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RUSSIAN GEOPOLITICS AND GEOPOLITICS OF RUSSIA.

PHENOMENON OF SPACE

Abstract:

In contemporary Russia some authors propose to build a new Eurasian empire that the spatially and strategically overcome the previous version – the Soviet Union. New empire therefore is proposed to be a „big-continental world perspective“. The are also opinions, suggesting that Russia´s energy should focus on restoring its territorial size.

Key words: Russia, geopolitics, space, Russian geopolitics, Russian mentality

Introduction

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the new Russian self-reflection conditions ranged between exaggerated overstatement of its own importance and inferiority complexes. This was reflected in Russian geopolitical thinking, reacting to the changed situation stormy ideological development and trying to apply it formulated conclusions

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in practical politics. Even today the Russian geopolitics ambitions to influence the decisions of Russian politicians. This is due to the reduction of spatial and demographic potential of Russia, which took place twenty years ago, and have had a significant negative impact on the feelings of a whole generation of Russians raised the awareness of the size of the image their own state. This note was a source of Russian national self-confidence and creating Russian determinant identity (see Mondry 2010).

Development of Russia's geopolitical thinking in the last twenty years is also apparent from the social order. On the basis of the Russian elite from the early 90's last century seeks to formulate a new paradigm, which would explain the position and role of Russia in the world today, and outlined possible options for the future. Russian geopolitics seeks from his position to answer the question what is today Russia from a global perspective and what path should be issued after the trauma at the end of the last century.

Demand analysis of present and future problems of Russia's new geopolitical conditions, inspiring the amount of work that went in the title the word "geopolitics" and its derivative epithets. Focus was on. and. and projects to outline Russia's return to the position of global power. One of the conditions for achieving this goal was considered the restoration of the territorial scope of the original route of the new

expansion. A. I. Mikhaylov (1999) called the Russian geopolitics in the late 20th century "ideology restore superpower status of the country."

The strength of Russia had always been associated with the control of a large area. Indeed, some authors speak of age-old Russians love the territories that formed during the historical development in the context of ensuring the existence of the Russian nation. It is therefore not surprising that in Russian (not only political) thought was a space issue has special significance. Therefore have several works of Russian thinkers and artists but significant geopolitical accents. According to E. Lewandowski (2004) determined the geography of Russian national character, though, like their native land space, or Russian soul knows no boundaries. In this far-reaching sense monotonous plains and boundless dial'avy in its infinite and supernatural are reflected in the image of the Russian soul.

Already in the Russian state of permanent collection of the Russian concept of countries (sobiraniye russkikh zemel'), which is the core of the territorial expansion of the Moscow of the Russian state. It was justified by uniting territories inhabited by Eastern Slavs - today's Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians. This thesis, however, passed only in the mid-16th century, when it began to Russian expansion to the north and south, focused on the subjection of "non-Slavic" Areas (Vykoukal 2000).

American expert on Soviet (and Russian) issue of G. F. Kennan argued that after World War II, the Soviet Union still regarded as surrounded by enemies and confront this situation by expanding wants. In accordance with the Russian propaganda highlighted the boundless space of the Soviet state, but the lack of natural barriers on the borders. As stated R. Strausz-Hupe (1947) "in Russian foreign policy is dominated by a strategic factor, its objectives during the czarist and communist rule are the same: achieving strategic frontiers ...". Understood in this way - but understood differently - the border should eliminate the danger of enemy encirclement.

Reflections on the role of space in the life of Russian society led to an interesting view of the conclusion which mention D. N. Zamyatin (2002). According to him, the analysis of the history of Russia, it is appropriate to talk about geocracy even when not done itself, represents and interprets the manipulation through a defined area. In the case of Russia, it is not surprising, because the Russian state as a tool of power has always been a means of territorial expansion.

