

Foreword

Guest Editor's Foreword. Joint Agenda for Greater Eurasia

The preliminary launch of the “Pivot to the East” project, which almost two decades later led to the concept of a Greater Eurasia partnership or community, took place in 1999–2000. At that time, the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, a public organization, which I had the honour to head, concluded that there was a need for accelerated development of Siberia and the Russian Far East through their integration into markets of the rapidly rising Pacific region. The Council issued a report titled “New Development of Siberia and the Russian Far East”¹ which aroused interest. However, this interest did not last long. The Russian governing class was preoccupied with survival, internal problems and the development and redistribution of resources. It still viewed Asia as something distant, dirty and backward and had no doubts yet that Russia could integrate into Europe – into which part of this class actively pumped its capital. This was despite the enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which undermined the possibility of such integration by Russia, and despite the 78-day bombardment of the remnants of Yugoslavia by the Alliance which made a future confrontation between Russia with the West almost inevitable.

The second attempt to provide grounds for a pivot to the East, made by the Council jointly with the School of World Economy and International Affairs of the Higher School of Economics in 2008–2009, was more successful. Our analysis, distributed to Russian government agencies and the media, was based on the fact that the rise of Asia gave Russia competitive advantages. As a result, Siberia and the Russian Far East could be transformed from Russia's rear in its confrontation with the West or from Russia's imperial burden into an engine that would drive their own development and the development of the whole country.² We also proceeded from a forecasted slowdown in the development of Europe and possible complications in political relations with the West. It seemed obvious that Russia should diversify its foreign economic relations and external sources of development. We promoted the reasons for the pivot, a new policy in Asia and the Greater Eurasia concept not only through memoranda and reports but also through a series of reports prepared under the auspices of the Valdai Club. The reports, which won acclaim, were united by a com-

¹ Ryzhkov V.A., Khloponin A.G. (2001) *Novoe osvoenie Sibiri i Dal'nego Vostoka* New. Ch. 1 [Development of Siberia and the Russian Far East. Part 1]. Available at: http://vseup.ru/static/files/2_1.pdf (accessed 16 July 2018). (In Russian)

² Karaganov S. A. (2015) *Povorot k Azii: istorija politicheskoi idei* [Pivot to Asia: The History of a Political Idea]. *Povorot na vostok: razvitiie Sibiri i Dal'nego Vostoka v usloviyah usilenija aziatskogo vektora vneshnej politiki Rossii* [Turn to the East: The Development of Siberia and Eastern Russia in Strengthening Russia's Foreign Policy toward Asia] (I. Makarov (ed.)). Moscow: *Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya*, pp. 9–17. (In Russian)

mon name, “Towards the Pacific Ocean”,³ which was the slogan of engineers, the military and workers who built the Trans-Siberian Railway.

Thanks to the efforts of many scholars, business people and politicians, in 2012 the pivot began, and the process soon gained momentum. The factor that played the key role in accelerating the development of the Far Eastern Federal District (not the whole of Siberia yet) was the establishment of the Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East in 2012. In late 2013 – early 2014, the ministry started to work full-scale. Simultaneously, Russia intensified its diplomatic efforts in Asia and the Asia-Pacific region. By 2017, the pivot was largely completed.⁴ The Russian Far East began to develop fast. The Eurasian Economic Union’s trade with Asia equaled its trade with the European Union. Russia began to reformat its foreign political ties, formed in the years of the revolutionary collapse of the 1990s and the chaotic recovery of the 2000s. They were based on the exchange of Russian oil and gas for expensive and often economically less effective European goods. The growth of trade with Asia makes it possible to replace these imports with cost-effective goods.

Asia no longer views Russia as an alien force, although it is still considered – and this is probably right – a great European country.

A major factor in Russia’s pivot was its unprecedented rapprochement with China, relations with which have de facto reached the level of allied relations. At the same time, Russia quickly built up its relations with countries that are on the periphery of what will likely be a main superpower of the future world – Japan, Rep. of Korea, Vietnam, the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), India and Pakistan.

But perhaps most importantly, the geostrategic identity of the larger part of Russia’s policy-forming class changed.

