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THE STRATEGIC PATH OF RUSSIA IN EURASIA

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ABSTRACT: The transformation of the bipolar world order into unilateral or American globalization began following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ever since, the regions, countries, and markets of the world have been bizarrely interconnected with American economy and politics. Within this model, the US has become the centre of the world security, political and economic affairs. The re-emergence of Russia in the early 21st century raised the geopolitical and geo-economic importance of the entire Eurasian continent. China, India, Turkey, and Iran have coordinated some of their interests with Russia. These Eurasian powers are likely to create a common or shared geopolitical and geo-economic dominance in the region. This paper posits the hypothesis that Russian Eurasianist foreign policy strategy implies a comprehensive regional security, including political and economic cooperation initiatives by applying global partnership theory instead of heartland and rimland theory. It seeks an answer to the question of how Russia can shape a multi-vector diplomacy to convince the Eurasian great, middle and small powers to cooperate and coordinate their policies.

KEYWORDS: Russia, Soviet Union, Eurasianism, bipolar world order, multilateralism, global partnership

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INTRODUCTION

The Eurasian security, political, and economic cooperation is among the most important questions in international politics. Sustainable economic development, political stability, and security need powerful regions, shared values, and common goals to construct balance of power for better global security and peace. The new world order needs fundamental changes and reorganization such as moving from unilateralism towards multilateralism and global partnership. The transformation of the bipolar world order into unilateral or American globalization began after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ever since, the regions, countries and markets of the world have been bizarrely interconnected with American economy and politics. Within this model, the US has become the centre of the world security, political and economic affairs.

The re-emergence of Russia in the early 21st century raised the geopolitical and geo-economic importance of the entire Eurasian continent. This opened a new study era for experts and researchers to study the structuralization principles of the entire Eurasian supercontinent. In this regard, the re-emergence of Russia as a great geopolitical and military power in Eurasia is a considerable challenge to the current Western-centric world order. Russia with its central role in the Soviet Union and the last great power in recent decades of power

politics of Eurasia has more historical, geopolitical, security capacity, and economic resources to influence the Heartland and the World Island again. According to Rutland, “Russia has deployed political, military and economic tools in order to keep influence and advance its interests”¹. As for now, despite the United States’ long-term preventive balance of power strategy and deep concerns in the region, China, India, Turkey, and Iran have coordinated some parts of their interests with Russia. These Eurasian powers are likely to create a common or shared geopolitical and geo-economic dominance in the region. The very meaning of strategic shifts and policy cooperation among Eurasian nations is a balance of power and challenge to US-led globalization. These common and shared geopolitical and geo-economic efforts will constitute a Eurasian powers’ club that will lay a better ground for Eurasian security, political, economic and technological initiatives. Considering all the above-mentioned issues, my hypothesis is: *Russian Eurasianist foreign policy strategy has become highly considerable for the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), China, India, Turkey, Iran and other Middle Eastern and Asian countries because it implies a certain degree of appropriate comprehensive regional security, including political and economic cooperation initiatives by applying global partnership theory instead of heartland and rimland theory.*

In this regard, my research question is: *How can Russia shape such a multi-vector diplomacy to convince the Eurasian great, middle, and small powers to cooperate and coordinate their policies?*

THE EURASIANIST FOREIGN POLICY STRATEGY OF RUSSIA

One of the main points in Russia’s Eurasianist foreign policy strategy is to build trust and show Russia as a non-aggressive country. Russia is considering to build a new political environment in the region. It seeks to achieve its regional and international influence by installing new perspectives and norms in Eurasia. Enjoying bigger influence and letting others have their voice on policy and decision-making processes seem to be the new model of regional integration in Eurasia. Russia’s foreign and security policy has developed step by step from different directions to this point. These directions meant stability in its zone of influence in the early 1990s, Pan-Slavism in late 1990s and early 2000s, opening to the West or Western modernization in the first decade of the 21st century, and currently Eurasian integration and regional and international security, political and economic cooperation.

The Eurasian view in Russian regional and international politics is a policy of prestige. According to Hans J. Morgenthau, “Prestige, in contrast to the maintenance and acquisition of power, is but rarely an end in itself. More frequently, the policy of prestige is one of the instrumentalities through which the policies of the status quo and of imperialism try to achieve their ends”².

