of the local balance of cultural relationships.

It should also be noted that a number of extremely negative mistakes were made in the national policy of the Soviet state. The main goal of the Center was to maintain the loyalty of the titular elites to themselves at the expense of growing diversity at the personal and group levels. In the end, there was a high internal tension in society. This inevitably led to the release of energy along the line of intergroup relations. Initially, they began as a center-periphery opposition, and then increasingly acquired a valuable ethnic content, updating historical contradictions and reproducing old conflicts, etc. This can be found in the politics of other states as well. It means that mistakes are inevitable. It is important to be as aware of their causes and results as much as possible.

The periphery of the Eurasian space was stabilized during the Soviet period, when there was a strict border regime and a balance of power at the world level. It was facilitated by the corresponding foreign policy of the USSR, aimed at maintaining normal good-neighborly relations with the respective states. For example, despite all the ideological and geopolitical differences with Iran and Turkey, the Soviet Union had quite normal and stable relations with these countries. An increase in the share of the Russian-speaking population in the peripheral zone contributed to the stabilization of it, which became an important element in maintaining the inter-ethnic balance in some peripheral zones, where there were long-standing historical contradictions between different ethnic and religious groups. Of course, along with this, there was a number of negative aspects in administrative policy, which, although its goal was to stabilize the periphery, in fact, did not solve the existing problems, but only preserved them and drove them deeper. For example, the Soviet administration carried out a number of measures to resettle some of the population from the border areas, thereby trying to change the structure of the ethnic composition of the population there.

The periphery of Eurasia has two types of orientation [8. P. 133-140]. One is directed inward, the other is directed outward from the Eurasian space. Orientation can be both economic and ethno-cultural. This applies to both the zone as a whole and its parts. For example, culturally, the Baltic contact area is generally oriented towards the European region. And the South-Western periphery, which coincides mainly with the territory of Moldova, is oriented both outside and inside Eurasia. If we talk about post-Soviet Ukraine, even if it is clearly pro-Western, it is in search of its identity and is trying to resolve the problems of national integration.

Cross-border ethnic ties pose a potential threat to the state integrity. Conflicts on the periphery inevitably become cross-border conflicts. However, it is often difficult to resolve such conflicts without intermediaries and only at the bilateral level. The nature and inherent international participation in conflicts are intertwined by a variety of processes, both material and spiritual: economic, political, legal and moral. Traditional ethnic groups largely live in the past they continue to worry about historical grievances, unrealized opportunities, conflicts, etc.

At the time, the Union center was not able to realistically and fully assess the situation on the periphery, i.e. to develop an appropriate policy. Acting in a stereotypical manner, it used the same methods of force, for example, as in Chechnya, thus aggravating the situation. As a result, the outflow of the Russian-speaking population began. All this automatically led to changes in the ethnic balance of the contact zones. In such situation, a number of ethnic groups proceeding from their historical experience took some preventive steps for their security from spontaneous migration to political and military measures.

In general, the collapse of the USSR into independent states, as well as other similar composite entities, did not automatically lead to the emergence of sta-

ble societies. Despite all the external anti-totalitarian rhetoric, the struggle with the center was really primarily for the redistribution of power between powerful elite groups. As a result, the majority of those who “zealously advocated freedom, independence and “national revival”, “once in power, showed themselves as opponents of the rights and freedoms of representatives of non-titular nations.” Because of this, the contact zone societies still have to go through the stage of coordinating interests and achieving their balance in the new conditions. Moreover, in this process, taking into account inter-regional interaction and the interests of neighboring states, there is inevitably an external factor in the face of the respective states and ethnic groups that are related to a part of the population of the contact zone by cultural affinity.

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