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**MYSLIT' PROSTRANSTVOM:
EURASIA AND ETHNO-TERRITORIALITY
IN POST-SOVIET MAPS**

*Nach dem Zerfall der UdSSR ist das Ideologem
Karte unserer Heimat im öffentlichen Diskurs
ungewöhnlich lebendig geworden.*

Gasan Gusejnov¹

Introduction

In a new subtitle to a much-expanded second edition of his *Osnovy Geopolitiki*, Aleksandr Dugin appeals to his countrymen to "myslit' prostranstvom" – to begin in other words both to 'think about space' and to 'think spatially about Russia'.² The considerable popularity of Dugin's work as a whole could be taken as a confirmation that this particular message is getting through, but it would be rather more accurate to see his celebrity as an indication of the extent to which his message resonates with already-existing concerns and preoccupations in post-Soviet Russia. That the reading public in Russia today should be preoccupied with space is hardly surprising, in view of the political-geographical realignments, boundary changes, and territorial disputes that have become the daily fare of national politics over the past decade. Beyond this, however, Dugin's appeal resonates because there is nothing very new in the suggestion that Russians should start 'thinking about space', despite his own claim for the novelty of his injunction. Very much to the contrary, Russians have always possessed an extremely active

¹ Gusejnov, G. 1999: "Die 'Karte unserer russländischen Heimat': ein Ideologem zwischen Wort und Körper", in: de Keghel, I. / Maier, R. (eds.): *Auf den Kehrichthaufen der Geschichte? Der Umgang mit der sozialistischen Vergangenheit*. Hannover, 77-101, here 77.

² The first edition is Dugin, A. 1997: *Osnovy geopolitiki. Geopoliticheskoe budushchee Rossii*. Moscow. The second edition, published in 1999, added "Myslit' Prostranstvom" to the subtitle. Also see idem, *Absolutnaia rodina* Moscow, 1999. On Dugin see Shenfield, S. 2001: *Russian Fascism. Traditions, Tendencies, Movements*. Armonk NY, 190-199; Ianov, A. 1995: *Posle Bl' tsina: Veimarskaia Rossiia*" Moscow. 215-241; Laqueur, W. 1993: *Black Hundred. The Rise of The Extreme Right in Russia*. New York, 139-42ff; Ingram, A.: *Aleksandr Dugin: Geopolitics and Fascism in Post-Soviet Russia*, (forthcoming).

spatial imagination, at the very center of which has been a proclivity precisely to 'think spatially' about their homeland. Indeed, space is arguably the most fundamental element overall in the Russian national consciousness, the rich significance of which is indicated among other things by the considerable variety of words which the Russian language offers to evoke it. The special qualities of Russian space, most notably its twin attributes of physical immensity and physiographical monotony, have long been taken as an existential marker of what makes Russia different from other countries, and for centuries philosophers and poets have chosen this sense of 'geography' as the central axis around which to explore the deepest meanings of Russian nationhood.³ The following excerpt from Viacheslav Ivanov's *A Scythian Dances* exemplifies how the Russians can locate their entire sense of distinctiveness from other nations (in this case the European West) in the factor of space:

...
 Nam, nestroinym, – svoevol'e!
 Nam – kochev'e! Nam – prostor!
 Nam – bezmezh'e! Nam – razdol'e!
 Grani – vam, i granei spor.⁴
 ...

Thus Dugin's appeal to "think about space" is a sermon to the converted. Or is it? Is there perhaps something different about what we might call 'post-Soviet spatiality,' something which sets it apart from earlier modes of spatial thinking? We can begin to ponder this through the example of the passage from Ivanov's poem just cited. It is clear that space here carries a very particular connotation, betrayed by the poet's juxtaposition of the terms *prostor* and *bezmezh'e*. Effectively, for the poet Russian space is precisely "boundless" and without limit, and it is precisely this existential openness which serves to distinguish Russia from the 'bounded' spaces of the West. Yet if in our minds we can leap a century from Ivanov's *fin-de-siècle* into our own troubled times, and if we can further shift from the rich literary evocations of the Silver Age to the mundane political *Alltag* of the new millennium, then we can perhaps see that something indeed is very different. In a word, Russia too has now become bounded. More than this: the Russians have seen what they traditionally understood to be their national space or territory truncated and cut away. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the ensuing establishment of the constituent republics as independent states, Ivanov's dreamy vision of Russian *bezmezh'e* has shattered on the hard rocks of national

³ See for example Tjutchev's poem *Russkaia Geografiia*, in: Tjutchev, F. 1980: *Sochineniia*. Moscow, t. I, 104), or the essay *O vlasti prostranstv nad russkoi dushoi* by Berdiaev, N. 1918: *Sud'ba Rossii. Opyty po psikhologii voiny i natsional'nosti*. Moscow, 62-68.

⁴ Ivanov, V. 1978: *Skif plishchet*, in: *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy*. Leningrad, 75-76.

self-determination and political sovereignty. And as if this rude loss of national space were not enough, the specific boundaries of the new Russian state are – for many citizens at least – far from satisfactory. The result of all this is that the question of space has taken on depths and dimensions of significance that are entirely unprecedented. In this sense, we can understand Dugin's appeal to *myslit' prostranstvom* or 'think about space' rather more accurately as a call to *myslit' prostranstvom inache* or *po-novomu*, that is to say 'think about space in a new, non-traditional way.'