Finding the status and further development of Russia's roads created in the geopolitical thinking from the 90's the 20th century, several competing directions that competed with one another and compete. There is no doubt that in practical politics we find strong spatial emphasis, aiming to secure the territorial integrity of Russia and to strengthen its position in the post-Soviet space in Eurasia as

well as the world. V. Putin after two years in the presidency, said: "... we are a global power, not only because we have a great military and economic potential, but we have to do and geographic reasons. We are still physically present in Europe, Asia, the north and the south and everywhere we have some concerns."

Phenomenon of space in Russian mentality

Russian philosopher I. Ilyin brought into the Russian political thought, the concept of "burden of space." Based on the fact that vast territory, controlled by Russia was not only a sign of its great power status, but the size of Russia was also his undoing. The State has long carried its imperial burden, only to have the government paid close attention to the changing area of law only as a benefit in its own superpower status. It is significant that the Soviet Foreign Minister V. Molotov acknowledged that "... Russian tsars have won so many areas. We will now be easier for the fight of capitalism " (Gaidar 1995).

Vast Russian empire meant a huge burden for statehood Russian nation. As wrote philosopher N. Berdyaev (2003), "Russian nation has spent huge forces loss caused by the vastness of the Russian state." Colonization of large areas was a significant burden for the economy of the state as absorbing huge material and human resources, but also the mental energy of the population, especially the Russian state-forming nation.

As V. Veber writes (2001), the basic cause of the backwardness of Russia and the "Empire hypertrophy, excessive size that the state is incapable of doing. Keeping the growing empire and particularly to solve the problem of managing such a large territory was beyond the power of the Russian state over its economic potential. "It turns out that it was a tax is too high for great power behavior of the Russian ruling elite and the increasing Russian confidence. The emergence of the crisis in the global situation changed in the late 20th century was basically inevitable.

Efficient organization of vast areas should be provided in 1918 by autocracy (samoderzhavia). This form of government should be able to perform under certain conditions, not only the role but also ensure dissemination of the territory through its relentless expansion, which also justify the legitimacy of military force totalitarian empire and the nature of the ruling regime. In fact, this one should seek an alternative reason for questioning the application of liberal democracy in Russia. As he writes P. Juza (1999), "any type of consolidated democracy is relativized while maintaining current territorial form of Russia, which has historically formed exclusively imperial manner".

Is known that the rate of expansion was Russian world unique. M. Švankmajer (1993) notes that since the early 17th century until the time of Stalin, Russian, or Soviet empire was expanding day by day over the 90 km². While in other countries expanding expansion ended

up after only a few decades, Russia expanded its own territory continuously since the Middle Ages up to 20th century. Like the process of European powers on other continents, and Russian expansion was primarily associated with the application of military force, often associated with scientific inquiry, which, however, was followed by a gradual colonization of the territory of the European part of Russia. Finally, the acquired territories began to consolidate government.

Explanation of the reasons for the expansion of the Russian state has been the subject of many considerations. According to N. I. Cymbayeva even some Russian politicians on this issue could not find an answer. "A true empire can not place limits its expansion is irrational" (Cymbayev 1997). Aptly in that spirit, expressed in his diary in 1865, Russian Interior Minister P. S. Valuev: "Tashkent conquered generals M. G. Tchernyev. Nobody knows why and what for. "Territorial expansion but has played in the lives of a large part of Russian society, as evidenced by the fact that it is the addition of collective and one of the pillars of Orthodoxy so. Russian ideas that emerged in the late 19th century (see Berdyaev 2003).

The analysis shows a number of other typical Russian thinking, quite surprising cause of Russian expansion. Linked to the statement of the Russian philosopher P. A. Chaadaev in 1836, according to which "... our country to have ever noticed it, had to be added from the

Bering Strait to the Oder "(Nolte 1992). In other words, according to him, the territorial size of the culvert between Russia only major country in the history of mankind. This statement follows the British historian N. Davies, who believes that "the greatest country in the world needed to feed a growing country and people to balance their sense of insecurity" (Davies 2000).

Russian expansion to the expansion of other countries differ mainly by their multi-way. Each course brought it to a new, often unrealistic and unrealized plans of conquest. So for example. during the reign of Catherine II. considered to extend Russia's geopolitical influence on the whole territory of the former Byzantium, the Balkans with the Orthodox population and the eastern part of the Mediterranean. The empress associated with its governance even conquering the whole of Europe.

