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## THE GEOPOLITICAL BASIS OF RUSSIA'S FUTURE

«Die schönste Stadt der Welt ist die, in der man glücklich ist»  
(The most beautiful city in the world is the one where you are happy)  
Erich Maria Remarque

*The coronavirus pandemic has brought the world closer to the threshold of a new geopolitical era – to a structural super-cycle that will last several decades and begin with a period of disorder and chaos. We will witness the multidimensional rivalry of Great powers in an era of global catastrophes i.e. economic crises, wars, large-scale cyber-attacks, pandemics and natural disasters related to climate change.*

*The geo-economic space is becoming more diverse and unstable by virtue of the deglobalization process (or trends) and increasing protectionism, as well as due to recent technological and digital advances and their wide availability. This is a very harsh and possibly cruel time, the period of cold and hot conflicts.*

*This time will last at least the entire third decade of the 21st century. The next global economic crisis is on the horizon and it will be much more potent than the 2008 crisis and the 2020 coronavirus recession.*

*The impending crisis will cause socio-political upheavals in most countries of the world. The destructive force of these shocks will be inversely proportional to the quality of public administration, socio-political measures and economic incentives, and efforts to put each country on a sustainable development path in a changing world.*

*The Powers that can protect themselves and survive during this period will create new rules and new world order.*

*The losers will be left behind forever, and some will remain only in history, as happened with the great empires of ancient time or some European States in the 20th century.*

## Geography as fate

Rome's example, which fell, and Byzantium, which lasted for a thousand years after the death of the Western Roman Empire, is remarkable. At the end of antiquity, the great Mediterranean civilization faced the same challenges that modern post-industrial civilization.

The transformation of large cities, especially Rome, into megapolises, the construction of a post-industrial consumer and service society, and the concentration of the impoverished population in the capital, the transfer of production to remote provinces...

The expansion of Rome encountered serious obstacles: there was no place to take new slaves for the metropolis, large-scale corruption, financial crises, a sharp increase in inequality, the degradation of the army.

The largest owners of capital, who once gave thousands of people the opportunity to earn money, found it uncomfortable to live in overpopulated cities and moved to their estates on the best Mediterranean riviera.

Senators and senior officials made decisions out of self-interest, a sprawling bureaucracy demanded more and more resources, while state and municipal offices were filled by greedy and incompetent people from the provinces.

The tax burden increased, while hordes of barbarians ravaged entire provinces. The army consisted of mercenaries-federates of barbarian origin, one of whose leaders – Odoacer in 476 A.D. removed from power the last Emperor Romulus Augustulus. And Europe for a long period plunged into the "dark ages". On the contrary, Byzantium preserved the continuity of the Imperial system of government of the Dominate era. There was no weakening of the Central government, the decline of production and trade. Still, a single economic and cultural space was formed, protected by a mighty disciplined army. During the invasion of external enemies in the middle Byzantine period (641-1204), military power was combined with administrative authority.

But in the later period, Byzantium lost the demographic war. The decline of its population in Asia Minor and the Balkans and replacing people of Greek origin by Turks and other alien tribes deprived the empire of human resources and the ability to resist enemies. The result is sad.

But the semi-nomadic Ottoman Turks could not create their own tribal administrative structures, so they adopted the Byzantine organizational system and combined political power with military power.

The Ottoman Empire was destroyed by a weak economy, which eventually led the Turks to defeat in a centuries-old confrontation with the West.

Byzantium's imperial mission was assumed by Russia, formalizing it in 1472 with the marriage between Russian monarch Ivan III and Sophia Palaiologina, and the ideology of protecting Orthodoxy and the concept of Moscow - the Third Rome consolidated the legitimacy of the transfer of the mission to Russia. Since then, Russia has been a unique civilization, an empire that has created an order around itself that resists chaos and is ready to defend this order.

The Empire can act at its own discretion because the order depends solely on its own will. However, the wave of global chaos is growing, threatening to overwhelm our borders and destroy Russia.

## The change of epochs

We live in a moment of changing ...