It is certainly for this reason that study of geopolitics has become such a dynamic growth industry in post-Soviet Russia.⁵ Its rapid emergence is all the more striking in that it has occurred more-or-less *ex nihilo*, insofar as there was virtually no work in this field in the USSR before the late 1980s. Yet the broad and virtually immediate appeal of a perspective which promises to explain the significance of geographical factors to national politics and, more importantly, to derive from these factors policies and perspectives which will insure the future survival and prosperity of the state, is readily understandable. Effectively, it is geopolitics which is now assigned the responsibility of showing Russians exactly how they should go about 'thinking about space in a new way' as just discussed, and it is entirely unsurprising that even national political leaders such as Vladimir Zhirinovskii and Gennadii Ziuganov, should seek to command the nation's attention by writing about it.⁶ The actual effectiveness of this literature in meeting its challenge is mixed, undermined frequently by an eclecticism in the specific approach to geopolitics and an obscurity in its analysis. The work of Dugin, however, stands out. This is not so much because of his textual analysis, which on the whole is even more eclectic and obscure than most. It is rather because Dugin, remarkably, is almost the only geopolitician to make active use of maps in his books or journals to articulate his political-geographical ideas. While crude and informal 'homeland' maps have become a familiar feature of public culture in contemporary Russia and figure commonly in graffiti, cartoons, and even tat-

⁵ The library of literature on geopolitics in post-Soviet Russia continues to expand unabated. In addition to Dugin's work, see Dergachev, V.A. 2000: *Geopolitika*. Kiev; Gadzhiev, K.S. 1998: *Vvedenie v geopolitiku*. Moscow; Nartov, N.A. 1999: *Geopolitika*. Moscow; Tikhonravov, Iu.V. 2000: *Geopolitika. Uchebnoe posobie*. Moscow; Mikhailov, T.A. 1999: *Evoliutsiia geopoliticheskikh idei*. Moscow; Kolosov, V.A. (ed.) 2000: *Geopoliticheskoe polozhenie Rossii: Predstavleniia i real'nost'*. Moscow; Mitrofanov, A.V. 1997: *Shagi novoi geopolitiki*. Moscow.

⁶ Zhirinovskii, V.V. 1998: *Geopolitika i russkii vopros*. Moscow; idem 1995: *Geopoliticheskii aspekt unichtozheniia Rossii*, in: V.V. Zhirinovskii i Fraktsiia LDPR v Gosudarstvennoi Dume. *Obzor*. Moscow, 6-10; idem 1997: *Geopolitics*, in: Vladimir Zhirinovskiy speaks with Russia. Moscow, 90-140; Ziuganov, G.A. 1998: *Geografiia pobedy. Osnovy rossiiskoi geopolitiki*. Moscow.

toos,⁷ a more scholarly political cartography addressed explicitly to the domestic and international issues confronting post-Soviet Russia paradoxically remains most notable by its absence. Thus Dugin represents something of an exception, and although his maps vary considerably in their content and appearance, I would suggest that all of them are significant in a special way. All of them serve to clarify the precise range of issues that 'thinking about space in a new fashion' in today's Russia might involve. In the following discussion, I will try to illustrate this point through an examination of selected examples, taken both from Dugin's own writings and from the journal *Élementy* which he edits.

The shifting contours of russian space

The point has already been made that contemporary preoccupations with the problem of Russian space have their source in the political fragmentation of Soviet territory, a process which gained its momentum during the period of *perestroika* and then culminated in the breakup of the USSR in 1991. Against this background, it is entirely logical that the overriding spatial sentiment in Russia today should be an awareness of geographical loss and a vague but palpable anxiety that with along this territory, Russia has sacrificed some vital aspect of its national identity. Clearly, those who accept the Russian Federation as a satisfactory geopolitical embodiment of Russian statehood are not bothered by such concerns, but the fact that these concerns are in fact pervasive suggests that the new Russian state by no means enjoys unconditional endorsement from all of its Russian citizens. In *FIGURE 1*, summarily entitled "The Geopolitical Results of *Perestroika*", the territorial shifts of the past 15 years are depicted as a *sokrashchenie*, in other words a cut-back or abridgement of Russia's geographical space. The terms "Heartland" and 'Rimland' that are used on this map come from the "Geographical Pivot of History" discourse initiated in the early years of the 20th century by the British geographer Halford Mackinder. Dugin uses them here to fit Russia's territorial constrictions into a framework of global strategic relations and superpower standoff, in order to make very clear that this loss of territory – the *sokrashchenie* of the Russian heartland – was not in Russia's global-strategic interests. The present boundaries of the Russian Federation, indicated by the broken line, clearly represent a shrunken space, and illustrate graphically the common sentiment in Russia today that the national boundaries have been rolled back to (as it is often expressed) "those of the 17th century."

Yet this sense of territorial loss is only one aspect of a distinctly more complex pattern of responses to the political-geographical readjustments of the early

⁷ Gusejnov: *Die 'Karte unserer russländischen Heimat'*, passim.

1990s. After all, if boundaries have become moveable then they can be shifted in all directions, at least notionally. The chagrin of territorial *sokrashchenie*, therefore, can be balanced – if not entirely mollified – with the prospect of reestablishing Russia's distinctiveness and greatness by extending or expanding its political-national space. The concept of *Evrasiia* or Eurasia, which over the past decade has become an extremely popular way of contrasting the distinctiveness of Russian civilization to both Europe and Asia, serves additionally as a useful geopolitical trope through which a discourse of Russian territorial expansion can be articulated. The concept originated in the 1920s among circles of Russian *émigrés* whose initial rejection of Russia's new Marxist-Bolshevik order was displaced by a no-less-intense horror of powerful independence movements in Ukraine, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and elsewhere which threatened to bring about the wholesale territorial dismemberment of Russia's imperial space.⁸ They denounced this process with the argument that the former empire as a whole represented a cohesive community of Eurasian peoples, who cohabited a cohesive physical-geographical arena which they called Eurasia. The peoples of Eurasia – Russian, Turkic, Finno-Ugric, Mongol, and other groups – shared numerous affinities in terms of culture, ethnography, and historical experience, to the extent that together they effectively comprised a single Eurasian group or nation. And to correspond to its nature as a homogeneous historical-ethnographical community, Russia-Eurasia should remain as a single and unified political community as well. Thus the *émigré* Eurasians argued strongly for the preservation of the geopolitical integrity of Russian space, a position which obviously resonated with Bolshevik intentions and served ultimately as the basis for something of an accommodation between the former and latter.