Brake Russian expansion in the late 19th century was due to conflicts with more powerful opponents like the lack of plans for further action. Still, the anticipated acquisition of the Straits and Constantinople, considered the campaign in India and acquired more territory in the Pacific. We can therefore conclude that the Russian expansion to the end of the 19th century was pragmatic, as in this period sought (particularly in Asia) to avoid more conflicts and clashes. Moscow rulers behave very rationally and were willing to give up any goal, if it was possible to be too great a risk of expansion to shift to

safer areas. Some authors also point out that the Russian government is deliberately not strive to dominate the overseas territories. Here lies the difference between Russia and the European powers. They were originally formed as nation states, which expanded overseas, while the Russian empire are created in parallel with the Russian state in the inseparable historical process.

Despite stalled Russian expansion, or even retreat from Russia conquered the territory in the early 20th century, especially after World War I, the imperial policy is part of the political doctrine of the Soviet Union as the successor to Russia. Partially transformed only in terms of creating zones of influence, thus dropped from the direct connection to the Russian state. This resulted in a system of satellite countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

We can say that many problems associated with the load space is Russia still struggling despite the changed technological conditions. It should be especially noted the vast territory size effect on population density, which is uneven and the average low. In addition, each population too isolated and separated. As R. F. Turovsky writes (2005), "a clear picture of Russia's archipelago, consisting of hundreds of large and small cities, scattered amidst forest wilderness."

The people of Russia have always uninhabited contiguous territory, but lived separate and mutually self-sustaining remote communities and therefore lack of national feeling or national

belonging (Pipes 1998). To this may be added to the problems with the formation of regional identity, which is only a very Russia underdeveloped. The sparsely populated territory Asian part of Russia is so enhanced the macro-regional (Siberia), or local identity. These weaknesses and amplifies asymmetric ethnic structure significantly polycentrism developed and underdeveloped economy, which is unable to sustain its vast territory and population to an acceptable level of life.

Amplification of demographic pressure from the neighbors is one of the consequences of the mentioned features of the Russian territory. This is particularly the Far East, in relation to China. The area is not densely populated areas in Russia's Amur Region not comparable to the relatively high density of population in northeastern China. In addition to the lack of advanced communications network, as well as high transportation costs are forcing some Russian regions peripheral to seek economic contacts with neighboring states rather than the distant metropolis, as well as the Far East.

For problematic factor contributing to the load space can be difficult to treat and natural conditions, particularly climate, coupled with the significant complication suitability large part of the Russian territory for permanent settlement and economic exploitation. Creating conditions for the development of a modern economy and

the creation of permanent settlements in some parts of Russia, particularly in the north, requires a high financial cost. This fact can not be fully offset by a significant mineral resources and other natural resources.

As follows from the factors mentioned above, the solution of the problem of political control over a huge space has a specific meaning for Russia. Consisted in finding the optimal political system and create balance in relations between the center and regions in terms of expanding the territory and it was associated particularly with the need to control the vast empire from a single center. The recipe for the solution to be the centralization of power and intimidation of the population concerned local apparatus (Galeotti 1998). The power center was personified ruler, disposing of absolute power, relying on the spiritual and mystical irreplaceable role in Russian society.

The functioning of the vast empire thus depended on the relations between the center and regions. Until the early 20th century was dominated by the center this session, then the balance of power began to change in favor of the regions. This was reflected in the promotion of disintegrating tendencies, threatening territorial compactness Russian territory. The emergence of the Soviet Union did not mean their elimination. There was only to brake through the process of disintegration of some "cosmetic" changes. Such was the

transformation of the empire without »Russian« in its name" (Prôčková 1997).

In terms of the relationship of the Russian center and regions inevitably marked by constant efforts to expand the center and maintain territory. According Turovsky (2005) is incorporated in this respect the whole logic of the historical development of Russia as a spatial phenomenon. The definition of the optimal model of the relationship is still one of the unsolved problems of Russia.