Russia was no longer viewed as a provincial European country but as a central Eurasian or, perhaps, northern Eurasian power. In modern Russian geopolitical thinking, Eurasia includes the west of the continent and is not anti-European, as it was in constructs of former Soviet and Russian Eurasianists.

Russia’s new geopolitical and geoeconomic identity helps it overcome moral and political dependence on the West and strengthens the country’s positions in the dialogue and interaction with it. At the same time, Russia naturally is not going to give up advantageous cooperation with European countries. Such a move would be disadvantageous, simply impossible economically and dangerous ideologically. It would threaten the identity of most Russians who consider themselves Europeans, even if they do not like many things in modern Europe, which itself is in many ways becoming a post-Europe, giving up, at least for now, many of the values that shaped it and that many Russians share.

Based on the assessment and forecasts of geoeconomic and geopolitical trends in world development and the first results of its economic, political and mental pivot to the East, Russia proposed the idea of forming a new community – a “Greater Eurasia” (here-

³ All reports are available at: <http://ru.valdaiclub.com/a/reports/> (accessed 16 July 2018).

⁴ Valdai Club (2017) To the Great Ocean – 5: From the Turn to the East to Great Eurasia. Valdai Club Reports, 6 September. Available at: <http://valdaiclub.com/a/reports/toward-the-great-ocean-5-from-the-turn-to-the-east/> (accessed 16 July 2018)..

inafter, GE) partnership. This idea was officially supported by the leaders of Russia and China and became a bilateral initiative, naturally open to other countries, as well.

Russia's new Asia policy will be closely integrated with Russia's European, southern, northern (Arctic) and, of course, U.S. policies, wherever possible.

In two to three years, it may be useful to renew active cooperation between Russia and other European countries, and between Russians and other Europeans, on a new basis and from new positions. Europe is a traditional partner of Russia and a convenient supplier of many technologies and goods. Due to its new position in the world, Europe is highly interested in turning to the East, not so much to Russia, as before, as to Asia and Eurasia.

The Greater Eurasia concept is based not only on its desirability for Russia and, we believe, all countries on the continent in terms of creating a new space for cooperation, development and security. GE will also develop as the "Asia for the world" trend, when Asian countries developed mainly as exporters to the outside world, is being replaced by the "Asia for Asia" trend, as Asian and Eurasian markets are becoming the main sources and drivers of growth. Ten years ago, it seemed that the Pacific Ocean or even "Chimerica" – a duumvirate of China and the United States proposed by some scholars, primarily Zbigniew Brzezinski – would become the centre of a new world. However, China opposed the idea, while the U.S. elite, void of rationality, almost unanimously opted for a policy of containing China. This factor caused China to make a resolute turn towards European markets through the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) plan. This turn gave a strong boost to the creation of GE. It came as a stroke of luck for Russia, which is at the centre of the new development area. In addition, Moscow and Beijing in 2015 agreed to conjoin the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and OBOR, which prevents their rivalry in Central Asia, predicted by many analysts.

The Greater Eurasia partnership or community is, first of all, a conceptual framework setting a vector for cooperation among countries on the continent. It should be aimed at working for joint economic, political and cultural revival and development of dozens of once-underdeveloped or subdued Eurasian countries and turning Eurasia into the centre of the world economy and politics.

It will include countries of East, Southeast and South Asia, countries located in the centre of Eurasia, Russia and, apparently, those countries of the European subcontinent and their organizations that are able and willing to engage in constructive cooperation.

Second, GE is an emerging geoeconomic community brought to life by the "Asia for Asia" trend, China's pivot to the West, the EAEU-OBOR conjunction and Russia's pivot to the East. Third, it is a space of civilizational cooperation, reemerging after centuries of divide. This cooperation was once personified by the cultural aspect of the Silk Road, which involved and linked the great civilizations of China, India, Persia, the Arab Middle East and Europe through the Eastern Roman Empire, Venice and Spain.