Russia is not interested in integrating with the West anymore. This could work for a while until all sides become ready to reach the level they can cooperate with one another as peers while having their own values and interests. Russia needs to prove itself as a great, sustainable and reliable, regional and international power. This is the reason why Russia

¹ Peter, R. “Paradigms for Russian Policy in the Caspian Region.” *Energy and Conflict in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Volume 163. 2000.

² Morgenthau, H. J.: *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle For Power and Peace*. Seventh edition ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 1978) 83.

appears at the places where the US or the West in general is involved or interested. Paul M. Carter Jr. argues, “during the past decade, Russia’s foreign policy ambitions have steadily increased, including in areas of conflicts or instability in the Middle East, Africa, and the Western Hemisphere”³. It means the new international and foreign policy of Russia is looking to make conflict zones in certain regions or countries where the US intervened. Russia follows this policy towards nations to provide them alternative options and make them ready to join Russia’s Eurasian and regional security, political, and economic cooperation strategy. The reason Russia is confronting western powers alone and does not request its friends and powerful strategic partners to stand by it or at least act as mediator between Russia and the West is that the former seeks to demonstrate its great power status.

The case of re-emerging as a great regional and international power for Russia is the matter of to be or not to be. Confronting the most developed and economically better structured Western countries would not bring good times for Russia. Russia may fail and face a series of problems, including threats. It is a hard political and historic decision. Referring to basic rules for taking hard political steps Robert D. Kaplan refers to Darius, “if you think yourself stronger, stand and fight, if not, submit”⁴, and according to Sun Tzu “the side that knows when to fight and when not will take the victory.”⁵ Russia’s main goal is to create a new world order. A world order, which refuses the primacy of one over others. Once Amir Timor (Tamerlane) told his soldiers, “A knight dies once but a coward dies repeatedly.”⁶

One of the most outstanding points in the new Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation in 2016 was the use of force and power projection outside the country and outside its zone of influence. In this regard, Vladimir Frolov writes, “On the surface, Russia’s new Foreign Policy Concept is a low key technical document. But if you read between the lines, it contains significant changes to Russia’s approach to international affairs and emphasizes a growing willingness to use force to achieve the Kremlin’s goals.”⁷

The term “use of force” or more clearly hybrid warfare as the new Russian way of war in its foreign policy concept originates from the so-called Gerasimov doctrine (2013). The author of the doctrine is General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation Armed Forces. The Gerasimov doctrine applied hybrid warfare that transcends boundaries between peace and war. General Valery Gerasimov argues, “The very “rules of war” have changed. The rule of non-military means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and, in many cases, they have exceeded the power of forces of weapons in their effectiveness”⁸. It is a model of all-of-government warfare and related to achievement of political goals. As he writes, “The use of political, diplomatic, economic and other non-military measures in combination with the use of military forces”⁹. In other words,

³ Carter, P. M. Jr. “Understanding Russia’s Interest in Conflict Zones.” Washington DC.: United States Institute of Peace. 469. 2020.

⁴ Kaplan, R. D. *The Return of Marco Polo’s World: War, Strategy, and American Interests in the Twenty-first Century*. (London: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2019) 46.

⁵ Sun Tzu. *The art of war*. In: *Strategic Studies*. Second ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014) 86–110.

⁶ Brion, M. *I am the World Occupier Timur*. (Tehran: Mostufi Publication, 1984) 180.

⁷ Frolov, V. “Russia’s New Foreign Policy – A Show of Force and Power Projection.” *The Moscow Times*, 6 December 2016. <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/12/06/russias-new-foreign-policy-based-on-force-and-power-projection-a56431>

⁸ Gerasimov, V. “The Value of Science Is in the Foresight.” (in Russian) *Voenna-Promishlenni Kurier*. 27 February 2013.

⁹ Gerasimov. “The Value of Science Is in the Foresight.”

the Gerasimov doctrine can be described as the development of an operational concept to increase the confrontation capacity of Russia with the West.