Russian geopolitics in the context of Russia's space

As Z. Brzezinski writes (1999), "the vastness of the territory of Russia in Eurasia has been long predestined elite countries to consider in geopolitical terms." This is so even now, when the discussion on the geopolitical factors and the development of Russia status particularly intense and passionate. In the geopolitical considerations of Russia's focus is always awarded for the relationship between Russia and the territorial scope of the guidelines for its foreign policy, especially with a view to self-preservation and economic development.

History of Russian geopolitical thinking goes back to the 19th century, although geopolitical elements found in the works of Russian thinkers in the previous period. For the formulation of the first Russian geopolitical doctrines were used knowledges of history, geography, linguistics, ethnography, psychology, culturology, but also other sciences. Such a doctrine is like now focused on defining the place of

Russia in Eurasia and global scale, the formula for finding the next state and territorial development and foreign policy orientation as a great power. Geopolitical concept originated in the circles of scientists, especially philosophers, historians and geographers, but also geopolitical elements we find in the works of Russian writers and columnists. Spatial specifics of Russian landscape influenced the whole range of intellectual development in Russia. This was reflected in Russian thinking, not only in the context of science, but also art.

For the founders of Russian geopolitics can be considered historians. In writings on and in address the issue of the position of Russia in the world, even in the spatial context. In the context of the topic of this paper is need to concentrate on the work of historian and slavist V. I. Lamansky. He said that Russia should be universal state which dominate on most of the Europe and two fifths of the Asia. Its western boundaries will form a line joining the ports of Gdansk and Trieste. Russian empire would be ranging from Vienna to Beijing. Geopolitical approach, however, can also be found in works of art. Poet F. I. Tyutchev's poem "Ruskaya Geographiya" as he writes of the Eastern Empire, Eastern Roman Empire, which boundary extends to the west along the River Elbe.

The founders of Russian geopolitics may include geographer V. P. Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky. In his book, published in 1915, assigned to the Russian empire transcontinental type powers that ranged "from

sea to sea." Territorial integrity of Russian state does not interfere even Ural Mountains, which is seen as just as before, dividing Russia into two unequal parts. Pointed out, however, that the regions of Russia heterogeneity increases the risk of its desintegration. Despite this lack argued that Russia transcontinental nature makes it more powerful than the European colonial empires. This position must be fixed by building roads, consolidating compactness Russian territory and achieve the most equal siting. To meet this objective, it is necessary to create a network of cultural colonization centers in sparsely populated areas in the Ural Mountains, which serve as focal points of development of surrounding areas. He said Russia "is not necessary to distinguish Europe and Asia, but rather must seek to unite them into a single geographic entity ..." (quoted Eberhardt 2006).

Russian geopolitics I. I. Dusinsky in the book "Geopolitika Rossyi" in 1910 presented the view that the task of the immediate future for Russia's further territorial expansion. This creates the conditions for it to become an empire that will decide not only the fate of the Eurasian continent, but around the world. According Dusinsky important than the western borders of the Russian southern borders. In this respect, Russia should expand into Anatolia, Armenia and Kurdistan dominate the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. Thus, the Black Sea became a Russian internal sea.

The reasoning of the natural definition of the Russian (Soviet) area contributed significantly Eurasian geopolitical school, developed in the environment of the Russian emigration in the interwar period. According to them, Russia's territorial unity and stability in nature had its borders and the state, which was in the very center of the Eurasian continent had become a natural unifier Eurasian continental space. Integrity vast territory of the Russian state is justified in creating a separate Eurasian civilization, distinct from the East and the West (Europe and Asia). So separate category was created Eurasian community, naturally concentrated around a common (Russian) state.