Fourth, GE is a movement towards a new geostrategic community – a common Eurasian space of development, cooperation, peace and security, intended to overcome Cold War divisions, prevent the emergence of new ones, and settle conflicts and tensions between parties to the partnership. Its most important potential function is to involve China in a network of ties, cooperation, balances and agreements in order to prevent its becoming a potential leader against which other Eurasian countries would inevitably unite, or the en-

try of external balancers which are not interested in maintaining stability and peace on the continent. At the same time, GE must be open to the rest of the world and its other major centre, which is emerging around the U.S., through the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum and similar fora, through Atlantic organizations and, in the longer term, through a possible and desirable trilogue on global issues and international strategic stability between Russia, China and the United States.

GE should be formed on the basis of traditional values of international law and the international community, and on the denial of any kind of universalism, superiority in values, unilateral “righteousness” or hegemony.

Principles on which GE (and, ideally, international relations in general) should be built include:

- unconditional respect for sovereignty and territorial value, renunciation of the policy of hegemony, diktat and threats, and mutual efforts to maintain peace and stability under the aegis of the United Nations;
- unconditional respect for political pluralism, freedom of political choice by peoples of the continent and renunciation of interference in each other’s internal affairs;
- economic openness, reduction of barriers to international trade and investment, depoliticization of economic ties that undermine interdependence, and win-win economic cooperation;
- refraining from creating new military alliances and expanding existing ones, full support for the principle of neutrality and nonalignment, and security guarantees for countries that have made this choice;
- focus on the creation of a pancontinental system of development, cooperation and security that would stretch from Jakarta (or Tokyo) to Lisbon, that would cover and compensate for the failed European security project, and that would provide a new format for settling conflicts in Europe, in countries around China, on the Korean peninsula and in the Middle East;
 - focus on efforts to maintain military and political stability, prevent conflicts as an absolutely necessary condition for social development and welfare growth, and ultimately ensure basic human rights;
 - focus on efforts to maintain and develop the diversity of cultures, restore historical cultural ties and create new ones;
 - efforts towards peace, cooperation and mutual enrichment through dialogue among Eurasian civilizations; and
 - protection of human rights in their inseparable relationship with the rights of societies and states.

GE is also a conceptual framework for the future-oriented geostrategic and geoeconomic identity of Russia as the centre and the north of the rising continent, as its major transport and economic link and security supplier. Thanks to its centuries-old experience of interacting with both the West and the East, the peaceful interaction of many religions in the country and the openness of Russian culture, Russia can play a central role in establishing and restoring cultural interaction in Eurasia. At the same time, Russia is not going to give up its European cultural roots, which are very important to Russia, and will continue to be developed.

The conceptual framework allows using tendencies and directing the efforts of states, organizations and dialogue formats into a single channel with a view to forming a new geo-economic, geopolitical and geocultural community – a Greater Eurasia partnership and later community. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) can serve as a natural negotiating platform for creating such a partnership, provided it steps up its efforts, becomes more open and turns from a purely regional organization into an “organization of organizations” and a forum for discussing problems. Also, it might be useful to establish SCO-EU and EAEU-EU dialogues. One could also start with an expert (and later expert-political) forum on Eurasian development, cooperation and security. But using an existing organization (provided it is developed) is more convenient than creating a new one which may not have an institutional basis.

Naturally, the creation of a new organization on the basis of the SCO (if it is developed and preserved) requires effective joint efforts of its members, above all Russia and China, whose actions in the SCO were previously hamstrung by their desire to contain each other’s influence in the economic sphere (Russia apparently feared China’s domination) and in the sphere of security (China apparently did not want leadership for Russia). Now development is held back by conflicts between India and China. We need a new format that would help resolve old conflicts. This can be achieved through joint movement towards a GE partnership, which requires pooling efforts and competitive advantages to everyone’s benefit.

GE provides conceptual frameworks for a joint projects, or rather many projects, by its members and their organizations, ready to work for the common goal of creating a continent of development, peace and close cooperation. Initially, Russia and China could play the leading role in these efforts. The leaders of the two countries have already expressed their support for the Greater Eurasia partnership concept. However, this concept needs to be concretized in a multilateral dialogue.

Here follows a list of possible specific projects, which I have previously proposed.⁵

In addition to the development of latitudinal transport infrastructure, of paramount importance is the development of North-South transport routes to link the Russian Far East, Central and Western Siberia, and the Cis-Urals region with fast-growing markets of western China, Iran, India and Pakistan.