The existing world order is radically changing, threatening to plunge the entire so-called "civilized world" into chaos. And at the center of this rift is the Western liberal civilization led by the hegemon of the last decades - the United States.

The world has come to a fork in the road of development.

Pay attention to the recent book "COVID-19: The Great Reset", written by Klaus Schwab in collaboration with journalist Thierry Malleret. Klaus Schwab – is the founder and Chairman of the world economic forum "Davos Forum" - the Mecca of global corporations - a place "where billionaires come to explain to millionaires how the poor people should live." Schwab is one of the influential ideologists of globalism.

When will things get back to normal after COVID-19? Never, says Davos founder Klaus Schwab in his book «The Great Reset». "*Many of us are pondering when things will return to normal. The short response is: Never. The world as we knew it in the early months of 2020 is no more*" he writes.

Professor Klaus Schwab and French author Thierry Malleret argue that the global health crisis has "*magnified the fault lines that already beset our economies and societies,*" noting a multitude of surveys have shown many "*collectively desire change.*"

They insist the world needs to see, without delay, a reset that puts the world on a path toward a more inclusive, equitable and respectful future. "*It is incumbent upon us to take the bull by the horns*". The pandemic gives us this chance: it "represents a rare but narrow window of opportunity to reflect, reimagine and reset our world". Schwab understands that the destruction of the world economy will cause people great pain, but at the same time teaches politicians to be ready to suppress all resistance and unrest.

Schwab openly instructs politicians not to ease the restrictions, urging them not to lift the quarantine, no matter what resistance they face. Moreover, Schwab emphasizes that the resistance of the disobedient must be crushed, and there are many ways to do this. Thus, the new globalization can take the form of a gloomy dystopia when the world's impoverished population is under the digital control of a private or state dictatorship that distributes dwindling resources at its discretion.

The "Great Reset" of globalists is essentially a project of transferring power and wealth from nation-states to supranational corporations, from the population of countries to a narrow group of global elites...

The Project «Covid-19» struck fear into the population of the planet Earth, disoriented national elites, unbalanced national economies and health systems – and fulfilled its primary task.

Now the globalists need more platforms for the destruction of sovereignties of Russia and China, primarily. Obviously, for this purpose, the globalists began to promote the "green agenda" to restrain industry development around the world and weaken competitors. Biden announced political heavyweight Kerry's appointment to the post of "environmental tsar" is just one sign of the beginning of this offensive.

But the victory of the globalists is not predetermined. Rather the opposite. Their increasing aggressiveness is evidence that the world is spinning out of control.

The US hegemony is met with increasing resistance from countries seeking to secure their sovereignty. As I. Wallerstein noted in his theory of world-system analysis: "*The state loses its hegemony not because it is weakening, but because others are gaining strength.*"

Moreover, the 'American Empire' faced an internal existential crisis that split the country in half. America is losing its geopolitical power before our eyes... It faces a battle with significant adversaries for strategic dominance in politics, the economy, energy, and technology - a war with high stakes and unpredictable results.

## Image of the future people's State – people's Empire

Where is Russia's place in this changing world?

First, in values – in the ideology and image of the future. And let's start, as mathematicians say - from the opposite. The coronavirus pandemic has exposed the fragility of the West's value priorities. The camouflage gilding of the "temple of freedom on the Hill" - the one that our Russian liberals prayed for - is peeling off right before our eyes, exposing the terrible corrosion... However, it didn't start

in 2020. Coronavirus only exacerbated the crisis of social and cultural identity of the West.

The inability of national States to protect the population from global problems (both anthropogenic and natural) with the available tools and resources has led, if not to the collapse, then precisely to undermine the policy of globalization, which Klaus Schwab proposes to restart again. Under the threat of the coronavirus, States were forced to suspend production and close their borders. Economic policies based on globalization processes - the increasing interdependence of national economies due to the increase in the speed and volume of goods and services, technologies, capital, and labor across state borders – were in an unworkable state. So-the West is in an existential crisis and is no longer a model even for the most diehard liberals...