In the Soviet Union, the geopolitical thinking of not developing ideological reasons, although a number of his foreign policy decisions of the political elite based on geopolitical premises. The collapse of the Soviet Union was reflected in the rapid development of geopolitical ideas and produce a range of publications. The current Russian geopolitical thinking responds to a new situation in which he found himself post-Soviet space, particularly in Russia after 1992. This change requires the formulation of a new paradigm that would explain Russia's position in the world and its future prospects, including the territorial development. Already shortly after the breakup of the Soviet Union, there were radical notions about restoring Russia's size. E.g. A Russian politician Ruckoi in 1994 said that the geopolitical situation of Russia "clearly shows that Russia is the only bridge

between Asia and Europe. Whoever becomes master of this space will become master of the world" (quoted Brzezinski 1999).

Current neoeurasians who restored the original Eurasian geopolitical school, based on the notion that geographically, climatically, linguistically, culturally and religiously, Russia is a synthetic unity of the West Eurasian and East Eurasian. Russia is vast, but the natural services that significantly interferes with Europe and Asia, as well as "mediator" between East and West in terms of "bridge" between the continents. A. G. Dugin (1997), the most prominent representative neoeurázijstva, proposes to create a Eurasian empire, which should consist of four parts: the European empire (Germany and Central Europe), the Pacific Empire (centered in Japan), the Centralasian Empire (with its center in Iran) and the Russian Empire.

The current Russian author V. L. Cymbursky (2000) in his project „Island of Rossia" (*ostrov Rossia*) was based on the vast expanses of the Russian state, which gives the requirements for the conclusion before the rest of the world. The condition for this is to increase the efficiency of the use of Russian territory and especially Siberia and the Far East. The weakening of the position of Russia, according to him, due to his involvement in the space outside the civilizational platforms, particularly in the area of „between" civilization of Europe, or let us say in Europe alone. Russia should

abandon efforts to restore the empire and its "global mission". It should focus exclusively on solving its own internal geopolitical problems. The main task of Russia is according Cymbursky close and focus on the intensification of settlement and the acquisition of its previously underutilized territories, which will strengthen the territorial integrity of Russia.

For some lines of contemporary Russian geopolitical thinking, especially neoeurázijcov is characterized by identification with the idea of "heartland" according to Russia's territorial synonyms. Russians are terrestrial, continental, Eurasian nation prone to integration and formation of a "special continental, Eurasian Community" (Dugin, 1997). It is therefore a nation that is natural and empire builder who during his creating, defense and dissemination of consolidated and matured. The adoption of the idea of "heartland" to help promote the idea of the necessity of maintaining a large, stable and integrated Russia.

Russian geopolitics seeks to contribute not only to explain the specifics of Russia and its mission, but also to maintain and consolidate its entirety, which is threatened from the early 20th century. This serves to internal geopolitics, which is "power-political analysis, useful for understanding the relationship between regions of different scales to each other and to the state as a whole" (Ištók 2008). In the case of Russia, it is about convergence of two

development trends: on the one hand, efforts to ensure the unity of the state, based on the legal homogeneity throughout its territory, and on the other hand, the need to maintain the ethnic and economic sovereignty of Federation entities, which create a heterogeneous regional-political structure . It is significant that when M. S. Gorbachev understood that the internal security threat of the Soviet Union greatly exceeds the terms of the importance of foreign threats, as well as from the aspect of possible consequences for the integrity (Gadzhiev 2000). Even now, in the Russian geopolitical thinking approaches developed just inside geopolitics.

Explanation of the size of Russia in the Russian geopolitical thinking

Reflections on the causes of Russia's development into an area of the largest government department in the world are just a natural part of the work of Russian historians, but also geopolitics. Russian A. E. Vandam at the beginning of the 20th century presented the state as a biological organism to ensure its existence must absorb a new territory. If the state does not extend the territorial, threatened with decline and extinction. In the case of Russia, supported its expansion to the south and east.

For Russia, it is significant that provides justification for the expansion of the Russian concept of the „Third Rome“ (*tretyi Rim*) which was formulated by monk Philoteus in the turn of the 15th and

16th century. Russians supported the messianic mission to protect all Orthodox nations. The concept of the „Third Rome“ (*tretyi Rim*) necessarily included in the geopolitical element itself, which consists in significant reasoning of the Russian state as a unifier of Orthodox Nations (Kolossoff - Mironenko 2001). Moscow as the „Third Rome“ (*tretyi Rim*) should be at the center of the newly created extensive empire that would arise through joining the Russian regions. This belief has become a defining part of Russian identity.