The contemporary reemergence of Eurasia as a vision embodying the essence of Russian nationhood is obviously related to the break up of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the creation of numerous independent states, a process which was indeed impelled by the same sort of national autonomy movements (if on a far grander scale) against which the original Eurasians reacted.⁹ At the same time, as its deployment in Dugin's maps indicates, the original specificity and clarity of

⁸ On *émigré* Eurasianism, see Böss, O. 1961: *Die Lehre der Eurasier. Ein Beitrag zur russischen Ideengeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Wiesbaden; Riasanovsky, V.N. 1964: Prince N. S. Trubetskoy's *Europe and Mankind*, in: *Jahrbücher für die Geschichte Osteuropas* 12, Neue Folge, 207-220; Luks, L. 1986: *Die Ideologie der Eurasier*, in: *Jahrbücher für die Geschichte Osteuropas* 34, 374-95; Laruelle, M. 1999: *L'idéologie eurasiiste russe, ou comment penser l'empire*. Paris.

⁹ Bassin, M. 1996: Eurasianism and Geopolitics in Post-Soviet Russia, in: Godzimirski, M. (ed.): *Russia and Europe*, Jakub (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs Report, No. 210), 33-42; idem: Classical Eurasianism and the Geopolitics of Russian Identity, in: Dressler, W. (ed.): *Les Enjeux d'un terme l'Eurasie*, Paris.

the term Eurasia has been significantly relaxed in post-Soviet discourse, and replaced with a broad, and decidedly vague range of associations. In other words the concept of Eurasia has become flexible, indeed elastic, and while this new quality might undermine its usefulness for scholarly-analytical purposes, it serves unmistakably to enhance the usefulness of Eurasia as a evocative image in popular discourses of national identity and destiny. In *FIGURE 2*, Dugin presents an initial sketch of what Russia-Eurasia today might look like. It is the terminology rather than the graphics of the map which is immediately striking, for in the very center of it he carefully labels Russia as a “Eurasian Empire.” This attribution of imperial status to Eurasia betrays a fundamental misreading of the original post-revolutionary Eurasian doctrine, which endorsed the principle of self-determination and quite correctly appreciated that if Russia were indeed an empire then its various colonial populations would be entirely justified in seeking independence. Their argument for an ethnographically and culturally homogeneous Russia-Eurasia, therefore, was an argument precisely *against* Russia’s imperial identity. Dugin’s terminology, rather, is significant entirely in terms of the contemporary preoccupations described above, for which Russia’s territorial loss effectively engenders an expansionist, that is to say an imperial inclination. The specific boundaries which Dugin indicates, moreover, provide a good sense of how he would realize this inclination. His Eurasian empire takes as its basis a re-constituted Soviet state, but is actively imperial well beyond this. He includes regions that had been part of the Russian Empire before 1917, notably Finland (although the former Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are carefully excluded), but goes even further to include major regions that neither were a political part of Russia at any time, nor figured in the original Eurasians’ conception of Eurasia, such as Afghanistan, north-west China, Mongolia, and Manchuria.

Yet expansive as it may be, the imperial Eurasia indicated by Dugin in *FIGURE 2* remains implicitly faithful at least to the original conception of Russia-Eurasia as a cohesive civilizational zone geographically distinct from Europe and Asia proper. The elasticity of Eurasia in its post-Soviet incarnation, however, allows for even this distinctiveness to be relaxed, as is apparent from the maps in *FIGURE 3*. In the upper map, Eurasia has effectively been globalized and broken down into six “civilizational belts,” which include not only the entirety of the European and Asian continents but almost the entire northern half of Africa as well. (The latter Dugin terms – with truly splendid toponymical dexterity – “Arabic Asia”). On the lower map, he then groups his six regions into two “worlds,” one of which encompasses what we commonly think of as ‘the West’ plus Russia (Dugin’s “Eurasian North”), while the other includes the former colonial realms (the “Eurasian South”). These two zones are separated by the “natural boundary”

of the mountain ranges from the Pyrenees to the Altai, and between these zones he identifies a natural "parallelism" or symmetry. It is difficult to say on what basis Dugin has identified these zones or why he is determined to include as part of Eurasia regions as obviously and emphatically un-Eurasian as Western and Central Europe. In this configuration, it would seem that Eurasia loses its character as a geographical designation altogether, and instead becomes something of a global idea: a vast collage of macro-region, all permeated with the spirit of Eurasia, and thus indirectly with the spirit of Russia itself.

Ėtnos and russian ethno-territoriality

Probably the most fateful of the political ideas or perspectives to emerge on the Soviet scene during *perestroika* was the notion of ethno-territoriality. The principle itself was of course by no means new, for it drew on a views of nationhood and self-determination that had been articulated already in the 19th century and then codified for international practice with the Versailles arrangements on 1919. Indeed, ethno-territoriality had been influential in the design of federalism in the Soviet Union itself in the 1920s. Beginning in the 1980s, however it took on a powerful new significance. Self-determination stipulated that homogeneous national bodies had an absolute and inviolable right to an autonomous national existence, consolidated on their historic homelands as independent state entities or 'nation-states'. The Soviet Union, for its part, had sought to pay its respects to self-determination through the careful promotion of the division of its population in many dozens of distinct ethno-national groups and the official recognition of their territorial homelands as the basis for the Soviet federal structure. What was missing from Soviet federalism, of course, was genuine autonomy for these regions and groups, and it was this which the various nationalities – encouraged at the outset, rather paradoxically, by the then-general secretary of the Communist Party Mikhail Gorbachev – finally began to demand. For the nationalities of the constituent union republics or SSRs, this demand eventually took the form of full political independence from the Soviet Union, which they achieved in 1991. For those national entities which existed inside one or another of the union republics and were subordinated to it, the demand was in certain cases also for full political independence but more often for some sort of vaguely-defined 'sovereignty' which would maintain their membership within the larger unit. In all cases, however, the ethno-territorial principle was the same: the legitimate right of a national group to autonomy or independence within the territorial boundaries of its national homeland.