According to Eugene Rumer, the main points of the Gerasimov doctrine are:

- Whole-of-government warfare.
- Fusion of elements of hard and soft power across various domains.
- Permanent conflict transcending the boundaries between peace and war.¹⁰

In this doctrine, General Valery Gerasimov applies the following new operational forms and methods:

- Initiations of military operations by groupings of line-units (forces) in peacetime
- Highly manoeuvrable, non-contact combat operations of inter-branch groupings of line-units.
- Reducing the military-economic potential of the state by the destruction of critically important facilities of its military and civilian infrastructure in short time
- The mass use of high-precision weaponry, the large-scale use of special operations forces, as well as robotic systems and weapons based on new physical principles and the participation of a civil-military component in combat operations
- Simultaneous effect on line-units and enemy facilities throughout the entire depth of its territories
- Warfare simultaneously in all physical environment and the information space
- The use of asymmetric and indirect operations
- Command-and-control of forces and assets in a unified information space.

The aim the Gerasimov doctrine wants to achieve is the powerful return or re-emergence of Russia in the world affairs as a partner among other major powers. The Gerasimov doctrine increased the practical value of Russian military in the Russian foreign and national security policies. The use of force drastically increased the capacity and activity of Russian foreign policy in the current international politics and conflicts. Some of the experts believe the Gerasimov doctrine is the implementer of Russian foreign policy strategy and national security interests. However, the driver of Russian foreign policy strategy and national security policy is still the Primakov doctrine. The military in its old and new form has always been the implementer of Russian foreign policy strategy. The Gerasimov doctrine can be recognized as the classical “*getting around strategy*” of Amir Timor (Tamerlane). When Amir Timor mobilized his army to conquer Baghdad, he was aware of his enemy’s strength. He used “*getting around strategy*” to take over on his enemy.

*“In my left side, when my riders attacked the enemy’s army, in response, my riders come under a heavy arrowing attack. The heavy arrowing attack destroyed some of my riders and warhorses. The lesson I learned from that attack showed that the enemy is strong and well prepared for defense and if I conduct a direct attack, possibly my army might be destroyed. Therefore, I decided to get around the enemy’s army.”*¹¹

According to the foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation in 2016, one of the strategic national priorities for Russia is “*facilitate the development of constructive dialogue and partnership with a view to promote harmony and mutual enrichment among*

¹⁰ Rumer, E. “The Primakov (Not Gerasimov) Doctrine in Action.” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 5 June 2019.

¹¹ Brion. *I am the World Occupier Timur*.

various cultures and civilizations”¹². The document highlights, “*the world is currently going through fundamental changes related to the emergence of a multipolar international system*”¹³. Enhancing a multipolar international system in Russian foreign policy strategy can be traced back to the 1990s. In other words, it stems from the Primakov doctrine.

Russia’s contemporary security, defence and foreign policy strategy was conceived by Yevgeni Primakov in 1996. The Primakov doctrine, named after him, has been the actual theoretical background and defining concept of the Russian security, military, and foreign policies for more than two decades. The most outstanding principles of the Russian foreign and security policy in the Primakov doctrine (1996) are:

- View of Russia as an indispensable actor with an independent foreign policy
- Vision of a multipolar world managed by a concert of major powers
- Insistence on Russia’s primacy in the post-Soviet space and the pursuit of Eurasian integration
- Opposition to NATO expansion
- Partnership with China and India.¹⁴

The doctrine suggested that it would be beneficial for Russia to maintain good relationships with Eastern powers. Based on its Eastern roots, Russia should consider the technology, economy, and social development gap between Russia and Western powers. This gap will make different interests for both. That is why it is very important for Russia to keep its Eastern mentality and relations towards the West. Based on this perspective, Russia as a key geopolitical and military power in Eurasia is not in a position to work in the same team as developed Western countries. The West wants Russia to behave as Western countries do and follow Western norms and values. However, according to its geographical and geopolitical position, Russia could not act this way because it is not a fully European country, nor an Asian one. The geographical and geopolitical position of Russia is deeply rooted in its history. It lay the ground for Russian political elite to represent Russia as a Eurasian country and act in-between. According to numerous experts, Primakov was the one who injected the idea of multilateralism into post-Soviet Russia and drafted the concept of Russia-India-China strategic triangle to counterbalance the western alliance and the US-led unipolar globalization.¹⁵

We believe that the emergence of a multipolar international system in the current globalized world will lay the ground for a knowledge-based and more stable global partnership. The term Eurasia can help Russia to re-emerge as a regional and international great power and build a reliable partnership with other major powers. In this regard, according to Pihla Barnier, after becoming Minister of the Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Primakov said, “*despite the current difficulties, Russia has been and remains a great power, and its policy toward the outside world should correspond to that status ... In advocating partnership relations with our former cold war adversaries, we proceed from the need for*

¹² “Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation.” The MoFA of the Russian Federation. Web. 1 December 2016.