Unification Russian regions might start to defeat the Mongols, the Russians had naturally taken by Mongolia role conquerors huge area stretching from Eastern Europe to the Far East. Maybe you agree with the view that the concept of the "Third Rome - tretyi Rim" superpower has created the identity of the Russian nation and the absolutism contributed to stability, the strengthening of the Russian Orthodox Church and the nation. It also justified the expansion of Russia as the third universal empire after the fall the Roman Empire and the Byzantium Empire (Eberhardt 2006).

Russian geographer V. P. Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky, claimed that it is the process of "space combat", which is the most important historical process. This applies of course principally Russia, the development of the liberation from Mongol domination rooted in territorial expansion. In this context, the Russian geopolitics highlights the fact that at the beginning of its existence, the Russian nation was

on the plane, open on all sides. Country not except the northern Arctic regions of natural boundaries, which could serve as a natural barrier to the outside threat. This was particularly steppe areas in the south southeast. Therefore, it was necessary to look for natural barriers that define the natural boundaries of Russia.

This approach previously presented by historian M. N. Karamzin, who wrote of the need to shift the Russian borders the sea-coast as a natural barrier in all geographic directions. The main task of the Russian state was in his continuous territorial expansion as an essential attribute of a great power is the control of a large territory. Subordination to a new territory is therefore entirely natural phenomenon and reflects positively on the strength of the state. Russia was strong because it was huge.

Geographical and geopolitical predisposition (inland location on the plane and threats from neighbors) bring to the Russian foreign policy three fundamental questions, which had a successful solution to transform Russia into a world power, and also because it has been associated with huge territorial gains. These issues were:

- Northern issues which consisted in achieving the longest coast of the Baltic Sea,
- Western issue, which was seen as a question of national reunification under old Russian territory of the former Kievan Rus'

- Eastern question, under which relations with the Eastern understanding, but also southern neighbors, and whose solution was a key prerequisite for the survival of the Russian state (Duleba 2000).

Russian politician G. Zyuganov (1997) speaks of three problems whose solution was necessary for the existence of Russia:

- The need to provide access to the Baltic Sea, and thus breaking of the Western "cordon sanitaire".

- The need to ensure access to the Black Sea and thus breaking of the South "cordon sanitaire".

- The need to ensure the security of Russia in the Caucasian-Central Asia strategic direction of civilization fracture between Slavic-Orthodox and the Turkish-Islamic civilization.

Russia was thus "organism, always forced to self-defense", while its rightful form was to achieve natural boundaries, which correspond to the interests of the Russian state security. For these borders so they can be considered for Russia and coastal oceans separating Eurasia from the rest of the world.

In addition to the absence of natural boundaries are creating the Russian state surrounded by hostile neighbors who belonged to the other civilizations and did not hide desire for control over territories, inhabited by the Russian people. Russia reacted very sensitively to the neighborhood of another strong power and therefore its limits trying to move away from its central area and thus

face the danger of attack from the outside. However, this process does not eliminate the risk, in turn, created new threats in the form of a new conflict.

Russian geopolitical thinking responded well to break Russia's expansion during the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century. Russian state definitively became one of the world centers of power. Russian expansion met with economic power and the limits of the Russian state. Consummation of the territorial development in the form of dominance in Central Asia and the lack of progress in the Far East meant that the geopolitical concept of development of the Russian state began to focus on other tasks up to date. This was mainly to ensure effective political control and power over a territory of the Russian Empire. Dominant in this context was to maintain access to the Baltic Sea, as well as control of Ukraine, Transcaucasia and Central Asia, and the territory to the east of it. This objective has managed to meet until the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Further expansion of Russian territory was not necessary. Continued expansion westward in the mid-30th and 40 the 20th century in the Russian geopolitical thinking understood as a continuation of the "gathering of the Russian countries" that have been lost especially after the defeat in the war with Poland in 1920, or as acquiring territories that contribute to strengthening the security of the country (border westward movement before World War II).