For the ethnic Russian population of the Soviet Union, however, ethno-territoriality was a rather foreign concept, and their response to its adoption by their fellow Soviet citizens was ambivalent. Because from its very origins in 15th century Muscovy the Russian state had been an imperial formation expanding across a contiguous landmass, the Russians never developed a strong and commonly-shared territorial sense of Russia or of those geographical boundaries marking precisely where Russia proper ended and non-Russian colonial domain began. Rather, national space was almost universally assumed to coincide with the full territorial expanse of the empire, a habit of mind which was carried over essentially intact after 1917. The ethnographic distinctions which distinguished the Russians from the other nations of the empire were more clearly drawn, to be sure, but these distinctions were not necessarily seen to be very significant. Indeed, we have seen that the original doctrines of the Eurasians insisted very strongly that the various national groups of the empire, including the Russians, were all actually part of a single over-arching Eurasian ethnicity. Elements of this perspective were carried over – albeit via a very different language – into the Soviet ideal of *silence* or fusion of all the Soviet nationalities into a single supranational *sovetskii chelovek* or ‘Soviet Man.’

Yet however committed Russians themselves may have been to this integrationist ideal, by the end of the 1980s it was painfully clear that all of the other Soviet nationalities had rejected it, and indeed with considerable emphasis. It was moreover quite impossible for Russians to stand by impassively as observers of other nations’ drives for autonomy or independence, insofar as these movements aimed for political-geographical consolidation upon territories which the Russians – to the extent that their vision of Russia coincided with the boundaries of the Soviet Union – felt to be part of their own homeland. In this sense, it might be said that in the long run the Russians simply had no choice but to respond to the demands of the other Soviet nationalities by adopting the premises of ethno-territoriality and adapting them for their own purposes. It must be strongly stressed that this development was absolutely unprecedented in the history of Russian nationalist thinking, for there simply had never been an attempt to establish Russian statehood on criteria which were explicitly and exclusively ethnographic and in a territorial homeland which was ethnically Russian and nothing else. To be sure, since the 1970s conservative Russian intellectuals had been debating the problems of an exclusively Russian ethno-nationality, and their discussions offered a certain point of departure, but it was not until the late *perestroika* period that Russians were constrained to try and press the implications of ethno-territoriality to their logical conclusions. In FIGURES 4 and 5 we can see two very different examples of where this process might lead.

What these maps make clear is that the precise nature of Russia as an ethnic community is itself flexible, and this flexibility in turn yields rather different ethno-territorial configurations. In *FIGURE 4*, entitled "Russia as a Monoethnic Formation", Russians are understood in the manner probably most familiar in the West, that is to say as a member of the East-Slavic group which is ethnographically distinct from the other East Slavs, namely Ukrainians and Belorussians. This distinctiveness is indicated on the map by Russia's western boundaries, which are drawn carefully to exclude Belarus in the west and Ukraine in the southwest and south. Ethnic Russia thus extends to cover much of the eastern half of 'European Russia' west of the Urals, although it is bounded by the substantial territorial chunk of the Komi national republic in the north-east. The Turkic republics of the trans-Volga region, however – the Tatars, Bashkirs, and others – appear to be included as part of ethnic Russia, probably by virtue of the large percentages of Russian population who live there. From this point, ethnic Russia extends in a broad ribbon east across the Urals and Siberia to the Pacific ocean. At the Urals themselves a thumb juts up to the north indicating the predominantly Russian settlement of the mountain region. Beyond this, ethnic Russia simply follows the pattern of densest demographic settlement in Siberia, which itself reflects historical settlement patterns influenced by climate, opportunities for agriculture, and not least of all the route of the Trans-Siberian Railway. To the south, the national republics of Gornyi Altai, Tuva, and Buriatia are also carefully excluded, as is of course Sakha-Yakutia to the north-east. The very striking constriction of Russian space in Dugin's "Rus' Republic" cannot appear very appealing to those Russians who are already disturbed by the truncation of Soviet territory which produced the Russian Federation. It would appear, therefore, that this particular exercise in applying ethno-territoriality to Russia is intended ultimately to demonstrate its inappropriateness, indeed harmfulness for Russian interests.

FIGURE 5, which appeared in an essay by E.F. Morozov in the mid-1990s, presents a different and rather more revealing picture. The title of the map, "The Regional Distribution of the Russian Ethnos", resonates in a general sense with the spirit of Dugin's map, but the use of the term 'ethnos' is significant. It comes from L.N. Gumilev, a historian and geographer whose thinking has acquired enormous prestige and influence in post-Soviet Russia. Beginning in the 1960s, Gumilev developed a theory of the life-cycle of ethnic groups, as part of which the special quality of what he termed *passionarnost'* played a critical role in the group's self-assertion.¹⁰ On his map, Morozov indicates the geographical locus of