¹³ “Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation.”

¹⁴ Rumer. “The Primakov (Not Gerasimov) Doctrine in Action.”

¹⁵ Simha, R. K. “Primakov: The man who created multipolarity.” *Modern Diplomacy*, 30 June 2015. <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2015/06/30/primakov-the-man-who-created-multipolarity/>

an equitable – and I want to put special emphasis here on this – equitable and mutually advantageous partnership that takes each other's interests into account"¹⁶.

This is a desire for post-Soviet Russia to position itself in the centre and act between East and West or Europe and Asia as a major power instead of invading eastward and westward. Today geo-strategically Russia turned to China to redefine its foreign policy and position between East and West. Eurasia needs a "technological update", including know-how and economic resources to build its infrastructure which has been expected from Western partners, however, after the confrontation with the West over Ukraine, it became clear that there would be no chance for meeting such expectations in the near future.

Confrontations with the West in Syria, Ukraine, and potentially in Yemen and Venezuela posed numerous difficulties to Russia's economy and household. The average monthly salary across Russia has shrunk, decrease in oil prices, devaluation of the ruble, looming recession, inflation, and worsening investment climate are the main factors leading to Russia's economic misfortunes. These hardships result in exerting social, economic, and political pressure on Russia's government and cause serious concerns to political leaders. Nevertheless, from the balance of power point of view, it is very essential for Russia to be the strongest one and ensure no outsider can dominate the Russian political and economic system. In this account, such states usually create a new equilibrium or balance of power for the regional and international political relations. The new equilibrium or balance of power in Russian politics is the neo-Eurasianist regional and trans-regional settlement instead of installing neoliberal norms and US-led unipolar globalization. Related to Russia's new balance of power act, Dimitry Trenin's argues about "*Sino-Russian and greater Asian cooperation*"¹⁷ as shown below:

- Russia's confrontation with the United States will help mitigate Sino-Russian rivalries, mostly to China's advantage. However, this does not mean Russia will be dominated by China. Moscow is likely to find a way to craft a special relationship with its partner.
- Through its enhanced relations with non-Western countries, Russia will actively promote a concept of world order that seeks to reduce U.S. global dominance and replace it with a broader great-power consensus.
- The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), due to include India and Pakistan this year (2015), is on its way to becoming the principal development and security forum for continental Asia.

Russia or Russian political leaders are providing Eurasianism to change their undisclosed geopolitical, geostrategic, geo-economic, political and economic sphere to a disclosed and cooperative sphere. The Eurasianist way of thinking provides and supports common and long-term Eurasian connectivity, sustainability and reliability.

THE COMPLEXITY OF REGIONAL STRUCTURALIZATION

The Russian political mentality is manifested in automatic countering unipolar globalization and multilateralism. Reality demonstrates that the Russian political leadership's attitude

¹⁶ Bernier, P. *Yevgeny Primakov's Operational Code and Russian Foreign Policy*. (Tampere: University of Tampere, 2018) 47.

¹⁷ Trenin, D. "From greater Europe to greater Asia. The Sino-Russian Entente." Carnegie Moscow Center. April 2015.

towards multilateralism and rules-based order is complicated and sceptical. In this regard, Russia's significant consideration is about who is actually writing the rules.¹⁸

Various political scientists and international relations experts believe that no world order has been fully implemented and no world orders exists. Compared to 20th century multilateral and bilateral world order, we are in a transition period to another or new paradigm. The new world order is yet to be defined because its global or regional tendency is still unsolved. According to G. John Ikenberry, "*the irregular and episodic pattern of international order formation is itself an important observation about the nature of change*"¹⁹. At the same time, in his book "*After Victory*" he also refers to the fact that a complete version of balancing power is still to guarantee a real sustainability for international order. He refers to the neorealism and liberal world order theories but shows the weakness and lacking factors of them too. The central debate in his book is "*How to create and maintain order in a world of sovereign states*"²⁰.