Despite the current slowdown in integration processes in the EAEU caused by the economic crisis, the Union needs a new long-term agenda. This may be common transport and trade policies, integration into a single Greater Eurasian space on optimal terms, and participation in the formation of its standards and rules.

It is necessary to establish multilateral technological alliances with countries of the continent, both in the west and east. Most high-tech industries cannot be developed with a focus on one’s own market or even the market of a union. Technological alliances are needed to prevent possible politicization of the world economy by the West or other actors.

Russia’s achievements in its pivot to the East also require working out a request policy with regard to Asian partners. There are some things in the growing cooperation that Rus-

⁵ Karaganov S.A. (2017) *Ot povorota na Vostok k Bol'shoj Evrazii* [From the Pivot to the East to Greater Eurasia]. Available at: <https://interaffairs.ru/jauthor/material/1847> (accessed 16 July 2018). (In Russian)

sia cannot accept. There are still bureaucratic and political barriers to many Russian goods and investments.

Finally, Russia should not delay choosing forms for its participation in integration associations in Asia and the Pacific. The Trans-Pacific Partnership has failed, but there is the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), led by ASEAN and China, which unites the majority of countries in the region. So far, Russia and the EAEU have refrained from participating in the negotiations due to difficulties working out a common position and the lack of an expert potential; instead, they have emphasized a network of bilateral free trade areas. It is not clear, however, whether this tactic will be advantageous in the long term.

A separate group of tasks pertains to Russia's foreign policy and military-political participation in the affairs of Asia and the Pacific region. The surfacing of many long-standing conflicts in it, the almost inevitable strengthening of the American policy of containing China, Washington's desire to play on conflicts between regional players and their fears, and most importantly, the objective fear of China's growing might on the part of its neighbours, which has no relation to Beijing's policy and intentions, creates a demand for Russia's constructive participation as an experienced and diplomatically strong player, friendly to the majority of countries. This demand is also due to the lack of a developed and stable security system in the region.

Objectively, Russia is potentially the largest security supplier in the region and the world, including through strategic deterrence and dialogue with the U.S. (the latter is almost nonexistent now) and, in the future, through a Russia-China-U.S. tripartite dialogue, if the parties come to realize the need for it.

The Russian-Chinese "comprehensive, equitable and trusting partnership and strategic interaction" needs to be deepened, too. Its nature is close to an alliance, yet medium- and low-level ties between the two countries, in particular in business, are not sufficiently developed. Also, it lacks "strategic depth" – a common long-term goal of codevelopment. This goal, which may be common to all Eurasian countries, should apparently be interaction between the leaders to build a Greater Eurasia partnership or community. The roadmap for building it may include the creation of a coordinated GE transport strategy, a system of rating agencies, support for the development of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and other regional banks, and a system parallel to the SWIFT system of exchanging financial messages in order to rule out its use as an economic war weapon and to strengthen stability of the world financial system. It may also include the expansion of trade in national currencies and the creation of independent payment systems, the creation of an economic information centre parallel to, and interacting with, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the creation of a Eurasian network or even organization for mutual assistance in case of (increasing) emergency situations, climatic and technological disasters and post-crisis recovery. A possible pilot project for the latter type of activity may be implemented in Syria.

Also possible is the creation of a complex independent information and analytical mega-agency that would distribute, gather and analyze information – a kind of symbiosis between Al-Jazeera or BBC and Stratfor. This agency, which might be called Eurasia News, would allow countries on the continent to gain greater intellectual and political in-

dependence and resist the politicization of information flows. One of the goals behind the creation of such an information and analytical agency is to develop a theory of international relations that would focus more on the new realities and the future and would reflect the interests of Eurasian countries. For example, this may be interaction and interpenetration of civilizations instead conflicts between them, the infinity and recurrence of mankind's development instead of its finiteness, and so on.

Cooperation could restore the historical and cultural narrative common to all Eurasian countries – ranging from the history of the Genghis Khan empire, to the economic and cultural phenomenon of the Silk Road, and the history of the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire where cultural flows from Asia and Europe merged, and where European culture was preserved in the years of its decline in Europe. The narrative may also include the role of Venice as the gateway between Asia and Europe, and a new assessment of the Crusades. The goal is to restore and create a single historical and cultural identity of Eurasia and the world, and supplement the primarily European-oriented narrative of world history, which is still dominant.