¹⁰ Gumilev, L.N. 1990: *Geografiia étnosa v istoricheskii period*. Leningrad; idem 1989: *Étnogenez i biosfera Zemli*, 2nd ed. Leningrad; idem 1992: *Drevniaia Rus' i velikaia step'*. Mos-

passionarnost' in today's Russia in a region he calls *Novorossia* or "New Russia," but the important point for us is his larger geographical picture of Russian ethnicity as a whole. In distinction to Dugin, Morozov uses Gumilev's terminology to further break down the Russian ethnos into 'sub-ethnoses,' which are distinct but ultimately fused into a single entity. We can see immediately that this vision of the Russian ethnos is dramatically more expansive than that sketched out by Dugin. On the one hand, the other East-Slavic groups, while still retaining their distinction as sub-ethnoses, are denied the status of full ethnoses and merged instead into the Russian group. On the other hand, significant amounts of territory inside the Russian Federation, which Dugin depicted as part of other national republics and thus outside Russian ethno-territorial space, have now been incorporated into it, notably in the northeastern parts of the East European Plain, the Urals, and Siberia. Thus Morozov's is a vision of what we might call a 'greater ethno-Russia': a multi-national nationality which the non-Russian ethnic groups affected will be likely to see – and not unreasonably – as an expression of an imperial inclination on the part of Russian nationalism.

Indeed, the author himself introduces this imperial theme quite explicitly into his map, with his use of the terms "colony" and "colonial" to refer to regions outside the space of the Russian ethnos. In general usage, both of these terms are usually employed in historical reference to the Russian or Soviet empires, and they are not commonly invoked in discussions of contemporary post-Soviet affairs. It is therefore of considerable significance that Morozov should choose to use them in characterizing the relationship of Russian national space to non-Russian territories directly contiguous with it. It is immediately apparent that the terms are deployed in two rather different senses. On the one hand, the solid black triangles, labeled "major Russian colonies", are significant settlements of ethnically Russian population outside of Russian ethnic territory, the existence of which open up the possibility of irredentism or even the redrawing of the geographical boundaries of the Russian ethnos. More significant, however, are the three references on the map to *kolonial'nye zony* or "colonial zones", located in the southeast corner of the Baltic, in Central Asia ("Turkestan"), and in the Far East. By indicating these regions as "colonial zones," the author invokes their traditional status within the Russian empire as essentially foreign zones which the Russians entered, conquered, and absorbed administratively as part of their colonial realm. Thus, while these territories were not historically an integral part of

cow. On Gumilev see Kochanek, H. 1998: Die Ethnienlehre Lev N. Gumilevs: Zu den Anfängen neu-rechter Ideologie-Entwicklung im spätkommunistischen Russland, in: *Osteuropa* 48, 11-12, 1184-1197; Lavrov, S.B. 2000: *Lev Gumilev: Sud'ba i idei*. Moscow; Its, R.F. Neskolk'o slov o knige Gumileva *Ėnogenez i biosfera Zemli*, in: Gumilev, L.N. : *Ėnogenez i biosfera Zemli*, 3-13.

Russia's *ethnic* space, they were traditionally an integral part of Russia's *political-imperial* space. As a depiction of the historical constitution of the Russian empire prior to the 20th century, this is an accurate depiction and there is nothing notable about it. As a depiction of the geography of the Russian ethnos in the present day, however, the implication is clear that the traditional imperial attitudes still persist.

Encirclement, expansionism and new strategic ensembles

As we have seen, the Eurasian doctrines of the 1920s-1930s represent a significant source of inspiration for Russian attempts to re-vision its national space after 1991. The same cannot be said, however, in regard to Russia's international position and its global engagement with the rest of the world. The original Eurasians were strongly influenced by the notions of national self-sufficiency and autarchy popular during the inter-war period. They understood Russia-Eurasia very much as a *mir v sebe* or self-contained universe, which physical geography and historical experience has conspired to separate equally (if in quite different ways) from the civilizations of Europe and Asia by. Their perspective was thus *de facto* strongly isolationist, and the fact that this inclination was echoed in the Stalinist determination to achieve of "Socialism in a single country" proved to be of considerable significance for the development of the Eurasian movement in the 1930s. The emergence of the USSR after 1945 as a world superpower, however, together with the irresistible forces of globalization of the late 20th century, has undermined such an uncomplicated prospect of isolationist national autarchy and rendered it essentially obsolete for any purpose than that of pure national nostalgia. Very much to the contrary, there is in Russia today a powerful preoccupation with the country's international position, and a strong sense that post-Soviet Russia must have an important global role to play. Exactly how global forces are arranged, and what sort of strategic alignments will allow Russia best to pursue its global goals, have thus become important concerns in the project of 'thinking spatially about Russia' that we are examining.

The fundamental points of departure for a post-Soviet global perspective, therefore, are most commonly taken not from the original Eurasianist vision but from the picture of the world order which developed in the Soviet Union after 1945, under the conditions of the Cold War. This was a picture of a bi-polar world divided into two opposing camps organized around two superpowers, which were relatively balanced in overall power. The approximate parity between the contending powers, sustained for decades down till the 1980s, has now of course been lost, a circumstance which is equally well appreciated by both of the

former superpower contenders. What remains from the Cold War *Weltanschauung*, however, is the perception by the Russians of an enduring and aggressive hostility toward them on the part of the other superpower, which in stark contrast to Russia has lost none of its former power and vitality and is today all the more threatening in the absence of any other power which could resist or challenge its pretensions to absolute global hegemony. During the Cold War, the Russians saw the geopolitical expression of these hostile pretensions in the American doctrine of containment, which involved the installation of what the United States envisioned as a geographical belt of resistance to Soviet expansionism extending just beyond the frontiers of Soviet territory across Europe and Asia. For the Russians, containment amounted to hostile encirclement, maintained by the United States through a combination of puppet states and actual American military presence, and it served as a daily demonstration of American determination that the Soviet Union should not survive and prosper. The prospect of aggressive intentions and hostile encirclement as Russia's existential global condition has easily survived the collapse of the communist order, and is a major focus of attention for geopolitics in Russia today. *FIGURE 6*, entitled simply "The Encirclement of Eurasia", offers a stylized and rather dramatic depiction of the pernicious nature of this situation, in which the location of American military bases are anthropomorphized into the arms of a clasping United States that squeezes Russia – and indeed the rest of Asia – in an ever-tightening grasp.