What should Russia do in this situation, whose sovereignty is enshrined in the Constitution, secured by our Army and based on thousands of years of history? In the new global game, Russia can now only move forward and up, constantly increasing its power, because if the achievements of recent years in the field of defense and security are stopped or curtailed, Russia will receive a disproportionate blow from the United States and will forever cease to be a subject of both world politics and the world economy. If the anti-Russian forces win in this new confrontation, there will be no "Marshall plan" for Russia and its citizens.

With high probability, the West will implement a new "plan OST" - based on the elimination of Russian civilization, the division of our country into small entities and territories. The substantial industrial and oil and gas areas will be under external control. There will be a curtailment of manufacturing and metallurgical industries, a ban or strict foreign trade restriction, and demilitarization.

In the case of the worst-case scenario, the population of Russia may be reduced by several tens of millions - there will only be "service people" working "for food", necessary to ensure the operation of the "pipe" through which natural resources will be pumped to the West. There is no doubt that the comprador financial and economic "elite" will surrender the country and go to live on their Mediterranean Riviera... This will be the price of defeat. The stake in this confrontation is Russia's future existence in the world.

The forced transition of Russia, following the West, to an information "digital" society, only exacerbates the risks. Corona crisis brilliantly demonstrated the effectiveness of the technology of manipulating public consciousness – paranoia and fear began to rule the world. As a result, it reduced trust between the government and society, and "self-isolation" only worsened society's atomization. What should we do, what are our goals and strategies for achieving them?



Unfortunately, the Russian society has not been presented with a clear outline of the future. The elites have demonstrated their failure, acting reflexively, after the fact and following the situation with delay.

It is necessary to look for points of crystallization of the socio-economic fabric on new solidary bases-in the territorial, economic and social dimensions.

First, we recognize that the current crisis is GEO-economic in nature and should be resolved not by changing the monetary foundations of economic development, as is customary now, but through the transformation of the geo-economic space.

Russia's logistical vulnerability and potential geo-economic competitors' ability to exert pressure on Russian export flows, the importance of which will increase in the foreseeable future due to the general contraction of the non-resource segment of world trade and the increasing importance of resource exports.

The possibility of the emergence of "gray zones of influence" near Russia's borders, which are not controlled at the level of post-Soviet national States and can become hotbeds for the maturation of radical and destructive trends, exacerbates the risks.

One of the lessons of the corona crisis should be the spatial and territorial re-assimilation of the country because a balanced spatial distribution of the population is an element of Russia's national security. It is necessary to create a socio-economic model of mobilization type built into the public administration system that duplicates/ensures various hybrid crises, such as coronavirus or human-made failures in the future.

For Russia, the regionalization of the economy in a crisis is essential not in itself, but as a process that opens up new opportunities for its development as a civilization. The high internal tension associated with the retention of substantial heterogeneous spaces, the constant presence of Russia in the thick of the geopolitical struggle – make the task of consolidating society and power, ensuring national security and state development the most important and decisive today. It is necessary to nationalize economic growth, which is difficult in the dominant liberal financial and investment model's existing geo-economic context.

This categorically reinforces the demand for sovereignty, strategic and comprehensive public administration, which collects "in a bundle" internal and external connections and Russia's growth factors.

**Russia needs to focus on itself!**

The "Russia of the future" model is an "internal" people's Empire, based on the principle of "autocracy" not in the sense of restoring the monarchy, but in the sense of real democracy, where we – the Russians – are led by a strong Leader. To implement this model, we need a new strategy for the country's socio-political and spatial structure, based on the components – security, human development, and

territorial and economic efficiency. This system's essence is the implementation of the Constitutional Provision on democracy through the unity of the vertical of power of the popularly elected national Leader and the horizontal of energy resulting from strong local self-government.

## Civilization of expanse

The current strategy of concentrating resources in megacities, imposed on Russia from the outside and contrary to its civilizational code, lays a social bomb for our future. Now Moscow and St. Petersburg account for a third of Russia's GDP. But any structure is stable when there are at least three supports. Such a third pillar of Russia should be the cities and territories of development in Siberia and the Far East. There are already many types of resources, industrial and scientific potential. Still, there is also a shortage of personnel and managerial competencies, and the main problem and threat – depopulation.