In the field of security, it may be advisable to create a continental security system in addition to existing formats, with a partial and gradual replacement of obsolete organizations (for example, the OSCE). The prevailing way of ensuring security in GE would be nonalignment or neutrality, guaranteed by the leading players of the international community (primarily Russia, China and the United States).

Perhaps, the creation of a security system should begin with the convocation of an expert, and later expert-political, forum on the development of cooperation and security in Greater Eurasia.

Simultaneously with the movement towards “Greater Eurasia” and the deepening of Russia's pivot to Asia, in the next few years it may be advisable to think of interaction with the traditional partner, Europe, on a new political, economic and conceptual basis. This is especially relevant as the continuing crisis of the EU project objectively causes many countries on the old subcontinent to revise their Russia policies which have turned out to be counterproductive. European countries, too, are trying to turn to the East, and many are already ahead of Russia in these efforts.

The most important task in developing the GE concept is its linkage with China's One Belt, One Road initiative. China has officially supported GE, and Russia has supported OBOR. More than that, it has supported its latest and more developed interpretation, set out by Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

Speaking at an OBOR forum, held on 14–15 May 2017, Xi set forth the concept, which is not so much a plan for China's movement to the West as a vision of Eurasia's development. This vision is very close to the idea of a Greater Eurasian partnership. Russia and China will have to avoid competition over credit for being the first to propose this idea. Hopefully, given the quality of their political leadership, they will cope with it.

But the most important thing, I repeat, is not only joint efforts to draw plans for the development of the Eurasian megacontinent but also the involvement of other leading countries – India, Japan, Korea, ASEAN countries and, in the nearest future, European partners – in this major Eurasian project. In Europe, this process has already begun. Whereas two or three years ago this concept was mocked and rejected, 2017 saw a turning

point. European countries have begun to discuss modalities for their participation in the project and their own pivot to Asia.⁶

We on the faculty of World Economy and International Affairs of the Higher School of Economics and on the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy continue our modest efforts to concretize the Greater Eurasia partnership concept and the related concept of Russia's pivot to the East. Some of the studies are our own initiative, and many are requested by the administration of the Russian president, the Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East, and the Eurasian Economic Commission among other agencies. In our work we also use the intellectual potential of these institutions, the Eurasian Development Bank and the SCO Bank. We cooperate closely and on a permanent basis with Chinese, Korean and Japanese experts. For several years, under the auspices of our faculty and the Lee Kuan Yew faculty of Singapore University, a consortium of institutes in Russia, China, Japan, Korea, Singapore and Norway worked to help Russia with its turn to Asian markets and with the development of the "last frontier" in Asia – Siberia and the Russian Far East.

In a special issue of the *International Organisations Research Journal*, we offer abridged versions of our recent studies, adapted for open publication, which promote the "Greater Eurasia" project and which fill some of its aspects with concrete content. For this special issue we invited authors from China and Kazakhstan to share their views on Greater Eurasia: its institutions, key tracks for cooperation and current constraints.

We plan to continue this work and involve a growing number of Russian and foreign experts in it. We will closely monitor and take into account the results of growing discussions on progress in the "pivot to the East" and new goals. Soon it may be supplemented with a new rapprochement with Europe, but on different terms and in different frameworks. We will also develop discussions on the contours and trends in the development of a future Greater Eurasia partnership or community.

Anything may happen in our rapidly developing world, and the best hopes may not come true. But we are full of intellectual optimism. Eight to nine years ago, almost no one believed in the possibility of a Russian turn to the East, but it has begun. Three years ago, no one even heard the term "Greater Eurasia," and now this concept is an important part of discussions on the future of international relations. And this is only the beginning.

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⁶ Bond I. (2017) The EU, the Eurasian Economic Union and One Belt, One Road: Can They Work Together? Centre for European Reform, March. Available at: http://cer.eu/sites/default/files/pb_eurasian_IB_16.3.17_0.pdf (accessed 16 July 2018).

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