A sense of encirclement gives rise naturally to an urge to break out or escape, and thus hostile containment is linked as it were dialectically to a positive vision of Russian territorial expansionism. This is conveyed quite clearly in *FIGURE 7*, which refers to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The caption explains this policy in the following manner: "The incursion into Afghanistan was dictated by Moscow's natural urge to break through the 'Anakonda circle' and reach 'warm seas'". In fact, there are two distinct and rather different messages here. The 'Anakonda circle', represented on the map as a darkened swath extending from the northern tip of Finland across western Europe, northern Africa, Central Asia, and the Far East to the Pacific, is a rather sensationalist post-Soviet term for precisely that Cold War belt of containment mentioned above. The Soviet thrust into Afghanistan was thus a logical – and entirely justifiable – attempt to break out of the strangling grasp of this ring and thereby resist the hostile intentions of the American-dominated West.

At the same time, however, the characterization of the incursion as Moscow's "natural urge" to "reach 'warm seas'" invokes a very different geopolitical discourse, and one not necessarily related to American encirclement. Because of its physical-geographical location in the northern extremes of the Eurasian landmass, Russia has traditionally never possessed any coastline which did not freeze

over for some significant period of time each year, and thus never had truly unlimited access to the world's seas. In the mid- and late 19th century, this geographical circumstance was identified by the Russians as a critical hindrance to Russia's participation in global politics. The absence of a non-freezing, 'warm-water port' was portrayed as a natural-geographical abnormality, and thus the acquisition of such an outlet – which became a perceptible element in Russia's policy of expansion in the Pacific Far East at this time – was seen to be an imperative for national politics dictated by Nature itself.¹¹ As Dugin's map indicates, Russian geopoliticians after 1991 have resurrected this old doctrine. Its significance, it should be noted, goes well beyond a retrospective explanation and justification for the Soviet move into Afghanistan. It is directly connected to a new, and distinctly post-Soviet expansionist inclination, for which there is no better evidence than the bellicose writings of the politician Vladimir Zhirinovskii. Indeed, Zhirinovskii takes the sort of 'thrust' depicted on Dugin's map beyond the former Soviet boundaries into Central Asia as his central theme, as indicated in the very title of his best-known and most influential manifesto, portentously entitled *The Last Thrust to the South*.¹² In it, he famously evokes a hypnotic future vision of Russian soldiers at the conclusion of a victorious march to the south, pausing to wash the mud off their boots in the warm waters of the Indian Ocean.

The contending camps of the Cold War were organized around the two superpowers, as noted, but they both included an immediate penumbra of allied countries, which together with the respective superpower formed a 'block' which in both cases was officially consolidated as a military alliance. Thus, superpower hostility toward the Soviet Union was perceived not as an exclusively North American affair but rather primarily in terms of NATO, which added a significant West-European dimension. NATO was seen as a monolithic organization, and little differentiation was made between its members. This image of militant uniformity began to break down already during *perestroika*, when Mikhail Gorbachev's endlessly repeated vision of an *obshchii evropeiskii dom* or "common European house" seemed to suggest affinities between the countries of Europe – including Russia – that went beyond and perhaps even against existing military alliances.¹³ It remained for the Soviet Union to collapse, however, for the full im-

¹¹ On the historical background of this notion, see Morrison, J. A. 1952: Russia and Warm Water: A Fallacious Generalization and Its Consequences, in: *United States Naval Institute Proceedings* 78, 11, 1169-1179; Bassin, M. 1999: *Imperial Visions, Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840-1865*, Cambridge, 206-232.

¹² Zhirinovskii, V. 1993: *Poslednyi brodok na iug*, Moscow.

¹³ Eg. Gorbachev, M. 1987: *Perestroika*. New York, 180, 191, 194-5, 197-8; idem 1987: *Toward a Better World*. London, 344, 348.

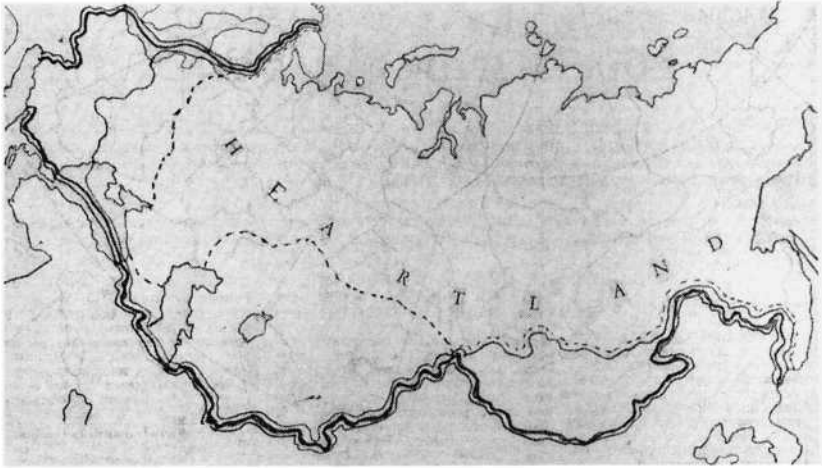
plications of this new approach to be developed. The fact that the United States remain as the single global superpower now makes it possible to focus the Cold War instincts of hostility toward the trans-Atlantic NATO alliance more specifically onto the United States alone. The United States are perceived as a sort of unique super-hegemon, whose the underlying urge is not merely to destroy Russia but to implement a *Novyi Mirovoi Poriadok* or universal "New World Order" by subjecting the rest of the world to American global control.