In this complexity of order, Russia is on the path to build the Eurasian security, political and economic system with other Eurasian powers. Russia is still trying to find a position in between of every direction to be an active part of the world while keeping sovereignty and independence. Russia applies neo-Eurasianism in its bilateral, regional, and international relations as a rule of recognition. In practice, the neo-Eurasianism concept has two directions in Russian politics. A Russo-centric nationalist direction represented by Alexander Dugin (2017) and other Russian nationalists, and a regional integrationist direction represented by Russian security and foreign policy experts and state leaders like Vladimir Putin, Dimitri Medvedev, and Sergei Lavrov etc.

In other words, Russo-centric and regional integrationist points of view or directions depend on different generations of political leaders. There are old generations of leaders who learned from the Soviet Union's defeats and collapse and act carefully. On the other hand, there is a new generation of political leaders who grew in modern Russia and act offensively. In this regard, Eugene Rumer points out, "*The key question for the Kremlin is whether to push for greater capabilities and take additional risks in pursuit of a more ambitious set of global aspirations, or to continue to follow the Primakov doctrine and the careful practice of calculating the risks and benefits of a given course. New generations of Russian leaders are less mindful of the Soviet experience of overextension than the current generation of leaders may be more influenced by the successes of Crimea and Syria, more inclined to take risks, and more ambitious in their vision for Russia. How they address these ambitions and exercise Russian hard power will have major consequences for the future of Russia, Eurasia and the World*"²¹.

To put it in another way, neo-Eurasianism is a concept of regional and social integration and regional order for Russian leaders. According to a theoretical definition, "*Regional integration is the process of establishing a degree of supranational authority beyond the nation-state within a particular geographical region – that is, where the governments of nation-states decide to hand over some decision-making capacity to a new, higher level*

¹⁸ Chernenko, E. and Gabaev, A. "What Russia Thinks about Multilateralism." Carnegie Endowment for Peace, 2019.

¹⁹ Ikenberry, G. J. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars*. New Edition. (Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2019)

²⁰ Ikenberry. *After Victory*.

²¹ Rumer. "The Primakov (Not Gerasimov) Doctrine in Action".

of governance”²². Social integration means the formation of a new identity beyond national boundaries by intensifying positive interactions between citizens of different countries. The successful social integration can be a guarantee and possible condition for a successful political, economic, military, and technological integration.²³

The regional integrationist Eurasian direction of Russia is welcomed by China, India, Turkey and Iran for taking their historical relations, involvement, experiences, interests, future views, contemporary practical strategies, policy options, and their economic relations and geo-economic interests into consideration. Russia seeks to work together with other regional powers in all aspects to promote Eurasian security, political and economic initiatives.

In the case of Eurasian cooperation, Russian foreign policy strategy has the possibility to play a central role in making all other powers align with each other. The practical transformation process of Eurasian unity started after relations between the US-Russia, US-China, US-Turkey, and US-Iran had deteriorated over ongoing conflicts in Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, South China Sea conflict, S-400 deals, and other types of military and strategic partnership. The rise of Russian Eurasianist foreign policy direction and its role in regional security, political and economic initiatives are considered as an alarming threat from the American and Western point of view.

The intensity of cooperation among Eurasian powers like Russia, China, India, Turkey, and Iran in security, political, economic, and technological areas can be considered as a degree of integration. Their policy cooperation, coordination, harmonization, and integration can help regional and international securitization, too. The alignment of the Eurasian great, middle, and small powers can intensify transforming regional and inter-regional initiatives like the Commonwealth of Independent States (CSI), SCO, BRICS Cooperation, Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). The institutional frameworks can put the heartland theory of Mackinder to an end. Regarding Sino-Russian and greater Asian cooperation, Dimitry Trenin argued, “*The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, due to include India and Pakistan this year (2015), is on its way to becoming the principal development and security forum for continental Asia*”²⁴.

The rise of Russia, China, India as great powers and the emergence of middle powers, like Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and others in the Eurasian region and the trans-border, trans-regional security, political, economic, and technological cooperation have laid a better ground for a common regional development process. Russia plays a central role in policy cooperation and policy coordination processes among Eurasian great, middle, and small powers.

On the other hand, the U.S. and the European Union are also significantly involved in the development process of Eurasian initiatives. According to Andrew C. Kuchins, “*the baseline for U.S. policy was established in 1992, the prevention of a peer competitor emerging in Eurasia*”²⁵. The most important and long-term aim of the U.S. is to promote Russia’s transition to becoming a neoliberal market democracy. To the end of avoiding the return of a revanchist Russia, the U.S. simultaneously promoted the expansion of NATO and the European Union close to Russia’s borders. At the same time, the U.S. strategy focused on

²² Diez, T., Bode, I., & Da Costa, A. F. *Key concepts in international relations*. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing, 2011) 187–191.