Solving these issues is extremely important because the lack of socio-spatial thinking in politics has already led to the depopulation of territories, the formation of social wastelands, and the creation of "exclusion zones" – satellite cities and suburbs inhabited by paupers.

This suggests a direct historical analogy with ancient Rome, in which the mega-agglomeration is the same "western Roman empire", which is under the attack of "hybrid barbarians". For the country's sustainability, it is necessary to develop the new "Eastern Roman Empire" beyond the Urals. Most of the energy, the country's resource base, forest, and freshwater reserves, and significant industrial potential are concentrated, with good quality universities.

To do this, it is advisable to review the policy of development of territories – to move from consolidation and concentration to reasonable dispersion, to form a single standard of management and quality of life throughout the part of the Russian Federation. Jobs, schools, clinics, pharmacies, shops, cultural centers, yard sports, leisure, and others — all this should be restored locally. Public money should be spent on their maintenance, even if, from the point of view of "radical Economism," which we have been guided by for the past 30 years, it is unprofitable. The word "unprofitable" should be removed from Russian state policy and replaced with the word "safe."

Sociologists testify that the megalopolis is comfortable for life only in conditions of public consent, otherwise it turns into a stone jungle. And if the inhabitants who inhabit it find themselves in conflict with each other, hell begins much faster and on a much larger scale than in the "bosom of nature" - in

medium/small towns and villages. All the mass protests of the last decades - "color" revolutions, bloodless and bloody coups - all of them had their Central stage in the capital cities.

In addition, giant megacities such as the Moscow agglomeration "produce loneliness", alienate people from each other. This reduces trust and solidarity in society. Megacities are extremely vulnerable to epidemics and all sorts of man-made disasters...

The principles of rational "multi-layered" socio-territorial planning should be taken as a basis for forming an image of the future of Russia that is understandable to society. This is closely linked to our civilizational code since Russia is a civilization of expanse, and this is how our values and way of thinking were formed. "Crowding" and concentration is a trend that is multidirectional with the Russian mentality.

It is necessary to start developing alternative growth hubs for Moscow beyond the Urals in the Eastern part of Russia. To do this, you can upgrade existing ones, but rather build new cities in comfortable natural and climatic zones, towns of a modern type, and the logic of placement and development tied to natural resources. These should not be shift cities or mono-cities of industrial and factory style – they will be cities of the most advanced architecture with developed infrastructure and science, education and healthcare, cities that are comfortable, attractive and interesting for life – especially for young people. These cities of the people's Empire will become the assemblage points of the Russian world! This is not a utopia. Russia has always "pulled itself by the hair" out of the swamp with big projects such as long-term military campaigns against numerous and powerful enemies, the conquest of Siberia in the 16th century, the TRANS-Siberian railway, space, the Arctic, and reunification with the Crimea, etc....

## Conclusion – mission is feasible

We must understand that threats and risks to Russian statehood will become existential shortly.

In order not to repeat the sad fate of ancient Rome, and to win a new confrontation with the United States, Russia needs to transform into a modern power-a people's Empire - where instead of the "invisible hand of the market," reasonable economic dirigisme and real control over the use of resources will operate. It is necessary not only to withstand the pressure but also to prepare for Russia's geostrategic renaissance. It is essential to nationalize elites and mobilize domestic and foreign policies to maximize national interests.

The task of the national-oriented part of the Russian elites is to realize our world's role as a civilizing power, a peace-bearing power.

State authority is the center of crystallization in Russia. Authority has no right to be weak, disconnected from the people, and unsure of the country's prospects for decades to come. The Russian philosopher Vasily Rozanov wrote: "The only vice of the Russian state is its weakness. A weak state is no longer a state, but it simply does not exist." The people's Empire is a reasonable force based on tradition, justice, and trust. This implies our political, internal, and external strategy for ensuring Russia's sovereignty. This is the strategy put forward by President Vladimir Putin in the messages and enshrined amendments to the Constitution. The essence is the preservation and multiplication of Russia's land and people, the protection of our Russian world in the ontological sense. This is the meaning of the Russian state. This is a difficult challenge, but it is our great historical mission.

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