For Russia itself, the existential threat of what is seen as American unilateralism – euphemistically referred to as *Atlantizm* or 'Atlanticism' – is in a sense not so very different from the old NATO threat which underlay the old Cold War standoff. What is radically new are the implications for the rest of the world, which now has become no less threatened than Russia by American pretensions. In view of this situation, Russian geopoliticians have begun to think about new patterns of international linkages, as illustrated in the maps in *FIGURE 8*. Both of these maps refer to new 'strategic blocks' which might take shape as a logical geopolitical response to the unprecedented realities of Atlanticism. The lower map, entitled "The Axis of European Integration," makes very clear the expectation that the key West European powers – traditionally firmly aligned alongside the United States in the NATO alliance – will now appreciate the threat of the American thrust for hegemony and opt to ally with Russia as a key geopolitical player in a greater anti-American European union. It is incidentally hardly surprising that Britain, which in the form of the so-called 'Special Relationship' continues to insist loudest of all the West-European countries on the inviolability of its trans-Atlantic links, is left out of this particular geopolitical calculation. The upper map – "The Fundamental Axes of a Eurasian Strategic Block" – extends this perspective into the Eurasian arena. Here Moscow emerges as the central hub of a grand trans-continental alliance extending from Central Europe deep into Central Asia, and east to the Pacific. Perhaps the most startling aspect of this cluster is the inclusion of Japan, which again suggests that a traditional American ally will come to appreciate the threats implicit in the New World Order and effectively switch alliances.

Conclusion

In this essay I have explored how geopolitical maps suggest new ways and categories of 'thinking spatially about Russia'. It is important to stress that these maps must be taken as cognitive abstractions. What they reveal are tendencies in what we might call the geo-psychology of post-Soviet Russia: general preoccupations, inclinations, and concerns, that is to say, rather than clear indications of

political policies or intentions. Dugin's inclusion of Mongolia or indeed Finland within the boundaries of Eurasia does not mean that he is actively calling for the formal incorporation of these countries into the political space of a greater Russia-Eurasia. It does mean, however, that his idealized view of Russia's proper national-territorial dimensions does not coincide with the present-day boundaries of the Russian state, and this is the important point. In a similar way, to label Turkestan as a 'colonial zone' does not necessarily amount to the call for Russia to re-annex and recolonize the region. Rather, it is a evocation and reminder of Russia's former imperial status, which in fact portends a wide variety of possible policy implications for the present day. The critical question as to precisely what these implications might be, and how they might be pursued, must be the subject of a separate and very different study. Whatever they are, however, the maps examined in this essay will have helped to prepare the geo-psychology of the nation to accept and act upon them.



Геополитические результаты перестройки 1985 — 1992. Этапы сокращения геополитического объема Heartland'a и параллельного приращивания геополитического объема Rimland'a.

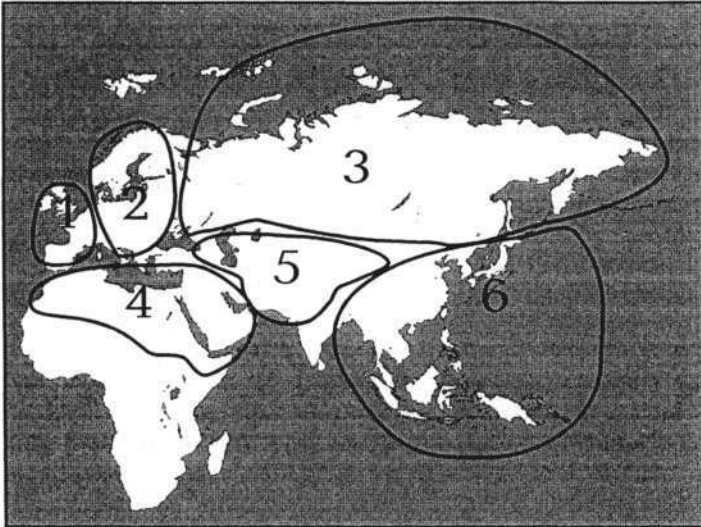
- стратегические границы Heartland'a Евразии на 1985 год
- стратегические границы Heartland'a Евразии на 1991 год
- - - стратегические границы Heartland'a Евразии на 1992 год

FIGURE 1. (Source: *Elementy*, N 4, 1993, p. 32)



Россия как Евразийская Империя.

FIGURE 2. (Source: Dugin, *Osnovy Geopolitiki*.1997, p. 415)



1, 6 цивилизационных поясов Евразии: 1 Западная Европа, 2 Средняя Европа, 3 Россия-Евразия, 4 Арабская Азия (включая страны Магриба), 5 Средняя Азия, 6 Дальний Восток.

Наглядно виден параллелизм между северными и южными зонами.

2. Геополитическое деление Евразии по меридиану. Горный хребет от Пиренеев до Алтая и Манчжурии является важнейшей естественной границей между двумя евразийскими мирами.