²³ Diez, T., Bode, I., & Da Costa, A. F. *Key concepts...* 187–191.

²⁴ Trenin, D. “From greater Europe to greater Asia.”

²⁵ Kuchins, A. C. “What is Eurasia to US (the US)?” *Journal of Eurasian studies*. Volume 9 (2). 2018.

promoting the same market democracy and sovereignty to the states neighbouring Russia. By this shift, the U.S. wanted to become the only dominant power in terms of promoting democracy, economic openness, and sovereignty in the region.²⁶

The United States acts sensitively towards the rise of other powers, mainly in Eurasia. The return of Russia as a great political and military power and the rise of China as a great economic and technological power have increased a fear of declinism in the United States. The rise and growth of the Soviet Union from 1945 to the 1980s was the appearance of declinism for the United States. The United States feared that the Soviet growth could develop the communist East better than the capitalist West. From 1980s, Japanophobia constituted the fear of declinism in America. In the 1990s, a huge number of scholars and universities warned that the Japanese economy had overtaken the United States. According to Lester Thurow and others, the Japanese GDP per year was growing twice as fast and the U.S. GDP and its GNP per capita was 22 percent higher. Back to the declinism, Paul Kennedy also wrote about this in his book *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. According to Glenn Hubbard and Tim Kane, Kennedy's book "was much more than a declinist manifesto" in which he asks the readers "to think about history in economic term".²⁷ Regarding declinism, Glenn Hubbard and Tim Kane writes, "Here the Theory predicts that follower nations will approach but not surpass the leader, or the frontier"²⁸.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE WORLD ORDER IN RUSSIAN EURASIANISM

According to Mark Bassin and Dugin, modern Russia's path is not the one meant to rebuild classical Eurasia. Dugin's neo-Eurasianism advocates a very different vision of Russia's position to the world. Russia's international position is shaped by a genuinely global perspective, which has the Eurasian new world order in its centre. This is a complex model for the reorganization of the entire world. In this imaginary model, the world is divided into four Macro-Regions that Dugin calls "geo-economic belts" or "zones". These would be Euro-Africa, Asia-Pacific, America, and Eurasia.²⁹

In a slightly different view presented by Anita Sengupta in her book *Asiatic Russia*, the author focuses on Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who raises the importance of the "belt of anticipation". In Anita Sengupta's words "there is a consecutive vertical row of countries of Eurasia from Russia in north to India in south (Central Asian countries, Iran, Pakistan) that does not yet link either with the east or with the west. Despite all the differences among these countries they constitute a relatively solid group from the point of view of potential resources and possibilities of influencing not only the balance of power in Asia or Eurasia but even the geopolitical balance of the world"³⁰. The most important term

²⁶ Kuchins, A. C. "What is Eurasia to US (the US)?"...

²⁷ Hubbard, G. and Kane, T. *Balance: The economics of great powers from ancient Rome to modern America*. Edited by First. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014) 16–34.

²⁸ Hubbard, Glenn, and Tim Kane. *Balance*. 19.

²⁹ Bassin, M. "Eurasianism 'Classical' and 'Neo': the lines of continuity." Cesran International. <https://cesran.org/eurasianism-classical-and-neo-the-lines-of-continuity.html>

³⁰ Sengupta, A., Chatterjee, S. & Bhattacharya, S. (Eds.). *Asiatic Russia: Partnerships and Communities in Eurasia*. (New Delhi: Shipra, 2009) 24.

is that since Russia is not a full member or ally of the European or the East Asian Sphere it may choose a third option to build a new security system uniting the countries of the “*belt of anticipation*”.³¹ However, according to Mackinder’s comment, “*Every country has had its own geographical perspective*”³². The emergence of a “zone of anticipating” could improve the trans-Eurasian meaning of the heartland uniting Russia, India, Central Asia, and Iran in one line.

