



Advent of a new civilization project: Eurasia in – U.S. out?



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ABSTRACT

International relations present the picture of integration and disintegration processes in vast territories stimulating different types of states' unions that have become the key points of international relations. Therefore the bulk of questions should be referred to the relationships between the states and the territory. This approach creates a geopolitical paradox revealing that the states' positions depend exactly on the territory and their geographical disposition, for instance, on distance from each other. So, the idea of shared territory and history allowed many European states to build up the European Union (EU). And now we are witnessing the same integration processes in the territory of ex-the USSR (Eurasian Economic Union), which is open for huge international actors like China, India and so on. It is of crucial importance to notify that these two international integration projects are in the territory of Eurasia. At the same time the majority of the EU member states are also connected with or even integrated into another international organization – NATO – with the United States (US) as the head and leader. It makes a clear division between the Atlantic macro-region and the Pacific macro-region underlying the role of the US in the contemporary international system. This role is unique but often hasty and irresponsible. Observation of the US's foreign politics through a geographical approach gives a perfect explanation of that. The US is simply geographically remote (despite the jet planes) from these two integration unions (from Eurasia) that allows them to feel the hegemon and influence the international processes there being at a distance. Therefore the main question nowadays is if the US can sustain their world leadership they have been claiming for, and that is what we aim to address in this article.

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to analyze both the state of the art and the possible future development of the geopolitical strategy of the United States in the context of Eurasia's growth. In this connection, we'll concentrate on the following points: (1) a clear definition of what a civilization represents; (2) the features of North American civilization, having the US for its core, and its strategies in

the context of Eurasia's growth; (3) the prospects of Eurasian civilization project.

Nowadays it is time to reject the usual Western (Euro-Atlantic, American) orientation of history. World history includes the Atlantic West as well as China, India and so on. The contemporary international and globalization processes renounce Western pretensions to universality. This creates the atmosphere of geopolitical vacuum, which leads to different types of conflicts but gives new opportunities to many geopolitical actors. In this context Eurasian states are to establish a normative civilization project for the common Eurasian future. And the concept of a multipolar world system is considered as the base of the project. The idea of the

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common Eurasian civilization has a long history, although not always peaceful. It dates back to the Silk Road and Genghis Khan's Empire. Over thousands of years many tribes and peoples influenced each other in culture and science (mathematics, medicine, technology, etc.). Therefore Eurasian history is the history of great human civilizations and cultures; it is the history of trade, war and dialogue. The history of a dialogue for more than a thousand years moves Eurasian civilization project ahead. Now it is important to start a dialogue with each other, and respect different values and traditions. An intensive dialogue of nations and cultures is evident in Eurasian civilization area at the present time. Eurasia is diverse. The early civilizations of Eurasia (Chinese, Indian, Persian, Greek and Roman, which were later divided into Roman-German and Orthodox Byzantine civilizations) represent the idea that there is no universal way of development. Different civilizations have different ways of existence and historical timing.

The US claim world leadership in the second decade of the 21st century despite the economic and political growth of states outside North America, first of all, in Eurasian region (China, India, Russia, etc.) (Erşen, 2014, p. 187; Mostafa, 2013, pp. 160–161). It is assumed that it is the civilization approach in its aspect, which considers the civilization dynamics that provides the most fruitful context for relevant research. This approach makes it possible for us to transform the partial into the general and reveal both the still strong and the increasingly weak facets of North American civilization, an opponent for Eurasian civilization project.

Eurasia is not merely a geographical notion. The definition "Eurasia" is often used in geopolitics referring to post-Soviet states and Asia as well. Therefore, in geopolitical terms most of European states are not considered as the part of Eurasia. In this article Eurasia means a specific geopolitical arena and a civilization project, which comprises Russia and its allies (post-Soviet space), China and India. These countries have been developing political cooperation, a number of great transport and defense projects, and have got experience of international negotiations being the members of Eurasian Economic Union (Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Armenia) or the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, the South African Republic). Considering large territories in a geopolitical context it is necessary to build on a civilization approach.

Modern geopolitical processes comprise tendencies that have prevailed in concrete, well-defined geographically regions, which implies taking into account the regions' many-faceted interactions. Therefore, in considering strategic roles of relative regions and territories it is a must to base the discourse not only on the analysis of currently topical news and issues (which provides of course vast empirical base for research) but also on taking cognizance of the so-called civilization (political, military, cultural, etc.) features of various regions and territories. Most methods and approaches have their limits if applied to geopolitics. But the civilization approach presents a reliable instrument for geopolitical research because it interconnects and unifies into a peculiar entity various cultural-historical communities and geopolitical spaces allowing us to take into account multifarious changes which areas, territories, regions undergo over long periods of time.

So, the main ideas of the article are: (1) the world has changed since the Atlantic (North American) civilization project has lost its attractiveness as a universal civilization project at the beginning of the 21st century; (2) new geopolitical actors with their own civilization projects have appeared (including Islamic State with its idea of World Caliphate); (3) Eurasia has solid bases for a successful civilization project; (4) North American civilization is not able to rival Eurasian civilization project.

2. Civilization: theoretical and methodological aspects

Human history can be studied through time, space and culture. Actually, history can be described as local communities' interconnections in the concrete territory (region) that create common cultural and mental meanings among neighboring peoples. These peoples have direct or indirect influence on each other in different spheres, seek for stronger cooperation and are ready for compromise. Summarily that means they share the same civilization. And the civilization approach is the best tool to study human communities' relations in the regional dimension.

Human civilizations, if considered as a set of cultural, material and technological achievements (including, first of all, the military ones), have a marked feature – non-uniform, cyclic nature of their development. Only through juxtaposing and superimposing results of the systematic multifaceted analysis of various regions and territories we can obtain an adequate notion of a civilization under consideration. Different regions of the globe possess different dynamic parameters of their development, which is predetermined by concrete conditions of the regions and territories' interactions with nature and other human communities (countries, blocks of states and other geopolitical actors) along all the main civilization lines: economic, demographic, military, cultural. These interconnections and mutual influences, all kinds of exchanges in civilization assets, lead to either rise, development and prosperity, or to decline, degeneration and fall of civilizations.

It is exactly for this reason, simplifying the picture outlined above, that it is possible to state that culture "fills in" geopolitical regions and territories, and it is their combination (territory-plus-culture) that forms any civilization. Culture transfigures the space around it and broadens the human community's geopolitical habitat (Bodin, 2000, p. 297; Brodel, 2008, p. 34; Karsavin, 1993, pp. 160–163; Rickert, 1998, p. 55; Savitsky, 1997, pp. iii–iv; von Herder, 1968). Many geopolitical theories, for example, geoculture (Wallerstein, 1997) or ethnocentricity (Gumilev, 1989), reflect and incorporate within their respective gists the idea of the importance of territory from the point of view of preserving common cultural genotype that crucially influences the decision making processes. Territories that still preserve the most important elements of culture belonging to relevant communities prolong the existence of the civilizations they have created, each civilization carrying with it its creative potential that becomes either attractive or anathema. In this respect, it is North American civilization that stands out with its emphasis on the "American way of life." It is this many-faceted image of North American civilization project that is currently on sale for the rest of the

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