In addition to efforts to obtain "natural" borders Russia sought access to warm, so warm-water sea. This role is an essential part of the definition of safe conditions for the existence of the Russian state. It developed in the early 20th century A. Y. Snetsaryov, who championed the idea of dominating the Indian Ocean to the south from Central Asia.

Expansion of Russian territory was thus under the above interpretations completely natural process, the result of a struggle for a decent existence of the Russian nation and the state. Thus, Russia has become (not only from the territorial point of view) completely without power in its discretion, under the influence of objective geographical, geo-strategic and geo-historic times. They are simply formed by territorial acquisition without power, without the guaranteed control over a huge area of Eurasia was not possible existence of the Russian state.

In connection with the expansion is necessary to mention the subjection of ethnic groups that lived in the conquered territories. View of geopolitics and Russian historians to this question is often presented as a voluntary subjection of Russian domination. Russia therefore, under this approach does not get as colonizer. The mentality of the Russian people did not place at the expense of other life. Moreover, according to many thinkers of the Russian leadership understood that if the non-Russian peoples oppressed, they can not

keep within the Russian Empire as a result of its huge size and limited resources. Russian expansion did not directed overseas, was not linked to disrupt the traditional Russian culture and statehood was far radical forms of nationalism (Podoprigora - Krasnopevceva 1995).

The Russians could not be colonizers, were colonists. Russian historian V. O. Klyuchevskoy wrote that colonization is a cornerstone of Russian history (cit. Johnson 1998). This colonization was first enforced, then voluntary. From the above it can be concluded that one of the main causes of the Russian expansion can be „hungry for land“. It resulted from the fact that Russia is considering the geographical conditions and primitive agriculture still needed new land.

Russian expansion was, according to some opinions mainly Russian civilizational sense. Unlike other powers was not a utilitarian quest for colonies, or banal battle for "living space". Russia expanded its national territory as carriers of special missions in accordance with their deep understanding of the need for unification of the vast Eurasian space. According to M. N. Karamzin Russian expansion brought considerable benefit conquered territories, because they have become part of a well organized state with a strong central government. This civilizational task was interpreted as decisive for raising the level of ethnic groups subjected to whom the Russian colonization brought new development opportunities (Baar 2005).

This argument was used to legitimize the Russian government over large non-Russian territories.

Conclusion

The collapse of the Soviet Union meant the diminishing role of the Russian state, whose symbol was the reduction of its size and lack of control over non-Russian territories of the former empire. Although this contributed to a change in the mentality of the Russians and the Russian crisis of identity. While the Western colonial powers after decolonization had problems with its own historical and national identity in the case of Russia, the situation is different. The concept of law and the notion of empire overlap and therefore post-Soviet Russia was to search for a new state ideology to define their own identity.

This stems from the significant importance of the spatial factor, deliberately cultivated in creating an identity of the Russian nation. This led to the mythologizing if its laying down a position in the Russian political culture (Potulski 2010). This was reflected in the Renaissance perception of the Russian nation as a community, which is intended to carry globally unique historical mission. Critical access to thesis which supporting this way the formation of the Russian consciousness is found in only a few works of Russian authors whose mention in the text of this article.

Russia still reconciled with problems not only with the collapse of the Soviet empire. Result is precluding the possibility of losing even

a small area, even at a time when sharply reduces the importance of the immediate political and military control of vast territories. The problem was and still is the perception of the former Soviet republics as sovereign states. This factor influenced the emergence of the term "near abroad" (*blizkoye zarubezhie*), which marked the post-Soviet countries have a special place in Russian foreign policy.