In a general context, Eurasia is the Earth’s largest continent covering and connecting Europe and Asia. It borders the Arctic, Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans, as well as their seas. In terms of population, Eurasia is the most populated continent on the Earth, hosting the world’s most populated countries (like China, India, Russia, and other CIS and South Asian and Asia Pacific nations). Its population is over 3 billion. Russia, as the central power of Eurasia has borders with seas of three oceans. Russia is washed by the Baltic, Arctic (Barents, White, Karsk, Laptevs, East-Siberian, Chukotsk) and Pacific (Bering, Okhotsk, Japan) seas. Russia is also a significant power in the Black Sea, Azov Sea, and Caspian Sea. Considering Eurasia’s geographical importance, human potential, natural resources, production and industrialization potentials, and their relations and positions in the world economy, we can state Russia and Eurasia are located at the crossroads of the world economy, politics and security.³³ According to Robert D. Kaplan, “*Eurasia has become a comprehensible unit, because of interactions of globalization, technology and geopolitics*”³⁴.

Accordingly, the association of the four geo-economic belts (Euro-Africa, Asia-Pacific, America, and Eurasia) may happen as a result of the establishment of international principles of equality and mutual recognition. In this theory, what remains unchanged from its classical form to neo-one is the elimination, destruction, or at least derailment of American global hegemony or American Atlanticism. Such goals could only be achieved through an alliance of three macro-regions against the North American superpower. For this step, as Dugin points out, the first direction is the Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis, the second direction of Russian Eurasianism is Central Asia, with the creation of a Tehran-Moscow axis, and the third one would be the Tokyo-Moscow axis.³⁵

³¹ Sengupta et al. *Asiatic Russia*. 24.

³² Mackinder J. H. “The Geographical Pivot of History.” *The Geographical Journal*, Volume 23. Mo.4. 1904.

³³ Stroeve, E. S., Bliakhman, L. S. and Krotov, M. I. *Russia and Eurasia at the Crossroads: Experience and Problems of Economic Reforms in the Commonwealth of Independent States*. Berlin: Springer-Verlag. 1999. 5–37.

³⁴ Kaplan, R. D. *The Return of Marco Polo’s World*.

³⁵ Bassin, M. “Eurasianism.”

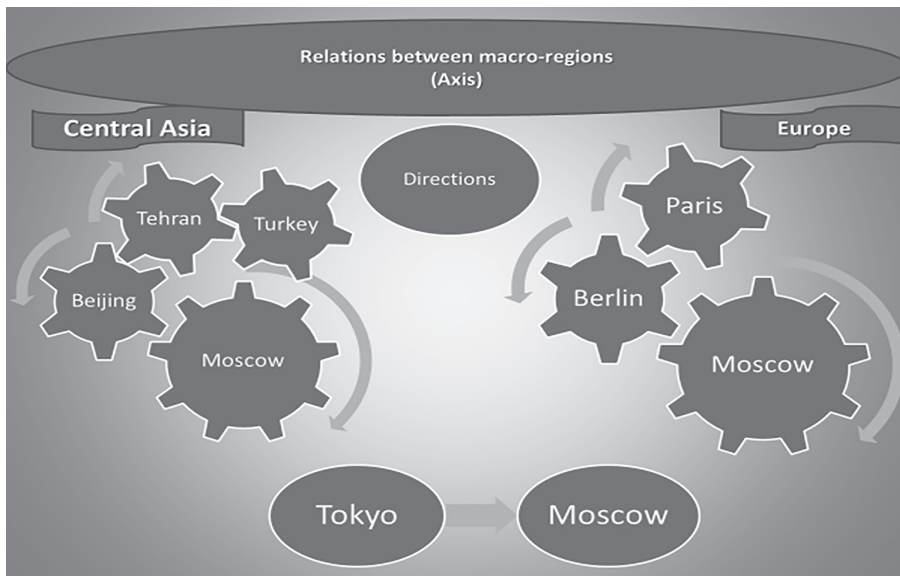


Image 1 The current directions of Russian foreign policy strategy

The CSI, the EAEU, the CSTO, the SCO, the BRICS and other bilateral and multilateral cooperation platforms are parts of influence transition strategies for Russia and other Eurasian powers. These strategies are built first and foremost on the alignment of the Russian, Chinese, Indian, Iranian and Turkish sides aiming at keeping their influence across the whole of Eurasia and the balance with non-Eurasian powers by providing a source of help, cooperation, coordination, and common security, political and economic infrastructure. According to realist explanations, the alignment theory is a “*systemic explanation to identify a state’s relative position in the structure of the international system as the primary determinant of alignment outcomes*”³⁶; at this stage, the power balancing theory is the main interest of states wishing to move and shape their strategic orders. Balancing power for a state or states means moving against the strongest power and potential hegemony to ensure no state will dominate the system. In this account, the states create a new equilibrium or balance for the international political order.³⁷