FIGURE 3. (Source: Dugin, *Osnovy Geopolitiki*.1997, p. 420)

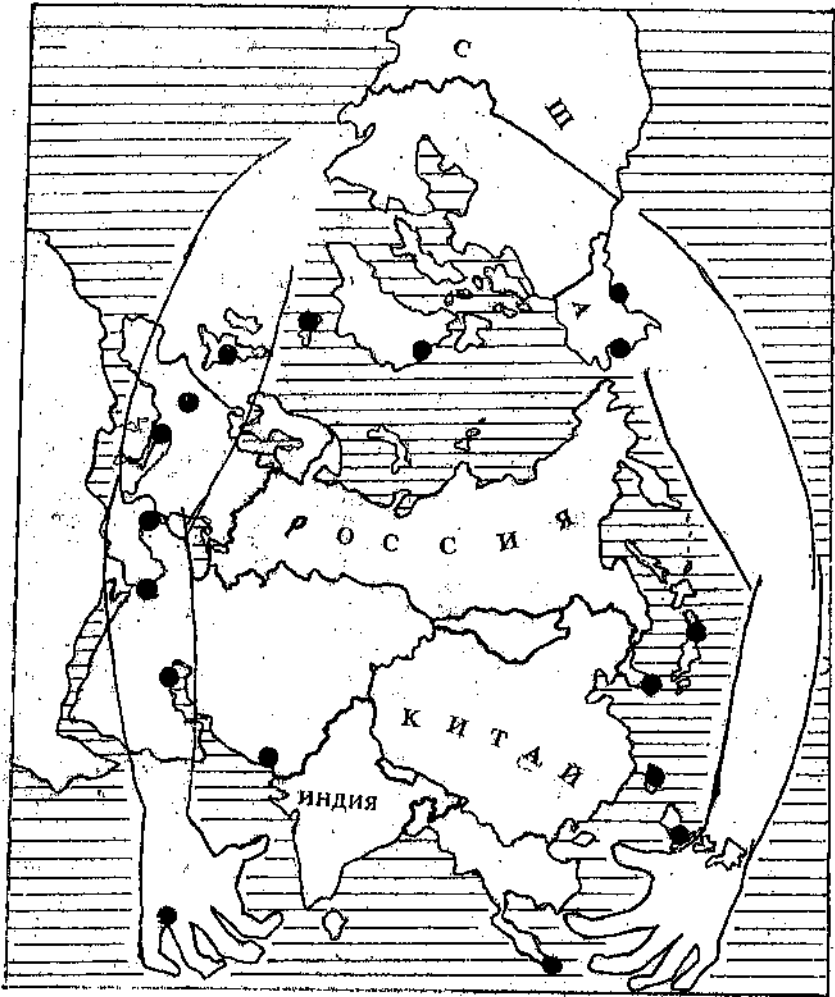


Россия как моноэтническое образование.

FIGURE 4. (Source: Dugin, *Osnovy Geopolitiki*.1997, p. 411)



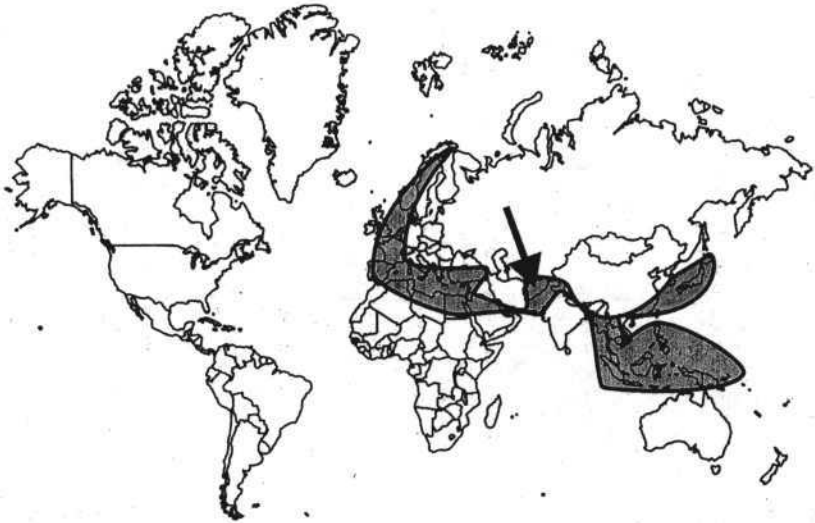
FIGURE 5. (Source: *Russkij Geopoliticheskii Sbornik*. N 1, 1995, p. 24)



Окружение Евразии

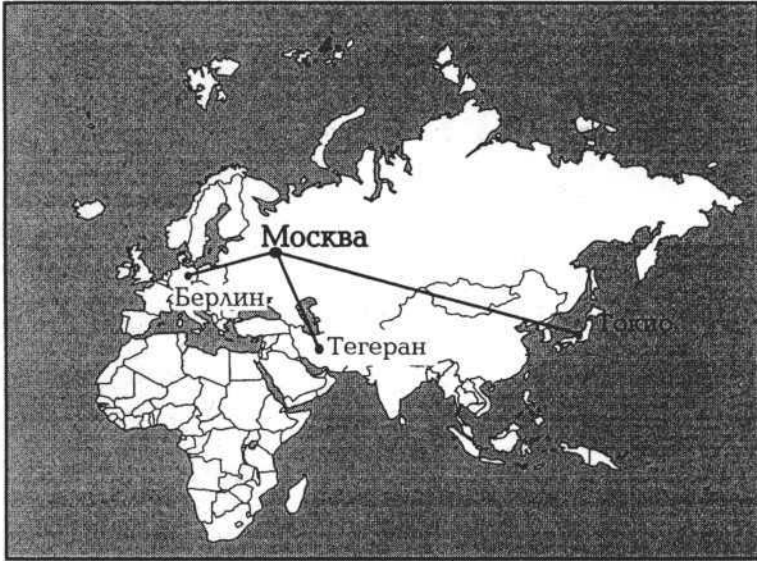
● — основные военные базы США

FIGURE 6. (Source: *Elementy*, N 4, 1993, p. 25)



Вторжение в Афганистан было продиктовано естественным стремлением Москвы прорвать "кольцо Анаконды" и выйти к "теплым морям".

FIGURE 7. (Source: *Russkij Geopoliticheskii Sbornik*. N 1, 1995, p. 101)



Основные оси евразийского стратегического блока.



Ось европейской интеграции.

FIGURE 8. (Source: *Osnovy Geopolitiki*, 1997)