The balance of the current status of Russia attempted Russian geographer A. I. Treybish. The collapse of the Soviet Union brought about by him not only for Russia's geopolitical losses, but also profits. For cons should be considered as a return to the borders of the early 17th century (in the west), and the early half of the 19th century (in the Caucasus region or central Asia). Russia lost a large area of geopolitical influence, created numerous Russian minority for Russian borders and the number of the generated voltage at its borders and in their vicinity. Be seen as positives retain control of vital natural resources, preservation approaches to the Black and Baltic Sea and direct contacts with the developed countries and the stabilization feature unique transit corridor in Eurasia (Kolossoff - Mironenko 2001).

The collapse of the Soviet Union is seen as a crime against the great Russian nation, "which over the centuries with enormous sacrifice and loss collected, the department defended a huge state," which has become a "guarantor of global geopolitical equilibrium and guarantee the security of all nations Eurasian continent" (Zyuganov

1997). For today's Russia is an important fact that the former multi-ethnic empire (including the Soviet Union) was perceived as the Russian state and its history was primarily a history of Russians (testicular 1996). Therefore, for many Russian thinkers not present a full Russian Federation Russian State.

According to A. G. Dugin (1997) is the current Russian Federation only temporary service in a rapidly changing global geopolitical process. Thus, Russia today, according to some Russian authors is again before three huge tasks that deal began in the 17th century. Now, however, does not have to meet them three hundred years, as it was during the framing of the Russian Empire. Presentation expansion plans aimed at restoring Russia's size proves that the fascination with space in Russian thinking was far from over.

The collapse of the Soviet Union, while maintaining Russia's position as the largest country in the world, but stayed the territorial continuity of its geopolitical core (or axis). This core, according to A. Duleba (2000) has developed several centuries and located in Europe and Asia runs from the mouth of the Danube along the Black Sea coast, including Crimea east through eastern Ukraine and central Russia in the east, which stretches along the two railway arteries to the Far East, Khabarovsk and Vladivostok. Restoring the status of Russia as a global power is therefore related to the renewal of

territorial continuity of the core. In this context, it is particularly alarming loss of Ukraine.

For Russia has by some authors to build a new Eurasian empire that the spatially and strategically overcome the previous version, which was the Soviet Union. New empire therefore "must be Eurasian, and big-continental world perspective" (Dugin, 1997). Such reasoning is consistent with the thesis that Russian expansion "must take place in any rational international political circumstances, and considering their own options and possibilities of any opponent it played little role. ... Russia ... must either expand or perish ..." (Luňák - Pečenka 1996).

Opinions, suggesting that Russia's energy should focus on restoring its territorial size can not be considered dominant in Russian (only) geopolitical thinking. E.g. by A. Bovin (1998) is the only chance for the Russians in terms of the new global situation to overcome deep-rooted complex of imperial power and to participate in creating a multipolar order, in the creation of stable relationships and to avoid conflicts, which would be incompatible with the interests of Russia. The author points out that the violence spread to the territories of the Russian Empire, which was inhabited by different ethnic and cultural well capable defenses have been one of the causes of its decline.

As in the past, and today Russia is therefore seeks to define. This stems from the belief that it had assigned a special mission, which is associated with a special spiritual destiny. In this connection it

should be noted that Russia saw itself as a separate country, not only geographically, but mostly mentally. Russians themselves mystified its peculiarity and made its message. This message is a myth about the size and vastness of the Russian landscape, which has persisted to the present day and also affected the Russian geopolitical thinking. In connection with the Russian state so dominated psychology major country with frequent use of communication as "one sixth of the world", "territory without borders", "unlimited source of raw materials," and so on., Which were presented in the press and electronic media.

Russian space problem will still attract the attention of researchers in many disciplines. Doing so may not always agree with the Russian geographer Y. L. Pivovarov (1992), according which all heterogeneity in the huge territory of the country and its particularity, large differentiation of the population, economy and nature is Russia "synthetic world consisting of many nations, cultures, religions, like boiler, which washed out a new substance people. "

Russia is still the largest state of the world and its dimensions can be compared with the continents. It also is among the most populous country on the planet. These factors, along with its military might predispose its power position in the world in the near future. The question is how to reconcile the change in its global geopolitical situation.

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