According to Russian foreign policy strategy, the regional and even international strategic shifts against American Atlanticism or American globalization can be summarized as follows:

- De-dollarization process in international trade, monetary and finance system.
- Supporting Anti-American or even non-democratic states and non-state political and military groups all over the globe.
- Turning countries and regions where the US has some strategic interests and boots on the ground into conflict zones.

³⁶ Miller, E. A. *To balance or to Not Balance*. (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006) 12.

³⁷ Miller, E. A. *To balance or to Not Balance*. 12.

- Practicing international power and influence transaction policies by providing economic, investment, technology, infrastructure, military, security and even intelligence facilities to certain government and political or military groups.
- Practicing policy cooperation, coordination, harmonization and integration based on mutual equality and recognizing each other's interests within CIS, SCO, BRICS, EAEU, CSTO, and other bilateral forms.

To achieve the above-mentioned goals, Russia builds its foreign policy strategy in three different aspects: *“Bilateralism, Globalization, and Regionalism”*³⁸.

The three-level foreign policy strategy helps Russia seek a game-changer position by conducting multi-vector diplomacy with its partners bilaterally, globally and regionally. The three-level foreign policy strategy laid the ground for Russia to act as a strong partner for small and weak states through bilateral ties, as a regional great power in regional institutions, organizations, and as a global great and strong actor in international conflicts and initiatives. This enabled Russia to rise again and exert political influence upon other great powers in the region and the world by reshaping Eurasianism, transforming it into neo-Eurasianism and gathering the countries around itself. Related to Russia's foreign policy strategy and economic relations with the East and West, the press secretary of the president of Russia, Dmitry Peskov stated the following:

*“China is not our partner number one yet. Still the EU and EU countries are trade partners number one for us and I cannot agree with those who say that Russia is turning eastward. No, I hope Russia will never turn eastwards. The Russian Eagle looks both sides – westward and eastward, that is the nature of every dimension of policy of Russia let it be political and diplomatic activities or economic ones”*³⁹.

This is one of the most exciting segments of today's world politics. The Eurasian great, middle, and small powers are trying to grow as a large and effective body in the region, drawing on regionalism. The Eurasian security, political, and economic cooperation is the manifestation/embodiment of bilateralism, regionalism, and globalization in Russian foreign policy strategy. Russia applies this strategy in order to change unilateralism to global partnership.

CONCLUSION

Today, the great powers of the world confront each other; some of them, typically Western powers, are in an era of power survival, while the Eurasian powers, such as Russia, China, India, Turkey, and Iran are in the era of power transition. The Eurasian powers are shifting towards a new form of cooperation with the West. Ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union the large powers of Eurasia have successfully retained their political and economic systems. These countries have chosen to enhance their regional cooperation in security, political, economic, and technology fields to defend their interests. Eurasia is a powerful region that can develop in its own path and find regional solution to address regional conflicts. Within a global

³⁸ Molchanov, M. A. *Eurasia Regionalisms and Russian Foreign Policy*. (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2015) 72–79.

³⁹ Peskov, D., 2019. “Like in the Wild West, US tells Europe to buy American natural gas at gunpoint – Kremlin Spokesman.” *Russia Today-Web*. 3 June 2019. <https://www.rt.com/shows/sophieco/460929-peskov-kremlin-spokesman-interview/>. Accessed on 5 June 2019.

partnership model, powerful regions, comprehensive regional cooperation, and regional institution-building processes are the most significant. Regional cooperation increases the geopolitical and geo-economic values of the region and helps promote inter-regional ties and interactions. Regional powerfulness is the appropriate phenomenon that secures and stabilizes the world order. History has proved all multipolar, bipolar, and unipolar world orders to be failed models as they lacked the means for successfully handling challenges and threats. The Russian Eurasianist regional-international view that contains global partnership could work as an enhanced version or supplementary instrument of globalization developed in post-Soviet Eurasia through mutual understanding and recognizing one another's interest, influence, and demands.

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